

Special Issue: A Hundred Years Since the End of the Ottoman Empire – Introduction



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The idea of publishing this special issue of *Revista Estudos Inter-nacionais* emerged after the *Second International Seminar on the Middle East*, which was organized by the Department of International Relations at PUC Minas and by the Middle East and North Africa Study Group (GEOMM, PUC Minas) between 11th and 13th of September 2019. The topic of the seminar was entitled “A Hundred Years Since the End of the Ottoman Empire”. Needless to say, the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War and the Treaty of Sèvres (10th of August, 1920) represented not only the last phase of its existence, but it inaugurated a new era for the international relations in the Middle East. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire had consequences that are still felt in the region to this day. The Ottoman political legacy reverberated in the relations among the various ethnic-religious minorities and nation states that emerged on the ruins of the empire. It played a part in the ways in which the changing forces vying for power and influence in the region acted, as well as in the formation of the political views of Muslims, Christians, Jews, and other local religious communities. Thus, our aim was to bridge between the historical dimension of the Ottoman geopolitics and society and the contemporary challenges related to Turkey’s complex ambitions with respect to Europe, Middle East, and Central Asia.

Researchers from seven countries (Germany, Argentina, Brazil, Israel, Lebanon, Romania, and Turkey) and from eleven different higher education institutions (PUC Minas, PUC São Paulo, UFMG, UFRGS, USP, UNIFESP, UNESP, National University of Rosario, University Alexandru Ioan Cuza, University of Innsbruck and University of Tel Aviv) took part in this dossier. This special edition consists of ten papers that deal with historical as well as recent perspectives. They vary from local to regional and world affairs.

The first section of the dossier pertains to a number of historical and political topics. Naif Bezwan in his article “The Status of the Non-Muslim Communities in the Ottoman Empire: A Non-Orientalised Decolonial Approach” sheds light on the relation between the Ottoman Empire and its non-Muslim communities from a historical perspective.

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He argues for the necessity of understanding the dynamics and the rationale behind Ottoman policies and practices toward these communities. **Youssef Cherem** and **Danny Zahreddine** then focused on a central component of the reforms and of the international relations of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century: the juridical status of non-Moslem, particularly Christian, minorities. Thus, in their contribution “Integration, conflict, and autonomy among religious minorities in the late Ottoman Empire: the Greek-Catholic (Melkite) Church and sectarian turmoil in Mount Lebanon and Damascus”, Youssef Cherem and Danny Zahreddine examined two key aspects: the official recognition of the Greek Catholic (Melkite) religious community in 1848 and the multilayered conflict in Mount Lebanon and Damascus in 1860. The impact of the defeat in the Balkan War (1912-1913) as a critical moment for the Ottoman Empire has been covered by **Edmar Avelar Sena**, **Guilherme Di Lorenzo Pires** and **Alaor Souza Oliveira**. Their contribution to this issue is entitled “Between a Traumatic Past and an Uncertain Future: a study on the representations of the Ottoman defeat in the Balkan War (1912-1913)”. It looked at the representation of the Ottoman defeat in the editorials of the *La Jeune Turquie*, an Ottoman newspaper published in Paris at the time of the Balkan Wars. **Rodrigo Augusto Duarte Amaral** and **Reginaldo Mattar Nasser**’s contribution “The creation of the Iraqi state beyond Sykes-Picot: Between Imperialism and Revolution”, analyzed how the end of the Ottoman Empire shaped the policies of the British and the French succeeding powers in the region. Thus, the Iraqi case reveals the local struggles for the independence of the Arab country and the policies of domination of European forces in the region after the conclusion of the Sykes-Picot agreement. Next **Gabriel Leanca** emphasized on the “Eastern Question”, which is a central theme of International Relations in the 19th century. In his article “The Ottoman Empire and Europe from the late Westphalian order to the Crimean system: the ‘Eastern Question’ Revisited” he looks at how center-periphery relations had an impact on the world balance of power.

The second section of the dossier introduces more directly the question of the Ottoman legacy in contemporary Turkish politics. In their contribution entitled “The End of the Ottoman Empire and the Evolution of the Middle East Security Complex”, **Jorge Mascarenhas Lasmar** and **Leonardo Santa Rita** discover connections and intersections that bridge between several phases of the Middle Eastern geopolitical playground. Then **Nir Boms** and **Kivanc Ulusoy**’s “Rival American Allies: Turkey and Israel in the Eastern Mediterranean” analyze and dissect how periods of rapprochement alternated at key moments with rivalry and misunderstanding between the Ottoman Empire and the Yishuv, between the Republic of Turkey and Israel, respectively.

The last section of this issue is dedicated to the relations between the Ottoman Empire, Turkey, respectively and Latin America. Thus, **Rubén Paredes Rodríguez**, in his article entitled “Turkish-Ottoman relations with Latin America: a journey through the time capsule”, sheds light on three distinct periods: the first one studies the transition from the imperial regime to the republican government (1923); the second refers to the evolutions that had an impact on these ties in the second half

of the 20th century; finally, the third one covers the last two decades. Focusing on the same topic, **André Luiz Reis da Silva** and **Gabriela Dorneles Ferreira da Costa** in their contribution entitled “Brazil and Turkey in the 21st century: strategic interests in comparative perspective”, stress upon the setting of the bilateral agenda between Brazil and Turkey in the last decades. Finally, **Arlene Clemesha** and **Silvia Feraboli** explored in a critical fashion the ways in which the Middle Eastern studies evolved in Brazilian and Latin American intellectual context. In the article “Studying the Middle East from Brazil: reflections on a different worldview”, the two authors examine the limits and the possibilities of Latin American research in this particular field, as well as its relation with the Anglo-Saxon intellectual tradition on this wide topic.

We hope that the readers of this special issue of *Revista Estudos Internacionais* – “A Hundred Years Since the End of the Ottoman Empire” – will enrich their knowledge on the Middle Eastern past and present. *Last, but not least*, we wish to believe that this thematic number of our journal will push forward the research in the field of the Middle Eastern studies in Brazil and more generally in Latin America.