

The Ottomans: 2 – the Reign of Suleiman

1. What were Suleyman's qualities when he first became sultan?

He was young and inexperienced, he was surrounded by poets and interested in fashion. He was seen as a man of peace, a "gentle lamb."

2. How did Suleyman gain control over his realm?

He demanded assurances of loyalty from everyone in his domain. Those who did not profess loyalty were declared enemies. He killed rebels instantly—and made sure it was widely known.

3. How was the sultan's power dependent on slavery?

Slaves from the conquered regions provided military and civil servants for the defence and operation of the empire.



4. When Suleyman put his friend Ibrahim into the position of grand vizier, how did Ibrahim serve him? What happened to Ibrahim?

Ibrahim served Suleyman loyally and capably as prime minister; however, Roxellana influenced Suleyman against Ibrahim and Suleyman had him killed.

5. How did Suleyman achieve an army so capable and disciplined that "ten thousand could be led by a single thread"?

He required each Christian family in his realm to give up one of their sons to him; they received demanding military training and were able to advance based on their achievements.

6. How was Suleyman different from other conquerors of his time?

Only he allowed his conquered subjects to keep their own faiths, because he knew that to force a new religion on them would cause rebellion.

7. What were the distant borders of the area Suleyman controlled, and why couldn't he extend his empire any farther?

Suleyman's empire included central Europe, North Africa, and Persia. Distance and weather prevented Suleyman from extending it farther.

8. How did Suleyman change in his last years?

After Mustafa's death, Suleyman became a recluse; he turned more to poetry and to Islamic religious observation. He grew old and physically weakened, and he died before the victory of his last campaign had been achieved.

Discussion points:

- How could Suleyman, who was reputed to be wise, religious, and gentle, could have had two people he loved, Ibrahim and Mustafa, killed?
- It's not often that a ruler is called "the Magnificent." Why do you think Suleyman got this honour in history? List several reasons and compare him to other rulers you've studied.

Task:

Commemorating the Reign of Suleyman

In the year 2020, we will observe the 500th anniversary of the beginning of Suleyman's reign. Encourage your students to start preparing for the celebration now by designing commemorative coins, bills, postage stamps, costumes, a monument, and a convention center. Working in groups, students should research art and design during Suleyman's reign so that the commemorative materials will pay tribute to the period in which he lived.

