Lesson 5  The Ottoman Empire

MAIN IDEAS

Government  The Ottoman Empire had an efficient government and legal system for much of its history.
Government  The Ottomans controlled a vast empire that included parts of Africa, Asia, and Europe.
Culture   Conquered peoples, women, and slaves had a remarkable degree of freedom.

An Emerging Power

ESSENTIAL QUESTION   How did the Ottomans structure their empire?

Osman Founds an Empire
• After Crusades, Mongols conquered Seljuk Turks
• Turkish leader —Osman—rose to power
  - founded Ottoman Empire in early 1300s
• Ottoman organization of government proved effective
  - sultan was head of Ottoman system
  - divan—imperial council advised sultan, headed by grand vizier
  - estate owners, military and religious leaders ran local affairs

New Leadership
• Suleyman I—sultan of Ottoman Empire in 1520
  - under his rule, Ottomans produced great art, architecture, literature
• Called “The Lawgiver” for influential legal code he organized

The Legal Code
• Ottomans’ sultans passed laws to address taxation, criminal law
• Suleyman organized laws into a code for governing, expanding empire

REVIEW QUESTION
Why was Suleyman’s law code important to the Ottomans?
The Empire Expands

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** What regions did the Ottomans expand into?

**Eastern and Southern Expansion**

- Ottomans captured Syria, Arabia, Persia, Palestine, Egypt
  - controlled Mecca and Medina, the holiest cities of Islam

**End of the Byzantine Empire**

- In 1453, Ottomans took Constantinople; renamed city Istanbul
- By 1525, Suleyman attacked Austria, Hungary with help from France
- German Hapsburgs ruled central Europe; defended Austria, Hungary
- In 1529, Suleyman forced to withdraw forces due to lack of supplies

**REVIEW QUESTION**

How far did the Ottomans expand into Europe?
Life in the Ottoman Empire

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** What was the Ottoman policy toward Christians?

**Privileges of Conquered Peoples**
- Ottomans allowed Christians, Jews to worship freely for the most part
- Christians, Jews formed self-governing communities called millets
  - as long as millets were loyal, paid taxes, sultan allowed freedoms

**Slaves**
- Ottomans developed system of slave soldiers and officials
  - some conquered slaves filled important positions in empire
- **Janissaries**—elite slaves in Ottoman army; experts with gunpowder

**Women in the Empire**
- Women’s situation depended on social class, where they lived
  - in the country, women helped men with farming, herding
  - in cities, women worked in markets, workshops
- Islamic law gave women the right to own and inherit property, divorce
- Women of sultan’s court were educated; some very powerful in court

**REVIEW QUESTION**
How were women treated in the Ottoman Empire?

**Lesson Summary**
- The Ottoman Empire was run by an efficient state and legal organization.
- The Ottomans controlled a huge empire.
- Slaves and women were an active part of society in the Ottoman Empire.

**Why It Matters Now . . .**
The Ottoman Empire was a powerful Muslim state. Today no single Muslim government is as powerful as the Ottoman Empire once was.