



## RELIGION AND THE STATE: HOW THE BOUNDARIES WERE DELINEATED AN EXAMINATION OF THE CALIPHATE, THE OTTOMAN SULTANATE AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF THE TWO DARS (“HOUSES”)

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**T**he destruction of Baghdad – the seat of the Abbasid Caliphate – by the Tatars (otherwise known as the Mongols) in 1256 CE brought an end to that city’s role as the capital of the Muslim world. Up till then, it had continued to enjoy this status despite the Caliphate’s weakness and impotence in its final years when its authority extended no further than the borders of Iraq (and perhaps no further than Baghdad), and the Islamic region found itself ruled by a patchwork miscellany of Sultans who formed the real power in the land. Even in those difficult years of the Abbasids’ decline, however, legitimacy had continued to be vested in them as the natural successors to the original Caliphate dating from the *Khilafah al Rashidah* (the Rightly-Guided Caliphate).

The Caliphate’s status had been most clearly exemplified in the attitude of the Mameluke Sultans in Egypt. There the Sultans (who were originally slaves) needed support in order to bestow legitimacy upon their



Sultanate in Egypt and Syria, and this was why Sultan Aybek constantly reaffirmed his allegiance to the Abbasids in Baghdad during his struggle with the Ayyubid Sultans.

With the fall of Baghdad in 1256 Sultan Baybars saw that the revival of the Abbasid Caliphate in Egypt could be an ideal way of legitimising his accession to the throne after Qutuz's assassination. Consequently, in 1261 Emir Ahmad, the son of the Caliph al Nasir li Din Allah Ibn al Mustadhi', was installed as Caliph in Cairo. Ahmad then appointed Sultan Baybars as ruler over "the Islamic territories and whatever is added to them, as well as those lands of the infidels that Allah will conquer by His Hand."

According to al Suyuti, Baybars was given the title "*Qaseem Amir al Mu'minin*" ("Partner of the Prince of the Faithful") – a title that had never been bestowed upon anyone before him.

### The Ottoman conquest of Egypt: Sultan and Caliph

The Ottomans' power in the Islamic world grew significantly in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently it was inevitable that there should be a clash between them and the traditional Islamic powers of that time – the Safavids in Iran and Iraq and the Mameluke Sultans in Egypt and Syria.

What particularly concerns us here is the Ottomans' conquest of Egypt in 1517, which was to bring the Hejaz under Ottoman rule and force them to confront the issue of the Abbasid Caliphate in Cairo.

From the moment of Selim I's victory over the Mameluke Sultan al Ghawri at the Battle of Marj Dabiq in 1516, instead of Selim declaring allegiance to the Caliphate, it was the Abbasid Caliph al Mutawakkil who submitted to Selim's authority.

According to Ibn Iyas – a contemporary chronicler of the Ottoman conquest of Egypt – the Abbasid Caliph in Cairo was happy to acquiesce in the authority of Sultan Selim, while the Sultan was able to use the Caliph and his spiritual status as a means of pacifying the local populace and restoring stability to Cairo:

“On a Friday in the year 922, the *Amir al Mu'minin* Mohammad al Mutawakkil 'Ala'llah entered Cairo, accompanied by the ministers of *Ibn 'Uthman* (the Ottoman Sultan) and a large number of his troops...When the Caliph entered, he entered through the Victory Gate and passed through Cairo; in front of him were the torchbearers calling upon the people to [feel] security and peace of mind and [continue with their] selling and buying and taking and giving, [and declaring] that no-one should disturb any of the populace and that the door of injustice had been closed and the door of justice had been opened.”

This demonstrates the “public relations” and political role played by the Abbasid Caliph on behalf of the Ottomans in order to create the kind of climate that would encourage the Egyptians to accept their new conqueror.

Ibn Iyas's chronicles clearly illustrate the differences between the status and powers of the Abbasid Caliph and the Ottoman Sultan Selim I. The Caliph was a symbol with religious connotations from whom the Sultan acquired the benefit of *Barakah* (Divine Blessing) – an asset which he used to oil the wheels of the new Ottoman government system. At the same time, the true power and influence in the country was reflected in the titles used to describe the Ottoman Sultan in the first Friday *khutbah* (address) after the Ottoman conquest. According to Ibn Iyas:

“On that day a *khutbah* in the name of Sultan Selim Shah was delivered from the pulpits of Cairo...It included the words: ‘O Allah, grant victory to the Sultan, son of the Sultan, King of the Two Lands and the Two Seas, Breaker of the Two Armies, Sultan of the Two Iraqs, Custodian of the Two Holy Sanctuaries, the Victorious King Selim Shah. O Allah, grant him a mighty victory and a manifest triumph.’”

The above extract shows that Selim I had inherited the same *de facto* status and authority that had been enjoyed by the Mamelukes before him; at the same time, symbolic authority remained the preserve of the Abbasid Caliph, thereby maintaining the long historical continuity of the Islamic Caliphate. It also shows that the title “Custodian of the Two Holy Sanctuaries” was given to Sultan Selim I following the conquest of Egypt and after the Hejaz had been declared as being subject to his authority.



This meant that the title (of Custodian of the Two Holy Sanctuaries) had no connection with the Caliphate; rather, it was an indication that the Hejaz had become part of the Ottoman State and that the Sultan was now responsible for the pilgrim caravans and other Hajj affairs.

Although Ibn Iyas lists “Custodian of the Two Holy Sanctuaries” as being among Sultan Selim I’s titles, he does not suggest in any way that the Caliphate had passed from the Abbasids to the Ottoman Sultan.

This point leads us into a long historical controversy which is still continuing to this day. I am referring here to the dispute between historians over the account of the Abbasid Caliph ceding the Caliphate to the Ottoman Sultan.

Let us begin by taking a look at the latest Turkish studies on the subject. *History of the Ottoman State and Civilization*, published by the Islamic History, Arts and Culture Centre in Istanbul in 1999 (edited and preface by Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu), is one of the main reference works representing the Turkish angle on this controversial subject.

The book supports the view that the Caliphate passed to the Ottoman Sultans after 1517 – that is to say, the year of the conquest of Egypt. However, it does not specify a particular year or event indicating when this took place and it defends its point of view by criticising those who reject this version on the grounds of a lack of solid information or record of a ceremony to mark the transfer of the Caliphate to the Ottoman Sultan. It adds:

“Therefore the question of whether or not there had to be a specific ceremony is irrelevant.”

At the same time, however, the book makes an important point, which could be seen as lending support to its position, when it mentions that several debates took place over whether the Ottomans were eligible to assume the Caliphate during the reign of Sultan Suleyman the Lawgiver (“Suleyman the Magnificent”). The book draws from one of the main Ottoman sources on this question – a letter written in Arabic and Persian by the scholar and vizier Lutfi Pasha, entitled *Khalas al Ummah fi Ma’rifat*

*al A'immah (The Nation's Deliverance is through Knowledge of the Imams)*, which was later translated into Turkish. The fact that it was written in these languages suggests that it was designed to be propagated throughout the world of Islam and not just the Turkish world.

In this letter Lutfi Pasha discusses the Caliphate, its status and its significance. After presenting a brief history of that institution, he examines an issue of huge importance that has provoked widespread controversy in Islamic literature – the view that the Caliph must be from Quraish. There had been virtual consensus about this since the time of al Mawardi (d. 1058 CE), though Lutfi Pasha rejects it and endeavours to prove that it is incorrect, or at least not viable or sustainable from a historical point of view. In his opinion, if this were indeed the case, then Muslims would have had to be without a Caliph when the Abbasids disappeared from the historical scene – a situation that would be incompatible with Islamic interests.

Lutfi Pasha champions Sultan Suleyman the Lawgiver as Caliph of the Muslims:

“It is no wonder that the Ottoman Sultan (Suleyman the Lawgiver) – as the protector of Islam and the Muslims against the Christian West, and the fighter in the Cause of Allah – should be the most suitable person and the best qualified to bear the title of Caliph.”

This does not mean that Sultan Suleyman the Lawgiver was the first to hold the title of Caliph, but at least it confirms the “merging” of the Caliphate with the Ottoman Sultanate.

In fact, Lutfi Pasha was not the first person in the Turkic world to tackle the question of whether or not the Caliph necessarily had to be from Quraish. At a relatively early period the renowned Hanafi *faqih* (jurist/legal scholar) Sadr al Shari'ah (d. 1346 CE), who was one of the leading scholars of Turkestan, maintained in his work *Al A'immah min Quraish (The Imams from Quraish)* that such a condition was not invariably applicable:

“Among the conditions mentioned ... [there are] conditions which are absent and no longer exist; the condition of ‘Quraishness’ is absent in our time and no longer exists.”



This indicates that from an early era Sadr al Shari‘ah opened up the prospect of the Ottoman Sultans assuming the position of Caliph, on the grounds that they were the leading Sultans of the Islamic world after the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1256 CE and the collapse of the Abbasids’ power and authority. (So that the way was now clear for the Sultan to take on the role of Caliph).

Now let us return once more to Lutfi Pasha’s letter. This letter, written in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, confirms that many scholars in the east and the west had long accepted the idea of a “merging of Sultanate and Caliphate” and that the Caliphate should devolve upon the man with the power, regardless of his origin or nobility of lineage. Thus it makes an important point about the “intermingling” of the actual authority (the Sultan) and the symbolic authority (the Caliph), and about its becoming an established reality:

“And so the Ottomans revered the Sultan as the Caliph, who was by right entitled to hold this title by virtue of his sword.”

On a similar theme, another Turkish historian – Ahmet Aq Kondoç – asserts that, during the reign of Sultan Selim I, the Sultan accompanied the Abbasid Caliph al Mutawakkil from Egypt to Constantinople and received the Caliphate from him at a grand ceremony in the Mosque of Aya Sophia. The *‘ulama* (religious scholars) granted Selim permission to do this, particularly since Makkah and Madinah were now under his rule. Moreover, as he was the leading Sultan in the Islamic world, he was in any case eligible to hold the title of Caliph.

Kondoç states that the Ottoman Sultans held the title of Caliph from the reign of Sultan Selim I right up to the time of the last Caliph, Abdulmecit Efendi, in 1924. He also notes that Sultan Selim adopted the title *Khalifat Allah* (Allah’s Caliph) after the conquest of Aleppo - a term which occurs in the 1516 preamble to the Sanjaq of Semendere’s laws as well as in the preamble to the Tripoli (Syria) laws of 1519.

During the reign of Sultan Suleyman the Lawgiver the renowned *faqih* Abu al Sa‘ud Efendi wrote:

“The Sultan son of the Sultan - Sultan Suleyman Khan, son of Sultan Selim Khan, Caliph of the Messenger of the Lord of Creation, preparer of the laws of the manifest Shariah, the shade-giving shadow of Allah over all nations, holder of the Greater Imamate, Sultan of the sea, heir of the Greater Caliphate and victor over all contenders, issuer of the Royal Laws, the Tenth *Khaqan* (Monarch), Sultan of the Arabs, Persians and Byzantines, Protector of the Two Holy Sanctuaries.”

The above paragraph raises several points; perhaps the main one is the fact that the renowned Abu Sa‘ud puts the title “Sultan” before the title “Caliph” – he begins his description of him with the statement that he is the “Sultan son of the Sultan” so that the title “Caliph” only appears later. This is highly significant in that he gives precedence to the “actual” over the “theoretical” or “figurative,” with priority being accorded to the real or political authority over the religious authority. It is also a clear indication that the Sultans had acquired the title of Caliph because they were more than just sultans; they were in fact the most powerful sultans in the Islamic world; this is compatible with the earlier statement that the Ottomans acquired their status with the sword because they were the Protectors of Islam and the Custodians of the Two Holy Sanctuaries.

Some writers have observed that Ottoman political thought during this “Classical” period gave little consideration to the question of the Caliphate – with the possible exception of Lutfi Pasha’s letter referred to above. They attribute this to the fact that there was no real need for a renewed focus on this issue as long as the Ottoman Sultans continued to fulfil their role as Protectors of Islam, while in any case the Caliphate had been in their hands since 1517. Consequently the debates over the Caliphate only surfaced during the “hard times” suffered by the Ottoman State during its final period.

Nevertheless, from the Arab side several historical studies have appeared on the question of the Caliphate in the Ottoman era and there have been heated debates on the subject. Perhaps the most important of these is *Al Dawla al ‘Uthmaniyyah: Dawla Islamiyyah Muftara ‘Alaiha (The Ottoman State: a Maligned Islamic State)* – a fascinating study by ‘Abdel



'Aziz al Shinawi which was published in the 1970s. This book re-evaluates the Ottoman era in the Arab world as a whole as well as in Egypt. Despite Shinawi's strong sympathies towards the Ottomans, the thing that concerns us here is what he has to say about the Caliphate and the fact that the Ottoman Sultans held the title of Caliph.

Al Shinawi categorically rejects the idea that the Abbasid Caliph abdicated his title in favour of Sultan Selim I; in his view the Ottoman Sultan – generally speaking – had no need of this symbolic, figurative badge of authority since he was:

“The Supreme Head of the biggest Islamic state in the world, and by virtue of his position he held sway over the ruling Islamic religious establishment which had previously been headed by the Sheikh of Islam, the Mufti of Constantinople.”

In al Shinawi's view the situation did not change until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when:

“The Sultan appropriated the title of Caliph at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century for political reasons, with the aim of intimidating those European countries which had designs on [his] state's possessions.”

Here al Shinawi supports the traditional view which has been prevalent in the East and West on the issue of the Ottomans and the Caliphate; it had been generally believed that the Ottomans only became interested in the question of the Caliphate after suffering a succession of defeats in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and as a means of resisting the Tsar of Russia – their traditional enemy – by stirring up Muslim feelings within the Russian Empire.

The second important study on this topic is *Al Fath al 'Uthmani li'l Sham wa Misr wa Muqaddimatuh min Waqi' al Watha'iq wa' Masadir al Turkiyyah wa'l 'Arabiyyah* (*The Ottoman Conquest of Syria and Egypt based on Turkish and Arab Documents and Sources*) by Ahmad Fu'ad Mitwalli, Professor of Turkish Studies. In a section on the “Caliphate Issue” Mitwalli tells us about the Abbasid Caliph's journey to Constantinople with Selim and provides us with some significant details about his daily life there.

He observes that the Caliph al Mutawakkil ‘Ala’llah lived a life of luxury and self-indulgence in Constantinople and this led to serious conflict between him and his cousins who travelled with him from Cairo. Eventually, al Mutawakkil’s behaviour drove Sultan Selim to expel him from Constantinople and he lived in exile until the reign of Sultan Suleyman the Lawgiver, who allowed him to return to Constantinople. Later, Sultan Suleyman asked him to return to Egypt.

Al Mitwalli maintains that al Mutawakkil returned to Cairo and that he continued to hold the title of Caliph until his death in 945 AH/1538 CE. In this, his opinion differs fundamentally from the views expressed in the modern Turkish studies we have referred to above.

According to Mitwalli, some recent Turkish sources maintain that the Caliphate was waived in favour of Sultan Selim II, while other sources deny this is the case and claim that it did not pass to the Ottomans.

Mitwalli cites extensive evidence to support his point of view. He mentions that contemporary Turkish sources from the time of Sultan Selim said nothing about the Caliphate being transferred, while Turkish historians who accompanied Selim during his conquest of Egypt did not record anything about it either. Nor did others who were alive at the time of the conquest such as Ibn Kamal, Haider Jalabi, Mutraqji Nasuh and Jalalzadeh Qojeh Neshanji Mustafa.

So it never occurred to any of these people to mention the transfer of the Caliphate, which Mitwalli sees as being of major significance. He also points out that Arab historians who were contemporaries of the conquest – such as Ibn Iyas and Ibn Zunbul al Rammal – said nothing about the matter, although Ibn Iyas wrote of the Abbasid Caliph’s journey to Constantinople and expressed regret that it had taken place.

Mitwalli also points out that the Friday address from the pulpits of Egypt did not include the title of Caliph in conjunction with the name of Sultan Selim, nor does the title of Caliph appear on the coins that were minted in his name. In addition to this, he cites Ahmad bin Mohammad Edirnevi – a Turkish historian who was a contemporary of Sultan Suleyman



the Lawgiver – who described the end of al Mutawakkil along with the end of the Caliphate, as follows:

“Sultan Suleyman Khan returned him (the Caliph al Mutawakkil) to Egypt as a generous gesture on the death of his father al Mustamsik in the year 927 AH, and he continued as Caliph in Egypt. Then he died and the Caliphate simply died out.”

In Mitwalli’s view the Ottoman Sultan was only described as Caliph (here he recognizes the importance attached by the Ottoman State to the Caliphate’s spiritual status) when the Treaty of Kucuk Kaynarca was signed with Russia in 1774 during the reign of Sultan Abdelhamid I; before that date the Sultan did not officially assign that title to himself. Mitwalli believes this was due to the fact that the Tsar of Russia objected to the Ottoman Sultan speaking in the name of the Arabs. Abdelhamid took offence at this and expressed his vexation with the Tsar by publicly declaring himself Caliph.

Mitwalli dates the “official revival” of the Caliphate from Sultan Abdelhamid II, when it was stipulated in the 1876 Constitution. From then on the title of Caliph continued to be used officially on occasions of major importance. This is understood to have been designed to reinforce Abdelhamid’s call for an Islamic League and his attempts to unite the Muslim world in the face of European interventionism and the aggressive imperialist attacks on Islamic countries. In attempting to revive the Caliphate Abdelhamid II may also have been trying to resist calls for reform in Constantinople from people whom he saw as followers of the West. Another factor which should not be ignored was the spread of nationalist ideas among the subjects of the Ottoman State and Abdelhamid’s efforts to counter them with the notion of the Islamic League and the Caliphate, based on the principle that Islam itself is a nation.

Another study on this subject is a doctoral thesis by an Egyptian – Sayyed Mohammad Sayyed – entitled *Misr fi’l Qarn al Sadis ‘Ashr (Egypt in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century)*. Based largely on Turkish sources and written in Istanbul, it only refers to the question of the Ottomans and the Caliphate in a few lines with the observation:

“From 923 AH/1517 CE the Ottoman Sultan became the absolute legitimate authority in his capacity as Caliph of the Muslims and Custodian of the Two Holy Sanctuaries.”

He does not offer any additional details on this matter.

Foreign studies on this subject include an article by the French scholar Gilles Veinstein entitled *L'Empire dans Sa Grandeur (XVI Siecle) (The Ottoman Empire at its Height: the 16<sup>th</sup> Century)*, which was published in Robert Mantran's *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman (History of the Ottoman Empire)*. Here Veinstein offers us an overview of the growth and significance of the Ottoman State in the 16<sup>th</sup> century – a time when it was at its greatest when considered from the point of view of its conquests, geographical area and military power; this was also true of its “institutional systems,” particularly during the reign of Suleyman the Lawgiver, who acquired his name because of the extensive legislation enacted while he was on the throne with the aim of regulating his far-flung empire.

Veinstein makes an important point regarding the titles Suleyman the Lawgiver bestowed upon himself to demonstrate his power, the wide range of different subjects under his rule and the greatness of the Ottoman State during his reign. His main title was Sultan “Padishah”:

“I am the Sultan and Padishah of the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, Rumelia, Anatolia, the Land of the Rum and Kerman, the Land of Dhu'l Qadir, Diyarbakir, Kurdistan, Azerbaijan, Fars, Damascus, Aleppo, Egypt, al Quds al Sharif (Jerusalem), Makkat al Mukarramah (Makkah), al Madinat al Munawwarah (Madinah), all the lands of the Arabs, Yemen, Jeddah, the land of the Tatars and numerous other countries conquered by the might of the swords of my glorious forbears and most noble ancestors, not to mention a huge number of territories which I have conquered with my radiant sword.”

In Veinstein's view, the Two Holy Sanctuaries were the top priority for the Ottoman Sultans after their “conquests of the kingdoms,” since they enabled them to oversee the Hajj Pilgrimage and its related affairs, and this gave them a high status in the Islamic world. Hence these Sultans acquired



the title “Custodian of the Two Holy Sanctuaries”. Veinstein maintains that this title was held in the highest regard by the earlier Sultans after Selim, and considered to be preferable even to the title of Caliph – an appellation to which they attached little importance:

“Suleyman had no need to establish a blood relationship with the Prophet; nor did he even need to advance the claim that the last Abbasid Caliph in Cairo had waived his rights in favour of Selim and his descendants; this tradition was destined to be adopted a long time later when the Ottomans sought to defend their legitimacy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century against the Wahhabis or the onslaughts of Christian Europe, so the [Sultan] could feel with full confidence that he was the undisputed Caliph and Prince of the Faithful.”

The well-known American historian Stanford Shaw puts forward a not dissimilar thesis to Veinstein’s in his *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, where he points to the conflicting historical sources over the question of the Abbasid Caliphate passing to the Ottomans after the conquest of Egypt. Some of these sources claim that al Mutawakkil abdicated in favour of Selim, while others say that he returned to Egypt, where he remained Caliph until his death. Shaw’s view is that the fact some Sultans after Selim I held the title of Caliph does not necessarily mean that the Caliphate passed to the Ottomans. In this connection he points to an important feature of the Islamic world following the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad at the hands of the Tatars; that is, that several rulers in the Islamic world held the title of Caliph as a means of asserting their power and authority. In other words, the concept of the Caliphate acquired a different connotation from its original, traditional one; the title had an honorific value and could have been held by more than one ruler at the same time.

Shaw also points out that “Caliph” was not the Ottoman Sultans’ preferred title. The title of “Sultan” was followed in “order of reverence” by “Custodian of the Two Holy Sanctuaries,” in view of the latter title’s importance in the Islamic context as a reflection of its holder’s responsibility for the Hajj and the welfare of pilgrims from every part of the Muslim world.

Shaw believes that the Ottoman Sultans' true assertion of their claims to the Caliphate – and the importance they attached to being the official and internationally recognized holders of the title – did not really surface until the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Russia agreed to recognize the Sultan as Caliph and granted him spiritual authority over the Muslims of Crimea. Later, the Caliphate was broadly used for political purposes by Sultan Abdelhamid II. Here Shaw points to another interesting phenomenon – the link between the prominence given to the Caliphate and the periods of Ottoman decadence and decline – reflecting the fact that religious identity comes to the fore at times of crisis when the nation is passing through difficult times.

The national leader Mohammad Farid's book *History of the Ottoman Empire*, written as part of the campaign to promote the idea of the Islamic League, was presented to Sultan Abdelhamid II:

“With this service it was my intention to perform a duty which it is incumbent upon every human being to perform for the throne of the Greater Caliphate and Refuge of Islam in this era – our liege lord the Prince of the Faithful, the Victorious Sultan Abdelhamid Khan the Second, may Allah grant him a long life and support him with His help.”

It is for this reason that Mohammad Farid endorses the version which says the Caliphate passed to the Ottomans from the time that Selim I conquered Egypt in 1517. Thus he divides the history of the Islamic Caliphate into two periods or – as he puts it – “two branches”:

“The history of this conquering, noble Islamic *Ummah* (Nation) comprises two main branches: the Arab Caliphate and the Turkish Caliphate.”

We can see from the above how the revival of the Caliphate is linked to times of weakness and crisis for the Islamic *Ummah* – a factor which perhaps explains the present-day calls for the revival of the Caliphate, as well as the claims that the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 is the main reason behind the *Ummah's* problems today.

The Turkish historian Halil Inalcik suggests a different thesis which contains some new elements. He too rejects the version that the Caliph



al Mutawakkil abdicated in favour of Sultan Selim and believes that Selim preferred “*Sultan-Ghazi*” (Conqueror- Sultan) and the new title “Custodian of the Two Holy Sanctuaries” and thought little of the title “Caliph” which he regarded as relatively insignificant.

The new elements in Inalcik’s thesis include his view that it was Sultan Suleyman the Lawgiver who attached more importance to the Caliphate and adopted the title “Caliph of the Muslims” in order to give himself a higher status than the other rulers of the Islamic world and reinforce the role of the Ottoman State, which had become the most powerful empire on earth during his reign. According to Inalcik, however, at that time the concept of the Caliphate was no longer the same as it had been in former times:

“They – the Ottomans – enriched the institution of the Caliphate with a new meaning after they had established it on a basis of conquest and jihad rather than the traditional teachings.”

Inalcik concurs with the other historians who maintained that the Ottomans only revived the traditional concept of the Islamic Caliphate during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and that they did so for a number of political reasons.

So we find that the concept of the Caliphate has been seen in numerous different ways over the centuries. It ceased to be understood in its traditional sense after Baghdad fell to the Tatars in 1256, when it moved to Cairo and was revived by the Mameluke Sultans. The Abbasid Caliph then became a symbol of moral authority, while the real power and authority was in the hands of the Mameluke Sultans. A further development was a change in the concept of the Caliphate so that it became an honorary title adopted simultaneously by a number of different rulers.

In the Ottoman period – regardless of whether or not the Caliphate was reported to have passed to the Ottomans – the prime title in the Islamic world was “Sultan,” followed – perhaps – by “Custodian of the Two Holy Sanctuaries,” while the term “Caliph” came to be seen as being of far less significance. The revival of the Caliphate in its traditional sense in the 18<sup>th</sup>

century was the Ottomans' response to the challenge from the West, which had begun to shake the foundations of the mightiest Islamic power of that era; the Caliphate was also the response of the Ottoman fundamentalists to pressures for "reform" in the Ottoman State and the "*Tanzimat*" ("Reorganisation").

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk administered the final blow in 1924 when he asked the Turkish National Assembly to abolish the Caliphate and the Assembly agreed to do so, enabling Atatürk to establish a system of government in the Islamic world in which religion became separated from the state. Not surprisingly, there was a swift reaction in the Muslim world, including attempts to revive the Caliphate in Egypt, the Hejaz and even India. They all failed. They were followed by another major development in modern Islam's history – the creation of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, only four years after the abolition of the Caliphate; the Brotherhood's founder, Hassan al Banna, admitted that the fall of the Caliphate was the main reason behind his group's project of setting the world to rights by means of religion and reviving Islam's international character. This was reflected in the Brotherhood's adoption of the slogan "*Al Islam Huwa'l Hall*" "Islam is the Solution".

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