RELIGION AND WORLD CIVILIZATIONS

How Faith Shaped Societies from Antiquity to the Present

VOLUME 2

MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN WORLDS

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to pay its taxes. Given the dire financial situation of Constantinople, it is not surprising that the Byzantine emperor could not afford the services of a famed Hungarian engineer's proposal in 1452 to trade his technical expertise at casting large-caliber artillery for a significant amount of money or afford to hire enough mercenaries to provide a sufficient defense of the city against the Turks.

Constantinople fell to the Ottomans on May 29, 1453, after a fifty-four-day siege, followed by Mystras in 1460 and Trebizond in 1461. Constantinople's conquest marked the end of a centuries-long resistance of the Christian peoples of the East against the expansion of Islam, and signaled the beginning of significant political, social, cultural, religious, and economic changes in the Balkans.

Aphrodite Papayianni

See also: Volume 1: Byzantium: Byzantine Conflicts with Islam; Byzantine Understandings of the Arab Conquests; Fall of Constantinople (1453); Sack of Constantinople; *Volume 2: Medieval Asian Civilizations (300–1500):* Mongol Impact on *Dar al-Islam*; *Seljuk and Ottoman Civilizations:* Seljuk Invasion of Asia Minor (Eleventh Century); Turkification and Islamization of Asia Minor

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Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire (1299–1922), sometimes called the Turkish Empire, was founded by Osman I in 1299. He was a tribal leader of Turks coming from central Asia (Turkestan) and looking for a new homeland in Asia Minor. Once, it was a small principality neighboring the Byzantine Empire in the early fourteenth century but became an empire that ruled over three continents, including southeastern Europe, western Asia, and northern Africa in the sixteenth century.

The founding sultans, as emperors, followed two effective policies. First, instead of struggling against Muslim Turkish principalities in Anatolia, they preferred to wage *jihad* against the Byzantines and Europeans. Second, they settled a significant number of Turks into conquered places in Europe. Thus, they ensured both Turkification and Islamization of such places, and consolidated their position and power there.

An early important military victory of the Ottomans was the conquest of Bursa from the Byzantines in 1326. Next, they crossed into the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1354 and gained a strategic foothold in Europe. Afterward, they gradually seized many places in Thrace and the Balkans such as Adrianople, today's Edirne, Sofia, Skopje, and Thessaloniki. As the Ottomans transformed from a principality to an empire, they nearly faced the danger of collapse at the beginning of fifteenth century. Tamerlane, founder of the Timurid Empire (1370–1507), destroyed the Ottoman army at the Battle of Ankara and captured the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid I (r. 1389–1402) in 1402. Ottoman civil wars between princes followed for eleven years until, finally, Mehmed I restored Ottoman unity in 1413.

After the Interregnum period, the Ottomans, particularly during the reigns of Mehmed II (r. 1451–1481), Selim I (r. 1512–1520), and Suleiman I (r. 1520–1566), experienced a continuous growth and development in all areas, especially militarily. Due to its advanced military superiority, the empire during this period has been called the Gunpowder Empire. For example, in 1453, Mehmed II conquered the Byzantine capital city of Constantinople, now Istanbul, which brought about the end of the Byzantine Empire. Istanbul became the new capital of the Ottoman Empire after Bursa and Edirne, respectively. In order to ensure the unity of the empire, Mehmed II established the Nation System (Millet Sistemi), which provided a significant degree of autonomy and religious freedom for non-Muslim subjects of the empire. His grandson, Selim I, first defeated the Shiite Safavids of Iran in 1514 and then the Mamluks of Egypt twice in 1516 and 1517. By ending the Mamluk sultanate, he took over the caliphate from Mamluk Abbasids and became the first Ottoman caliph. Also, the holy cities of Jerusalem, Mecca, and Medina were taken under Ottoman guardianship during Selim I's rule. During the reign of his successor, Suleiman I, known as the Magnificent and Lawgiver, the empire lived its Golden Age. He conquered Belgrade, Rhodes, and then Hungary and drove deeply into Europe putting Vienna threateningly, but unsuccessfully, under siege in 1529. The Black and Aegean Seas became *mare clausum* (closed sea) and the Ottoman navy dominated the Mediterranean. But

after Suleiman I, incompetent princes came to the throne; nepotism and favoritism corrupted the Ottoman administration; lasting wars with the Habsburg Monarchy in the west and Shiite Safavids in the east disrupted the state's economy; the Janissary system, which was the backbone of the Ottoman army, broke down and crucial rebellions took place in Anatolia. Consequently, the Ottomans faced difficulties maintaining authority in some regions and experienced stagnation. Under these circumstances, they were defeated during the Second Siege of Vienna in 1683. The Holy League, including the Habsburg Monarchy, Poland-Lithuania, Venice, and Russia was formed against the Ottoman Empire. Wars between the Ottomans and the Holy League lasted sixteen years until the Ottoman Empire had to sign the Karlowitz Treaty in 1699, after which they began to lose control of lands in Europe and faced decline throughout the eighteenth century.

The nineteenth century was a period during which the Ottomans suffered various major defeats in conflicts against the Russians, which caused economic bankruptcy and laid a foundation for the eventual dissolution for the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, ideas popularized by the French Revolution, particularly the idea of nationalism, further accelerated the decline of the Ottoman Empire during this period, which witnessed the Balkan nations, consisting of Greeks, Serbians, Montenegrins, Romanians, and Bulgarians, each gaining their independence one by one. The so-called Eastern Question referring to how powerful Western powers would partition the Ottoman Empire, became more complicated. Hence, the empire was called the Sick Man of Europe.

In the same period, the Ottomans adopted policies of Westernization and modernization in an effort to stop the breakup of the Ottoman lands and transition to a modern state. In this context, first, the undisciplined Janissary army, being the main obstacle to reforms and constantly causing unrest, was finally eliminated in 1826. Second, the Tanzimat (Reorganization) and Islahat (Reform) Edicts providing more rights and freedom to both Muslims and non-Muslims of the empire were declared in 1839 and 1856. Third, the empire transitioned to a constitutional monarchy twice in 1876 and 1908.

Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876–1909), the Young Ottomans, and the Young Turks all left their mark on the Ottoman Empire in its final decades. The Young Ottomans and Young Turks were in favor of liberty, equality, and justice and struggled to achieve them. But Abdul Hamid II ruled the country strictly and sought to exert pressure on them. The Young Turks were either arrested or exiled into distant Ottoman territories and newspapers were censored. Additionally, the Armenian Question emerged during this period and became an international concern as Western powers sought to provide some protections for Armenian communities under Ottoman rule. While the Ottoman administration faced many pressures in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the era of Abdul Hamid II was also a period when the education, transportation, and communication infrastructures were built up the most. He also sought to take advantage of the conflicts of interest among the Great Powers, and used the caliphate to pursue a policy of pan-Islamism.

After Abdul Hamid II's rule, the Ottomans engaged in several conflicts in which they would be defeated one after another. In 1911, the Italians attacked and successfully occupied Tripolitania, the last Ottoman land in North Africa. In 1912, the Balkan League, consisting of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro, heavily defeated Ottoman armies on all fronts, forcing them to retreat to the outskirts of Istanbul. Finally, the Ottomans joined World War I on the side of the Central Powers. The Ottoman sultan and caliph Mehmed V declared *jihad* against the Allied Powers in November 1914, but the declaration did not receive the expected support from Muslims. Although not all of them, the Arabs of Hejaz led by Hussein al-Hashimi, sharif of Mecca, also revolted against the Ottomans. Moreover, the Armenian Question became a more troubling issue. First, though they would later be unsuccessful, the mighty British and French navies organized the Gallipoli Campaign to take Istanbul and end Ottoman involvement in the war, and second, the Ottoman Eastern Army failed in its campaign against the Russians leaving the eastern border defenseless. Meanwhile, revolutionary Ottoman Armenians formed voluntary Armenian regiments and fought in the Russian armies against the Ottomans or engaged in subversive activities in favor of the Allies. These sensitive situations led to the passage of the Temporary 1915 Relocation and Resettlement Law (Geçici Sevk ve İskan Kanunu) in May 1915. Mutual massacres between Muslims and Armenians, with the Armenians especially suffering enormous casualties, occurred until the Treaty of Alexandropol was signed in 1920.

Ottoman forces were unsuccessful in the Mesopotamian and Sinai-Palestinian fronts as well. The empire withdrew from the Great War with the Armistice of Mudros in October 1918. The capital city of Istanbul, the Turkish Straits, and many strategic places in Anatolia were occupied. The

Treaty of Sèvres was signed between the Ottomans and the Allies in August 1920. However, Turkish nationalists under the leadership of General Mustafa Kemal, later Atatürk the founder of modern Turkey, started the Turkish War of Independence. He established a new administration and gathered a new parliament called the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Ankara against the occupying Allied Powers and the Ottoman administration in Istanbul. The Turkish War of Independence ended with the defeat of the Greeks and their expulsion from Anatolia in 1922. The Grand National Assembly then abolished the Ottoman sultanate on November 1, 1922, effectively representing the end of the Ottoman Empire, and in July 1923, the warring parties signed the Lausanne Peace Treaty, which declared Turkish independence.

ERCAN KARAKOC

See also: Volume 1: Byzantium: Fall of Constantinople (1453); *Volume 2: Seljuk and Ottoman Civilizations:* Abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate; Armenian Genocide; Collapse of the Ottoman Empire; Defeat of the Ottomans at the Second Siege of Vienna (1683); Establishment of the Ottoman Caliphate; Establishment of the Secular Republic of Turkey; Ghazis; Janissaries; Jews under Ottoman Rule; *Jihad*, World War I, and the Ottoman Empire; Millet System; Ottoman Conquest of the Byzantine Empire; Ottoman Religious Architecture

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Ottoman Religious Architecture

From the thirteenth century onward, the Turks took from Byzantine architecture and the milieu in which they settled to develop uniquely Turkish architectural features that have survived to the modern era. The evolution of their distinctive building characteristics and the refinement of Turkish architecture can be seen in their religious buildings, typically mosques, madrassas, and tekkes (a sort of Sufi monastery). The Ottomans, retaining their spiritual values, perfected an architecture that both reflected and transformed their religion, social organization, ethics, and political views.

Ottoman religious architecture commonly features robust proportions, domes, towering minarets, heighted entrances, use of glazed bricks, centralized fountains, verandas, and arches in rhythmic patterns that connect internal prayer halls and outer courtyards. Their forms are mostly centralized following a square, hexagonal, or octagonal geometry and are noteworthy for their symmetry. The scale of the architecture makes the forms even more powerful, yet the use of contours makes the building soft and elegant. The calligraphic inscriptions demonstrate a high level of perfection in the use of inlay or tilework. Careful design and construction are meant to ensure the unification of all building and interior spaces within a complex.

Ottoman architecture was initially shaped by and included various Sufi elements that were meant to communicate various religious, political, and cultural ideals or beliefs. A Sufi or dervish is a wanderer, in the quest for religious fulfillment, yet they mostly subscribed to a communal life of brotherhood that lived in a tekke (lodge), also known as a *dergah*. Every brotherhood had its own beliefs and practiced under a central figure, known as the sheikh. The sheikh was a teacher whose duty was to guide disciples along a path of God. The sheikh was accepted by the brotherhood as a spiritual descendant with supernatural wisdom and power. The tekke normally housed the sheikh's family and resident Sufis. It was a resting place for travelers, provided guest rooms to pilgrims, and contained the graves of the deceased sheikhs. The tekke architecture significantly accommodated the ritual dancing and meditation of the Sufis. The tekke was at times more than just a meeting or resting place for the brotherhood, as they developed into intense communal spaces where the devotees came to gain the blessings and prayers of sheikhs in exchange of precious offerings.

The size of the tekke, their fame, and decor was not only dependent on how renowned their sheiks were among their disciples but also on the graves of venerated people and sheiks buried there. A tekke established in a dense urban area was considered a major gathering place for devotees, unlike those located in rural areas. The location of the tekke and sheiks access to wealth also decided the fortune of the brotherhood. In the nineteenth century, some tekkes housed as many as a hundred Sufis while others could accommodate only three to four Sufis.