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## Ottoman Integration into the European Metric System and the Standardization of Scales, 1860–1930

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### Abstract

Even though the integration of the Ottoman Empire into the European metric system can be traced back to the mid-19th century, the process was only fully completed during the Kemalist Revolution in the 1930s. During the Imperial period, the Ottomans' main motivation for using modern scales was to avoid the variations in the units of weights and measures that had arisen as a result of its technical and economic relations with Europe. In addition, the introduction of the new system was intended to secure the unification of the different traditional scales used in different parts of the Empire. During the Republican period, this motivation also included some ideological concerns. Using Ottoman archival documents, this article sketches out the entire process of integration into the European metric system and the standardization of weights and measures in the Ottoman Empire. In addition, it explains why this whole process lasted for sixty years, and how the Republican regime of modern Turkey was finally able to complete it. The article argues that it was the state capacity, methodology, and specific characteristics of modern Turkey as a nation-state that ultimately enabled it to fully introduce the European metric system.

### Keywords

Ottoman Empire | Weights and Measures | 19th century | Standardization of Scales | Metric System | Modern Turkey | European Convention of Meter

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