

Chapter 21 Reading Guide: The Muslim Empires

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Mongol invasions of the 13th and 14th centuries destroyed theoretical Muslim unity. The Abbasid and many regional dynasties were crushed. Three new Muslim dynasties arose to bring a new flowering to Islamic civilization. The greatest, the Ottoman Empire, reached its peak in the 17th century; to the east, the Safavids ruled in Persia and Afghanistan, and the Mughals ruled much of India. Together the three empires possessed great military and political power; they also produced an artistic and cultural renaissance within Islam. They contributed to the spread of Islam to new regions. All three dynasties originated from Turkic nomadic cultures; each possessed religious fervor and zeal for conversion. They built empires through military conquest based on the effective use of firearms. Each was ruled by an absolute monarch and drew revenues from taxation of agrarian populations. There were differences. The Mughals ruled mostly non-Muslim peoples, the Safavids mostly Muslims, and the Ottomans a mixture of Muslims and Christians. The Safavids were Shi'a Muslims; the others were Sunni.

1. What technological advancement did Babur the Tiger make use of that helped him overcome the numerical advantage possessed by his opponents?
2. Babur's dynasty, the Mughal, was one of three major Muslim dynasties during the Early Modern period. List the other two.
3. What three similarities did the Mughal dynasty share with other two Muslim powers regarding technology, treatment of non-Muslims, and attitude toward different sects of Islam?
4. What was the key difference between the Mughal dynasty and the other two regarding the impetus which led to their creation?
5. How did Islamic art change during this period?

THE OTTOMANS: FROM FRONTIER WARRIORS TO EMPIRE BUILDERS.

6. In what three areas did the Ottomans excel, advancing Islamic civilization?
7. The Turks were from central Asia yet they ended up in far western Asia. Give two reasons why they ended up settling there?
8. What famous Roman/Byzantine city did the Ottomans take in 1453 and what was key to their victory?
9. Read the caption to the picture on page 461. How did the capture of that famous city and the expansion of Muslim power into Eastern Europe influence Spain and Portugal's colonization efforts?

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10. How many years were the Ottomans an important threat to European/Christian countries? (Start from the date of that city's capture and round to the nearest hundred.)

A STATE GEARED TO WARFARE.

11. How was the economy of the Ottoman Empire similar to the Roman Empire's?
12. Your text states that the Turkic cavalry (soldiers on horseback) developed into an aristocracy. Read that section carefully and compare it to Western Europe during the Middle Ages. What Western European political system does this closely resemble?
13. What name did the infantry troops (soldiers who fight on foot) go by and why did they become more important than the cavalry (a major change in warfare)?
14. That infantry group became so powerful that they resembled another aspect of Rome as it began to decline. What was it? (see p. 107 for a hint)

THE SULTANS AND THEIR COURT.

15. Why did the "vizier" sometimes have more power than the sultan (the Ottoman emperor)?

CONSTANTINOPLE RESTORED AND THE FLOWERING OF OTTOMAN CULTURE.

16. What did the Hagia Sophia become under Mehmed II?
17. What sort of structure was most commonly built by sultans to beautify Constantinople?
18. How were artisans in the Ottoman Empire organized similarly to those in Europe?

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THE PROBLEM OF OTTOMAN DECLINE.

19. A geographical and technological problem that led to Rome's fall was shared by the Ottomans. What was it?

20. How were later Ottoman sultans similar to Japanese emperors following the Gempei Wars?)

MILITARY REVERSES AND THE OTTOMAN RETREAT.

21. Although the Ottomans initially made huge gains due to their use of artillery, what change did the Europeans introduce to artillery that gave them the advantage?

22. What European power replaced the Ottomans and other Muslim powers in the Indian Ocean?

23. How did European control of trade with Asia via the Indian Ocean impact the Ottoman Empire and the old Silk Road?

24. What was the most important factor in the Ottoman Empire's decline? (Hint: Ming China)

THE SHI'A CHALLENGE OF THE SAFAVIDS.

25. What modern Middle East country was the center of the Safavid dynasty?

26. What ethnic heritage to the Ottomans, a Sunni group, share with the Safavids, a Shi'a group?

27. What was the Safavid word for emperor?

28. Why did the Ottomans win the battle of Chaldiran?

29. Much of the conflict in modern Iraq today is due to the minority Sunni's long control over the political system (thanks to Saddam Hussein) and subjugation of the majority Shi'as. How

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might things be different if Isma'il had gotten his artillery to the area in time for the battle at Chaldiran?

IN DEPTH: THE GUNPOWDER EMPIRES AND THE SHIFTING BALANCE OF GLOBAL POWER.

30. What change did Europeans introduce to naval warfare, once dominated by the tactic of ramming ships into each other?

31. Why did European nobles stop building castles and wearing suits of armor?

32. Why did China, the inventor of gunpowder, fail to develop and make advances in artillery?

33. How did Japan's shoguns address the invention of firearms? Why?

34. Spain, France, and England were often at war with each other. How did this lead to their later domination of the world?

POLITICS AND WAR UNDER THE SAFAVID SHAHS.

35. Contrast the Safavid behavior towards outsiders, esp. Europeans, with that of the Ottomans.

STATE AND RELIGION.

36. Why would Safavid shahs claim they were descended from the successors of Ali?

37. Why were religious leaders required to curse the first three caliphs? (Hint: Sunni vs. Shi'a)

38. What happened to Sunnis, Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians in Persia/Iran?

ELITE AFFLUENCE AND ARTISTIC SPLENDOR.

39. How did Abbas I try to improve and strengthen his empire's economy?

SOCIETY AND GENDER ROLES: OTTOMAN AND SAFAVID COMPARISONS

40. How did geography benefit the Ottoman economy more than the Safavid? (Hint: Europe)

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41. Describe the life of most women in Safavid society.

THE RAPID DEMISE OF THE SAFAVID EMPIRE.

42. What did Abbas I do to his sons and why?

THE MUGHALS AND THE APEX OF MUSLIM CIVILIZATION IN INDIA.

43. Where did Babur locate his capital?

AKBAR AND THE BASIS FOR A LASTING EMPIRE.

44. Identify the most impressive aspect/deed of Akbar and explain why it impresses you.

SOCIAL REFORM AND SOCIAL CHANGE

45. Identify three ways in which Akbar tried to improve the lives of women in Mughal society.

ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT IN THE MUGHAL ERA

46. After reading this section, examine the picture of the Taj Mahal on page 478. Identify the Persian influence and Hindu aspects of its architecture.

A. Persian –

B. Hindu –

COURT POLITICS AND THE POSITION OF ELITE AND ORDINARY WOMEN

47. How did the position of women decline in Indian society during this time? Identify four negative aspects.

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THE BEGINNINGS OF IMPERIAL DECLINE

48. What did Aurangzeb have in common with his grandfather, Akbar in his role as leader?

49. How were the Sikhs originally similar to something Akbar wanted?

50. Why did they become anti-Muslim?