

# The Economic Progress of the Ottoman Empire: An Analysis of Advancement During the Reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent

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## ABSTRACT

The development of the Islamic economy during the reign of Suleiman al-Qanuni (1520–1566 CE) represents one of the significant episodes in the history of global economic development. This article analyzes the economic progress achieved by the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566), known as one of the peak periods in the empire's history. The main focus of this research is on the economic policies implemented by Sultan Suleiman, as well as their impact on key sectors such as agriculture, trade, and taxation. The research methods employed are: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The research findings indicate that Suleiman's reign saw the implementation of reforms in the administrative and tax systems, including the continuation of the timar system, which contributed to a more equitable distribution of resources and increased agricultural output. Furthermore, rapidly growing trade relations with Europe, Asia, and Africa positioned the Ottoman Empire as a global trade center, which significantly benefited the economy. Overall, the reign of Sultan Suleiman played a crucial role in modernizing and strengthening the Ottoman economic structure through constructive and systematic policies, bringing prosperity to its people during the 16th century.

## ABSTRAK

Perkembangan ekonomi Islam pada masa pemerintahan Suleiman al-Qanuni (1520–1566 M) merupakan salah satu episode penting dalam sejarah perkembangan ekonomi global. Artikel ini menganalisis kemajuan ekonomi yang dicapai oleh Kekaisaran Ottoman selama masa pemerintahan Sultan Suleiman al-Qanuni, yang dikenal sebagai salah satu periode puncak kejayaan dalam sejarah kekaisaran tersebut. Fokus utama penelitian ini adalah pada kebijakan-kebijakan ekonomi yang diterapkan oleh Sultan Suleiman, serta dampaknya terhadap sektor-sektor kunci seperti pertanian, perdagangan, dan perpajakan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan meliputi: heuristik, kritik sumber, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa masa pemerintahan Suleiman ditandai dengan pelaksanaan reformasi dalam sistem administrasi dan perpajakan, termasuk kelanjutan penerapan sistem timar, yang berkontribusi pada distribusi sumber daya yang lebih merata serta peningkatan hasil pertanian. Selain itu, hubungan dagang yang berkembang pesat dengan Eropa, Asia, dan Afrika menempatkan Kekaisaran Ottoman sebagai pusat perdagangan global, yang secara signifikan menguntungkan perekonomian. Secara keseluruhan, masa pemerintahan Sultan Suleiman memainkan peran penting dalam memodernisasi dan memperkuat struktur ekonomi Ottoman melalui kebijakan-kebijakan yang konstruktif dan sistematis, sehingga membawa kesejahteraan bagi rakyatnya pada abad ke-16.

## Keywords

Ottoman Dynasty, Sulaiman Al-Qanuni, Advancing Economy, Financial Policy

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## Introduction

After the passing of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Islam experienced rapid expansion. The Prophet had already laid down the foundational principles of faith, commerce, social order, and governance. The extraordinary spirit of *jihad* fostered a strong desire to advance and spread Islam. However, following the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad due to the Mongol invasion, the political power of the Islamic world declined drastically. This setback did not mark the end of Islamic influence, as it continued even after Timur (Tamerlane) devastated other major centers of Islamic power. Such political turmoil persisted for some time, until a period of revival emerged with the rise and growth of three major empires: the Ottoman Empire in Turkey, the Mughal Empire in India, and the Safavid Empire in Persia. Among these, the Ottoman Empire was the first to be established, the largest in terms of territory and influence, and the most enduring in comparison to the other two empires.

The peak of the Ottoman Empire's glory was achieved during the reign of Suleiman I, also known as Suleiman the Lawgiver (Suleiman Al-Qanuni) (Iswanto, 2015, p. 53). His reign represents the height of political greatness of the Ottoman Caliphate and the zenith of the Sultan's prestige in the global arena of that era. The rule of Sultan Suleiman Al-Qanuni is widely regarded as the golden age of the Ottoman Empire. His leadership lasted from 926 to 972 AH / 1520 to 1566 CE (Al-Shallabi, 2016, p. 36).

The development of the Islamic economy during the reign of Suleiman al-Qanuni (1520-1566 CE) represents one of the significant episodes in the history of global economic development, particularly in the context of the Ottoman Empire. As one of the greatest sultans to rule the Ottoman Empire, Suleiman al-Qanuni was renowned not only for his military and political achievements but also for his ability to manage and expand the empire's vast economy. His reign marked the peak of economic progress, shaped by the principles of Islamic economics, which emphasized a balance between social justice, the management of natural resources, and the growth of trade (Ali, 2003, p. 549).

During the reign of Suleiman al-Qanuni, the Ottoman Empire successfully developed a well-structured economic system, driven by the implementation of Sharia law in regulating trade, finance, and taxation sectors. Improvements in economic infrastructure—including the construction of roads, ports, and markets—further supported the growth of both domestic and international trade. The Ottoman Empire's strategic position as a bridge between East and West, along with its control over major trade routes such as the Bosphorus Strait and the Mediterranean Sea, significantly contributed to global economic dynamics of the time (Al-Azizi, 2014, p. 423).

This territorial expansion was supported by military advancements, particularly the strength of the Janissary and Taujiyah troops, as well as a powerful naval force. Moreover, the golden age of the Ottoman Empire was also marked by significant progress in economic trade, tax revenues, and its strategic role as a bridge between the Eastern and Western worlds through its control of key ports. This progress was further reinforced by public awareness and willingness to allocate waqf (endowment) assets for religious and public welfare purposes (Ahmad, 2003).

Moreover, the policies implemented by Suleiman al-Qanuni reflected a concerted effort to ensure public welfare through a more equitable distribution of wealth, efficient tax administration, and sustainable utilization of natural resources. Within this framework, Islamic economic principles—integrated into the governance of the Ottoman Empire—aimed to achieve prosperity in a balanced manner among the state, society, and individuals.

This paper aims to explore how the development of Islamic economics during the reign of Suleiman al-Qanuni not only shaped the economic stability of the Ottoman Empire but also had a significant influence on global economic development. By examining the economic policies implemented and their impact on society, this article will demonstrate how Suleiman al-Qanuni's administration integrated Islamic economic principles with real-world challenges in order to create sustainable prosperity and economic stability.

Some research relevance with this research, they are: The first, Sucipto, the title "Biografi Sulaiman Al-Qanuni: Penguasa Dinasti Turki Utsmani Pada Masa Kejayaan" The paper discusses the biography of Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni, the ruler of the Ottoman Empire during its golden age, focusing on his contributions in politics, economy, social, military, arts, and culture (Sucipto, 2022, p. 115).

Article from Ahmad Zulfikar, "Kepemimpinan dan Kontribusi Sulaiman Alqanuni di Turki Utsmani (Suatu Tinjauan Sejarah)" Sultan Sulaiman Alqanuni, the 10th Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, made significant contributions that led to the Ottoman Empire becoming a major global power during his reign.(Zulfikar, 2018, p. 87). Article from Dwi Ratnasari, "Sulaiman Al-Qanuni: Sultan Terbesar Kerajaan Turki Usmani", the paper summarizes the reign of Sultan Sulaiman I, also known as Sulaiman the Magnificent, who was the greatest ruler of the Ottoman Empire and oversaw its peak of power and expansion (Ratnasari, 2013, p. 70).

Article from Muhamad Basyrul Muvid, "Sejarah Kerajaan Turki Utsmani dan Kemajuannya Bagi Dunia Islam", this study analyzes the history and progress of the Ottoman Turks, highlighting the political, military, economic, and socio-cultural factors that contributed to the empire's rise and peak during the reign of the ruler known as "al-Qanuni", with advancements in the military, government, science, culture, architecture, religion, and political management (Muvid, 2022, p. 26). Article from Liris Maulina, Rahman Latif Alfian, "Sejarah Kepemimpinan Sulaiman I pada Masa Kesultanan Turki Utsmani Di Turki (1520-1566 M)", the paper examines the leadership and expansion of the Ottoman Empire under the rule of Sultan Suleiman I (also known as Suleiman the Magnificent) from 1520 to 1566. The paper focuses on the leadership and territorial expansion of Sultan Suleiman I during the Ottoman Empire in Turkey, but does not discuss his impact on the Ottoman economy (Liris Maulina & Alfian, 2023, p. 47).

## Method

This research is a local history study, which describes history within a specific region with local characteristics or spatial elements. Local history refers to the study

of past events experienced by individuals or groups within a particular geographical area. In simple terms, local history refers to the study of the smallest socio-geographical unit of analysis, such as a village, sub-district, or district, in the context of Islam.(Mareta & Jamil, 2022) The study of history within Islam is an interesting subject for both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars, as it offers various benefits. For Muslim scholars, studying Islamic history is both a source of pride and a reminder of valuable lessons.(Putra, 2021)

The research method also utilizes library research.(Afrianto et al., 2024) Research methods are a series of techniques or activities in carrying out research, based on basic assumptions, philosophical, ideological views, as well as the questions and issues faced. This library research, with a qualitative approach, is within the scope of social history. The data collection technique involves sources from various academic books, journals, magazines, and others.(Rajab & Putra, 2023) This social history research is conducted through several steps, including: heuristics, which is the effort of gathering and tracing historical data sources, such as tracking historical documents and sites. At this stage, aside from the technical aspect of data collection, the researcher also develops a broader perspective to view the historical facts that have been gathered.(Sjamsuddin, 2014) The analysis and interpretation section uses several social science approaches aimed at strengthening the historical approach analysis. Given that history, as a one-time event (*einmalig*), cannot be entirely repeated (no *historia re-pete*), an empathetic understanding, or *verstehen*, is required (Syauqi, 2023).

## Result and Discussion

### Biography of Sultan Sulaiman Al-Qanuni

Sultan Suleiman al-Qanuni was born in a city called Trabzon, on November 6, 1494 CE (Roger, 1944, p. 36). At the time of his birth, his father was serving as the Governor of Trabzon. Suleiman's father, Sultan Selim I, was deeply concerned about his son's future. As a result, it is not surprising that Suleiman was raised in an intellectually rich environment. From an early age, he received an education from his father in various fields of knowledge. Among the subjects he studied were political science, governance, the art of warfare, and the art of diplomacy. In addition, he also had a profound interest in literature. Suleiman pursued his studies under the guidance of various religious scholars and intellectuals, which brought him into close contact with learned figures such as Islamic scholars, poets, and jurists. When he reached the age of seven, Suleiman was sent to study at the Topkapi Palace School in Istanbul. The Topkapi Palace served not only as the Sultan's residence but also as the administrative center of the Ottoman Empire. Historical records indicate that at least 24 Ottoman sultans resided in this palace up until 1839 CE (Black, 2006).

During its construction, various forms of ceramics, woodwork, and architectural styles were showcased in the Topkapi Palace. At the palace school, Suleiman studied a wide range of subjects, including history, literature, theology, and military science. The knowledge he acquired during his childhood undoubtedly proved beneficial and instrumental when he later became a great Sultan, destined to lead a vast empire. These

early studies served as crucial preparation for Suleiman in his future role as ruler of the Ottoman Empire. It is described that from a young age, Suleiman was known as a serious and focused youth with a calm demeanor. This was evident in his approach to challenges—he did not appear panicked or fearful, but instead remained composed in making decisions to resolve problems. Despite being born into nobility and serving as the crown prince of one of the most powerful empires of the time, Suleiman was already known for his closeness to the people from an early age (El-Ustadzi, 2017, p. 98).

Subsequently, at the age of seventeen, Suleiman was entrusted and appointed by his father to serve as the first Governor of the Province of Kaffa (Theodosia). Although his tenure as Governor in Kaffa was relatively brief, he was later reassigned to govern the province of Sarukhan (Manisa). Nevertheless, this marked the beginning of Suleiman's direct involvement in applying the knowledge he had acquired—both in religious studies and in governance—before eventually ascending to lead a great dynasty (Hitti, 2013).

He later also served as a leader in Edirne (Adrianople). Eight days after the death of his father, on September 30, 1520 CE, Suleiman ascended the throne as the 10th Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, succeeding his father. (Bastoni, 2008, p. 248) It is described that he took the reins of leadership over the Ottoman Empire at the young age of twenty-six—a notably early age to rule such a vast empire that spanned multiple continents. Suleiman was recognized as a wise ruler, particularly in making governmental decisions. He possessed a deep love for knowledge and a passion for learning, which had been evident since his childhood. As a result, by the time he became the ruler of the Ottoman Empire, it was no surprise that many placed great hope in his leadership. This sentiment was echoed by Contarini, who praised Sultan Suleiman al-Qanuni's noble character. Some historians also claim that during his youth, Sultan Suleiman al-Qanuni greatly admired the figure of Alexander the Great. According to other contemporary historians, Suleiman was deeply influenced by Alexander's vision of building a vast empire that extended from East to West and sustained its power over a long period.

The reign of Suleiman al-Qanuni was the longest of any other sultan, lasting from 1520 to 1566. During his rule, Sultan Suleiman achieved numerous victories in various wars, expanding the territories of the Ottoman Empire from East to West. Under his leadership, the Ottoman Empire reached its peak of prosperity. Suleiman led successful military expeditions to Europe, conquering Vienna, Hungary, Persia, and much of the Arab coast, while also reclaiming the Hijaz region. He was also renowned as a skilled administrator and military leader, both on land and at sea.

Suleiman was known for his careful selection of government officials, particularly governors. Popularity and social status were not criteria for choosing candidates. He personally investigated the track record and character of every potential governor, ensuring that those appointed were competent and of high moral standing. Suleiman was also an artist, particularly in the field of literature. His works included several ghazals and diwans (collections of poetry). He even transcribed a copy of the Quran by hand, which is now preserved in the Süleymaniye Mosque. His love for



knowledge led him to establish the As-Sulaimaniyah University in 1550. He also organized madrasahs (Islamic schools) with a well-structured educational system. The lowest level madrasahs taught Arabic grammar (nahwu), syntax (sharaf), logic (manthiq), technology, astronomy, geometry, and rhetoric. The second-level madrasahs focused on literature and rhetoric, while the highest-level madrasahs taught law and theology (Hitti, 2013).

Suleiman passed away at the age of 71 in Szegedvar, Hungary, on June 5, 1566. His body was laid to rest in the Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey. His greatness and the goodness he displayed while leading the Ottoman Empire are still remembered to this day. The title "al-Qanuni" is a mark of honor for Sultan Suleiman's efforts in drafting the *Qanun Nameh*, a legal code that helped govern the Ottoman Empire. During his reign, the Ottoman Empire reached its peak in both military and naval power. Suleiman was a brilliant, just, noble, and wise sultan. His reign is marked by several significant policies, including the regulation of *iqṭāʿ* (land grants), the establishment of laws, reconciliation efforts, the formation of a police force, and the creation of educational institutions like madrasahs, schools, and universities. Additionally, he oversaw the construction of grand buildings, the most famous being the *Süleymaniye Mosque* in Istanbul, which remains one of the architectural masterpieces of the Ottoman era (Ratnasari, 2013, p. 70).

### **The Reign of Sultan Suleiman al-Qanuni**

When Sultan Suleiman ascended to the throne as the 10th Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, he faced numerous challenges. One of the main obstacles during the early years of his reign was the unstable political situation. At that time, there were multiple rebellions, which demanded immediate attention and resolution. Specifically, four significant rebellions were taking place simultaneously, which required Suleiman to work diligently to suppress them. These early trials marked the first test of his leadership as the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Despite the overwhelming challenges, Suleiman worked tirelessly to handle the rebellions, which drained much of his energy and delayed the implementation of his jihad movement—the effort to spread Islam globally. As a result, he focused primarily on internal matters and sought to restore stability within the empire. Once the domestic situation improved, he then turned his attention to territorial expansion.

The rebellions were largely instigated by ambitious provincial governors who sought independence from the Ottoman Empire. These governors believed that with the death of Sultan Selim I, the Ottoman Empire was in decline and that the central government had weakened. They thought it was the perfect moment to assert their independence and rebel. However, this perception was proven wrong. The first major rebellion was led by Jan Bardi al-Ghazali, the Governor of Syria. He openly declared his defiance against the Ottoman government and aimed to seize control of the Aleppo region. However, his rebellion was swiftly crushed. Sultan Suleiman immediately deployed his strong forces to quash the separatist movement. In a short period, the rebellion was brought to an end.

Next, to ensure that such chaos and rebellion do not recur, the leader of the rebels—the governor of Syria—was beheaded, and his head was sent to Istanbul as proof that the rebellion and uprising led by the governor of Syria had been quelled. Meanwhile, the second rebellion was led by Ahmad Shah of Egypt. Initially, this rebellion occurred in 930 AH/1524 CE. Ahmad Shah was known as a figure greedy for power, which led him to rebel against the Ottoman government. One of his goals was to establish himself as a great leader. However, his efforts did not yield favorable results because the Sultan swiftly succeeded in stopping him. At first, Ahmad Shah sought the Sultan's assistance to secure the position of governor in Egypt. But once he arrived in Egypt, he attempted to rally public support and declared himself an independent Sultan. Upon hearing this news, the Sultan immediately ordered his troops to suppress and halt this act of rebellion. In the end, the rebellion led by Ahmad Shah was successfully crushed, and he was killed in the process. The third rebellion came from the Rafidah Shia in the Yuzaghad region. This rebellion was led by a man named Baba Dhunnun in 1526 CE.

In response to the rebellion, Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni sent his forces, led by Bahram Pasha, to immediately suppress and stop the uprising. However, when facing the rebellion, Bahram Pasha was defeated and killed in the ensuing battle. Not stopping there, Sultan Sulaiman quickly ordered Ibrahim Pasha to put an end to the rebellion. Eventually, the sultan emerged victorious, and the rebellion led by Qalandar Jalabi was suppressed. The strategy employed by Ibrahim Pasha at the time was his success in persuading the followers of Qalandar Jalabi to side with him. This weakened the rebels' strength, making it easier to defeat the insurgency. As for Qalandar Jalabi, he was captured and executed. Once the internal issues were resolved and peace restored within the empire, Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni swiftly planned and strategized to launch a jihad into Europe and expand his empire's territories. In general, the territorial extent of the Ottoman Empire during Sulaiman al-Qanuni's reign, which marked its peak, included Asia Minor, Armenia, Iraq, Syria, Hejaz, Yemen, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Bulgaria, Greece, Yugoslavia, Albania, Hungary, and Romania. Therefore, under Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni's rule, the Ottoman Dynasty reached its golden age. This was also reflected in the advancements in various fields (Sucipto, 2022).

The success of the Ottoman Dynasty in expanding its territory can be attributed to several factors, including: the military strategy skills of the Turkish people, the nature and character of the Turks who were always forward-thinking and never stagnant, their simple lifestyle, the spirit of jihad and the desire to spread Islam, the strategic location of Istanbul as the capital of the empire, and the chaotic conditions of the surrounding kingdoms (Putri et al., 2021, p. 45).

In the field of knowledge, generally, the rulers of the Ottoman Empire had limited intellectual engagement and scientific progress. Few prominent scholars emerged from the Ottoman Empire. However, the development of Islamic architecture was quite notable, exemplified by beautiful mosque buildings such as the Al-Muhammadi Mosque, the Suleymaniye Mosque, and the Abi Ayyub al-Ansari Mosque. Some religious advancements in the Ottoman Empire included the significant role of scholars in government, politics, and the development of Islamic Sufi orders, which were followed by both civilians and the military. One of the educational advancements

during the Ottoman period was the promotion of madrassas (Islamic schools) that taught a wide range of knowledge. Educational institutions, including madrassas, were established in various parts of the Ottoman Empire, with the first madrasa being founded in Izmir in 1331 CE. To improve the quality of education, several scholars were brought in from Iran and Egypt to expand Muslim teachings in newly conquered territories (Aniroh, 2021).

Historians argue that the reign of Sultan Suleiman al-Qanuni marked the golden age and greatness of the Ottoman Empire. This is evidenced by the fact that during the era of Sultan Suleiman al-Qanuni, the Ottoman Empire outpaced European countries in the fields of military, politics, and knowledge. The military strength of the Ottoman Empire became formidable because, in its early stages, the empire was filled with strong individuals, and military power was prioritized, especially when armed contact occurred with Europe. The Ottoman Empire not only emphasized military weaponry and the power to control vast territories across Asia, Africa, and Europe, but also ensured that its civilizations did not fall behind. This is proven by the rapid progress of Ottoman civilization during this time. Additionally, many renowned scholars emerged during this period, contributing to the intellectual development of the empire (Uliyah, 2021, p. 330).

### **Advancing the Economy of the Ottoman Dynasty**

The success of Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni in expanding the Ottoman Empire had a significant impact on the prosperity of the economy, particularly in agriculture, trade, taxes, and war spoils. After taking control of the trade routes to India, previously dominated by the Portuguese, Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni was able to freely control trade in the region. Throughout the 16th century, he also successfully maintained trade relations with India. The Ottoman Empire's dominance over the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf brought substantial economic benefits (Zulfikar, 2018, p. 102).

The Ottoman Empire was strategically located at the crossroads of three continents: Asia, Europe, and Africa. Its territory encompassed major trade routes, such as the Silk Road in Central Asia and sea routes connecting the Middle East with Europe. Sultan Sulaiman established trade relations with European countries like France, Italy, and the Netherlands. For example, the agreement with Venice facilitated the rapid growth of trade in goods such as spices, silk, and textiles in the Mediterranean region. Products like silk, cotton, and Ottoman handicrafts were in high demand in international markets. Additionally, the Ottomans became one of the main suppliers of spices to Europe, replacing the role of several kingdoms in India and Southeast Asia (Muvid, 2022).

In 961/1554 CE, Venetian trade was able to purchase 6,000 quintals of spices in Alexandria, with merchant fleets from Hormuz bringing spices, medicines, and textiles from India to Basra every month. This dominance in trade continued until the English and Dutch took control of the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean in the 17th century, causing the Middle East to lose its status as a primary trade route. However, after



reaching its zenith under Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni, the Ottoman Empire began to decline slowly but steadily toward its eventual collapse. This long period of decline was due to various internal and external struggles, including conflicts between Ottoman rulers and their allies, both from within the empire and from outside (Kusdiana, 2013).

The economic condition of the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni saw significant improvement, on par with advancements in politics and military affairs. The territories conquered by the empire provided economic gains for the Sultanate. This is because with each successful conquest, the empire obtained war spoils, *jizyah* (taxes from non-Muslims), and taxes afterward. Additionally, the control over key trading cities and important trade routes, both by land and sea, allowed the empire to stimulate economic growth through trade (El-Ustadzi, 2017, p. 106).

Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni's success had a direct impact on the prosperity of the Ottoman Empire's economy. After taking control of the trade routes to India, which had previously been dominated by the Portuguese, Sultan Sulaiman was able to control trade in the region more effectively. As a result, during the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire flourished economically, marking a period of prosperity in the Islamic economy during Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni's reign (Syalabi, 1997).

The success of Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni in expanding the Ottoman Empire had significant impacts on the economy, including agriculture, trade, and revenues from taxes and war spoils. By taking control of the trade routes to India, which were previously dominated by the Portuguese, Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni was able to secure a monopoly over crucial trade routes in the region. This allowed him to control trade and generate immense wealth, which further strengthened the empire's economy (Kusdiana, 2013).

During the 16th century, under Sulaiman's leadership, the Ottomans were able to maintain strong trade relations with India. His strategic policies and military conquests in the region allowed for the continuation of prosperous commerce, boosting the economy through both formal trade and the capture of valuable goods from military expeditions (Zulfikar, 2018, p. 102).

However, after reaching the peak of its power under Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni, the Ottoman Empire began to experience a slow decline, which eventually led to its downfall. The decline was marked by a series of internal and external conflicts. The internal struggles included power struggles among the rulers and the challenges of managing such a vast empire. External challenges came from increasing competition and aggression from other European powers, which shifted the balance of power. These factors contributed to the weakening of the empire after the reign of Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni (Kusdiana, 2013).

Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni, widely known for his title *al-Qanuni* (The Lawgiver), implemented a legal system that integrated Islamic law (*sharia*) with civil law. His governance was marked by the application of Islamic principles, especially in economic matters, to ensure justice and fairness. Sultan Sulaiman's government had a strong

bureaucratic structure. He appointed officials known as *defterdar* (finance ministers) to oversee state finances, including tax collection, management of income from waqf (charitable endowments), and budget expenditures. Transparency in the administration of these funds helped maintain economic stability even amid global changes (Hitti, 2013).

### Economic Infrastructure and Stable Financial System

The Timar system was a land-based tax system that was a cornerstone of the Ottoman economy. In this system, land was granted to farmers for cultivation, with a portion of the produce collected as tax by the state. This system ensured sustainable agricultural productivity while preventing the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few individuals, promoting a more equitable distribution of resources. Besides land taxes, the Ottoman government also earned revenue from trade taxes and customs duties. These taxes were levied on merchants passing through Ottoman territories. However, the rates were designed to balance the need for state revenue with the goal of not hindering international trade, ensuring that the empire remained an essential hub for commerce (Faroghi et al., 2008).

Currency Management Under Sulaiman's rule, the Ottoman currency, the *akçe*, became widely accepted as a medium of exchange across the Middle East and Europe. The government ensured the stability of the currency by controlling inflation and maintaining an adequate supply of precious metals. Prohibition of Usury (Riba) As a Muslim ruler, Sulaiman prohibited the practice of *riba* (usury) in all financial activities. Instead, partnership-based financial systems such as *mudharabah* (profit-sharing) and *musyarakah* (joint investment) were introduced. These systems supported trade and investment activities without violating Islamic principles (Faroghi et al., 2008).

The redistribution of wealth through *zakat*, *sadaqah*, and waqf made a significant contribution to reducing poverty in the Ottoman region. Social welfare was a top priority, with a focus on education, healthcare, and access to basic needs. As part of Islamic principles, Sulaiman emphasized the institution of *zakat* (almsgiving) to support wealth redistribution. *Zakat* was used to assist the poor, orphans, and those in need, contributing to the reduction of economic inequality. This not only provided social welfare but also helped maintain social stability within the empire.

### Conclusion

Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni was a figure with strong and resilient leadership qualities. From a young age, he studied various fields of knowledge, including governance, military, and politics. It is no surprise that during his youth and adulthood, he was able to lead the Ottoman Empire to its peak and successfully govern a great dynasty. In addition to being a sultan leading a vast empire, Sultan Sulaiman also managed to build significant advancements and a flourishing civilization. During his reign, the Ottoman Empire expanded its territory not only in Europe but also in Asia and Africa. Sultan Sulaiman established strengths across various sectors, such as

politics, economy, military, social aspects, and culture, creating stability, peace, and prosperity for the people under his rule.

Over approximately 46 years of rule, Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni made the Ottoman Empire a center of culture and civilization, with numerous architectural projects contributing to the development of Istanbul as a hub of knowledge in the Islamic world at the time. His success in leading the Ottoman Empire and building a great civilization, especially in the Islamic world, earned him the title of *The Magnificent* in the Western world and *Sultan Sulaiman al-Qanuni* in the Eastern world. This title is well-deserved due to his achievements and successes in leading a great empire like the Ottoman Empire. One of his greatest accomplishments was the creation of a legal code, which became the law for the entire Ottoman society at that time. For this, Sultan Sulaiman was given the title *al-Qanuni*, meaning "the Lawgiver," a testament to his contributions in shaping the legal system and governance of the empire.

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