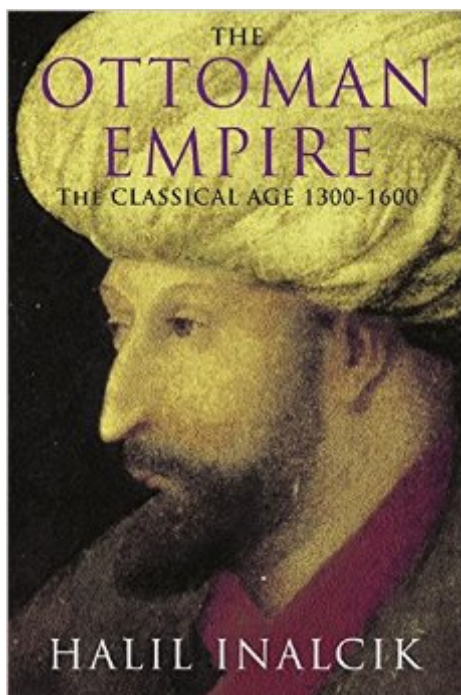


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The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600



Synopsis

A preeminent scholar of Turkish history vividly portrays 300 years of this distinctively Eastern culture as it grew from a military principality to the world's most powerful Islamic state. He paints a striking picture of the prominence of religion and warfare in everyday life, as well as the traditions of statecraft, administration, social values, financial, and land policies. "...masterly...Halil Inalcik is one of the foremost living students of Ottoman history...Read this book..."--Times Literary Supplement.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For the past several decades, few scholars have been as dominant in their fields as has Halil Inalcik. His half century of scholarship on the Ottoman empire has defined our understanding of it, and the generation of scholars he trained continue to advance our knowledge further still. Though he wrote several books and articles about various aspects of Ottoman history, this book is his best-known work. Originally published in 1973 as part of the Praeger "History of Civilization" series, it offers a sweeping survey of Ottoman imperial development, from its origins as a small frontier principality to his peak as a dominant power spanning three continents. Inalcik divides this examination into four parts. The first part consists of six chapters chronicling the political history of this period, describing its path of conquest and the numerous struggles - both internal and external - that took place along the way. These provide useful context for the next three sections, as Inalcik then adopts a thematic approach, examining the Ottoman state, its economic and social life, and its religion and culture in the other three sections. Most of these chapters are short, but they are all rich

in details about the institutions and practices of the Ottomans. Despite its age, Inalcik's book remains an essential resource for anyone seeking to learn about the Ottoman empire. Its analysis has never been bettered, and even after the decades of additional scholarship its assessments still hold up well. Readers seeking a more comprehensive narrative history would do better to turn to Caroline Finkel's more recent study,

Prof. Inalcik's *The Ottoman Empire: the classical age* is a great introduction to the origins and rise of the Ottoman Empire, from mountain bandits to conquerors of the eastern Mediterranean and Balkans. The organization of the book causes a little repetition, but the history is superb. The book is broken into four parts: the first is a general outline of the political rise and growth of the empire. In it, Inalcik brings up some points that certainly caused me to reassess the importance of the Ottomans - among them, their role in helping the Reformation become a success by (inadvertently) causing the Habsburgs to agree to the Treaties of Trent and of Augsburg, thereby allowing Protestant enclaves to continue and thrive, and the importance the Ottomans had in the birth and growth of the Renaissance. The remaining sections address in detail the domestic and foreign policy of the Ottoman state, its economic and social life, and the nature of religion and culture in Ottoman lands. The information here was detailed and certainly helped broaden my understanding of the influence the Ottomans had in the Balkans and Levant. His discussion of religion, in particular drew my attention. The Ottoman empire, mind you, was not only tolerant of Judaism and Christianity, but the Sultan went so far as to see himself as the protector of Orthodox Christianity from the influence of Rome - much in the same way the Ottomans sought to protect Protestants, although this rationale may have been more out of political expedience than genuine religious fervor. Similarly his discussion of the complex relationship between Sultan and the religious class was excellent.

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