

The Ottoman Empire

Ottoman Empire, empire created by Turkish tribes in Anatolia (Turkey) 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 1923, when it was replaced by the Turkish Republic after World War 1. 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 derived from the nomadic Turkmen chief, Osman 1, who founded both the empire about 1300.



Activities

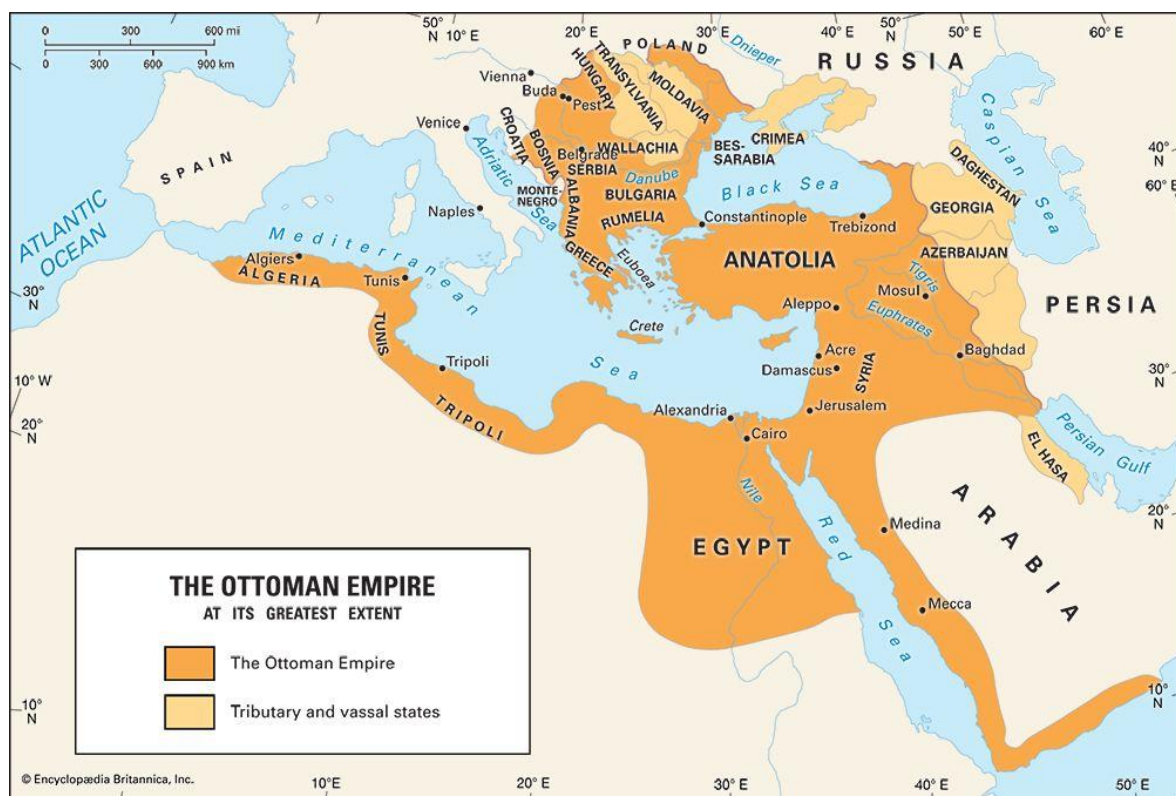
1. In which countries today would we find:

- a) Thrace
- b) Anatolia
- c) Armenia
- d) Kiev

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

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Ottoman-Empire>

The Ottomans were leaders of the Turkish warriors for the faith of Islam, known by the Arabic title of “raider”. They fought against the shrinking Christian Byzantine state, (previously the Western half of the Roman Empire). The ancestors of Osman I, the founder of the dynasty, were members of a nomadic tribe from Central Asia. They established themselves in Iran and Iraq, (see map below), in the mid-11th century, fought to overthrow the Byzantium Empire, (the Western Roman Empire). They then occupied eastern and central Anatolia during the 12th century.



The Ottoman Empire ruled a large portion of the Middle East and Eastern Europe for over 600 years. It first formed in 1299 and finally dissolved in 1923, becoming the country of Turkey.

Rise of the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire was founded by Osman I, a leader of the Turkish tribes in Anatolia in 1299. Osman I expanded his kingdom, uniting many of the independent states of Anatolia under one rule. Osman established a formal government and allowed for religious tolerance over the people he conquered.

Capturing Constantinople

Over the next 150 years the Ottoman Empire continued to expand. The most powerful empire in the land at the time was the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Roman Empire). In 1453, Mehmet II the Conqueror led the Ottoman Empire in capturing Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantium Empire. He turned Constantinople into the capital of the Ottoman Empire and renamed it Istanbul. For the next several hundred years the Ottoman Empire would be one of the largest and most powerful empires in the world.

When Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Empire, a large number of scholars and artists fled to Italy. This helped to spark the European Renaissance. It also caused the European nations to begin to search for new trade routes to the Far East, beginning the Age of Exploration.

Suleiman the Magnificent

The Ottoman Empire reached its peak during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. He ruled from 1520 to 1566. During this time the empire expanded and included much of Eastern Europe including Greece and Hungary.

Decline

The Ottoman Empire began to decline in the late 1600s. It ceased to expand and began to face economic competition from India and Europe. Internal corruption and poor leadership led to a steady decline until the empire was abolished after World War 1 and the country of Turkey was declared a republic in 1923.

Questions

- 1) About how many years did the Ottoman Empire exist?
- 2) Who founded the Ottoman Empire?
- 3) What city did the Ottoman Empire conquer in 1453 putting an end to the Byzantium Empire?
- 4) Under what Ottoman ruler did the empire reach its peak?
- 5) What modern day country was created from the Ottoman Empire in 1922?

Answers

1. 600
2. Osman I
3. Constantinople
4. Suleiman the Magnificent
5. Turkey

How Islamic people were governed

The leader of the Ottoman Empire was called the Sultan. The title of Sultan was inherited by the eldest son. When a new Sultan took power, he would put all of his brothers into prison. Once he had a son of his own to inherit the throne, he would have his brothers executed.

Caliphs were the chief rulers and religious leaders. They divided their governments into departments, with each department being run by an official.

For the first 20 – 30 years, people were not forced to become Muslims, but if they did not convert, they had to pay high taxes, and had to abide by the Islamic laws. They were treated as the lowest social order, much like slaves.

Soldiers were well-trained and ready to fight to overthrow surrounding countries. The Muslims conquered cities and kingdoms in Africa, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Israel, Syria and India.

As time went on, life became very difficult for Christians and Jews. Different rulers created different rules for people who were not Muslims. While most Ottomans were Muslim, there were also many religious minorities in the empire. The most prominent minorities were Christians, who themselves were primarily divided between Greek Orthodox and Armenian Christians, and Jews, who settled in the Ottoman Empire after being expelled from Spain and Portugal in the 1490s.

Questions

1. What was the religion of the Ottoman Empire?
2. What were the two denominations of Christians living in the Ottoman Empire?
3. What were the difficulties faced by Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire?
4. What was the main goal of the Ottoman army?

Islamic Beliefs

Islam is a religion followed by millions of people all around the world. Muslims believe there is only one God, Allah. The word 'Islam' means 'submission. Muslims submit to or obey Allah, and the teachings of Muhammad. Mahammad is said to be the messenger of a prophet of Allah.

In 610 AD, Muhammad is said to have had a visitation from the angel Gabriel who told Mahammad the story of Allah. Mahammad spent the next 23 years writing down the words of Allah in the sacred book, the Qur'an.

The Qur'an is Islam's holy book. Muslims believe that the words in the Qur'an are the exact words of Allah. Some Muslims learn the whole book off by heart. Muslims worship at a mosque. During worship the Qur'an is always read in Arabic, its original language.

Islam is said to be a 'religion of peace' but the meaning of this for a Muslim is that the world will be at peace when the whole world is under Islamic rule.

Differences between Islam and Christianity

While Allah and the Christian God share some attributes, they have substantial differences that go beyond just naming. Most theologians do not view them as the same deity.

Islam: In Islam, salvation is based on believing in Allah's oneness – in other words, being a Muslim. Muslims believe Allah forgives all sins except worshipping another god. They don't believe Jesus is God's Son and part of the Godhead (Quran 4: 48). Muslims believe in hell (Jahannam) as a place of fire and torment. Those who reject Islam go to hell (Jahannam) and Muslims who commit grave sins also go to hell, but not necessarily for eternity.

Christianity: The Bible teaches that all people have sinned and fallen short of God's standard (Romans 3:23). For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23). The Bible teaches that Jesus was the only person to live a sinless life. He died as a substitute for all people in the world – He took our punishment. God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sins, so that we could be made right with God through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Salvation

Islam: The Qur'an teaches that heaven is a place of sensual pleasures (for men) where there is no sadness or fear. The Islamic heaven has rivers of water, milk, wine, and honey (Qur'an, 47:15). The best Muslims will get a glimpse of Allah's face in heaven, although there is no suggestion of the intimate, personal friendship with God that Christians have even here on earth.

Christianity: The Bible says that if you declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9). When we belong to Jesus, the power of the life-giving Holy Spirit frees us from the power of sin that leads to death (Romans 8:2)

Heaven and Hell

Islam: Islam teaches that Allah will weigh a person's good deeds and sins from the Book of Life on the Day of Judgment. If a Muslim has more sins than good deeds, he will go to hell

for a while until he has been punished for his sins. To get into heaven, a Muslim must perform good deeds, like praying regularly, going to mosque, reading the Qur'an, being kind to orphans and one's parents, seeking knowledge, and having integrity and patience.

Christianity: The Bible says that when Christians die and leave their earthly bodies, they have an eternal body made for by God Himself. We will be at home with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:1-9)

We must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many rooms (dwelling-places, mansions) . . . I am going there to prepare a place for you, and . . . I am coming again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, there you also will be" (John 14:2-3).

"After these things, I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" (Revelation 7:9-10)

View of the Trinity

Islam: The most fundamental element of Islam is that Allah is one, indivisible god; this strict monotheism is called Tawhid. Muslims incorrectly believe that the Christian concept of the Trinity means three separate gods. "They do blaspheme who say: 'Allah is the third of three.' There is no god except one God." (Sura 5:73).

When Muhammad wrote the Qur'an, he confused the Trinity as meaning God, Jesus, and Mary. "And when God said, 'O Jesus son of Mary, didst thou say unto men, "Take me and my mother as gods, apart from God"?' (Qur'an 5:116)

Christianity: The Bible explicitly teaches, in both the Old and New Testaments, that God is one:

"The Lord our God, the Lord is one." (Deuteronomy 6:4)

"Now one of the scribes had come up and heard their debate. Noticing how well Jesus had answered them, he asked Him, 'Which commandment is the most important of all?' Jesus replied, 'This is the most important: Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' . . . 'Right, Teacher,' the scribe replied. 'You have stated correctly that God is One and there is no other but Him.'" (Mark 12:28-32)

God called Jesus His Son (Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22, Luke 9:35, John 3:16)

“But Mary said to the angel, ‘How will this be, since I am a virgin?’ The angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; for that reason also, the holy Child will be called the Son of God.’” (Luke 1:34-35)

“After He was baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and settling on Him, and behold, a voice from the heavens said, ‘This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’” (Matthew 3:16-17)

The Biblical Trinity is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19)

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” (Jesus, John 14:26)

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.” (John 15:26)

Conclusion

A Muslim can call on Jesus as their Lord and Saviour and receive forgiveness for sin and the promise of eternal life, just as anyone else can. Many Muslims today are receiving dreams and vision from Jesus, and have been converted to Christianity through supernatural visitations from Jesus. For those who convert, their life is in danger.

Activities

1. Who founded Islam?
2. How did he get his beliefs for the foundational doctrine?
3. Where do we find the beliefs of Islam in written form?
4. What is meant by ‘a religion of peace’ in the case of Islam?
5. Draw up a table as follows. In each box write brief dot point summaries of major differences between Islam and Christianity.

	Islam	Christianity
Attributes of God		
Salvation		
Heaven & Hell		
The Trinity		

Mosques

A mosque is a place where Muslims gather to worship. Mosques have been a central part of Muslim communities since the early days of Islam.

What are the functions of a mosque?

The mosque serves a variety of roles in the lives of Muslims. Its most important role is as a house of prayer. Muslims often visit the mosque to participate in prayer with large groups. Mosques also provide religious education, and a meeting place for Muslims to have religious discussions.

Who leads the mosque?

Mosques are often led by an Islamic leader called an "imam". The imam sometimes leads the prayers, especially the Friday prayer, and is responsible for the religious guidance of those who attend the mosque.

Minaret

Minarets are towers that are often built as part of a mosque. They are used for calling Muslims to prayer. Five times each day, a man called a "muezzin" issues the call for prayer from the minaret. Minarets come in a variety of styles and shapes, but they are generally tall, narrow towers.

Prayer Room

Mosques have a room set aside specifically for prayer. This room has a wall that faces in the direction of Mecca. There is usually a niche in the wall called a "mihrab" to indicate the proper direction. The Muslim worshipers then face toward this wall when they pray. There generally isn't any furniture or chairs in the prayer room. Worshipers use prayer mats to kneel on while praying.



Decorations

Some mosques are elaborately decorated with tiles and carpets. There are no pictures of people or animals in the decorations, however, to make sure that idols are not worshiped in the mosque. Instead, the decorations use repeated geometric designs, scrolling leaves and flowers, or words from the Quran written in calligraphy.

Women's Area

Depending on the mosque, women and men may worship in different areas. Sometimes the mosque will have a separate prayer room or area where women can pray.

Questions

1. What is the function of a mosque?
2. What is the role of the 'imam'?
3. What are the two tall towers in this picture?
4. What is the posture that Muslims take on when they pray?
5. What kind of decoration would you see in a mosque?
6. Do women and men worship together?



Women in the Ottoman Empire

Women's social life was often one of relative seclusion. The extent of seclusion was dependent on class. Urban women lived in some amount of sex segregation during most of the empire's history, as many social gatherings were segregated, and many upper-class urban women veiled in public areas; rural women, on the other hand, often did not have the same restrictions placed on them. Veiling and sex segregation customs were therefore seen as a sign of status, privilege and class. Later it was seen as a sign of Ottoman and Islamic values.

Women were in large part absent from the political sphere. Men were thought of as more competent and valued in the spheres of military and politics.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_Ottoman_Empire

Islamic treatment of women

Islamic practices, still operating in many Islamic countries today:

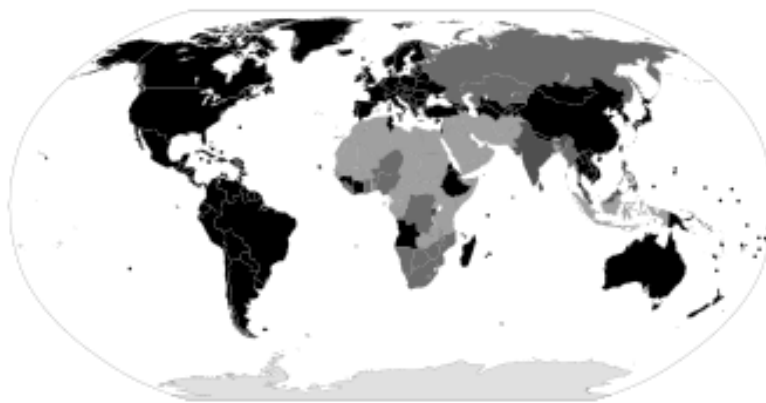
- Belief that education for women should be limited
- Restrictions on women's mobility, such as the prohibition on driving
- Strict rules on dress – complete body covering, often in all black, head coverings with no hair showing, and in some cases face coverings when in public.
- The Quran has been interpreted by some to permit domestic violence under certain circumstances.

Polygamy

Traditional Islamic law allows Muslim men to be married to multiple women (a practice known as polygyny) —up to four wives at a time — with the stipulation that if the man fears he is unable to treat more wives fairly he must marry only one. Marriage by a woman to multiple husbands (polyandry) is haram (forbidden).

There are 28 countries that allow polygamy today, under Islam. Examples:

- Saudi Arabia: Polygamy is permitted with a maximum of four wives, but the husband must treat all wives equally.
- United Arab Emirates: Similar to Saudi Arabia, men can marry up to four wives under Islamic law.
- Iran: allows polygamy, including an unrestricted number of temporary marriages arranged for a fixed period.
- Indonesia: Polygamy is legal for men, but requires permission from the first wife and must adhere to religious regulations.
- Many African countries: Under customary law, polygamous marriages can occur, but they must be registered to be recognized.
- India: Polygamy is legal only for Muslims



Countries in shown in black indicate that polygamy is banned.

Contemporary Realities and Regional Variations

The modern Muslim world presents a stark gender gap. Out of the 195 countries in the world, *the 2023 Global Gender Gap Report* ranks Afghanistan (152nd), Yemen (149th), and Pakistan (142nd) among the lowest globally for women’s education, economic participation, and political empowerment. In Afghanistan, Taliban policies since 2021 bar girls from secondary school and mandate male chaperones. Yemen’s civil war has worsened child marriage rates, with 32% of girls wed before 18. (UNICEF, 2023).

In Iran, husbands may stop wives from taking jobs or travelling overseas. Husbands have an incontestable right to divorce but women may only divorce on limited grounds and usually have to forgo monetary claims to secure agreement. A mother may have physical custody of a child until age seven when custody is transferred to the father, though a court may override that. The father remains sole legal guardian. A man who sees his wife commit adultery may be exempted some punishment if he kills her. In Iran 2022 there were protests over a woman's death. She was killed for improper hijab (head covering).

Contrastingly, some Muslim-majority states show more flexibility. Tunisia's 1956 Personal Status Code banned polygamy and expanded women's rights. Turkey's secular reforms under Ataturk granted women the right to vote in 1934, though recent policies signal a conservative rollback. Indonesia, the largest Muslim nation, hosts progressive groups like Fatayat NU, which reinterpret Islamic texts to promote gender equity (Badran, 2009).

<https://revistaminerva.pt/the-disparity-between-islamic-ideals-and-the-treatment-of-women-in-the-modern-muslim-world-a-cultural-and-historical-analysis/>

Questions

1. Compare the practice of veiling in the Ottoman Empire and today. How was it different?
2. What restrictions were placed upon women in the Ottoman Empire?
3. Which countries today have the worst record for treatment of women?
4. Which Muslim countries have made some improvements?
5. Find on a map, all the countries mentioned in this article.



Child Marriage

In many Islamic countries and around the world, child marriages are common practice. Girls below the age of 18, and often far below the age of puberty are forcibly married to older persons (sometimes in their 50s and later), often for various personal gains by the girls' guardian or with the intention to preserve family honour by helping her avoid pre-marital sex.

Child marriage is identified as a marriage involving individuals under the age of 18. It is a prevalent practice in various regions globally, with an estimated 12 million young girls getting married before reaching 18 years every year. Factors such as poverty, gender inequality, and cultural and religious beliefs often drive child marriage.

Within the realm of Islam, some have justified child marriage based on specific interpretations of Islamic teachings. One example often cited is the marriage of Prophet Muhammad to Aisha, believed to be nine years old at the time of their marriage. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that views on child marriage vary within Islamic communities, and interpretations of Islamic teachings pertaining to marriage age differ.

In Iran. more than 13,000 girls aged 13 were married from March 2018-March 2019, the U.N. report said, citing most recently-available government data.

<https://youthfoundation.org.uk/the-practice-of-child-marriage-in-islam-understanding-the-controversy.html>

World War 1 and the end of the Ottoman Empire

Although the early years of the Ottoman Empire permitted Christians to practice their religion, (because it had a financial and social benefit to the Islamic government), this leniency changed. New leaders decided to put into practice the teachings of the Qur'an such as:

(Numbers in brackets show chapter and verse of the Qur'an.)

"Slay the unbelievers wherever you find them" (3:28)

"Muslims must not take the infidels as friends." (3:85)

"Any religion other than Islam is not acceptable."

"Maim and crucify the infidels if they criticize Islam." (8:12)

"Terrorize and behead those who believe in scriptures other than the Qur'an" (8:60.)

"Muslims must muster all weapons to terrorize infidels." (8:65)

"When opportunity arises, kill the infidels wherever you find them." (9:30)

"The Jews and Christians are perverts. Fight them." (9:123)

"Fight until religion is for Allah alone." (8:39)

"Strike off their heads and fingertips." (8:12)

"Fight Jews and Christians until they pay their taxes and feel subdued." (9:29)

The Armenian Genocide – WW1

The Armenian genocide was the systematic destruction of the Armenian people and identity in the Ottoman Empire during World War I. It involved the mass murder of around one million Armenians during death marches to the Syrian desert and the forced Islamization of others, primarily women and children.

Before World War I, Armenians occupied a somewhat protected, but subordinate, place in Ottoman society. Armenians showed signs of wanting independence. Ottoman leaders took isolated instances of Armenian resistance as evidence of a widespread rebellion, and decided to permanently forestall the possibility of Armenian autonomy or independence.

On the eve of World War I in 1914, around two million Armenians lived in Ottoman territory, mostly in Anatolia, a region with a total population of 15–17.5 million. On 24 April 1915, Ottoman authorities arrested and deported hundreds of Armenian intellectuals and leaders from Constantinople. At the orders of Talaat Pasha, an estimated 800,000 to 1.2 million Armenians were sent on death marches to the Syrian desert in 1915 and 1916. Driven forward by paramilitary escorts, the deportees were deprived of food and water and subjected to robbery, rape, and massacres; survivors were dispersed into concentration camps. In 1916, another wave of massacres was ordered, leaving about 200,000 deportees alive by the end of the year. Around 100,000 to 200,000 Armenian women and children were forcibly converted to Islam and integrated into Muslim households. Massacres and ethnic cleansing of Armenian survivors continued through the Turkish War of Independence after World War I, carried out by Turkish nationalists.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_genocide

The Greek Genocide – WW1

The Greek was the systematic killing of the indigenous Christian Ottoman Greek population of Anatolia because of their religion and ethnicity, which was carried out between 1912 and 1923.

The genocide included massacres, forced deportations involving death marches through the Syrian Desert, expulsions, summary executions, and the destruction of Eastern Orthodox Church cultural, historical, and religious monuments. Several hundred thousand Ottoman Greeks died during this period. Most of the refugees and survivors fled to Greece (adding over a quarter to the prior population of Greece). Some, especially those in Eastern provinces, took refuge in the neighbouring Russian Empire. Some who remained organized the Greek resistance.

By late 1922, most of the Greeks of Asia Minor had either fled or had been killed. Those remaining were transferred to Greece under the terms of the later 1923 population exchange between Greece and Turkey, which formalized the exodus and barred the return of the refugees. Other ethnic groups were similarly attacked by the Ottoman Empire during this period, including Assyrians and Armenians, and some scholars and organizations have recognized these events as part of the same genocidal policy.

The Allies of World War I condemned the Ottoman government–sponsored massacres. In 2007, the International Association of Genocide Scholars passed a resolution recognising the Ottoman campaign against its Christian minorities, including the Greeks, as genocide.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_genocide

The Decline of the Ottoman Empire

In 1914 the Ottomans joined the side of the 'Central Powers' in World War I. These were those fighting on the German side, fighting against the British side. World War 1 ended at 11am on 11 November, 1918. This became known as Armistice Day - the day Germany signed an armistice (an agreement for peace) which caused the fighting to stop. The Ottoman Empire was abolished and the country of Turkey was declared a republic in 1923.

Questions

1. Where is Armenia?
2. Where is Asia Minor?
3. Who did the Ottomans fight with in WW1?
4. Who were the allies in WW1 fighting against the Ottomans? (research)