

### TURKIC STATE TRADITION

**Early Political Organization** The state tradition of the Turkic peoples from nomadic societies to empires was established around a powerful ruler, and the bureaucratic elite in his close proximity. The Kaghan in the 6<sup>th</sup> century Turk Empire was considered to have celestial power (kut), and ruled the empire with his *yabgu*, *eb kaghans*, *hakan begs*, *begs*, a bureaucratic organization hierarchically organized and highly centralized. The centralization of political power was not only the characteristics of the Uyghur and Khazar Khanates;

**The Seljukids** The centralized political organization was also the foundation of the Seljukid power. The Seljukids organized the rule of the empire in three levels: the lands ruled by the *beys* coming from the Seljuk family, lands ruled by the Turkic allies, and possessions by the vassal principalities. The political power was concentrated, though, in the center, and de-centralization was considered as the weakness of the empire as the Persian statesman of the Seljuks, Nizam al-Mulk indicated in his *Siyasetname*, the Book of Politics. Not only the administration of the state, both in the center and provinces, but also the organization of military, finances, agricultural economics, education and legal order was built on centralized structure. Islam and Islamic teaching were also basics of the Seljukid state tradition and in its branches in Anatolia, Syria and elsewhere.

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**Ottomans** The Ottoman Empire was built on the old Turkic ruling practices, Persian-Seljukid state tradition and Islamic political culture; however, the Ottoman Empire also borrowed the land, law, and art and architecture from the Byzantine Empire. The Ottoman Empire too was highly centralized, though towards the 19<sup>th</sup> century there happened to emerge de-centralizing tendencies. The state was organized as a great bureaucratic body, the ruling class, constituted by the men of sword, men of pen and men of religion formed the bureaucratic organization both in the center and in the periphery. All power was concentrated in the center, but the central bureaucracy did not hesitate to share the sources of power with the local sedentary people and the nomads. While the taxes and armies were provided by the locals, as if it was still a nomadic organization, the "ülüs" (share) of power became a means of legitimizing centralized power of the state, and its rulers both in Asian and European lands of the Ottoman Empire. The legacy of Turkic culture in the Ottoman Empire is not limited only to political organization, but it appears also in education, the organization of the men of pen, and of religion, and also in art and architecture of Anatolia and the Balkans during the reign of the Ottoman sultans.

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