

9th Grade Suleiman Inquiry

How “Magnificent” Was Suleiman?



Titian, painting of Suleiman, c1530 ©World History Archive/Newscom

Supporting Questions

1. How was Suleiman characterized during his reign?
2. How did Suleiman expand the Ottoman Empire?
3. What changes did Suleiman make to the governance of the Ottoman Empire?
4. To what extent did Suleiman promote tolerance in the Ottoman Empire?



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How “Magnificent” Was Suleiman?

New York State Social Studies Framework Key Idea & Practices	<p>9.7 OTTOMANS AND MING PRE-1600: Christianity, Islam, and Neo-Confucianism influenced the development of regions and shaped key centers of power in the world between 1368 and 1683. The Ottoman Empire and Ming Dynasty were two powerful states, each with a view of itself and its place in the world.</p> <p>✔ Gathering, Using, and Interpreting Evidence ✔ Comparison and Contextualization</p>
Staging the Question	Students read an excerpt from the <i>National Geographic</i> (2014) article “After 450 Years, Archaeologists Still Hunting for Magnificent Sultan’s Heart.” Discuss what reasons might explain the fascination with finding Suleiman’s remains.

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3	Supporting Question 4
How was Suleiman characterized during his reign?	How did Suleiman expand the Ottoman Empire?	What changes did Suleiman make to the governance of the Ottoman Empire?	To what extent did Suleiman promote tolerance in the Ottoman Empire?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
List reasons why Suleiman would be perceived as “magnificent.”	Write a paragraph describing how Suleiman was able to conquer territories and expand the Ottoman Empire.	Write a summary of the laws and reforms passed by Suleiman to stabilize his control of the Ottoman Empire.	Develop a claim with evidence about the extent to which religious and ethnic tolerance was promoted during Suleiman’s reign.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
<p>Source A: Excerpt from Inscription on Moldavian fortress (1538)</p> <p>Source B: Excerpt from <i>Suleyman the Magnificent and His Age</i></p> <p>Source C: Excerpt from <i>Lords of the Horizons</i></p> <p>Source D: Painting of Suleiman (c. 1530)</p>	<p>Source A: Map of Ottoman expansion, 1300–1683</p> <p>Source B: Excerpt from “The Ottomans in Europe”</p> <p>Source C: Excerpt from “Siege of the Moles”</p>	<p>Source A: Excerpt from <i>The Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire</i></p> <p>Source B: Excerpt from <i>The Turkish Letters</i> (c. 1555–1562)</p>	<p>Source A: Excerpt from <i>Owning the Earth</i></p> <p>Source B: Map of religious divisions in Europe (c. 1555)</p> <p>Source C: Excerpt from <i>On the Ottoman Empire</i></p>

Summative Performance Task	<p>ARGUMENT How “magnificent” was Suleiman? Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources while acknowledging competing views.</p> <p>EXTENSION Research the recent debate concerning the depiction of Suleiman in the Turkish soap opera <i>The Magnificent Century</i>. Have a class discussion on how Suleiman’s story should be told.</p>
Taking Informed Action	<p>UNDERSTAND Research the relationship between church and state in modern-day Turkey.</p> <p>ASSESS Weigh the arguments for and against Turkish membership in the European Union.</p> <p>ACT Create a class position statement on the issue and email or mail it to the European Commission.</p>



Overview

Inquiry Description

This inquiry leads students through an investigation of the Ottoman Empire during the 16th century by examining the esteemed leader Suleiman the Magnificent. By investigating the compelling question “How ‘magnificent’ was Suleiman?” students are asked to evaluate the positive and negative impacts Suleiman had on the region. The formative performance tasks are designed to build on knowledge and skills through the course of the inquiry and should help students recognize the often simplistic nature of historical labels in understanding complex figures. Students ultimately create an argument supported by evidence as to the appropriateness of the label “magnificent” after considering the ways in which Suleiman conquered territories, the bureaucratic systems that he continued and/or altered, and the dual nature of his desire to spread Islam while also allowing religious autonomy.

In addition to the Key Ideas listed earlier, this inquiry highlights the following Conceptual Understanding and Content Specification:

- (9.7c) The Ottoman Empire and the Ming Dynasty had different views of the world and their place in it. Islam under the Ottoman Empire and Neo-Confucianism under the Ming Dynasty influenced the political, economic, military, and diplomatic interactions with others outside of their realm. Students will examine how the Ottomans interacted with Europeans noting the role of Suleiman the Magnificent.

NOTE: This inquiry is expected to take four to six 40-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries in order to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question “How ‘magnificent’ was Suleiman?” students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument with evidence and counterevidence from a variety of sources.

NOTE: Suleiman’s name has also been spelled Suleyman. The former is used in all of the inquiry text; the latter has been maintained in any historical sources in which it is used.



Staging the Compelling Question

The compelling question could be staged by having students read an excerpted article from *National Geographic* and discuss the archaeological hunt for Suleiman’s remains. Teachers may want to have students brainstorm reasons why people have a fascination with finding the remains of an individual as well as reasons why Suleiman might be referred to as “magnificent.”

Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question—“How was Suleiman characterized during his reign?”—asks students to examine descriptions of Suleiman to assess why Europeans would describe him as “magnificent,” while he was known as “the Lawgiver” to those within the Ottoman Empire. Featured Source A is an inscription on a Moldavian fortress in which Suleiman describes himself. Featured Sources B and C are excerpts from two books on Suleiman that provide context for the label “magnificent,” thereby enabling students to begin building the elements of their arguments in response to the compelling question.

Supporting Question 2

The second supporting question—“How did Suleiman expand the Ottoman Empire?”—helps students determine the methods and conditions through which Suleiman was able to conquer such a vast area. The formative performance task asks students to write a summary of Suleiman’s actions that led to expansion. Featured Source A is a map illustrating the expansion of the Ottoman through various periods in its history. Featured Source B includes an excerpted article discussing the conditions in Europe that allowed Suleiman to expand his empire and describing his aggressive tactics. This source contains violent descriptions, and teachers should consider this content when choosing to use this source in class. Featured Source C is an excerpt from a secondary account that speaks to the barbarism of Suleiman’s soldiers in their unsuccessful attempt to take Vienna.

Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question—“What changes did Suleiman make to the governance of the Ottoman Empire?”—asks students to reflect on the bureaucratic structure established prior to and during Suleiman’s reign. The formative performance task asks students to summarize the reforms Suleiman instituted as emperor. Featured Source A provides a description of the governing structure in the Ottoman Empire and Suleiman’s role in its establishment. Featured Source B is an excerpt from *The Turkish Letters*, which provides a description of the Ottoman governing system from the perspective of a Holy Roman Empire ambassador.



Supporting Question 4

The fourth supporting question—“To what extent did Suleiman promote tolerance in the Ottoman Empire?”—challenges students to consider the spread of Islam and the level of religious freedom and autonomy afforded to minority groups. The formative performance task asks students to write a claim based on evidence about whether or not Suleiman’s collective policies promoted tolerance. In addition to the featured sources from the previous performance tasks, the featured sources here present students with two different perspectives concerning diversity within the Ottoman. Featured Source A is an excerpt from the book *Owning the Earth*, in which the author presents Suleiman’s expansion as a means to advance Islam. Featured Source B includes a map of the main non-Islamic religious groups under Ottoman power. Featured Source C, an excerpt from *On the Ottoman Empire*, describes the attempts by Suleiman to promote stability through the millet system, which is generally seen as tolerant to ethnic and religious minorities.

Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have been introduced to some of the factors that led to Suleiman being labeled “magnificent.” Students should be able to demonstrate the breadth of their understanding and the ability to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students are asked to construct an evidence-based argument responding to the compelling question “How ‘magnificent’ was Suleiman?”

Students’ arguments likely will vary, but could include any of the following:

- Although he instituted some beneficial reforms, Suleiman was not a “magnificent” ruler because his expansion of the Ottoman Empire was through aggressive warfare and conquering weaker regimes.
- Suleiman made some positive reforms, but much of the Ottoman Empire’s stability was a continuation of the empire’s established systems.
- The reforms instituted by Suleiman created a powerful, stable, and tolerant empire, making him a “magnificent” Ottoman leader.

Students could extend their arguments by investigating the ways in which depictions of Suleiman have become controversial in Turkish society. Students could research the recent debate concerning the depiction of Suleiman (and Islam itself) in the Turkish soap opera *The Magnificent Century*. Students could have a class discussion concerning how they would depict Suleiman’s story in a video or play.

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by drawing on their knowledge of the relationships between religions and governments. They demonstrate their capacity to *understand* by researching the relationship between religion and government in modern-day Turkey. The argument extension activity also provides some context in terms of the role of religion in Turkish society. Students show their ability to *assess* by investigating how this relationship has affected the debate regarding Turkey’s membership in the European Union. And they *act* by crafting a class position statement concerning this issue and sharing it with the European Commission, the European Union’s executive body, which is responsible for the decision.



Staging the Compelling Question

Featured Source

Source A: Roff Smith, article describing Suleiman's reign and the search for his burial place, "After 450 Years, Archaeologists Still Hunting for Magnificent Sultan's Heart" (excerpt) *National Geographic*, June 20, 2014

On a rainy day in February, a black Subaru purrs along a country road through the sodden farmland east of Pécs, in rural southern Hungary.

"Back in Süleyman's day, all this would have been much more heavily wooded," says Norbert Pap, a professor of political geography at the nearby University of Pécs. "Oak forests mainly, broken up with meadows and cornfields and vineyards, although as you draw nearer to Szigetvár the land opened up further and became more marshy."

We were on our way to the fortress at Szigetvár, following an old road that was around in the time of the great Turkish sultan Süleyman the Magnificent and that, for as long as anyone can remember, has been known colloquially as Turbek Road.

In the summer of 1566, Szigetvár was the site of a bloody siege that French diplomat Cardinal Richelieu would later call "the battle that saved civilization." For five desperate weeks Szigetvár castle, the garrison of the hopelessly outnumbered forces of the Austrian Empire, held off an advancing army of more than 100,000 Ottoman troops led by Süleyman, a wily, gray-bearded veteran on his 13th military campaign.

The sultan's ultimate goal was Vienna. To capture the Habsburg capital, known as "the Golden Apple," would have been the crowning achievement of his long and brilliant reign. But it wasn't to be. As he marched through southern Hungary, he found his path blocked by an indomitable Croatian nobleman named Miklós Zrínyi, who held the fortress at Szigetvár and refused to surrender.

Zrínyi and his men put up a heroic fight, and when at last they could hold out no longer, they galloped out of the castle with suicidal élan on the morning of September 8 in one of history's great death-and-glory cavalry charges. None survived, but their weeks of bitter resistance cost the Turks more than 20,000 men and stopped their march to Vienna in its tracks. More than a century would pass before the Ottomans would try to capture Vienna again.

The night before the castle fell, the ailing sultan died in his tent, two months shy of his 72nd birthday. Although the sultan's body was taken to Constantinople for burial, it was said that his heart remained behind in Hungary, buried with his other organs in a golden casket beneath the campaign tent in which he died.

For the past two years, Pap has been on the trail of the lost tomb of Süleyman's heart.

"I started doing this simply because I was looking for a challenge," Pap says. Like most Hungarians he grew up hearing the story of the Siege of Szigetvár and the legend of Süleyman's lost tomb. "I wanted to see if by using an interdisciplinary approach and hard science, we couldn't solve this old mystery," he says.

His proposal to find the lost tomb fired the imagination of Turkish authorities. The discovery of the burial place of Süleyman's heart would have enormous symbolic significance at a time when Turks are rediscovering, and embracing, their old Ottoman heritage. With the 450th anniversary of Süleyman's death coming up in 2016, the Turkish government is enthusiastically funding the search....



Romantic Myth

Not surprisingly, the discovery of what may be the ruins of a 16th-century Ottoman town and—just possibly—the lost tomb of a great sultan has drawn a lot of interest from many quarters. Within a few moments of our arrival in the old vineyards, a carload of police arrived. They were all business, but relaxed when they realized the visitors were just Professor Pap and his team.

"They were worried we might be treasure hunters," explained Erika Hancz, the team's archaeologist, who led last summer's excavation in the vineyard. For years there have been whispers of buried Ottoman treasure in and around the fortress at Szigetvár, although none has ever been found. The latest discovery, of what may be Turbek, has sparked fresh imaginings of a golden casket containing the sultan's heart lying beneath the earth.

"There is no golden casket," Hancz said. "That part of the story is definitely a myth, something made up during the 18th century to add a bit of glamour to the tale. If Süleyman's heart was buried here, it would have been wrapped in cloth and placed in a wooden box. And so, as far as the heart goes, there might not be much of anything for us to find."

But was the heart ever actually removed and buried? Many scholars think not—that while the shrine to the sultan's memory might have been real enough, the story that his heart was buried beneath it was merely a colorful myth concocted years later. "We are supposed to believe that the Grand Vizier allowed the sultan's body to be treated in a way notoriously not allowed by Islam?" asked Nicholas Vatin, a renowned Ottoman scholar at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris, who investigated the old stories and came away concluding they were just part of local folklore.

"All they had to do was bury the body—intact—and exhume it later. It had been done before, with the body of Selim I in 1520, and keeping the death of a sultan secret until the successor could be informed was fairly typical Ottoman policy in the 16th century. The romantic story of Süleyman's heart being buried in Hungary, I'm sorry to say, is just a myth," Vatin said.

Istanbul University's Günhan Börekçi concurs. What the search for Süleyman's heart boils down to today, he says, is a combination of the Hungarians' desire to develop Szigetvár as a tourist destination and nostalgia in Turkey for the Ottoman Empire's golden—and partly mythical—past.

Nostalgia for the Empire

Certainly Süleyman is a bankable name these days. Among other things, he—or rather the 44-year-old actor Halit Ergenç, who plays him—is the star of an immensely popular Turkish TV series called *Magnificent Century*. A lavishly filmed soap opera set in the 16th-century court of Süleyman the Magnificent, it has been a runaway success since it launched in 2011, gathering more than 200 million viewers each week in 52 countries.

"My mother watches it every Wednesday night," says archaeologist Hancz. "It is very popular in Hungary." It is popular in a lot of other countries throughout the region as well—places like Bosnia and Serbia, where the years of Ottoman rule are not otherwise nostalgically remembered; it's even a top-rated show in Greece.

Nowhere is it more popular than in Turkey itself, where the golden years of the Ottoman Empire are embraced and celebrated across the board—in art, architecture, cuisine, couture, literature, politics, and film. Turkey's highest-grossing movie was another period drama—*Conquest 1453* (2012), a glitzy re-creation of the fall of Constantinople at the hands of Sultan Mehmed II, known as Mehmed the Conqueror. In the skies Turkish Airlines is redesigning its



uniforms, with leaked photos showing a return to Ottoman-style fezzes and below-the-knee skirts. Meanwhile, on the ground, the government is spending considerable sums of money on archaeological digs and on restoring Ottoman buildings and monuments abroad: Seven restoration projects are taking place in Hungary alone, including a €2 million (\$3 million U.S.) grant to restore the 16th-century mosque within the walls of Szigetvár castle.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan himself is an avowed admirer of Süleyman. Indeed, his critics sometimes refer to him as "Sultan Erdoğan" and his foreign policies as "neo-Ottoman." Curiously enough, Erdoğan is far from being a fan of Magnificent Century, frequently condemning the show on the grounds that its portrayal of Süleyman the Magnificent is nowhere near magnificent enough, with too much of the pleasure-seeking palace intriguer and not enough of the battle-hardened warrior-poet who, as the prime minister is fond of pointing out, spent years in the saddle, on campaign.

Hopes for Tourism

None of those campaigns were any grander or more ambitious than the one that ended at Szigetvár in 1566. Hopes are high in this part of Hungary that this surge in interest in Süleyman and the golden age of the Ottoman Empire will translate to a similar surge in tourism. The numbers of Turkish tourists in Hungary have risen by over 40 percent in the past few years, and shops and businesses in the otherwise fading farm town of Szigetvár would love to get a slice of that action.

Already €1 million has been earmarked for a new visitor center at the Szigetvár castle, and there is talk of five-star hotels. The town already boasts a Turkish-Hungarian Friendship Park commemorating the battle at Szigetvár, with enormous sculptures of the two foes—Süleyman and Zrínyi, side by side, rather than in conflict—and a shrine to Süleyman containing soil from his birthplace, Trebizond, in eastern Turkey.

"Süleyman is the most popular Ottoman sultan, known everywhere in the world, and such an association of Szigetvár with his heart [and] tomb would attract, no doubt, many Turkish tourists, as well as those from other countries and regions," says Börekçi. "For Muslim Turks, such a discovery would mean so much. Süleyman is considered one of the greatest caliphs in Islamic history; thus, they would consider his tomb as another pilgrimage site. You should see how many people visit Süleyman's mausoleum in Istanbul today."

Finding a few old Ottoman bricks—even a lot of old Ottoman bricks—and pinning a name to them are two different things. Intriguing though the ruins are, they may not have anything to do with Süleyman's tomb. Indeed, long-standing local tradition has it that Süleyman's tomb stood on ground now occupied by an old Catholic church. Built in the early years of the 18th century, the crumbling ochre-colored church sits in muddy farmland about three-quarters of a mile down the slope from the vineyards where Pap and his team found the ruins.

A plaque on the front of the church, put up in 1916, categorically states that this was the site of Süleyman's tomb, although so far no ruins have been found on the church grounds. Archaeological test trenches have drawn a blank.

"The claim that the tomb was beneath the church was made purely for political reasons during World War I, at a time when Hungary and Turkey were close friends and allies," says Pap. "The locals wanted to demonstrate solidarity with the Turks, a sense of shared history."

Still, a century of local tradition is hard to shake. The Turkish government in particular is convinced that there must be something more to the story of the church than just a few obliging locals telling pleasant fictions to their allies in wartime, and is pressing Pap and his team to concentrate their efforts there. Even if the ruins on the hilltop



are indeed Turbek, it is entirely possible that Süleyman's tomb was located down the slope from the town, three-quarters of a mile away.

"They are putting up the money, so we will certainly dig there some more if they want us to," says Pap, although his and his team's own hearts are set more on the ruins they have discovered up the hill.

Tantalizing Traces

To find more evidence about the site, Pap and his team have been sifting through mountains of old documents, letters, maps, and paintings, and coupling their archival research with hard science and good old-fashioned footwork.

The evidence they've found thus far is certainly tantalizing. Newly discovered letters written by a German spy in the 1570s mention the sultan's heart being buried on the site—by far the earliest known reference to the tale. Contemporary accounts of Turbek describe it as a place of vineyards and fruit trees and cornfields—which is consistent with computer modeling of 16th-century crop patterns and land use for the hilltop where the ruins were found.

"There were not that many places around where these crops all come together," says Zita Bognar, the team's geomorphologist, who has spent the past two years analyzing old maps, historic land use, and topographical changes in the landscapes around Szigetvár. "Down by where the church is was all marshy then."

Then there is the etching of Prince Paul Esterhazy, discovered by the team's archivist Máté Kitanics. Drawn around the time Szigetvár was retaken by the Habsburgs, it shows the Hungarian nobleman astride a prancing charger near the castle walls with a town labeled "Turbek" sitting—significantly—atop a hill in the background, in distance and direction not at all unlike the setting where the ruins are found today.

Still more tantalizing evidence that these hilltop ruins may be the lost Turbek comes from firsthand accounts of the Siege of Szigetvár, which say that Süleyman could see the castle from his tent—so today somebody standing by the shrine, supposedly built where Süleyman's tent once stood, should have the same view. And sure enough, face south and gaze out between the fruit trees, and you can easily spot Szigetvár castle in the distance.

And that distance, a bit under three miles, is just about right, says Kitanics, who has sifted through hundreds of old letters and accounts of the battle in his search for the tomb. "They all agree that the sultan's tent was located about an hour's walk from the castle, safely out of range of the cannons on the ramparts," he says. "I have hiked from here to Szigetvár several times, and it always takes just about exactly an hour." The old church, on the other hand, by tradition the favored location of the shrine, is only a 35-minute walk from the castle, he says. "And you can't see the castle from there."

Finally, there is a sense of logic in having this hilltop be the site of Süleyman's last encampment. The summer of 1566, when the Siege of Szigetvár took place, was one of the rainiest in years. In such a flat, dreary, rain-sodden landscape of marsh and floodplain, the sultan surely would have claimed this elevated bit of ground, away from the mud and mosquitoes, argues Pap, and with a good view of the town and castle he was planning to conquer. "This would have been the best spot. Why wouldn't he take it for himself?"

Why wouldn't he indeed? But whether he left his heart there is likely to remain a mystery. The only way to really prove it one way or the other, says Istanbul University's Börekçi, would be to open the imperial mausoleum in

Istanbul and do an autopsy on Süleyman's body to see if his heart is still there. "But such a thing would be unthinkable. The sultans' bodies are so sacred that nobody would dare to touch them."

© 2014 National Geographic Society. Full article available at: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/06/140620-ottoman-empire-suleyman-hungary-turkey-sultans-heart/>.



Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

Source A: Suleiman, Inscription placed on the fortress of Bender, Moldavia in 1538, *Islam: A Thousand Years of Faith and Power* (excerpt), 2002

I am God's slave and sultan of this world. By the grace of God I am head of Muhammad's community. God's might and Muhammad's miracles are my companions. I am Suleyman, in whose name the *hutbe* [Friday sermon] is read in Mecca and Medina. In Baghdad I am the shah, in Byzantine realms the Caesar, and in Egypt the sultan; who sends his fleets to the seas of Europe, the Maghrib and India. I am the sultan who took the crown and throne of Hungary and granted them to a humble slave. The voivoda Petru raised his head in revolt, but my horse's hoofs ground him into the dust, and I conquered the land of Moldavia.

From *Islam: A Thousand Years of Faith and Power*, Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair. Copyright © 2002. Yale University Press.



Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

Source B: Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead, description of Suleiman’s reign, *Suleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World* (excerpts), 1995

Peter Burke discusses the range of meaning encompassed in western Europe by Renaissance understandings of the term ‘golden age’—terminology which differed markedly from that used by the Ottomans themselves. There was, for instance, no comparable Ottoman concept associated with ‘gold’, just as there was no commonly-used Ottoman equivalent of ‘the Magnificent’. There were, however, parallels in the purposes for which the notion of the ideal state could be used....The European image of Suleyman is...bound up with Christian perceptions of power, morality and the self-image of the West.

From *Suleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*, I.M. Kunt and Christine Woodhead. Copyright © 1995. Routledge.



Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

Source C: Jason Goodwin, description of the reign of Suleiman, *Lords of the Horizons: A History of the Ottoman Empire* (excerpt), 2003

Under no other sultan would the Ottoman Empire be so universally admired or feared. Suleyman's corsairs plundered the ports of Spain. Indian rajahs begged his aid. So did the King of France, who once had letters smuggled to the Sultan from an Italian prison cell, hidden in the heel of his envoy's shoe. The Iranians burnt their country on his account. The Hungarians lost their nobility at a stroke. 'He roars like a lion along our frontier,' wrote one foreign ambassador, and even the Habsburgs gave him tribute. His reputation was so splendid and magnanimous that twenty years after his death the English begged his successors for a fleet to help them tackle the Spanish Armada. Thirty years later a Neapolitan traveller went to admire his sepulcher in Constantinople, 'for surely though he was a Turk, the least I could do was to look at his coffin with feeling, for the valorous deeds he accomplished when alive'. When he went to war—thirteen times on major campaigns, endlessly on stiletto raids—foreign descriptions of the cavalcade ran to chapters. The flight of the Knights of Rhodes to Malta in 1526 made the eastern Mediterranean Ottoman; and the coast of North Africa right up to Algiers was ruled by the Barbary corsairs in the Sultan's name. When Suleyman went to sleep, four pages watched the candles for him. When he rode through the city or into battle or out hunting, they went with him, as one of the overwhelmed Venetian ambassadors reported, 'one to carry his arms, another his rain clothes, the third pitcher full of an iced drink, and the fourth something else'

He ruled so long that he became something of an Ottoman Queen Victoria, the very embodiment of his state.

From *Lords of the Horizons: A History of the Ottoman Empire*, Jason Goodwin Copyright © 2003. Picador.

Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

Source D: Titian, painting of Suleiman, c1530



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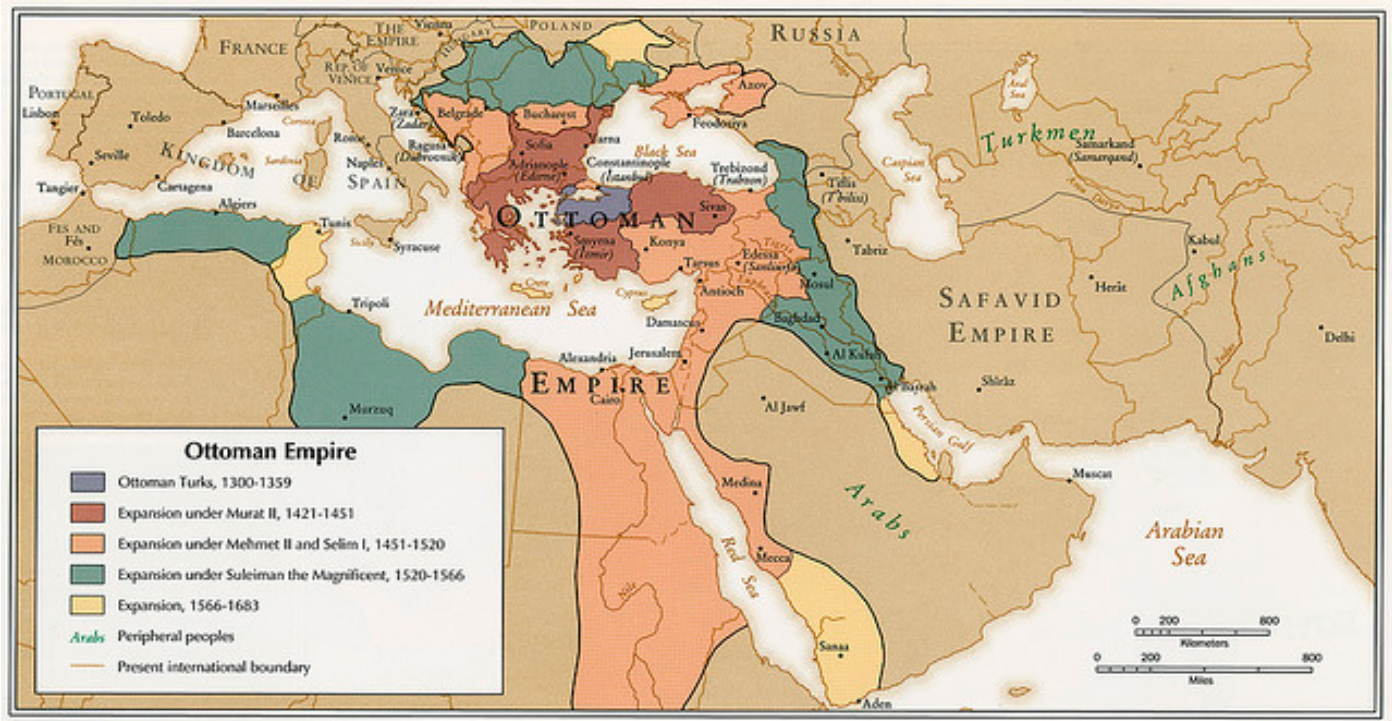


Supporting Question 2

Featured Source

Source A: Map of Ottoman expansion, 1300–1683

Map of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1359



Map courtesy of the Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library.



Supporting Question 2

Featured Source

Source B: Geoffrey Woodward, description of how Europe was affected by the Ottoman Empire, “The Ottomans in Europe” (excerpts), *History Today*, 2001

Introduction

‘Now shalt thou feel the force of Turkish arms Which lately made all Europe quake for fear.’

Christopher Marlowe’s observation in *Tamburlaine* (1587) held true for most of the sixteenth century. The Ottoman army was the largest in Europe, its navy ruled the shipping lanes of the eastern Mediterranean, and its capital Istanbul was five times the size of Paris. Its resources seemed limitless, and its capacity to sweep aside opposition in the name of Islam gave the Turkish Empire an awesome presence. Indeed between 1520 and 1565 its momentum seemed unstoppable. Well might Christians in western Europe ‘quake for fear’. This article sets out to trace some of the ways in which Europeans were affected by the Turkish Empire in the course of the sixteenth century. First, it considers the impact on the Balkans and the consequences for the Holy Roman Empire. Second, it looks at how Spain, Portugal and Venice were affected by the maritime expansion. Third, consideration is given to the argument that important military changes occurred in Europe as a result of Ottoman expansion. Finally, the strength of its Empire is evaluated and the question posed: did it really present a serious threat to Europe?

Ottoman western expansion

Since 1354 the Ottoman Turks had been advancing westwards, overrunning Constantinople (and renaming it Istanbul) in 1453, gaining control of the Black Sea and the main routes to the Balkans and driving on to the eastern Adriatic. Owing to the exploits of successive Sultans, the Ottomans were, by 1520, the undisputed leaders of the Muslim world. For the rest of the century they cast their shadow over western Europe.

Suleiman ‘the Magnificent’ (1520–66) seized Belgrade in 1521 and, upon capturing Rhodes, evicted the Knights of St John and removed the last remaining obstacle to his domination of the eastern Mediterranean. The effect upon Europe was dramatic. The Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, absent in Spain and Italy for most of the 1520s, delegated the administration and defence of his Austrian lands to his brother Ferdinand. It proved a timely move as Suleiman thrust aside the Hungarian armies at Mohacs, killed King Louis II of Hungary and, three years later, moved to the gates of Vienna. Though severe weather conditions led the Ottomans to withdraw after a two-month siege, Ferdinand and his court had been forced to flee and he never forgot how close he had been to losing his capital. In 1532 Charles himself stood in the way of the largest army ever seen in Europe and repelled its assault on Güns, 60 miles south of Vienna. This, however, was to be a temporary respite and Suleiman’s only military setback. In 1541 Ferdinand was forced out of Buda and six years later at Adrianople agreed to pay the sultan an annual tribute of 30,000 ducats in return for holding a small strip of western Hungary. Another abortive attempt to expel the Ottomans from Transylvania in 1550 confirmed that the Balkan frontier would remain 80 miles from Vienna and the Austrian Habsburgs would be treated as a tributary power.

In the second half of the century, the Habsburg emperors strengthened their frontier defences in anticipation of further Ottoman attacks and, apart from desultory fighting between 1552 and 1568, Austria was spared. In the wake of Suleiman’s death in 1566, Selim the Sot (1566–74) and his successor, Murad III (1574–95), called a halt to the landward advances and, for much of this period, the Turks concentrated on defence rather than expansion. Like other European states, they were feeling the strain of administering their massive empire, a fact reflected by the state debts recorded every year after 1592. Indeed, peace would have probably lasted longer if Emperor Rudolf had not refused to continue paying his tribute. When Murad retaliated, war began again....



(i) Turkish rule in the Balkans

The impact of Turkish rule upon all sectors of Balkan society was profound. Most of its aristocracy were killed though a minority was absorbed into the ruling class when, in keeping with Ottoman practice, the sultan took over their lands. In contrast, the peasantry, who worked the land, paid most of the taxes and were liable for military service, were treated much better than before. They were protected by the new landlords and had their feudal services abolished. Apart from the frontier regions, most of the Balkans were spared that cultural and religious destruction usually associated with armies of occupation. Christians, though encouraged to convert to Islam, were allowed religious toleration and mixed marriages, and the comparative freedom and contentment enjoyed by its people is one of the most important explanations why the Balkans remained under Ottoman rule for over 400 years.

(ii) The impact on the Holy Roman Empire

Largely for reasons of geography, Charles V suffered more than most west European rulers. As ‘the Most Catholic’ King of Spain (1516–56) and Holy Roman Emperor (1519–58), he took his obligations seriously. The Ottomans were intent on a holy war against Christianity and the western Empire looked to him to counter them, but his political commitments consistently distracted him and forced him to confine his efforts to stemming the Turkish advance in north Africa. In this respect, he was spectacularly unsuccessful, losing at Tunis (1534), Algiers (1541), and Tripoli, Bougie and Peñón de Vélez in the 1550s. To add to his problems, German princes skillfully exploited the Ottoman threat by forcing him to make political and religious concessions. Charles himself later admitted that the Turkish threat had forced him to put aside religious issues. Indeed, at times of greatest peril—in 1527, 1532 and 1541—Charles compromised religion to attend to the Turks, and significantly his only triumph against the Lutherans in 1547 was secured in the knowledge that Suleiman was engaged in wars against Persia. The Turks also received considerable help from France. It was Francis I who first encouraged them to attack the Habsburgs and allowed them free access to the ports of Marseilles and Toulon to reduce the Emperor’s power. Indeed, it can safely be said that the Ottoman Empire’s western expansion owed a great deal to the political and religious disunity of Europe.

Spain, Portugal and Venice

(i) Spain

The effects of Ottoman expansion were felt as far west as Spain in the early sixteenth century. To reduce the possibility that Granadan Moriscos would receive help from Muslims in north Africa, King Ferdinand seized five coastal settlements, including Tripoli and Algiers, and secured Spain’s sea routes between Sicily, Sardinia and Tunisia. However, the creation of a powerful Turkish fleet enabled it to conquer Egypt and renewed the threat to Spain’s possessions. And the situation became critical when Barbarossa defected to the Ottoman fleet: Tunis and Algiers were lost and several north African settlements seized in the 1550s. Not only were Spanish communications with Milan, Naples and Sicily endangered but the mainland towns of Málaga, Cadiz and Gibraltar also suffered raids from corsair pirates. It was just as well that the main Ottoman army was pre-occupied with Persia.

Philip II of Spain responded to the Muslim threat in 1560 when his troops occupied the island of Djerba preparatory to an attack on Tripoli, but the expedition ended in disaster: 27 galleys were lost and 10,000 men were taken prisoner to Istanbul. The recovery of Peñón in 1564 renewed Spanish spirits but celebrations were curtailed with the news that Malta was being besieged by 40,000 troops and 180 Ottoman warships. The subsequent relief of the island in September 1565 by the viceroy of Naples saved Sicily as well as Malta and marked the limit of Ottoman expansion in the western Mediterranean but, in spite of Suleiman’s death the following year, its maritime



power remained formidable. In 1570 Tunis, recovered by Spain in 1535, was again captured by the Turks and the Venetian island of Cyprus was attacked.

A Christian fleet, which was mainly Venetian but commanded by a Spaniard, Don John, met the Ottomans at Lepanto in the Gulf of Corinth. The ensuing battle (October 1571) saw two of the largest navies ever assembled and resulted in victory for the Christians. Though they lost 10 of their 208 galleys and 15,000 men, this was nothing compared with the losses sustained by the Turks. 117 out of 270 Ottoman ships were captured, 113 sunk and 30,000 men killed. It was their worst defeat since 1402 and dispelled the myth of invincibility. Most historians have viewed Lepanto as a crucial battle, that ended the long conflict between Muslims and Christians. Thomas Arnold has recently argued that: 'After Lepanto, the Ottoman navy never recovered its earlier near-mastery of the Mediterranean'. The extant evidence in the Turkish archives, however, does not bear out this judgment, at least not in the short term. The sultan's reaction to defeat was to rebuild his fleet and double his resolve to control north Africa and the sea routes via Malta and Sicily. Just six months after Lepanto, the Turks had built 200 new galleys and captured Cyprus—a reminder that their potential to inflict a serious blow was still formidable. In 1574 a massive Turkish fleet seized Tunis and put the Spanish garrison in La Goletta to flight. Yet just when it seemed that the Ottomans were resuming the initiative, Selim died, and with him passed the last competent sultan for over a hundred years. Western Europe had been saved by a hair's breadth.

The expansion of the Ottoman Empire had two further direct effects upon Spanish affairs. For 20 years after Philip II's accession (in 1556), the problem had drawn resources away from the Netherlands and northern Europe and enabled the Dutch Revolt to gather momentum. Second, there was widespread belief in the 1560s that the Spanish Moriscos were in secret contact with the Muslims and the Ottoman court in Istanbul. Though some 4,000 Turkish and Berber troops fought alongside the Granadan Moriscos in their rebellion of 1598–70, letters from local Turkish rulers in 1574 suggest that the sultan was indeed contemplating a co-ordinated attack on Spanish lands. Philip II and the Inquisition continued to investigate reports of collusion. Though nothing was proved, it served to perpetuate the myth of the 'Turkish menace'.

(ii) Portugal

Portuguese interests were affected both positively and negatively. Portuguese merchants in their search for gold had developed an alternative route to the Far East and Spice Islands that avoided the Turkish controlled east Mediterranean. This gave Portugal in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries 'premier league' status. But its territorial and commercial expansion came at a price. Its long sea routes needed defending from the Turks, who had also reached the Red Sea by 1500 and the Indian Ocean by the mid-sixteenth century, and they were equally keen to secure the lucrative pepper trade with the Far East. Portugal, however, was more than up to this challenge. Its efficiently designed and well defended barracks saw off Turkish galleys which were less manoeuvrable in ocean waters, but the struggle for dominance of the spice trade was not won quickly or cheaply. Moreover Portugal had limited resources. As competition with Spain increased, it could ill-afford a struggle with the Ottomans for mastery of the Indian Ocean. It was precisely this threat of over-stretch which made Portugal so vulnerable in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, due not so much to any Turkish incursion—this had long since passed—but to English, Dutch and French colonials, merchants and privateers.

(iii) Venice

The Turkish threat to Mediterranean trade in general and to Iberian possessions in particular receded in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, but its impact was none the less considerable. A principal beneficiary for much of this period was the city-state of Venice. Since 1479 it had paid a tribute to gain access to the Middle East overland routes to Aleppo and Alexandria, and under Ottoman sufferance it remained the major maritime power in the eastern Mediterranean, handling most Ottoman trade with the west and successfully competing with Portugal for



control of the pepper trade. Of course, Ottoman wars in the Red Sea, Persian Gulf and Mediterranean had disrupted trade but for most of the sixteenth century Venice itself avoided armed conflict. Indeed, by strengthening its fortresses and doubling the size of its fleet, it enjoyed rising profits from trade at least until the 1570s. However, the loss of Cyprus in 1571, rich in grain and wine, and Venice's failure to recover it, proved a turning-point in its history. In 1573 it gave up its claims to Cyprus and Dalmatia, returned lands in Albania and agreed to pay a large indemnity to normalise its trade arrangements with the sultan. The 1570s also brought new trading competitors when first French and then English merchants received Turkish 'capitulations' or privileges to compete with Venetian traders. By 1600, French merchants had displaced Venetians in the Levant, Dutch traders had won control of the east African trade and the English East India Company was ready to exploit the weakening condition of Spain, Portugal, Venice, and the Ottoman Empire.

The Turks and the 'military revolution'

Historians have long recognised the significance of the wars with the Turks as an important, if not vital, element in the development of the 'military revolution' of western states. Victory for the cross over the crescent carried more than ideological and religious superiority. It proved, at least as far as west Europeans were concerned, that their military and naval tactics, equipment and application were also second to none.

There were some important differences between European and Turkish military developments. One lay in the line of fortifications built by several Christian towns in the 1520s which were modeled on the trace Italienne: these were earthen ramparts, low-walled bastions, and strategically located cannons which could repel the main Turkish assaults whether human or artillery. Although some fortresses fell to the Turks—Szigeth in Hungary (1566), Nicosia in Cyprus (1570)—they were the exceptions to the rule, and Vienna, Güns, Corfu and Malta all successfully withstood lengthy sieges.

A second important difference was that European armies placed more emphasis on drill and discipline, on practising defensive infantry formations of squares of pikes and arquebusiers, and of combining infantry, artillery and cavalry, confident that they could repel a Turkish cavalry and infantry attack. Treatises on military tactics encouraged generals to believe the way forward was to innovate. In one writer's opinion, a well-trained pike and arquebus detachment could withstand a Turkish cavalry assault, and another author claimed that a disciplined infantry would enable 'a few men to defeat the great multitudes of the Turks'. Although contemporaries could not prove it—there were no battles between Turks and Europeans in the sixteenth century—their confidence was not misplaced, as campaign after campaign confirmed in later centuries.

Third, the Turkish navy never developed the flexibility in ship design or strategy achieved by its European counterparts. As the Spanish and Portuguese adapted their ocean-going galleons to sail the Mediterranean and modified their galleys into three-masted carracks capable of both trading and fighting, so they were able to counter the Ottoman fleet and merchant shipping which was composed solely of galleys. Though the Turks almost always put more ships to sea, the Christians had a better fleet and superior cannon fire. After Lepanto, Turkish fleets warily avoided further engagements.

Ottoman decline

To decide whether the Ottomans were in decline by the end of the 16th century, we must realise that ever since the seventh century the Turkish Empire had been expanding. As it did so, it became a military state geared for conquest and holy war. The sultan exercised, at least in theory, unlimited authority. The only conceivable challenge to his position came from his family, and such threats were negated by the traditional Ottoman practice of fratricide. By 1520, the Ottoman Empire was self-sufficient in food, minerals and land; the Islamic faith bound its people together and its army was second to none. Suleiman possessed the best field artillery, 87,000 devoted



cavalry (known as sipahis) and 16,000 highly disciplined infantry (janissaries), whose sole objective was to wage war. Its western vassal states formed a buttress to defend the core principality of Anatolia, and so, of necessity, its frontier was in a permanent state of war. Since the fourteenth century, the Ottoman family had provided very able sultans. It was they who gave the Empire its dynamism. Under Suleiman, who fought 13 successful campaigns and some 40 battles, they had a leader capable of putting the fear of Allah into all Christians. Indeed, only his death in September 1566 prevented an estimated 300,000 troops from advancing upon the Austrian-Habsburg lands. The last naval engagement between Christians and Muslims may have been in 1573, but Spain's north African and Italian possessions remained vulnerable targets and Philip II considered it prudent to keep a fleet in excess of 100 ships in the Mediterranean for the rest of his reign.

The Ottoman Empire's strengths, nevertheless, hid long-term weaknesses. First, the sultans Selim, Murad and Mohammed, who followed Suleiman, began a line of ineffectual rulers whose authority was seriously undermined by a series of palace revolts. Second, by fixing Istanbul as the administrative capital, the Ottomans had unknowingly established limits to their western and eastern Empire. Some 99 days were needed to transport 100,000 troops from Istanbul to Hungary. This reduced the campaigning season to a few months at best, and made communications and supply lines difficult to sustain. Similarly, to reach Malta by sea entailed a journey in excess of a thousand miles, which raised questions as to the point of wanting to sail beyond it. Third, the Ottomans were beginning to fall behind western Europe in naval and military technology and tactics. In fact, it can be argued that only the lack of political and spiritual unity within Europe prevented western states from exploiting Ottoman weaknesses. Already by the end of the sixteenth century Turkey's northern frontier of Azerbaijan and its central Asian trade were being challenged by the emerging state of Muscovy and its eastern frontier was threatened by the Safavids of Persia. For much of the century, the Ottomans had seen off challenges from these old rivals but victory eluded them in the Long War. It now seems clear that when both its western and eastern frontiers ceased to advance, the Ottoman state was vulnerable, and this was its condition at the end of the sixteenth century.

Conclusion

The impact of the Ottoman Turks on sixteenth-century Europe was far-reaching. This explains why Charles V regarded them as a greater threat to Christendom than Luther; why Ferdinand II devoted the best part of his life to defending the Austrian heartlands; why Spain feared for its trade and dominions in the western Mediterranean and became paranoid over suspected links with Granadan Moriscos; why Portugal was prepared to neglect its transatlantic trade and colonies in order to defend its pepper monopoly with Asia; and why Venice saw its livelihood hang by a thread as Turkish fleets threatened to cut off its sea-borne trade. It also contributed to the 'military revolution' as European armies and navies learned how first to defend and then to defeat superior numbers and, in so doing, forged ahead of their eastern rivals. In this, as in so many other ways, the Turks played an important part in shaping European history.

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Supporting Question 2

Featured Source

Source C: John Godwin, description of the extent and failings of the Ottoman Empire, "Siege of the Moles" (excerpts), *Military History*, 2001

The High Tide of Ottoman Expansion to the West Saw the Turks Burrowing Underground in an Attempt to Take Vienna.

They had swept down from the steppes of Turkestan in Central Asia, calling themselves the Ottoman Turks. And during that chill, rainy summer of 1529, they represented the gravest peril Europe had faced in a thousand years, worse even than Attila's Huns in the 5th century. Attila's hordes had been barbarian primitives—these new invaders were more advanced and sophisticated than the Western nations in many dangerous ways, particularly in the military sphere.

Named after their first sultan, Osman, the Ottoman Turks settled in what is now Anatolia, in Asia Minor. At a glance they seemed no different from other tribes of wild horsemen in that region. But the Turks possessed two outstanding attributes that made them natural conquerors: They were excellent administrators, and they were very fast learners. The first enabled them to absorb neighboring peoples. The second gave them a rapid grasp of whatever sciences into which they came in contact—engineering, architecture, medicine, astronomy and the use of gunpowder.

In the 14th century, the Turks crossed the Dardanelles Strait into Europe and proceeded to overrun the entire Balkan Peninsula. Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Romanians and Albanians all came under their domination. And in the process they created what was probably the most remarkable armed force in history.

The Turks were fervent Muslims. But they allowed Christians and Jews in their realm complete freedom of worship, providing they paid a special head tax imposed on all "infidels." The bitterly poor mountain folk of the Balkans had no money for taxes, so they were charged a "blood tribute" instead. This consisted of the biggest and strongest adolescent boys from each village, who were taken to the capital to become personal slaves of the sultan. What they actually became were janissaries ("new troops")....

In 1453, the Turks moved on Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire and the seat of the Eastern Orthodox Church—the "Second Rome." Its citizens fought desperately while the Turkish guns pounded their walls to rubble, sending out frantic pleas for help to all Christian nations. None came—they were too busy warring among themselves to respond. Constantinople fell, and the sultan rode his blood-spattered horse into the venerable cathedral of St. Sophia, to proclaim the city his new capital—today's Istanbul.

From then on, the Ottoman Empire spread with the speed of a forest fire. It reached from Egypt and the Sudan in the south to the Crimea and Ukraine in the north; from Syria, Mesopotamia and Palestine in the east to Bosnia in the west. Its subject peoples included Russians, Tartars, Arabs, Persians, Armenians and Jews, black Nubians and blond Dalmatians. The Turks themselves were a minority. With every new province the stream of tribute money and the number of available soldiers swelled; all were at the command of the sultan in Constantinople. The empire resembled an avalanche that grew in weight and velocity the farther it rolled.

The 10th sultan, Suleiman II, ascended to the Ottoman throne in 1520. The Turks called him "the Lawgiver," but to foreigners he was Suleiman the Magnificent. His court, the Seraglio, comprised an entire town within the capital, housing approximately 9,000 people and boasting water fountains that danced to music and ponds of goldfish with tiny jewels attached to their fins. His harem contained 300 slave concubines representing every race and nationality in his realm.



Suleiman was the son of a Tartar harem slave. He spoke eight languages fluently, wrote exquisite Persian poetry and composed lute music as a hobby—none of which prevented him from being one of the most ruthless warlords of his age. He enjoyed battle as much as philosophical debate and led his armies personally on horseback.... Suleiman, in other words, was the classic Renaissance prince, an Oriental counterpart to the Borgias in Rome, but infinitely more powerful.

The Venetian envoy Ottaviano Bon described Suleiman as "tall and thin, with a smoky complexion and an aquiline nose above drooping mustaches. His hands were finely boned but exceedingly strong, and it is said that he can pull the tautest bowstring in the army. On his head he wore a wide oval turban with an aigrette of peacock feathers, held in place by a clasp of diamonds. His voice was sweet and pleasing, though he never smiled during our discourse."

Suleiman was kept fully informed about the bitter feuds among the Western powers, several of which secretly sought his aid. He also knew that the rise of Protestantism was tearing Christianity apart. The time seemed ripe for a final westward push by the forces of Islam.

The Turkish assault troops took the important border fortress of Belgrade with almost playful ease. Then Suleiman's army, 100,000 strong, advanced into Hungary, the gateway to Central Europe. King Lajos II of Hungary was a brave, handsome and extremely stupid young man; he ordered the Turkish ambassadors hanged when they came to demand his submission. Calling for help from other Christian monarchs, Lajos scraped together some 25,000 noble knights and retainers. From his royal colleagues he received fair promises and not a single soldier. In August 1526, he met the Ottomans at Mohacs and was not so much defeated as obliterated. King Lajos and 24,000 of his men were killed in the battle. Hungary became yet another Turkish province.

Suleiman appointed a Transylvanian governor named Janos Zapolya as puppet king of Hungary, and it says a great deal about the state of that country that Zapolya and thousands of Hungarians fought fiercely for the Turks from then on. They had been so cruelly oppressed and impoverished by their own nobles that they felt better off under the sultan.

It took the Ottomans just three years to digest Hungary. Then Suleiman began preparations for the next meal: Austria. King Ferdinand I von Hapsburg of Austria had protested against the crowning of the puppet ruler Zapolya. Suleiman sent him a brief and ominous reply via courier: "Tell the king that I will meet him on the field at Mohacs. If he is not there I will come to Vienna to fetch him."

In the spring of 1529, the bulk of the Turkish army started massing in Bulgaria. Joined by their auxiliaries, they comprised the largest armed force ever in Europe—more than 330,000 men, 500 guns and 90,000 camels. They included 20,000 of the crack janissaries and 6,000 Christian Hungarians. Suleiman led this mass, with Ibrahim acting as seraskier (field commander, as distinct from commander in chief). It was a signal honor, since grand viziers, being politicians, usually stayed home....

The sultan banked on the thousands of highly skilled Romanian and Serbian miners in his ranks to reduce [Vienna] through mining operations. It was his first—and fatal—mistake in the war. Another soon followed. Suleiman was suffering from hubris, the delusion of invincibility that has broken so many conquerors in the past and would undo so many more in future.

When his army reached Pest, opposite Buda on the Danube, the sultan offered its small German garrison a safe retreat if the soldiers would evacuate the stronghold. The Germans accepted and marched out between two lines of jeering janissaries. But from mutual insults the two sides came to blows, then to cold steel. Within half an hour the Turks killed every man of the garrison, then turned on the town and sabered most of the inhabitants as well.



Word of the massacre spread and acted as a terrible warning for the Austrians not to trust the sultan's promises. For Suleiman the episode held a different, equally ominous warning—that he couldn't control the janissaries once they went on a rampage....

From the city walls the sentries could see the smoke of burning villages all around them. The Turks were scorching everything in their path, slaughtering or carrying off an estimated half of the peasant population. But it was not until late September, two months behind schedule, that the main body of the Ottoman army reached Vienna.

Overnight the city found itself surrounded by a mass of white tents stretching as far as the eye could see, all the way to the heights of Semmering Mountain. It was an awesome sight and helped to disguise the fact that things were not well with the Turkish army. Roughly one-third of its troops were spahis, light cavalry of very limited use in siege warfare. Of the initial 90,000 pack camels, barely 20,000 remained, and those were in bad shape. The same applied to the men, who had been drenched to the skin for months and were coughing so loudly that the sound drowned out the camp preparations.

Suleiman dispatched couriers with a demand for surrender. "I expect to sup in the city on the last day of September," his message ran. "If Vienna capitulates only my dignitaries will enter and all will be spared. If you resist, the place will be razed to the ground and all therein put to the sword." Salm sent the couriers back courteously enough, but minus any reply.

At dawn the following day, 300 cannons opened up on the city, maintaining a steady fire until dusk. The Turkish gunners displayed exemplary discipline; they had managed to keep their powder reserves dry in the torrential rains, and they loaded and fired faster than any Western artillerymen. The bombardment, however, was fairly futile. The heavy pieces, left behind in Bulgaria, would have cracked the walls, but the stone projectiles of the light field guns simply splattered, though at high elevation they curved over the walls and damaged houses. Several lodged in the tower of St. Stephen's, where they can still be seen by visitors. Salm remained calmly at his post, remarking to an aide, "These pebbles are like the little pills my medico bids me swallow."

With the balls came showers of arrows fired over the walls. The crescent-shaped Tartar bows used by the Turks were vicious weapons that could propel their arrows through chain mail or iron helmets. But again, these were typical field armament—against fortifications they had only nuisance value....

[The night of October 5th,] a new type of raiding party struck the Ottoman camp. This time the raiders came on foot and in utter silence, wearing black cloaks. Each one carried two homemade bombs—earthenware containers filled with powder and chopped lead—which they hurled into the tents. The glowing streaks of the burning fuses were the only warning the sleepers had before the grenades exploded and the lead pellets tore into them. More than 2,000 Turks died in their shredded tents.

The mining and the charges that followed went on day after day, accompanied by gunfire.

[After unsuccessful assaults by the Ottomans against Vienna, the] janissaries reeled back, though no signal for retreat had been given. Ibrahim used his horsewhip, then his saber to drive them forward, only to be ignored or cursed. For the first time in the 200 years of their existence, the janissaries refused to obey. They flooded to the rear, first in trickles, then in swarms, not stopping until they had reached their tents. Some even began to strike the tents without orders. There was no pursuit.

During that night the Turks packed up their campsites. The people in Vienna were kept awake by dreadful shrieks coming from the camps. The Ottomans were setting fire to the baggage they couldn't carry and hurling their bound prisoners into the flames. Hundreds were roasted alive, but hundreds more managed to escape in the confusion and ran toward the city walls. They were hoisted up by ropes. The Viennese refused to open any gates. They couldn't believe that the danger was over.



The following day the sea of tents around the city had nearly disappeared. Snow began to fall, far too early in the season. The weather that year, more than anything, had saved Vienna. The Turks marched off unhampered after Sultan Suleiman announced solemnly, "Allah, in His wisdom, has not yet permitted us to capture Vienna." The Ottoman losses were estimated at between 18,000 and 25,000, several times higher than those of the garrison. But civilian casualties had been ghastly—lower Austria was virtually depopulated. In some villages the invaders left pyramids of human heads in place of inhabitants....

In retrospect, the defeat at Vienna signaled the beginning of the decline of the Ottoman Empire. The invincible janissaries had been forced to retreat, and their morale was impaired. The Turks learned the hard way how dangerous such elite guards can be to their own side. The janissaries grew more and more insubordinate, threatening and occasionally murdering their monarchs. Instead of the janissaries being slaves of the sultan, the sultan frequently became their prisoner....

Selim took over after Suleiman's death in 1566, and from then on the realm went steadily downhill. The Turks never produced another capable sultan, though there were many cruel ones. Their military prowess declined decade by decade as the Western nations rapidly improved their armaments and organization. The Turks still counted as a major power; they even staged another—disastrous—siege of Vienna in 1683. But as a menace to Europe they were finished the rainy night they folded their tents and retreated into the Balkans.

From "Siege of the Moles," John Godwin. *Military History*, October 2001. Permission to use courtesy of World History Group.



Supporting Question 3

Featured Source

Source A: Alan Palmer, description of the decline of the Ottoman Empire, *The Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire* (excerpt), 1992

The Ottoman Empire was, in origin, a military institution, dedicated to fulfilling the sacred obligation of extending the ‘Adobe of Islam’ by conquering the lands of the unbelievers. Even before the fall of Constantinople the warrior Sultans had begun to bolster their personal despotism by developing a system under which selected Christian-born slaves, converted to Islam, became an imperial bodyguard. From within this privileged caste the Sultans came to find most of their ministers (viziers) and military commanders (agas). Suleiman I completed the work of Mehmed II in modifying this machine geared for continuous frontier war, into an imperial administration run by personal slaves through what were, in effect, armies of occupation.

‘Whoever assaults the Turk must be prepared to meet his united forces...because those near the ruler’s person, being all slaves and dependent, it will be more difficult to corrupt them.’ This grudging admiration for Ottoman rule in Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, written shortly before Suleiman’s accession, points shrewdly to the basic source of strength in the imperial autocracy. It could not function without total reliance on ‘those near the ruler’s person’. For the efficient administration of his empire a strong Sultan could turn confidently to the *divan-i hümayun* (a council of ministers, and a court of law) and especially to his chief minister, the Grand Vizier, who was generally the most privileged of imperial slaves. But within this centralized state, the Sultan also had to depend on the loyalty of each governor (*beylerbey* or, later, *vali*) whom he appointed to a province (*beylerbik* or *vilayet*). Beneath the governor would be several beys, heads of each county (*sanjak*) in the province. Rank was shown by the title of Pasha accorded to governors and symbolized by the bestowal of ceremonial horsetails: one to a bey; two to a governor; three to the Grand Vizier; four to the Sultan himself.

A Sultan was more than an all-powerful sovereign. He was the greatest of land-owners; all newly conquered territory passed into his possession. In the cities, especially in the capital, most landed property constituted *vakif*, a pious foundation (plural *evkaf*) under the control of a religious institution, but when Suleiman came to the throne, almost ninety per cent of land outside the towns was, technically, crown property and therefore under state ownership. By using this crown land as a basic source of revenue for his government, Suleiman built up an Islamic counterpart to Western feudalism, exploiting the slave basis of the empire, even at the lowest level in the social scale. In the Balkans and Anatolia a fief (*timar*) of land would be allocated to a mounted soldier (*sipahi*) who, while having no rights of ownership, became the Sultan’s representative on the ‘estates’ assigned to him. The *sipahi* was charged with the maintenance of order, and with encouraging agriculture so as to raise the yield from the fields; but, above all, he was responsible for collecting agreed taxes from the peasants which, after deducting a sum for the upkeep of himself, his horse and his family, he would forward to the central government. It was a cumbrous system, needing the maintenance of a coordinated discipline across the empire in order to intimidate the feudatories into collaboration. Under Suleiman this *timar* system worked; he died with a full treasury. Less skillful Sultans did not.

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Supporting Question 3

Featured Source

Source B: Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, observation of Ottoman military and social structure, "The Turkish Letters" (excerpts), 1555–1562

NOTE: Busbecq, a Fleming, was the ambassador of the Holy Roman Emperor at the Sublime Porte (the Turkish Sultan's court in Constantinople) from 1555 to 1562. His letters provide important foreign accounts of the Ottoman state. Because Busbecq was trying to bring about reform at home, he did not dwell on the real problems with Ottoman government.

At Buda I made my first acquaintance with the Janissaries; this is the name by which the Turks call the infantry of the royal guard. The Turkish state has 12,000 of these troops when the corps is at its full strength. They are scattered through every part of the empire, either to garrison the forts against the enemy, or to protect the Christians and Jews from the violence of the mob. There is no district with any considerable amount of population, no borough or city, which has not a detachment of Janissaries to protect the Christians, Jews, and other helpless people from outrage and wrong.

A garrison of Janissaries is always stationed in the citadel of Buda. The dress of these men consists of a robe reaching down to the ankles, while, to cover their heads, they employ a cowl which, by their account, was originally a cloak sleeve, part of which contains the head, while the remainder hangs down and flaps against the neck. On their forehead is placed a silver gilt cone of considerable height, studded with stones of no great value.

These Janissaries generally came to me in pairs. When they were admitted to my dining room they first made a bow, and then came quickly up to me, all but running, and touched my dress or hand, as if they intended to kiss it. After this they would thrust into my hand a nosegay of the hyacinth or narcissus; then they would run back to the door almost as quickly as they came, taking care not to turn their backs, for this, according to their code, would be a serious breach of etiquette. After reaching the door, they would stand respectfully with their arms crossed, and their eyes bent on the ground, looking more like monks than warriors. On receiving a few small coins (which was what they wanted) they bowed again, thanked me in loud tones, and went off blessing me for my kindness. To tell you the truth, if I had not been told beforehand that they were Janissaries, I should, without hesitation, have taken them for members of some order of Turkish monks, or brethren of some Moslem college. Yet these are the famous Janissaries, whose approach inspires terror everywhere.

The Turkish monarch going to war takes with him over 400 camels and nearly as many baggage mules, of which a great part are loaded with rice and other kinds of grain. These mules and camels also serve to carry tents and armour, and likewise tools and munitions for the campaign....The invading army carefully abstains from encroaching on its magazines at the outset; as they are well aware that when the season for campaigning draws to a close, they will have to retreat over districts wasted by the enemy, or scraped bare by countless hordes of men and droves of hungry animals, as if they had been devastated by locusts; accordingly they reserve their stores as much as possible for this emergency. Then the Sultan's magazines are opened, and a ration just sufficient to sustain life is daily weighed out to the Janissaries and other troops of the royal household. The rest of the army is badly off, unless they have provided some supplies at their own expense....On such occasions they take out a few spoonfuls of flour and put them into water, adding some butter, and seasoning the mess with salt and spices; these ingredients are boiled, and a large bowl of gruel is thus obtained. Of this they eat once or twice a day, according to the quantity they have, without any bread, unless they have brought some biscuit with them.... Sometimes they have recourse to horseflesh; dead horses are of course plentiful in their great hosts, and such beasts as are in good condition when

they die furnish a meal not to be despised by famished soldiers.

No distinction is attached to birth among the Turks; the deference to be paid to a man is measured by the position he holds in the public service. There is no fighting for precedence; a man's place is marked out by the duties he discharges. In making his appointments the Sultan pays no regard to any pretensions on the score of wealth or rank, nor does he take into consideration recommendations or popularity, he considers each case on its own merits, and examines carefully into the character, ability, and disposition of the man whose promotion is in question. It is by merit that men rise in the service, a system which ensures that posts should only be assigned to the competent. Each man in Turkey carries in his own hand his ancestry and his position in life, which he may make or mar as he will. Those who receive the highest offices from the Sultan are for the most part the sons of shepherds or herdsmen, and so far from being ashamed of their parentage, they actually glory in it, and consider it a matter of boasting that they owe nothing to the accident of birth; for they do not believe that high qualities are either natural or hereditary, nor do they think that they can be handed down from father to son, but that they are partly the gift of God, and partly the result of good training, great industry, and unwearied zeal; arguing that high qualities do not descend from a father to his son or heir, any more than a talent for music, mathematics, or the like; and that the mind does not derive its origin from the father, so that the son should necessarily be like the father in character, our emanates from heaven, and is thence infused into the human body. Among the Turks, therefore, honours, high posts, and judgeships are the rewards of great ability and good service. If a man be dishonest, or lazy, or careless, he remains at the bottom of the ladder, an object of contempt; for such qualities there are no honours in Turkey!

This is the reason that they are successful in their undertakings, that they lord it over others, and are daily extending the bounds of their empire. These are not our ideas, with us there is no opening left for merit; birth is the standard for everything; the prestige of birth is the sole key to advancement in the public service.

Public domain. From *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, vol. I, edited by C. T. Forster and F. H. B. Daniel. 1881. London: Kegan Paul, pp, 86–88, 153–155, 219–222, 287–290, 293.



Supporting Question 4

Featured Source

Source A: Andro Linklater, description of military and law during the Ottoman Empire, *Owning the Earth: The Transforming History of Land Ownership* (excerpts), 2013

The cutting edge of Ottoman armies was delivered by its fearsome horse-mounted archers, known as *sipahis*, or sometimes as *timariots*, from the landholding or *timar* that fed and supplied them with their mounts and arms. Adopting the tactic of Mongol horsemen who were their forebears, the *sipahis* shot arrows at the gallop, outflanking enemy formations by their speed of movement. They were recruited only from Muslim landholders. At the height of his power in the 1560s, Süleyman the Magnificent could rely on the *timar* system to finance the deployment of eighty-seven thousand *sipahi* cavalry.

Although an Ottoman cavalryman held his *timar* directly from the sultan in return for service in war—much as a Christian feudal knight held his land from the king—it could never be a purely military relationship. A fundamental concept of sharia law, the basis of the empire’s legal system, was that the earth belonged to God—“Unto Allah belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth,” the Koran states explicitly. Thus, Süleyman the Magnificent, in common with all Ottoman rulers, possessed the soil simply as God’s agent, the leader of the Muslims, *Amir-al-Muslimin*.

Land, in other words, was the currency paid to those who served the empire, and thereby advanced Islam. Holders of *timar* land not only fought, but were responsible for gathering taxes and providing local justice and administration, while alongside them the holders of religious land, the *waqf*, a category comprising almost one fifth of the empire’s territory, were expected to build schools and hospitals. In theory at least, the holders of Ottoman soil could neither inherit it nor lease it to someone else....

Next to his military achievements, Süleyman’s magnificence lay in his legal reforms, and especially the framework of land law that he laid over the patchwork quilt of imperial land ownership. It remained in force for three hundred years. And in European terms it represented a preemptive strike to establish imperial control of the land’s resources. The main purpose of the changes was to increase revenues for the state, and so it made the use of land dependent on payment of taxes and dues. Cadastral surveys—to map the ownership of land—were ordered throughout the empire in order to register its main categories—*miri* or state land, including the *timariot*; *waqf* or religious land; and *mülk* or private land, including small allotments and large tracts of reclaimed land.

A strongly centralized bureaucracy in Istanbul, headed by the Grand Vizier, used the information to impose imperial taxes that were levied through provincial governors. Throughout Süleyman’s reign these produced a treasury surplus that amounted to 71 million *akcer* (very approximately twelve million dollars) in 1528. Measured by the crude but unforgiving test of war, his revenue permitted him to raise an army of up to one hundred thousand warriors in the west, strong enough to force the Hapsburg Austrians to cede control of Hungary, while a smaller force in the east captured Baghdad from the Persians and took possession of the Persian Gulf.

A century later, the French traveler Jean de Thévenot testified to the lasting effects of Süleyman’s reforms, writing of the empire’s “strong agricultural base...the well being of the peasantry, the abundance of staple foods, and the pre-eminence of organization in Süleyman’s government.”

From *Owning the Earth: The Transforming History of Land Ownership*, Andro Linklater. Copyright © 2013. London: Bloomsbury Press, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Inc.

Supporting Question 4

Featured Source

Source B: Map of religious divisions in Europe in 1555, “Predominant Religion of 1555,” *Western Society: A Brief History*, 2009

Map of Predominant Religions in 1555



From *Western Society: A Brief History*, vol. 1, John P. McKay, D. Hill Bennett, John Buckler, Clare Crowston, and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks. Copyright ©2009 by Bedford/St. Martin’s. Used with permission of the publisher.



Supporting Question 4

Featured Source

Source C: Talip Küçükcan, description of Turkish-Muslim diaspora in southern Europe, “Re-claiming Identity: Ethnicity, Religion and Politics among Turkish-Muslims in Bulgaria and Greece” (excerpts), 1999

The *millet* system has been an important administrative apparatus to serve this end throughout Ottoman history. As a well known historian points out 'the Millet system emerged gradually as an answer to the efforts of the Ottoman administration to take into account the organization and culture of the various religious-ethnic groups it ruled. The system provided, on the one hand, a degree of religious, cultural and ethnic continuity within these communities, while on the other hand it permitted their incorporation into the Ottoman administrative, economic and political system.' (Karpaz, 1982)

Broadly speaking, the term '*millet*' in the context of Ottoman history means a religiously defined people. The Millet system had a socio-cultural and communal framework based, firstly, on religion and, secondly, on ethnicity which in turn reflected linguistic differences of the millets consisted essentially of people who belonged to the same faith.

(Karpaz, 1982) Shaw (1977) further elucidates the nature of this system:

....division of society into communities along religious lines formed the millet (nation) system, with each individual or group belonging to one millet or another according to religious affiliation....Each millet established and maintained its own institutions to care for the functions not carried out by the ruling class and state, such as education, religion, justice and social security. The separate schools, hospitals and hotels, along with hospices for the poor and the aged, have remained to modern times long after the millet courts and legal status were ended by the nation states established in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The millet system has allowed the development and maintenance of ethnic identity on the part of minority subjects within the Ottoman Empire. Greek Orthodox Christians were established as the first major millet and the Greek Orthodox patriarchate was recognised within the millet system. The patriarch was allowed to apply Orthodox law in secular and religious matters to the followers of Orthodox Church in Istanbul.

Similarly, the policy of toleration and multi-culturalism consolidated by the millet system allowed the Jews to form their own ethnic community and to establish independent religious institutions in Istanbul. It has been noted that the autonomy given to the minorities within the Ottoman territories attracted large numbers of displaced Jewish communities who then, were among the victims of persecution in Spain, Poland, Austria and Bohemia. Dumont (1982, p. 221–2) points out that 'while in Russia, Rumania, and most of the Balkan states, Jewish communities suffered from constant persecution (pogroms, anti-Jewish laws, and other vexations), Jews, established on Turkish territory enjoyed an altogether remarkable atmosphere of tolerance and justice.'

Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, vol. 19, no. 1, 1999. Courtesy of Taylor & Francis. Used by permission.