

# Western Influence in Ottoman Lands | Turkey

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Although a relationship of many centuries had existed between the Ottomans and the West through wars or trade going back to the middle ages, Westernisation of Ottoman taste came to the empire much later. The zenith of the Ottoman Empire, which occurred in the 16th century, did not last long. The weaknesses that occurred in the administrative system, together with erosion of the military and financial bodies, resulted in the empire's loss of territories from the late 17th century. Attempts were made at regaining the empire's once mighty power seen in the importation of measures from the West's administrative and technical infrastructure, a borrowing that was also reflected in Ottoman society and art. Closer cultural and diplomatic relations established with the West, reinforced with the perception of the Ottoman Empire as a market, led to new developments in both the social structure of the society and its art. Thus, the introduction of Western elements into the Ottoman artistic repertoire in the 18th and 19th centuries is known as the Westernisation period.



**Name:**  
Topkapı Palace (Fruit Room of Ahmed III)

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 9th– 13th century / AD 15th –19th century Ottoman

**Details:**  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**  
By the Westernisation period, the abstract decorative and ornamental features of classical Ottoman art are replaced by naturalistic motifs.

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**Name:**  
Fountain and sabil of Ahmed III

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 1141 / AD 1729 Ottoman

**Details:**  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**  
Monumental fountains became important elements of urban planning in town squares and parks.

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**Name:**  
Astronomical instrument: Qiblanuma

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 1151 / AD 1738 Ottoman

**Details:**  
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**  
Among the favourite motifs of the period are acanthus leaves, 'C' and 'S' curves, depictions of various flowers and non-figurative landscapes.

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**Name:**

Tughra of Sultan Osman III

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 1170 / AD 1756–7 Ottoman

**Details:**

Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**

In this tughra the decoration has Western origins while the classical motifs are Ottoman. The depiction of Mecca and Medina deserves attention.

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**Name:**

Triptych with 'hilya-i-sherif' (noble description)

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 12th century / AD 18th century Ottoman period

**Details:**

Museum of Civilisations | Museum of Oriental Art "Giuseppe Tucci"  
Rome, Italy

**Justification:**

This triptych is another example of the Western origins of decoration while the classical motifs are Ottoman, surrounding depictions of Mecca and Medina.

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**Name:**

Painting

**Dynasty:**

Hegira early 12th century / AD early 18th century Ottoman

**Details:**

Uppsala University Library  
Uppsala, Sweden

**Justification:**

In landscapes, perspective became an important element as well as the use of Western motifs.

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