

# The rise and fall of the ottoman empire

[History](#), [Empires](#)



## **Introduction**

The Ottoman empire was one the most successful empires and one of the most powerful civilizations of the modern period, it had many sultans that conquered many lands throughout Asia, Europe and Africa. The empire built was the most influential and the largest of the many Muslim empires. Their military and culture expanded over and into most of Europe. The empire lasted many years for it a strong janissary army and ruled many cities.

## **The Ottoman Empire**

The Ottoman Empire stretched out from a small territory near Constantinople to overthrow and control the remnant of the Byzantine empire in the late thirteenth century, Successfully seizing the empire it centralized to a Sunni Islamic state. Suleyman the Magnificent (1494-1566) the greatest ruler of the empire expanded the empire to its greatest extent; at that time it reached from the Near East west to the Balkans and south to North Africa. Although the empire began to slowly shrink after Suleyman, it persisted until overthrown in the early twentieth century.

## **Rise of Ottomans**

The Ottoman Empire conquered and expanded under its Sultan Selim I, who ruled from (1512 to1520). But his son Sultan Suleyman, he strove the Ottoman Empire to conquering many and most of its lands, Sultan Suleyman conquered great cities, and brought military machines, a lasting culture to the great Ottoman Empire. Most of the history of this empire lies on the achievements around this one ruler who was high minded and had lots of dignity and pride. Suleyman called was now called “ The Magnificent” for his numerous achievements and was also named the “ Law-Giver” for the laws

he established as he conquered many cities. Suleyman ruled with self-respect and fairness according to the Ottoman political theory. In the Ottoman state, most of the power rested with the monarch. The Monarch's main idea was to establish justice, it meant shielding the poor and the helpless from shady officials and unfair taxation. The Sultan had a central bureaucracy, which was led by the Grand Vizier, to be able to govern the Empire. He also had the authority to capsize the verdicts of the courts if he thought that the decisions were unjust. This did not put the Sultan above law instead he was chosen as the keeper of a lawful government and fair government. The Sultan was given the title of " Caliph" as well, meaning the supreme leader of Islam. When Suleyman became grew of old age, his two sons plotted to remove him from power and achieve access to the crown. The crown in the empire did not pass from father to son or to the next oldest brother but, it was given to the most worthy successor. Because of this, there was always a struggle for the crown. Once a successor was crowned, the other contenders were killed to eliminate any future competition as well as to have full control and restore order. This devilish practice was later removed and replaced by making the eldest son the heir and he should be kept insulated in a lavish imprisonment.

Imperial Expansion: once the dynastic civil war was done, the determined Mehemed II the conqueror, who many people considered the real creator of the empire, brought in European artillery knowledge and took his newly built navy across Pera into an inlet of the Bosphorus, to attack both the seaward and landward walls of Constantinople to conquer the city. He later renamed is Istanbul. Selim the Grim who created an Ottoman navy, which effectively

captured Mesopotamia, Egypt and Syria by capturing these countries he was able to acquire the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Suleyman the Magnificent's reign was the main cause of the Ottomans expansion and its importance. He made his way through Europe conquering many places.

### **The culture of the Ottoman Empire**

The Ottoman Empire evolved and expanded over several centuries, as the ruling organization of the Turks absorbed, modified and adapted the cultures of many different dominated lands and their peoples. There was a powerful influence from the languages and customs of Islamic societies. Throughout its history, the Ottoman Empire had large subject populations of Jews, and Byzantine Greeks, who were allowed a certain amount of independence under the millet system of the powerful Ottoman government. However, as the Ottomans moved further into the west and the incorporation of the Balkan and Greek populations progressed, the Turkish and Arabic-Persian-Greek influenced culture of its leaders, for itself to absorb some of the culture of the conquered peoples.

### **Islam in the Ottoman Empire**

When the Ottomans conquered Medina and Mecca, the Empire achieved speculative leadership privileges over mostly all the Muslim Sunni states. The Ulama helped the sultan by watching and accepting his actions under the Islamic law. Charitable foundations supplied schools and mosques.

### **Ottoman Society**

Five classes were divided among the people of the Ottoman Empire: First, was the ruling class, all of who were linked to the sultan. Under the ruling

class were the merchant class, which had a largely free form of government taxation and regulation. The Artisans were a separate class; they organized themselves according to guilds. The largest group in the Ottoman Empire was the peasant class. They farmed leased land. The leased land was passed along from generation to generation. The final groups were the pastoral people. They were clans and tribes who lived by their own rules under the guidance of their chiefs, who swore allegiance to the Ottoman sultan.

### **Ottoman Law**

The legal system approved in the Ottoman law was the religious law over its subjects. The Empire always planned around a system of jurisprudence (the science of philosophy and law). Power in the Ottoman Empire revolved around the administration of the rights to land, which gave space for local authority to develop local crops. The Ottoman Empire aimed to permit the incorporation of religious and cultural different groups. Ottomans had different court systems: One for non-Muslims which appointed Jews and Christians to rule over their religious communities and another for Muslims, the sultan ruled these laws but he could also interfere with the court laws of non-Muslims if needed to.

### **Army and Military ranks of the Ottoman Empire**

The Cavalry: Until the mid of the 18th century the spihai cavalry formed the most of the Ottoman armies, Numbered around forty thousand men half of them were from European provinces. Regular timar fiefs supported one horseman, the larger zaemets were expected to equip mounted retainers. The Largest were the hass fiefs of the Sultan's family, favorite ministers and

viziers. Sipahis lived in a village, work their own lands, and pay the peasants for most of their services and gained no salary.

The Infantry: Infantry forces in the Ottoman state went by many confusing names, meaning that would change over the centuries. The first were azaps. Most of these were Anatolian Turks and in the beginning were only paid how long a campaign was. After a while they got regular salaries and they acted as garrison troops. The Gonulluyan which were called volunteer infantry, they could be Muslim or Christian, and were supported similarly like their neighbor villagers. The Voyniks were Balkan Christians, first recorded as the infantry follower's of Christian sipahis that fight under Murat I

### **The Janissaries**

The janissaries were two institutions created by sultans of the Ottoman Empire and they were the military organization and civil service. This institution came from the practice by ottomans leaders in Anatolia of hiring prisoners as troops. During the conquest of the Balkans they took slaves which later became slaves of the sultan. These slaves were Christian but were brought up as Muslims and were devoted to loyalty the sultan and islam. The better troops were enrolled in the palace corps, trained to become officials in the Ruling Institution. The rest were taught military education and later became part of the janissary army. They were known to be the best and most effective soldiers of Europe.

### **The Decline of the Ottoman Empire**

One primary cause for the decline of the Empire was the decline of the Sultanate. The Sultanate was a powerful organization where the sultan would

chose a capable successor from his many sons. Over periods of time the sultanate weakened gradually. The weakening of the empire began late in the ruling of Suleyman the Magnificent. Although he was the height of the Golden Age, Suleyman became less concerned with the affairs of state added to that his two qualified successors went against him, they were later executed. As Selim II became Sultan he did not have much experience in the running of the government. He was fond of physical pleasures rather than taking the governing responsibility seriously. After him the decline of the Sultanate continued. Because the brothers of the Sultans were restricted in the harem, they became incompetent. Another reason to the decline of the empire was that the Sultans deserted the tradition of training their sons in related affairs and government. The collapse of the empire focused mainly on the corruption of the government's control over the empire. Added to this problem was the major factor which was the change in the balance of power. Because of the Ottoman military division called the janissary kept fighting and always conquering new lands and became the most powerful state in the world. As time passed the janissaries and their fighting methods became old-fashioned and no longer became a army that was unmatched. In the end, the Ottoman Empire collapsed, the government declined with the degeneration of the sultanate as well as the Ottomans failed to industrialize and the empire was destroyed when war overwhelmed it during World War I.

### **Conclusion**

As stated above, the Ottoman Empire was the greatest and one of many empires that still leads influence and remembrance throughout history. It had many great leaders and each brought great changes through their

reigns in the empire. The Ottoman Empire accepted many religions and brought in many cultures, their established laws caused people to move to its empire but in the end all great empires fail to maintain their strong and well built structure. Unfortunately the Ottoman Empire dealt with bad economic outcomes and fail leadership of its sultanate which caused its fall and collapse.