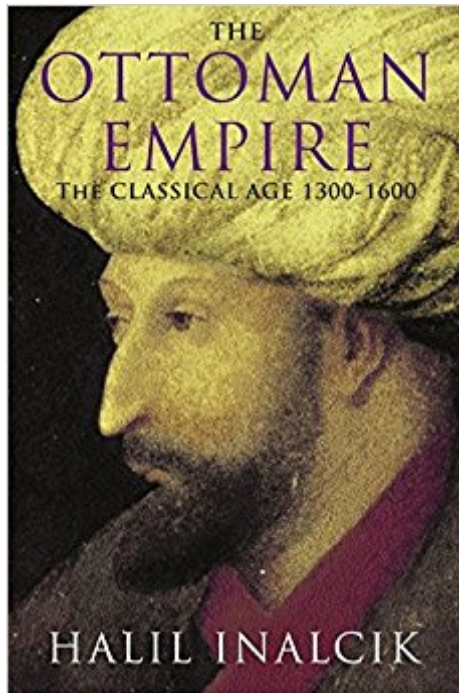


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# The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600



## 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

Text: English (translation) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Halil Inalcik is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Chicago. Born in Istanbul, he was a Professor of Ottoman History at the University of Ankara from 1952 until 1972. He then joined the University of Chicago where he taught until his retirement in 1986. He is currently Professor of Ottoman History at Bilkent University in Ankara.

I was delighted with the content. I was in Croatia when I purchased it on my Kindle. Gerald

Excellent book to learn about the structure of the Ottoman empire during its growth years. Professor Inalcik is among the most respected history scholars specializing on Ottoman history.

When I read the first chapter, it struck me as a list of wars and battles, who fought who and which side won. The style was sterile and could have been referring to business transactions. There was no sense of the savagery of the battles or the horrors awaiting those who lost. I hoped that the rest of the book would not be like this. And it wasn't. However, there was no cohesion to the book. Each chapter stood on its own, dissecting a different aspect of the society. I did not get a sense of what engine drove the expansion and durability of the Empire or what the experience was like for those peoples who were conquered by it.

Great book!

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. Because of the book was topically rather than strictly chronologically organized, it did become repetitive in places, particularly during the remarkable reign of Beyezid II (1481 - 1512) due to the number of far-reaching changes socially, politically and economically during that time. I also wish he had given more attention in his discussion of Ottoman society to the role of women (beyond those in the Sultan's harem), and of the bazzari (merchant) classes. Inalcik keeps the narrative

moving at a brisk pace, giving details to support the larger historical themes managing to provide enough historical examples without becoming bogged down in minutiae. This is perfect for amateur historians or those interested in a deeper understanding of Balkan and Near Eastern culture and institutions. A recommended read.

For the past several decades, few scholars have been as dominant in their fields as has Halil İnalcık. 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 its peak as a dominant power spanning three continents. İnalcık 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 İnalcık 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, İnalcık'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, *Osman's Dream: The History of the Ottoman Empire*, but for those who want a general understanding of how the government, economy, and culture of the Ottoman empire functioned and flourished during its glory days this is a good place to start.

Professor İnalcık is one of the best in documenting the long history of the Ottoman Empire. To many readers, this book might look boring and excessively academic. But to other readers, especially those who are interested in taking a deep look into the history of the Middle East in general and the Ottoman Empire in particular, this is one of the must-read books. The book is full of details of the Ottoman bureaucracy, the Janissaries (the army), conspiracies among rulers and would-be sultans, the social status of the different people of the empires and of course the Ottoman political situation and that of its treasury. For those interested in modern Turkish history, this might not be their best read as it highlights the history of the Ottomans up until the days of the zenith of their rule. The book

does not go as far as depicting how the Muslim Ottoman Empire was transformed into the sick Turkish man of Europe. Overall, the book is highly recommended for readers interested in Middle Eastern affairs.

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