

Inventory for the Ottoman Empire / Turkish Republic 1500-2000

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I will contribute to the collaboratory with data from the Ottoman Empire/Turkey for the period 1500-2000. I presume suffering from similar limitation like many of us I will also have problems with my data. The geographical area of the Ottoman Empire was rather dynamic and continuously changing in the half millennia, which we are trying to cover. The Ottoman Empire came to being as a state in the late 14th century and consolidated itself as an Empire with its own practices of governance in the late 15th, early 16th century. The geographical expansion of the Empire reached its peak in the late 17th century. Surprisingly it took almost the same time, again about two and a half centuries, to shrink back to its approximate size of the early 15th century at the end of the World War I. As a result, the geography of the Empire in 1500 is rather close and comparable to its size in 1900.

Demographic data on the other hand is sketchier. For almost the whole half millennia except the most recent centuries, it will not be easy to compute empire wide valid figures for working population derived from the total population. Good news is though the fact that we possess more detailed data for numerous Ottoman urban centers,¹ towns with more than 5000 inhabitants, for the time period of the collaboratory. Again for some of these urban centers we also possess data on wages and prices.²

Now I would like to present you a draft of a chart for the Ottoman/Turkish population for the period 1500-2000, divided into two religious categories: Muslims and Non-Muslim. I will indicate other religious subcategories or different ethnic or gender divisions for the cross-sections if data allow in the footnotes.

¹ The most extensive work on historical demography of the Ottoman Empire is (Behar 1996)

² For prices and wages the most comprehensive study is again published by the Turkish Statistical Institute (Pamuk 2000).

Total population of the Ottoman Empire/Turkey 1500-2000

Cross-Section	Total Population	Muslim Total Population	Non-Muslim Total Population
1520-1535 ³	11 692 480 ⁴	6 791 565 ⁵	4 832 450
1650 ⁶	-	-	-
1831 ⁷	7 230 660	4 934 256	2 294 940
1844 ⁸	35 350 000	21 000 000	14350 000
1881-1893 ⁹	17 388 604	12 587 137	4 801 467
1905-06 ¹⁰	20 884 630	15 508 753	5 372 801
2000 ¹¹	67 804 000	-	-

³ This period is covered by the pioneering studies by Barkan for the Ottoman demography (Barkan 1957, 1952). Barkan used figures of households in Ottoman tithe registers in computing his figures. After reaching the total number of households for the Ottoman Empire he multiplied this number with 5. Although not really reliable these figures are the sole available ones for this early period.

⁴ (Barkan 1957) used in (Behar 1996)4.

⁵ I have calculated Muslim and Non-Muslim Total Population by multiplying total numbers of respective households with 5. Barkan provides us with the total number of Christian households. Although the numbers of Jewish households were given separately for this cross-section they are not included into this chart.

⁶ For this intersection we do not possess general numbers for the Ottoman Empire. However, there are several individual studies providing detailed demographic information on urban centers. Faroqhi also provides population estimates for 26 Ottoman towns with more than 5000 inhabitants (Faroqhi 1987, 1979-80, 1984) by using a different source than Barkan. She calculates her figures by multiplying total numbers of tax payers with a constant and tries to compute not exact numbers but ranges for the last quarter of the 16th century. See (Behar 1996)7.

⁷ 1831 marks the beginning of detailed censuses in the Ottoman Empire. The reason for the compilation of this census was not to explore the tax base of the Ottoman Empire, but to register possible conscripts. 1831 census precedes the introduction of universal conscription in the Ottoman Empire and although we have detailed information on the male part of the population females are totally missing. See (Karal 1943) for the first publication of the 1831 census and (Behar 1996)23-25 for critical comments on 1831 census. Due to inefficiency of newly modernizing Ottoman state in registering its subjects, this census represents a serious undercount. Moreover, several regions of the Ottoman Empire including its biggest city Istanbul were not included into the census. Nevertheless, on the demography of the capital we possess detailed studies throughout the centuries.

⁸ The census used and provided by Ubicini is the first census, dividing the total population into ethno-religious categories like Ottomans, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Slavs, Rumanians, Albanians, Tatars, Arabs, Syrians and Keldanis, Druses, Kurds, Turcomans, and Gypsies. However, gender division is still missing (Ubicini 1856) quoted in (Behar 1996)28.

⁹ This census was initially planned to be conducted for the year 1881 but could not be accomplished for the Ottoman Empire in its entirety. In 1893 the major outcomes of this census was compiled and served to the Sultan of the time. This census is the first modern, general and standardized census, which was accomplished neither for taxation nor for military purposes, but to acquire demographic data. In this census Ottoman population was divided into ethno-religious and gender characteristics. Number of both male and female subjects are given in ethno-religious categories like, Muslim, Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians, Catholics, Jews, Protestants, Latins, Syrians, Gypsies and non-Ottoman subjects. The data of this census were presented in (Eldem 1970; Karpas 1978; Shaw 1978) and (Behar 1996)39-42.

¹⁰ Following the 1881-1893 census in 1899 results of another official census was published by then the newly established Ottoman state statistics authority (Turkey. Nezaret-i Umur-i Ticaret ve Nafia. İstatistik-i Umumi, İdaresi. 1899) and in 1905-06 the last general Ottoman census was conducted, results of which were not published completely but substantial archival documentation on the census has been used and presented by (Shaw 1978; Karpas 1978) and also (Behar 1996)55-58.

¹¹ For the Turkish Republic demographical data and figures on industrial relations are available at the website of the Turkish Statistical Institute (Turksat) <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr> One should of course be extremely careful in integrating *Turkish* figures into this chart. Not only the geography but social demography of the Turkish Republic has been dramatically altered in the first quarter of the 20th century. Turkey has experienced a large-scale demographical engineering, first two steps of which were the massive killings of Armenians in 1915 and then a compulsory population exchange between Greece and the Turkish Republic in 1923/4.

Following this very preliminary chart on the total population of the Ottoman Empire I would like present you some thoughts on the limitations of this data regarding industrial relations for the half millennia and possible getaways from them specific to the Collaboratory. Forms of agricultural production and prevailing remuneration techniques of Ottoman rural economies in early periods will be a difficult terrain to conduct for numeric analysis. Urban centers on the other hand, can be scrutinized more effectively from the perspective of industrial relations due to the availability of individual studies in Ottoman economic and social history and the sources utilized therein. Although we possess series of urban wages and prices for the whole period it is not surprising to see that in modern period especially for the cross-sections 1900 and 2000 outcomes of the collaboratory will promise more accuracy for the Ottoman Empire compared to the classical age and early modern period of it.¹² Although not accurate the existing figures on the total population for earlier periods will still be definitely very helpful for a combined effort to utilize tax registers and accounts of labor organizations.

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¹² The Classical age of the Ottoman Empire is periodized for the period up to the 17th century and the early modern era from the mid 17th century to the early 19th century.