

# Migrations / Migrations within the Ottoman Empire

From the 16th to the late 18th century, the conquests of the Ottoman Empire resulted in continuous migratory flows through its ever-expanding lands. Between 1790 and 1923, 7 million people left their homelands due to the constant conflicts between a weakening empire and European powers on one side and indigenous people struggling for freedom and self-determination on the other. The independence of Greece in 1829, Romania in 1856, Bulgaria in 1878, followed by Bosnia, Herzegovina, Crete and, in 1913, Macedonia, Thrace and most of the Aegean islands, led to the exodus of many – Muslim and Christian, Greek, Albanian, Armenian, Arab, Kurd, Circassian and Turk – seeking a safer and more prosperous future elsewhere. But not all migration in the empire was triggered by conflict, and seasonal migration was common among many mountain people and nomads in the region.



**Working Number:** ET1 001  
**Name:** Khedive Ismail  
**Holding Museum:** Bibliotheca Alexandrina  
**Date:** 19th century  
**Materials:** -  
**Curator Justification:** Isma'il Pasha, himself of Albanian and Ottoman Turkish descent, ruled as viceroy of Egypt from 1867 to 1879. He did much to modernise the country, supported by hundreds of thousands of economic migrants from the Levant, Greece and Italy, as well as a rural labour force of African slaves.

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**Working Number:** TN 046  
**Name:** Portrait of Hammouda Pacha Bey  
**Holding Museum:** Institut Supérieur d'Histoire Contemporaine de la Tunisie  
**Date:** 19th century  
**Materials:** Wood, paint, gold leaf  
**Curator Justification:** Hammuda Ibn 'Ali, who ruled Tunisia from 1782 to 1814, belonged to the ruling Husaynid family, originating from the island of Crete. Tunisia had had a considerable and diverse Ottoman Turkish population since the 16th century.

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**Working Number:** TN 009  
**Name:** Mohamed Bey Mosque  
**Holding Museum:** -  
**Date:** 19th century  
**Materials:** -  
**Curator Justification:** The only Ottoman–Turkish style mosque in Tunisia, this building symbolises the memories, presence and aspirations of the country's ethnic Turks. In the country since the 16th century, they soon became an integral part of local society, and many rose to key positions in government or even to the position of ruler.

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**Working Number:** TN 022  
**Name:** Painting of Ahmed Pacha Bey  
**Holding Museum:** Musée d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine de Kassar Saïd

**Date:** 19th century

**Materials:** Canvas, wood, coloured pigments, gold leaf

**Curator Justification:** The Husaynid Ahmad Pasha Bey, who ruled Tunisia from 1837 to 1855, was a great reformer and thinker. Among his greatest achievements was the closure of the slave market in Tunis in 1841, followed by his declaration in 1846 that all slaves should be set free.

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**Working Number:** FR 038

**Name:** Balkans, exiled civilians on the move

**Holding Museum:** National Library of France

**Date:** 1912

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** Most mass migrations within the Ottoman Empire were triggered by conflict. The first Balkan War (1912–13), for example, pitted Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece against their overlord in a fight for ancestral homelands. After its defeat, they in turn, joined by Romania, fought over the spoils. Nearly a million Christians and Muslims from various ethnic backgrounds were displaced.

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**Working Number:** GR 022

**Name:** The arrival of the refugees

**Holding Museum:** Benaki Museum

**Date:** 1922

**Materials:** Photograph

**Curator Justification:** The Treaty of Lausanne, signed on 24 July 1923, ended the bloody war the Ottoman Empire had been fighting against Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece and the Balkan states in the wake of World War I. As a result of this treaty, 2 million people (around 1.5 million Anatolians and 500,000 Greek Muslims) became refugees.

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**Working Number:** TR2 080

**Name:** Emigrant family

**Holding Museum:** Population Exchange Museum (The Foundation of Lausanne Treaty Emigrants)

**Date:** 1916

**Materials:** Photograph

**Curator Justification:** As part of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, the governments of Turkey and Greece signed a convention regulating the exchange of Greek and Turkish populations. It was based on religious identity and involved the Greek Orthodox citizens of Turkey and the Muslim citizens of Greece. Among the 2 million or so people on the move was the Greek Luka Likidis family, who emigrated from Bodrum to Crete.

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**Working Number:** FR 048

**Name:** North African caravan, in the west of the Sahara

**Holding Museum:** National Library of France

**Date:** 1888

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** Up to the early 20th century and even beyond, large parts of the Arab and Ottoman world were inhabited by sedentary or even nomadic tribal peoples, be they Kurds, Turkmen, Arabs or Berber. Many migrated in line with the seasons to ensure the best sustenance for their flocks or to allow the effective working of agricultural land.

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**Working Number:** UA 011

**Name:** Bedouin of the Houran

**Holding Museum:** Sharjah Art Museum / Sharjah Museums Authority

**Date:** Published 1881–1884

**Materials:** Wood engraving

**Curator Justification:** Bedouins traditionally were nomadic, desert-dwelling Arabs. From the 19th century, they became increasingly semi-sedentary due to pressure from the Ottoman authorities, who also settled Circassian, Balkan and Caucasus people in areas traditionally populated by Bedouin in an attempt to restrict their freedom of movement and action.

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**Working Number:** FR 047

**Name:** A bedouin and his camel/dromedary

**Holding Museum:** National Library of France

**Date:** c. 1870

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** Bedouins of the Arabian desert were constantly on the move and had a complex relationship with settled populations, who often paid them to avoid their raids or for protection for trade routes or from enemies. Government authorities were in constant touch to ensure their compliance or negotiate allegiances. In the 19th century, the Bedouin became a symbol of romantic nomadism in the European imagination.

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