

Suleiman the Magnificent

Suleiman I (Ottoman Turkish: سلطان سليمان اول *Sultan Süleyman-ı Evvel*; Turkish: *Birinci Süleyman*, *Kanunî Sultan Süleyman* or *Muhteşem Süleyman*,^[3] 6 November 1494 – 6 September 1566), commonly known as **Suleiman the Magnificent** in the West and **Kanunî Sultan Süleyman** (Ottoman Turkish: قانونی سلطان سليمان; "The Lawgiver Suleiman") in his realm, was the tenth and longest-reigning Sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1520 until his death in 1566.^[4] Under his administration, the Ottoman state ruled over 15 to 25 million people.

Suleiman became a prominent monarch of 16th-century Europe, presiding over the apex of the Ottoman Empire's economic, military and political power. Suleiman personally led Ottoman armies in conquering the Christian strongholds of Belgrade and Rhodes as well as most of Hungary before his conquests were checked at the Siege of Vienna in 1529. He annexed much of the Middle East in his conflict with the Safavids and large areas of North Africa as far west as Algeria. Under his rule, the Ottoman fleet dominated the seas from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea and through the Persian Gulf.^[5]

At the helm of an expanding empire, Suleiman personally instituted major legislative changes relating to society, education, taxation and criminal law. His reforms, carried out in conjunction with the empire's chief judicial official Ebussuud Efendi, harmonized the relationship between the two forms of Ottoman law; sultanic (Kanun) and religious (Sharia).^[6] He was a distinguished poet and goldsmith; he also became a great patron of culture, overseeing the "Golden" age of the Ottoman Empire in its artistic, literary and architectural development.^[7]

Breaking with Ottoman tradition, Suleiman married Hurrem Sultan, a woman from his harem, a Christian of Rusyn origin who converted to Islam, and who became famous in the West by the name Roxelana who is said to have red hair due to her name being related to "Rose". Their son Selim II succeeded Suleiman following his death in 1566 after 46 years of rule. Suleiman's other potential heirs Mehmed and Mustafa had died, the former from smallpox and the latter had been strangled to death 13 years earlier at the sultan's order. His other son Bayezid was executed in 1561 on Suleiman's orders, along with his four sons, after a rebellion. Although scholars no longer believe that the empire declined after his death,^[8] the end of Suleiman's reign is still frequently characterized as a watershed in Ottoman history. In the decades after Suleiman, the empire began to experience significant political, institutional, and economic changes, a phenomenon often referred to as the Transformation of the Ottoman Empire.^[9]

Contents

Alternative names and titles

Early life

Suleiman I	
<i>Sultan of the Ottoman Empire</i> <i>Kayser-i Rûm</i> <i>Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques</i> <i>Caliph of Islam</i>	
 Suleiman in a portrait attributed to Titian c.1530	
10th Ottoman Sultan (Emperor)	
Reign	30 September 1520 – 6 September 1566
Sword girding	30 September 1520
Predecessor	Selim I
Successor	Selim II
Born	6 November 1494 ^[1] Trabzon, Ottoman Empire
Died	6 September 1566 (aged 71) ^[2] Szigetvár, Kingdom of Hungary
Burial	Süleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul
Consorts	Hurrem Sultan (legal wife) Mahidevran Sultan
Issue	Şehzade Mahmud Şehzade Mustafa

Accession	Şehzade Mehmed
Military campaigns	Şehzade Murad
Conquests in Europe	Mihrimah Sultan
Ottoman–Safavid War	Şehzade Abdullah
Campaigns in the Indian Ocean	Selim II
Mediterranean and North Africa	Raziye Sultan
Administrative reforms	Şehzade Bayezid
Cultural achievements	Şehzade Cihangir
Personal life	Şehzade Orhan
Consorts	
Issue	
Sons	
Daughters	
Relationship with Hürrem Sultan	
Grand Vizier Pargalı Ibrahim Pasha	
Succession	
Death	
Legacy	
In popular culture	
Notes	
References	
Further reading	
External links	
	Full name
	Süleyman bin Selim
	Dynasty
	Ottoman
	Father
	Selim I
	Mother
	Hafsa Sultan
	Religion
	Sunni Islam
	Tughra
	

Alternative names and titles

Suleiman the Magnificent (محمّشيم سليمان *Muḥteşem Süleymān*), as he was known in the West, was also called Suleiman the First (سلطان سليمان أول *Sulṭān Süleymān-ı Evvel*), and Suleiman the Lawgiver (قانونی سلطان سليمان *Ḳānūnī Sulṭān Süleymān*) for his reform of the Ottoman legal system.^[10]

It is unclear when exactly the term *Kanunî* (the Lawgiver) first came to be used as an epithet for Suleiman. It is entirely absent from sixteenth and seventeenth-century Ottoman sources, and may date from the early eighteenth century^[11]

Early life

Suleiman was born in Trabzon along the east coast of the Black Sea to Şehzade Selim (later Selim I), probably on 6 November 1494,^[1] although this date is not known with absolute certainty.^[12] His mother was Hafsa Sultan, a convert to Islam of unknown origins, who died in 1534.^[13] At the age of seven, Suleiman was sent to study science, history, literature, theology and military tactics in the schools of the imperial Topkapı Palace in Constantinople (modern Istanbul). As a young man, he befriended Pargalı Ibrahim, a slave who later became one of his most trusted advisers.^[14] From the age of seventeen, he was appointed as the governor of first Kaffa (Theodosia), then Manisa, with a brief tenure at Edirne.^[15]

Accession

Upon the death of his father, Selim I (r. 1512–1520), Suleiman entered Constantinople and ascended to the throne as the tenth Ottoman Sultan. An early description of Suleiman, a few weeks following his accession, was provided by the Venetian envoy Bartolomeo Contarini "The sultan is only twenty-five years [actually 26] old, tall and slender but tough, with a thin and bony face. Facial hair is evident but only barely. The sultan appears friendly and in good humor. Rumor has it that Suleiman is aptly named, enjoys reading, is knowledgeable and shows good judgment."^[16] Some historians claim that in his youth Suleiman had an admiration

Military campaigns

Conquests in Europe

Upon succeeding his father, Suleiman began a series of military conquests, eventually suppressing a revolt led by the Ottoman-appointed governor of Damascus in 1521. Suleiman soon made preparations for the conquest of Belgrade from the Kingdom of Hungary—something his great-grandfather Mehmed II had failed to achieve because of John Hunyadi's strong defense in the region. Its capture was vital in removing the Hungarians and Croats who, following the defeats of the Albanians, Bosniaks, Bulgarians, Byzantines and the Serbs, remained the only formidable force who could block further Ottoman gains in Europe. Suleiman encircled Belgrade and began a series of heavy bombardments from an island in the Danube. Belgrade, with a garrison of only 700 men, and receiving no aid from Hungary, fell in August 1521.^[19]



Suleiman as a young man

The fall of Christendom's major strongholds spread fear across Europe. As the ambassador of the Holy Roman Empire to Constantinople was to note, "The capture of Belgrade was at the origin of the dramatic events which engulfed Hungary. It led to the death of King Louis, the capture of Buda, the occupation of Transylvania, the ruin of a flourishing kingdom and the fear of neighboring nations that they would suffer the same fate ..."^[20]

The road to Hungary and Austria lay open, but Suleiman turned his attention instead to the Eastern Mediterranean island of Rhodes, the home base of the Knights Hospitaller. In the summer of 1522, taking advantage of the large navy he inherited from his father, Suleiman dispatched an armada of some 400 ships towards Rhodes, while personally leading an army of 100,000 across Asia Minor to a point opposite the island itself.^[21] Here Suleiman built a large fortification, Marmaris Castle, that served as a base for the Ottoman Navy. Following the brutal five-month Siege of Rhodes (1522) Rhodes capitulated and Suleiman allowed the Knights of Rhodes to depart.



Suleiman during the Siege of Rhodes in 1522



Ottoman Siege of Esztergom (1543)

As relations between Hungary and the Ottoman Empire deteriorated, Suleiman resumed his campaign in Central Europe, and on 29 August 1526 he defeated Louis II of Hungary (1506–26) at the Battle of Mohács. In its wake, Hungarian resistance collapsed, and the Ottoman Empire became the preeminent power in Central Europe.^[22] Upon encountering the lifeless body of King Louis, Suleiman is said to have lamented: "I came indeed in arms against him; but it was not my wish that he should be thus cut off before he scarcely tasted the sweets of life and royalty."^[23] While Suleiman was campaigning in Hungary, Turkmen tribes in central Anatolia (in Cilicia) revolted under the leadership of Kalender Çelebi.^[24]

Some Hungarian nobles proposed that Ferdinand, who was ruler of neighboring Austria and tied to Louis II's family by marriage, be King of Hungary, citing previous agreements that the Habsburgs would take the Hungarian throne if Louis died without heirs.^[25] However, other nobles turned to the nobleman Ioan Zápolya, who was being supported by Suleiman. Under Charles V and his brother Ferdinand I, the Habsburgs reoccupied Buda and took possession of Hungary. Reacting in 1529, Suleiman marched through the valley of the Danube and regained control of Buda; in the following autumn his forces laid siege to Vienna. This was to be the Ottoman Empire's most ambitious expedition and the apogee of its drive to

the West. With a reinforced garrison of 16,000 men,^[26] the Austrians inflicted the first defeat on Suleiman, sowing the seeds of a bitter Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry that lasted until the 20th century. His second attempt to conquer Vienna failed in 1532, as Ottoman forces were delayed by the siege of Güns and failed to reach Vienna. In both cases, the Ottoman army was plagued by bad weather, forcing them to leave behind essential siege equipment, and was hobbled by overstretched supply lines.^[27]

By the 1540s a renewal of the conflict in Hungary presented Suleiman with the opportunity to avenge the defeat suffered at Vienna. In 1541 the Habsburgs attempted to lay siege to Buda but were repulsed, and more Habsburg fortresses were captured by the Ottomans in two consecutive campaigns in 1541 and 1544 as a result,^[28] Ferdinand and Charles were forced to conclude a humiliating five-year treaty with Suleiman. Ferdinand renounced his claim to the Kingdom of Hungary and was forced to pay a fixed yearly sum to the Sultan for the Hungarian lands he continued to control. Of more symbolic importance, the treaty referred to Charles V not as 'Emperor' but as the 'King of Spain', leading Suleiman to identify as the true 'Caesar'.^[29]

Ottoman–Safavid War

As Suleiman stabilized his European frontiers, he now turned his attention to the ever-present threat posed by the Shi'a Safavid dynasty of Persia. Two events in particular were to precipitate a recurrence of tensions. First, Shah Tahmasp had the Baghdad governor loyal to Suleiman killed and replaced with an adherent of the Shah, and second, the governor of Bitlis had defected and sworn allegiance to the Safavids.^[30] As a result, in 1533, Suleiman ordered his Grand Vizier Pargalı Ibrahim Pasha to lead an army into eastern Asia Minor where he retook Bitlis and occupied Tabriz without resistance. Having joined Ibrahim in 1534, Suleiman made a push towards Persia, only to find the Shah sacrificing territory instead of facing a pitched battle, resorting to harassment of the Ottoman army as it proceeded along the harsh interior.^[31] When in the following year Suleiman made a grand entrance into Baghdad, he greatly enhanced his prestige by restoring the tomb of Abu Hanifa, the founder of the Hanafi school of Islamic law to which the Ottomans adhered.^[32]

Attempting to defeat the Shah once and for all, Suleiman embarked upon a second campaign in 1548–1549. As in the previous attempt, Tahmasp avoided confrontation with the Ottoman army and instead chose to retreat, using scorched earth tactics in the process and exposing the Ottoman army to the harsh winter of the Caucasus.^[31] Suleiman abandoned the campaign with temporary Ottoman gains in Tabriz and the Urmia region, a lasting presence in the province of Van, control of the western half of Azerbaijan and some forts in Georgia.^[33]

In 1553 Suleiman began his third and final campaign against the Shah. Having initially lost territories in Erzurum to the Shah's son, Suleiman retaliated by recapturing Erzurum, crossing the Upper Euphrates and laying waste to parts of Persia. The Shah's army continued its strategy of avoiding the Ottomans, leading to a stalemate from which neither army made any significant gain. In 1554, a settlement was signed which was to conclude Suleiman's Asian campaigns. Part of the treaty included and confirmed the return of Tabriz, but secured Baghdad, lower Mesopotamia, the mouths of the river Euphrates and Tigris, as well as part of the Persian Gulf.^[34] The Shah also promised to cease all raids into Ottoman territory



King John Sigismund of Hungary with Suleiman in 1556



Miniature depicting Suleiman marching with an army in Nakhchivan, summer 1554

Campaigns in the Indian Ocean

Ottoman ships had been sailing in the Indian Ocean since the year 1518. Ottoman Admirals such as Hadim Suleiman Pasha, Seydi Ali Reis^[35] and Kurtoğlu Hızır Reis are known to have voyaged to the Mughal imperial ports of Thatta, Surat and Janjira. The Mughal Emperor Akbar himself is known to have exchanged six documents with Suleiman the Magnificent.^{[35][36][37]}

In the Indian Ocean, Suleiman led several naval campaigns against the Portuguese in an attempt to remove them and reestablish trade with India. Aden in Yemen was captured by the Ottomans in 1538, in order to provide an Ottoman base for raids against Portuguese possessions on the western coast of modern India and Pakistan.^[38] Sailing on to India, the Ottomans failed against the Portuguese at the Siege of Diu in September 1538, but then returned to Aden, where they fortified the city with 100 pieces of artillery.^{[38][39]} From this base, Sulayman Pasha managed to take control of the whole country of Yemen, also taking Sana'a.^[38] Aden rose against the Ottomans however and invited the Portuguese instead, so that the Portuguese were in control of the city until its seizure by Piri Reis in the Capture of Aden (1548).

With its strong control of the Red Sea, Suleiman successfully managed to dispute control of the Indian trade routes to the Portuguese and maintained a significant level of trade with the Mughal Empire of South Asia throughout the 16th century.^[40] His admiral Piri Reis led an Ottoman fleet in the Indian Ocean, achieving the Capture of Muscat in 1552.

From 1526 till 1543, Suleiman stationed over 900 Turkish soldiers to fight alongside the Somali Adal Sultanate led by Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi during the Conquest of Abyssinia. After the first Ajuran-Portuguese war, the Ottoman Empire would in 1559 absorb the weakened Adal Sultanate into its domain. This expansion fathered Ottoman rule in Somalia and the Horn of Africa. This also increased its influence in the Indian Ocean to compete with the Portuguese Empire with its close ally the Ajuran Empire.^[41]

In 1564, Suleiman received an embassy from Aceh (a sultanate on Sumatra, in modern Indonesia), requesting Ottoman support against the Portuguese. As a result, an Ottoman expedition to Aceh was launched, which was able to provide extensive military support to the Acehnese.^[42]

The discovery of new maritime trade routes by Western European states allowed them to avoid the Ottoman trade monopoly. The Portuguese discovery of the Cape of Good Hope in 1488 initiated a series of Ottoman-Portuguese naval wars in the Indian Ocean throughout the 16th century. The Ajuran Sultanate allied with the Ottomans defied the Portuguese economic monopoly in the Indian Ocean by employing a new coinage which followed the Ottoman pattern, thus proclaiming an attitude of economic independence in regard to the Portuguese.^[43]

Mediterranean and North Africa

Having consolidated his conquests on land, Suleiman was greeted with the news that the fortress of Koroni in Morea (the modern Peloponnese, peninsular Greece) had been lost to Charles V's admiral, Andrea Doria. The presence of the Spanish in the Eastern Mediterranean concerned Suleiman, who saw it as an early indication of Charles V's intention to rival Ottoman dominance in the region. Recognizing the need to reassert naval preeminence in the Mediterranean, Suleiman appointed an exceptional naval commander in the form of Khair ad Din, known to Europeans as Barbarossa. Once appointed admiral-in-chief, Barbarossa was charged with rebuilding the Ottoman fleet, to such an extent that the Ottoman navy equaled in number those of all other Mediterranean countries put together.^[44]

In 1535, Charles V won an important victory against the Ottomans at Tunis, which together with the war against Venice the following year, led Suleiman to accept proposals from Francis I of France to form an alliance against Charles.^[30] In 1538, the Spanish fleet was defeated by Barbarossa at the Battle of Preveza, securing the eastern Mediterranean for the Turks for 33 years, until the defeat at the



Ottoman fleet in the Indian Ocean in the 16th century

Battle of Lepanto in 1571.

East of Morocco, huge Muslim territories in North Africa were annexed. The Barbary States of Tripolitania, Tunisia and Algeria became autonomous provinces of the Empire, serving as the leading edge of Suleiman's conflict with Charles V, whose attempt to drive out the Turks failed in 1541.^[45] The piracy carried on thereafter by the Barbary pirates of North Africa can be seen in the context of the wars against Spain.

In 1542, facing a common Habsburg enemy, Francis I sought to renew the Franco-Ottoman alliance. As a result, Suleiman dispatched 100 galleys^[46] under Barbarossa to assist the French in the western Mediterranean. Barbarossa pillaged the coast of



The Siege of Malta in 1565: Arrival of the Turkish fleet, by Matteo Perez d'Aleccio

Naples and Sicily before reaching France, where Francis made Toulon the Ottoman admiral's naval headquarters. Barbarossa attacked and captured Nice in 1543. By 1544, a peace between Francis I and Charles V had put a temporary end to the alliance between France and the Ottoman Empire.

Elsewhere in the Mediterranean, when the Knights Hospitallers were re-established as the Knights of

Malta in 1530, their actions against Muslim navies quickly drew the ire of the Ottomans, who assembled another massive army in order to dislodge the Knights from Malta. The Ottomans invaded Malta in 1565, undertaking the Great Siege of Malta, which began on 18 May and lasted until 8 September, and is portrayed vividly in the frescoes of Matteo Perez d'Aleccio in the Hall of St. Michael and St. George. At first it seemed that this would be a repeat of the battle on Rhodes, with most of Malta's cities destroyed and half the Knights killed in battle; but a relief force from Spain entered the battle, resulting in the loss of 10,000 Ottoman troops and the victory of the local Maltese citizenry^[47]



Barbarossa Hayreddin Pasha defeats the Holy League under the command of Andrea Doria at the Battle of Prevezain 1538



Francis I (left) and Suleiman the Magnificent (right) initiated a Franco-Ottoman alliance from the 1530s.

Administrative reforms

While Sultan Suleiman was known as "the Magnificent" in the West, he was always *Kanuni* Suleiman or "The Lawgiver" (قانونی) to his own Ottoman subjects. As the historian Lord Kinross notes, "Not only was he a great military campaigner, a man of the sword, as his father and great-grandfather had been before him. He differed from them in the extent to which he was also a man of the pen. He was a great legislator, standing out in the eyes of his people as a high-minded sovereign and a magnanimous exponent of justice".^[48] The overriding law of the empire was the Shari'ah, or Sacred Law, which as the divine law of Islam was outside of the Sultan's powers to change. Yet an area of distinct law known as the *Kanuns* (قانون, canonical legislation) was dependent on Suleiman's will alone, covering areas such as criminal law, land tenure and taxation.^[49] He collected all the judgments that had been issued by the nine Ottoman Sultans who preceded him. After eliminating duplications and choosing between contradictory statements, he issued a single legal code, all the while being careful not to violate the basic laws of Islam.^[50] It was within this framework that Suleiman, supported by his Grand Mufti Ebussuud, sought to reform the legislation to adapt to a rapidly changing empire. When the Kanun laws attained their final form, the code of laws became known as the *kanun-i Osmani* (قانون عثمانی), or the "Ottoman laws". Suleiman's legal code was to last more than three hundred years.^[51]

Suleiman gave particular attention to the plight of the rayas, Christian subjects who worked the land of the Sipahis. His Kanune Raya, or "Code of the Rayas", reformed the law governing levies and taxes to be paid by the rayas, raising their status above serfdom to the extent that Christian serfs would migrate to Turkish territories to benefit from the reforms.^[52] The Sultan also played a role in protecting the Jewish subjects of his empire for centuries to come. In late 1553 or 1554, on the suggestion of his favorite doctor and

dentist, the Spanish Jew Moses Hamon, the Sultan issued a firman (فرمان) formally denouncing blood libels against the Jews.^[53] Furthermore, Suleiman enacted new criminal and police legislation, prescribing a set of fines for specific offenses, as well as reducing the instances requiring death or mutilation. In the area of taxation, taxes were levied on various goods and produce, including animals, mines, profits of trade, and import-export duties. In addition to taxes, officials who had fallen into disrepute were likely to have their land and property confiscated by the Sultan.

Education was another important area for the Sultan. Schools attached to mosques and funded by religious foundations provided a largely free education to Muslim boys in advance of the Christian countries of the time.^[54] In his capital, Suleiman increased the number of mektebs (مکتب, primary schools) to fourteen, teaching boys to read and write as well as the principles of Islam. Young men wishing further education could proceed to one of eight medreses (مدرسه, colleges), whose studies included grammar, metaphysics, philosophy, astronomy and astrology.^[54] Higher medreses provided education of university status, whose graduates became imams (امام) or teachers. Educational centers were often one of many buildings surrounding the courtyards of mosques, others included libraries, baths, soup kitchens, residences and hospitals for the benefit of the public.^[55]

Cultural achievements

Under Suleiman's patronage, the Ottoman Empire entered the golden age of its cultural development. Hundreds of imperial artistic societies (called the اهل حرف *Ehl-i Hiref*, "Community of the Craftsmen") were administered at the Imperial seat, the Topkapı Palace. After an apprenticeship, artists and craftsmen could advance in rank within their field and were paid commensurate wages in quarterly annual installments. Payroll registers that survive testify to the breadth of Suleiman's patronage of the arts, the earliest of documents dating from 1526 list 40 societies with over 600 members. The *Ehl-i Hiref* attracted the empire's most talented artisans to the Sultan's court, both from the Islamic world and from the recently conquered territories in Europe, resulting in a blend of Arabic, Turkish and European cultures.^[56] Artisans in service of the court included painters, book binders, furriers, jewellers and goldsmiths. Whereas previous rulers had been influenced by Persian culture (Suleiman's father, Selim I, wrote poetry in Persian), Suleiman's patronage of the arts saw the Ottoman Empire assert its own artistic legacy.^[57]

Suleiman himself was an accomplished poet, writing in Persian and Turkish under the takhallus (nom de plume) Muhibbi (محبی, "Lover"). Some of Suleiman's verses have become Turkish proverbs, such as the well-known *Everyone aims at the same meaning, but many are the versions of the story*. When his young son Mehmed died in 1543, he composed a moving chronogram to commemorate the year: *Peerless among princes, my Sultan Mehmed*.^{[58][59]} In addition to Suleiman's own work, many great talents enlivened the literary world during Suleiman's rule, including Fuzuli and Baki. The literary historian E. J. W. Gibb observed that "at no time, even in Turkey, was greater encouragement given to poetry than during the reign of this Sultan"^[60] Suleiman's most famous verse is:

The people think of wealth and power as the greatest fate,
But in this world a spell of health is the best state.
What men call sovereignty is a worldly strife and constant war;
Worship of God is the highest throne, the happiest of all estates.^[60]

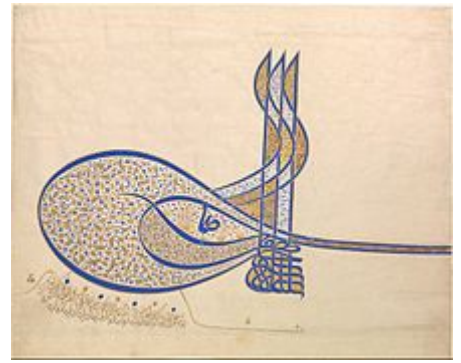


Suleiman the Magnificent receives an ambassador (painting by Matrakçı Nasuh)



Ottoman miniature from the Süleymanname depicting the execution by elephant of Serbian rebels in Belgrade

Suleiman also became renowned for sponsoring a series of monumental architectural developments within his empire. The Sultan sought to turn Constantinople into the center of Islamic civilization by a series of projects, including bridges, mosques, palaces and various charitable and social establishments. The greatest of these were built by the Sultan's chief architect, Mimar Sinan, under whom Ottoman architecture reached its zenith. Sinan became responsible for over three hundred monuments throughout the empire, including his two masterpieces, the Süleymaniye and Selimiye mosques—the latter built in Adrianople (now Edirne) in the reign of Suleiman's son Selim II. Suleiman also restored the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the Jerusalem city walls (which are the current walls of the Old City of Jerusalem), renovated the Kaaba in Mecca, and constructed a complex in Damascus.^[61]



Tughra of Suleiman the Magnificent

Personal life

Consorts

Suleiman had two known consorts:

- Mahidevran Sultan (m. 1512/14), a Circassian or Albanian^[62] "Ottoman".
theottomans.org Retrieved 2016-02-03.</ref>
- Hürrem Sultan (also known as Roxelana) (m. 1531), Suleiman's concubine and later legal wife and first Haseki Sultan, possibly a daughter of a Ruthenian Orthodox priest.^[63]



Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul, built by Mimar Sinan, Suleiman's chief architect.

Issue

Suleiman had several children with his consorts, including:

Sons

- Şehzade Mahmud, born 1513 (died in 1521)
- Şehzade Mustafa— son with Mahidevran, born 1515 (killed in 1553 on the Sultan's orders)
- Şehzade Murad, born 1518 (died in 1521)
- Şehzade Mehmed— son with Hürrem, born 1521 (died in 1543)
- Şehzade Abdullah— son with Hürrem^[64] or Mahidevran^[65] born 1522 (died in 1525)
- Sultan Selim II— son with Hürrem, born 1524 (died in 1574)
- Şehzade Bayezid— son with Hürrem, born 1525 (killed in 1561 on the Sultan's order)
- Şehzade Cihangir— son with Hürrem, born 1531 (died in 1553)
- Şehzade Orhan, born 1552 (died in 1562)

Daughters

- Mihrimah Sultan— daughter with Hürrem, born 1522 (died in 1578)
- Raziye Sultan— mother unknown, born 1524 (died in 1570)

Relationship with Hürrem Sultan

Suleiman was infatuated with Hürrem Sultan, a harem girl from Ruthenia, then part of Poland. Western diplomats, taking notice of the palace gossip about her, called her "Russelazie" or "Roxelana", referring to her Ruthenian origins.^[66] The daughter of an Orthodox priest,^[34] she was captured by Tatars from Crimea, sold as a slave in Constantinople, and eventually rose through the ranks

of the Harem to become Suleiman's favorite. Breaking with two centuries of Ottoman tradition,^[34] a former concubine had thus become the legal wife of the Sultan, much to the astonishment of the observers in the palace and the city.^[67] He also allowed Hürrem Sultan to remain with him at court for the rest of her life, breaking another tradition—that when imperial heirs came of age, they would be sent along with the imperial concubine who bore them to govern remote provinces of the Empire, never to return unless their progeny succeeded to the throne.^[68]

Under his pen name, Muhibbi, Sultan Suleiman composed this poem for Hürrem Sultan:

Throne of my lonely niche, my wealth, my love, my moonlight.
 My most sincere friend, my confidant, my very existence, my Sultan, my one and only love.
 The most beautiful among the beautiful ...
 My springtime, my merry faced love, my daytime, my sweetheart, laughing leaf ...
 My plants, my sweet, my rose, the one only who does not distress me in this room ...
 My Istanbul, my karaman, the earth of my Anatolia
 My Badakhshan, my Baghdad and Khorasan
 My woman of the beautiful hair my love of the slanted brow my love of eyes full of misery ...
 I'll sing your praises always
 I, lover of the tormented heart, Muhibbi of the eyes full of tears, I am happy^[69]



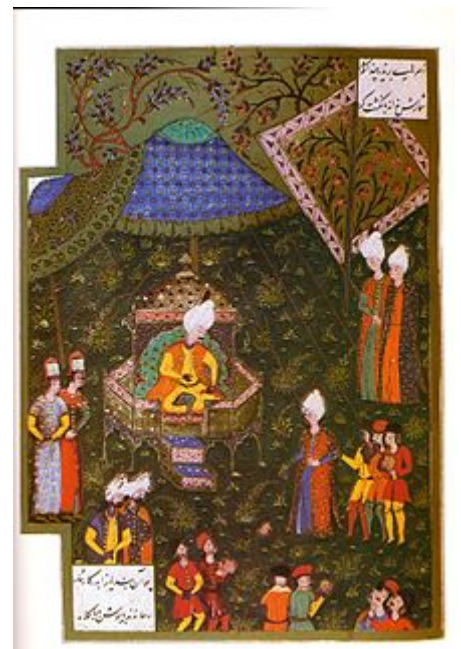
16th-century oil painting of Hürrem Sultan

Grand Vizier Pargalı Ibrahim Pasha

Pargalı Ibrahim Pasha was a friend of Suleiman from before his accession. Ibrahim was originally a Christian from Parga (in Epirus), who was captured in a raid during the 1499–1503 Ottoman–Venetian War, and was given as a slave to Suleiman most likely in 1514.^[70] Suleiman made him the royal falconer, then promoted him to first officer of the Royal Bedchamber.^[71] Ibrahim Pasha rose to Grand Vizier in 1523 and commander-in-chief of all the armies. Suleiman also conferred upon Ibrahim Pasha the honor of beylerbey of Rumelia (first-ranking military governor-general), granting Ibrahim authority over all Ottoman territories in Europe, as well as command of troops residing within them in times of war. According to a 17th-century chronicler, Ibrahim had asked Suleiman not to promote him to such high positions, fearing for his safety; to which Suleiman replied that under his reign, no matter what the circumstance, Ibrahim would never be put to death.^[72]

Yet Ibrahim eventually fell from grace with the Sultan. During his thirteen years as Grand Vizier, his rapid rise to power and vast accumulation of wealth had made Ibrahim many enemies at the Sultan's court. Reports had reached the Sultan of Ibrahim's impudence during a campaign against the Persian Safavid empire: in particular his adoption of the title serasker sultan (سر عسكر سلطان) was seen as a grave affront to Suleiman.^[73]

Suleiman's suspicion of Ibrahim was worsened by a quarrel between the latter and the finance secretary (defterdar) Iskender Çelebi. The dispute ended in the disgrace of Çelebi on charges of intrigue, with Ibrahim convincing Suleiman to sentence the defterdar to death. Before his death however, Çelebi's last words were to accuse Ibrahim of conspiracy against the Sultan.^[73] These dying words convinced Suleiman of Ibrahim's disloyalty,^[73] and on 15 March 1536 Ibrahim was executed.



Suleiman awaits the arrival of his Grand Vizier Pargalı Ibrahim Pasha at Buda, 1529.

Succession

Sultan Suleiman's two wives (Hürrem and Mahidevran) had borne him six sons, four of whom survived past the 1550s. They were Mustafa, Selim, Bayezid, and Cihangir. Of these, the eldest, was not Hürrem Sultan's son, but rather Mahidevran Sultan's, and therefore preceded Hürrem's children in the order of succession. Hürrem was aware that should Mustafa become Sultan her own children would be strangled. Yet Mustafa was recognized as the most talented of all the brothers and was supported by Pargalı İbrahim Pasha, who was by this time Suleiman's Grand Vizier. The Austrian ambassador Busbecq would note "Suleiman has among his children a son called Mustafa, marvelously well educated and prudent and of an age to rule, since he is 24 or 25 years old; may God never allow a Barbary of such strength to come near us", going on to talk of Mustafa's "remarkable natural gifts".^[74] Hürrem is usually held at least partly responsible for the intrigues in nominating a successor. Although she was Suleiman's wife, she exercised no official public role. This did not, however, prevent Hürrem from wielding powerful political influence. Since the Empire lacked, until the reign of Ahmed I, any formal means of nominating a successor, successions usually involved the death of competing princes in order to avert civil unrest and rebellions. In attempting to avoid the execution of her sons, Hürrem used her influence to eliminate those who supported Mustafa's accession to the throne!^[60]

Thus in power struggles apparently instigated by Hürrem,^[71] Suleiman had Ibrahim murdered and replaced with her sympathetic son-in-law, Rüstem Pasha. By 1552, when the campaign against Persia had begun with Rüstem appointed commander-in-chief of the expedition, intrigues against Mustafa began. Rüstem sent one of Suleiman's most trusted men to report that since Suleiman was not at the head of the army, the soldiers thought the time had come to put a younger prince on the throne; at the same time he spread rumors that Mustafa had proved receptive to the idea. Angered by what he came to believe were Mustafa's plans to claim the throne, the following summer upon return from his campaign in Persia, Suleiman summoned him to his tent in the Ereğli valley,^[75] stating he would "be able to clear himself of the crimes he was accused of and would have nothing to fear if he came".^[76]



Ottoman *sultani* manufactured during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent.

Mustafa was confronted with a choice: either he appeared before his father at the risk of being killed; or, if he refused to attend, he would be accused of betrayal. In the end, Mustafa chose to enter his father's tent, confident that the support of the army would protect him. Busbecq, who claims to have received an account from an eyewitness, describes Mustafa's final moments. As Mustafa entered his father's tent, Suleiman's eunuchs attacked Mustafa, with the young prince putting up a brave defence. Suleiman, separated from the struggle only by the linen hangings of the tent, peered through the chamber of his tent and "directed fierce and threatening glances upon the mutes, and by menacing gestures sternly rebuked their hesitation. Thereupon, the mutes in their alarm, redoubling their efforts, hurled Mustafa to the ground and, throwing the bowstring round his neck, strangled him!"^[77]

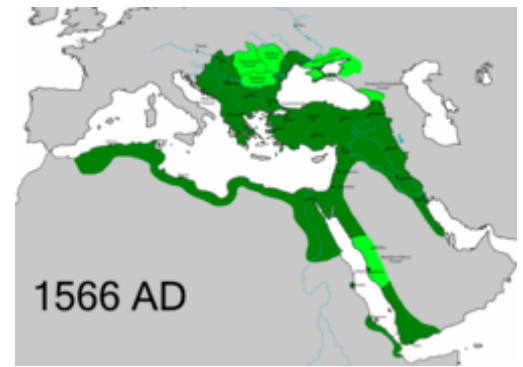
Cihangir is said to have died of grief a few months after the news of his half-brother's murder.^[78] The two surviving brothers, Selim and Bayezid, were given command in different parts of the empire. Within a few years, however, civil war broke out between the brothers, each supported by his loyal forces.^[79] With the aid of his father's army, Selim defeated Bayezid in Konya in 1559, leading the latter to seek refuge with the Safavids along with his four sons. Following diplomatic exchanges, the Sultan demanded from the Safavid Shah that Bayezid be either extradited or executed. In return for large amounts of gold, the Shah allowed a Turkish executioner to strangle Bayezid and his four sons in 1561,^[78] clearing the path for Selim's succession to the throne five years later



Distribution of rewards after the siege of Szigetvár

Death

On 6 September 1566, Suleiman, who had set out from Constantinople to command an expedition to Hungary, died before an Ottoman victory at the Battle of Szigetvár in Hungary^[2] and the Grand Vizier kept his death secret during the retreat for the enthronement of Selim II. Just the night before the sickly sultan died in his tent, two months before he would have turned 72. The sultan's body was taken back to Istanbul to be buried, while his heart, liver, and some other organs were buried in Turbék, outside Szigetvár. A mausoleum was constructed above the burial site, and came to be regarded as a holy place and pilgrimage site. Within a decade a mosque and Sufi hospice were built near it, and the site was protected by a salaried garrison of several dozen men.^[80]



The Ottoman Empire at the time of the death of Suleiman the Magnificent

Legacy

The formation of Suleiman's legacy began even before his death. Throughout his reign literary works were commissioned praising Suleiman and constructing an image of him as an ideal ruler, most significantly by Celalzade Mustafa, chancellor of the empire from 1534–1557.^[81] Later Ottoman writers applied this idealized image of Suleiman to the Near Eastern literary genre of advice literature (*naṣīḥatnāme*), urging sultans to conform to his model of rulership and to maintain the empire's institutions in their sixteenth-century form. Such writers were pushing back against the political and institutional transformation of the empire after the middle of the sixteenth century, and portrayed deviation from the norm as it had existed under Suleiman as evidence of the decline of the empire.^[82] Western historians, failing to recognize that these 'decline writers' were working within an established literary genre and often had deeply personal reasons for criticizing the empire, long took their claims at face value and consequently adopted the idea that the empire entered a period of decline after the death of Suleiman.^[83] Since the 1980s this view has been thoroughly reexamined, and modern scholars have come to overwhelmingly reject the idea of decline, labeling it an "untrue myth."^[8]



Türbe (tomb) of Sultan Suleiman at Süleymaniye Mosque

At the time of Suleiman's death, the Ottoman Empire was one of the world's foremost powers.^[84] Suleiman's conquests had brought under the control of the Empire major Muslim cities (such as Baghdad), many Balkan provinces (reaching present day Croatia and Hungary), and most of North Africa. His expansion into Europe had given the Ottoman Turks a powerful presence in the European balance of power. Indeed, such was the perceived threat of the Ottoman Empire under the reign of Suleiman that Austria's ambassador Busbecq warned of Europe's imminent conquest: "On [the Turks'] side are the resources of a mighty empire, strength unimpaired, habituation to victory endurance of toil, unity discipline, frugality and watchfulness ... Can we doubt what the result will be? ... When the Turks have settled with Persia, they will fly at our throats supported by the might of the whole East; how unprepared we are I dare not say."^[85] Suleiman's legacy was not, however, merely in the military field. The French traveler Jean de Thévenot bears witness a century later to the "strong agricultural base of the country, the well being of the peasantry, the abundance of staple foods and the pre-eminence of organization in Suleiman's government".^[86]

Even thirty years after his death, "Sultan Solymán" was quoted by the English playwright William Shakespeare as a military prodigy in *The Merchant of Venice*, where the Prince of Morocco boasts about his prowess by saying that he defeated Suleiman in three battles (Act 2, Scene 1).^{[87][88]}

Through the distribution of court patronage, Suleiman also presided over a Golden Age in Ottoman arts, witnessing immense achievement in the realms of architecture, literature, art, theology and philosophy.^{[7][89]} Today the skyline of the Bosphorus and of many cities in modern Turkey and the former Ottoman provinces, are still adorned with the architectural works of Mimar Sinan. One of these, the Süleymaniye Mosque is the final resting place of Suleiman: he is buried in a domed mausoleum attached to the mosque.



Funeral of the Ottoman Sultan
Suleiman the Magnificent

Nevertheless, assessments of Suleiman's reign have frequently fallen into the trap of the Great Man theory of history. The administrative, cultural, and military achievements of the age were a product not of Suleiman alone, but also of the many talented figures who served him, such as grand viziers Ibrahim Pasha and Rüstem Pasha, the Grand Mufti Ebussuud Efendi, who played a major role in legal reform, and chancellor and chronicler Celalzade Mustafa, who played a major role in bureaucratic expansion and in constructing Suleiman's legacy^[90]

In popular culture

- Suleiman the Magnificent appears as the lead character of the 2011–14 Turkish TV series Muhtesem Yüzyıl and occurs in TV series Hürrem Sultan (2003).
- Suleiman I also features in the movies Les trois sultanes (1912) and Eğri csillagok aka Stars of Eger (1968).
- Suleiman is portrayed as a young man, and a friend and ally of Ezio Auditore in the game Assassin's Creed: Revelations.^[91]
- Suleiman the Magnificent appears as the leader of the Ottomans in the computer strategy games Age of Empires III, Civilization IV, and Civilization V.

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 - Tezcan, Baki (2010). *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern Period*. Cambridge University Press. p. 9. ISBN 978-1-107-41144-9 "Ottomanist historians have produced several works in the last decades, revising the traditional understanding of this period from various angles, some of which were not even considered as topics of historical inquiry in the mid-twentieth century. Thanks to these works, the conventional narrative of Ottoman history – that in the late sixteenth century the Ottoman Empire entered a prolonged period of decline marked by steadily increasing military decay and institutional corruption – has been discarded. [...] As observed by Douglas Howard, Ottoman decline became an "untrue myth."
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External links

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Suleiman the Magnificent House of Osman Born: 6 November 1494Died: 6 September 1566		
Regnal titles		
Preceded by <u>Selim I</u>	<u>Sultan of the Ottoman Empire</u> 22 Sep 1520 – c. 6 Sep 1566	Succeeded by <u>Selim II</u>
Sunni Islam titles		
Preceded by <u>Selim I</u>	<u>Caliph of Islam</u> 22 Sep 1520 – c. 6 Sep 1566	Succeeded by <u>Selim II</u>

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