

Living History in Turkey/Turkiye

(Some book and film suggestions at the end)

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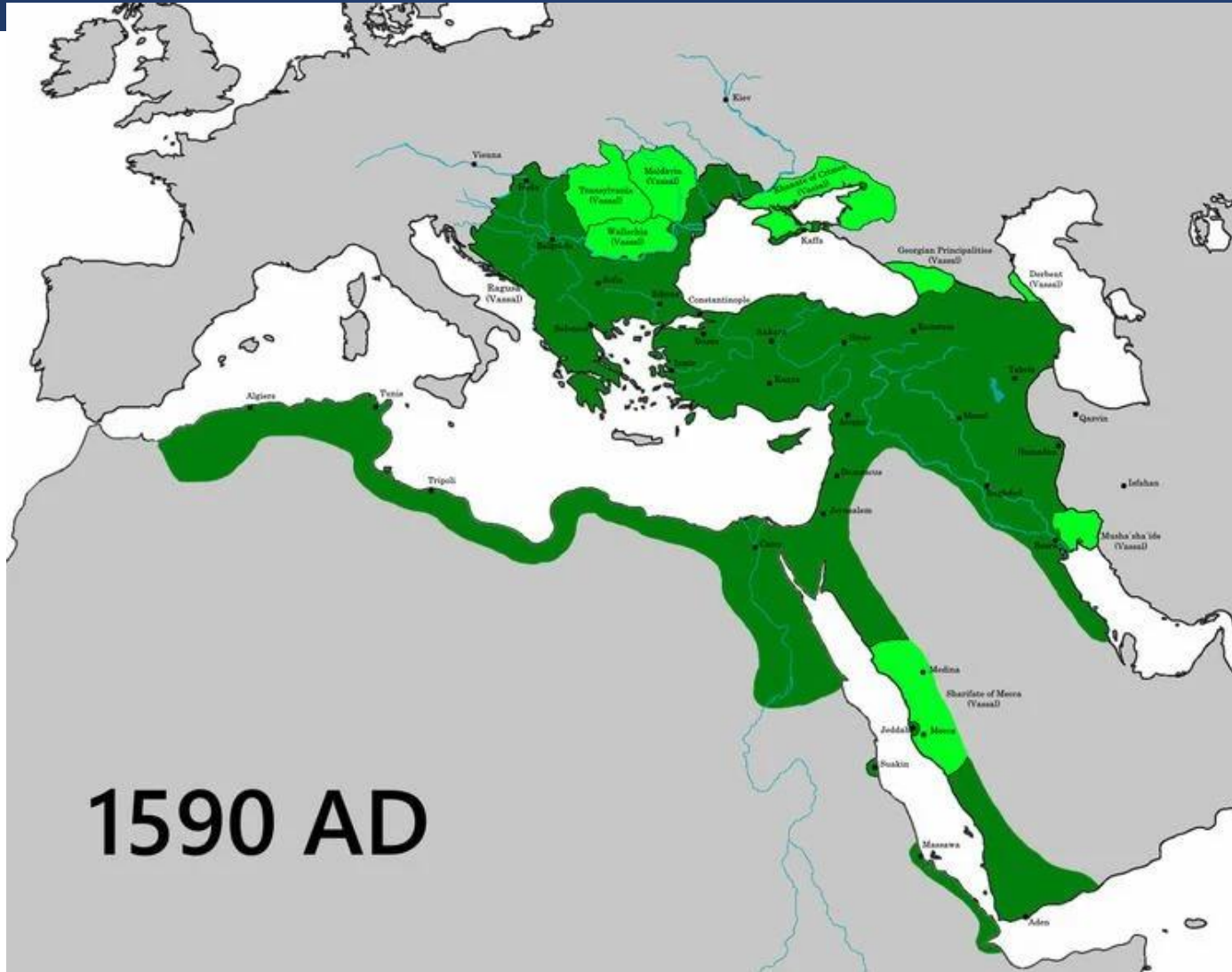
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Three Eras, Three Historical Interpretations

Sultan Abdul Mejid (1839-61) faced with European invasions and nationalist movements
Ataturk, (1923-38) challenge of establishing new basis for state legitimacy
Erdogan, (2003-present) Recovering the dignity of the Islamic past



The Ottomans at the Height of their Power



1300s they challenge the Seljuk Dynasty and the Byzantine Empire

1453 “Conquest” of Constantinople

1500s Conquest of the Hejaz allows Sultan Selim to add the title **“Caliph”** and claim legitimate rule over all Muslims. (Really in competition with Arab history – not Byzantine)

The majority of the Sultan’s subjects actually Christian. As **“people of the Book”** both Christians and Jews have significant autonomy over their own communities through the **“Millet”** system.

The Ottoman Blue Mosque (left) and the Byzantine Hagia Sophia





From the 1770s the Ottoman Empire on the defense.

1770s Russia takes Crimea.

1798 Napoleon invades Egypt, Ottomans lose control over Egypt.

1821-29s Greek Independence War

1830s French in Algeria

1850-60s Crimean Wars-waves of refugees into Ottoman lands.

Lord Elgin's Marbles

(short documentary
on youtube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PlngsXKu74o&list=PLgak0lvA3SHTN4a6rbABdQ1b1kS5fflef&index=4>



1799 an excellent
moment to be
Minister from
Britain to Istanbul



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Lord Elgin and Some Stones of No Value (1985) TV

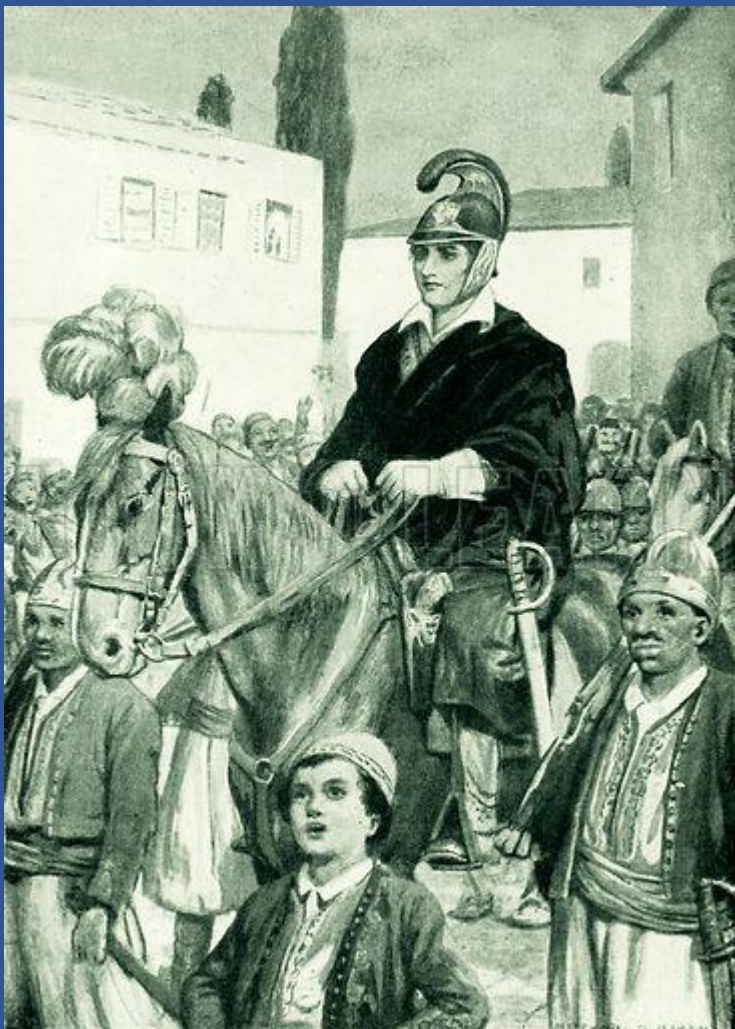


Bad timing for Elgin – his departure crosses path of a young English poet, enamored of the Greeks and horrified at the loss of their “patrimony.”

**Istanbul
establishes first
Ottoman Imperial
Museum in 1830,
but collection not
really for the local
public but to
demonstrate
Ottoman “civility”
by displaying
items Europeans
valued**



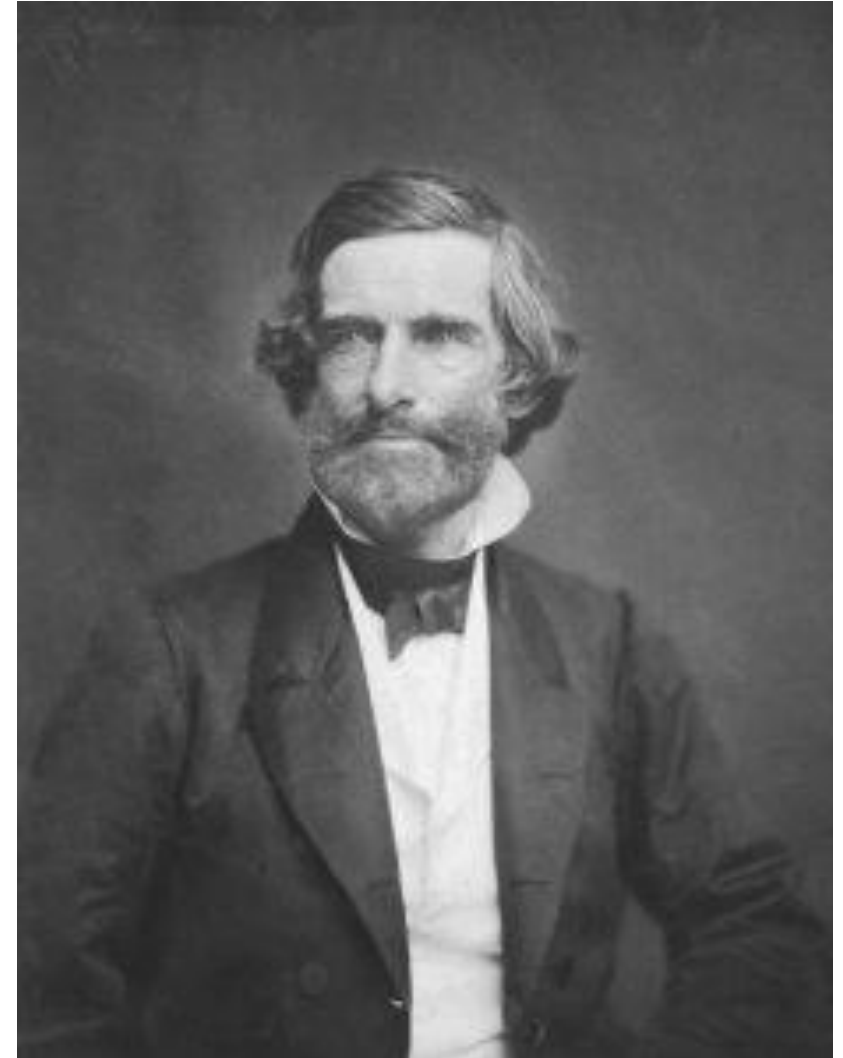
Byron returned to Greece in 1822 to join the struggle, but died of a fever in 1824.



“Byronmania” keeps the image of the Ottoman as Barbarians alive in Europe



Samuel Gridley Howe, volunteer physician in Greece 1823 and later US abolitionist, one of many who carried a romantic view of Greece.



The Christians of the Greek church are governed by patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops, who are tolerated by the Porte. The worship of pictures is practised, and the service of the church is encumbered with many rites and ceremonies. Since the Greeks have fallen under the dominion of the Turks, they have sunk into deplorable ignorance, in consequence of the despotism by which they are enslaved; and their religion is greatly corrupted. It is little better than a mass of ridiculous ceremonies and absurdities. The patri-

Ottomans also coming under the eye of Missionary societies who develop a similar theme: Ottoman rule has degraded Christians as well as Greeks.

Sketch of Asia Minor.

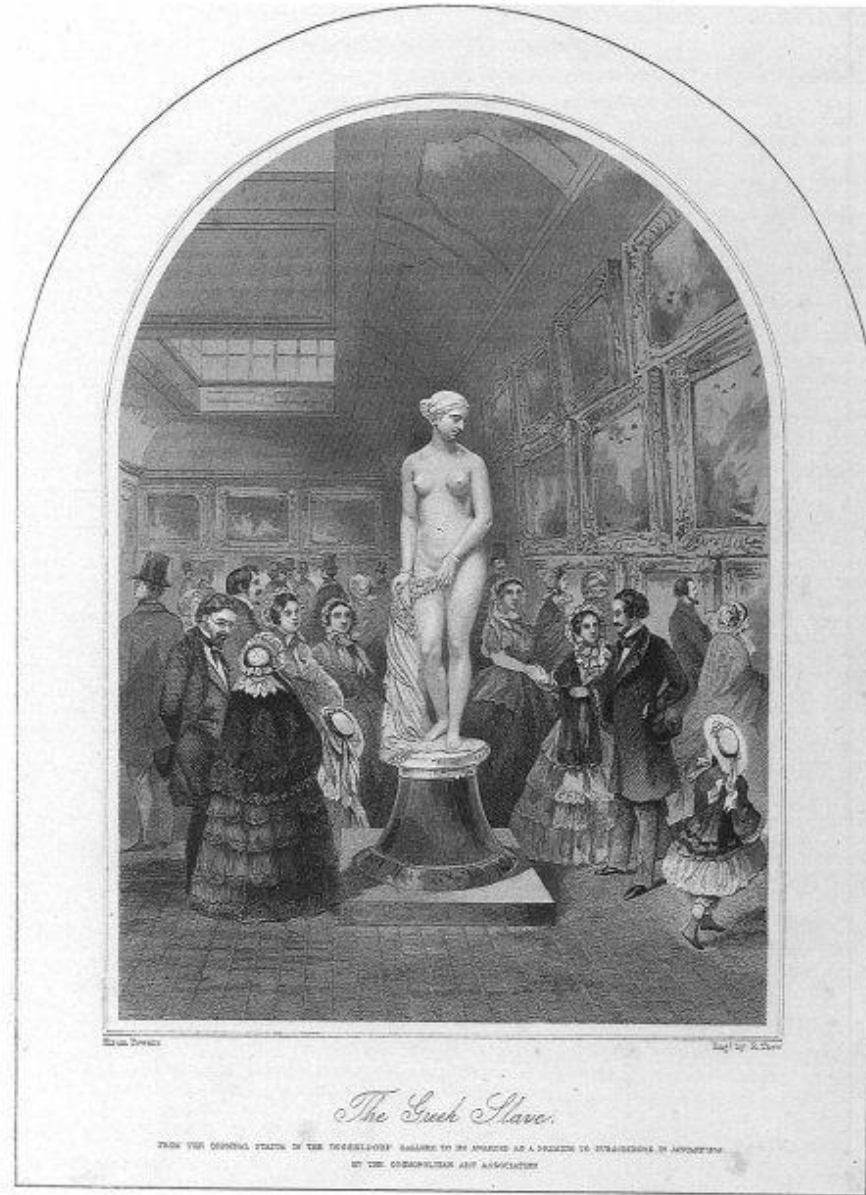
Christian Missionaries of the 1820s-60s fascinated with the history of St. Paul and the Seven Churches of the Revelations.



Ephesus still a site of Christian travel today. In the 1800s missionaries were welcomed by the Sultan to work with Christian subjects and establish schools and hospitals. But at home many used negative depictions of Ottoman culture in fundraising.



Hiram Powers, "The Greek Slave" (1847) the most widely traveled sculpture in U.S. history. By the time it was carved the Ottomans were farther towards abolition than the US, (white slavery and enslavement of captives), but few viewing it knew that.



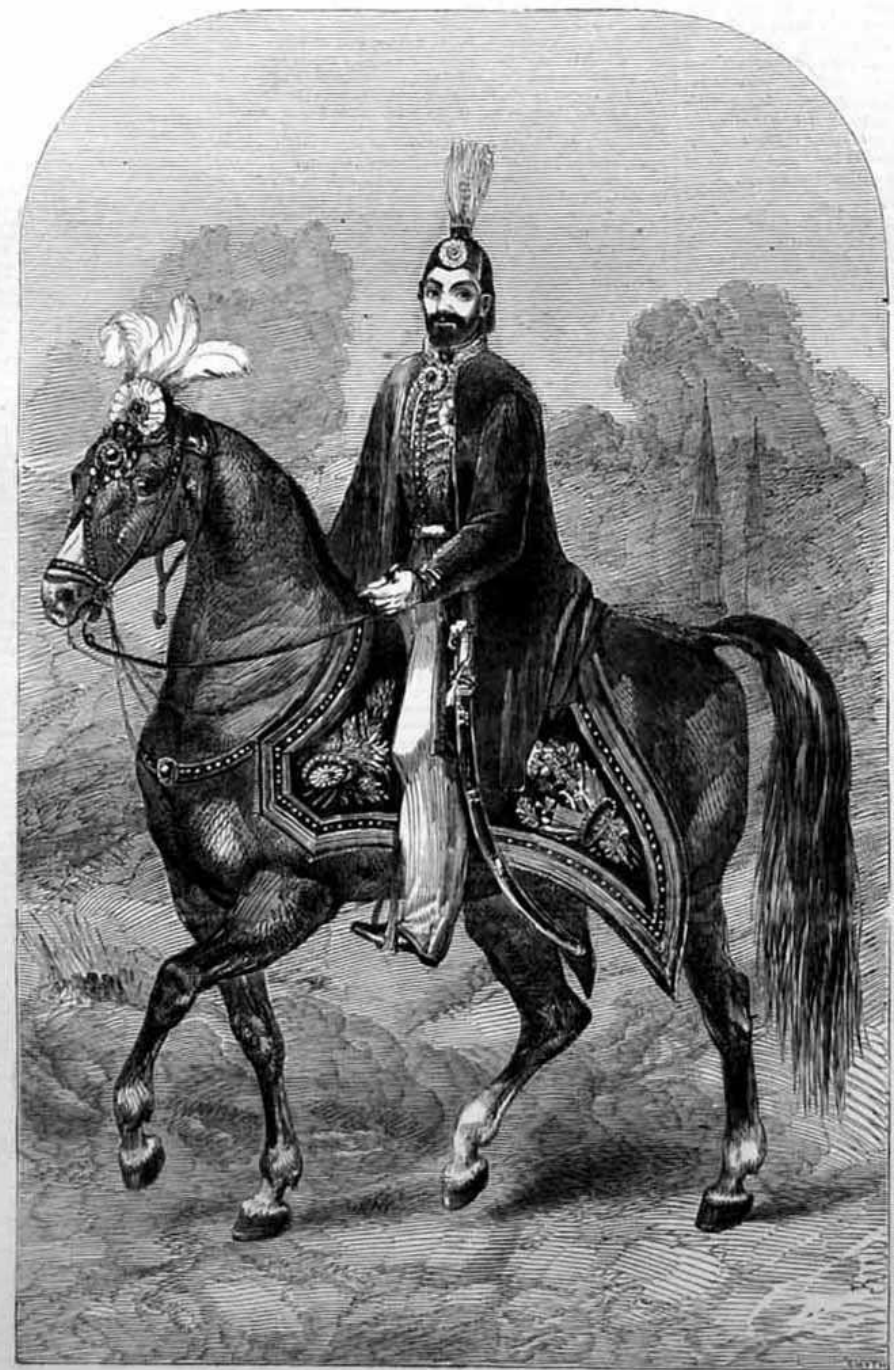
**Crystal Palace,
London, 1851**



Sultan Abdul Mejid, 1839-61

Presided over a series of internal reforms, confronted by domestic and foreign challenges.

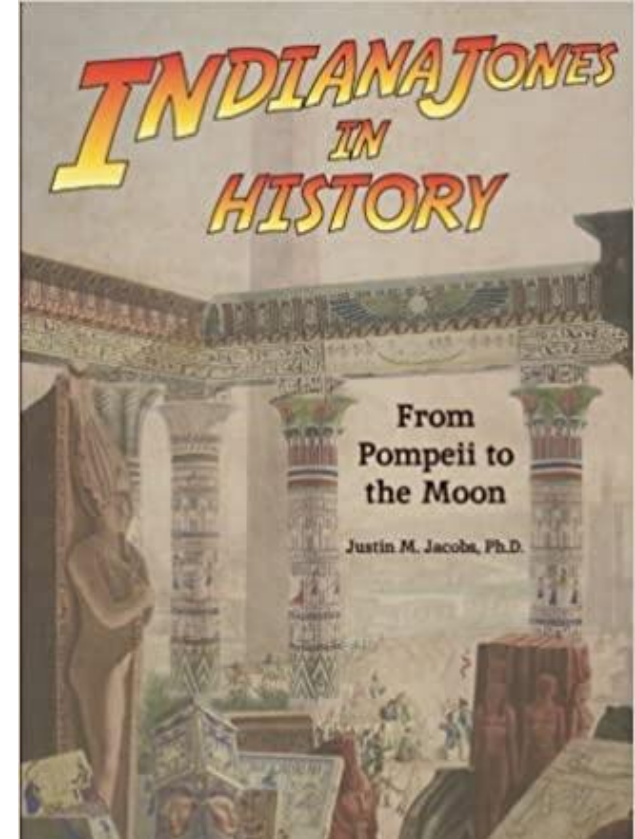
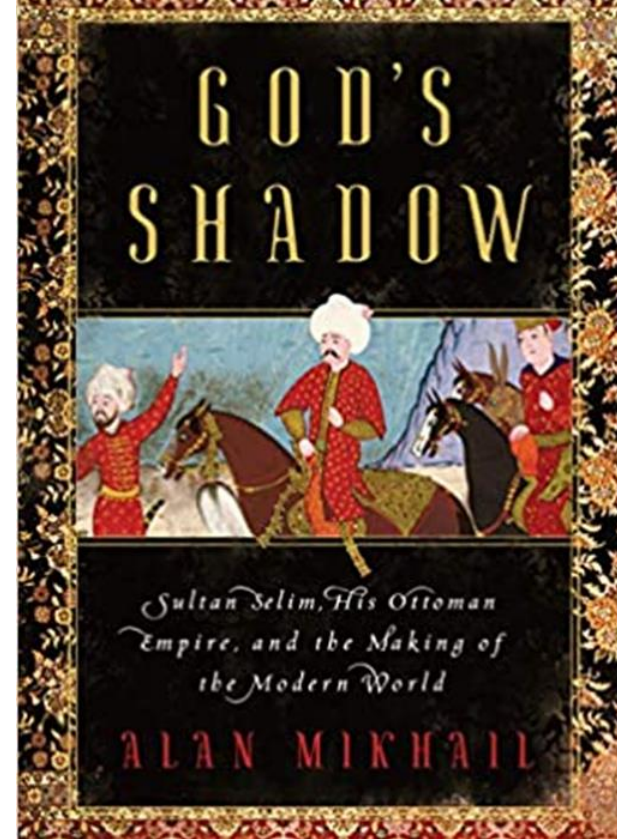
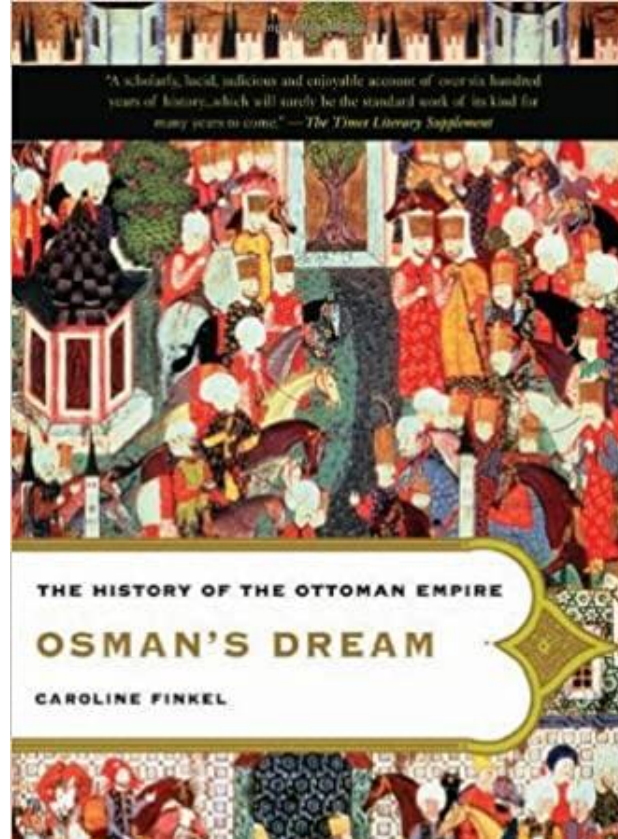
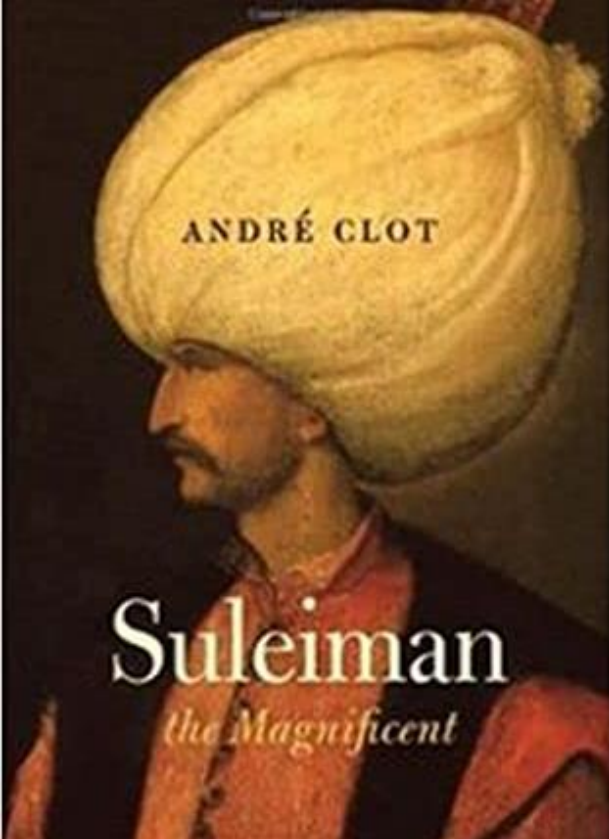
European images gained from ideas about Greek oppression, slavery, and Christian decay not just insulting, but a political vulnerability in an age of European colonialism over “uncivilized” regions.



ABDU'L MEJID, SULTAN OF TURKEY, PROCEEDING TO THE FEAST OF THE SAIGAR,—FROM A PICTURE IN THE PALACE AT CONSTANTINOPLE.—(SEE NEXT PAGE.)

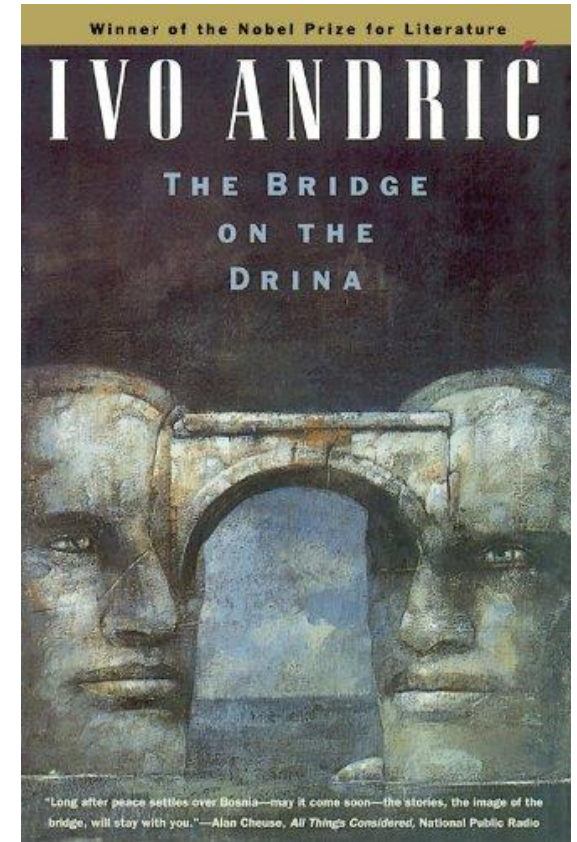
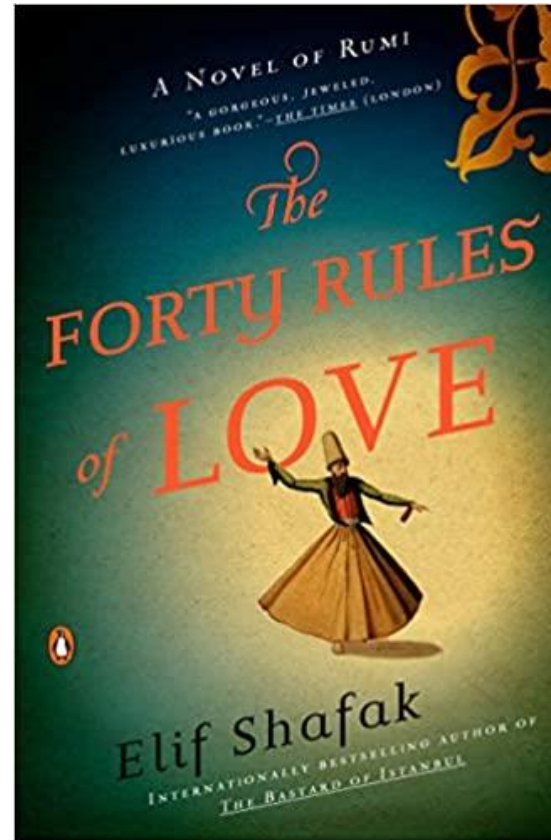
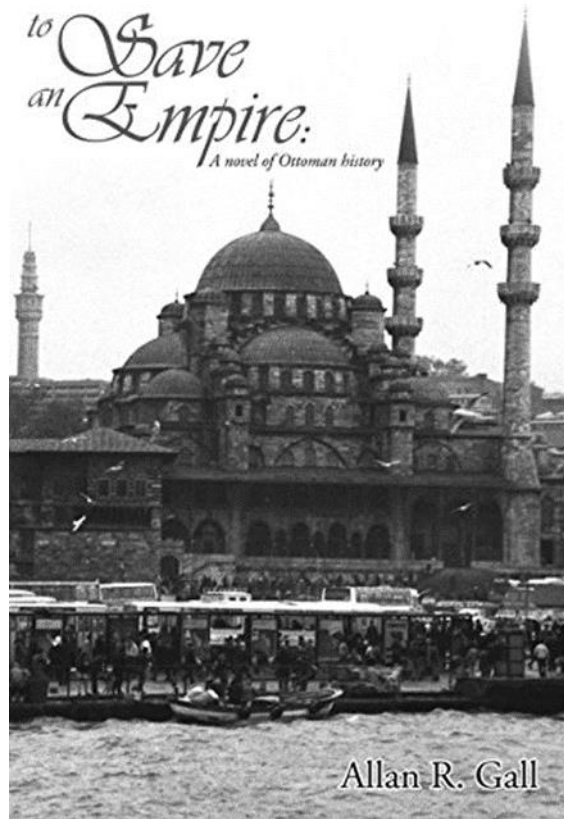
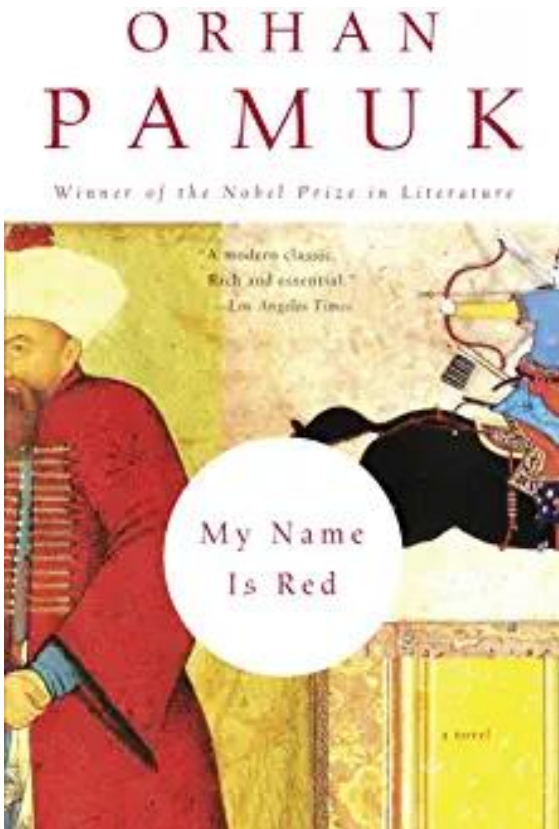
Video options (I really recommend the two from Netflix!)

- There is a documentary on Suleiman the Magnificent on Amazon Prime for free.
- Netflix has many Turkish series. “The Club” is set in 1950s Istanbul and is very controversial now. Persecution of Sephardic Jews and Greeks, homosexuals, sexual harassment...lots of forbidden topics.
- “Ethos” is also on Netflix and was very popular. Lots of class tension in this drama and lots of discussion about it.
- There are many historic dramas – the Magnificent Century and Ertugrul are both popular Ottoman-focused series, but I found them a bit violent.

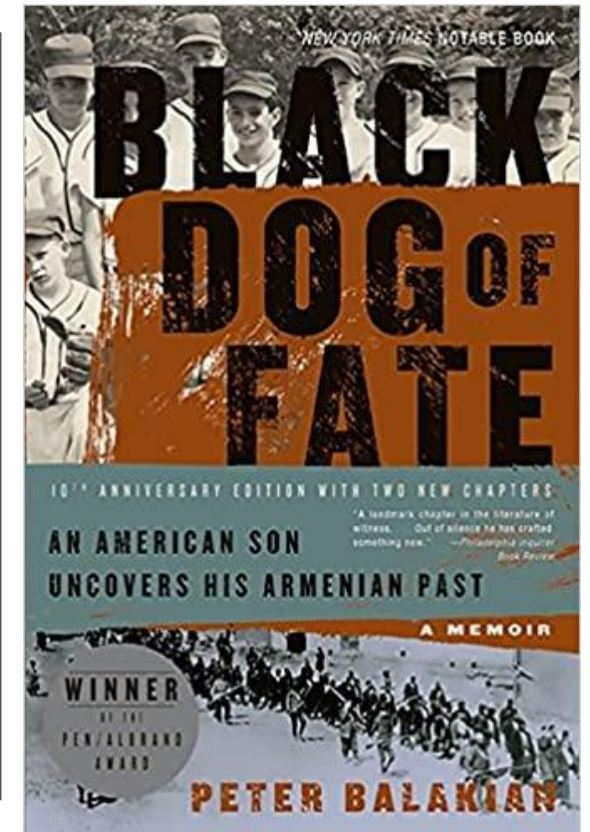
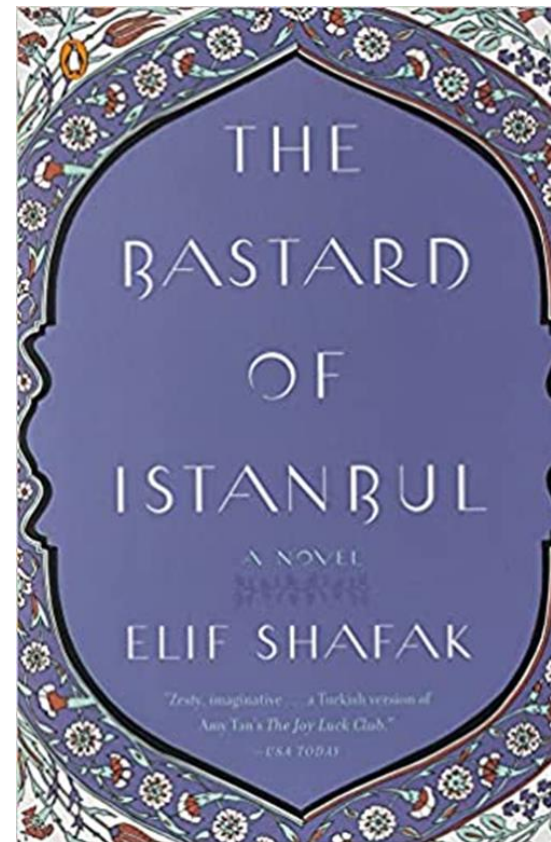
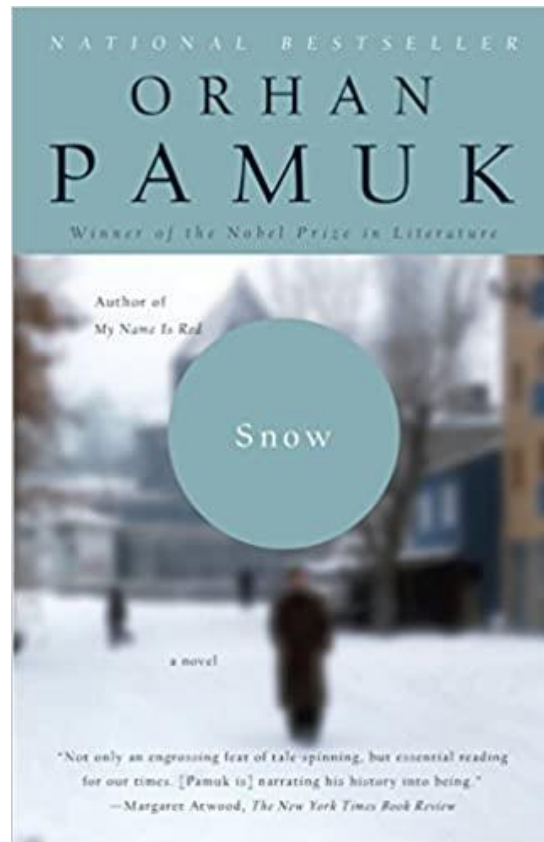
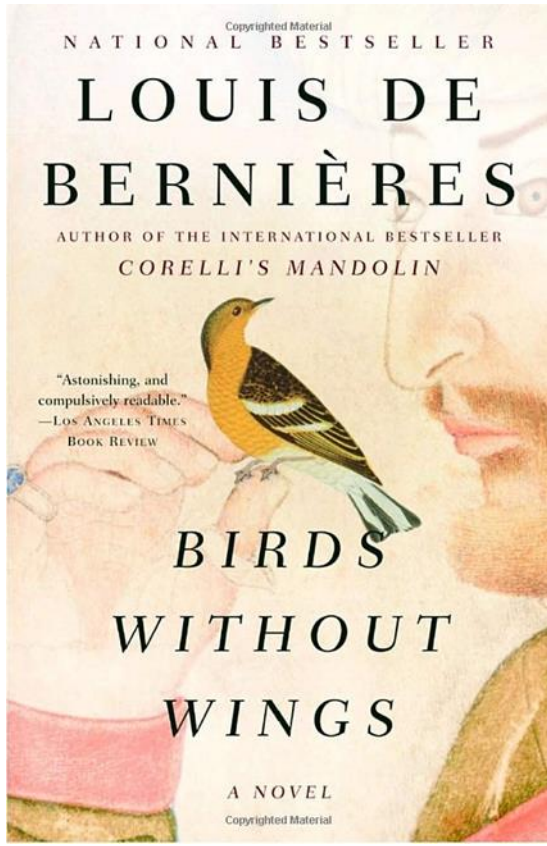


Ottoman recommendations

- Mikhail's book is as much about the how the West was shaped by its fanatic fear of Islam as it is about Selim. Good read.
- The Indiana Jones book is a fun look at the personalities and politics of archaeology "finds."



Some fiction. The Shafak is set before the Ottoman era, but anything she writes is great. The others are all set in the Ottoman world.



All of these deal in some way with the tragedies at the end of the empire – not pretty reading but all brilliant writers.
