

Land-Based Empires

AP World History ■ Unit 3

AP World History



What we will cover

- 1 How the Land Empires Expanded
- 2 Administration
- 3 Legitimacy and Belief
- 4 Comparison in Land-Based Empires



How the Land Empires Expanded

Unit 3 covers the great **land-based empires** of roughly 1450 to 1750. Four questions organise it: how they expanded, how they governed, how they paid for themselves, and how they used religion.

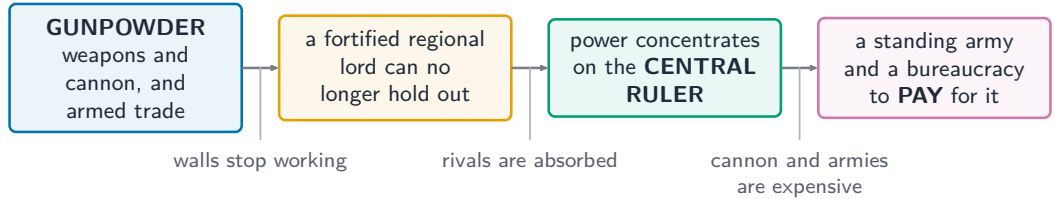
- The **Manchu (Qing)** in Central and East Asia.
- The **Mughal** in South Asia.
- The **Ottoman** in the eastern Mediterranean and beyond.
- The **Safavid** in Persia.

How the Land Empires Expanded, continued

Expansion relied on the **increased use of gunpowder, cannons, and armed trade** – which is why these are often called the **gunpowder empires** .

Access to gunpowder weapons let a central ruler overpower regional rivals and fortified nobles, so military technology and political centralisation grew together.

Why they are called gunpowder empires



Ottoman, Safavid, Mughal and Qing are the **instances**. This chain is the claim, and it is the claim that a comparison question marks



Four empires, one set of tools

Rulers faced the same problem: how to control territory far from the capital.

The CED names the tools they used.

Four empires, one set of tools, in detail

	Ottoman	Safavid	Mughal	Qing
Who staff the state?	devshirme recruits officials and janissaries	ghulams - an enslaved-elite corps	mansabdars ranked in imperial service	the examination system continues
Where do the revenues come from?	tax farming - the right to collect is sold	land revenue and silk trade	zamindars - hereditary local landholders	direct taxation, hard currency
What makes rule legitimate?	caliphal claim; mosque complexes	Shi'ism as the state religion	monumental building; tolerance (Akbar)	Mandate of Heaven; imperial portraits

all four expanded with gunpowder - they DIFFER in how they then governed

Rulers faced the same problem: how to control territory far from the capital.

Administration

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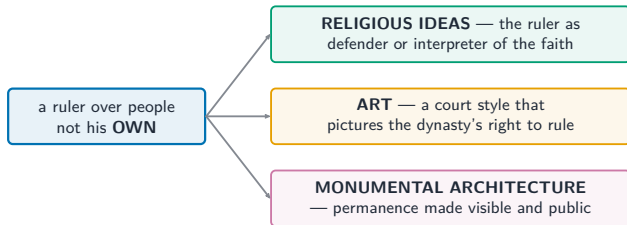


Legitimacy and Belief

Rulers continued to use **religious ideas, art, and monumental architecture** to legitimise their rule – Mughal mosques and mausolea, Ottoman mosque complexes, Qing imperial portraits, and European palaces such as Versailles all do the same work.

- The **Protestant Reformation** marked a break with existing Christian traditions and led to sustained religious and political conflict in Europe.
- Political rivalry between the **Ottoman and Safavid** empires intensified the **Sunni-Shia split**, showing how state rivalry can deepen a religious division.
- **Sikhism** developed in South Asia in a context of interaction between Hinduism and Islam.

Three instruments of legitimacy



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How the land empires actually governed

recruitment of bureaucratic elites

examinations in China, **janissaries** in the Ottoman Empire, and salaried officials elsewhere

military professionals

standing forces loyal to the ruler rather than to a local lord

why both

they replace hereditary nobles with people who owe their position **to the state**

tribute collection

one revenue route – goods or coin owed by subordinate regions

tax farming

selling the right to collect taxes – immediate revenue, and long-run abuse

innovative tax collection

land surveys and cadastral registers made assessment systematic

Political and religious disputes together produced **rivalries and conflict between states** – Sunni against Shia, Catholic against Protestant – and legitimacy was always part of the quarrel.

Three religious divisions

- The **Protestant Reformation** marked a break with existing Christian traditions and led to sustained religious and political conflict in Europe.
- Political rivalry between the **Ottoman and Safavid** empires intensified the **Sunni-Shia split** , showing how state rivalry can deepen a religious division.

Three religious divisions, in detail

THE DIVISION	WHERE	WHAT IT DID POLITICALLY
The Protestant Reformation	Latin Christendom	broke the single religious authority a ruler could appeal to
The Sunni-Shia split	Ottoman and Safavid	turned a doctrinal difference into the border between two empires
Sikhism	Mughal South Asia	a new tradition inside an empire that ruled a religiously plural population

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The Süleymaniye Mosque



The Süleymaniye Mosque -
monumental architecture as
an instrument of legitimacy

The Taj Mahal



The Taj Mahal - the same instrument, used by a Mughal ruler over a religiously plural population



Comparison in Land-Based Empires

The unit's reasoning skill is **comparison**, and the productive comparisons are about **method**, not size:

- Recruiting officials by **examination** (Qing) against by **enslaved-elite systems** (Ottoman devshirme, Safavid ghulams).
- **Tax farming** (Ottoman) against **land-revenue intermediaries** (Mughal zamindars) against **direct taxation** (Ming hard currency).
- Legitimacy through **religious identity** (Safavid Shi'ism as state religion) against through **tolerance of diversity** (Mughal policy under Akbar).

Worked example – one function, two empires

“Explain one difference in how land-based empires maintained power.”

- **Full marks:** *“Both the Ottoman and Mughal empires used intermediaries to collect revenue rather than salaried officials, but the Ottomans used tax farming, selling the right to collect for a fixed payment, while the Mughals relied on zamindars, hereditary landholders with a permanent local interest.”*
- **One function** – raising revenue – performed two ways.

Pick the function first, then the two methods. That order is what keeps a comparison from becoming two descriptions.

Exam tips

- Say **why** gunpowder mattered: it let central rulers overpower regional rivals, so military change and centralisation go together.
- Learn the four empires by their **administrative method**, not their territory – devshirme, examinations, zamindars, ghulams.
- **Tax farming** sells the right to collect; a **zamindar** is a hereditary landholder. Questions turn on that difference.
- Monumental architecture is **evidence of legitimation**, not decoration. Say what it was doing.
- The **Ottoman-Safavid** rivalry is the example of political conflict deepening a religious divide.
- Comparisons should be one **function** performed two ways, with the consequence stated.



Unit 3 – key takeaways

1

Gunpowder

lets central rulers overpower
regional rivals

2

Admin

devshirme, examinations,
zamindars, ghulams

3

Tax

farming sells the right; a zamindar
is hereditary

4

Monuments

evidence of legitimation, not
decoration

Check yourself

- 1 Why did gunpowder matter politically?
- 2 Tax farming vs zamindar?
- 3 What is monumental architecture evidence of?
- 4 Name the rivalry that deepened a religious divide.

Answers: central rulers overpower rivals ▪ sold right vs hereditary landholder ▪ legitimization ▪ Ottoman–Safavid