

Land-Based Empires

AP World History: Modern

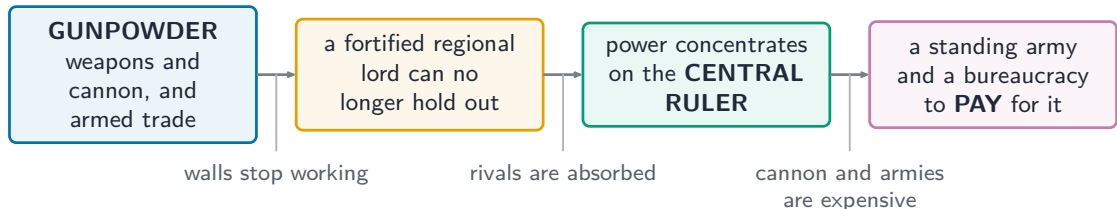
How the Land Empires Expanded

Unit 3 covers the great **land-based empires** 陆基帝国 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.

Expansion relied on the **increased use of gunpowder, cannons, and armed trade** - which is why these are often called the **gunpowder empires** 火药帝国. Access to gunpowder weapons let a central ruler overpower regional rivals and fortified nobles, so military technology and political centralisation grew together.

The empires to know:

- The **Manchu (Qing)** 满清 in Central and East Asia.
- The **Mughal** 莫卧儿 in South Asia.
- The **Ottoman** 奥斯曼 in the eastern Mediterranean and beyond.
- The **Safavid** 萨法维 in Persia.



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

Administration

	Ottoman	Safavid	Mughal	Qing
Who staffs the state?	devshirme recruits officials and janissaries	ghulams - an enslaved-elite corps	mansabdars ranked in imperial service	the examination system continues
Where does the revenue 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

The same three problems - staff, revenue, legitimacy - solved differently by each empire

Rulers faced the same problem: how to control territory far from the capital. The CED names the tools they used.

Recruitment of bureaucratic elites 官僚精英的选任 and the development of **military professionals** 职业军人 gave rulers officials who owed their position to the state rather than to birth. The clearest case is the Ottoman **devshirme** 德夫希尔梅 system, which recruited and trained administrators and soldiers, including the **janissaries** 耶尼切里; the Manchu continued China's **examination** system; the Safavids used **ghulams** 古拉姆.

Revenue came through **tribute collection** 纳贡, **tax farming** 包税制, and innovative tax-collection systems. The Mughal **zamindar** 柴明达尔 system and Ottoman tax farming are the standard examples, and the Ming practice of collecting taxes in **hard currency** 硬通货 is another.

Legitimacy and Belief

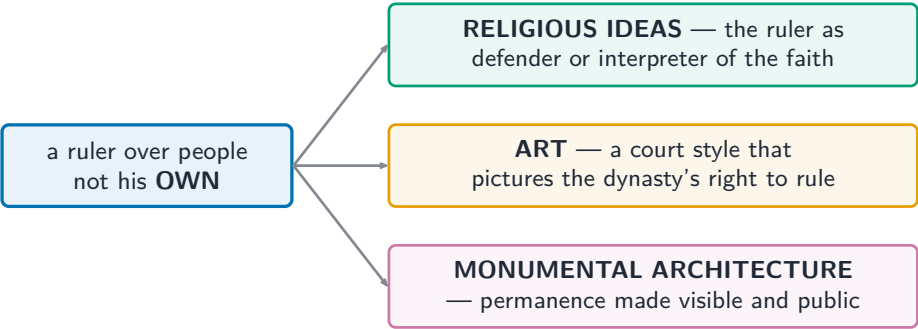
Rulers continued to use **religious ideas, art, and monumental architecture** to legitimise their rule - Mughal mosques and mausolea, Ottoman mosque complexes, Qing imperial portraits, and European palaces such as Versailles all do the same work.

Religious change also produced conflict:

- The **Protestant Reformation** 新教改革 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** 逊尼派与什叶派分裂, showing how state rivalry can deepen a religious division.
- **Sikhism** 锡克教 developed in South Asia in a context of interaction between Hinduism and Islam.

Political and religious disputes together produced **rivalries and conflict between states** across Eurasia.



The same three tools, used differently — which is why “how did each legitimise itself?” is a **comparison** question and not a definition

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

In this unit a religious division is a **political** fact. Say what it did to a state’s authority, not what the two sides believed



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 (a real AP exam question). AP World short-answer questions in this unit typically ask students to “*Explain one similarity*” or “*Explain one difference in how land-based empires maintained power.*” A full-mark answer names the method for both and explains the effect: “*Both the Ottoman and Mughal empires used intermediaries to collect revenue rather than salaried tax officials, but the Ottomans used tax farming, which sold the right to collect for a fixed payment, while the Mughals relied on zamindars, hereditary landholders whose local standing gave them a permanent interest in the countryside.*” Notice the shape: the comparison is one **function** (raising revenue), performed two ways, with the consequence stated.

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.