THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE SNOWBALLS INTO DISASTERS 1560 - 1720

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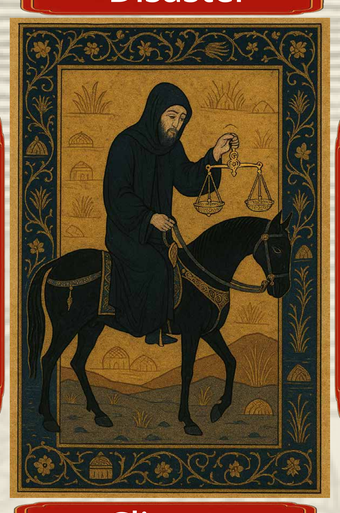
Largely Based on Sam White's
The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire

Disaster

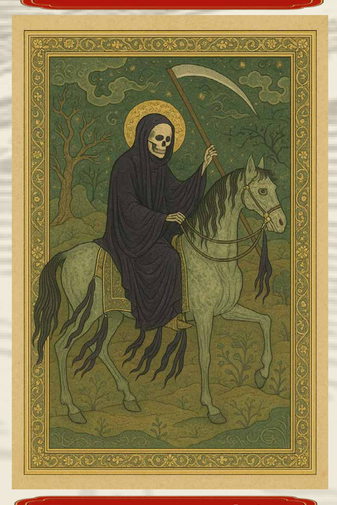
Resources



Economics

Climate

Disease



Demographics

Politics

Unrest

War

1560
1565
1570
1575
1580
1585
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1600
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1720

Little Ice Age

- (1560 - 1590) Erratic Climate Swings Associated With The Little Ice Age Begins
- (1564 - 1565) First Wave Of Major Drought and Famine Affects Greek islands and Egypt
- (1565 - 1567) Drought And Famine Hits The Balkans And Western Anatolia
- (1570 - 1571) Drought and Famine In The South and Syria
- (1574 - 1575) Severe Empire-Wide Famine
- (1583 - 1585) More Empire-Wide Severe Famine
- (1585 - 1586) Constantinople Provisions Shortages
- (1590 - 1620) Little Ice Age Intensifies
- (1591 - 1596) The Great Drought
- (1594 - 1595) Famine In Constantinople
- (1596) The Sultan commands that state leaders publically pray for rain
- (1600 - 1604) Nile Flood Shortages
- (1606 - 1610) Extreme Cold And Famine in Anatolia
- (1608 - 1621) Severe Recurring Droughts
- (1621) The Freezing Of The Bosphorus
- (1626 - 1628) Extreme Cold In Anatolia
- (1629 - 1630) Constantinople Total Grain Shortage
- (1630) Mecca Flood
- (1645 - 1715) Maunder Minimum - Lack of Sun Spots (50 Observed in this period instead of the Normal 50,000) Indicating Less Solar Activity and May Have Contributed to The Little Ice Age
- (1647) Locusts In Cyprus and Major Famine
- (1676 - 1679) New Phase Of Little Ice Age Climate Fluctuations. Severe Winters, Heavy Summer Rains, and Major Droughts Across the Empire
- (1682) Smyrna Suffers An Invasion Of Locusts.
- (1687 - 1688) Driest Drought in a Millennium in Northern Anatolia and the Agean Sea Area
- (1695) Malikâne System Of Lifetime Tax Farms Reforms, in an Attempt to Curtail the Chronic Lack of Interest in Inferestructure Investment. The Decentralizing Reforms were Effective and Created a New Class of Powerful Land Owners, fundamentally shattered the classical Ottoman State Model.
- (1708 - 1709) One of the Coldest Winters in European History

Little Ice Age Intensifies

Maunder Minimum

Meat Crisis

- (1560 - 1590) Meat Crisis Empire Faces Shortfalls Every Few Years
- (1565 - 1567) Major Floods Inundated The Cities Of Edirne And Sofia
- (1570 - 1571) Locusts In Rhodes And İznik
- (1572 - 1576) Outbreak Of Locusts In Cyprus
- (1576 - 1579) Swarms Of Locusts In Anatolia And Crimea
- (1585) Government Debases The Silver Akçe By Almost Half

Volcanoes

- (1590s) Dry Fog from Volcanic Eruptions Likely Significantly Contribute to the Little Ice Age

Food Prices Soar

- (1594 - 1596) Famine And Disease In Hungary
- (1595 - 1608) Basic Food Prices Soar
- (1596) Impossible Demand Of 472,000 Sheep
- (1600) Eruption Of Huaynaputina
- (1606 - 1607) Mt. Etna Eruptions Cause Three years of Dry Fog
- (1647) Volcanic Activity Creates a Dry Fog
- (1648) Constantinople Earthquake Kills Around 30,000 and Destroyed the City's Main Aquaduct
- (1660) The Great Fire Of Constantinople Destroys 2/3 of the City and Kills 40,000
- (1668) Anatolia Earthquake Kills Upwards to Tens of Thousands
- (1688) Great Fire of Smyrna Kills Over 5,000
- (1682) Mount Etna Erupts Creating a Dry Fog
- (1689) Volcanic Activity Creates a Dry Fog

Demographics

- (1630 - 1640) Decay of Urban Infrastructure Due to Insufficient Resources and Mass Rural Exodus
- (1630 - 1640) Rural Flight Continues
- (1635) Sultan Murad IV's Refugee Urban Expulsion Orders but Ineffective
- (1640) Anatolian Cenus Shows 80% Drop in Rural Households since 1580s and Many Villages Vacant and Ruined
- (1676 - 1690) Constant Plagues, Panzootics, and Famine Across the Empire

Disease

- (1564) Plague In Aleppo
- (1565) Plague In Karaman
- (1568) Plague In Salonica
- (1576) Plague In Erdel/Tamivar
- (1577) Plague In Erzurum
- (1579) Plague In Salonica
- (1584 - 1585) Plague In Constantinople
- (1592) Two Severe Epidemics In Constantinople
- (1595 - 1596) Animal Plague
- (1595) Epidemics In Constantinople
- (1594 - 1598) Cattle Plague
- (1600 - 1604) Plagues and Famines In Egypt
- (1619 - 1622) Serious Plagues and Famines In Egypt

Politics

- (1583 - 1584) Lawlessness And Banditry in Anatolia
- (1589) The First Janissary Mutiny
- (July 1596) Comet Apears and is Interpreted as a "Sign of Impending Doom"

The Celali Rebellion

- (1596) Uprising Erupts In Turgud Over the Requisition of 472,000 Sheep.
  - Karayazıcı becomes a Key Leader
  - Dismissed Soldiers from Hungary Join the Rebellion
- (1597) Banditry and Unrest in Larende
- (1598) The Rise Of Karayazıcı and Consolidation of rural violence into Ottoman Oposition
- (1602) Karayazıcı Freezes To Death
- (1603) Independence Movement In Syria
- (1603) Persian Invasion During Ottoman Weakness
- (1608) Uprisings Brutally Supressed and Tens of Thousands Beheaded

In the wake of the Celali Rebellion's devastation, a massive and coordinated invasion of settled agricultural lands began. Türkmen, Kurdish, and Bedouin tribes abandoned their traditional pastures and moved into the depopulated farmlands of Anatolia, Syria, and Northern Iraq. This marks a sudden and, for over 200 years, irreversible shift in land use.

The causes are thought to be a combination of climate-induced pressure on pastureland and displacement from military campaigns in Safavid Persia. The long-term consequence was a fundamental ecological shift, as vast tracts of former farmland permanently reverted to pastoralism, hindering the recovery of the empire's agricultural base for centuries.

- (1622) The Regicide Of Sultan Osman II by Mutinous Soldiers of an Ill-Fated Military Campaign in Poland. It's the Empire's First Regicide
- (1622 - 1627) Abaza Mehmed Paşa's Counter-Rebellion

The Kadizadeli Movement Peak

- (1630s - 1683) Kadızadeli Puritanical and sometimes Violent Movement Peaks in Constantinople
- (1632) Janissary Mutiny Purging Unpopular Ministers in Constantinople
- (1648) Sultan İbrahim "The Mad" Is Deposed. It's the Empire's Second Regicide, following Sultan Osman II's in 1622
- (1656) Mehmed Paşa Rises To Power, Following Instability and a Mutiny
- (1658 - 1659) Rebellion Of Abaza Hasan Paşa
- (1687) The Overthrow of Sultan Mehmed IV by Unprovisioned Mutinous Soldiers

War

- (1570) Ottoman Conquest Of Cyprus
- (1571) Major Defeat Against Venice but Rebounds Quickly

War With Safavid Persia

- (1580 - 1590) Deepening War With Safavid Persia

The Long War

- (1593 - 1606) The "Long War" With The Habsburg Empire Commences In Hungary
- (1606) Peace with the Habsburgs Allows for the Ottomans to use their Military for Supressing Rebelions

War with Persia

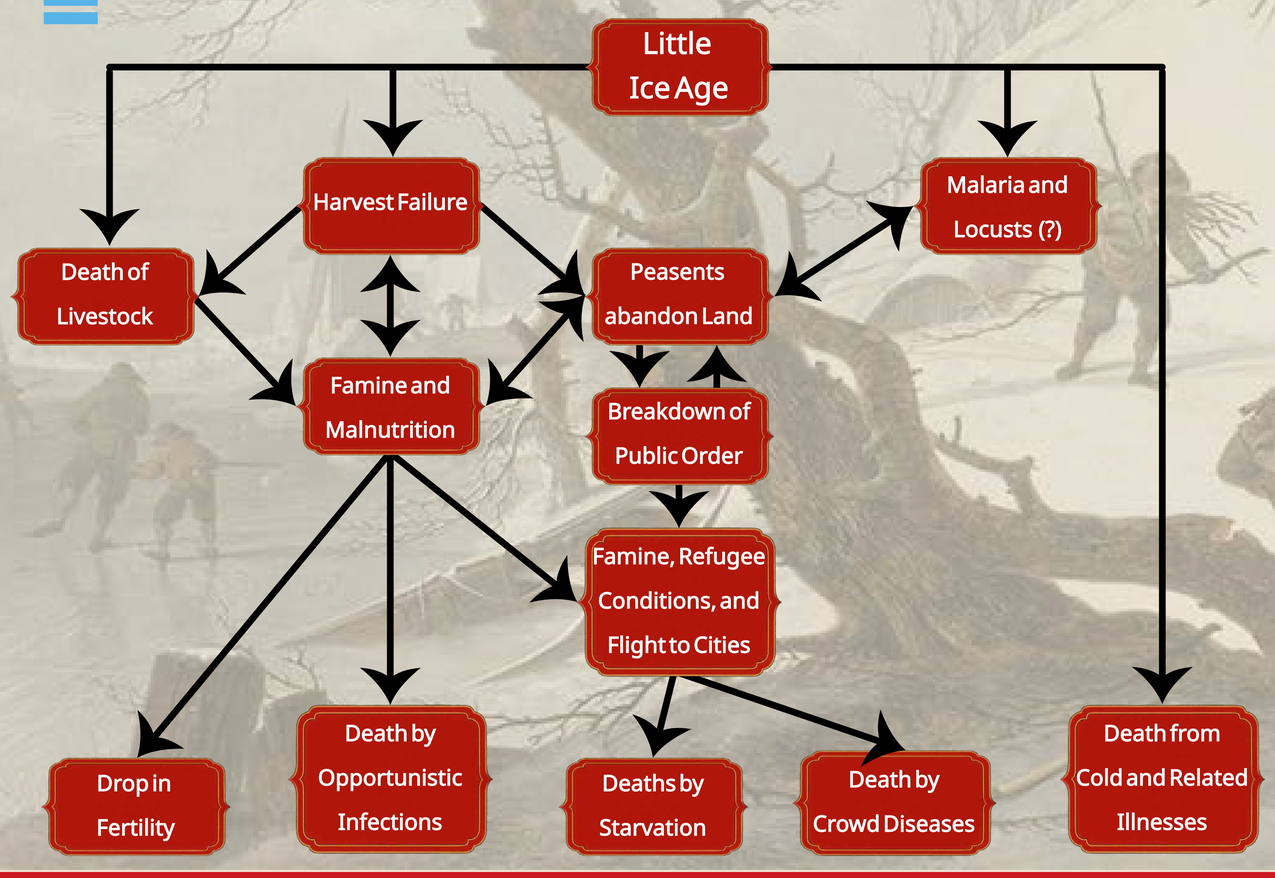
- (1611 - 1618) War with Persia Resumes
- Polish–Ottoman War of 1620–1621 Ends in Stalemate
- (1624) The Capture Of Baghdad By The Persians

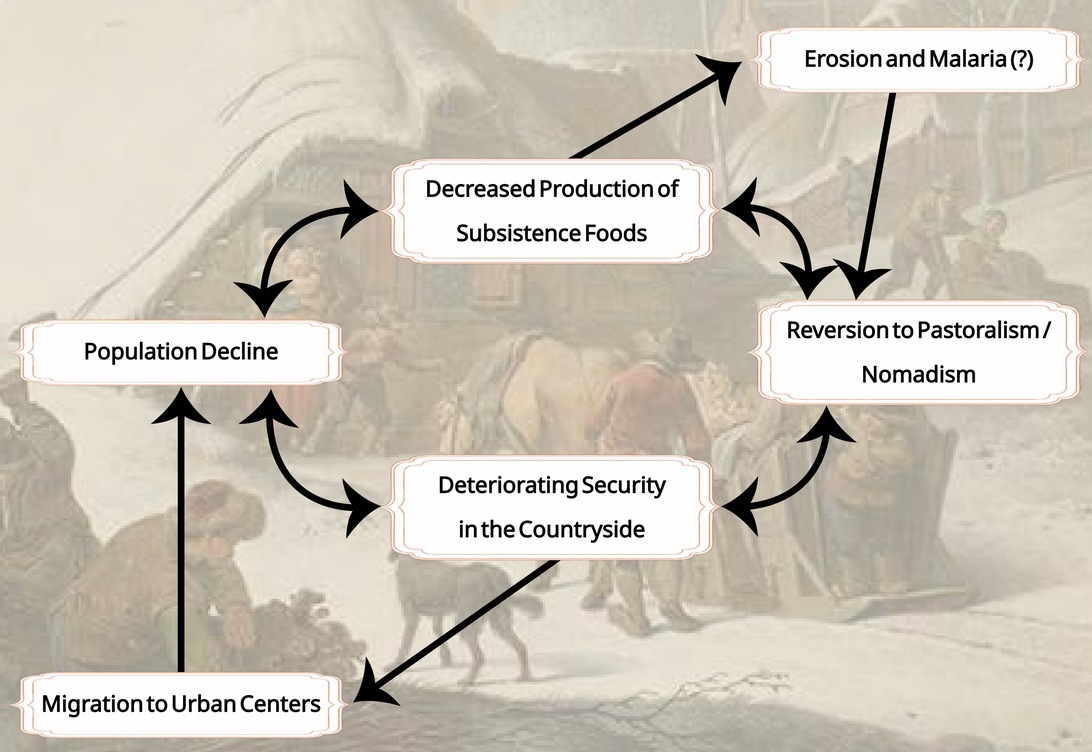
The Cretan War

- (1645 - 1669) Cretan War Against Venice
- (1669) Cretan War Ends in Ottoman Victory

The Great Turkish War

- (1683 - 1699) The Great Turkish War Begins. Defeats and Setbacks Constantly Plague the Ottomans.
- (1683) Failed Siege Of Vienna
- (1699) The Treaty Of Karlowitz Forces Ottomans to Cede Major, Long-Held Territory (Hungary) for the First Time, Marking a Major Shift in World Power Dynamics





Left Chart: White, Sam. The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire. Cambridge UP, 2011, p. 294, fig. 11.1
Right Chart: White, Sam. The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire. Cambridge UP, 2011, p. 296, fig. 11.3