Chapter 21

The Muslim Empires
(A.D. 1450 – A.D. 1750)
Section 1
Bell Work

"Leviathan"
Primary Source Documents 1 & 2

Document 1

Document 2

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Louis XIV et Molière

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While the Mughals ruled India, the Ottomans and the Safavids dominated the Middle East and parts of Eastern Europe.

All three owed much of their success to new military technology, such as cannons and muskets.

Russia under Peter the Great, a rival of the Ottomans, also vied for control of Eastern Europe and is sometimes included with the gunpowder empires.

As a result, the period from about 1450 to 1650 is sometimes called “the age of gunpowder empires.”
Ottoman and Safavid Empires, 1453 - 1629
The Ottoman Empire

- The Seljuk Turkic kingdom collapsed after the Mongol invasion in 1243.

- By the 1350s the Ottomans, named after Sultan Osman, had advanced from Asia Minor into Europe.

- In 1453, the Ottoman Turks, under Mehmed II, defeated the Byzantine Empire at Constantinople and created the Ottoman Empire.

- The Ottomans had superior weapons, including canons.

- Later, muskets, reduced the need for cavalry.
The Ottoman Empire

- Sultan Suleyman, called the Magnificent or the “Lawgiver,” modernized the army and conquered many new lands.

- Suleyman controlled the largest and most powerful empire in both Europe and the Middle East from 1520 to 1566.

- Claimed title of “Emperor” and “Protector of the Sacred Places” (Mecca and Medina).
The Ottoman Empire under Suleyman

- Suleiman had absolute power.
- Ottoman law was based on Shari’a, or laws found in the Quran, though Suleiman wrote situational laws based on analogy of the rules or cases that are covered in the Quran.
- The Ottomans recruited government and military officers from conquered people.
- He conquered Rhodes, a large part of Greece, Hungary, and a major part of the Austrian Empire taking him right to the doorway of Vienna.
- He pursued an aggressive policy of destabilization of the Holy Roman Empire and Roman Catholic Church by pouring money into Protestant countries.
Ottoman Society

Society was broken into four classes:

- “Men of the pen” included scientists, lawyers, judges, and poets.
- “Men of the sword” were soldiers who guarded the sultan and defended the state.
- “Men of negotiation” were merchants, tax collectors, and artisans, who carried on trade and production.
- “Men of husbandry” included farmers and herders who produced food for the community.

Non-Muslims were organized into millets, or religious communities, with religious leaders responsible for education and legal matters.

Millets were established by Mehmet II as part of his government reorganization after conquering Constantinople.
Millets

- The Ottoman term refers to the separate legal courts pertaining to personal law under which minorities were allowed to rule themselves with fairly little interference from the Ottoman government.

- People were bound to their millets by their religious affiliations, rather than their ethnic origins.

- The head of a *millet* – most often a religious hierarch such as the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople - reported directly to the Ottoman Sultan.

- The millets set their own laws and collected and distributed their own taxes, so long as they remained loyalty to the Empire.

- When a member of one millet committed a crime against a member of another, the law of the injured party applied, but the ruling Islamic majority being paramount, any dispute involving a Muslim fell under their shari’a–based law.
The Janissaries

- Christian families in Balkans were required to give one son to be converted to Islam and become slaves of the Sultan.
- The boys were legally slaves, but were given extensive schooling for the time.
- Some were trained to serve in the palace or bureaucracy, but most became soldiers.
- The best soldiers won places in the janissaries, the elite force of the Ottoman army.
Sulyeman’s Golden Age

- Suleyman was a great cultivator of the arts and is considered one of the great poets of Islam.
- Under Suleyman, Istanbul became the center of visual art, music, writing, and philosophy in the Islamic world.
- This cultural flowering during the reign of Suleyman represents the most creative period in Ottoman history; almost all the cultural forms that we associate with the Ottomans date from this time.
- Poets produced works in the Turkish language.
- Painters produced detailed miniatures and illuminated manuscripts.
Examples of Ottoman Illuminated Pages

- Tughra on the Gate of Felicity at Topkapı Palace
- Carpet Pages
- Decorated tughra, or seal, of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520)
Suleyman’s Building Projects

- Suleyman undertook to make Istanbul the center of Islamic civilization.

- He began a series of building projects, including bridges, mosques, and palaces, that rivaled the greatest building projects of the world in that century.

- The greatest and most brilliant architect of human history was in his employ: Sinan.

- The mosques built by Sinan are considered the greatest architectural triumphs of Islam and possibly the world.

- They are more than just awe-inspiring; they represent a unique genius in dealing with nearly insurmountable engineering problems.
Selimiye Mosque at Edirne, designed by Sinan

“I have succeeded in building a dome for the mosque which is greater in diameter and higher than that of Hagia Sophia.” - Sinan
Topkapi Palace, Istanbul

Sultan Mehmed II ordered the initial construction around the 1460s.

Sultan Selim III holding an audience in front of the Gate of Felicity in the Second Courtyard. Courtiers are assembled in a strict protocol.
Topkapi Palace, Istanbul

The Imperial Gate

↑ Main entrance to the audience chamber with the fountain of Suleyman I to the right.

← Imperial Hall with the throne of the Sultan.
The Fruit Room with Painted Walls

Stained-glass windows decorate the interior of the Twin Kiosk.
Ottoman Women

- **Harem** means “sacred” or “forbidden.” The word is not only applied to female space, but is used in reference to Mecca and Medina.

- This implies that women were highly valued.

- Women were guaranteed support from their husbands, even if the husbands abandoned them.

- Women could initiate divorce, inherit, own property, and even stipulate the conditions of marriage.
Women’s Quarters in Topkapi

The Queen Mother and her attendants in her apartments

Courtyard of the Favorites

The Queen Mother and her attendants in her apartments
Ottoman Women Traditional Dress
The Ottoman and Safavid Empires, ca. 1600

* Baghdad under Safavid Control: 1508-34; 1624-38
The Safavid Empire

- The Safavid dynasty united a strong empire in Persia, present day Iran.
- Sunni Muslim Ottomans and Shi’ite Muslim Safavids frequently fought each other.
Safavid Origins

- The Safavid dynasty had its origins in a family of Sufi mystics and religious preachers.
- Their shrine was located in Ardabil near the Caspian Sea.
- Sail al-Din began a militant campaign to purify and reform Islam and spread Muslim teachings among the Turkic tribes of the region.
- The ensuing chaos brought about the collapse of the Mongol authority in the mid-14th century.
- Safavid followers, known as Red Heads, grew as did opposition.
- Eventually, Ismâ’il, led his Turkic followers to victory, conquering the city of Tabriz, and declared himself shah, or emperor.
- Within a decade, they had conquered most of Persia and driven the nomadic Ozbegs – a neighboring Turkic people back into the Central Asian steppes.
Abbas the Great

The most outstanding Safavid shah, or king, Abbas the Great revived the glory of ancient Persia. During his reign (1588 – 1629), he

- centralized government
- created a powerful military force modeled on the Ottoman janissaries
- sought alliances with European states that had reason to fear the Ottomans
- strengthened the economy by reducing taxes on farmers and herders and encouraged the growth of industry
Abbas the Great:

- tolerated non-Muslims and valued their economic contributions
- used a mixture of force and diplomacy against the Ottomans
- built a magnificent new capital at Isfahan, a center of the international silk trade
- had thousands of Armenian Christians (who controlled the silk trade) brought in and set up a settlement for them, where they could govern themselves
- supported the growth of Persian culture in producing porcelain, clothes, rugs, and poetry
Decline of the Safavid Empire

- Ottomans continued to apply pressure on Safavids.
- Conservative Shi’ite scholars challenged the shah’s authority and encouraged persecution of minority religions.
- Sunni Afghans rebelled, defeated imperial armies, captured Isfahan, and forced the last Shah to abdicate in 1722.
- A new dynasty, the Qajars, won control of Iran, moved the capital to Tehran, and ruled until 1925.
By 1526, the Mughals, Turkish and Mongol invaders, built a powerful empire in India.

Babur, claiming descent from Genghiz Khan and Timur (aka Tamerlane), led them.
Akbar, Babur’s grandson, reigned from 1526 to 1605 creating a strong centralized government.

- He recognized India’s diversity and implemented a policy of religious toleration.
- He invented a new faith, Din-i-Illahi, which blended elements of Hinduism and Islam.
- A Muslim, but gave Hindus government jobs, treating them as partners.
- He ended the non-Muslim tax.
- Employed paid officials, instead of hereditary officeholders.
- Modernized the army.
- Encouraged international trade.
- Standardized weights and measures.
- Introduced land reforms.
Reforms Affecting Women

- He encouraged widows to remarry, which had been taboo for both Hindu and Muslims.
- He discouraged child marriage, though the practice was so widespread his disapproval had little impact.
- He legally prohibited sati, even rescuing a young woman despite the protestations of her angry relatives.

The Bride Throws Herself on Her Husband's Funeral Pyre.
Akbar’s Successors

- Akbar’s son, Jahangir, was a weaker ruler.
- He left details of government to his 20th wife, Nur Jahan, as he became addicted to wine and opium.
- She was a capable, shrewd politician, who loved poetry and royal sports.
- She was the most powerful Indian woman, but was defeated by her own devotion to her roles as wife and mother.
- She died giving birth to her 19th child.
- The Golden Age of Indian literature, art, architecture came with the reign of Akbar’s grandson, Shah Jahan.
Shah Jahan

- Shah Jahan (r. 1627-1658) added territory to the empire.
- He continued Akbar’s policy of tolerance toward the Hindu majority and retained most of the alliances Akbar had forged with Hindu princes and local leaders.
- His consort, Mumtaz Mahal, became actively involved in court politics, and is remembered for the love and devotion Shah Jahan bestowed upon her.
Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal, designed in Persian style, for his consort when she died.
Mughal India and European Trades

- India produced spices, handicrafts, shipbuilding, and was the leader in textile manufacturing, exporting silk, and cotton.

- While European merchants were dazzled by India, the sophisticated Mughal civilization was unimpressed by the Europeans.

- When Europeans sought trading rights, the Mughal emperors saw no threat in granting them.

- Mughal emperors allowed Portuguese, Dutch, English, & French to build forts and warehouses in coastal towns.

- When Akbar’s successors ended his policy of religious tolerance, civil war between Hindu and Muslim princes broke out draining Mughal resources.

- Rulers increased taxes, leading to peasant rebellions.

- Weak rulers & corruption led to the collapse of the central government.
British-French Rivalry

- English and French made alliances with local leaders and organized sepoys, Indian troops.
- Fighting in India and Europe broke out between them in 1756.
- In India, Robert Clive, an agent of British East India Company, used British troops and sepoys to drive French out of their posts, take over Bengal, and spread its influence into other parts of India.
- He then forced the Mughal emperor to recognized the companies right to collect taxes in Bengal, allowing it to become real ruler there and providing opportunities for its influence to spread.