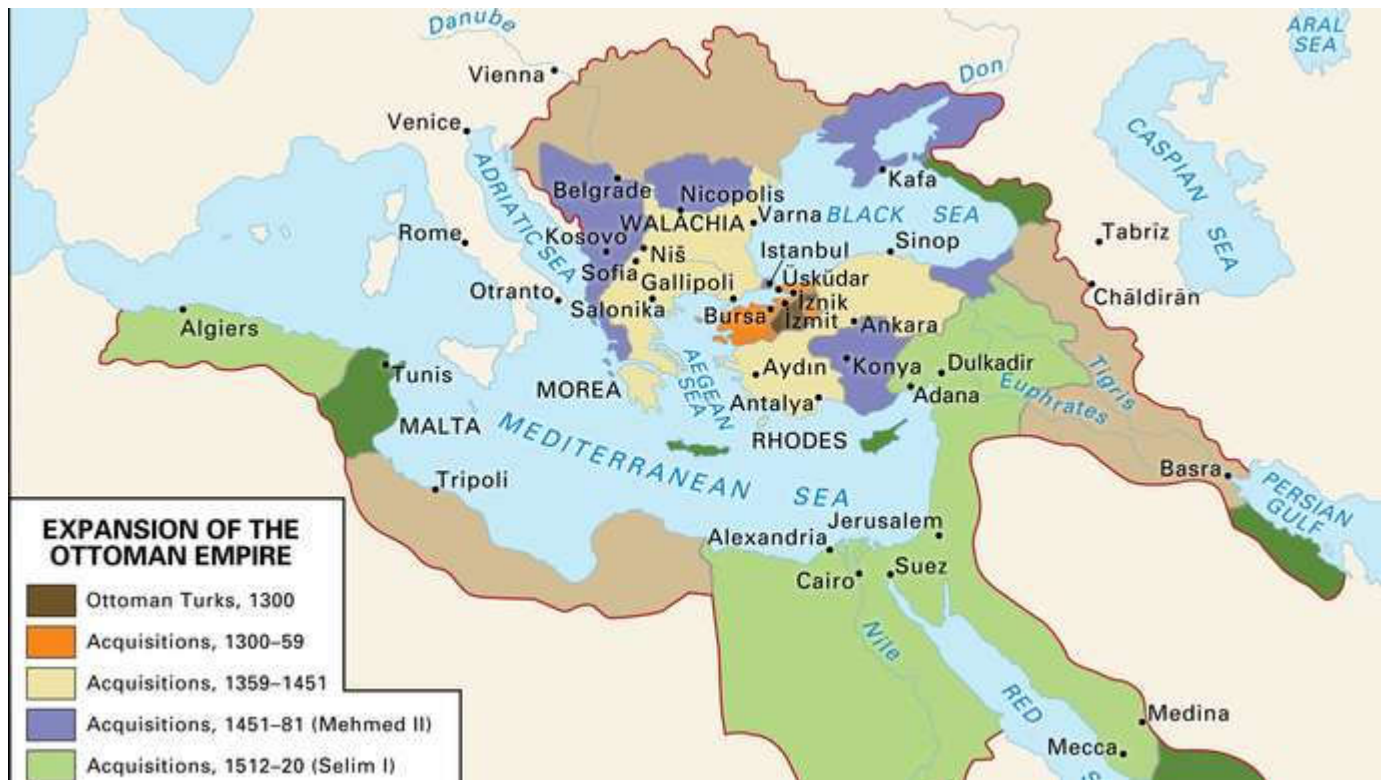


Ottoman Empire,

empire created by Turkish tribes in [Anatolia](#) (Asia Minor) that grew to be one of the most powerful states in the world during the 15th and 16th centuries. The Ottoman period spanned more than 600 years and came to an end only in 1922, when it was replaced by the [Turkish Republic](#) and various successor states in southeastern [Europe](#) and the [Middle East](#). At its height the [empire encompassed](#) most of southeastern Europe to the gates of [Vienna](#), including present-day [Hungary](#), the [Balkan](#) region, [Greece](#), and parts of [Ukraine](#); portions of the Middle East now occupied by [Iraq](#), [Syria](#), [Israel](#), and [Egypt](#); [North Africa](#) as far west as [Algeria](#); and large parts of the [Arabian Peninsula](#). The term Ottoman is a dynastic appellation derived from [Osman I](#) (Arabic: [ʿUthmān](#)), the nomadic [Turkmen](#) chief who founded both the [dynasty](#) and the empire about 1300.

The Ottoman State To 1481: The Age Of Expansion

The first period of Ottoman history was characterized by almost continuous territorial expansion, during which Ottoman dominion spread out from a small northwestern Anatolian principality to cover most of southeastern Europe and Anatolia. The political, economic, and social institutions of the classical Islamic empires were amalgamated with those inherited from [Byzantium](#) and the great Turkish empires of [Central Asia](#) and were reestablished in new forms that were to characterize the area into modern times.



Ottoman Empire

Map showing the expansion of the Ottoman Empire (c. 1300–1700).

Origins and expansion of the Ottoman state, c. 1300–1402

In their initial stages of expansion, the Ottomans were leaders of the Turkish warriors for the faith of [Islam](#), known by the honorific title *ghāzī* (Arabic: “raider”), who fought against the shrinking Christian [Byzantine](#) state. The ancestors of Osman I, the founder of the dynasty, were members of the Kayı tribe who had entered Anatolia along with a mass of Turkmen [Oğuz](#) nomads. Those nomads, migrating from Central Asia, established themselves as the [Seljuq dynasty](#) in [Iran](#) and [Mesopotamia](#) in the mid-11th century, overwhelmed Byzantium after the [Battle of Manzikert](#) (1071), and occupied eastern and central Anatolia during the 12th century. The ghazis fought against the [Byzantines](#) and then the Mongols, who invaded Anatolia following the establishment of the [Il-Khanid](#) (Ilhanid) empire in Iran and Mesopotamia in the last half of the 13th century. With the disintegration of [Seljuq](#) power and its replacement by [Mongol](#) suzerainty, enforced by direct military occupation of much of eastern Anatolia, independent Turkmen principalities—one of which was led by Osman—emerged in the remainder of Anatolia.

Osman and Orhan

Following the final Mongol defeat of the Seljuqs in 1293, Osman emerged as prince ([bey](#)) of the border principality that took over [Byzantine Bithynia](#) in northwestern Anatolia around [Bursa](#), commanding the ghazis against the [Byzantines](#) in that area. Hemmed in on the east by the more powerful [Turkmen](#) principality of Germiyan, Osman and his immediate successors concentrated their attack on [Byzantine](#) territories bordering the [Bosporus](#) and the [Sea of Marmara](#) to the west. The Ottomans, left as the major Muslim rivals of Byzantium, attracted masses of nomads and urban unemployed who were roaming through the [Middle East](#) searching for means to gain their livelihoods and seeking to fulfill their religious desire to expand the territory of Islam. The Ottomans were able to take advantage of the decay of the Byzantine frontier defense system and the rise of economic, religious, and social discontent in the [Byzantine Empire](#) and, beginning under Osman and continuing under his successors [Orhan](#) (Orkhan, ruled 1324–60) and [Murad I](#) (1360–89), took over Byzantine territories, first in western Anatolia and then in southeastern [Europe](#). It was only under [Bayezid I](#) (1389–1402) that the [wealth](#) and power gained by that initial expansion were used to [assimilate](#) the Anatolian Turkish principalities to the east.

By 1300 Osman ruled an area in Anatolia stretching from [Eskişehir](#) (Dorylaeum) to the plains of [İznik](#) (Nicaea), having defeated several organized Byzantine efforts to curb his expansion. Byzantine attempts to secure Il-Khanid support against the Ottomans from the east were unsuccessful, and the Byzantine emperor's use of mercenary troops from western Europe caused more damage to his own territory than to that of the Turks. The Ottomans lacked effective siege equipment, however, and were unable to take the major cities of [Bithynia](#). Nor could they move against their increasingly powerful Turkmen neighbours, the [Aydın](#) and [Karasi](#) dynasties, which had taken over Byzantine territory in southwestern [Anatolia](#). [Orhan](#)'s capture of Bursa in 1324 (some sources date the event to 1326) provided the first means for developing the administrative,

economic, and military power necessary to make the principality into a real state and to create an army. Orhan began the military policy, expanded by his successors, of employing Christian mercenary troops, thus lessening his dependence on the nomads.

Orhan soon was able to capture the remaining Byzantine towns in northwestern Anatolia: İznik (1331), [İzmit](#) (1337), and [Üsküdar](#) (1338). He then moved against his major Turkmen neighbours to the south. Taking advantage of internal conflicts, Orhan annexed Karası in 1345 and gained control of the area between the Gulf of Edremit and Kapıdağı ([Cyzicus](#)), reaching the Sea of Marmara. He thus put himself in a position to end the lucrative monopoly enjoyed by the city of Aydın, that of providing [mercenary](#) troops to competing Byzantine factions in [Thrace](#) and at the Byzantine capital, Constantinople (present-day [Istanbul](#)). The expansion also enabled the Ottomans to replace Aydın as the principal ally of the Byzantine emperor [John VI Cantacuzenus](#). The consequent entry of Ottoman troops into Europe gave them a direct opportunity to see the possibilities for conquest offered by Byzantine decadence. The collapse of Aydın following the death of its ruler, Umur Bey, left the Ottomans alone as the leaders of the ghazis against the Byzantines. Orhan helped Cantacuzenus take the [throne](#) of Byzantium from [John V Palaeologus](#) and as a reward secured the right to ravage Thrace and to marry the emperor's daughter Theodora.

Ottoman raiding parties began to move regularly through [Gallipoli](#) into Thrace. Huge quantities of captured booty strengthened Ottoman power and attracted thousands from the uprooted Turkmen masses of Anatolia into Ottoman service. Starting in 1354, Orhan's son Süleyman transformed Gallipoli, a peninsula on the European side of the [Dardanelles](#), into a permanent base for expansion into [Europe](#) and refused to leave, despite the protests of Cantacuzenus and others. From Gallipoli Süleyman's bands moved up the [Maritsa River](#) into southeastern Europe, raiding as far as Adrianople. Cantacuzenus soon fell from power, at least partially because of his cooperation with the Turks, and Europe began to be aware of the extent of the Turkish danger.

Murad I

Orhan's son Murad I was the first Ottoman emperor to use Gallipoli for permanent conquests in Europe. [Constantinople](#) itself was bypassed, despite the weakness and disorganization of its defenders, because its thick walls and well-placed defenses remained too strong for the nomadic Ottoman army, which continued to lack siege equipment. Murad's initial conquests extended northward into [Thrace](#), culminating with the capture in 1361 of Adrianople, the second city of the Byzantine Empire. Renamed [Edirne](#), the city became the new Ottoman capital, providing the Ottomans with a centre for the administrative and military control of Thrace. As the main fortress between Constantinople and the [Danube River](#), it controlled the principal invasion road through the [Balkan Mountains](#), assured Ottoman retention of their European conquests, and facilitated further expansion to the north.

Murad then moved through the [Maritsa River](#) valley and captured Philippopolis (Philibé or Filibe; modern [Plovdiv](#)) in 1363. Control of the main sources of Constantinople's grain and tax revenues enabled him to force the Byzantine emperor to accept Ottoman suzerainty. The death of the [Serbian](#) emperor [Stefan Dušan](#) in 1355 left his successors too divided and weak to defeat the Ottomans, despite an alliance with [Louis I](#) of [Hungary](#) and Tsar Shishman of [Bulgaria](#) in the first European [Crusade](#) against the Ottomans. The Byzantine emperor [John V Palaeologus](#) tried to mobilize European assistance by uniting the churches of Constantinople and [Rome](#), but that effort only further divided Byzantium without assuring any concrete help from the West. Murad was thus able in 1371 to rout the allies at Chernomen (Çirmen), on the [Maritsa](#), increasing his own confidence and demoralizing his smaller enemies, who rapidly accepted his suzerainty without further resistance.

Murad next incorporated into the rapidly expanding empire many European [vassals](#). He retained local native rulers, who in return accepted his suzerainty, paid annual tributes, and provided contingents for his army when required. That policy enabled the Ottomans generally to avoid local resistance by

assuring rulers and subjects that their lives, properties, traditions, and positions would be preserved if they peacefully accepted Ottoman rule. It also enabled the Ottomans to govern the newly conquered areas without building up a vast administrative system of their own or maintaining substantial occupation garrisons.

Moving rapidly to consolidate his empire south of the [Danube](#), Murad captured [Macedonia](#) (1371), central Bulgaria (including [Monastir](#) [1382], [Sofia](#) [1385], and Niš [1386]), and [Serbia](#), all culminating in the climactic defeat of the Balkan allies at the [Battle of Kosovo](#) in 1389. South of the Danube only [Walachia](#), Bosnia, [Albania](#), [Greece](#), and the Serbian fort of [Belgrade](#) remained outside Ottoman rule, and to the north Hungary alone was in a position to resist further Muslim advances.

[Bayezid I](#)

Murad was killed during the Battle of Kosovo. His son and successor, [Bayezid I](#), was unable to take advantage of his father's victory to achieve further European conquest. In fact, he was compelled to restore the defeated vassals and return to Anatolia. That return was precipitated by the rising threat of the Turkmen principality of [Karaman](#), created on the ruins of the [Seljuq](#) empire of Anatolia with its capital at [Konya](#). Bayezid's predecessors had avoided forceful annexation of Turkmen territory in order to concentrate on Europe. They had, however, expanded peacefully through marriage alliances and the purchase of territories. The acquisition of territory in central Anatolia from the emirates of [Hamid](#) and Germiyan had brought the Ottomans into direct contact with Karaman for the first time. Murad had been compelled to take some military action to prevent it from occupying his newly acquired Anatolian territories but then had turned back to Europe, leaving the unsolved problem to his successor son.

Karaman willingly cooperated with Serbia in inciting opposition to Ottoman rule among Murad's vassals in both Europe and

Anatolia. That opposition strengthened the Balkan Union that was routed by the Ottomans at [Kosovo](#) and stimulated a general revolt in Anatolia that Bayezid was forced to meet by an open attack as soon as he was able. By 1390 Bayezid had overwhelmed and annexed all the remaining Turkmen principalities in western Anatolia. He attacked and defeated Karaman in 1391, annexed several Turkmen states in eastern Anatolia, and was preparing to complete his conquest in the area when he was forced to turn back to Europe to deal with a revolt of some of his Balkan vassals, encouraged and assisted by Hungary and Byzantium. Bayezid quickly smashed the rebels (1390–93), occupied Bulgaria and installed direct Ottoman administration for the first time, and besieged Constantinople. In response, Hungary organized a major European Crusade against the Ottomans. The effort was beaten back by Bayezid at the [Battle of Nicopolis](#) (Niğbolu) on the Danube in 1396. Europe was terrorized, and Ottoman rule south of the Danube was assured; Bayezid's [prestige](#) in the [Islamic world](#) was so [enhanced](#) that he was given the title of sultan by the shadow [Abbasid caliph](#) of [Cairo](#), despite the opposition of the caliph's [Mamluk](#) masters (the rulers of [Egypt](#), [Syria](#), and the holy cities of [Mecca](#) and [Medina](#)), who wanted to retain the title only for themselves.

Turning back to Anatolia to complete the conquests aborted by his move against the Crusaders, Bayezid overran Karaman, the last Turkmen principality, in 1397. His advances, however, attracted the attention of [Timur](#) (Tamerlane), who had been building a powerful [Tatar](#) empire in [Central Asia](#), [Iran](#), [Afghanistan](#), and Mesopotamia and whose invasion of [India](#) in 1398 had been halted by his fear of the rising Ottoman power on his western flank. Encouraged by several Turkmen princes who had fled to his court when their territories were taken by Bayezid, Timur decided to destroy Bayezid's empire before turning his attentions back to the east and thus invaded Anatolia. As Bayezid and Timur moved toward battle, the former's Turkmen vassals and Muslim followers deserted him because he had abandoned the old Ottoman ghazi tradition of advancing against the infidel. Left only with forces provided by his Christian vassals, Bayezid was decisively overwhelmed by Timur at the [Battle of Ankara](#) in 1402. Taken captive, Bayezid died within a year.

Restoration of the Ottoman Empire, 1402–81

[Timur's](#) objective in [Anatolia](#) had been not conquest but rather a secure western flank that would enable him to make further conquests in the east. He thus followed his victory by retiring from Anatolia after restoring to power the [Turkmen](#) princes who had joined him; evidently Timur assumed that a divided Anatolia would constitute no threat to his ambitions. Even Bayezid's sons were able to assume control over the family's former possessions in western Anatolia, and the Ottoman Empire in Europe was left largely untouched. At that time a strong European Crusade might have pushed the Ottomans out of Europe altogether, but weakness and division south of the Danube and diversion to other matters to the north left an opportunity for the Ottomans to restore what had been torn asunder without significant loss.