

SUMMARY OF THE MILLET SYSTEM USING GLOSSARY WORDS (Teacher Resource)

The millet system is an example of an **empire** – the Ottoman Empire, specifically – seeking to promote harmony rather than succumbing to the fate of so many empires before it (mainly, breaking into factions or smaller states as empires become too unwieldy to manage and inevitably weaken over time). In that regard, the millet system was a novel system of organization that recognized differences among its diverse ethnic and religious groups and allowed religious communities within the umbrella to rule themselves since **assimilating** non-Muslims and non-Turks into Ottoman society had previously proved less effective. Rather than forcing groups to **conform** to the majority’s standard, there was an underlying emphasis rooted in **freedom** (i.e. freedom of religion) and **tolerance**, respecting those who held different views. While this rule of law might raise the question of whether or not it represents tenuous efforts at **unity** and solidarity, it certainly speaks to the value of forms of **accommodation** and **integration**, such as truce, mediation, and compromise as a means of creating and sustaining social cohesion. However, each millet eventually became very independent, with its own facilities, such as schools, hospitals and churches. This, and the millets’ differing views, made it no longer possible for distinct ethnic and religious groups to continue to live harmoniously side by side. Due to the rise of **nationalism** and the advent of European **colonialism**, the Ottoman Empire began to crumble.