

(U) Ottoman Empire

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The **Ottoman Empire** (Ottoman Turkish: دولت عليه عثمانیه - *Devlet-i Âliye-yi Osmâniyye*^[1]; literally, "The Sublime Ottoman State"), also known in the West as the **Turkish Empire**, existed from 1299 to 1922. At the height of its power in the 16th and 17th centuries, the tri-continental Ottoman Empire controlled much of Southeastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, stretching from the Strait of Gibraltar (and in 1553 the Atlantic coast of North Africa beyond Gibraltar) in the west to the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf in the east, from the edge of Austria and Slovakia and the hinterland beyond Ukraine in the north to Sudan and Yemen in the south. The empire was at the center of interactions between the Eastern and Western worlds for six centuries.

With Istanbul, (the Ottoman Turkish name of old Constantinople) as its capital, it was the final great Mediterranean Empire and heir to the legacy of Rome and Byzantium in many ways. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Ottoman Empire was among the world's most powerful states, threatening the powers of eastern Europe with its steady advance through the Balkans. Its navy was a powerful force in the Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Red Sea, Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. On several occasions, the Ottoman army invaded central Europe, laying siege to Vienna in 1529 and again in 1683 in an attempt to conquer the Habsburgs, and was finally repulsed only by coalitions of European powers on the sea and on land. It was the only Eastern power to seriously challenge the rising power of Western Europe between the 15th and 20th centuries.

The Ottoman Empire steadily declined during the 19th century, and met its demise at the beginning of the 20th century after its defeat in World War I in the Middle Eastern theatre with the other Central Powers. In the aftermath of the war, the Ottoman government collapsed and the victorious powers partitioned the Empire. Subsequent years saw the creation of new states from the remnants of the Empire; at present 39 nation-states (40 including the disputed TRNC) have emerged from the former Ottoman territories. In Anatolia, the historical center of the Empire, an emergent Turkish national movement expelled invading forces during the Turkish War of Independence, which concluded with the birth of the Republic of Turkey. The new Republic declared the Sultan and his family, the Ottoman Dynasty, as 150 persona non grata of Turkey. Fifty years later, in 1974, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey granted descendants of the former dynasty the right to acquire Turkish citizenship.

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History

The history of the Ottoman Empire spans more than six centuries, and primary documentation of the empire's relations with other powers is to be found in the archives of thirty-nine nations. Earlier historiography of the empire was based largely on analysis of Ottoman military victories and defeats; current approaches take a wider perspective, the scope of which includes the social dynamics of territorial growth and dissolution, and examination of economic factors and their role in the empire's eventual stagnation and decline.

An examination of Ottoman history from a political and military viewpoint will be presented here; a socioeconomic analysis is treated in separate articles, divided between two periods, the classic period (sometimes referred to as the "era of enlargement"), and the reform period (also called "the era of Westernization").

Origins

The arpa ancestors of the Ottoman Dynasty formed part of the westward Turkic migrations from Central Asia that began during the 10th century. Settling in Persia during this period, the Turks began to push west into Armenia and Anatolia at the beginning of the 11th century. These movements brought them into conflict with the Byzantine Empire, which had been the preeminent political power in the eastern Mediterranean since the Roman era, but had by the 11th century begun a long decline. The Seljuk Turks established a permanent foothold in Anatolia after a historic victory at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, creating the Anatolian Seljuk Sultanate. Following the Mongol invasion of Anatolia in the 13th century, the sultanate collapsed and its territory was divided among a number of Turkish principalities known as Beylik.

Under the suzerainty of the Anatolian Seljuk Sultanate, the Kayı tribe of Oğuz Turks created what eventually became known as the Ottoman Beylik in western Anatolia. The Kayı leader Ertuğrul received this land after backing the Seljuks in a losing border skirmish. The Seljuk system offered the Beylik protection from outsiders, and also allowed it to develop its own internal structure. The Kayı position on the far western fringe of the Seljuk state enabled them to build up their military power through co-operation with other nations living in western Anatolia, many of whom were Christian. After the demise of the Sultanate, the Kayı became vassals of the Il Khanate of the Mongols.

Rise (1299–1453)

[[Image:Gentile Bellini_003.jpg|thumb|left|Mehmed II conquers Constantinople and makes it the new Ottoman capital in 1453

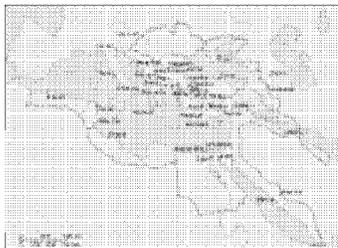
The name *Ottoman* derives from Osman I (Arabic: Uthman), son of Ertuğrul, who became the first Bey when he declared the independence of the Ottoman state in 1299. While the other Turkish Beyliks were preoccupied with internal conflicts, Osman was

able to extend the frontiers of Ottoman settlement towards the edge of the Byzantine Empire. He moved the Ottoman capital to Bursa, and shaped the early political development of the nation. Given the nickname "Kara" for his courage, Osman I was admired as a strong and dynamic ruler long after his death, as evident in the centuries-old Turkish phrase, "May he be as good as Osman." His reputation has also been burnished by the medieval Turkish story known as "**Osman's Dream**", a foundation myth in which the young Osman was inspired to conquest by a prescient vision of empire.

This period saw the creation of a formal **Ottoman government** whose institutions would remain largely unchanged for almost four centuries. In contrast to many contemporary states, the Ottoman bureaucracy tried to avoid military rule. The government also utilized the legal entity known as the millet, under which religious and ethnic minorities were able to manage their own affairs with substantial independence from central control.

In the century after the death of Osman I, Ottoman rule began to extend over the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans. After defeat in Battle of Plocnik, the Turkish victory at the Battle of Kosovo effectively marked the end of Serbian power in the region, and paved the way for Ottoman expansion into Europe. Ottomans needed almost 100 years to defeat Serbia. Serbia would finally fall in 1459. With the extension of Turkish dominion into the Balkans, the strategic conquest of Constantinople became a crucial objective. The city was eventually taken during the rule of Mehmed II, who was only 12 years old when he became sultan for the first time. Mehmed II reorganized the structure of both the state and the military, and demonstrated his military prowess by capturing Constantinople on May 29, 1453. This event marked the final defeat and collapse of the Byzantine state, and the city became the new capital of the Ottoman Empire.

Growth (1453–1683)



Ottoman Empire, 1299–1683

This period in Ottoman history can roughly be divided into two distinct eras: a golden era of territorial, economic, and cultural growth prior to 1566, followed by an era of relative military and political stagnation.

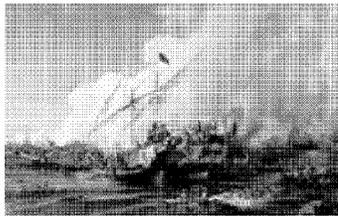
Following the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottoman Empire entered a long period of conquest and expansion, extending its borders deep into Europe and North Africa. The Empire prospered under the rule of a series of committed and effective sultans, culminating in the rule of Süleyman I (the Magnificent). Conquests on land were driven by the discipline and innovation of the Turkish military; and on the sea, the

Ottoman navy established the empire as a great trading power. The state also flourished economically thanks to its control of the major overland trade routes between Europe and Asia.

However, Süleyman's death in 1566 marked the beginning of an era of diminishing territorial gains. The rise of western European nations as naval powers and the development of alternate sea routes from Europe to Asia and the New World damaged the Ottoman economy. The effective military and bureaucratic structures of the previous century also came under strain during a protracted period of misrule by weak Sultans. But in spite of these difficulties, the empire remained a major expansionist power until the Battle of Vienna in 1683, the first major Ottoman defeat on European soil.

Expansion and apogee (1453–1566)

[[Image:First_Siege_of_Vienna_1529.jpg|thumb|left|180px|First Siege of Vienna in 1529]] The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 cemented the status of the empire as the preeminent power in southeastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean. Over the next century, the empire would extend its influence into the heart of the Arab world and come to dominate southeast Europe. Sultan Selim I (1512–1520) dramatically expanded the empire's eastern and southern frontiers by defeating the young Safavid Shah of Persia, Ismail I, in the Battle of Chaldiran. Selim I established Ottoman rule in Egypt, and created a naval presence on the Red Sea. Selim's successor, Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–1566), further expanded upon Selim's conquests. After capturing Belgrade in 1521, Süleyman conquered Kingdom of Hungary establishing Ottoman rule in the territory of present-day Hungary and other Central European territories, by winning the Battle of Mohacs in 1526. He then laid siege to Vienna in 1529, but failed to take the city after the onset of winter forced his retreat. During the reign of Süleyman, Transylvania, Walachia and, intermittently, Moldavia, became tributary principalities of the Ottoman Empire. In the east, the Ottomans took Baghdad from the Persians in 1535, giving them control of Mesopotamia and naval access to the Persian Gulf.



Barbarossa Hayreddin Pasha defeats the Allied European Fleet of Charles V under the command of Andrea Doria at the Battle of Preveza in 1538

Under Selim and Süleyman, the empire became a dominant naval force, controlling much of the Mediterranean Sea. The exploits of the Ottoman admiral Barbarossa Hayreddin Pasha, who commanded the Turkish navy during Süleyman's reign, included a number of impressive military victories. Among these were the conquest of Tunis and Algeria from Spain; the evacuation of Muslims and Jews from Spain to the safety of Ottoman lands

(particularly Salonica, Cyprus, and Constantinople) during the Spanish Inquisition; and the capture of Nice from the Holy Roman Empire in 1543. This last conquest occurred on behalf of France as a joint venture between the forces of the French king Francis I and those of Barbarossa. France and the Ottoman Empire, united by mutual opposition to Hapsburg rule in southern and central Europe, became strong allies during this period. The alliance was economic as well as military, as the sultans granted France the right of trade within the empire without levy of taxation. In fact, the Ottoman Empire was by this time a significant and accepted part of the European political sphere, and entered into a military alliance with France, England and Holland against Hapsburg Spain, Italy and Hapsburg Austria.

As the 16th century progressed, Ottoman naval superiority was challenged by the upstart sea powers of western Europe, particularly Portugal, in the Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean and the Spice Islands. With the Ottomans blockading sea-lanes to the East and South, the European powers were driven to find another way to the ancient Silk and Spice routes, now under absolute Ottoman control. On land, the empire was preoccupied by military campaigns in Austria-Hungary and Persia, two widely-separated theaters of war. The strain of these conflicts on the empire's resources, and the logistics of maintaining lines of supply and communication across such vast distances, ultimately rendered its sea efforts unsustainable and unsuccessful. Despite the Ottomans' strategic vision and partial success in global campaigning, the overriding military need for defense on the western and eastern frontiers of the empire eventually made effective long-term engagement elsewhere impossible.

Revolts and Revival (1566–1683)



 Second Siege (Battle) of Vienna in 1683

The latter half of the 16th century marked the start of European efforts to curb the Ottoman chokehold on overland trade routes. A number of western European states began to circumvent the Turkish trade monopoly by establishing their own naval routes to Asia. In southern Europe, a coalition of European trading powers on the Italian peninsula formed an alliance to weaken the Ottoman grip on the waters of the Mediterranean Sea. Their victory over the Ottomans at the naval Battle of Lepanto (1571) hastened the end of the empire's primacy in the Mediterranean; and in fact, this battle was considered by some earlier historians to signal the beginning of Ottoman decline.

By the end of the 16th century, the golden era of sweeping conquest and territorial expansion was over. The Hapsburg frontier in particular became a more or less

permanent border until the 19th century, marked only by relatively minor battles concentrating on the possession of individual fortresses. This stalemate was partly a reflection of simple geographical limits: in the pre-mechanized age, Vienna marked the furthest point that an Ottoman army could march from Istanbul during the early-spring to late-autumn campaigning season. It also reflected the difficulties imposed on the empire by the need to maintain two separate fronts: one against the Austrians, and the other against a rival Islamic state, the Safavids of Persia.

On the battlefield, the Ottomans gradually fell behind the Europeans in military technology as the innovation which fed the empire's forceful expansion became stifled by growing religious and intellectual conservatism. Changes in European military tactics caused the once-feared Sipahi cavalry to lose its military relevance. Discipline and unit cohesion in the army also became a problem due to relaxations of recruitment policy and the growth of the Janissary corps at the expense of other military units.

Economically, the huge influx of Spanish silver from the New World caused a sharp devaluation of the Ottoman currency and rampant inflation. This had serious negative consequences at all levels of Ottoman society. The period was marked by widespread lawlessness and rebellion in Anatolia in the late 16th and early 17th centuries (commonly known as the Celali rebellions), and Janissary revolts that toppled several governments.

However, the 17th century was not simply an era of stagnation and decline, but also key period in which the Ottoman state and its structures began to adapt to new pressures and new realities, internal and external. The warrior sultan Murad IV (1612–1640), who recaptured Yerevan (1635) and Baghdad (1639) from the Safavids, is the only example in this era of a sultan who exercised strong political and military control of the empire. Notably, Murad IV was the last Ottoman emperor who went to war in front of his army. Modern historians point out that the relative ineffectiveness of the sultans after his reign led to the diffusion of power to lower levels of the government; at first to powerful members of the Harem, and later to a sequence of Grand Viziers. Several important leaders arose at this time, including the sternly reactionary Grand Vizier Mehmed Köprülü (1656-1661) and his more moderate son Fazıl Ahmed Köprülü (1661-1676). Under their leadership the state began to reassert itself with some vigor. Despite internal conflicts within the Ottoman bureaucracy, and between the bureaucracy and military, the 17th century saw the empire expand its frontiers to their furthest reach, with notable gains under the Köprülü administration in Crete, Southern Ukraine and Podolia.

The defeat of Ottoman forces led by Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa Pasha at the Second Siege of Vienna in 1683, at the hands of the combined armies of Poland and the Holy Roman Empire under Jan III Sobieski, was the decisive event that swung the balance of power in the region in favor of the European nations. Under the terms of the Treaty of Karlowitz, which ended the Great Turkish War in 1699, the Ottomans ceded nearly all of Ottoman Hungary, Transylvania, the Morea and Podolia to Austria and Poland. They also acknowledged, for the first time in their history, that the Austrian Empire could treat with them on equal terms.

Decline (1699–1908)

The long period of Ottoman decline is typically broken by historians into an era of failed reforms and a subsequent era of modernization. The military and political details of this period are covered in two separate articles: the stagnation of the Ottoman Empire (1699–1827), when the empire began to lose territory along its western borders, but managed to maintain its stature as a great regional power; and the decline of the Ottoman Empire (1828–1908), when the empire lost territory on all fronts, and there was administrative instability due to the breakdown of centralized government.

Reform (1699–1827)

Main article: Stagnation of the Ottoman Empire

Template:Ottoman Empire periods infobox Further wars were lost, and territories ceded, to Austria in the Balkans. Certain areas of the empire, such as Egypt and Algeria, became independent in all but name, and subsequently came under the influence of Britain and France. The 18th century saw centralized authority giving way to varying degrees of provincial autonomy enjoyed by local governors and leaders. A series of wars were fought between the Russian and Ottoman empires from the 17th to the 19th centuries. Ottoman science and technology had been highly regarded in medieval times, as a result of Ottoman scholars' synthesis of classical learning with Islamic philosophy and mathematics, and knowledge of such Chinese advances in technology as gunpowder and the magnetic compass. By this period though the influences had become regressive and conservative. The guilds of writers denounced the printing press as "the Devil's Invention", and were responsible for a 100-year lag between its invention by Johannes Gutenberg in Europe in 1450 and its introduction to the Ottoman society.

During the "**Tulip Era**" (or *Lâle Devri* in Turkish), named for Sultan Ahmed III's love of the tulip flower and its use to symbolize his peaceful reign, the empire's policy towards Europe underwent a shift. The region was peaceful between 1718–1730, after the Ottoman victory against Russia in the Pruth Campaign in 1712 and the subsequent Treaty of Passarowitz brought a period of pause in warfare. The empire began to improve the fortifications of cities bordering the Balkans to act as a defense against European expansionism. Other tentative reforms were also enacted: taxes were lowered; there were attempts to improve the image of the Ottoman state; and the first instances of private investment and entrepreneurship occurred.

Ottoman military reform efforts Sultan Selim III (1789-1807) made the first major attempts to modernize the army along European lines. These efforts, however, were hampered by reactionism, partly from the religious leadership, but primarily from the Janissary corps, who had become anarchic and ineffectual, jealous of their privileges and firmly opposed to change. Selim's efforts cost him his throne and his life, but were resolved in spectacular and bloody fashion by his successor, the dynamic Mahmud II, who massacred the Janissary corps in 1826. Later on in Ottoman history there were **educational and technological reforms**, including the establishment of higher education

institutions such as Istanbul Technical University; but decline continued despite these measures.

Modernization (1828–1908)

Main article: Decline of the Ottoman Empire

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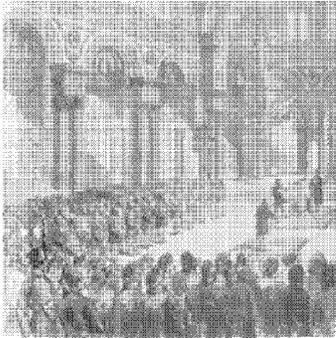
Mahmud II started the modernization of Turkey by preparing the Edict of Tanzimat in 1839 which had immediate effects such as European style clothing, architecture, legislation, institutional organization and land reform.

The period of the Ottoman Empire's decline was characterised by the reorganization and transformation of most of the empire's structures in an attempt to bolster the empire against increasingly powerful rivals.

The **Tanzimat period** (from Turkish *Tanzîmât*, meaning "reorganisation") lasted from 1839 to 1876. During this period, many significant changes were implemented: a fairly modern conscripted army was organized; the banking system was reformed; and the guilds were replaced with modern factories. Economically, the empire had difficulty in repaying its loans to European banks; at the same time, it faced military challenges in defending itself against foreign invasion and occupation: Egypt, for instance, was occupied by the French in 1798, while Cyprus was loaned to the British in 1878 in exchange of Britain's favours at the Congress of Berlin following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. In a significant shift in military and diplomatic policy, the empire ceased to enter conflicts on its own and began to forge alliances with European countries. There were a series of such alliances with France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Russia. As an example, in the Crimean War the Ottomans united with the British, French, and others against Russia.

The **rise of nationalism** swept through many countries during the 19th century, and the Ottoman Empire was not immune. A burgeoning national consciousness, together with a growing sense of ethnic nationalism, made nationalistic thought one of the most significant Western ideas imported by the Ottoman empire, as it was forced to deal with

nationalism-related issues both within and beyond its borders. There was a significant increase in the number of revolutionary political parties. Uprisings in Ottoman territory had many far-reaching consequences during the 19th century and determined much of Ottoman policy during the early 20th century. Many Ottoman Turks questioned whether the policies of the state were to blame: some felt that the sources of ethnic conflict were external, and unrelated to issues of governance. While this era was not without some successes, the ability of the Ottoman state to have any effect on ethnic uprisings was seriously called into question. Reforms did not halt the rise of nationalism in the Danubian Principalities and Serbia, which had been semi-independent for almost 6 decades; in 1875 Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Wallachia and Moldova declared their independence from the Empire; and following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, independence was formally granted to Serbia, Romania and Montenegro, with the other Balkan territories remaining under Ottoman control.



Opening of the Ottoman Parliament, 1876

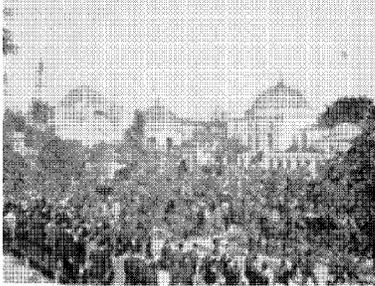
The era of the empire's **First Constitutional government** (or *Birinci Meşrûtiyet Devri* in Turkish), was short-lived; however, the idea behind it (Ottomanism), proved influential. A wide-ranging group of reformers known as the Young Ottomans, primarily educated in Western universities, believed that a constitutional monarchy would provide an answer to the empire's growing social unrest. Through a military coup in 1876, they forced Sultan Abdülaziz (1861-1876) to abdicate in favour of Murad V. However, Murad V was mentally ill, and was deposed within a few months. His heir-apparent Abdülhamid II (1876-1909) was invited to assume power on the condition that he would accept to declare a constitutional monarchy, which he did on 23 November 1876. However, the subsequent constitution, called the *Kanûn-ı Esâsî* (meaning "Basic Law" in Ottoman Turkish), written by members of the Young Ottomans, survived for only two years.

Despite the empire's label as the "Sick man of Europe", from an economic perspective, the empire's actual weakness did not reside in its developing economy, but the cultural gap which separated it from the European powers. The empire's problems were, in fact, the result of an inability to deal with the new problems created by the conflict between external imperialism and rising internal nationalism. (See socioeconomics during the Ottoman reformation era.)

Dissolution (1908–1922)

Main article: Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire

Template:Ottoman Empire periods infobox



Public demonstration in the Sultanahmet district of Istanbul, 1908

The period of the Ottoman Empire's final dissolution began with the onset of the Second Constitutional Era (or *İkinci Meşrûtiyet Devri* in Turkish). This era is dominated by the Committee of Union and Progress (or *İttihâd ve Terakki Cemiyeti* in Turkish) and the movement that would become known as the "Young Turks" (or *Jön Türkler* in Turkish). The Young Turk Revolution began on 3 July 1908 and quickly spread throughout the empire, resulting in the sultan's announcement of the restoration of the 1876 constitution and the reconvening of parliament.

The Balkan Wars of 1912-13, following the Italian occupation of Libya in 1911, were the first real test for the Committee of Union and Progress. The new Balkan states which were formed at the end of the 19th century sought additional territories from the Ottoman provinces of Albania, Macedonia, and Thrace, on the grounds of ethnic nationalism. Initially, with Russia acting as an intermediary, agreements were concluded between Serbia and Bulgaria in March 1912, and between Greece and Bulgaria in May 1912. Montenegro subsequently concluded agreements between Serbia and Bulgaria in October 1912. The Serbian-Bulgarian agreement specifically called for the partition of Macedonia, which was the chief *casus belli* of the First Balkan War. The main cause of the Second Balkan War was the disputes between the former Balkan allies over their newly gained territories; this then gave the Turks an opportunity to take back some of their lost territories in Thrace. The political repercussions of the Balkan Wars led to the coup of 1913, and the subsequent rule of the Three Pashas.



Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) at the trenches of Gallipoli (1915)

The Ottoman Empire took part in the Middle Eastern theatre of World War I, under the terms of the Ottoman-German Alliance. The Ottomans managed to win important victories in the early years of the war, particularly at the Battle of Gallipoli and the Siege of Kut; but there were setbacks as well, such as the disastrous Caucasus Campaign against the Russians. The Russian Revolution of 1917 gave the Ottomans the opportunity to regain lost ground and Ottoman forces managed to take Azerbaijan in the final stages of the war, but the Empire was forced to cede these gains at the end of World War I. A significant event in this conflict was the creation of an Armenian resistance movement in the province of Van. The core Armenian resistance group formed an independent provisional government in May 1915, prompting the Ottoman government to accuse the Armenians of being in collaboration with the invading Russian forces in eastern Anatolia, against their native state. The Armenian militia and Armenian volunteer units were also part of this nationalist movement. At the end of 1917 the Armenian Revolutionary Federation formed the Democratic Republic of Armenia. The eventual Ottoman defeat came from a combination of coordinated attacks on strategic targets by British forces commanded by Edmund Allenby and the Arab Revolt of 1916-1918.

During the first World War, the Ottoman government also faced difficulties on the home front. There were isolated Armenian rebellions in eastern Anatolia that led to the April 24 circular and then the Tehcir Law deportations between June 1 1915 and February 8 1916. An estimated 1.5 million ethnic Armenians died during this period, which most academics refer to as the Armenian Genocide. Typically this is considered to be the first genocide of the 20th century and the second most studied case of genocide, after the Holocaust. Turkish authorities, however, do not believe the term genocide applies. The Turkish government does not believe that the Tehcir Law was the main contribution to Armenian deaths during the first World War. The claim that Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa or the Special Organization committed an organized crime against the Armenian people is also disputed, though the poor conditions of the Armenians (and other Christians in general) as well as some Muslims were not. In addition to any deliberate policy, fighting between Kurds and Armenians along with the Caucasus Campaign of the World War caused trouble for both the Armenian and Muslim populations of the region. The Turkish rejection of the genocide is widely viewed by western scholars as historical revisionism

and is often compared to Holocaust denial. See the main Armenian Genocide article for more information on the dispute.

Partitioning of the Ottoman Empire happened in the aftermath of the WWI. The initial ceasefire agreement was the Armistice of Mudros; under the terms of the subsequent Treaty of Sèvres, the empire was to submit to a complete partition of its Middle Eastern territories under the mandates of Britain and France, cede the Turkish Mediterranean coast to Italy, the Turkish Aegean coast to Greece, cede the Turkish Straits and Sea of Marmara to the Allied powers as an international zone, and recognize a large Republic of Armenia in eastern Anatolia (in an area which was mostly inhabited by Turks and Kurds). The terms of this treaty were later superseded by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. Britain obtained virtually everything it had sought under the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement it had made with France in 1916 for the partitioning of the Middle East. The other powers of the Triple Entente, however, soon became entangled in the Turkish War of Independence.

The Turkish War of Independence was a response to the actions of the victorious Allies, in particular the harsh terms of the peace settlement. Turkish nationalists organized a Turkish national movement under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk). The establishment of the Turkish national movement resulted in the creation of the Grand National Assembly (Büyük Millet Meclisi) in Ankara on 23 April 1920, which refused to recognize the Ottoman government in Istanbul and the invading forces in Turkey, raised a "people's army" and expelled the invading Greek, Italian and French forces. They took back the Turkish provinces which were given to the Republic of Armenia with the Treaty of Sèvres, and threatened the British forces controlling the Turkish Straits. Turkish revolutionaries eventually freed the Turkish Straits and Istanbul, and abolished the Ottoman sultanate on 1 November 1922. The last sultan, Mehmed VI Vahdettin (1918-1922), left the country on November 17, 1922, and the Republic of Turkey was officially declared with the Treaty of Lausanne on 29 October 1923. The Caliphate was constitutionally abolished several months later, on 3 March 1924. the Sultan and his family were declared persona non grata of Turkey and exiled. Fifty years later, in 1974, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey granted descendants of the former dynasty the right to acquire Turkish citizenship. Ertuğrul Osman V.

Ultimately, the fall of the Ottoman Empire can be attributed to the failure of its economic structure; the size of the empire created difficulties in economically integrating its diverse regions. Also, the empire's communication technology was not developed enough to reach all territories. In many ways, the circumstances surrounding the Ottoman Empire's fall closely paralleled those surrounding the fall of the Roman Empire, particularly in terms of the ongoing tensions between the empire's different ethnic groups, and the various governments' inability to deal with these tensions. In the case of the Ottomans, the introduction of a parliamentary system during the Tanzimat proved to be too late to reverse the trends that had been set in place.

Economic History

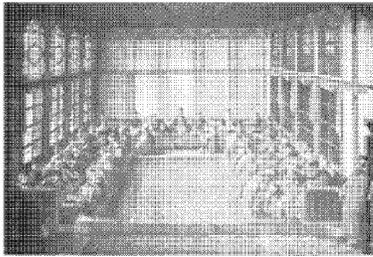
Main article: Economic history of the Ottoman Empire

Template:Economy of Ottoman Empire The economic structure of the Empire was defined by its geopolitical structure. The Ottoman Empire stood between the West and the East, thus blocking the land route eastward and forcing Spanish and Portuguese navigators to set sail in search of a new route to the Orient. The empire controlled the spice route that Marco Polo once used. When Christopher Columbus first journeyed to America in 1492, the Ottoman Empire was at its zenith; an economic power which extended over three continents. Modern Ottoman studies think that the change in relations between the Ottomans and central Europe was caused by the opening of the new sea routes. It is possible to see the decline in significance of the land routes to the East (as Western Europe opened the ocean routes that bypassed the Middle East and Mediterranean) as paralleling the decline of the Ottoman Empire itself.

State

Main article: State organisation of the Ottoman Empire

Template:State organisation of Ottoman Empire In diplomatic circles, the empire was often referred to as the "Sublime Porte", a literal translation of the Ottoman Turkish *Bâb-ı Âli*, which was the only gate of the imperial Topkapı Palace that was open to foreigners, and was where the sultan greeted ambassadors.



 Ottoman bureaucracy

Unlike many states, the Ottoman Empire was happy to use the talents of Greeks (and other Christians), Muslims and Jews, in revolutionizing its administrative system. The rapidly expanding empire utilized loyal, skilled subjects to manage the empire, whether Phanariot Greeks, Armenians, Serbs, Bosniaks, Hungarians or others. This eclectic administration was apparent even in the diplomatic correspondence of the empire, which was initially undertaken in the Greek language to the west, using the Greek subjects. Like the Byzantines before them, the Ottomans practiced a system in which the state had control over the clergy. The nomadic Turkic forms of land tenure were largely retained—with a number of unique adjustments—in the Ottoman period. Certain pre-Islamic Turkish traditions that had survived the adoption of administrative and legal practices from Islamic Iran continued to be important in Ottoman administrative circles. In the Ottoman judiciary, for example, the courts were run by *Kadi*, i.e. religious judges appointed by the sultan who exercised direct control over members of the religious establishment. Ultimately, the Ottoman administrative system was a blend of influences derived from the Turks, the Byzantines, and the Islamic world.

The Ottomans were primarily administrators and not producers, in the sense that the empire did not employ a program of economic exploitation (as did the colonial empires of the modern European states). Its economic outlook (fiscalism) stressed abundance and regulated prices within the marketplace to ensure social stability, and the state never developed a Western mercantile outlook of maximum production, leaving commerce very largely in the hands of the non-Muslim population. According to Ottoman understanding, the state's primary responsibility was to defend and extend the land of the Muslims and to ensure security and harmony within its borders within the overarching context of orthodox Islamic practice and dynastic sovereignty.

House of Osman

Further information: Ottoman Dynasty, House of Osman

The Ottoman sultan, also known as the pâdişâh (or "lord of kings"), served as the empire's sole regent and was considered to be the embodiment of its government, though he did not always exercise complete control.

Throughout Ottoman history, however —despite the supreme de jure authority of the sultans and the occasional exercise of de facto authority by Grand Viziers— there were many instances in which local governors acted independently, and even in opposition to the ruler. On eleven occasions, the sultan was deposed because he was perceived by his enemies as a threat to the state. New sultans were always chosen from among the sons of the previous sultan, but there was a strong educational system in place that was geared towards eliminating the unfit and establishing support amongst the ruling elite for the son before he was actually crowned. There were only two attempts in the whole of Ottoman history to unseat the ruling Osmanlı dynasty, both failures, which is suggestive of a political system which for an extended period was able to manage its revolutions without unnecessary instability.

Imperial Harem

Main article: Imperial Harem

The Harem was one of the most important powers of the Ottoman court. It was ruled by the Valide Sultan (also known as the *Baş Kadın*, or "Chief Lady"), mother of the reigning sultan, who held supreme power over the Harem and thus a powerful position in the court. On occasion, the Valide Sultan would become involved in state politics and through her influence could diminish the power and position of the sultan. For a period of time beginning in the 16th century and extending into the 17th, the women of the Harem effectively controlled the state in what was termed the "Sultanate of Women" (*Kadımlar Saltanatı*).

The harem had its own internal organization and order of formulating policies. Beneath the *Valide Sultan* in the hierarchy was the *Haseki Sultan*, the mother of the sultan's first-born son, who had the best chance of becoming the next Valide Sultan. The sultan also

had four other official wives, who were each called *Haseki Kadın*. Next in rank below the sultan's wives were his eight favourite concubines (*ikbâls* or *hâs odaliks*), and then the other concubines whom the sultan favoured and who were termed *gözde*. Next in rank were the concubines of other court officials. Pupils (*acemî*) and novices (*câriye* or *şâhgird*) were younger women who were either waiting to be married off to someone or who had not yet graduated out of the Harem School.

Palace schools

The palace schools were where young male Christian slaves (*devşirme*), taken as tribute from conquered Christian lands, were trained. There were palace schools in the old palace in Edirne, one in the Galata Palace north of the Istanbul's Golden Horn, and one in Ibrahim Pasha Palace in the Hippodrome area of Istanbul. The boys would graduate from these schools after seven years, and were then ready to become servants to the sultan or other notables, to serve in the Six Divisions of Cavalry, or to serve as Janissaries. Some of the most talented *devşirme* would come to Topkapı Palace, where they were trained for high positions within the Ottoman court or military.

The Divan (Council)

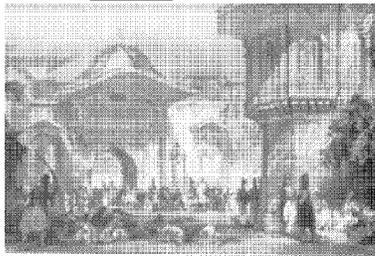
Further information: Divan, Grand Vizier, Vizier

Though the sultan was the supreme monarch, he had a number of advisors and ministers. The most powerful of these were the viziers of the Divan, led by the Grand Vizier. The Divan was a council where the viziers met and debated the politics of the empire. It was the Grand Vizier's duty to inform the sultan of the opinion of the divan. The sultan often took his viziers' advice, but he by no means had to obey the Divan. The Divan consisted of three viziers in the 14th century; by the 17th century, the number had grown to eleven, four of whom served as Viziers of the Dome (the most important ministers after the Grand Vizier).

Imperial Government

Main article: Imperial Government of the Ottoman Empire

Further information: Subdivisions of the Ottoman Empire, List of Ottoman Grand Viziers



 *Bâb-ı Âlî*, the "Sublime Porte"

Though the state apparatus of the Ottoman Empire underwent many reforms during its long history, a number of its basic structures remained essentially the same. Chief among these was the primacy of the sultan. Despite important decisions usually being made by the Divan, ultimate authority always rested with the sultan.

The Divan, in the years when the Ottoman state was still a *Beylik*, was composed of the elders of the tribe. Its composition was later modified to include military officers and local elites (such as religious and political advisors). These individuals became known as viziers. Later still, beginning in the year 1320, a Grand Vizier (or *Sadrizam*) was appointed in order to assume certain of the sultan's responsibilities. The Sublime Porte, which became synonymous with the Ottoman government, was in fact the gate to the Grand Vizier's headquarters, and the place where the sultan formally greeted foreign ambassadors. At times throughout Ottoman history, the authority of the Grand Vizier was to equal (and on some occasions even surpass) that of the sultan.

After the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, the Ottoman state became a constitutional monarchy without executive powers, and a parliament was formed, with representatives chosen from the provinces.

At the height of its power, the Ottoman Empire contained 29 provinces, in addition to the tributary principalities of Moldavia, Transylvania, and Wallachia.

Insignia

Further information: Tughra, Ottoman Flag

The Tughra were calligraphic monograms, or signatures, of the Ottoman Sultans, of which there were 35. Carved on the Sultan's seal, they bore the names of the Sultan and his father. The prayer/statement “ever victorious” was also present in most. The earliest belonged to Orhan Gazi. The ornately stylized *Tughra* spawned a branch of Ottoman-Turkish calligraphy.

Society

Main article: Society structure of the Ottoman Empire

One of the successes of the Ottoman Empire was the unity that it brought about among its highly varied populations. While the main reason for this was the Empire's military strength and use of intimidation as a means of control in newly conquered territories, it may also be ascribed in part to the laws of Islam, which stated that Muslims, Christians, and Jews—who constituted the vast majority of the Ottoman population—were all related in that they were “People of the Book” (*Ahl al-Kitâb*). As early as the reign of Mehmed II, extensive rights were granted to Phanariot Greeks, and many Jews were invited to settle in Ottoman territory.

Concept of Nation

Main article: Millet (Ottoman Empire)

See also: Ottomanism

Under Ottoman rule the major religious groups were allowed to establish their own communities, called millets, each retaining its own religious laws, traditions, and language under the general protection of the sultan. Millets were led by religious chiefs, who served as secular as well as religious leaders and thus had a substantial interest in the continuation of Ottoman rule. After conquering Constantinople, Mehmed II used his army to restore its physical structure. Old buildings were repaired, streets, aqueducts, and bridges were constructed, sanitary facilities were modernised, and a vast supply system was established to provide for the city's inhabitants.

Ultimately, the Ottoman Empire's relatively high degree of tolerance for ethnic differences proved to be one of its greatest strengths in integrating the new regions until the rise of nationalism (this non-assimilative policy became a weakness during the dissolution of the empire that neither the first or second parliaments could successfully address).

"...the Ottoman family was ethnically Turkish in its origins, as were some of its supporters and subjects. But ... the dynasty immediately lost this "Turkish" ethnic identification through intermarriage with many different ethnicities. As for a "Turkish empire", state power relied on a similarly heterogeneous mix of peoples. The Ottoman empire succeeded because it incorporated the energies of the vastly varied peoples it encountered, quickly transcending its roots in the Turkish nomadic migrations from Central Asia into the Middle East."^[2]

Slavery

Further information: Devshirmeh

The Ottomans came from a nomadic people among whom slavery was little practised. Also, from the Islamic perspective, the Qur'an specifically states "everyone is the same",^[3] although in practice there were cultural differences in how this was interpreted (Islam and Slavery covers these perspectives). The Ottomans did not approve of slavery in their empire. However, Ottoman policies were based on a millet perspective in which each millet had the right to govern their own domain, so there were places in the Ottoman Empire where slavery existed. Trafficking in slaves was expressively forbidden by the Ottoman application of *sharia*, or Islamic law. For example, by the terms of the *sharia*, any slaves who were taken could not be kept as slaves if they converted to Islam. It was, in fact, considered an insult to term an Ottoman man as a slave-master, and there were incidents in which Ottomans responded unsympathetically to any who even mentioned the idea of slavery to them.^[4]

Slavery was usually confined to domestic services, including odaliks. Many were captives of war and cross-border raids. In the Mediterranean, such enslaved captives manned the galley oars in the navy. By the era of Tanzimat, the Ottoman Empire aimed to gradually limit the scope of slavery. However, slavery was not formally abolished until the proclamation of the Republic.

The Devşirme system could be considered as a form of slavery, in that the Sultans had absolute power over its members. However, the 'slave' or kul (subject) of the Sultan had high status within Ottoman society, and this group included the highest officers of state and the military elite, all well remunerated, so to consider them 'slaves' (in the way the term is generally understood in the West) is misleading.

Rural slavery was largely a Caucasian phenomenon, carried to Anatolia and Rumelia after the Circassian migration in 1864. Conflicts emerged within the immigrant community and the Ottoman Establishment, at times, intervened on the side of the slaves.^[5]

Culture

Main article: Culture of the Ottoman Empire

Further information: Ottoman poetry, Prose of the Ottoman Empire, Costumes of the Ottoman Empire



Istanbul Park

Many different cultures lived under the umbrella of the Ottoman Empire, and as a result, a specifically "Ottoman" culture can be difficult to define. To some extent, there existed a Turkish Ottoman culture, a Greek Ottoman culture, an Armenian Ottoman culture, and so on. However, there was also, to a great extent, a specific melding of cultures that can be said to have reached its highest levels among the Ottoman elite, who were composed of a myriad of different ethnic and religious groups.

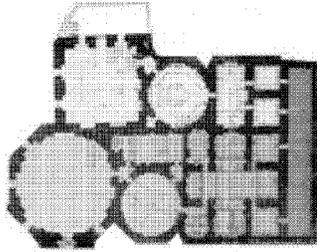
One of the roots of Ottoman culture comes from the Oghuz Turks with their Central Asian Turkic nomadic culture. As the Oghuz passed into Anatolia through Persia over a period of a few hundred years they absorbed many elements of Persian culture. Following Sultan Mehmed II's capture of Constantinople (later named Istanbul) in 1453, many aspects of Byzantine— and, more broadly, European— culture began to be integrated into Ottoman culture. As the empire expanded in subsequent years, even more cultures were brought into this mix, enriching it still further.

This Ottoman multicultural perspective is reflected in their policies. One of the reasons that the Ottoman Empire lasted as long as it did was its tolerant attitude, originating from

the Ottomans nomadic inheritance, in comparison to the attitude prevailing elsewhere in medieval times (east and west). This meant that the Ottoman State pursued multi-cultural and multi-religious policies. (Two examples of this can be seen in the Ottoman justice system and the independent regional governors.) As the Ottomans moved further west, the Ottoman leaders absorbed some of the culture of conquered regions. Intercultural marriages also played their part in creating the characteristic Ottoman elite culture. When compared to Turkish folk culture, the influence of these new cultures in creating the culture of the Ottoman elite is very apparent.

Architecture

Main article: Ottoman architecture



 Architectural plan of Bey Hamam in Thessaloniki dated 1444

Ottoman architecture was influenced by Seljuk, Persian, Byzantine, Greek and Islamic architecture, but came to develop a style all of its own. The years 1300-1453 (Rise Period) constitute the early or first Ottoman period, when Ottoman art was in search of new ideas. The years 1453-1600, known as the classical period, coinciding with the Empire's expansion, is the period when Ottoman art was at its most confident. During the years of the stagnation period, Ottoman architecture moved away from this style however. During the Tulip Era, it was under the influence of the highly ornamented styles of Western Europe; Baroque, Rococo, Empire and other styles intermingled.

The place of Turkish art within Islamic Art as a whole has long been a subject of controversy. In those regions in which Islamic Art developed it was founded on an already on an established basis of pre-Islamic civilization, the most important of these being the Late Antique and Christian cultures of Syria, and the Sasanian arts of Iran. The Arabic, Persian and Turkish elements added to these formed the basis of the development of Islamic Art. The majority of the states in the Islamic world were founded by the Turks and for nearly one thousand years, from the 9th century onwards the Turks, apart from some minor instances, remained the dominant element in the Islamic world.

The development of Turkish art was influenced by the arts of a number of different countries. The tomb of Ismail the Samanid at Bukhara dating from the first half the roth century played an important role, as a monument of revolutionary design derived from the Sasanian fire-temples, Karakhanid and Seljuk tomb design, and on top of this, the influence of the external appearance of Buddhist stupas. The plan of the Ghaznevid palaces is derived from the Sasanids, but also shows the influence of Abbasid palace

architecture. Other architectural forms such as the iwan, the squinch and the dome are also forms derived from the Sasanids. But in spite of this, in all monuments of Turkish art, in whatever geographical region they may be, there is a distinctive style clearly separate from any of the styles which influenced it.

Concepts of Ottoman architecture mainly circle around the mosque. The mosque was integral to society, city planning and communal life. Besides the mosque, it is also possible to find good examples of Ottoman architecture in soup kitchens, theological schools, hospitals, Turkish baths and tombs.

Examples of Ottoman architecture of the classical period, aside from Istanbul and Edirne, can also be seen in Egypt, Eritrea, Tunisia, Algiers, the Balkans and Hungary, where mosques, bridges, fountains and schools were built.

Language

Main article: Ottoman Turkish language

See also: Turkish language

Ottoman Empire had a unique multilingualism which attributed to its cosmopolitan structure and cultural richness. Ethnic groups with their own languages (e.g. Greeks, Jews-who often spoke Ladino, etc.) continued to speak them within their families and neighborhoods. In villages where two or more populations lived together, the inhabitants would often speak each other's language. In cosmopolitan cities, people often spoke their family languages, some Ottoman or Persian if they were educated, and some Arabic if they were Muslim. In the last two centuries, French and English emerged as popular languages. The elite learned French at school, and used European products as a fashion statement. The use of Turkish grew steadily under the Ottomans but they were still interested in their two other official languages so they kept them with a new limited usage: Persian for literature and Arabic solely for religious rites. Many famous Persian poets emerged at this time.

Ottoman Turkish was a variety of Turkish, highly influenced by Persian and Arabic. Ottomans had three influential languages; Turkish, Persian, Arabic but they did not have a parallel status. Throughout the vast Ottoman bureaucracy and, in particular, within the Ottoman court in later times, a version of Turkish was spoken, albeit with a vast mixture of both Arabic and Persian grammar and vocabulary. If the basic grammar was still largely Turkish, the inclusion of virtually any word in Arabic or Persian in Ottoman made it a language which was essentially incomprehensible to any Ottoman subject who had not mastered Arabic, Persian or both. The two varieties of the language became so differentiated that ordinary people had to hire special "request-writers" (*arzihâlcis*) in order to be able to communicate with the government.

Music

Main article: Ottoman classical music

Further information: [Janissary Music](#), [Roma music](#), [Belly dance](#), [Turkish folk music](#)

As music was an important part of the education of the Ottoman elite, a number of the Ottoman sultans were accomplished musicians and composers themselves, such as [Selim III](#), whose compositions are still frequently performed today. Due to a geographic and cultural divide between the capital and other areas, two broadly distinct styles of music arose in the Ottoman Empire: Ottoman classical music, and folk music.

Ottoman classical music arose largely from a confluence of [Byzantine music](#), [Arabic music](#), and [Persian music](#). Compositionally, it is organised around [rhythmic](#) units called [usul](#), which are somewhat similar to [meter](#) in Western music, and [melodic](#) units called [makam](#), which bear some resemblance to Western [musical modes](#). The [instruments](#) used are a mixture of Anatolian and Central Asian instruments (the [saz](#), the [bağlama](#), the [kemence](#)), other Middle Eastern instruments (the [ud](#), the [tanbur](#), the [kanun](#), the [ney](#)), and— later in the tradition— Western instruments (the [violin](#) and the [piano](#)).

In the provinces, several different kinds of [Folk music](#) were created. The most dominant regions with their distinguished musical styles are: Balkan-Thracian Turkus, North-Eastern Turkus([Laz](#)), Aegean Turkus, Central Anatolian Turkus, Eastern Anatolian Turkus, and Caucasian Turkus. There is no separate style for Istanbul, because Turkish Classical Music was preferred here.

Cuisine

Main article: [Ottoman cuisine](#)

When one talks of Ottoman cuisine, one refers to the cuisine of the Capital - [Istanbul](#), and the regional capital cities, where the melting pot of cultures created a common cuisine that all the populations enjoyed. This diverse cuisine was honed in the Imperial Palace's kitchens by chefs brought from certain parts of the empire to create and experiment with different ingredients. The creations of the Ottoman Palace's kitchens filtered to the population, for instance through [Ramadan](#) events, and through the cooking at [Yalis of Pashas](#), and from here on spread to the rest of the population.

Lifestyle

Main article: [Lifestyle of the Ottoman Empire](#)



Galata Bridge in Istanbul, 1878

The Ottoman court life in many aspects assembled ancient traditions of the Persian Shahs, but had many Greek and European influences.

The court (Topkapı)

Main article: Culture of the Ottoman court

Further information: Harem (household) and Topkapı Palace

The culture that evolved around the court was known as the Ottoman Way. To get a high position in the empire, one had to be skilled in the way. This included knowing the languages Persian, Arabic and Ottoman Turkish, and how to behave in different settings: in court, in front of the sultan, and on formal and religious occasions. The Ottoman Way also separated the nobles from the lower classes. Peasants and villagers were called Turks, while nobles were called Ottomans.

See also: Seraglio.

The provincial capitals

Apart from the Ottoman court, there were also large metropolitan centers where the Ottoman influence expressed itself with a diversity similar to metropolises of today: Sarajevo, Skopje, Thessaloniki, Dimashq, Baghdad, Beirut, Jerusalem, Makkah were other cities that had their own examples of Ottoman diversity, with their own small versions of Provincial Administration replicating the culture of the Ottoman court locally.

Religion

Further information: History of the Jews in Turkey, History of the Armenians in Ottoman Empire

Following the fall of Constantinople, in 1453, Mehmed II did not disband the Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate, but instead brought it under close control by installing Gennadius II Scholarius as the patriarch—after receiving from him a hefty fee^[6]—and thus establishing him as the ethnarch of the Millet of Rum; that is, the Orthodox Christian subjects of the empire, regardless of their ethnicity. Under the *millet* system—which applied to other non-Muslim religious groups as well—people were considered subjects, or rather *raya* (i.e. cattle), of the empire but were not subject to the Muslim faith or Muslim law. The Orthodox *millet*, for instance, was still officially legally subject to Justinian's Code, which had been in effect in the Byzantine Empire for 900 years. Also, as the largest group of non-Muslim subjects (or *zimmi*) of the Islamic Ottoman state, the Orthodox *millet* was granted a number of special privileges in the fields of politics and commerce{citation needed}, in addition to having to pay higher taxes than Muslim subjects.

Similar *millet*s were established for the Ottoman Jewish community, who were under the authority of the Haham Basi or Ottoman Chief Rabbi; the Armenian Orthodox community, who were under the authority of a head bishop; and a number of other religious communities as well.

Adoption of Islam

Further information: Ottoman Caliphate

Before adopting Islam—a process that was greatly facilitated by the Abbasid victory at the 751 AD Battle of Talas, which ensured Abbasid influence in Central Asia—the Turkic peoples practised a variety of shamanism. After this battle, many of the various Turkic tribes—including the Oghuz Turks, who were the ancestors of both the Seljuks and the Ottomans—gradually converted to Islam, and brought the religion with them to Anatolia beginning in the 11th century AD.

State and Religion

Main article: State and Religion (Ottoman Empire)

Largely for practical reasons, the Ottoman Empire was, in a broad sense, tolerant towards its non-Muslim subjects; it did not, for instance, forcibly convert them to Islam. The sultans took their primary duty to be service to the interests of the state, which could not survive without taxes and a strong administrative system. The state's relationship with the Greek Orthodox Church, for example, was largely peaceful, and the church's structure was kept intact and largely left alone but under close control and scrutiny until the Greek War of Independence of 1821–1831 and, later in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the rise of the Ottoman constitutional monarchy, which was driven to some extent by nationalistic currents, tried to be balanced with ottomanism. Other churches, like the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, were dissolved and placed under the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Church. On the other hand, the empire often served as a refuge for the persecuted and exiled Jews of Europe; for example, following the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, Sultan Beyazid II welcomed them into Ottoman lands.

Law

Further information: Mecelle



 An Ottoman trial, 1877 (see image detail for explanation)

Legally, the Ottoman Empire was organised around a system of local jurisprudence; that is, local legal systems which did not conflict with the state as a whole were largely left alone. The Ottoman system had three court systems: one for Muslims, which was run by the *kadis*, or Islamic judges; one for non-Muslims, involving appointed Jews and Christians ruling over their respective religious areas; and one which regulated trade and had its origins in the empire's capitulation agreements with foreign powers. The entire system was regulated from above by means of the administrative *Kanun*, i.e. laws.

These court categories were not, however, wholly exclusive in nature: for instance, the Islamic courts—which were the empire's primary courts—could also be used to settle a trade conflict or disputes between litigants of differing religions, and Jews and Christians often went to them so as to obtain a more forceful ruling on an issue. Women nearly always choose the Islamic courts, as these courts tended to be fairer towards them and to give them more just recompense.

Throughout the empire, there were two systems of law in effect: one was the Islamic *Sharia* law system, and the other was the Turkish *Kanun* system based upon the Turkic *Yasa* and *Töre* which was developed in the pre-Islamic era. The Ottoman state tended not to interfere with non-Muslim religious law systems, despite legally having a voice to do so through local governors. The Islamic *Sharia* law system had been developed from a combination of the Qur'ān; the Hadīth, or words of the prophet Muhammad; *ijmā'*, or consensus of the members of the Muslim community; qiyas, a system of analogical reasoning from previous precedents; and local customs. The *kanun* law system, on the other hand, was the secular law of the sultan, and dealt with issues not clearly addressed by the *sharia* system. Both systems were taught at the empire's law schools, which were in Istanbul and Bursa.

Military

Main article: Military of the Ottoman Empire

Further information: Sipahi, Akinci, Timariot, Janissary, Nizam-ı Cedid

The Ottoman military was a complex system of recruiting and fief-holding. In the Ottoman army, light cavalry long formed the core and they were given fiefs called *Timars*. Cavalry used bows and short swords and made use of nomad tactics similar to those of the Mongol Empire. The Ottoman army was once among the most advanced fighting forces in the world, being one of the first to employ muskets. The modernisation of the Ottoman empire in the 19th century started with the military. This was the first institution to hire foreign experts and which sent their officer corps for training in western European countries. Technology and new weapons were transferred to the empire, such as German and British guns, air force and a modern navy.

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- *This article incorporates text from the [Encyclopædia Britannica Eleventh Edition](#), a publication now in the [public domain](#).*

[Notes]

1. ↑ Other Names of the Empire: "Âl-i Osman"; "Devlet-i Âliye", "Devlet-i Ebed-Müddet", "Memâlik-i Mahrûse" (The Well-Protected Domains), "Memâlik-i Mahrûse-i Osmani"
2. ↑ Donald Quataert, 2
3. ↑ O mankind! We created you from a single soul, male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may come to know one another. Truly, the most honoured of you in God's sight is the greatest of you in piety. God is All-Knowing, All-Aware. -- 49:13
4. ↑ The bulk of this section uses information from the article "[Slavery in the Ottoman Empire](#)".
5. ↑ [Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Kölelik](#)
6. ↑ Mansel, 10