The Ottomans | The Ottoman Capital: Istanbul

‘For 400 years each sultan had adorned Istanbul with new monuments and updated the infrastructure.’

The town of Byzantium, chosen as the new capital of the Roman Empire by Emperor Constantine, continued to develop as Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire. In addition to its strategic location, the city attracted attention worldwide due to its fascinating monuments, including the Church of Hagia Sophia. Constantinople resisted several sieges by the Muslim Arabs, but suffered greatly during the Fourth Crusade. After centuries of resistance to invasion, the city was finally conquered by Sultan Mehmed II in 857 / 1453. When the Ottomans conquered the Mamluks in 923 / 1517 and took the title of caliph, their capital became the centre of the Islamic world and was known by the names: Konstantiniyye, Asitane, Dersaadet and Istanbul. Istanbul was the Ottoman capital until 1922; for 400 years each sultan had adorned the city with new monuments and updated the infrastructure.



Name:
Sultaniye Fortress

Dynasty:
Hegira 866 / AD 1463 Early Ottoman

Details:
Çanakkale, Turkey

Justification:
Conquering Istanbul, Mehmed II built these two fortresses opposite each other on the Dardanelles to secure the routes leading to the new capital.



Name:
Kilitbahir [kilid al-bahr] Fortress

Dynasty:
Hegira 866 / AD 1463 Early Ottoman

Details:
Kilitbahir - Eceabat, Çanakkale, Turkey

Justification:
Conquering Istanbul, Mehmed II built these two fortresses opposite each other on the Dardanelles to secure the routes leading to the new capital.



Name:
Topkap# Palace

Dynasty:
Construction began in hegira 9th century / AD 15th century, during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II (his second reign: AH 855–86 / AD 1451–81); the last addition was made under Sultan Abdülmecid ['Abd al-Majid] (r. AH 1255–77 / AD 1839–61) in hegira 13th century / AD 19th century Ottoman

Details:
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Turkey

Justification:
The Topkap# Palace was originally built as a governmental palace by Mehmed II. The holy relics acquired after the caliphate was taken by the Ottomans are still kept there.



Name:
Grand Bazaar

Dynasty:
The two bedestens were built during the reign of Mehmed II 'the Conqueror', (his second reign AH 855–86 / AD 1451—81), and the bazaar developed around them Ottoman

Details:
Eminönü, Istanbul, Turkey

Justification:
The Grand Bazaar which developed around the two bedestens (safeguarded hans for the trade of precious merchandise) built by Mehmed II is now one of the largest covered bazaars in the world.



Name:
Surname-i Hümayun ('Book of the Imperial Circumcision Festival')

Dynasty:
Hegira 991–7 / AD 1583–8 Ottoman

Details:
Topkap# Palace Museum
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Turkey

Justification:
The Ottoman capital was also an important centre for trade. Here glassmakers are seen during a parade.