

Instructions for Week 2:

We start our journey into the history of Europe and the Ottoman Empire with a document I once found in an archive and got permission to photograph. A copy is attached on the next page. At this point, you know very little. Indeed, you may not even be able to read this document. For now, all I can tell you is that this is a French document from the eighteenth century about a matter that caused grave concerns to European governments at the time. Here's what you'll need to find out for next week:

1. What is this document about? You do not need to bring an exact translation to class, but a summary of the main issue. If you don't read French, find someone who does. If you know another Latin language, such as Spanish or Italian, you'll probably manage to figure a few things out on your own.

Using Google translate or other such translating software won't work, as many French words were spelled differently in the eighteenth century. Any person who knows French should be able to figure this one out.

2. Who signed this letter (name, when that person lived, what he/she did, etc.), when, and where?
3. Where did I find this letter? You will see that the place I found it at is different from the place where it was written. Can you imagine why? (hint: the answer lies probably in the importance of the city that houses the archive).

Now for more general issues emanating from this letter:

4. Why was the disease mentioned in the letter a problem for early-modern European governments? What causes it? How is it spread? Do we know how to treat this disease today? What country still has an especially high number of cases every year?
5. Why were people and ships coming from the Ottoman Empire especially problematic?
6. What was the standard measure of prevention European authorities took in face of that disease?
7. A decade or so after the letter was written, the city that houses the archive where this letter is kept was hit by an epidemic of the disease mentioned in the letter. Was this a result of negligence in following the orders mentioned in the edict, or perhaps the measures suggested were not effective?

Instructions for Week 3:

Last week we discussed plague, common measures against it in the early modern period, and the differences in approach between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. We focused mostly on the eighteenth century. This week, we go back to where our story really begins. Here's what you'll need to do:

1. Read the attached text – in English this time.
2. The text is an excerpt. Identify the book it is taken from (title, author, when was it written, what is the book about, any other interesting details you can dig about the author or the book).
3. The text refers to a plague epidemic in the author's city. That epidemic was part of a larger pandemic – which one? If you are not sure what is the exact meaning of epidemic, pandemic, enzootic, epizootic, and endemic, now would be a good time to find out.
4. Dig as much information as you can about the epidemic you reference in #3 above (when it happened, what regions were affected, what were its short- and long-term results, etc.).
5. Some historians claim that that specific plague epidemic changed Europe forever. How so? Do you agree?

Tip: you may want to consult the works of historians such as Norman Cantor, William Jordan, Stuart Borsch, Ole Benedictow, and Philip Ziegler to answer this one. Their works might take you to others'.

6. If that epidemic was so dramatic in European history, why did it not inspire similar changes in other regions, such as the Middle East?

Note: question #6 is one of those “big questions” historians like to pose, knowing there is no one definite answer. This is especially true for questions that try to explain why something didn't happen (it's much easier to explain why things occurred). Responses to such questions are speculative by nature. This week I've decided to let you play with one such question. So try to discern clues in the sources you find and come up with a reasonable explanation.

In two weeks, we will face another “big question”!

Instructions for Week 4:

Last week we discussed the Black Death and how it was a transformative moment in European history, while not being as significant a vector of change in the Middle East. This week and the next, we will look into some of the developments that took place in Europe and the Middle East in the century and a half after the Black Death.

Here's what you need to do:

1. Boccaccio, the author of the Decameron, was a Renaissance humanist living in Florence during the time of the Black Death. What was Renaissance humanism?
2. In Venice, one of the leading city-states of the Renaissance, civic/lay leaders competed with the church on authority and control. One field in which this competition was clearly apparent was the administration of charity. Can you think why?

Note: to answer this question, you'll probably need to find some information about charity in Venice in the early modern period.

3. The Church, headed by the pope, sought in this period (14th and 15th century) to solidify its position, and nothing does that better than uniting against a common enemy. In that context, read the text for week 4 you may find on Blackboard, and figure out the following:
 - a. Where is this text taken from, and who wrote it?
 - b. What major event in the relationship between the Ottomans and Europe (or the world of Islam and Christendom) does the author refer to? If you are having a hard time figuring this one out, take note of any event of significance.
 - c. Was the proposed action against the Turkish atrocities described ever carried out? If so, when and with whose help? If not, why?

4. The event you referred to in 3b was one many contemporaries and modern historians regarded as an Islamic victory. It is easy to find references as to why this was so, and you will likely come across a few of these as you read. But can you find indications that this event was *not* about Islam but about something else? If so, what was that something?

Instructions for Week 5:

This week we move into the second half of the fifteenth century and the early sixteenth. By far the most exciting development in the second half of the fifteenth century was the invention of printing. And now that we've established that, here are your assignments:

1. Get your story right: when and where was printing invented? By whom? How fast did printing spread across Europe? What are incunabula? What later developments in European/world history are generally attributed to the invention of printing?
2. Go to <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/107.1/ah0102000084.html> (or simply google "ahr forum Eisenstein" and follow the first link) and read the discussion, originally published in the journal *American Historical Review*, between three historians of printing about the significance of what one scholar called "the printing revolution." Note that you will have to hit "next" 3 times to read the entire discussion (the "next" button is in the upper or lower right corner). Familiarize yourself with the arguments, and be ready to pick a side: do you agree the invention of print was a true revolution?

To form a decent and well-argued opinion, you will probably need to find some sources about the invention of printing.

3. Printing came much later to the Ottoman Empire. When did printing begin there?
4. And now for the other "big" question I promised you 2 weeks ago: Why did the Ottomans fail to adopt printing? Since they didn't implement the technology, this is another big question about why something *didn't* happen. There are several ways to answer this, but you will need to spend some time reading to come up with a decent answer.

Instructions for Week 6:

By now you already know quite a bit about the Ottomans and early modern Europe, and you decide to approach your professor asking for a cool primary source from which you could learn about early sixteenth-century Ottoman adventures. Your professor happily recommends the following book to you:

بدائع الزهور في وقائع الدهور /

Badā'i' al-zuhūr fī waqā'i' al-duhūr / ta'līf Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Iyās al-Ḥanafī ; ḥaqqāqahā wa-kataba lahā al-muqaddimah wa-al-fahāris Muḥammad Muṣṭafā.

ابن إياس; Ibn Iyās, 1448-ca. 1524. دكتور مصطفى، محمد، Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Duktūr.

: مطبعة دار الكتب والوثائق القومية بالقاهرة، القاهرة : al-Qāhirah : Maṭba'at Dār al-Kutub wa-al-Wathā'iq al-Qawmīyah bi-al-Qāhirah 2008

When you protest that you don't know Arabic, your professor dismisses your claim, saying that if you intend to be a serious historian, not knowing a language isn't an excuse for not reading it. Bewildered, you leave his office, with a burning desire to know what this book is about (and to burn his office in revenge). Being the nonviolent person that you are, you decide to prove to yourself and the world that you can do this, and you set forth determined to find out the following issues:

1. Who wrote this book, when, and what is it about?

Since Emory has the original Arabic edition, you decide to take a look at it. Perhaps with the help of a friend who has taken 1 or 2 years of Arabic, you can figure out at least a few basic facts about it.

2. Are there translations of this work to other languages? Perhaps you or a friend who reads French, German, and of course, English, can figure out more using foreign editions. If you can't access these editions, at the very least you should be able to note to what languages this work had been translated and when.
3. In despair, still not knowing much about this work beyond the few details you managed to find, you email your professor asking for further guidance. Your professor emails you back saying he remembers that a historian of the Mamluk Sultanate once published a book based on the primary source above, and has a chapter summarizing the events that appear in the fifth volume. But alas, he did not remember his name or the exact title of the book, only that it contained the word *majesty*.

In that rather bleak situation, you head out to the library to find that book. All I can tell you is that Emory has a copy. Find it, and in it read the description of the events that led to the conquests that changed the Middle East. You should be able to discuss how the story unfolded, who fought against who, and why the outcome

was so dramatic. At this point you should already have a sense of why your professor thought the above primary source is so exciting.

Note: If you find this book on the shelf, pay attention to its exact location. Use it quickly and return it to its place so others can use it too.

4. The year the above conquests were completed was the same year another, no less dramatic development took place in Europe (first in Germany, then elsewhere). What was it? Do you believe it is mere coincidence that the two seemingly unrelated events occurred in the same year?
5. What other developments that changed the world occurred in the 30 years prior to and after this event? Were they somehow connected to the Ottoman advances of the time?

Instructions for Week 7:

Remember Sultan Selim I, the conqueror of Syria and Egypt who brought down the Mamluk Sultanate? After Selim returned from his conquests to Istanbul we hear little of him, and shortly after, while preparing for another military campaign, he ends up dead, either from anthrax or skin cancer. His son succeeds him, and that's where our story begins.

1. Who was Selim's son, what did he do before he ascended to the throne, and why did he become so famous in the West?
2. Read the attached text about the aforementioned sultan, written by Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq. While you are at it, make sure you know who Busbecq was, and try to assess whether his impression from the sultan was positive or not.
3. Go to Blackboard, where you will find the full text of Busbecq's diary (it's a 350MB file, so be patient when downloading). Somewhere in his account, Busbecq talks about plague. Find that part. If plague appears more than once in his work, find every reference, and note page number and generally what is said about it.
4. At some point, Busbecq asks permission to leave the city and the sultan rejects his request. What would fleeing a plague area achieve in Busbecq's mind? Was avoiding leaving a plague-stricken area a new practice for the Ottomans at the time? Why did the sultan reject Busbecq's request?

Hint: an article by Heath Lowry, with whose work you are already familiar, may shed some light on this issue (copy on blackboard).

As you will soon discover, the question of flight from plague areas occupied European society too. The second attached excerpt, written a few decades before Busbecq's letters, is a response to a query a priest in Silesia sent about the permissibility of leaving a town that had been struck by the plague.

5. Identify the sender of the query, who he was, when and where he lived, what stream of Christianity he followed, etc. Some of the details are stated in the title of this document, while others you will need to find on your own. You will discover that it is easier to ascertain the details you need if you know where this excerpt is taken from.

Note: you can easily cheat by using the internet, but can you identify the text without going online?

6. Identify the recipient/respondent (the one who wrote the text). Was his response different from the mainstream Christian approach to epidemics until that point? If your answer is no, explain what that approach was. If you answer yes, explain what was changing in Europe in the sixteenth century in response to epidemics – and base your answer on a credible source!

Instructions for Week 8:

In 1610, George Sandys, an English traveller, visited the Ottoman Empire. His account of his adventures there was published in 1632, and you can find a PDF version of that text in Blackboard, under “content.”

Here’s what you’ll need to find out:

1. Who was George Sandys? Why did he visit the Ottoman Empire?
2. At some point in his journey, he arrived in Aleppo (today in Syria). There he found other English people. Who were those English living in Aleppo, and what were they doing there?
3. When did Europeans (not necessarily the English) begin to be involved in the Ottoman Empire in the same way the English Sandys describes were?

Tip: to answer this question properly, you should first familiarize yourself with the term *capitulations* in the Ottoman context. By “familiarize” I mean the ability to explain what this term means, when were capitulations first signed, which countries participated, how did they affect the people involved, etc.

4. What were the Europeans’ interests that brought so many of them to the Empire in the early modern period?
5. Was this European-Ottoman relationship reciprocal? Were there Ottoman subjects living in Europe in meaningful numbers in the 16th, 17th, or 18th century? If so, where, and what activities were they engaged in? If not, why?
6. To prepare for what is about to come, please go to Blackboard and look for an item called “18th-century letter.” It was handwritten by a British physician in Aleppo. All you need to do at this stage is figure out who the author of the letter was, what he was doing in Aleppo, what organization he was working for, and what work was this person most known for.

Instructions for Week 9:

By the eighteenth century, European presence in the Empire, fulfilling political and commercial interest, was fairly established. Already in the seventeenth century, it became clear that the Europeans enjoyed economic dominance over the Empire. In 1625, one Ottoman observer had the following to say about the Empire's situation:

[numbers in the text correspond to the questions that follow it]

Now the Europeans have learnt to know the whole world; they send their ships everywhere and seize important ports.¹ Formerly, the goods of India, Sind, and China used to come to Suez, and were distributed by Muslims to all the world.² But now these goods are carried on Portuguese, Dutch, and English ships to Frangistan,³ and are spread all over the world from there. What they do not need themselves they bring to Istanbul and other Islamic lands, and sell it for five times the price, thus earning much money. For this reason gold and silver are becoming scarce in the lands of Islam.⁴ The Ottoman Empire must seize the shores of Yemen and the trade passing that way;⁵ otherwise before very long, the Europeans will rule over the lands of Islam.

1. To which discoveries the author is referring? What was the role of the Ottomans in these discoveries?
2. What old trade routes existed between the Far East and Europe, and how did that change once new routes were discovered in the late 15th/early 16th century?
3. Where is Frangistan?
4. What problems did the Empire have with gold, silver, and its currency in general in the 16th and 17th century?
5. Why Yemen? What was so special about that area?

Now back to the English, one of the conspiring nations the obscure author above mentions. You already know who Patrick Russell was, and probably also that he had an older brother who spent some time in Aleppo as well. In 1794, Patrick edited and expanded his brother's original work from 1756 under the title *A Natural History of Aleppo*.

1. Find a copy of Russell's book. If the book has more than one volume, make sure you have all parts.
2. Choose one area Russell describes (people, customs, city landscape, scholarship, treatment of non-Muslims, etc.) and analyze his attitude toward Ottoman society: was it positive, did he admire Ottoman society?
3. Russell provided an extensive account of the plague in Aleppo. Accounts by other physicians and Russell's later work (can you find out which?) suggest he was at the forefront of medical knowledge of this time. So, reading his description of the plague, and having modern medical knowledge about this disease, which ideas about the disease and treatment did he get right? And on what was he dead wrong?

Instructions for Weeks 10-11:

Now that you know who Patrick Russell and his brother Alexander were, and perhaps a thing or two about the Levant Company, it is time to dig into the documents. On Blackboard (under “content”) you will find links to digital photographs of archival documents written in the mid-eighteenth century. The images were taken in the National Archives in London in 2007 and 2010. Due to their high resolution, the files will take time to download, so please be patient (high resolution doesn’t always mean a clear image, as you will soon see). Here’s what you need to do:

1. In every archive, documents and files have serial numbers denoting sections and sub-sections (that’s how we know what to order when working in the archives, and that’s how we cite our sources). Choose one of the folders, and figure out what the file number actually means (what it tells us about the contents of the file). To do this, you will probably need to consult the website of the National Archives in London (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>).
2. Familiarize yourself with the handwriting. Pick a random file and start reading until you feel you can read it more or less like anything else you read in English. Some of the photos may appear blurry, but that only makes reading archival documents more fun!

You may skip this step, but know the following assignments will take you considerably longer to complete.

3. Go to Blackboard and find the file “SP 100 74/1,” and read the story from 1772 about a presumed outbreak of plague in Aleppo. Patrick Russell is mentioned in that story. Why? What knowledge did he have that others did not? Was he still in Aleppo at the time?

Who was the narrator of the story? What was the role of the English consul? Why are the Jews mentioned? According to the narrative told here, why was the fear of a new outbreak so great?

4. Go to the other folders from the archives (provided as links to PDFs). Find as many examples as you can for places the English were corresponding with or operating from. For each place, be prepared to provide an example (file number, page, PDF image number, year) and to point to that location on a map in class. Note that some places are named differently today, so you will have to familiarize yourself with older designations.

5. The records include many entries written by or to English consuls (in Aleppo and elsewhere). Can you find consuls that you can cross list with another source (that is, that you find mention of in a secondary source)?

You may want to consult the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, or one of Daniel Goffman or Bruce Masters' books.

6. What was the relationship between the consuls and the Levant Company? Base your response on at least two examples from the documents (correspondence between merchants and consuls, account of consuls meeting Company people, etc.).
7. What was the consuls' or the Company's representatives' attitude toward the locals? Find examples where the indigenous population – Muslim or non-Muslim – is mentioned, and try to assess whether the English had any admiration at all for Ottoman society (or whether this changed over time).
8. Many of the documents available to you cover the 1740s and then the 1750s and 60s. These were pretty rough times to be living in Syria, and as you can imagine from what you already know about me and my strange curiosities, this had something to do with natural disasters. So first, you will need to figure out what troubles hit Syria and surrounding areas in the 1740s and then from 1755 to 1764. Find out what happened, when, and what region was affected.

Patrick Russell's book is one good place to look, but he does not cover all the years you need. Russell might have published other works that shed light on this issue; I remember one N. Ambraseys had something to say on this; someone I met at a conference last year has a section about this in his book – I believe his name is James Grehan; and you may also want to search the database of dissertations for recent relevant works. You will also find a link on Blackboard to some travel literature that might have the information you are looking for.

9. Here's the most frustrating part of your assignment: find as many references to natural disasters (plague, famine, earthquake, flood, drought, locusts attack, terrible weather conditions) as you can in the documents.

This may seem impossible at first, as there's no way to search through the texts electronically. There are ways to search more efficiently, though, and I'll let you figure out what these are.

And what's in it for you? You will earn 5 bonus points for each example of natural disaster mentioned in the texts that you manage to find. To get credit, you will need to email me your findings (details of the file where this was found, page or image number, and what is actually said about each instance) before class on Thursday, 11/8.

Instructions for Weeks 12:

Now that you have heard quite a bit about the question of decline in the Ottoman Empire, it's time we get down to business:

1. Read the two decline-related texts by Bernard Lewis and Dana Sajdi found on Blackboard, and find at least basic biographical information on the two authors.
2. Make yourself a list of the main arguments on each side so you can comfortably argue in class which, in your opinion, is more persuasive.
3. In particular, you should be able to discuss the following:
 - a. Were military defeats a sign of decline?
 - b. Was the slowdown in territorial expansion a sign of decline?
 - c. Is there a connection between the two issues in (a) and (b) and culture? Should we be talking about cultural decline?
 - d. In what ways did the Ottoman Empire improve and progress from the 16th to the 19th century?
 - e. In what ways did an alien, European perspective influence the decline thesis?
 - f. Why should we actually care about this question? Does it have implications outside the study of history?
4. As we've mentioned in class, one of the major critics of Bernard Lewis was Edward Said. You already know that Said was not a Middle East historian. But that did not detract him from writing a book about Middle East historiography. So:
 - a. Find and read what Said had to say about Lewis' scholarship in his book *Orientalism*.
 - b. Then read Lewis' response to Said published in the *New York Review of Books*, and Said's response to Lewis' response, published there as well (links on Blackboard).
 - c. Be prepared to take sides: who had better arguments, and why do you think Said's point changed Middle East (and other fields of) history forever.
5. And as a preview of our post-Thanksgiving discussion, which will also include your findings on disasters from the English archival sources, please find out what key event in Middle East history occurred on 1 July 1798.

Instructions for Weeks 13:

How important was Bonaparte's conquest of Egypt? This will be the main question we shall deal with in our final week. To be well prepared for our discussion, you should read different perspectives on this issue.

1. Before we get down to business, make sure you get the story right. Find a reputable source (not an obscure article you got off some website, but rather a book or an academic article) that explains what Napoleon did in Egypt, when he came, who kicked him out, and what happened in the Empire in the years after he had left. Don't forget to take note of one of his most remarkable achievements in the field of archeology.
2. Now let's start with the attached text, the opening of a book published some 25 years ago. Read it, and estimate what effect did the author believe the arrival of Bonaparte in Egypt had on the Middle East. As with every text, you'll also need to identify it (author, title, etc.)
3. On Blackboard, you will find an English translation of the chronicle of Jabarti, the Egyptian author the text above refers to. Read it, and be prepared to discuss what Jabarti thought of the French. Did he have a positive impression of them? Part of your answer, of course, is to figure out who Jabarti was.
4. Go back to Bernard Lewis' text on the decline of the Empire, and take a look at the chapter "The Impact of the West." How, according to Lewis (and in many ways to the author of the text above), did the arrival of Napoleon in Egypt fit in with the decline thesis?
5. Many historians do not regard the arrival of Bonaparte in Egypt as a turning point in the history of the region. But that does not mean it had no effect whatsoever on Middle Eastern society.
 - a. What novelties did Bonaparte and the French introduce in Egypt in their short tenure there? Perhaps Jabarti talks about these.
 - b. What environmental changes did the French conquest of Egypt have on the lives of peasants and urbanites, and on society in general? To figure this part out, you may want to consult the item by Alan Mikhail, which you may find on Blackboard.
 - c. What developments that took place in the nineteenth century can be ascribed, at least in part, to the French conquest of Egypt and the novelties it introduced?

You may talk about any changes that took place in the nineteenth century, in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East – but you will need a credible source for each such event.