
The Ottoman Empire

Basic Facts

- Lasted approximately 600 years
 - Was at its height in 1600, but in decline by 1700
 - Migrated from Central Asia
 - Empire centered around Anatolia, but conquered parts of the Ukraine
 - Rivals were Russia, Austria, Spain, & Safavids (Persia)
 - State was built on war and steady rate of territorial expansion
 - The Ottoman Empire ended with the end of WW I
 - Prime minister was called a Vizier
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Turning Points

- 1453 – siege and capture of Constantinople
 - 1529 – siege of Vienna (fails)
 - 1571 – defeat by a combined Spanish and Venetian fleet in the Battle of Lepanto
 - 1688 – siege of Vienna (fails)
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Important Leaders

- Osman Bey – founder of the Ottoman Empire; named after him
 - Mehmed II “The Conqueror” – conquered Constantinople, rest of Anatolia, Crimea, Greece, Aegean
 - Sulieman “the Magnificent” or “Lawgiver” (1520-1566) – conquered Belgrade, Rhodes, & Hungary; annexed North Africa, Morocco, & Middle East
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Janissaries

- Were slaves captured or brought from the Christians of the Balkans – converted to Islam and given extensive schooling
 - Were the Sultan's mounted body guard
 - Developed into infantry soldiers
 - Became the most powerful component of the Turkish military machine because they controlled artillery and other firearms
 - Were selected by *devshirme* – boys placed with Turkish families to learn the language and Islam
 - Became powerful within military and political spheres - so powerful that they would determine who would become sultan
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Daily Life

- Merchant & artisan class (with guilds) in cities
 - Farmers were free peasants
 - Military leaders played a dominant role
 - *Dhimmis* – Christians and Jews considered “people of the book”
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Women in Ottoman Society

- Subordinate role to fathers & husbands
 - Some lower class women were involved in trade & business
 - Very little opportunity for education, politics, etc.
 - Restricted by wearing of the veil and seclusion in the harem (esp. elite classes)
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Millets

- The non-Muslim community was divided into *millets*, administrative units organized on the basis of religious affiliation rather than ethnic origin
 - The four non-Muslim *millets* were Armenian, Catholic, Jewish, and Orthodox
 - Enjoyed a fair amount of autonomy. At the head of each was a religious leader responsible for the welfare of the *millet* and for its obedience to the sultan.
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The Ottoman Empire in Decline

- Ottoman empire reaches peak of military expansion in late 17th century
 - Defeated by Austrians & Russians → largely due to European advances in technology and strategy
 - Elite Janissary corps involved in palace intrigue
 - Semi-independent local warlords use mercenaries, slave armies to support Sultan in return for imperial favor
 - Massive corruption, misuse of tax revenues
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Decline of the Ottoman Empire



Decline of the Ottoman Empire

- Difficulty of administering empire led to gradual decline; called the “sick man” of Europe in the 18th & 19th centuries
 - Lost ability to maintain empire because of increasing power of Muslims & Christians
 - Rulers became corrupt and raised taxes
 - Inflation from Spanish bullion
 - Lagged behind the West in warfare technology (they preferred siege tactics)
 - Disregarded growing power of the west
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Empire on the verge of collapse

- Nature of the decline:
 - Military decline since the 17th C
 - Lag behind Europe
 - Janissaries politically corrupt, undisciplined
 - Provincial governors gained power & amassed private armies
 - Extensive territorial losses
 - To Russia, Austria, Greece & Serbia
 - Egyptian autonomy, 1798
 - Muhammad Ali
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Egypt

- Egypt often called the “linchpin” of the empire.
 - Key to Ottoman dominance of the Middle East between 1500 and 1600.
 - Ottomans conquered Egypt in 1512, seizing it from the Mamluks (who had stopped the expansion of the Mongols).
 - Major source of food and commodities.
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Egyptian Population

- *Fellahin*—Majority of population was native-born Egyptians, mostly descended from Arabs—rural and poor.
 - Mamluk ruling class—incorporated into Ottoman bureaucracy.
 - Ottoman military.
 - Ottomans and Mamluks constantly fighting.
 - Each emerged as dominant group at different times, never totally eliminating the other.
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French Occupation, 1798-1801

- Cycle was disrupted in July 1798 with the arrival of Napoleon (before he was emperor).
 - Battle of the Pyramids near Cairo.
 - Never totally defeated the Mamluks who had retreated into Upper Egypt and the Sudan.
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Muhammad Ali



- Combined Ottoman-British force expelled France from Egypt → Mamluks and Ottomans struggled for control, again.
- In 1805, Ottoman of Albanian descent, Muhammad, or Mehmed Ali, came out on top.
- Eventually recognized as the viceroy of Egypt.
- Modernization movement

Muhammad Ali's Egypt

- Often called *pasha* rather than *bey*, considered the “founder of modern Egypt.”
 - Ruled from 1805 to 1848 basically independent of the sultan.
 - Process of Westernization/modernization
 - His reign witnessed changes in Egypt's politics, economics, and cultural orientation.
 - Creation of a modern Egyptian state
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Politics

- Solidified his own power by crushing several resistance movements in Cairo.
 - 1809, removed the tax exempt status from religious organizations to curb power of the *ulama*—those that protested were exiled.
 - Wiped out remaining Mamluks in 1811 at a feast in Cairo.
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More on Politics

- The core of his government was his family: sons, nephews, cousins.
 - Appointed foreign-born Egyptians to mid-level positions: Turks, Albanians, Greeks, and Circassians (contested area between Ottomans and Russians).
 - Employed Europeans as advisors.
 - Modernized the military.
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Economy

- Nationalization of agriculture.
 - *Fellahin* forced to labor on government farms.
 - Canals and irrigation improved.
 - Farm land increased by 1/3 under Ali.
 - Promoted the growth of cotton, sugar, indigo, and rice as cash crops.
 - Funds used for public works such as roads and the military.
 - Attempted a massive industrialization project between 1810 and 1830—failure.
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Failure of Industrialization

- High tariffs on Egyptian exports.
 - Inadequate power sources.
 - Factories relied on turbines driven by animals.
 - Industrial sabotage by workers forced to work in factories with little or no compensation.
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Culture

- Egyptians were sent to study abroad in Europe.
 - Learned skills such as printing, shipbuilding, and modern military techniques.
 - Established a system of state-run military schools that also taught medicine and engineering.
 - Printing presses that printed Turkish and Arabic.
 - School of Languages, 1835, designed to teach Egyptians the languages of Europe.
 - Redesigned elite section of Cairo to resemble Paris.
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Muhammad Ali's Successors

- Muhammad Ali died in 1848, succeeded by son Ibrahim, then grandson Abbas (1848-1854), then another son, Muhammad Sa'id (1854-1863), finally grandson Isma'il (1863-1879).
 - Construction of the Suez Canal in 1869
 - Financed by the British.
 - Bankrupt and indebted to Europe.
 - British use this as an excuse to interlope in Ottoman-Egyptian affairs.
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Egypt under the British

(1882-1914)

- Summer 1882, Great Britain dispatches naval and land forces to occupy Egypt.
 - “Protect” Suez Canal.
 - March on Cairo in September and Egyptians surrenders.
 - British ruled indirectly as a colonial power.
 - Egypt never officially became a colony
 - Remained Ottoman province until World War I.
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Ottoman Empire on verge of collapse

- The nature of decline
 - Economic difficulties began in 17th C
 - Less trade through empire as Europeans changed trade basis from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic
 - Exported raw materials, imported European manufactured goods
 - Foreigners began to administer the debts of the Ottoman state by 1882
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On the verge of collapse

- The nature of the decline:
 - European domination of the economy:
 - Extraterritoriality: Europeans exempt from Ottoman law within the empire
 - Operate tax-free, levy own duties in Ottoman ports
 - Empire no longer had the desperately needed income
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Attempts at reform:

- Attempt to reform military led to violent Janissary revolt, 1807-1808
- Mahmud II (1808-1839) sultan after revolt
 - When Janissaries resisted, he had them killed; more reforms
 - Westernized army, academies, schools, roads, & telegraph



Tanzimat Reforms

- 1839-1876 - vast set of changes meant to modernize & save the Empire:
 - Modernizing industry
 - Granted more political and religious freedom
 - Expanded the nation's physical infrastructure
 - Introduced western style education
 - Women had access to education
 - Tolerance of non-Muslims
 - Government was secularized
 - Alas and alack → were not successful
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Attempts at reform:

- Opposition to Tanzimat reforms:
 - Religious conservatives critical of attack on Islamic law & tradition
 - Legal equality for minorities resented
 - Young Ottomans wanted more reform: freedom, autonomy, decentralization
 - High-level bureaucrats wanted more power, more checks on sultan's power
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The Young Turk era

- Cycles of reform and repression
 - 1876, bureaucrats staged coup who demanded constitutional government
 - Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) proved autocratic: suspended constitution, dissolved parliament, punished liberals
 - Reformed army & administration became source of new opposition
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Young Turk era

- The Young Turks:, after 1889 → active opposition body (Ottoman Society for Union & Progress)
 - ❑ Called for universal suffrage, equality, freedom, secularization, women's rights
 - ❑ Forced Hamid to restore constitution, dethroned him (1909)
 - ❑ Nationalistic: favored Turkish dominance within the empire, led to Arab resistance
 - ❑ Survived due to distrust among European powers
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Young Turk Rule

- Attempted to establish Turkish hegemony over far-flung empire
 - Turkish made official language, despite large numbers of Arabic and Slavic language speakers
- Yet could not contain forces of decline



Coming Attractions → End of the Ottoman Empire

- Mid 1880s—sided with Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany
 - Sided with Germany in WW I
 - Treaty of Lausanne, 1923, recognized the Republic of Turkey, after Ataturk fought against the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and of Sevres (between Allies & Ottoman Empire)
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Ataturk

- Radical reformer, 1924-1938
 - Political Reforms:
 - Sultanate abolished, 1922
 - Republic of Turkey w/ capital at Ankara proclaimed, 1923
 - Constitution adopted, 1924
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More Ataturk

- Secularist reforms:
 - State declared secular; constitution provision establishing Islam as official religion deleted (1928)
 - Caliphate abolished, traditional religious schools closed, Islamic Law (*Sheriat*) abolished
 - New civil code ended Islamic polygamy & divorce by renunciation & introduced civil marriage (1926)
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Yup, still Ataturk

- Civil rights for women:
 - Right to vote & hold office
 - Discouraged veiling of women
 - Clothing reform:
 - Fez outlawed by Hat Law; encouraged western clothing (1925)
 - Language Reforms:
 - New Turkish alphabet (modified Latin), 1928
 - Islamic call to worship, etc. required to be in Turkish rather than Arabic (1933)
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And, Ataturk again

- Other reforms:
 - Western calendar adopted (1925)
 - Sunday adopted as legal weekly holiday (1935)

