

# 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** 火药、火炮与武装贸易 - 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.

## Administration

|                                      | Ottoman                                         | Safavid                              | Mughal                                        | Manchu (Qing)                            |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Who staffs the state?                | devshirme recruits<br>officials and janissaries | ghulams - an<br>enslaved-elite corps | mansabdars ranked<br>in imperial service      | the examination<br>system continues      |
| Where does the<br>revenue come from? | tax farming - the right<br>to collect is sold   | land revenue and<br>silk trade       | zamindars - hereditary<br>local landholders   | direct taxation,<br>hard currency        |
| What makes rule<br>legitimate?       | caliphal claim;<br>mosque complexes             | Shi'ism as the<br>state religion     | monumental building;<br>tolerance under Akbar | Mandate of Heaven;<br>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** 宗教观念、艺术与纪念性建筑 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** 国家之间的对抗与冲突 across Eurasia.

## 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.