

The Ottomans | Court Life

'The Topkapı Palace was the governmental centre and residence of the imperial family.'

The Topkapı Palace was the governmental centre and residence of the imperial family. It was founded on an area of the Istanbul peninsula which commands views of the Golden Horn on one side, and the Bosphorus Strait and the Sea of Marmara, on the other. It is a complex of buildings in three parts (birun, enderun and harem) situated within large gardens. The birun is between the first gate, Bab-ı Hümayun (Imperial Gate), and the third gate, Bab-ı Saade (Gate of Felicity). The first courtyard accommodated the service buildings, the imperial mint, military barracks, ministries and other governmental offices. The second courtyard was called Alay Meydanı and housed the Divan-ı Hümayun – also called 'Under the Dome' – the treasury, the kitchens, stables and the entrance to the harem. Ceremonies, for instance enthronement, the royal hearing in case of emergencies known as Alay Divanı (Assembly on Foot) and the celebration of feasts, were made in front of the Gate of Felicity. The sultan's throne was also placed near the Gate; and the Holy Flag (Sancak-ı Şerif), the very symbol of the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph, was raised here when it was taken out of the Pavilion of the Holy Mantel on ceremonial occasions.



Name:
Topkapı 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, Türkiye

Justification:
Sultan Mehmed II began construction of the Topkapı Palace during his second reign (855–86 / 1451–81), as an administrative centre. In the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 926–74 / 1520–66), it also became the official residence of the imperial family.



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Details:
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

Justification:
Topkapı Palace, the Divan-ı Hümayun (also called Under the Dome), where the Ottoman government met and received ambassadors and envoys.



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Details:

Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

Justification:

Topkap# Palace, Babü's-Saade (Gate of Felicity) provided access to the inner palace which was closed to outsiders.



Name:

Portrait of the Ottoman Sultan Ahmed I

Dynasty:

Hegira first half of the 11th century / AD first half of the 17th century Ottoman

Details:

National Museums of Scotland (NMS)
Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom

Justification:

A portrait of the youthful ruler, Sultan Ahmed I, best known as the founder of the so-called Blue Mosque in Istanbul.



Name:

Tughra (imperial monogram)

Dynasty:

About hegira 956 / AD 1550 Ottoman

Details:

The British Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:

Tughras are a special form of calligraphy identifying the reigning sultan, and were used in firmans and other official documents as the royal signature or seal.



Name:

Throne of Sultan Ahmed I

Dynasty:

During the reign of Sultan Ahmed I (Hegira 1011–26 / AD 1603–17) Ottoman

Details:

Topkap# Palace Museum
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

Justification:

This throne, the symbol of the sultan's power, was made by the imperial architect Sedefkâr Mehmed Agha.



Name:

Sword

Dynasty:

Hegira 855–86 / AD 1451–81 Ottoman

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art

Cairo, Egypt

Justification:

The sword has always been important in Turkish culture; thus the Ottoman sultans were girdled with the sword at the Tomb of Eyüp Sultan (Ayyub al-Ansari), the standard bearer of the Prophet, soon after their enthronement. This sword belonged to Mehmed II 'the Conqueror'.
