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
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)
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
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
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”
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)
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.
The Ottoman Empire in Decline

- Ottoman empire reaches peak of military expansion in late 17\textsuperscript{th} 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
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
Empire on the verge of collapse

Nature of the decline:

- Military decline since the 17\textsuperscript{th} 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
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.
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.
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.
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
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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
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
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
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
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
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
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)
Ataturk

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

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