

Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society; A Comparative, Historical Analysis* (1992)

What general terms can we use to describe and classify the great variety of relations [between civilizations]? Words like 'state', 'empire' and 'system' are useful so long as we remember that they are no more than broad categorizations which cover a considerable range of distinct individual phenomena, and that different users of these terms mean slightly different things by them. The simple distinction between free and subject peoples, or between sovereign and vassal rulers, is hopelessly overcharged with rhetoric, and obscures many of the issues we need to examine. We need more dispassionate terms.

I have become increasingly doubtful about sharp distinctions between systems of independent states, suzerain systems and empires. I now prefer to define the wider subject by saying that, when a number of diverse communities of people, or political entities, are sufficiently involved with one another for us to describe them as forming a system of some kind (whether independent, suzerain, imperial or whatever), the organization of the system will fall somewhere along a notional spectrum between absolute independence and absolute empire. The two marginal positions are theoretical absolutes, that do not occur in practice. It is convenient for purposes of comparison to divide the spectrum into four broad categories of relationship: independence, hegemony, dominion and empire.

There is in states systems an inevitable tension between the desire for order and the desire for independence. Order promotes peace and prosperity, which are great boons. But there is a price. All order constrains the freedom of action of communities and in particular their rulers. The desire for order makes constraints and voluntary commitments acceptable, for the reasons set out by Hobbes and others. But in so far as the order is imposed by the actual or potential force of a hegemonic authority, it can be felt as oppressive. This is especially the case with imperial and other authorities which intervene in the domestic policies of members. The desire for autonomy, and then for independence, is the desire of states to loosen the constraints and commitments imposed upon them. But independence also has its price, in economic and military insecurity.

The term **independent states** in a system indicates political entities that retain the ultimate ability to take external decisions as well as domestic ones. But in practice freedom in external decisions is limited by the constraints which involvement in any system imposes, and also by the voluntary commitments that states assume in order to manage their external relations more effectively. The greater the constraints and commitments, the tighter the system will be, and the further along the spectrum.

At the multiple independences end of the spectrum, the more closely sovereign states are involved with each other, the less they feel able to operate alone. The impersonal net of strategic and economic pressures that holds them together in a system induces them to make alliances. Alliances bring a form of order to what would be an inchoate system by co-ordinating, and thus modifying, the behaviour of their members. That is an aspect of what the European system called *raison d'état*. Order is further promoted by general agreements and rules that restrain and benefit all members of the system, and make it into a society. That is an aspect of *raison de système*, the belief that it pays to make the system work. In so far as such agreements, including commitments to collective security, are voluntary, and are not imposed by a victor power or group of powers, they fall within the multiple independences area of the spectrum.

In practice the freedom of action of independent states is always limited by the pressures of interdependence in a system, and often also by voluntary choice. Usually it is also limited, more effectively, by hegemony. As we move along the spectrum to the point where one or more powers are able to exercise a hegemony, the other forms of co-ordination shade off into the benefits which derive from the hegemonic authority ordering the system in such a way that all its members see a balance of advantage in accepting the hegemony. So also imperial powers usually find it advantageous to respond to the interests and welfare of subordinate peoples.

By a **hegemony** I mean that some power or authority in a system is able to 'lay down the law' about the operation of the system, that is to determine to some extent the external relations between member states, while leaving them domestically independent. Some scholars like to reserve the term 'hegemony' for the exercise of this authority by a single power. The difficulty there is that in fact the authority can be

exercised either by a powerful individual state, or as is often the case by a group of such states. An example of dual hegemony is the Athenian-Spartan diarchy after the Persian wars, discussed in Chapter 5. The five great European powers after 1815 exercised a diffused hegemony, discussed in Chapter 21. Indeed, the rules and institutions of the European international society were far from purely voluntary: they were to a considerable extent imposed by the principal victors at the great peace settlements like Westphalia, Vienna and Versailles, and were to that extent hegemonic. I therefore prefer to use the term 'hegemony' in this wider sense of any authority, consisting of one or a few powerful states, that is able to determine the relations between the members of an international society, rather than resort to ugly words like 'para-hegemonic'. Moreover, a hegemony is not a dictatorial fiat. The hegemonies which I have looked at, whether exercised by an individual power or a small group, involve continual dialogue between the hegemonic authority and the other states, and a sense on both sides of the balance of expediency.

Suzerainty is a vaguer concept. In international law it usually means that one state exercises political control over another. In many historical contexts it means a shadowy overlordship that amounts to very little in practice. Some scholars like Wight and Bull spoke of suzerain systems or societies to mean those in which the members accepted hegemony as legitimate. There is a difference between systems whose members are in general agreement that there ought to be a suzerain authority, even when it is in abeyance in practice, and those whose members accept suzerain authority only tacitly. Tacit acceptance is the same as acquiescence, and is necessary for any effective hegemony, whether *de jure* or *de facto*.

Further along the spectrum **dominion** covers situations where an imperial authority to some extent determines the internal government of other communities, but they nevertheless retain their identity as separate states and some control over their own affairs. Examples are recent Soviet relations with eastern Europe, where the states were formally independent, the relation of the emperor Augustus to Herod's kingdom and the relation of the British raj to the Indian princes. Here the part played by the ability to coerce is more obvious.

Finally there is **empire**, no more absolute in practice than independence, meaning direct administration of different communities from an imperial centre. The freedom of action even of imperial governments is limited in practice by the constraints which involvement with other communities imposes.

When we look at historical examples, in the world today or in the systems of the past, we are of course aware that these categories are not watertight with an abrupt transition from one to another, but rather a continuum, like wavelengths of light in a rainbow which we find it convenient to divide into different colours. No actual system remains fixed at one point in this spectrum.

The relation of the various communities to each other shifts constantly along the spectrum over time. The ways in which a system tightens or loosens, and one hegemonic or imperial power supplants another, will be of special interest to us. There is also, at any one time, a variation in space. Communities involved in a system do not all stand in the same relationship to each other, or to an imperial power. There are many gradations, even between independent states; and when looked at closely every relationship between two communities has in practice a special nature of its own, conditioned by history, geography and other differentiating factors. One question we must examine is the extent to which empires usually have a hard core of direct administration, beyond which lie layers of dominion and hegemony until fully independent states are reached that lie outside imperial control or influence. Such 'layers' are, of course, gradations along our spectrum and therefore concentric circles on a diagram rather than a map.

In addition to these continuing variations of reality in time and space, the communities which we have treated as the components of systems are far from being constants. A political entity means in essence a community held together by a common government. Obviously the area under the control of a government will fluctuate. A **community** which is also bound together by other ties, such as custom, ethnic descent, religion or language, may grow or shrink in importance and size: it may absorb other elements, or break up, or become assimilated or otherwise disappear. We must use terms like community and state also in as neutral a sense as possible. For instance, it seems to me that it obscures our understanding of the nature of states to maintain dogmatically that to count as states they must be independent.

Since systems and the communities which compose them vary greatly from each other, with widely differing cultures, past experiences and degree of development, and since within a given system the degree of control which one, or two, or five powers can exercise over other communities also varies, can we make any valid generalizations about the pressures which induce such changes? Especially, can we see any indications of the way our own system may develop? Has there been any general tendency away from the pole of centralized authority, empire and world government towards multiple independence, as some people claim? Has there been a corresponding counter-tendency in known systems of independent states for the strongest power to move towards hegemony, trying to control the foreign relations of client states and lay down the rules of the system; and for hegemony to develop into dominion?

A useful metaphor for a theory of systems is the pendulum. Imagine our spectrum laid out in the form of an arc, with its midpoint at the bottom of the pendulum's swing, somewhere between hegemony and dominion. Was there in ancient systems any noticeable pendulum effect, any gravitational pull on systems away from the theoretical extremes and towards some central area of the spectrum, even though the momentum of change and other factors may carry the system past that area? Or does the pattern vary too much from one system to another for us to make any valid general inferences?

Another important issue is how far the arrangements between communities in a system are accepted as legitimate. Legitimacy is the acceptance of authority, the right of a rule or a ruler to be obeyed, as distinguished from the power to coerce. It is determined by the attitudes of those who obey an authority. How does legitimate authority, as opposed to power exercised by compulsion or the threat of it, operate between communities in a system, and acquire international significance? The more closely involved independent states are with each other, the less they try to operate alone. They see that they can further some of their interests and their principles, especially the preservation of their independence, by co-operation with allies; which involves taking the views and desires of their allies into account and modifying their own behaviour accordingly. Other interests can be promoted by general agreements and rules that restrain and benefit all members of the system. This awareness of the advantages of co-operation between independent partners corresponds to the ways in which hegemonic and imperial powers find it advantageous to respond to the interests and welfare of subordinate peoples. To what extent do such policies depend for their success on a wide measure of acceptance? The rules and institutions and the accepted practices of a society of substantially independent states need legitimate authority to ensure habitual compliance. Is legitimate authority as necessary for the successful exercise of hegemony or dominion?

If we want to understand how the civilizations of the past organized the relations between their different communities, we cannot simply leave such evidence as historians and archaeologists have been able to uncover as a mass of uncorrelated data. It can be very useful to impose a diagram or a grid of categories on the multiple variety of actual relations, for possible classification and comparative analysis. There is nothing unusual about this. We have to group different individuals and communities together into categories for juridical purposes: for instance, when we say that all the very different nominally independent states in our present international system are equal in international law. And it was regularly done in ancient times, as it is today, in order to further a political goal. But while the division of reality into categories can assist our understanding of what actually happens, there is the inherent danger that our categories may come between us and reality. We may slip into the assumption that phenomena lumped together in a category are more alike than they really are, or that because some things are true about all of them, other things are true also. We have noted the danger of category words with emotional overtones like 'independence' and 'empire'. Equally misleading are the categories used by past civilizations to classify their communities, and especially those which rulers and political leaders proclaimed for their own purposes. It will therefore pay us to look a little more closely at the changing patterns of relationship of various systems in all their individuality, and then compare them.

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THE RISE AND FALL OF THE GREAT POWERS

Economic Change
and Military Conflict
from 1500 to 2000

BY PAUL KENNEDY



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The Rise of the Western World

In the year 1500, the date chosen by numerous scholars to mark the divide between modern and pre-modern times,¹ it was by no means obvious to the inhabitants of Europe that their continent was poised to dominate much of the rest of the earth. The knowledge which contemporaries possessed about the great civilizations of the Orient was fragmentary and all too often erroneous, based as it was upon travelers' tales which had lost nothing in their retelling. Nevertheless, the widely held image of extensive eastern empires possessing fabulous wealth and vast armies was a reasonably accurate one, and on first acquaintance those societies must have seemed far more favorably endowed than the peoples and states of western Europe. Indeed, placed alongside these other great centers of cultural and economic activity, Europe's relative weaknesses were more apparent than its strengths. It was, for a start, neither the most fertile nor the most populous area in the world; India and China took pride of place in each respect. Geopolitically, the "continent" of Europe was an awkward shape, bounded by ice and water to the north and west, being open to frequent landward invasion from the east, and vulnerable to strategic circumvention in the south. In 1500, and for a long time before and after that, these were not abstract considerations. It was only eight years earlier that Granada, the last Muslim region of Spain, had succumbed to the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella; but that signified the end of a regional campaign, not of the far larger struggle between Christendom and the forces of the Prophet. Over much of the western world there still hung the shock of the fall of Constantinople in 1453, an event which seemed the more pregnant because it by no means marked the limits of the Ottoman Turks' advance. By the end of the century they had taken Greece and the Ionian Islands, Bosnia, Albania, and much of the rest of the Balkans; and worse was to come in the 1520s when their formidable janissary armies pressed toward Budapest and Vienna. In the south, where Ottoman galleys raided Italian ports, the

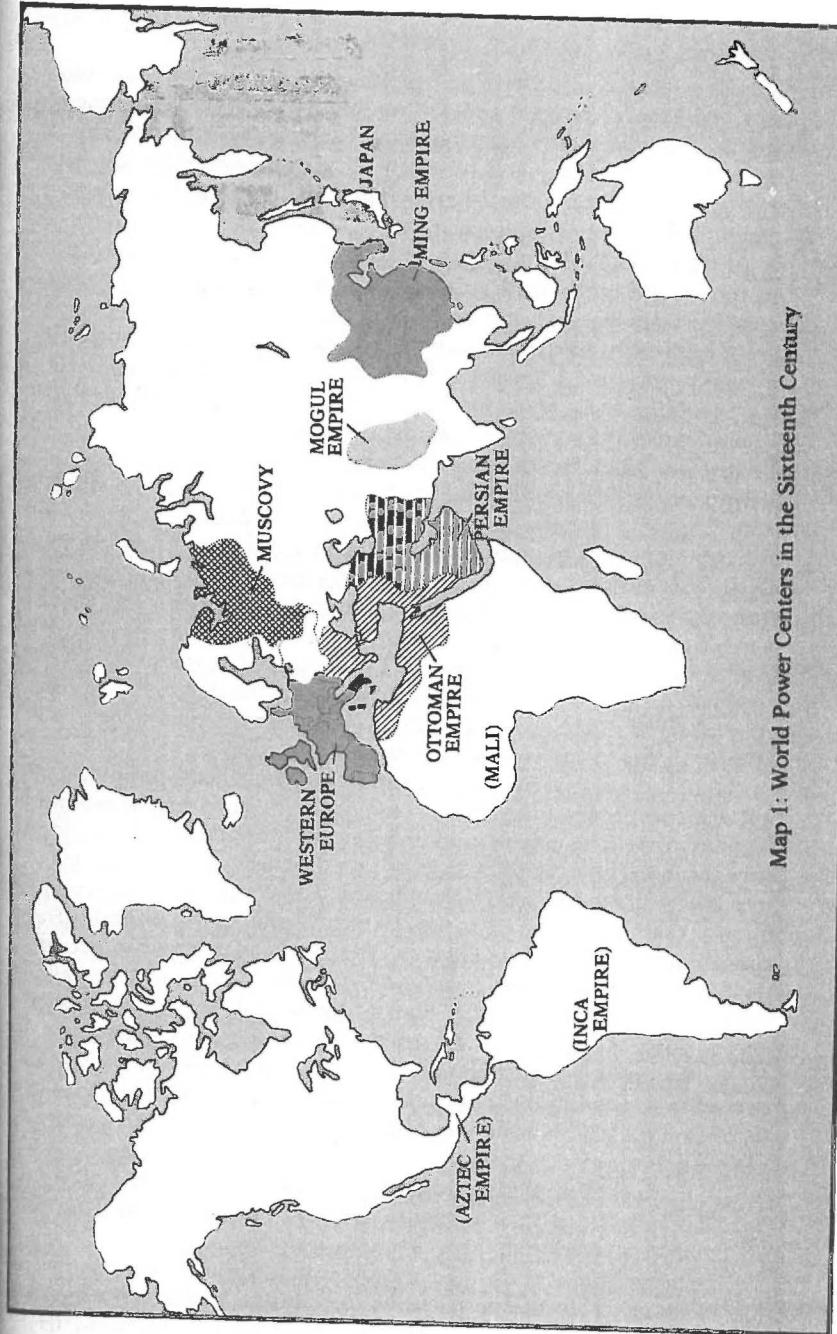
popes were coming to fear that Rome's fate would soon match that of Constantinople.²

Whereas these threats seemed part of a coherent grand strategy directed by Sultan Mehmet II and his successors, the response of the Europeans was disjointed and sporadic. Unlike the Ottoman and Chinese empires, unlike the rule which the Moguls were soon to establish in India, there never was a united Europe in which all parts acknowledged one secular or religious leader. Instead, Europe was a hodge-podge of petty kingdoms and principalities, marcher lordships and city-states. Some more powerful monarchies were arising in the west, notably Spain, France, and England, but none was to be free of internal tensions and all regarded the others as rivals, rather than allies in the struggle against Islam.

Nor could it be said that Europe had pronounced advantages in the realms of culture, mathematics, engineering, or navigational and other technologies when compared with the great civilizations of Asia. A considerable part of the European cultural and scientific heritage was, in any case, "borrowed" from Islam, just as Muslim societies had borrowed for centuries from China through the media of mutual trade, conquest, and settlement. In retrospect, one can see that Europe was accelerating both commercially and technologically by the late fifteenth century; but perhaps the fairest general comment would be that each of the great centers of world civilization about that time was at a roughly similar stage of development, some more advanced in one area, but less so in others. Technologically and, therefore, militarily, the Ottoman Empire, China under the Ming dynasty, a little later northern India under the Moguls, and the European states system with its Muscovite offshoot were all far superior to the scattered societies of Africa, America, and Oceania. While this does imply that Europe in 1500 was one of the most important cultural power centers, it was not at all obvious that it would one day emerge at the very top. Before investigating the causes of its rise, therefore, it is necessary to examine the strengths and the weaknesses of the other contenders.

Ming China

Of all the civilizations of premodern times, none appeared more advanced, none felt more superior, than that of China.³ Its considerable population, 100–130 million compared with Europe's 50–55 million in the fifteenth century; its remarkable culture; its exceedingly fertile and irrigated plains, linked by a splendid canal system since the eleventh century; and its unified, hierarchic administration run by a well-educated Confucian bureaucracy had given a coherence and sophistication to Chinese society which was the envy of foreign visi-



Map 1: World Power Centers in the Sixteenth Century

tors. True, that civilization had been subjected to severe disruption from the Mongol hordes, and to domination after the invasions of Kublai Khan. But China had a habit of changing its conquerors much more than it was changed by them, and when the Ming dynasty emerged in 1368 to reunite the empire and finally defeat the Mongols, much of the old order and learning remained.

To readers brought up to respect "western" science, the most striking feature of Chinese civilization must be its technological precocity. Huge libraries existed from early on. Printing by movable type had already appeared in eleventh-century China, and soon large numbers of books were in existence. Trade and industry, stimulated by the canal-building and population pressures, were equally sophisticated. Chinese cities were much larger than their equivalents in medieval Europe, and Chinese trade routes as extensive. Paper money had earlier expedited the flow of commerce and the growth of markets. By the later decades of the eleventh century there existed an enormous iron industry in north China, producing around 125,000 tons per annum, chiefly for military and governmental use—the army of over a million men was, for example, an enormous market for iron goods. It is worth remarking that this production figure was far larger than the British iron output in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, seven centuries later! The Chinese were also probably the first to invent true gunpowder; and cannons were used by the Ming to overthrow their Mongol rulers in the late fourteenth century.⁴

Given this evidence of cultural and technological advance, it is also not surprising to learn that the Chinese had turned to overseas exploration and trade. The magnetic compass was another Chinese invention, some of their junks were as large as later Spanish galleons, and commerce with the Indies and the Pacific islands was potentially as profitable as that along the caravan routes. Naval warfare had been conducted on the Yangtze many decades earlier—in order to subdue the vessels of Sung China in the 1260s, Kublai Khan had been compelled to build his own great fleet of fighting ships, equipped with projectile-throwing machines—and the coastal grain trade was booming in the early fourteenth century. In 1420, the Ming navy was recorded as possessing 1,350 combat vessels, including 400 large floating fortresses and 250 ships designed for long-range cruising. Such a force eclipsed, but did not include, the many privately managed vessels which were already trading with Korea, Japan, Southeast Asia, and even East Africa by that time, and bringing revenue to the Chinese state, which sought to tax this maritime commerce.

The most famous of the official overseas expeditions were the seven long-distance cruises undertaken by the admiral Cheng Ho between 1405 and 1433. Consisting on occasions of hundreds of ships and tens of thousands of men, these fleets visited ports from Malacca and Cey-

lon to the Red Sea entrances and Zanzibar. Bestowing gifts upon deferential local rulers on the one hand, they compelled the recalcitrant to acknowledge Peking on the other. One ship returned with giraffes from East Africa to entertain the Chinese emperor; another with a Ceylonese chief who had been unwise enough not to acknowledge the supremacy of the Son of Heaven. (It must be noted, however, that the Chinese apparently never plundered nor murdered—unlike the Portuguese, Dutch, and other European invaders of the Indian Ocean.) From what historians and archaeologists can tell us of the size, power, and seaworthiness of Cheng Ho's navy—some of the great treasure ships appear to have been around 400 feet long and displaced over 1,500 tons—they might well have been able to sail around Africa and "discover" Portugal several decades before Henry the Navigator's expeditions began earnestly to push south of Ceuta.⁵

But the Chinese expedition of 1433 was the last of the line, and three years later an imperial edict banned the construction of seagoing ships; later still, a specific order forbade the existence of ships with more than two masts. Naval personnel would henceforth be employed on smaller vessels on the Grand Canal. Cheng Ho's great warships were laid up and rotted away. Despite all the opportunities which beckoned overseas, China had decided to turn its back on the world.

There was, to be sure, a plausible strategical reason for this decision. The northern frontiers of the empire were again under some pressure from the Mongols, and it may have seemed prudent to concentrate military resources in this more vulnerable area. Under such circumstances a large navy was an expensive luxury, and in any case, the attempted Chinese expansion southward into Annam (Vietnam) was proving fruitless and costly. Yet this quite valid reasoning does not appear to have been reconsidered when the disadvantages of naval retrenchment later became clear: within a century or so, the Chinese coastline and even cities on the Yangtze were being attacked by Japanese pirates, but there was no serious rebuilding of an imperial navy. Even the repeated appearance of Portuguese vessels off the China coast did not force a reassessment.* Defense on land was all that was required, the mandarins reasoned, for had not all maritime trade by Chinese subjects been forbidden in any case?

Apart from the costs and other disincentives involved, therefore, a key element in China's retreat was the sheer conservatism of the Confucian bureaucracy—a conservatism heightened in the Ming period by resentment at the changes earlier forced upon them by the Mongols. In this "Restoration" atmosphere, the all-important officialdom was concerned to preserve and recapture the past, not to create a brighter

*For a brief while, in the 1590s, a somewhat revived Chinese coastal fleet helped the Koreans to resist two Japanese invasion attempts; but even this rump of the Ming navy declined thereafter.

future based upon overseas expansion and commerce. According to the Confucian code, warfare itself was a deplorable activity and armed forces were made necessary only by the fear of barbarian attacks or internal revolts. The mandarins' dislike of the army (and the navy) was accompanied by a suspicion of the trader. The accumulation of private capital, the practice of buying cheap and selling dear, the ostentation of the *nouveau riche* merchant, all offended the elite, scholarly bureaucrats—almost as much as they aroused the resentments of the toiling masses. While not wishing to bring the entire market economy to a halt, the mandarins often intervened against individual merchants by confiscating their property or banning their business. Foreign trade by Chinese subjects must have seemed even more dubious to mandarin eyes, simply because it was less under their control.

This dislike of commerce and private capital does not conflict with the enormous technological achievements mentioned above. The Ming rebuilding of the Great Wall of China and the development of the canal system, the ironworks, and the imperial navy were for state purposes, because the bureaucracy had advised the emperor that they were necessary. But just as these enterprises could be started, so also could they be neglected. The canals were permitted to decay, the army was periodically starved of new equipment, the astronomical clocks (built c. 1090) were disregarded, the ironworks gradually fell into desuetude. These were not the only disincentives to economic growth. Printing was restricted to scholarly works and not employed for the widespread dissemination of practical knowledge, much less for social criticism. The use of paper currency was discontinued. Chinese cities were never allowed the autonomy of those in the West; there were no Chinese burghers, with all that that term implied; when the location of the emperor's court was altered, the capital city had to move as well. Yet without official encouragement, merchants and other entrepreneurs could not thrive; and even those who did acquire wealth tended to spend it on land and education, rather than investing in protoindustrial development. Similarly, the banning of overseas trade and fishing took away another potential stimulus to sustained economic expansion; such foreign trade as did occur with the Portuguese and Dutch in the following centuries was in luxury goods and (although there were doubtless many evasions) controlled by officials.

In consequence, Ming China was a much less vigorous and enterprising land than it had been under the Sung dynasty four centuries earlier. There were improved agricultural techniques in the Ming period, to be sure, but after a while even this more intensive farming and the use of marginal lands found it harder to keep pace with the burgeoning population; and the latter was only to be checked by those Malthusian instruments of plague, floods, and war, all of which were very difficult to handle. Even the replacement of the Mings by the more

vigorous Manchus after 1644 could not halt the steady relative decline. One final detail can summarize this tale. In 1736—just as Abraham Darby's ironworks at Coalbrookdale were beginning to boom—the blast furnaces and coke ovens of Honan and Hopei were abandoned entirely. They had been great before the Conqueror had landed at Hastings. Now they would not resume production until the twentieth century.

The Muslim World

Even the first of the European sailors to visit China in the early sixteenth century, although impressed by its size, population, and riches, might have observed that this was a country which had turned in on itself. That remark certainly could not then have been made of the Ottoman Empire, which was then in the middle stages of its expansion and, being nearer home, was correspondingly much more threatening to Christendom. Viewed from the larger historical and geographical perspective, in fact, it would be fair to claim that it was the Muslim states which formed the most rapidly expanding forces in world affairs during the sixteenth century. Not only were the Ottoman Turks pushing westward, but the Safavid dynasty in Persia was also enjoying a resurgence of power, prosperity, and high culture, especially in the reigns of Ismail I (1500–1524) and Abbas I (1587–1629); a chain of strong Muslim khanates still controlled the ancient Silk Road via Kashgar and Turfan to China, not unlike the chain of West African Islamic states such as Bornu, Sokoto, and Timbuktu; the Hindu Empire in Java was overthrown by Muslim forces early in the sixteenth century; and the king of Kabul, Babur, entering India by the conqueror's route from the northwest, established the Mogul Empire in 1526. Although this hold on India was shaky at first, it was successfully consolidated by Babur's grandson Akbar (1556–1605), who carved out a northern Indian empire stretching from Baluchistan in the west to Bengal in the east. Throughout the seventeenth century, Akbar's successors pushed farther south against the Hindu Marathas, just at the same time as the Dutch, British, and French were entering the Indian peninsula from the sea, and of course in a much less substantial form. To these secular signs of Muslim growth one must add the vast increase in numbers of the faithful in Africa and the Indies, against which the proselytization by Christian missions paled in comparison.

But the greatest Muslim challenge to early modern Europe lay, of course, with the Ottoman Turks, or, rather, with their formidable army and the finest siege train of the age. Already by the beginning of the sixteenth century their domains stretched from the Crimea (where

they had overrun Genoese trading posts) and the Aegean (where they were dismantling the Venetian Empire) to the Levant. By 1516, Ottoman forces had seized Damascus, and in the following year they entered Egypt, shattering the Mamluk forces by the use of Turkish cannon. Having thus closed the spice route from the Indies, they moved up the Nile and pushed through the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean, countering the Portuguese incursions there. If this perturbed Iberian sailors, it was nothing to the fright which the Turkish armies were giving the princes and peoples of eastern and southern Europe. Already the Turks held Bulgaria and Serbia, and were the predominant influence in Wallachia and all around the Black Sea; but, following the southern drive against Egypt and Arabia, the pressure against Europe was resumed under Suleiman (1520–1566). Hungary, the great eastern bastion of Christendom in these years, could no longer hold off the superior Turkish armies and was overrun following the battle of Mohacs in 1526—the same year, coincidentally, as Babur gained the victory at Panipat by which the Mughal Empire was established. Would all of Europe soon go the way of northern India? By 1529, with the Turks besieging Vienna, this must have appeared a distinct possibility to some. In actual fact, the line then stabilized in northern Hungary and the Holy Roman Empire was preserved; but thereafter the Turks presented a constant danger and exerted a military pressure which could never be fully ignored. Even as late as 1683, they were again besieging Vienna.⁷

Almost as alarming, in many ways, was the expansion of Ottoman naval power. Like Kublai Khan in China, the Turks had developed a navy only in order to reduce a seagirt enemy fortress—in this case, Constantinople, which Sultan Mehmet blockaded with large galleys and hundreds of smaller craft to assist the assault of 1453. Thereafter, formidable galley fleets were used in operations across the Black Sea, in the southward push toward Syria and Egypt, and in a whole series of clashes with Venice for control of the Aegean islands, Rhodes, Crete, and Cyprus. For some decades of the early sixteenth century Ottoman sea power was kept at arm's length by Venetian, Genoese, and Habsburg fleets; but by midcentury, Muslim naval forces were active all the way along the North African coast, were raiding ports in Italy, Spain, and the Balearics, and finally managed to take Cyprus in 1570–1571, before being checked at the battle of Lepanto.⁸

The Ottoman Empire was, of course, much more than a military machine. A conquering elite (like the Manchus in China), the Ottomans had established a unity of official faith, culture, and language over an area greater than the Roman Empire, and over vast numbers of subject peoples. For centuries before 1500 the world of Islam had been culturally and technologically ahead of Europe. Its cities were large, well-lit, and drained, and some of them possessed universities and libraries

and stunningly beautiful mosques. In mathematics, cartography, medicine, and many other aspects of science and industry—in mills, gun-casting, lighthouses, horsebreeding—the Muslims had enjoyed a lead. The Ottoman system of recruiting future janissaries from Christian youth in the Balkans had produced a dedicated, uniform corps of troops. Tolerance of other races had brought many a talented Greek, Jew, and Gentile into the sultan's service—a Hungarian was Mehmet's chief gun-caster in the Siege of Constantinople. Under a successful leader like Suleiman I, a strong bureaucracy supervised fourteen million subjects—this at a time when Spain had five million and England a mere two and a half million inhabitants. Constantinople in its heyday was bigger than any European city, possessing over 500,000 inhabitants in 1600.

Yet the Ottoman Turks, too, were to falter, to turn inward, and to lose the chance of world domination, although this became clear only a century after the strikingly similar Ming decline. To a certain extent it could be argued that this process was the natural consequence of earlier Turkish successes: the Ottoman army, however well administered, might be able to maintain the lengthy frontiers but could hardly expand farther without enormous cost in men and money; and Ottoman imperialism, unlike that of the Spanish, Dutch, and English later, did not bring much in the way of economic benefit. By the second half of the sixteenth century the empire was showing signs of strategical overextension, with a large army stationed in central Europe, an expensive navy operating in the Mediterranean, troops engaged in North Africa, the Aegean, Cyprus, and the Red Sea, and reinforcements needed to hold the Crimea against a rising Russian power. Even in the Near East there was no quiet flank, thanks to a disastrous religious split in the Muslim world which occurred when the Shi'ite branch, based in Iraq and then in Persia, challenged the prevailing Sunni practices and teachings. At times, the situation was not unlike that of the contemporary religious struggles in Germany, and the sultan could maintain his dominance only by crushing Shi'ite dissidents with force. However, across the border the Shi'ite kingdom of Persia under Abbas the Great was quite prepared to ally with European states against the Ottomans, just as France had worked with the "infidel" Turk against the Holy Roman Empire. With this array of adversaries, the Ottoman Empire would have needed remarkable leadership to have maintained its growth; but after 1566 there reigned thirteen incompetent sultans in succession.

External enemies and personal failings do not, however, provide the full explanation. The system as a whole, like that of Ming China, increasingly suffered from some of the defects of being centralized, despotic, and severely orthodox in its attitude toward initiative, dissent, and commerce. An idiot sultan could paralyze the Ottoman Em-

pire in the way that a pope or Holy Roman emperor could never do for all Europe. Without clear directives from above, the arteries of the bureaucracy hardened, preferring conservatism to change, and stifling innovation. The lack of territorial expansion and accompanying booty after 1550, together with the vast rise in prices, caused discontented janissaries to turn to internal plunder. Merchants and entrepreneurs (nearly all of whom were foreigners), who earlier had been encouraged, now found themselves subject to unpredictable taxes and outright seizures of property. Ever higher dues ruined trade and depopulated towns. Perhaps worst affected of all were the peasants, whose lands and stock were preyed upon by the soldiers. As the situation deteriorated, civilian officials also turned to plunder, demanding bribes and confiscating stocks of goods. The costs of war and the loss of Asiatic trade during the struggle with Persia intensified the government's desperate search for new revenues, which in turn gave greater powers to unscrupulous tax farmers.⁹

To a distinct degree, the fierce response to the Shi'ite religious challenge reflected and anticipated a hardening of official attitudes toward all forms of free thought. The printing press was forbidden because it might disseminate dangerous opinions. Economic notions remained primitive: imports of western wares were desired, but exports were forbidden; the guilds were supported in their efforts to check innovation and the rise of "capitalist" producers; religious criticism of traders intensified. Contemptuous of European ideas and practices, the Turks declined to adopt newer methods for containing plagues; consequently, their populations suffered more from severe epidemics. In one truly amazing fit of obscurantism, a force of janissaries destroyed a state observatory in 1580, alleging that it had caused a plague.¹⁰ The armed services had become, indeed, a bastion of conservatism. Despite noting, and occasionally suffering from, the newer weaponry of European forces, the janissaries were slow to modernize themselves. Their bulky cannons were not replaced by the lighter cast-iron guns. After the defeat at Lepanto, they did not build the larger European type of vessels. In the south, the Muslim fleets were simply ordered to remain in the calmer waters of the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, thus obviating the need to construct oceangoing vessels on the Portuguese model. Perhaps technical reasons help to explain these decisions, but cultural and technological conservatism also played a role (by contrast, the irregular Barbary corsairs swiftly adopted the frigate type of warship).

The above remarks about conservatism could be made with equal or even greater force about the Mogul Empire. Despite the sheer size of the kingdom at its height and the military genius of some of its emperors, despite the brilliance of its courts and the craftsmanship of its luxury products, despite even a sophisticated banking and credit

network, the system was weak at the core. A conquering Muslim elite lay on top of a vast mass of poverty-stricken peasants chiefly adhering to Hinduism. In the towns themselves there were very considerable numbers of merchants, bustling markets, and an attitude toward manufacture, trade, and credit among Hindu business families which would make them excellent examples of Weber's Protestant ethic. As against this picture of an entrepreneurial society just ready for economic "takeoff" before it became a victim of British imperialism, there are the gloomier portrayals of the many indigenous retarding factors in Indian life. The sheer rigidity of Hindu religious taboos militated against modernization: rodents and insects could not be killed, so vast amounts of foodstuffs were lost; social mores about handling refuse and excreta led to permanently insanitary conditions, a breeding ground for bubonic plagues; the caste system throttled initiative, instilled ritual, and restricted the market; and the influence wielded over Indian local rulers by the Brahman priests meant that this obscurantism was effective at the highest level. Here were social checks of the deepest sort to any attempts at radical change. Small wonder that later many Britons, having first plundered and then tried to govern India in accordance with Utilitarian principles, finally left with the feeling that the country was still a mystery to them.¹¹

But the Mogul rule could scarcely be compared with administration by the Indian Civil Service. The brilliant courts were centers of conspicuous consumption on a scale which the Sun King at Versailles might have thought excessive. Thousands of servants and hangers-on, extravagant clothes and jewels and harems and menageries, vast arrays of bodyguards, could be paid for only by the creation of a systematic plunder machine. Tax collectors, required to provide fixed sums for their masters, preyed mercilessly upon peasant and merchant alike; whatever the state of the harvest or trade, the money had to come in. There being no constitutional or other checks—apart from rebellion—upon such depredations, it was not surprising that taxation was known as "eating." For this colossal annual tribute, the population received next to nothing. There was little improvement in communications, and no machinery for assistance in the event of famine, flood, and plague—which were, of course, fairly regular occurrences. All this makes the Ming dynasty appear benign, almost progressive, by comparison. Technically, the Mogul Empire was to decline because it became increasingly difficult to maintain itself against the Marathas in the south, the Afghans in the north, and, finally, the East India Company. In reality, the causes of its decay were much more internal than external.

Two Outsiders—Japan and Russia

By the sixteenth century there were two other states which, although nowhere near the size and population of the Ming, Ottoman, and Mogul empires, were demonstrating signs of political consolidation and economic growth. In the Far East, Japan was taking forward steps just as its large Chinese neighbor was beginning to atrophy. Geography gave a prime strategical asset to the Japanese (as it did to the British), for insularity offered a protection from overland invasion which China did not possess. The gap between the islands of Japan and the Asiatic mainland was by no means a complete one, however, and a great deal of Japanese culture and religion had been adapted from the older civilization. But whereas China was run by a unified bureaucracy, power in Japan lay in the hands of clan-based feudal lordships and the emperor was but a cipher. The centralized rule which had existed in the fourteenth century had been replaced by a constant feuding between the clans—akin, as it were, to the strife among their equivalents in Scotland. This was not the ideal circumstance for traders and merchants, but it did not check a very considerable amount of economic activity. At sea, as on land, entrepreneurs jostled with warlords and military adventurers, each of whom detected profit in the East Asian maritime trade. Japanese pirates scoured the coasts of China and Korea for plunder, while simultaneously other Japanese
 combed the chance to exchange goods with the Portuguese and Dutch visitors from the West. Christian missions and European wares penetrated Japanese society far more easily than they did an aloof, self-contained Ming Empire.¹²

This lively if turbulent scene was soon to be altered by the growing use of imported European armaments. As was happening elsewhere in the world, power gravitated toward those individuals or groups who possessed the resources to commandeer a large musket-bearing army and, most important of all, cannon. In Japan the result was the consolidation of authority under the great warlord Hideyoshi, whose aspirations ultimately led him twice to attempt the conquest of Korea. When these failed, and Hideyoshi died in 1598, civil strife again threatened Japan; but within a few years all power had been consolidated in the hands of Ieyasu and fellow shoguns of the Tokugawa clan. This time the centralized military rule could not be shaken.

In many respects, Tokugawa Japan possessed the characteristics of the "new monarchies" which had arisen in the West during the preceding century. The great difference was the shogunate's abjuration of overseas expansion, indeed of virtually all contact with the outside world. In 1636, construction of oceangoing vessels was stopped and Japanese subjects were forbidden to sail the high seas. Trade with

Europeans was restricted to the permitted Dutch ship calling at Deshima in Nagasaki harbor; the others were tumbled out. Even earlier, virtually all Christians (foreign and native) were ruthlessly murdered at the behest of the shogunate. Clearly, the chief motive behind these drastic measures was the Tokugawa clan's determination to achieve unchallenged control; foreigners and Christians were thus regarded as potentially subversive. But so, too, were the other feudal lords, which is why they were required to spend half the year in the capital; and why, during the six months they were allowed to reside on their estates, their families had to remain at Yedo (Tokyo), virtually hostages.

This imposed uniformity did not, of itself, throttle economic development—nor, for that matter, did it prevent outstanding artistic achievements. Nationwide peace was good for trade, the towns and overall population were growing, and the increasing use of cash payments made merchants and bankers more important. The latter, however, were never permitted the social and political prominence they gained in Italy, the Netherlands, and Britain, and the Japanese were obviously unable to learn about, and adopt, new technological and industrial developments that were occurring elsewhere. Like the Ming dynasty, the Tokugawa shogunate deliberately chose, with a few exceptions, to cut itself off from the rest of the world. This may not have retarded economic activities in Japan itself, but it did harm the relative power of the Japanese state. Disdaining to engage in trade, and forbidden to travel or to display their weapons except on ceremonial occasions, the samurai warriors attached to their lords lived a life of ritual and boredom. The entire military system ossified for two centuries, so that when Commodore Perry's famous "black ships" arrived in 1853, there was little that an overawed Japanese government could do except grant the American request for coaling and other facilities.

At the beginning of its period of political consolidation and growth, Russia appeared similar to Japan in certain respects. Geographically far removed from the West—partly on account of poor communications, and partly because periodic clashes with Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, and the Ottoman Empire interrupted those routes which did exist—the Kingdom of Muscovy was nevertheless deeply influenced by its European inheritance, not least through the Russian Orthodox Church. It was from the West, moreover, that there came the lasting solution to Russia's vulnerability to the horsemen of the Asian plains: muskets and cannon. With these new weapons, Moscow could now establish itself as one of the "gunpowder empires" and thus expand. A westward drive was difficult, given that the Swedes and Poles also possessed such armaments, but colonial expansion against the tribes and khanates to the south and east was made much easier by this military-technological advantage. By 1556, for example, Russian troops had reached the Caspian Sea. This military expansionism was

accompanied, and often eclipsed, by the explorers and pioneers who steadily pushed east of the Urals, through Siberia, and had actually reached the Pacific coast by 1638.¹³ Despite its hard-won military superiority over Mongol horsemen, there was nothing easy or inevitable about the growth of the Russian Empire. The more peoples that were conquered, the greater was the likelihood of internal dissension and revolt. The nobles at home were often restive, even after the purge of their numbers by Ivan the Terrible. The Tartar khanate of the Crimea remained a powerful foe; its troops sacked Moscow in 1571, and it remained independent until the late eighteenth century. Challenges from the West were even more threatening; the Poles, for example, occupied Moscow between 1608 and 1613.

A further weakness was that despite certain borrowings from the West, Russia remained technologically backward and economically underdeveloped. Extremes of climate and the enormous distances and poor communications partly accounted for this, but so also did severe social defects: the military absolutism of the czars, the monopoly of education in the hands of the Orthodox Church, the venality and unpredictability of the bureaucracy, and the institution of serfdom, which made agriculture feudal and static. Yet despite this relative backwardness, and despite the setbacks, Russia continued to expand, imposing upon its new territories the same military force and autocratic rule which was used to command the obedience of the Muscovites. Enough had been borrowed from Europe to give the regime the armed strength to preserve itself, while all possibility of western social and political "modernization" was firmly resisted; foreigners in Russia, for example, were segregated from the natives in order to prevent subversive influences. Unlike the other despotisms mentioned in this chapter, the empire of the czars would manage to survive and Russia would one day grow to be a world power. Yet in 1500, and even as late as 1650, this was scarcely obvious to many Frenchmen, Dutchmen, and Englishmen, who probably knew as much about the Russian ruler as they did about the legendary Prester John.¹⁴

The "European Miracle"¹⁵

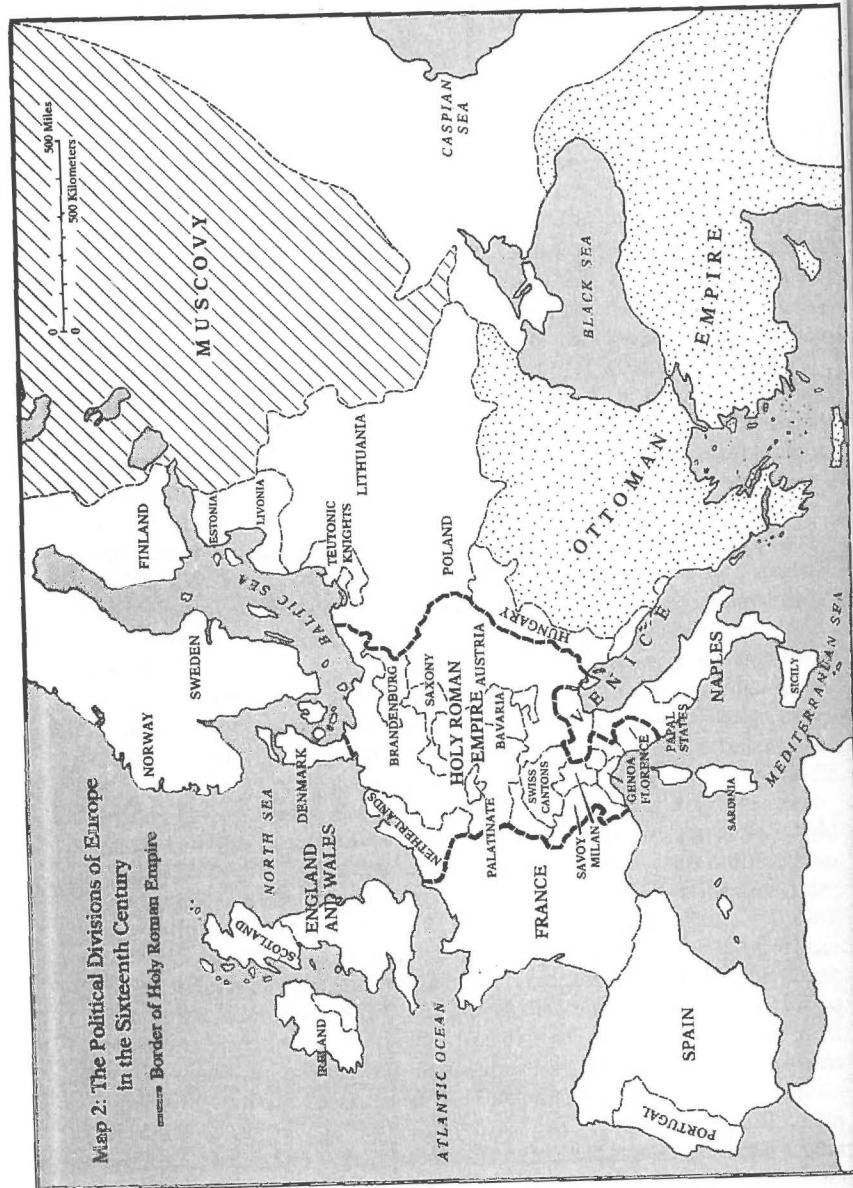
Why was it among the scattered and relatively unsophisticated peoples inhabiting the western parts of the Eurasian landmass that there occurred an unstoppable process of economic development and technological innovation which would steadily make it the commercial and military leader in world affairs? This is a question which has exercised scholars and other observers for centuries, and all that the following paragraphs can do is to present a synthesis of the existing knowledge. Yet however crude such a summary must be, it possesses

the incidental advantage of exposing the main strands of the argument which permeate this entire work: namely, that there was a *dynamic* involved, driven chiefly by economic and technological advances, although always interacting with other variables such as social structure, geography, and the occasional accident; that to understand the course of world politics, it is necessary to focus attention upon the material and long-term elements rather than the vagaries of personality or the week-by-week shifts of diplomacy and politics; and that power is a relative thing, which can only be described and measured by frequent comparisons between various states and societies.

The one feature of Europe which immediately strikes the eye when looking at a map of the world's "power centers" in the sixteenth century is its political fragmentation (see Maps 1 and 2). This was not an accidental or short-lived state of affairs, such as occurred briefly in China after the collapse of one empire and before its successor dynasty could gather up again the strings of centralized power. Europe had always been politically fragmented, despite even the best efforts of the Romans, who had not managed to conquer much farther north of the Rhine and the Danube; and for a thousand years after the fall of Rome, the basic political power unit had been small and localized, in contrast to the steady expansion of the Christian religion and culture. Occasional concentrations of authority, like that of Charlemagne in the West or of Kievan Russia in the East, were but temporary affairs, terminated by a change of ruler, internal rebellion, or external invasions.

For this political diversity Europe had largely to thank its geography. There were no enormous plains over which an empire of horsemen could impose its swift dominion; nor were there broad and fertile river zones like those around the Ganges, Nile, Tigris and Euphrates, Yellow, and Yangtze, providing the food for masses of toiling and easily conquerable peasants. Europe's landscape was much more fractured, with mountain ranges and large forests separating the scattered population centers in the valleys; and its climate altered considerably from north to south and west to east. This had a number of important consequences. For a start, it both made difficult the establishment of unified control, even by a powerful and determined warlord, and minimized the possibility that the continent could be overrun by an external force like the Mongol hordes. Conversely, this variegated landscape encouraged the growth, and the continued existence, of decentralized power, with local kingdoms and marcher lordships and highland clans and lowland town confederations making a political map of Europe drawn at any time after the fall of Rome look like a patchwork quilt. The patterns on that quilt might vary from century to century, but no single color could ever be used to denote a unified empire.¹⁶

Europe's differentiated climate led to differentiated products, suit-



able for exchange; and in time, as market relations developed, they were transported along the rivers or the pathways which cut through the forests between one area of settlement and the next. Probably the most important characteristic of this commerce was that it consisted primarily of *bulk* products—timber, grain, wine, wool, herrings, and so on, catering to the rising population of fifteenth-century Europe, rather than the luxuries carried on the oriental caravans. Here again geography played a crucial role, for water transport of these goods was so much more economical and Europe possessed many **navigable rivers**. Being surrounded by seas was a further incentive to the vital shipbuilding industry, and by the later Middle Ages a flourishing maritime commerce was being carried out between the Baltic, the North Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea. This trade was, predictably, interrupted in part by war and affected by local disasters such as crop failures and plagues; but in general it continued to expand, increasing Europe's prosperity and enriching its diet, and leading to the creation of new centers of wealth like the Hansa towns or the Italian cities. Regular long-distance exchanges of wares in turn encouraged the growth of bills of exchange, a credit system, and banking on an international scale. The very existence of mercantile credit, and then of bills of insurance, pointed to a basic *predictability* of economic conditions which private traders had hitherto rarely, if ever, enjoyed anywhere in the world.¹⁷

In addition, because much of this trade was carried through the rougher waters of the North Sea and Bay of Biscay—and also because long-range fishing became an important source of nutrient and wealth—shipwrights were forced to build tough (if rather slow and inelegant) vessels capable of carrying large loads and finding their motive power in the winds alone. Although over time they developed more sail and masts, and stern rudders, and therefore became more maneuverable, North Sea “cogs” and their successors may not have appeared as impressive as the lighter craft which plied the shores of the eastern Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean; but, as we shall see below, they were going to possess distinct advantages in the long run.¹⁸

The political and social consequences of this decentralized, largely unsupervised growth of commerce and merchants and ports and markets were of the greatest significance. In the first place, there was no way in which such economic developments could be fully suppressed. This is not to say that the rise of market forces did not disturb many in authority. Feudal lords, suspicious of towns as centers of dissidence and sanctuaries of serfs, often tried to curtail their privileges. As elsewhere, **merchants were frequently preyed upon, their goods stolen, their property seized.** Papal pronouncements upon usury echo in many ways the Confucian dislike of profit-making middlemen and money-lenders. But the basic fact was that there existed no uniform authority

in Europe which could effectively halt this or that commercial development; no central government whose changes in priorities could cause the rise and fall of a particular industry; no systematic and universal plundering of businessmen and entrepreneurs by tax gatherers, which so retarded the economy of Mogul India. To take one specific and obvious instance, it was inconceivable in the fractured political circumstances of Reformation Europe that everyone would acknowledge the pope's 1494 division of the overseas world into Spanish and Portuguese spheres—and even less conceivable that an order banning overseas trade (akin to those promulgated in Ming China and Tokugawa Japan) would have had any effect.

The fact was that in Europe there were always some princes and local lords willing to tolerate merchants and their ways even when others plundered and expelled them; and, as the record shows, oppressed Jewish traders, ruined Flemish textile workers, persecuted Huguenots, moved on and took their expertise with them. A Rhineland baron who overtaxed commercial travelers would find that the trade routes had gone elsewhere, and with it his revenues. A monarch who repudiated his debts would have immense difficulties raising a loan when the next war threatened and funds were quickly needed to equip his armies and fleets. Bankers and arms dealers and artisans were essential, not peripheral, members of society. Gradually, unevenly, most of the regimes of Europe entered into a symbiotic relationship with the market economy, providing for it domestic order and a nonarbitrary legal system (even for foreigners), and receiving in taxes a share of the growing profits from trade. Long before Adam Smith had coined the exact words, the rulers of certain societies of western Europe were tacitly recognizing that "little else is requisite to carry a state to the highest degree of opulence from the lowest barbarism, but peace, easy taxes, and tolerable administration of justice. . ."¹⁹ From time to time the less perceptive leaders—like the Spanish administrators of Castile, or an occasional Bourbon king of France—would virtually kill the goose that laid the golden eggs; but the consequent decline in wealth, and thus in military power, was soon obvious to all but the most purblind.

Probably the only factor which might have led to a centralization of authority would have been such a breakthrough in firearms technology by one state that all opponents were crushed or overawed. In the quickening pace of economic and technical development which occurred in fifteenth-century Europe as the continent's population recovered from the Black Death and the Italian Renaissance blossomed, this was by no means impossible. It was, as noted above, in this broad period from 1450 to 1600 that "gunpowder empires" were established elsewhere. Muscovy, Tokugawa Japan, and Mogul India provide excellent examples of how great states could be fashioned by leaders who

secured the firearms and the cannon with which to compel all rivals to obedience.

Since, furthermore, it was in late-medieval and early modern Europe that new techniques of warfare occurred more frequently than elsewhere, it was not implausible that one such breakthrough could enable a certain nation to dominate its rivals. Already the signs pointed to an increasing concentration of military power.²⁰ In Italy the use of companies of crossbowmen, protected when necessary by soldiers using pikes, had brought to a close the age of the knight on horseback and his accompanying ill-trained feudal levy; but it was also clear that only the wealthier states like Venice and Milan could pay for the new armies officered by the famous *condottieri*. By around 1500, moreover, the kings of France and England had gained an artillery monopoly at home and were thus able, if the need arose, to crush an overmighty subject even if the latter sheltered behind castle walls. But would not this tendency finally lead to a larger transnational monopoly, stretching across Europe? This must have been a question many asked around 1550, as they observed the vast concentration of lands and armies under the Emperor Charles V.

A fuller discussion of that specific Habsburg attempt, and failure, to gain the mastery of Europe will be presented in the next chapter. But the more general reason why it was impossible to impose unity across the continent can briefly be stated here. Once again, the existence of a variety of economic and military centers of power was fundamental. No one Italian city-state could strive to enhance itself without the others intervening to preserve the equilibrium; no "new monarchy" could increase its dominions without stirring rivals to seek compensation. By the time the Reformation was well and truly under way, religious antagonisms were added to the traditional balance-of-power rivalries, thus making the prospects of political centralization even more remote. Yet the real explanation lies a little deeper; after all, the simple existence of competitors, and of bitter feelings between warring groups, was evident in Japan, India, and elsewhere, but that of itself had not prevented eventual unification. Europe was different in that each of the rival forces was able to gain access to the new military techniques, so that no single power ever possessed the decisive edge. The services of the Swiss and other mercenaries, for example, were on offer to anyone who was able to pay for them. There was no single center for the production of crossbows, nor for that of cannon—whether of the earlier bronze guns or of the later, cheaper cast-iron artillery; instead, such armaments were being made close to the ore deposits on the Weald, in central Europe, in Málaga, in Milan, in Liège, and later in Sweden. Similarly, the proliferation of shipbuilding skills in various ports ranging from the Baltic to the Black Sea made it extremely difficult for any one country to monopolize maritime power,

which in turn helped to prevent the conquest and elimination of rival centers of armaments production lying across the sea.

To say that Europe's decentralized states system was the great obstacle to centralization is not, then, a tautology. Because there existed a number of competing political entities, *most of which possessed or were able to buy the military means to preserve their independence*, no single one could ever achieve the breakthrough to the mastery of the continent.

While this competitive interaction between the European states seems to explain the absence of a unified "gunpowder empire" there, it does not at first sight provide the reason for Europe's steady rise to global leadership. After all, would not the forces possessed by the new monarchies in 1500 have seemed puny if they had been deployed against the enormous armies of the sultan and the massed troops of the Ming Empire? This was true in the early sixteenth century and, in some respects, even in the seventeenth century; but by the latter period the balance of military strength was tilting rapidly in favor of the West. **For the explanation of this shift one must again point to the decentralization of power in Europe.** What it did, above all else, was to engender a primitive form of arms race among the city-states and then the larger kingdoms. To some extent, this probably had socioeconomic roots. Once the contending armies in Italy no longer consisted of feudal knights and their retainers but of pikemen, crossbowmen, and (flanking) cavalry paid for by the merchants and supervised by the magistrates of a particular city, it was almost inevitable that the latter would demand value for money—despite all the best maneuvers of *condottieri* not to make themselves redundant; the cities would require, in other words, **the sort of arms and tactics which might produce a swift victory, so that the expenses of war could then be reduced.** Similarly, **once the French monarchs of the late fifteenth century had a "national" army under their direct control and pay, they were anxious to see this force produce decisive results.²¹**

By the same token, this free-market system not only forced the numerous *condottieri* to compete for contracts but also encouraged artisans and inventors to improve their wares, so as to obtain new orders. While this armaments spiral could already be seen in the manufacture of crossbows and armor plate in the early fifteenth century, the principle spread to experimentation with gunpowder weapons in the following fifty years. It is important to recall here that when cannon were first employed, there was little difference between the West and Asia in their design and effectiveness. Gigantic wrought-iron tubes that fired a stone ball and made an immense noise obviously looked impressive and at times had results; it was that type which was used by the Turks to bombard the walls of Constantinople in 1453. Yet it seems to have been only in Europe that the impetus existed for con-

stant improvements: in the gunpowder grains, in casting much smaller (yet equally powerful) cannon from bronze and tin alloys, in the shape and texture of the barrel and the missile, in the gun mountings and carriages. All of this enhanced to an enormous degree the power and the mobility of artillery and gave the owner of such weapons the means to reduce the strongest fortresses—as the Italian city-states found to their alarm when a French army equipped with formidable bronze guns invaded Italy in 1494. It was scarcely surprising, therefore, that inventors and men of letters were being urged to design some counter to these cannon (and scarcely less surprising that Leonardo's notebooks for this time contain sketches for a machine gun, a primitive tank, and a steam-powered cannon).²²

This is not to say that other civilizations did not improve their armaments from the early, crude designs; some of them did, usually by copying from European models or persuading European visitors (like the Jesuits in China) to lend their expertise. But because the Ming government had a monopoly of cannon, and the thrusting leaders of Russia, Japan, and Mogul India soon acquired a monopoly, there was much less incentive to improve such weapons once their authority had been established. Turning in upon themselves, the Chinese and the Japanese neglected to develop armaments production. Clinging to their traditional fighting ways, the janissaries of Islam scorned taking much interest in artillery until it was too late to catch up to Europe's lead. Facing less-advanced peoples, Russian and Mogul army commanders had no compelling need for improved weaponry, since what they already possessed overawed their opponents. Just as in the general economic field, so also in this specific area of military technology, Europe, fueled by a flourishing arms trade, took a decisive lead over the other civilizations and power centers.

Two further consequences of this armaments spiral need to be mentioned here. One ensured the political plurality of Europe, the other its eventual maritime mastery. The first is a simple enough story and can be dealt with briefly.²³ Within a quarter-century of the French invasion of 1494, and in certain respects even before then, some Italians had discovered that raised earthworks inside the city walls could greatly reduce the effects of artillery bombardment; when crashing into the compacted mounds of earth, cannonballs lost the devastating impact they had upon the outer walls. If these varied earthworks also had a steep ditch in front of them (and, later, a sophisticated series of protected bastions from which muskets and cannon could pour a crossfire), they constituted a near-insuperable obstacle to the besieging infantry. **This restored the security of the Italian city-states, or at least of those which had not fallen to a foreign conqueror and which possessed the vast amounts of manpower needed to build and garrison such complex fortifications.** It also gave an advantage to the armies

engaged in holding off the Turks, as the Christian garrisons in Malta and in northern Hungary soon discovered. Above all, it hindered the easy conquest of rebels and rivals by one overweening power in Europe, as the protracted siege warfare which accompanied the Revolt of the Netherlands attested. Victories attained in the open field by, say, the formidable Spanish infantry could not be made decisive if the foe possessed heavily fortified bases into which he could retreat. The authority acquired through gunpowder by the Tokugawa shogunate, or by Akbar in India, was not replicated in the West, which continued to be characterized by political pluralism and its deadly concomitant, the arms race.

The impact of the "gunpowder revolution" at sea was even more wide-ranging.²⁴ As before, one is struck by the relative similarity of shipbuilding and naval power that existed during the later Middle Ages in northwest Europe, in the Islamic world, and in the Far East. If anything, the great voyages of Cheng Ho and the rapid advance of the Turkish fleets in the Black Sea and eastern Mediterranean might well have suggested to an observer around 1400 and 1450 that the future of maritime development lay with those two powers. There was also little difference, one suspects, between all three regions in regard to cartography, astronomy, and the use of instruments like the compass, astrolabe, and quadrant. What was different was *sustained organization*. Or, as Professor Jones observes, "given the distances covered by other seafarers, the Polynesians for example, the [Iberian] voyages are less impressive than Europe's ability to rationalize them and to develop the resources within her reach."²⁵ The systematic collection of geographical data by the Portuguese, the repeated willingness of Genoese merchant houses to fund Atlantic ventures which might ultimately compensate for their loss of Black Sea trade, and—farther north—the methodical development of the Newfoundland cod fisheries all signified a sustained readiness to reach outward which was not evident in other societies at that time.

But perhaps the most important act of "rationalization" was the steady improvement in ships' armaments. The siting of cannon on sailing vessels was a natural enough development at a time when sea warfare so resembled that on land; just as medieval castles contained archers along the walls and towers in order to drive off a besieging army, so the massive Genoese and Venetian and Aragonese trading vessels used men, armed with crossbows and sited in the fore and aft "castles," to defend themselves against Muslim pirates in the Mediterranean. This could cause severe losses among galley crews, although not necessarily enough to save a becalmed merchantman if its attackers were really determined. However, once sailors perceived the advances which had been made in gun design on land—that is, that the newer bronze cannon were much smaller, more powerful, and less

dangerous to the gun crew than the enormous wrought-iron bombard—it was predictable that such armaments would be placed on board. After all, catapults, trebuchets, and other sorts of missile-throwing instruments had already been mounted on warships in China and the West. Even when cannon became less volatile and dangerous to their crews, they still posed considerable problems; given the more effective gunpowder, the recoil could be tremendous, sending a gun backward right across the deck if not restrained, and these weapons were still weighty enough to unbalance a vessel if sufficient numbers of them were placed on board (especially on the castles). This was where the stoutly built, rounder-hulled, all-weather three-masted sailing vessel had an inherent advantage over the slim oared galleys of the inland waters of the Mediterranean, Baltic, and Black seas, and over the Arab dhow and even the Chinese junk. It could in any event fire a larger broadside while remaining stable, although of course disasters also occurred from time to time; but once it was realized that the siting of such weapons amidships rather than on the castles provided a much safer gun platform, the *potential power* of these caravels and galleons was formidable. By comparison, lighter craft suffered from the twin disadvantage of less gun-carrying capacity and greater vulnerability to cannonballs.

One is obliged to stress the words "potential power" because the evolution of the gunned long-range sailing ship was a slow, often uneven development. Many hybrid types were constructed, some carrying multiple masts, guns, and rows of oars. Galley-type vessels were still to be seen in the English Channel in the sixteenth century. Moreover, there were considerable arguments in favor of continuing to deploy galleys in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea; they were swifter on many occasions, more maneuverable in inshore waters, and thus easier to use in conjunction with land operations along the coast—which, for the Turks, outweighed the disadvantages of their being short-ranged and unable to act in heavy seas.²⁶

In just the same way, we should not imagine that as soon as the first Portuguese vessels rounded the Cape of Good Hope, the age of unchallenged western dominance had begun. What historians refer to as the "Vasco da Gama epoch" and the "Columbian era"—that is, the three or four centuries of European hegemony after 1500—was a very gradual process. Portuguese explorers might have reached the shores of India by the 1490s, but their vessels were still small (often only 300 tons) and not all that well armed—certainly not compared with the powerful Dutch East Indiamen which sailed in those waters a century later. In fact, the Portuguese could not penetrate the Red Sea for a long while, and then only precariously, nor could they gain much of a footing in China; and in the late sixteenth century they lost some of their East African stations to an Arab counteroffensive.²⁷

It would be erroneous, too, to assume that the non-European powers simply collapsed like a pack of cards at the first signs of western expansionism. This was precisely what did happen in Mexico, Peru, and other less developed societies of the New World when the Spanish adventurers landed. Elsewhere, the story was very different. Since the Chinese government had voluntarily turned its back upon maritime trade, it did not really care if that commerce fell into the hands of the barbarians; even the quasi-official trading post which the Portuguese set up at Macao in 1557, lucrative though it must have been to the local silk merchants and conniving administrators, does not seem to have disturbed Peking's equanimity. The Japanese, for their part, were much more blunt. When the Portuguese sent a mission in 1640 to protest against the expulsion of foreigners, almost all its members were killed; there could be no attempt at retribution from Lisbon. Finally, Ottoman sea power was holding its own in the eastern Mediterranean, and Ottoman land power remained a massive threat to central Europe. In the sixteenth century, indeed, "to most European statesmen the loss of Hungary was of far greater import than the establishment of factories in the Orient, and the threat to Vienna more significant than their own challenges at Aden, Goa and Malacca; only governments bordering the Atlantic could, like their later historians, ignore this fact."²⁸

Yet when all these reservations are made, there is no doubt that the development of the long-range armed sailing ship heralded a fundamental advance in Europe's place in the world. With these vessels, the naval powers of the West were in a position to control the oceanic trade routes and to overawe all societies vulnerable to the workings of sea power. Even the first great clashes between the Portuguese and their Muslim foes in the Indian Ocean made this clear. No doubt they exaggerated in retrospect, but to read the journals and reports of da Gama and Albuquerque, describing how their warships blasted their way through the massed fleets of Arab dhows and other light craft which they encountered off the Malabar coast and in the Ormuz and Malacca roads, is to gain the impression that an extraterrestrial, superhuman force had descended upon their unfortunate opponents. Following the new tactic that "they were by no means to board, but to fight with the artillery," the Portuguese crews were virtually invincible at sea.²⁹ On land it was quite a different matter, as the fierce battles (and occasional defeats) at Aden, Jiddah, Goa, and elsewhere demonstrated; yet so determined and brutal were these western invaders that by the mid-sixteenth century they had carved out for themselves a chain of forts from the Gulf of Guinea to the South China Sea. Although never able to monopolize the spice trade from the Indies—much of which continued to flow via the traditional channels to Venice—the Portuguese certainly cornered considerable

portions of that commerce and profited greatly from their early lead in the race for empire.³⁰

The evidence of profit was even greater, of course, in the vast land empire which the conquistadores swiftly established in the western hemisphere. From the early settlements in Hispaniola and Cuba, Spanish expeditions pushed toward the mainland, conquering Mexico in the 1520s and Peru in the 1530s. Within a few decades this dominion extended from the River Plate in the south to the Rio Grande in the north. Spanish galleons, plying along the western coast, linked up with vessels coming from the Philippines, bearing Chinese silks in exchange for Peruvian silver. In their "New World" the Spaniards made it clear that they were there to stay, setting up an imperial administration, building churches, and engaging in ranching and mining. Exploiting the natural resources—and, still more, the native labor—of these territories, the conquerors sent home a steady flow of sugar, cochineal, hides, and other wares. Above all, they sent home silver from the Potosí mine, which for over a century was the biggest single deposit of that metal in the world. All this led to "a lightning growth of transatlantic trade, the volume increasing eightfold between 1510 and 1550, and threefold again between 1550 and 1610."³¹

All the signs were, therefore, that this imperialism was intended to be permanent. Unlike the fleeting visits paid by Cheng Ho, the actions of the Portuguese and Spanish explorers symbolized a commitment to alter the world's political and economic balances. With their shipborne cannon and musket-bearing soldier, they did precisely that. In retrospect it sometimes seems difficult to grasp that a country with the limited population and resources of Portugal could reach so far and acquire so much. In the special circumstances of European military and naval superiority described above, this was by no means impossible. Once it was done, the evident profits of empire, and the desire for more, simply accelerated the process of aggrandizement.

There are elements in this story of "the expansion of Europe" which have been ignored, or but briefly mentioned so far. The personal aspect has not been examined, and yet—as in all great endeavors—it was there in abundance: in the encouragements of men like Henry the Navigator; in the ingenuity of ship craftsmen and armorers and men of letters; in the enterprise of merchants; above all, in the sheer courage of those who partook in the overseas voyages and endured all that the mighty seas, hostile climates, wild landscapes, and fierce opponents could place in their way. For a complex mixture of motives—personal gain, national glory, religious zeal, perhaps a sense of adventure—men were willing to risk everything, as indeed they did in many cases. Nor has there been much dwelling upon the awful cruelties inflicted by these European conquerors upon their many victims in Africa, Asia, and America. If these features are hardly mentioned

here, it is because many societies in their time have thrown up individuals and groups willing to dare all and do anything in order to make the world their oyster. What distinguished the captains, crews, and explorers of Europe was that they possessed the ships and the firepower with which to achieve their ambitions, and that they came from a political environment in which competition, risk, and entrepreneurship were prevalent.

The benefits accruing from the expansion of Europe were widespread and permanent, and—most important of all—they helped to accelerate an already-existing dynamic. The emphasis upon the acquisition of gold, silver, precious metals, and spices, important though such valuables were, ought not to obscure the worth of the less glamorous items which flooded into Europe's ports once its sailors had breached the oceanic frontier. Access to the Newfoundland fisheries brought an apparently inexhaustible supply of food, and the Atlantic Ocean also provided the whale oil and seal oil vital for illumination, lubrication, and many other purposes. Sugar, indigo, tobacco, rice, furs, timber, and new plants like the potato and maize were all to boost the total wealth and well-being of the continent; later on, of course, there was to come the flow of grain and meats and cotton. But one does not need to anticipate the cosmopolitan world economy of the later nineteenth century to understand that the Portuguese and Spanish discoveries were, within decades, of great and ever-growing importance in enhancing the prosperity and power of the western portions of the continent. Bulk trades like the fisheries employed a large number of hands, both in catching and in distribution, which further boosted the market economy. And all of this gave the greatest stimulus to the European shipbuilding industry, attracting around the ports of London, Bristol, Antwerp, Amsterdam, and many others a vast array of craftsmen, suppliers, dealers, insurers. The net effect was to give to a considerable proportion of western Europe's population—and not just to the elite few—an abiding material interest in the fruits of overseas trade.

When one adds to this list of commodities the commerce which attended the landward expansion of Russia—the furs, hides, wood, hemp, salt, and grain which came from there to western Europe—then scholars have some cause in describing this as the beginnings of a "modern world system."³² What had started as a number of separate expansions was steadily turning into an interlocking whole: the gold of the Guinea coast and the silver of Peru were used by the Portuguese, Spaniards, and Italians to pay for spices and silks from the Orient; the firs and timber of Russia helped in the purchase of iron guns from England; grain from the Baltic passed through Amsterdam on its way to the Mediterranean. All this generated a continual interaction—of further European expansion, bringing fresh discoveries and thus trade

opportunities, resulting in additional gains, which stimulated still more expansion. This was not necessarily a smooth upward progression: a great war in Europe or civil unrest could sharply reduce activities overseas. But the colonizing powers rarely if ever gave up their acquisitions, and within a short while a fresh wave of expansion and exploration would begin. After all, if the established imperial nations did not exploit their positions, others were willing to do it instead.

This, finally, was the greatest reason why the dynamic continued to operate as it did: the manifold rivalries of the European states, already acute, were spilling over into transoceanic spheres. Try as they might, Spain and Portugal simply could not keep their papally assigned monopoly of the outside world to themselves, the more especially when men realized that there was no northeast or northwest passage from Europe to Cathay. Already by the 1560s, Dutch, French, and English vessels were venturing across the Atlantic, and a little later into the Indian and Pacific oceans—a process quickened by the decline of the English cloth trade and the Revolt of the Netherlands. With royal and aristocratic patrons, with funding from the great merchants of Amsterdam and London, and with all the religious and nationalist zeal which the Reformation and Counter-Reformation had produced, new trading and plundering expeditions set out from northwest Europe to secure a share of the spoils. There was the prospect of gaining glory and riches, of striking at a rival and boosting the resources of one's own country, and of converting new souls to the one true faith; what possible counterarguments could hold out against the launching of such ventures?³³

The fairer aspect of this increasing commercial and colonial rivalry was the parallel upward spiral in knowledge—in science and technology.³⁴ No doubt many of the advances of this time were spinoffs from the arms race and the scramble for overseas trade; but the eventual benefits transcended their inglorious origins. Improved cartography, navigational tables, new instruments like the telescope, barometer, backstaff, and gimbaled compass, and better methods of shipbuilding helped to make maritime travel a less unpredictable form of travel. New crops and plants not only brought better nutrition but also were a stimulus to botany and agricultural science. Metallurgical skills, and indeed the whole iron industry, made rapid progress; deep-mining techniques did the same. Astronomy, medicine, physics, and engineering also benefited from the quickening economic pace and the enhanced value of science. The inquiring, rationalist mind was observing more, and experimenting more; and the printing presses, apart from producing vernacular Bibles and political treatises, were spreading these findings. The cumulative effect of this explosion of knowledge was to buttress Europe's technological—and therefore military—superiority still further. Even the powerful Ottomans, or at least their front-

line soldiers and sailors, were feeling some of the consequences of this by the end of the sixteenth century. On other, less active societies, the effects were to be far more serious. Whether or not certain states in Asia would have taken off into a self-driven commercial and industrial revolution had they been left undisturbed seems open to considerable doubt;³⁵ but what was clear was that it was going to be extremely difficult for other societies to ascend the ladder of world power when the more advanced European states occupied all the top rungs.

This difficulty would be compounded, it seems fair to argue, because moving up that ladder would have involved not merely the acquisition of European equipment or even of European techniques: it would also have implied a wholesale borrowing of those general features which distinguished the societies of the West from all the others. It would have meant the existence of a market economy, if not to the extent proposed by Adam Smith then at least to the extent that merchants and entrepreneurs would not be consistently deterred, obstructed, and preyed upon. It would also have meant the existence of a plurality of power centers, each if possible with its own economic base, so that there was no prospect of the imposed centralization of a despotic oriental-style regime—and every prospect of the progressive, if turbulent and occasionally brutal, stimulus of competition. By extension, this lack of economic and political rigidity would imply a similar lack of cultural and ideological orthodoxy—that is, a freedom to inquire, to dispute, to experiment, a belief in the possibilities of improvement, a concern for the practical rather than the abstract, a rationalism which defied mandarin codes, religious dogma, and traditional folklore.³⁶ In most cases, what was involved was not so much positive elements, but rather the reduction in the number of *hindrances* which checked economic growth and political diversity. Europe's greatest advantage was that it had fewer disadvantages than the other civilizations.

Although it is impossible to prove it, one suspects that these various general features related to one another, by some inner logic as it were, and that all were necessary. It was a combination of economic laissez-faire, political and military pluralism, and intellectual liberty—however rudimentary each factor was compared with later ages—which had been in constant interaction to produce the "European miracle." Since the miracle was historically unique, it seems plausible to assume that only a replication of all its component parts could have produced a similar result elsewhere. Because that mix of critical ingredients did not exist in Ming China, or in the Muslim empires of the Middle East and Asia, or in any other of the societies examined above, they appeared to stand still while Europe advanced to the center of the world stage.

2

The Habsburg Bid for Mastery, 1519–1659

By the sixteenth century, then, the power struggles within Europe were also helping it to rise, economically and militarily, above the other regions of the globe. What was not yet decided, however, was whether any one of the rival European states could accumulate sufficient resources to surpass the rest, and then dominate them. For about a century and a half after 1500, a continent-wide combination of kingdoms, duchies, and provinces ruled by the Spanish and Austrian members of the Habsburg family threatened to become the predominant political and religious influence in Europe. The story of this prolonged struggle and of the ultimate defeat of these Habsburg ambitions by a coalition of other European states forms the core of this chapter. By 1659, when Spain finally acknowledged defeat in the Treaty of the Pyrenees, the political *plurality* of Europe—containing five or six major states, and various smaller ones—was an indisputable fact. Which of those leading states was going to benefit most from further shifts within the Great Power system can be left to the following chapter; what at least was clear, by the mid-seventeenth century, was that no single dynastic-military bloc was capable of becoming the master of Europe, as had appeared probable on various occasions over the previous decades.

The interlocking campaigns for European predominance which characterize this century and a half differ both in degree and kind, therefore, from the wars of the pre-1500 period. The struggles which had disturbed the peace of Europe over the previous hundred years had been *localized* ones; the clashes between the various Italian states, the rivalry between the English and French crowns, and the wars of the Teutonic Knights against the Lithuanians and the Poles were typical examples.³⁷ As the sixteenth century unfolded, however, these traditional regional struggles in Europe were either subsumed into or eclipsed by what seemed to contemporaries to be a far larger contest for the mastery of the continent.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT* EDITION

The Earth and Its Peoples

A Global History

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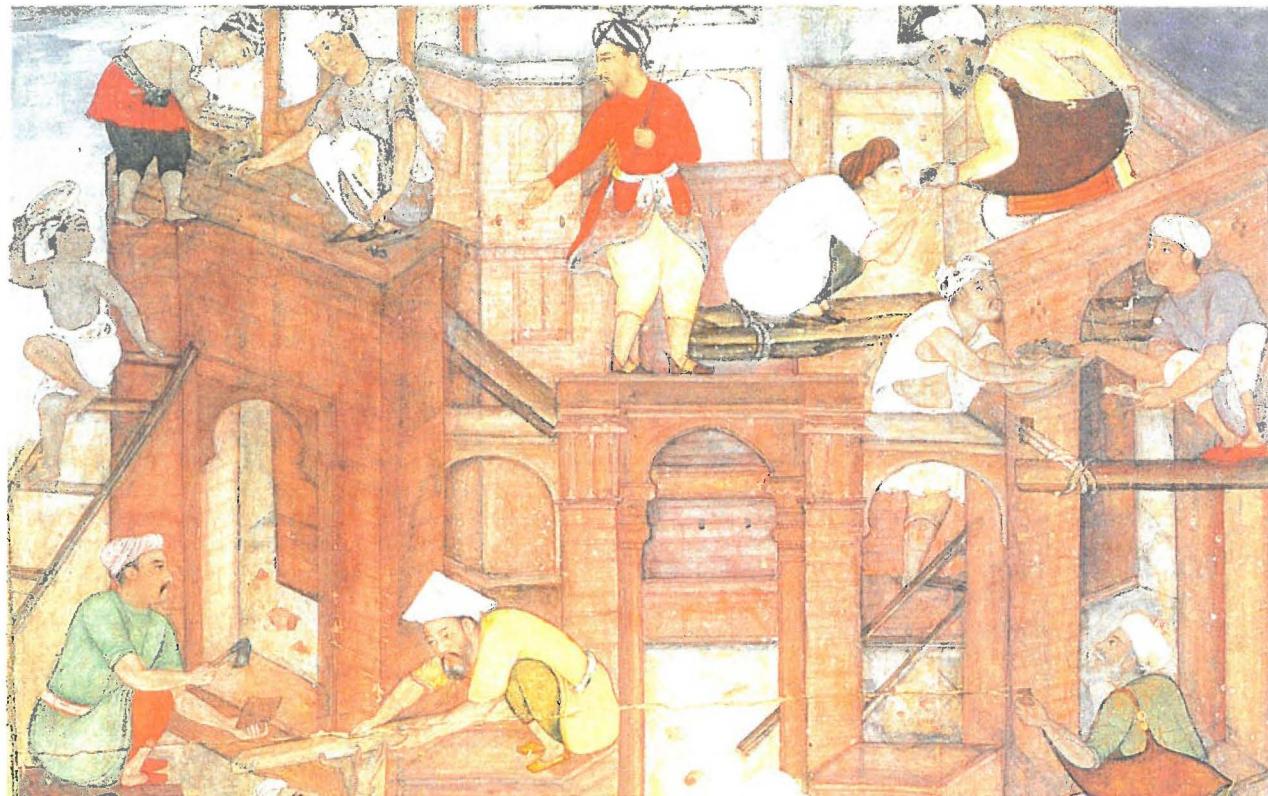
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Building a Palace This miniature painting from the reign of the Mughal emperor Akbar illustrates the building techniques of seventeenth-century India.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The Ottoman Empire, to 1750

The Safavid Empire, 1502–1722

The Mughal Empire, 1526–1761

Trade Empires in the Indian Ocean, 1600–1729

DIVERSITY AND DOMINANCE: Islamic Law and Ottoman Rule

ENVIRONMENT AND TECHNOLOGY: Metal Currency and Inflation

AnTHONY Jenkinson, merchant-adventurer for the Muscovy Company, which was founded in 1555 to develop trade with Russia, became the first Englishman to set foot in Iran. In 1561 he sailed to Archangel in Russia's frigid north, and from there found his way down the Volga River and across the Caspian Sea. The local ruler he met in northwestern Iran was an object of wonder:

richly appareled with long garments of silk, and cloth of gold, embroidered with pearls of stone; upon his head was a *tolipane* [headdress shaped like a tulip] with a sharp end pointing upwards half a yard long, of rich cloth of gold, wrapped about with a piece of India silk of twenty yards long, wrought in gold richly enameled, and set with precious stones; his earrings had pendants of gold a handful long, with two rubies of great value, set in the ends thereof.

Moving on to Qazvin^o, Iran's capital, Jenkinson met the shah, whom the English referred to as the "Great Sophie" (apparently from Safavi^o, the name of the ruling family). "In lighting from my horse at the Court gate, before my feet touched the ground, a pair of the Sophie's own shoes . . . were put upon my feet, for without the same shoes I might not be suffered to tread upon his holy ground."¹ Finding no one capable of reading a letter he carried from Queen Elizabeth, written in Latin, English, Hebrew, and Italian, he nevertheless managed to propose trade between England and Iran. The shah, who was in the midst of negotiations with the Ottoman sultan to end a half-century of hostilities, rejected the idea of diverting Iranian silk from Ottoman markets.

Though Jenkinson and later merchants discovered that Central Asia's bazaars were only meagerly supplied with goods, the idea of bypassing the Ottomans in the eastern Mediterranean and trading directly with Iran through Russia remained tempting. The Ottomans, too, dreamed of outflanking Safavid Iran. In 1569 an Ottoman army unsuccessfully tried to dig a 40-mile (64-kilometer) canal between the Don

River, which opened into the Black Sea, and the Volga, which flowed into the Caspian. Putting Ottoman ships in the Caspian would have facilitated an attack on Iran from the north.

Russia, then ruled by Tsar Ivan IV (r. 1533–1584), known as Ivan the Terrible or Awesome, stood in the Ottoman path. Ivan transformed his principality from a second-rate power into the sultan's primary competitor in Central Asia. In the river-crossed steppe, where Turkic nomads had long enjoyed uncontested sway, Slavic Christian Cossacks from the region of the Don and Dnieper Rivers used armed wagon trains and river craft fitted with small cannon to push southward and establish a Russian presence.

A contest for trade with or control of Central Asia, and beyond that with the Muslim Mughal empire in India, grew out of the centrality conferred on the region by three centuries of Mongol and Turkic conquest. Nevertheless, changes in the organization of world trade were sapping the vitality of the Silk Road, and power was shifting to European seafaring empires linking the Atlantic with the Indian Ocean. For all their naval power in the Mediterranean, neither the Ottomans, the Safavid shahs in Iran, nor the Mughal emperors of India deployed more than a token navy in the southern seas.

As you read this chapter, ask yourself the following questions:

- What were the advantages and disadvantages of a land empire as opposed to a maritime empire?
- What role did religion play in political alliances and rivalries and in the formation of states?
- How did trading patterns change between 1500 and 1750?
- How did imperial rulers maintain dominance over their diverse populations?

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, TO 1750

The most long-lived of the post-Mongol Muslim empires, the Ottoman Empire grew from a tiny nucleus in 1300 to encompass most of southeastern Europe by

the late fifteenth century. Mamluk Syria and Egypt succumbed in the early sixteenth century, leaving the Ottomans with the largest Muslim empire since the original Islamic caliphate in the seventh century. However, the empire resembled the new centralized monarchies of France and Spain (see Chapter 16) more than any medieval model.

Enduring more than five centuries until 1922, the Ottoman Empire survived several periods of wrenching change, some caused by internal problems, others by the growing power of European adversaries. These periods of change reveal the problems faced by huge, land-based empires around the world.

Expansion and Frontiers

At first a tiny state in northwestern Anatolia built by Turkish nomad horsemen, zealous Muslim warriors, and a few Christian converts to Islam (see Map 19.1), the empire grew because of three factors: (1) the shrewdness of its founder Osman (from which the name “Ottoman” comes) and his descendants, (2) control of a strategic link between Europe and Asia at Gallipoli^o on the Dardanelles strait, and (3) the creation of an army that took advantage of the traditional skills of the Turkish cavalryman and new military possibilities presented by gunpowder and Christian prisoners of war.

At first, Ottoman armies concentrated on Christian enemies in Greece and the Balkans, conquering a strong Serbian kingdom at the Battle of Kosovo^o (in present-day Yugoslavia) in 1389. Much of southeastern Europe and Anatolia was under the control of the sultans by 1402, when Bayazid^o I, “the Thunderbolt,” confronted Timur’s challenge from Central Asia. After Timur defeated and captured Bayazid at the Battle of Ankara (1402), a generation of civil war followed, until Mehmed^o I reunified the sultanate.

During a century and a half of fighting for territory both east and west of Constantinople, the sultans repeatedly eyed the heavily fortified capital of the slowly dying Byzantine Empire. In 1453 Sultan Mehmed II, “the Conqueror,” laid siege to Constantinople, using enormous cannon to bash in the city’s walls, dragging warships over a high hill from the Bosphorus strait to the city’s inner harbor to avoid its sea defenses, and finally penetrating the city’s land walls through a series of infantry assaults. The fall of Constantinople—henceforth commonly known as Istanbul—brought over eleven hundred

years of Byzantine rule to an end and made the Ottomans seem invincible.

In 1514, at the Battle of Chaldiran (in Armenia), Selim^o I, “the Inexorable,” ended a potential threat on his eastern frontier from the new and expansive realm of the Safavid shah in Iran (see below). Although warfare between the two recurred, the general border between the Ottomans and their eastern neighbor dates to this battle. Iraq became a contested and repeatedly ravaged frontier zone.

When Selim conquered the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria in 1516 and 1517, the Red Sea became the Ottomans’ southern frontier. In the west, the rulers of the major port cities of Algeria and Tunisia, some of them Greek or Italian converts to Islam, voluntarily joined the empire in the early sixteenth century, thereby strengthening its Mediterranean fleets.

The son of Selim I, Suleiman^o the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566), known to his subjects as Suleiman Kanuni, “the Lawgiver,” commanded the greatest Ottoman assault on Christian Europe. Suleiman seemed unstoppable as he conquered Belgrade in 1521, expelled the Knights of the Hospital of St. John from the island of Rhodes the following year, and laid siege to Vienna in 1529. Only the lateness of the season and the need to retreat before the onset of winter saved Vienna’s overmatched Christian garrison. In later centuries, Ottoman historians looked back on Suleiman’s reign as a golden age when the imperial system worked to perfection.

While Ottoman armies pressed deeper and deeper into eastern Europe, the sultans also sought to control the Mediterranean. Between 1453 and 1502 the Ottomans fought the opening rounds of a two-century war with Venice, the most powerful of Italy’s commercial city-states. From the Fourth Crusade of 1204 onward, Venice had assembled a profitable maritime empire that included major islands such as Crete and Cyprus along with strategic coastal strongpoints in Greece. Venice thereby became more than just a trading nation. Its island sugar plantations, exploiting cheap slave labor, competed favorably with Egypt in the international trade of the fifteenth century. With their rivals the Genoese, who traded through the strategic island of Chios, the Venetians stifled Ottoman maritime activities in the Aegean Sea.

The initial fighting left Venice with reduced military power and subject to an annual tribute payment, but it controlled its lucrative islands for another century. The Ottomans, like the Chinese, were willing to let other nations carry trade to and from their ports; they preferred trade of this sort as long as the other nations acknowl-

Gallipoli (gah-LIP-po-lee) Kosovo (KO-so-vo)
Bayazid (BAY-yah-zeed) Mehmed (MEH-met)

Selim (seh-LEEM) Suleiman (SOO-lay-man)

C H R O N O L O G Y				
	Ottoman Empire	Safavid Empire	Mughal Empire	Europeans in the Indian Ocean States
1500		1502–1524 Shah Ismail establishes Safavid rule in Iran 1514 Defeat by Ottomans at Chaldiran limits Safavid growth		1511 Portuguese seize Malacca from local Malay ruler
1600	1514 Selim I defeats Safavid shah at Chaldiran; conquers Egypt and Syria (1516–1517) 1520–1566 Reign of Suleiman the Magnificent; peak of Ottoman Empire 1529 First Ottoman siege of Vienna 1571 Ottoman naval defeat at Lepanto 1610 End of Anatolian revolts	1587–1629 Reign of Shah Abbas the Great; peak of Safavid Empire 1622 Iranians oust Portuguese from Hormuz after 108 years	1526 Babur defeats last sultan of Delhi at Panipat 1539 Death of Nanak, founder of Sikh religion 1556–1605 Akbar rules in Agra; peak of Mughal Empire	1565 Spanish establish their first fort in the Philippines 1600 English East India company founded 1602 Dutch East India Company founded 1606 Dutch reach Australia 1641 Dutch seize Malacca from Portuguese 1650 Omani Arabs capture Muscat from Portuguese
1700	1718–1730 Tulip Period; military decline apparent to Austria and Russia	1722 Afghan invaders topple last Safavid shah 1736–1747 Nadir Shah temporarily reunites Iran; invades India (1739)	1658–1707 Aurangzeb imposes conservative Islamic regime 1690 British found city of Calcutta 1739 Iranians under Nadir Shah sack Delhi	1698 Omani Arabs seize Mombasa from Portuguese 1742 Expansion of French Power in India

edged Ottoman authority. It never occurred to them that a sea empire held together by flimsy ships could rival a great land empire fielding an army of a hundred thousand.

In the south Muslims of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean region customarily traded by way of Egypt and Syria. In the early sixteenth century merchants from southern India and Sumatra sent emissaries to Istanbul

requesting naval support against the Portuguese. The Ottomans responded vigorously to Portuguese threats close to their territories, such as at Aden at the southern entrance to the Red Sea, but their efforts farther afield fell short of stopping the Portuguese.

So long as eastern luxury products still flowed to Ottoman markets, why commit major resources to



Map 19.1 Muslim Empires in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries Iran, a Shi'ite state flanked by Sunni Ottomans on the west and Sunni Mughals on the east, had the least exposure to European influences. Ottoman expansion across the southern Mediterranean Sea intensified European fears of Islam. The areas of strongest Mughal control dictated that Islam's spread into southeast Asia would be heavily influenced by merchants and religious figures from Gujarat instead of from eastern India.



Aya Sofya Mosque in Istanbul Originally a Byzantine cathedral, Aya Sofya (in Greek, Hagia Sophia) was transformed into a mosque after 1453, and four minarets were added. It then became a model for subsequent Ottoman mosques. To the right behind it is the Bosphorus strait dividing Europe and Asia, to the left the Golden Horn inlet separating the old city of Istanbul from the newer parts. The gate to the Ottoman sultan's palace is to the right of the mosque. The pointed tower to the left of the dome is part of the palace. (Robert Frerck/Woodfin Camp & Associates)

subduing an enemy whose main threat was a demand that merchant vessels, mostly belonging to non-Ottoman Muslims, buy protection from Portuguese attack? Portuguese power was territorially limited to fortified coastal points, such as Hormuz at the entrance to the Persian Gulf, Goa in western India, and Malacca in Malaya (see Chapter 15). The Ottomans did send a small naval force to Indonesia, but they never acted consistently or aggressively in the Indian Ocean.

Central Institutions

Heirs of the military traditions of Central Asia, the Ottoman army originally consisted of lightly armored mounted war-

riors skilled at shooting short bows made of compressed layers of bone, wood, and leather. The conquest of Christian territories in the Balkans in the late fourteenth century, however, gave the Ottomans access to a new military resource: Christian prisoners of war induced to serve as military slaves.

Slave soldiery had a long history in Islamic lands. The Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria was built on that practice. The Mamluks, however, acquired their new blood from slave markets in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Enslaving Christian prisoners, an action of question-

able legality in Islamic law, was an Ottoman innovation. Converted to Islam, these "new troops," called *yeni cheri* in Turkish and "Janissary" in English, gave the Ottomans great military flexibility.

Christians by upbringing, the Janissaries had no misgivings about fighting against Turks and Muslims when the sultans attacked in western Asia. Not coming from a culture of horse nomads, they readily accepted the idea of fighting on foot and learning to use guns, which were then still too heavy and awkward for a horseman to load and fire. The Janissaries lived in barracks and trained all year round. Until the mid-sixteenth century, they were barred from holding jobs or marrying.

Selection for Janissary training changed early in the fifteenth century. The new system, called the *devshirme* (literally "selection"), imposed a regular levy of male children on Christian villages in the Balkans and occasionally elsewhere. Devshirme children were placed with Turkish families to learn their language before commencing military training. The most promising of them received their education at the sultan's palace in Istanbul, where they studied Islam and what we might call the liberal arts in addition to military matters. This regime, sophisticated for its time, produced not only the Janissary soldiers but

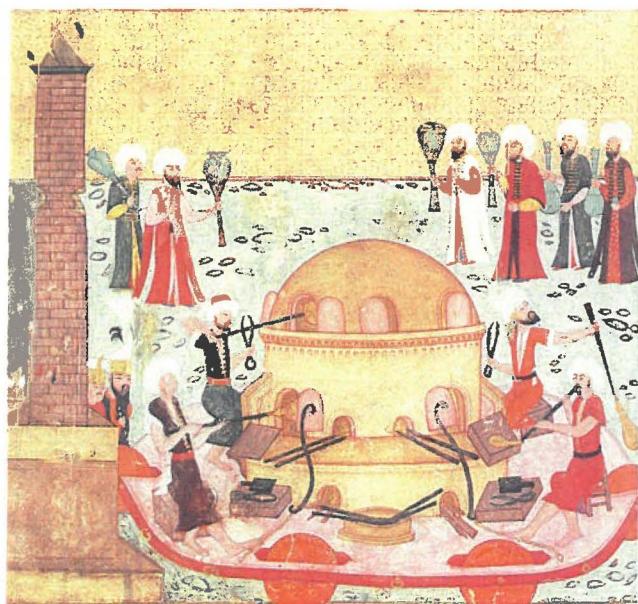
also, from among the few who received special training in the inner service of the palace, senior military commanders and heads of government departments up to the rank of grand vizier.

The Ottoman Empire became cosmopolitan in character. The sophisticated court language, Osmanli^o (the Turkish form of Ottoman), shared basic grammar and vocabulary with the Turkish spoken by Anatolia's nomads and villagers, but Arabic and Persian elements made it as distinct from that language as the Latin of educated Europeans was from the various Latin-derived Romance languages. People who served in the military or the bureaucracy and conversed in Osmanli belonged to the askeri^o, or "military," class, which made them exempt from taxes and dependent on the sultan for their well-being. The mass of the population, whether Muslims, Christians, or Jews—Jews flooded into Ottoman territory after their expulsion from Spain in 1492 (see Chapter 16)—constituted the raya^o, literally "flock of sheep."

By the beginning of the reign of Sultan Suleiman, the Ottoman Empire was the most powerful and best-organized state in Europe and the Islamic world. Its military balanced mounted archers, primarily Turks supported by grants of land in return for military service, with Janissaries—Turkified Albanians, Serbs, and Macedonians paid from the central treasury and trained in the most advanced weaponry. Greek, Turkish, Algerian, and Tunisian sailors manned the galley-equipped navy, usually under the command of an admiral from one of the North African ports.

The balance of the Ottoman land forces brought success to Ottoman arms in recurrent wars with the Safavids, who were much slower to adopt firearms, and in the inexorable conquest of the Balkans. In naval matters, a major expedition against Malta that would have given the Ottomans a foothold in the western Mediterranean failed in 1565. Combined Christian forces also achieved a massive naval victory at the Battle of Lepanto, off Greece, in 1571. In a year's time, however, the sultan had replaced all of the galleys sunk in that battle.

Under the land-grant system, resident cavalrymen administered most rural areas in Anatolia and the Balkans. They maintained order, collected taxes, and reported for each summer's campaign with their horses, retainers, and supplies, all paid for from the taxes they collected. When not campaigning, they stayed at home. Some historians maintain that these cavalrymen, who did not own their land, had little interest in encouraging production or introducing new technologies; but since a



Ottoman Glassmakers on Parade Celebrations of the circumcisions of the sultan's sons featured parades organized by the craft guilds of Istanbul. This float features glassmaking, a common craft in Islamic realms. The most elaborate glasswork included oil lamps for mosques and colored glass for the small stained-glass windows below mosque domes. (Topkapi Saray Museum)

militarily able son usually succeeded his father, the grant holders did have some interest in productivity.

The Ottoman conception of the world saw the sultan providing justice for his raya and the military protecting them. In return, the raya paid the taxes that supported both the sultan and the military. In reality, the central government, like most large territorial governments in premodern times, seldom intersected the lives of most subjects. Arab, Turkish, and Balkan townsfolk sought justice in religious law courts and depended on local notables and religious leaders to represent them before Ottoman provincial officials. Balkan regions such as Albania and Bosnia had large numbers of converts, and Islam gradually became the majority religion. Thus the law of Islam (the Shari'a^o), as interpreted by local ulama^o (religious scholars), conditioned urban institutions and social life (see Diversity and Dominance: Islamic Law and Ottoman Rule). Local customs prevailed among non-Muslims and in many rural areas. Non-Muslims also looked to their own religious leaders for guidance in family and spiritual matters.

Crisis of the Military State, 1585–1650

As military technology evolved, cannon and lighter-weight firearms played an ever-larger role on the battlefield. Accordingly, the size of the Janissary corps—and its cost to the government—grew steadily, and the role of the Turkish cavalry, which continued to disdain firearms, diminished. In the mid-sixteenth century, to fill state coffers and pay the Janissaries, the sultan started reducing the number of landholding cavalrymen. Revenues previously spent on their living expenses and military equipment went directly into the imperial treasury. Some of the displaced cavalrymen, armed and unhappy, became a restive element in rural Anatolia.

In the late sixteenth century, inflation caused by a flood of cheap silver from the New World (see Environment and Technology: Metal Currency and Inflation), affected many of the remaining landholders, who collected taxes according to legally fixed rates. Some saw their purchasing power decline so much that they could not report for military service. This delinquency played into the hands of the government, which wanted to reduce the cavalry and increase the Janissary corps. As the central government recovered control of the land, more and more cavalrymen joined the ranks of dispossessed troopers. Students and professors in madrasas (religious colleges) similarly found it impossible to live on fixed stipends from madrasa endowments.

Constrained by religious law from fundamentally reforming the tax system, the government levied emergency surtaxes to obtain enough funds to pay the Janissaries and bureaucrats. For additional military strength, particularly in wars with Iran, the government reinforced the Janissaries with partially trained, salaried soldiers hired for the duration of a campaign. Once the summer campaign season ended, these soldiers found themselves out of work and short on cash.

This complicated situation resulted in revolts that devastated Anatolia between 1590 and 1610. Former landholding cavalrymen, short-term soldiers released at the end of a campaign, peasants overburdened by emergency taxes, and even impoverished students of religion formed bands of marauders. Anatolia experienced the worst of the rebellions and suffered greatly from emigration and loss of agricultural production. Banditry, made worse by the government's inability to stem the spread of muskets among the general public, beset other parts of the empire as well.

In the meantime, the Janissaries took advantage of their growing influence to gain relief from prohibitions on marrying and engaging in business. Janissaries who involved themselves in commerce lessened the burden on the state budget. Married Janissaries who enrolled

sons or relatives in the corps made it possible in the seventeenth century for the government to save state funds by abolishing the devshirme system with its traveling selection officers. However, the increase in the total number of Janissaries and their steady deterioration as a military force more than offset these savings.

Economic Change and Growing Weakness, 1650–1750

A very different Ottoman Empire emerged from this period of crisis. The sultan once had led armies. Now he mostly resided in his palace and had little experience of the real world. This manner of living resulted from a gradually developed policy of keeping the sultan's male relatives confined to the palace to prevent them from plotting coups or meddling in politics. The sultan's mother and the chief eunuch overseeing the private quarters of the palace thus became important arbiters of royal favor, and even of succession to the sultanate, while the chief administrators—the grand viziers—oversaw the affairs of government. (Ottoman historians draw special attention to the negative influence of women in the palace after the time of Suleiman, but to some degree they reflect stereotypical male, and Muslim, fears about women in politics.)

The devshirme had been discontinued, and the Janissaries had taken advantage of their increased power and privileges to make membership in their corps hereditary. Together with several other newly prominent infantry regiments, they involved themselves in crafts and trading, both in Istanbul and in provincial capitals such as Cairo, Aleppo, and Baghdad. This activity took a toll on their military skills, but they continued to be a powerful faction in urban politics that the sultans could neither ignore nor reform.

Land grants in return for military service also disappeared. Tax farming arose in their place. Tax farmers paid specific taxes, such as customs duties, in advance in return for the privilege of collecting greater amounts from the actual taxpayers. In one instance, two tax farmers advanced the government 18 million akches^o (small silver coins) for the customs duties of the Aegean port of Izmir^o and collected a total of 19,169,203 akches, for a profit of 6.5 percent.

Rural administration, already disrupted by the rebellions, suffered from the transition to tax farms. The military landholders had kept order on their lands to maintain their incomes. Tax farmers seldom lived on the land, and their tax collection rights could vary from year to year. The imperial government, therefore, faced



팡운드폭탄 4발 투하... 두 아들과 함께 사

진지 구축... 이틀째 시가戰

령이 대중 앞에 나타나거나 애국심
을 고취하는 노래만을 내보내던 방
송마저 중단됐다.

DIVERSITY AND DOMINANCE

ISLAMIC LAW AND OTTOMAN RULE

Ebu's-Su'ud was the Mufti of Istanbul from 1545 to 1574, serving under the sultans Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566) and his son Selim II (1566–1574). Originally one of many city-based religious scholars giving opinions on matters of law, the mufti of Istanbul by Ebu's-Su'ud's time had become the top religious official in the empire and the personal adviser to the sultan on religious and legal matters. The position would later acquire the title Shaikh al-Islam.

Historians debate the degree of independence these muftis had. Since the ruler, as a Muslim, was subject to the Shari'a, the mufti could theoretically veto his policies. On important matters, however, the mufti more often seemed to come up with the answer that best suited the sultan who appointed him. This bias is not apparent in more mundane areas of the law.

The collection of Ebu's-Su'ud's fatwas, or legal opinions, from which the examples below are drawn shows the range of matters that came to his attention. They are also an excellent source for understanding the problems of his time, the relationship between Islamic law and imperial governance, and the means by which the state asserted its dominance over the common people. Some opinions respond directly to questions posed by the sultan. Others are hypothetical, using the names Zeyd, 'Amr, and Hind the way police today use John Doe and Jane Doe. While qadis, or Islamic judges, made findings of fact in specific cases on trial, muftis issued only opinions on matters of law. A qadi as well as a plaintiff or defendant might ask a question of a mufti. Later jurists consulted collections of fatwas for precedents, but the fatwas had no permanent binding power.

On the plan of Selim II to attack the Venetians in Crete in 1570 A land was previously in the realm of Islam. After a while, the abject infidels overran it, destroyed the colleges and mosques, and left them vacant. They filled the pulpits and the galleries with the tokens of infidelity and error, intending to insult the religion of Islam with all kinds of vile deeds, and by spreading their ugly acts to all corners of the earth.

His Excellency the Sultan, the Refuge of Religion, has, as zeal for Islam requires, determined to take the aforemen-

tioned land from the possession of the shameful infidels and to annex it to the realm of Islam.

When peace was previously concluded with the other lands in the possession of the said infidels, the aforementioned land was included. An explanation is sought as to whether, in accordance with the Pure shari'a, this is an impediment to the Sultan's determining to break the treaty.

Answer: There is no possibility that it could ever be an impediment. For the Sultan of the People of Islam (may God glorify his victories) to make peace with the infidels is legal only when there is a benefit to all Muslims. When there is no benefit, peace is never legal. When a benefit has been seen, and it is then observed to be more beneficial to break it, then to break it becomes absolutely obligatory and binding.

His Excellency [Muhammad] the Apostle of God (may God bless him and give him peace) made a ten-year truce with the Meccan infidels in the sixth year of the Hegira. His Excellency 'Ali (may God ennoble his face) wrote a document that was corroborated and confirmed. Then, in the following year, it was considered more beneficial to break it and, in the eighth year of the Hegira, [the Prophet] attacked [the Meccans], and conquered Mecca the Mighty.

On war against the Shi'ite Muslim Safavids of Iran Is it licit according to the shari'a to fight the followers of the Safavids? Is the person who kills them a holy warrior, and the person who dies at their hands a martyr?

Answer: Yes, it is a great holy war and a glorious martyrdom.

Assuming that it is licit to fight them, is this simply because of their rebellion and enmity against the [Ottoman] Sultan of the People of Islam, because they drew the sword against the troops of Islam, or what?

Answer: They are both rebels and, from many points of view, infidels.

Can the children of Safavid subjects captured in the Nakhichevan campaign be enslaved?

Answer: No.

The followers of the Safavids are killed by order of the Sultan. If it turns out that some of the prisoners, young and old, are [Christian] Armenian[s], are they set free?

Answer: Yes. So long as the Armenians have not joined the Safavid troops in attacking and fighting against the troops of Islam, it is illegal to take them prisoner.

On the Holy Land Are all the Arab realms Holy Land, or does it have specific boundaries, and what is the difference between the Holy Land and other lands?

Answer: Syria is certainly called the Holy Land. Jerusalem, Aleppo and its surroundings, and Damascus belong to it.

On land-grants What lands are private property, and what lands are held by feudal tenure [i.e., assignment in exchange for military service]?

Answer: Plots of land within towns are private property. Their owners may sell them, donate them or convert them to trust. When [the owner] dies, [the land] passes to all the heirs. Lands held by feudal tenure are cultivated lands around villages, whose occupants bear the burden of their services and pay a portion of their [produce in tax]. They cannot sell the land, donate it or convert it to trust. When they die, if they have sons, these have the use [of the land]. Otherwise, the cavalryman gives [it to someone else] by *tapu* [title deed].

On the consumption of coffee Zeyd drinks coffee to aid concentration or digestion. Is this licit?

Answer: How can anyone consume this reprehensible [substance], which dissolute men drink when engaged in games and debauchery?

The Sultan, the Refuge of Religion, has on many occasions banned coffee-houses. However, a group of ruffians take no notice, but keep coffee-houses for a living. In order to draw the crowds, they take on unbearded apprentices, and have ready instruments of entertainment and play, such as chess and backgammon. The city's rakes, rogues and vagabond boys gather there to consume opium and hashish. On top of this, they drink coffee and, when they are high, engage in games and false sciences, and neglect the prescribed prayers. In law, what should happen to a judge who is able to prevent the said coffee-sellers and drinkers, but does not do so?

Answer: Those who perpetrate these ugly deeds should be prevented and deterred by severe chastisement and long imprisonment. Judges who neglect to deter them should be dismissed.

On matters of theft How are thieves to be "carefully examined"?

Answer: His Excellency 'Ali (may God ennoble his face) appointed Imam Shurah as judge. It so happened that, at that time, several people took a Muslim's son to another district. The boy disappeared and, when the people came back, the missing boy's father brought them before Judge Shurah. [When he brought] a claim [against them on account of the

loss of his son], they denied it, saying: "No harm came to him from us." Judge Shurah thought deeply and was perplexed.

When the man told his tale to His Excellency 'Ali, [the latter] summoned Judge Shurah and questioned him. When Shurah said: "Nothing came to light by the shari'a," [Ali] summoned all the people who had taken the man's son, separated them from one another, and questioned them separately. For each of their stopping places, he asked: "What was the boy wearing in that place? What did you eat? And where did he disappear?" In short, he made each of them give a detailed account, and when their words contradicted each other, each of their statements was written down separately. Then he brought them all together, and when the contradictions became apparent, they were no longer able to deny [their guilt] and confessed to what had happened.

This kind of ingenuity is a requirement of the case.

[This fatwa appears to justify investigation of crimes by the state instead of by the qadi. Judging from court records, which contain very few criminal cases, it seems likely that in practice, many criminal cases were dealt with outside the jurisdiction of the qadi's court.]

Zeyd takes 'Amr's donkey without his knowledge and sells it. Is he a thief?

Answer: His hand is not cut off.

Zeyd mounts 'Amr's horse as a courier and loses it. Is compensation necessary?

Answer: Yes

In which case: What if Zeyd has a Sultanic decree [authorising him] to take horses for courier service?

Answer: Compensation is required in any case. He was not commanded to lose [the horse]. Even if he were commanded, it is the person who loses it who is liable.

On homicides Zeyd enters Hind's house and tries to have intercourse forcibly. Since Hind can repel him by no other means, she strikes and wounds him with an axe. If Zeyd dies of the wound, is Hind liable for anything?

Answer: She has performed an act of Holy War.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What do these fatwas indicate with regard to the balance between practical legal reasoning and religious dictates?
2. How much was the Ottoman government constrained by the Shari'a?
3. What can be learned about day-to-day life from materials of this sort?

Metal Currency and Inflation

Inflation occurs when the quantity of goods and services available for purchase remains stable while the quantity of money in circulation increases. With more money in their pockets, people are willing to pay more to get what they want. Prices go up, and what people think of as the value of money goes down.

Today, with paper money and electronic banking, governments try to control inflation by regulating the printing of money or by other means. Prior to the nineteenth century, money consisted of silver and gold coins, and governments did not keep track of how much money was in circulation. As long as the annual production of gold and silver mines was quite small, inflation was not a worry. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, precious metal poured into Spain from silver and gold mines in the New World, but there was no increase in the availability of goods and services. The resulting inflation triggered a "price revolution" in Europe—a general tripling of prices between 1500 and 1650. In Paris in 1650 the price of wheat and hay was fifteen times higher than the price had been in 1500.

This wave of inflation worked its way east, contributing to social disorder in the Ottoman Empire. European traders had more money available than Ottoman merchants and could outbid them for scarce commodities. Lacking silver and gold mines, the Ottomans

government reduced the amount of precious metal in Ottoman coins. This made the problem worse. Hit hardest were people who had fixed incomes. Cavalrymen holding land grants worth a set amount each year were unable to equip themselves for military campaigns. Students living on fixed scholarships went begging.

Safavid Iran needed silver and gold to pay for imports from Mughal India, which imported few Iranian goods. Iranians sold silk to the Ottoman Empire for silver and gold, worsening the Ottoman situation, and then passed the precious metal on to India. Everyday life in Iran depended on barter or locally minted copper coinage, both more resistant to inflation. Copper for coins was sometimes imported from China.

Though no one then grasped the connection between silver production in Mexico and the trade balance between Iran and India, the world of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was becoming more closely linked economically than it had ever been before.

Set of Coin Dies The lower die, called the anvil die, was set in a piece of wood. A blank disk of gold, silver or copper was placed on top of it. The hammer die was placed on top of the blank and struck with a hammer to force the coin's image onto it. (Courtesy, Israel Museum, Jerusalem)



greater administrative burdens and came to rely heavily on powerful provincial governors or on wealthy men who purchased lifelong tax collection rights that prompted them to behave more or less as private landowners.

Rural disorder and decline in administrative control sometimes opened the way for new economic opportunities. The port of Izmir, known to Europeans by the ancient name "Smyrna," had a population of around two thousand in 1580. By 1650 the population had increased to between thirty thousand and forty thousand. Along with refugees from the Anatolian uprisings and from European pirate attacks along the coast came European merchants and large colonies of Armenians, Greeks, and

Jews. A French traveler in 1621 wrote: "At present, Izmir has a great traffic in wool, beeswax, cotton, and silk, which the Armenians bring there instead of going to Aleppo . . . because they do not pay as many dues."²

Izmir transformed itself between 1580 and 1650 from a small Muslim Turkish town into a multiethnic, multi-religious, multilingual entrepôt because of the Ottoman government's inability to control trade and the slowly growing dominance of European traders in the Indian Ocean. Spices from the East, though still traded in Aleppo and other long-established Ottoman centers, were not to be found in Izmir. Aside from Iranian silk brought in by caravan, European traders at Izmir purchased local

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agricultural products—dried fruits, sesame seeds, nuts, and olive oil. As a consequence, local farmers who previously had grown grain for subsistence shifted their plantings more and more to cotton and other cash crops, including, after its introduction in the 1590s, tobacco, which quickly became popular in the Ottoman Empire despite government prohibitions. In this way, the agricultural economy of western Anatolia, the Balkans, and the Mediterranean coast—the Ottoman lands most accessible to Europe (see Map 19.1)—became enmeshed in a growing European commercial network.

At the same time, military power slowly ebbed. The ill-trained Janissaries sometimes resorted to hiring substitutes to go on campaign, and the sultans relied on partially trained seasonal recruits and on armies raised by the governors of frontier provinces. By the middle of the eighteenth century it was obvious to the Austrians and Russians that the Ottoman Empire was weakening. On the eastern front, however, Ottoman exhaustion after many wars was matched by the demise in 1722 of their perennial adversary, the Safavid state of Iran.

The Ottoman Empire lacked both the wealth and the inclination to match European economic advances. Overland trade from the east dwindled as political disorder in Safavid Iran cut deeply into Iranian silk production (see below). Coffee from the highlands of Yemen, a product that rose from obscurity in the fifteenth century to become the rage first in the Ottoman Empire and then in Europe, traditionally reached the market by way of Egypt. By 1770, however, Muslim merchants trading in the Yemeni port of Mocha^o (literally “the coffee place”) paid 15 percent in duties and fees. But European traders, benefiting from long-standing trade agreements with the sultans, paid little more than 3 percent.

Such trade agreements, called capitulations, led to European domination of Ottoman seaborne trade. Nevertheless, the Europeans did not control strategic ports in the Mediterranean comparable to Malacca in the Indian Ocean and Hormuz on the Persian Gulf, so their economic power stopped short of colonial settlement or direct control in Ottoman territories.

A few astute Ottoman statesmen observed the growing disarray of the empire and advised the sultans to reestablish the land-grant and devshirme systems of Suleiman's reign. Most people, however, could not perceive the downward course of imperial power, much less the reasons behind it. Ottoman historians named the period between 1718 and 1730 the “Tulip Period” because of the craze for high-priced tulip bulbs that swept Ottoman ruling circles. The craze echoed a Dutch tulip

mania that had begun in the mid-sixteenth century, when the flower was introduced into Holland from Istanbul, and had peaked in 1636 with particularly rare bulbs going for 2,500 florins apiece—the value of twenty-two oxen. Far from seeing Europe as the enemy that would eventually dismantle the empire, the Istanbul elite experimented with European clothing and furniture styles and purchased printed books from the empire's first (and short-lived) press.

In 1730, however, the gala soirees, at which guests watched turtles with candles on their backs wander in the dark through massive tulip beds, gave way to a conservative Janissary revolt with strong religious overtones. Sultan Ahmed III abdicated, and the leader of the revolt, Patrona Halil^o, an Albanian former seaman and stoker of the public baths, swaggered around the capital for several months dictating government policies before he was seized and executed.

The Patrona Halil rebellion confirmed the perceptions of a few that the Ottoman Empire was facing severe difficulties. Yet decay at the center spelled benefit elsewhere. In the provinces, ambitious and competent governors, wealthy landholders, urban notables, and nomad chieftains took advantage of the central government's weakness. By the middle of the eighteenth century groups of Mamluks had regained a dominant position in Egypt, and Janissary commanders had become virtually independent rulers in Baghdad. In central Arabia a conservative Sunni movement inspired by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab began a remarkable rise beyond the reach of Ottoman power. Although no region declared full independence, the sultan's power was slipping away to the advantage of a broad array of lower officials and upstart chieftains in all parts of the empire while the Ottoman economy was reorienting itself toward Europe.

THE SAFAVID EMPIRE, 1502–1722

The Safavid Empire of Iran (see Map 19.1) resembled its longtime Ottoman foe in many ways: it initially used land grants to support its all-important cavalry; its population spoke several languages; it focused on land rather than sea power; and urban notables, nomadic chieftains, and religious scholars served as intermediaries between the people and the government. Certain other qualities, such as a royal tradition rooted in pre-Islamic



Safavid Shah with Attendants and Musicians This painting by Ali-Quli Jubbadar, a European convert to Islam working for the Safavid army, reflects Western influences. Notice the use of light and shadow to model faces and the costume of the attendant to the shah's right. The shah's waterpipe indicates the spread of tobacco, a New World crop, to the Middle East. (Courtesy of Oriental Institute, Academy of Sciences, Leningrad. Reproduced from Album of Persian and Indian Miniatures [Moscow, 1962], ill. no. 98)

legends and adoption of Shi'ism, continue to the present day to set Iran off from its neighbors.

The Rise of the Safavids

Timur had been a great conqueror, but his children and grandchildren contented themselves with modest realms in Afghanistan and Central Asia, while a number of would-be rulers vied for control elsewhere. In Iran itself, the ultimate victor in a complicated struggle for power among Turkish chieftains was a boy of Kurdish, Iranian, and Greek ancestry named Ismail^o, the hereditary leader of a militant Sufi brotherhood called the "Safaviya" for his ancestor Safi al-Din. In 1502, at age sixteen, Ismail proclaimed himself shah of Iran. At around the same time, he declared that henceforward his realm would practice **Shi'ite Islam** and revere the family of Muhammad's son-in-law Ali. He called on his subjects to abandon their Sunni beliefs.

Most of the members of the Safaviya spoke Turkish and belonged to nomadic groups known as qizilbash^o, or "redheads," because of their distinctive turbans. Many considered Ismail god incarnate and fought ferociously on his behalf. If Ismail wished his state to be Shi'ite, his word was law to the qizilbash. The Iranian subject population, however, resisted. Neighboring lands gave asylum to Sunni refugees whose preaching and intriguing helped stoke the fires that kept Ismail (d. 1524) and his

son Tahmasp^o (d. 1576) engaged in war after war. It took a century and a series of brutal persecutions to make Iran an overwhelmingly Shi'ite land. The transformation also involved the importation of Arab Shi'ite scholars from Lebanon and Bahrain to institute Shi'ite religious education at a high level.

Society and Religion

Although Ismail's reasons for compelling Iran's conversion are unknown, the effect was to create a deep chasm between Iran and its neighbors, all of which were Sunni. Iran's distinctiveness had been long in the making, however. Persian, written in the Arabic script from the tenth century onward, had emerged as the second language of Islam. By 1500 an immense library of legal and theological writings; epic, lyric, and mystic poetry; histories; and drama and fiction had come into being. Iranian scholars and writers normally read Arabic as well as Persian and sprinkled their writings with Arabic phrases, but their Arab counterparts were much less inclined to learn Persian. Even handwriting styles differed, Iranians preferring highly cursive forms of the Arabic script.

This divergence between the two language areas had intensified after 1258 when the Mongols destroyed Baghdad, the capital of the Islamic caliphate, and thereby diminished the importance of Arabic-speaking Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, under Mamluk rule, had become the heart-

Ismail (IS-ma-eel) qizilbash (KIH-zil-bahsh)

Tahmasp (tah-MAHSP)

land of the Arab world, while Iran developed largely on its own, building extensive contacts with India, whose Muslim rulers favored the Persian language.

Where cultural styles had radiated in all directions from Baghdad during the heyday of the Islamic caliphate in the seventh through ninth centuries, now Iraq separated an Arab zone from a Persian zone. The post-Mongol period saw an immense burst of artistic creativity and innovation in Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. Painted and molded tiles and tile mosaics, often in vivid turquoise blue, became the standard exterior decoration of mosques in Iran. Architects in Syria and Egypt never used them. The Persian poets Hafez (1319–1389?) and Sa'di (1215–1291) raised morally instructive and mystical-allegorical verse to a peak of perfection. Arabic poetry languished.

The Turks, who steadily came to dominate the political scene from Bengal to Istanbul, generally preferred Persian as a vehicle for literary and religious expression. The Mamluks in Egypt and Syria, however, showed greatest respect for Arabic. The Turkish language, which had a vigorous tradition of folk poetry, developed only slowly, primarily in the Ottoman Empire, as a language of literature and administration. Ironically, Ismail Safavi was a noted religious poet in the Turkish language of his qizilbash followers, while his mortal adversary, the Ottoman Selim I (r. 1512–1520), composed elegant poetry in Persian.

To be sure, Islam itself provided a tradition that crossed ethnic and linguistic borders. Mosque architecture differed, but Iranians, Arabs, and Turks, as well as Muslims in India, all had mosques. They also had madrasas that trained the ulama to sustain and interpret the Shari'a as the all-encompassing law of Islam. Yet local understandings of the common tradition differed substantially.

Each Sufi brotherhood had distinctive rituals and concepts of mystical union with God, but Iran stood out as the land where Sufism most often fused with militant political objectives. The Safaviya was not the first brotherhood to deploy armies and use the point of a sword to promote love of God. The later Safavid shahs, however, banned (somewhat ineffectively) all Sufi orders from their domain.

Even prior to Shah Ismail's imposition of Shi'ism, therefore, Iran had become a distinctive society. Nevertheless, the impact of Shi'ism was significant. Shi'ite doctrine says that all temporal rulers, regardless of title, are temporary stand-ins for the "Hidden Imam," the twelfth descendant of Ali, who was the prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. Shi'ites believe that leadership of the Muslim community rests solely with divinely appointed Imams from Ali's family, that the twelfth descen-

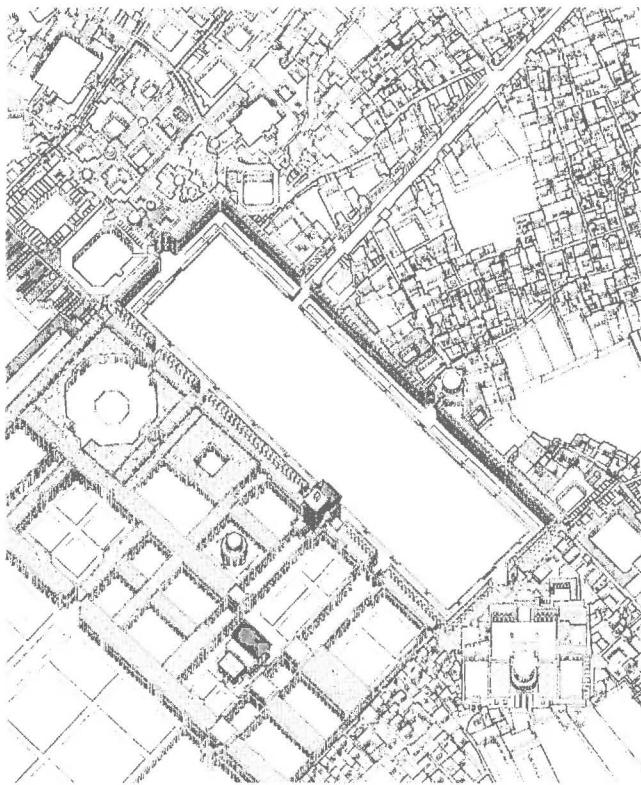
dant (the Hidden Imam) disappeared as a child in the ninth century, and that the Shi'ite community will lack a proper religious authority until he returns. Some Shi'ite scholars concluded that the faithful should calmly accept the world as it was and wait quietly for the Hidden Imam's return. Others maintained that they themselves should play a stronger role in political affairs because they were best qualified to know the Hidden Imam's wishes. These two positions, which still play a role in Iranian Shi'ism, tended to enhance the self-image of the ulama as independent of imperial authority and slowed the trend of religious scholars' becoming subordinate government functionaries, as happened with many Ottoman ulama.

Shi'ism also affected the psychological life of the people. Commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (d. 680), Ali's son and the third Imam, during the first two weeks of every lunar year regularized an emotional outpouring with no parallel in Sunni lands. Day after day for two weeks (as they do today) preachers recited the woeful tale to crowds of weeping believers, and chanting and self-flagellating men paraded past crowds of reverent onlookers in elaborate street processions, often organized by craft guilds. Passion plays in which Husayn and his family are mercilessly killed by the Sunni caliph's general became a unique form of Iranian public theater.

Of course, Shi'ites elsewhere observed some of the same rites of mourning for Imam Husayn, particularly in the Shi'ite pilgrimage cities of Karbala and Najaf^o in Ottoman Iraq. But Iran, with over 90 percent of its population professing Shi'ism, felt the impact of these rites most strongly. Over time, the subjects of the Safavid shahs came to feel more than ever a people apart, even though many of them had been Shi'ite for only two or three generations.

A Tale of Two Cities: Isfahan and Istanbul

Isfahan^o became Iran's capital in 1598 by decree of **Shah Abbas I** (r. 1587–1629). Outwardly, Istanbul and Isfahan looked quite different. Built on seven hills on the south side of the narrow Golden Horn inlet, Istanbul boasted a skyline punctuated by the gray stone domes and thin, pointed minarets of the great imperial mosques. Their design derived from Hagia Sophia, the Byzantine cathedral converted to a mosque and renamed Aya Sofya^o after 1453. By contrast, the mosques surrounding the royal plaza in Isfahan featured brightly tiled domes rising to gentle peaks and unobtrusive minarets. High walls surrounded the sultan's palace in



Royal Square in Isfahan Built by the order Shah Abbas over a period of twenty years starting in 1598, the open space is as long as five football fields (555 by 172 yards). At the upper left end of the square in this drawing is the entrance to the covered bazaar, at the bottom the immense Royal Mosque. The left hand side adjoins the Shah's palace and state administrative office. A multi-story pavilion for reviewing troops and receiving guests overlooks the square across from the smaller domed personal mosque of the Shah. [Reproduced with permission from Klaus Herdeg, *Formal Structure in Islamic Architecture of Iran and Turkestan* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990)]

Istanbul. Shah Abbas focused Isfahan on the giant royal plaza, which was large enough for his army to play polo, and he used an airy palace overlooking the plaza to receive dignitaries and review his troops. This public image contributed to Shah Abbas' being called "the Great."

The harbor of Istanbul, the primary Ottoman seaport, teemed with sailing ships and smaller craft, many of them belonging to a colony of European merchants perched on a hilltop on the north side of the Golden Horn. Isfahan, far from the sea, only occasionally received European visitors. Along with Jews and Hindus, a colony of Armenian Christians brought in by Shah Abbas who settled in a suburb of the city handled most of its trade.

Beneath these superficial differences, the two capitals had much in common. Wheeled vehicles were scarce in hilly Istanbul and nonexistent in Isfahan, which was

within the broad zone where camels supplanted wheeled transport after the rise of the Arab caravan cities in the pre-Islamic centuries. In size and layout both cities favored walking and, aside from the royal plaza in Isfahan, lacked the open spaces common in contemporary European cities. Away from the major mosque complexes, streets were narrow and irregular. Houses crowded against each other in dead-end lanes. Residents enjoyed the privacy of interior courtyards. Artisans and merchants organized themselves into guilds that had strong social and religious as well as economic bonds. The shops of the guilds adjoined each other in the markets.

Women seldom appeared in public, even in Istanbul's mazelike covered market or in Isfahan's long, serpentine bazaar. At home, the women's quarters—called *anderun*, or "interior," in Iran and *harem*, or "forbidden area," in Istanbul—were separate from the public rooms where the men of the family received visitors. Low cushions, charcoal braziers for warmth, carpets, and small tables constituted most of the furnishings. In Iran and the Arab provinces, shelves and niches for books could be cut into thick, mud-brick walls. Residences in Istanbul were usually built of wood. Glazed tile in geometric or floral patterns covered the walls of wealthy men's reception areas.

The private side of family life has left few traces, but it is apparent that women's society—consisting of wives, children, female servants, and sometimes one or more eunuchs (castrated male servants)—had some connections with the outside world. Ottoman court records reveal that women using male agents bought and sold urban real estate, often dealing with inherited shares of their fathers' estates. Some even established religious endowments for pious purposes. The fact that Islamic law, unlike most European codes, permitted a wife to retain her property after marriage gave some women a stake in the general economy and a degree of independence from their spouses. Women also appeared in other types of court cases, where they often testified for themselves, for Islamic courts did not recognize the role of attorney. Although comparable Safavid court records do not survive, historians assume that a parallel situation prevailed in Iran.

European travelers commented on the veiling of women outside the home, but miniature paintings indicate that ordinary female garb consisted of a long, ample dress with a scarf or long shawl pulled tight over the forehead to conceal the hair. Lightweight trousers, either close-fitting or baggy, were worn under the dress. This mode of dress differed little from that of men. Poor men wore light trousers, a long shirt, a jacket, and a brimless

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Istanbul Family on the Way to a Bath House Public baths, an important feature of Islamic cities, set different hours for men and women. Young boys, such as the lad in the turban shown here, went with their mothers and sisters. Notice that the children wear the same styles as the adults. (Osterreichische Nationalbibliothek)

cap or turban. Wealthier men wore ankle-length caftans, often closely fitted around the chest, over their trousers. The norm for both sexes was complete coverage of arms, legs, and hair.

Men monopolized public life. Poetry and art, both somewhat more elegantly developed in Isfahan than in Istanbul, centered as much on the charms of beardless boys as of pretty maidens. Despite religious disapproval of homosexuality, attachments to adolescent boys were neither unusual nor hidden. Women on city streets included non-Muslims, the aged, the very poor, and slaves. Miniature paintings frequently depict female dancers, musicians, and even acrobats in attitudes and costumes that range from decorous to decidedly erotic.

Despite social similarities, the overall flavors of Isfahan and Istanbul were not the same. Isfahan had a prosperous Armenian quarter across the river from the city's center, but it was not a truly cosmopolitan capital. Like other rulers of extensive land empires, Shah Abbas located his capital toward the center of his domain, within comparatively easy reach of any threatened frontier. Istanbul, in contrast, was a great seaport and crossroads located on the straits separating the sultan's European and Asian possessions. People of all sorts lived or spent time in Istanbul—Venetians, Genoese, Arabs, Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Albanians, Serbs, Jews, Bulgarians, and more. In this respect, Istanbul conveyed the cosmopolitan character of major seaports from London to Can-

ton (Guangzhou) and belied the fact that its prosperity rested on the vast reach of the sultan's territories rather than on the voyages of its merchants.

Economic Crisis and Political Collapse

The silk fabrics of northern Iran, monopolized by the shahs, provided the mainstay of the Safavid Empire's foreign trade. However, the manufacture that eventually became most powerfully associated with Iran was the deep-pile carpet made by knotting colored yarns around stretched warp threads. Different cities produced distinctive carpet designs. Women and girls did much of the actual knotting work.

Carpets with geometrical or arabesque designs appear in Timurid miniature paintings, but no knotted "Persian rug" survives from the pre-Safavid era. One of the earliest dated carpets was produced in 1522 to adorn the tomb of Shaikh Safi al-Din, the fourteenth-century founder of the Safaviya. This use indicates the high value accorded these products within Iran. One German visitor to Isfahan remarked: "The most striking adornment of the banqueting hall was to my mind the carpets laid out over all three rostra [platforms to sit on for eating] in a most extravagant fashion, mostly woolen rugs from Kirman with animal patterns and woven of the finest wool."³

Overall, Iran's manufacturing sector was neither large nor notably productive. Most of the shah's subjects, whether Iranians, Turks, Kurds, or Arabs, lived by subsistence farming or herding. Neither area of activity recorded significant technological advances during the Safavid period. The shahs granted large sections of the country to the qizilbash nomads in return for mounted warriors for the army. Nomad groups held these lands in common, however, and did not subdivide them into individual landholdings as in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, many people in rural areas lived according to the will of a nomad chieftain who had little interest in building the agricultural economy.

The Safavids, like the Ottomans, had difficulty finding the money to pay troops armed with firearms. This crisis occurred somewhat later in Iran because of its greater distance from Europe. By the end of the sixteenth century, it was evident that a more systematic adoption of cannon and firearms in the Safavid Empire would be needed to hold off the Ottomans and the Uzbeks⁴ (Turkish rulers who had succeeded the Timurids on Iran's Central Asian frontier; see Map 19.1). Like the Ottoman cavalry a century earlier, however, the nomad warriors refused to trade in their bows for firearms. Shah Abbas

responded by establishing a slave corps of year-round soldiers and arming them with guns.

The Christian converts to Islam who initially provided the manpower for the new corps came mostly from captives taken in raids on Georgia in the Caucasus^o. Some became powerful members of the court. They formed a counterweight to the nomad chiefs just as the Janissaries had earlier challenged the landholding Turkish cavalry in the Ottoman Empire. The strong hand of Shah Abbas kept the inevitable rivalries and intrigues between the factions under control. His successors showed less skill.

In the late sixteenth century the inflation caused by cheap silver spread into Iran; then overland trade through Safavid territory declined because of mismanagement of the silk monopoly after Shah Abbas's death in 1629. As a result, the country faced the unsolvable problem of finding money to pay the army and bureaucracy. Trying to remove the nomads from their lands to regain control of taxes proved more difficult and more disruptive militarily than the piecemeal dismantling of the land-grant system in the Ottoman Empire. Demands from the central government caused the nomads, who were still a potent military force, to withdraw to their mountain pastures until the pressure subsided. By 1722 the government had become so weak and commanded so little support from the nomadic groups that an army of marauding Afghans was able to capture Isfahan and effectively end Safavid rule.

Despite Iran's long coastline, the Safavids never possessed a navy. The Portuguese seized the strategic Persian Gulf island of Hormuz in 1517 and were expelled only in 1622, when the English ferried Iranian soldiers to the attack. Entirely land-oriented, the shahs relied on the English and Dutch for naval support and never considered confronting them at sea. Nadir Shah, a general who emerged from the confusion of the Safavid fall to reunify Iran briefly between 1736 and 1747, purchased some naval vessels from the English and used them in the Persian Gulf. But his navy decayed after his death, and Iran did not have a navy again until the twentieth century.

THE MUGHAL EMPIRE, 1526–1761

As a land of Hindus ruled by a Muslim minority, the realm of the Mughal^o sultans of India differed sub-

Caucasus (CAW-kuh-suhs) Mughal (MOH-guhl)

stantially from the empires of the Ottomans and Safavids. To be sure, the Ottoman provinces in the Balkans, except for Albania and Bosnia, remained mostly Christian; but the remainder of the Ottoman Empire was overwhelmingly Muslim with small Christian and Jewish minorities. The Ottoman sultans made much of their control of Mecca and Medina and resulting supervision of the annual pilgrimage caravans just as the Safavids fostered pilgrimages to a shrine in Mashhad in northeastern Iran for their overwhelmingly Shi'ite subjects.

India, in contrast, lay far from the Islamic homelands (see Map 19.1). Muslim dominion in northern India began with repeated military campaigns in the early eleventh century, and the Mughals had to contend with the Hindus' long-standing resentment of the destruction of their culture. Unlike the Balkan peoples who had struggled to maintain their separate identities in relation to the Byzantines, the crusaders, and one another before arrival of the Turks, the peoples of the Indian subcontinent had used centuries of freedom from foreign intrusion to forge a distinctive Hindu civilization that could not easily accommodate the worldview of Islam. Thus, the Mughals faced the challenge not just of conquering and organizing a large territorial state but also of finding a formula for Hindu-Muslim coexistence.

Political Foundations

Babur^o (1483–1530), the founder of the **Mughal Empire**, descended from Timur. Though Mughal means "Mongol" in Persian, the Timurids were of Turkic rather than Mongol origin. Timur's marriage to a descendant of Genghis Khan had earned him the Mongol designation "son-in-law," but like the Ottomans, his family did not enjoy the political legitimacy that came with Genghisid descent experienced by lesser rulers in Central Asia and in the Crimea north of the Black Sea.

Invasive from Central Asia, Babur defeated the last Muslim sultan of Delhi at the Battle of Panipat in 1526. Even though this victory marked the birth of a brilliant and powerful state in India, Babur's descendants continued to think of Central Asia as their true home, from time to time expressing intentions of recapturing Samarkand and referring to its Uzbek ruler—a genuine descendant of Genghis Khan—as a governor rather than an independent sovereign.

India proved to be the primary theater of Mughal accomplishment, however. Babur's grandson **Akbar** (r. 1556–1605), a brilliant but mercurial man whose illiteracy

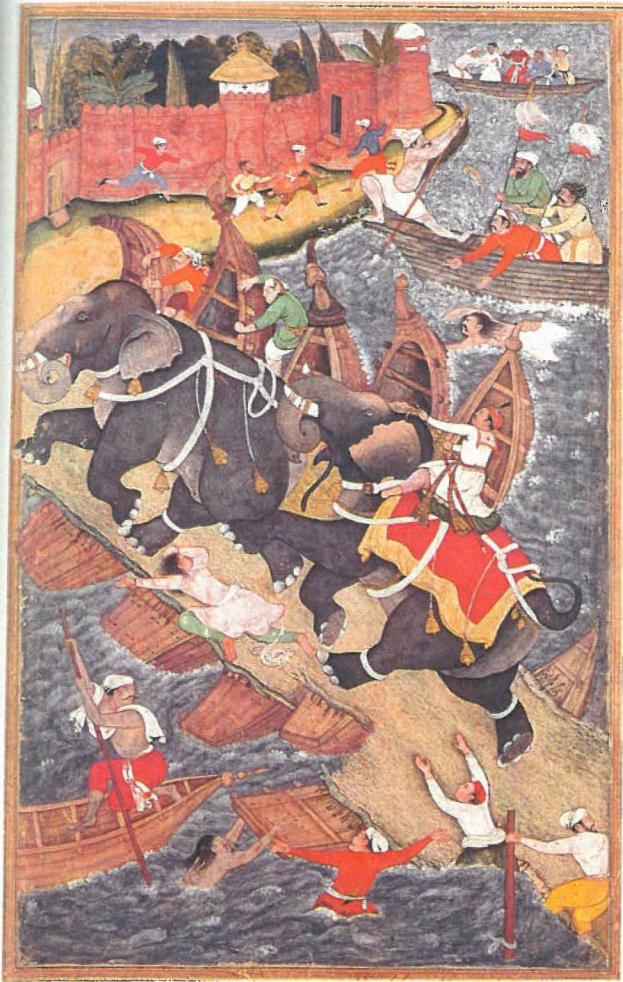
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Elephants Breaking Bridge of Boats This illustration of an incident in the life of Akbar illustrates the ability of Mughal miniature painters to depict unconventional action scenes. Because the flow of rivers in India and the Middle East varied greatly from dry season to wet season, boat bridges were much more common than permanent constructions. (Victoria and Albert Museum, London/Bridgeman Art Library)

betrayed his upbringing in the wilds of Afghanistan, established the central administration of the expanding state. Under him and his three successors—the last of whom died in 1707—all but the southern tip of India fell under Mughal rule, administered first from Agra and then from Delhi^o.

Akbar granted land revenues to military officers and government officials in return for their service. Ranks called **mansabs**^o, some high and some low, entitled their

holders to revenue assignments. As in the other Islamic empires, the central government kept careful track of these nonhereditary grants.

With a population of 100 million, a thriving trading economy based on cotton cloth, and a generally efficient administration, India under Akbar enjoyed great prosperity in the sixteenth century. Akbar and his successors faced few external threats and experienced generally peaceful conditions in their northern Indian heartland. Nevertheless, they were capable of squandering immense amounts of blood and treasure fighting Hindu kings and rebels in the Deccan region or Afghans on their western frontier (see Map 19.1).

Foreign trade boomed at the port of Surat in the northwest, which also served as an embarkation point for pilgrims headed for Mecca. Like the Safavids, the Mughals had no navy or merchant ships. The government saw the Europeans—now primarily Dutch and English, the Portuguese having lost most of their Indian ports—less as enemies than as shipmasters whose naval support could be procured as needed in return for trading privileges. It never questioned the wisdom of selling Indian cottons for European coin—no one understood how cheap silver had become in Europe—and shipping them off to European customers in English and Dutch vessels.

Hindus and Muslims

India had not been dominated by a single ruler since the time of Harsha Vardhana (r. 606–647). Muslim destruction of Hindu cultural monuments, the expansion of Muslim territory, and the practice, until Akbar's time, of enslaving prisoners of war and compelling them to convert to Islam horrified the Hindus. But the politically divided Hindus did not put up a combined resistance. The Mughal state, in contrast, inherited traditions of unified imperial rule from both the Islamic caliphate and the more recent examples of Genghis Khan and Timur.

Those Mongol-based traditions did not necessarily mean religious intolerance. Seventy percent of the mansabdars^o (officials holding land grants) appointed under Akbar were Muslim soldiers born outside India, but 15 percent were Hindus, mostly warriors from the north called **Rajputs**^o. One of them rose to be a powerful revenue minister. Their status as mansabdars confirmed the policy of religious accommodation adopted by Akbar and his successors.

Akbar, the most illustrious Mughal ruler, differed

from his Ottoman and Safavid counterparts—Suleiman the Magnificent and Shah Abbas the Great—in his striving for social harmony and not just for more territory and revenue. He succeeded to the throne at age thirteen, and his actions were dominated at first by a regent and then by his strong-minded childhood nurse. On reaching twenty, Akbar took command of the government. He married a Hindu Rajput princess, whose name is not recorded, and welcomed her father and brother to the court in Agra.

Other rulers might have used such a marriage as a means of humiliating a subject group, but Akbar signaled his desire for Muslim-Hindu reconciliation. A year later he rescinded the head tax that Muslim rulers traditionally levied on tolerated non-Muslims. This measure was more symbolic than real because the tax had not been regularly collected, but the gesture helped cement the allegiance of the Rajputs.

Akbar longed for an heir. Much to his relief, his Rajput wife gave birth to a son in 1569, ensuring that future rulers would have both Muslim and Hindu ancestry.

Akbar ruled that in legal disputes between two Hindus, decisions would be made according to village custom or Hindu law as interpreted by local Hindu scholars. Muslims followed Shari'a law. Akbar made himself the legal court of last resort in a 1579 declaration that he was God's infallible earthly representative. Thus, appeals could be made to Akbar personally, a possibility not usually present in Islamic jurisprudence.

He also made himself the center of a new "Divine Faith" incorporating Muslim, Hindu, Zoroastrian, Sikh^o, and Christian beliefs. Sufi ideas attracted him and permeated the religious rituals he instituted at his court. To promote serious consideration of his religious principles, he monitored, from a high catwalk, debates among scholars of all religions assembled in his private octagonal audience chamber. When courtiers uttered the Muslim exclamation "Allahu Akbar"—"God is great"—its second grammatical meaning, "God is Akbar," was not lost on them. Akbar's religious views did not survive him, but the court culture he fostered, reflecting a mixture of Muslim and Hindu traditions, flourished until his zealous great-grandson Aurangzeb^o (r. 1658–1707) reinstated many restrictions on Hindus.

Mughal and Rajput miniature portraits of political figures and depictions of scantily clad women brought frowns to the faces of pious Muslims, who deplored the representation of human beings in art. Most of the leading painters were Hindus. In literature, in addition to the florid style of Persian verse favored at court, a new taste developed for poetry and prose in the popular lan-

guage of the Delhi region. The modern descendant of this language is called Urdu in Pakistan, from the Turkish word *ordu*, meaning "army" (in India it is called Hindi).

Akbar's policy of toleration does not explain the pattern of conversion in Mughal India, most of which was to Sunni Islam. Some scholars maintain that most converts came from the lowest Hindu social groups, or castes, who hoped to improve their lot in life, but little data confirm this theory. Others argue that Sufi brotherhoods, which developed strongly in India, led the way in converting people to Islam, but this proposition has not been proved. The most heavily Muslim regions developed in the valley of the Indus River and in Bengal. The Indus center dates from the isolated establishment of Muslim rule there as early as the eighth century.

A careful study of local records and traditions from east Bengal indicates that the eastward movement of the delta of the Ganges River, caused by silting, and the spread of rice cultivation into forest clearings played the primary role in conversions to Islam there. Mansabdars (mostly Muslims) with land grants in east Bengal contracted with local entrepreneurs to collect a labor force, cut down the forest, and establish rice paddies. Though some entrepreneurs were Hindu, most were non-Sufi Muslim religious figures. The latter centered their farming communities on mosques and shrines, using religion as a social cement. Most natives of the region were accustomed to worshiping local forest deities rather than the main Hindu gods. So the shift to Islam represented a move to a more sophisticated, literate culture appropriate to their new status as farmers producing for the commercial rice market. Gradual religious change of this kind often produced Muslim communities whose social customs differed little from those in neighboring non-Muslim communities. In east Bengal, common Muslim institutions, such as madrasas, the ulama, and law courts, were little in evidence.

The emergence of **Sikhism** in the Punjab region of northwest India constituted another change in Indian religious life in the Mughal period. Nanak (1469–1539), the religion's first guru (spiritual teacher), stressed meditation as a means of seeking enlightenment and drew upon both Muslim and Hindu imagery in his teachings. His followers formed a single community without differences of caste. However, after Aurangzeb ordered the ninth guru beheaded in 1675 for refusing to convert to Islam, the tenth guru dedicated himself to avenging his father's death and reorganized his followers into "the army of the pure," a religious order dedicated to defending Sikh beliefs. These devotees signaled their faith by leaving their hair uncut beneath a turban; carrying a comb, a steel bracelet, and a sword or dagger; and wear-

^oSikh (sick) Aurangzeb (ow-rang-ZEB)

ing military-style breeches. By the eighteenth century, the Mughals were encountering fierce opposition from the Sikhs as well as from Hindu guerrilla forces in the rugged and ravine-scarred province of Maharashtra on India's west coast.

Central Decay and Regional Challenges, 1707–1761

Mughal power did not long survive Aurangzeb's death in 1707. Some historians consider the land-grant system a central element in the rapid decline of imperial authority, but other factors played a role as well. Aurangzeb failed to effectively integrate new Mughal territories in southern India into the imperial structure, and a number of strong regional powers challenged Mughal military supremacy. The Marathas proved a formidable enemy as they carved out a swath of territory across India's middle, and Sikhs, Hindu Rajputs, and Muslim Afghans exerted intense pressure from the northwest. A climax came in 1739 when Nadir Shah, the general who had seized power in Iran after the fall of the Safavids, invaded the subcontinent and sacked Delhi, which Akbar's grandson had rebuilt and beautified as the Mughal capital some decades before. He carried off to Iran, as part of the booty, the priceless, jewel-encrusted "peacock throne," symbol of Mughal grandeur. The later Mughals found another throne to sit on; but their empire, which survived in name to 1857, was finished.

In 1723 Nizam al-Mulk^o, the powerful vizier of the Mughal sultan, gave up on the central government and established his own nearly independent state at Hyderabad in the eastern Deccan. Other officials bearing the title *nawab* (from Arabic *na'ib* meaning "deputy" and Anglicized as "nabob") became similarly independent in Bengal and Oudh^o in the northeast, as did the Marathas farther west. In the northwest, simultaneous Iranian and Mughal weakness allowed the Afghans to establish an independent kingdom.

Some of these regional powers and smaller princely states flourished with the removal of the sultan's heavy hand. Linguistic and religious communities, freed from the religious intolerance instituted during the reign of Aurangzeb, similarly enjoyed greater opportunity for political expression. However, this disintegration of central power favored the intrusion of European adventurers.

Joseph François Dupleix^o took over the presidency of the east coast French stronghold of Pondicherry^o in

1741 and began a new phase of European involvement in India. He captured the English trading center of Madras and used his small contingent of European and European-trained Indian troops to become a power broker in southern India. Though offered the title *nawab*, Dupleix preferred to operate behind the scenes, using Indian princes as puppets. His career ended in 1754 when he was called home. Deeply involved in European wars, the French government declined to pursue further adventures in India. Dupleix's departure cleared the way for the British, whose ventures in India are described in Chapter 24.

TRADE EMPIRES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, 1600–1729

It is no coincidence that the Mughal, Safavid, and Ottoman Empires declined simultaneously in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Complex changes in military technology and in the world economy, along with the increasing difficulty of basing an extensive land empire on military forces paid through land grants, affected them all adversely. The opposite held for seafaring countries intent on turning trade networks into maritime empires. Improvements in ship design, navigation accuracy, and the use of cannon gave an ever-increasing edge to European powers competing with local seafaring peoples. Moreover, the development of joint-stock companies, in which many merchants pooled their capital, provided a flexible and efficient financial instrument for exploiting new possibilities. The English East India Company was founded in 1600, the Dutch East India Company in 1602.

Although the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals did not effectively contest the growth of Portuguese and then Dutch, English, and French maritime power, the majority of non-European shipbuilders, captains, sailors, and traders were Muslim. Groups of Armenian, Jewish, and Hindu traders were also active, but they remained almost as aloof from the Europeans as the Muslims did. The presence in every port of Muslims following the same legal traditions and practicing their faith in similar ways cemented the Muslims' trading network. Islam, from its very outset in the life and preaching of Muhammad (570–632), had favored trade and traders. Unlike Hinduism, it was a proselytizing religion, a factor that encouraged the growth of coastal Muslim communities as local non-Muslims associated with Muslim commercial activities converted and intermarried with Muslims from abroad.

Nizam al-Mulk (nee-ZAHM al-MULK) **nawab** (NAH-wab)
Oudh (OW-ad) **Dupleix** (doo-PLAY)
Pondicherry (pon-dir-CHEH-ree)

Although European missionaries, particularly the Jesuits, tried to extend Christianity into Asia and Africa (see Chapters 15 and 20), most Europeans, the Portuguese excepted, did not treat local converts or the offspring of mixed marriages as full members of their communities. Islam was generally more welcoming. As a consequence, Islam spread extensively into East Africa and Southeast Asia during precisely the time of rapid European commercial expansion. Even without the support of the Muslim land empires, Islam became a source of resistance to growing European domination.

Muslims in the East Indies

Historians disagree about the chronology and manner of Islam's spread in Southeast Asia. Arab traders appeared in southern China as early as the eighth century, so Muslims probably reached the East Indies at a similarly early date. Nevertheless, the dominance of Indian cultural influences in the area for several centuries thereafter indicates that early Muslim visitors had little impact on local beliefs. Clearer indications of conversion and the formation of Muslim communities date from roughly the fourteenth century, with the strongest overseas linkage being to the port of Cambay in India (see Map 19.2) rather than to the Arab world. Islam first took root in port cities and in some royal courts and spread inland only slowly, possibly transmitted by itinerant Sufis.

Although appeals to the Ottoman sultan for support against the Europeans ultimately proved futile, Islam strengthened resistance to Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch intruders. When the Spaniards conquered the Philippines during the decades following the establishment of their first fort in 1565, they encountered Muslims on the southern island of Mindanao[°] and the nearby Sulu archipelago. They called them "Moros," the Spanish term for their old enemies, the Muslims of North Africa. In the ensuing Moro wars, the Spaniards portrayed the Moros as greedy pirates who raided non-Muslim territories for slaves. In fact, they were political, religious, and commercial competitors whose perseverance enabled them to establish the Sulu Empire based in the southern Philippines, one of the strongest states in Southeast Asia from 1768 to 1848.

Other local kingdoms that looked on Islam as a force to counter the aggressive Christianity of the Europeans included the actively proselytizing Brunei[°] Sultanate in northern Borneo and the Acheh[°] Sultanate in northern Sumatra. At its peak in the early seventeenth century,

Mindanao (min-duh-NOW) Brunei (BROO-nie)
Acheh (AH-cheh)

Acheh succeeded Malacca as the main center of Islamic expansion in Southeast Asia. It prospered by trading pepper for cotton cloth from Gujarat in India. Acheh declined after the Dutch seized Malacca from Portugal in 1641.

How well Islam was understood in these Muslim kingdoms is open to question. In Acheh, for example, a series of women ruled between 1641 and 1699. This practice ended when local Muslim scholars obtained a ruling from scholars in Mecca and Medina that Islam did not approve of female rulers. After this ruling scholarly understandings of Islam gained greater prominence in the East Indies.

Historians have looked at merchants, Sufi preachers, or both as the first propagators of Islam in Southeast Asia. The scholarly vision of Islam, however, took root in the sixteenth century by way of pilgrims returning from years of study in Mecca and Medina. Islam promoted the dissemination of writing in the region. Some of the returning pilgrims wrote in Arabic, others in Malay or Javanese. As Islam continued to spread, adat ("custom"), a form of Islam rooted in pre-Muslim religious and social practices, retained its preeminence in rural areas over practices centered on the Shari'a, the religious law. But the royal courts in the port cities began to heed the views of the pilgrim teachers. Though different in many ways, both varieties of Islam provided believers with a firm basis of identification in the face of the growing European presence. Christian missionaries gained most of their converts in regions that had not yet converted to Islam, such as the northern Philippines.

Muslims in East Africa

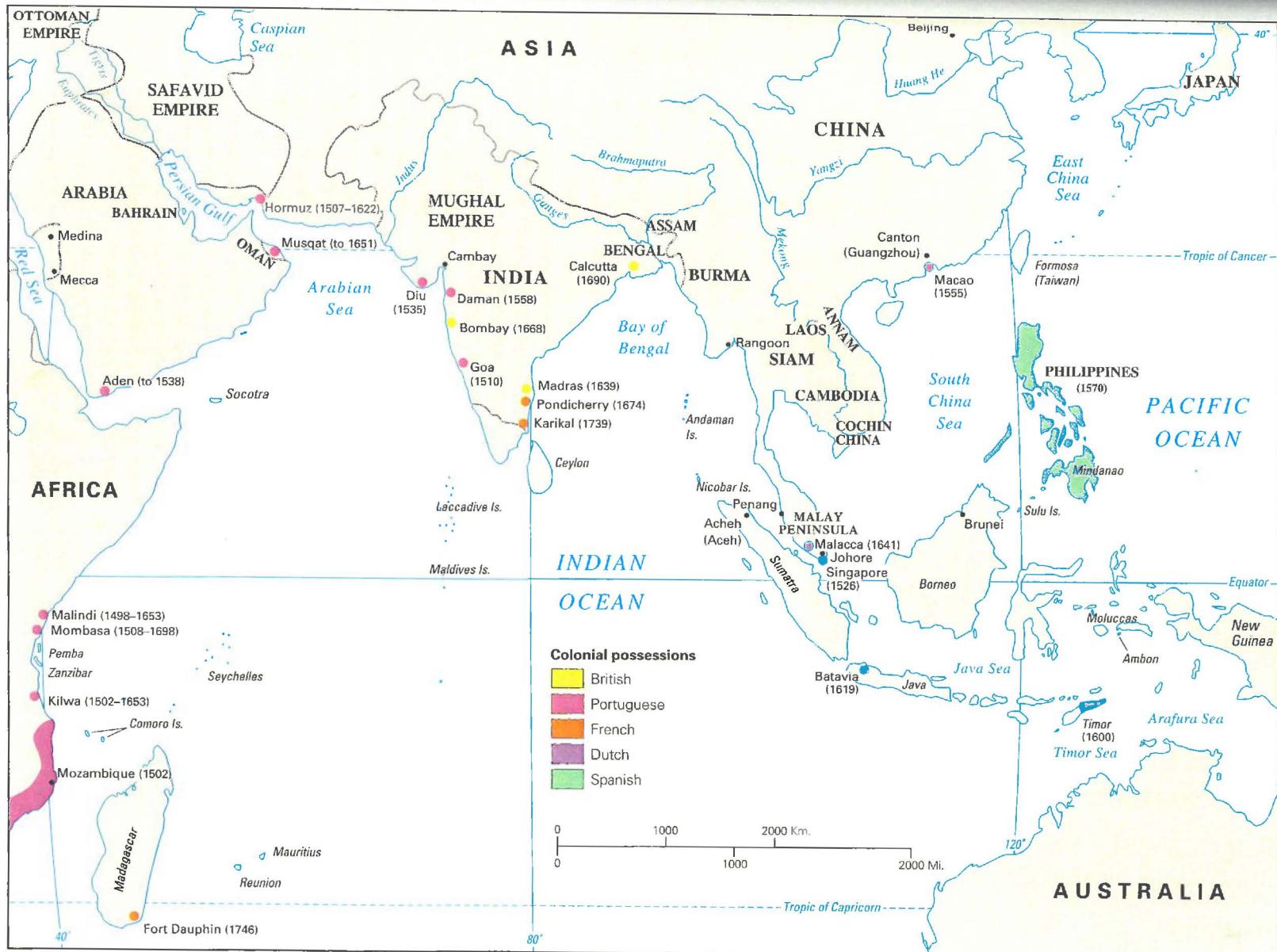
Muslim rulers also governed the East African ports that the Portuguese began to visit in the fifteenth century, though they were not allied politically (see Map 19.2). People living in the millet and rice lands of the Swahili Coast—from the Arabic sawahil[°] meaning "coasts"—had little contact with those in the dry hinterlands. Throughout this period, the East African lakes region and the highlands of Kenya witnessed unprecedented migration and relocation of peoples because of drought conditions that persisted from the late sixteenth through most of the seventeenth century.

Cooperation among the trading ports of Kilwa, Mombasa, and Malindi was hindered by the thick bush country that separated the cultivated tracts of coastal land and by the fact that the ports competed with one another in the export of ivory; ambergris[°] (a whale

sawahil (suh-WAH-hil) ambergris (AM-ber-grees)



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Map 19.2 European Colonization in the Indian Ocean to 1750 Since Portuguese explorers were the first Europeans to reach India by rounding Africa, Portugal gained a strong foothold in both areas. Rival Spain was barred from colonizing the region by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, which limited Spanish efforts to lands west of a line drawn through the mid-Atlantic Ocean. The line carried around the globe provided justification of Spanish colonization in the Philippines. French, British, and Dutch colonies date from after 1600, when joint-stock companies provided a new stimulus for overseas commerce.



Portuguese Fort Guarding Muscat Harbor Muscat in Oman and Aden in Yemen, the best harbors in southern Arabia, were targets for imperial navies trying to establish dominance in the Indian Ocean. Muscat's harbor is small and circular, with one narrow entrance overlooked by this fortress. The palace of the sultan of Oman is still located at the opposite end of the harbor. (Robert Harding Picture Library)

byproduct used in perfumes); and forest products such as beeswax, copal tree resin, and wood. Kilwa also exported gold. In the eighteenth century slave trading, primarily to Arabian ports but also to India, increased in importance. Because Europeans—the only peoples who kept consistent records of slave-trading activities—played a minor role in this slave trade, few records have survived to indicate its extent. Perhaps the best estimate is that 2.1 million slaves were exported between 1500 and 1890, a little over 12.5 percent of the total traffic in African slaves during that period (see Chapter 18).

The Portuguese conquered all the coastal ports from Mozambique northward except Malindi, with whose ruler Portugal cooperated. A Portuguese description of the ruler names some of the cloth and metal goods that Malindi imported, as well as some local manufactures:

The King wore a robe of damask trimmed with green satin and a rich [cap]. He was seated on two cushioned chairs of bronze, beneath a rough sunshade of crimson satin attached to a pole. An old man, who attended him as a page, carried a short sword in a silver sheath. There were many players on [horns], and two trumpets of ivory richly carved and of the size of a man, which were blown through a hole in the side, and made sweet harmony with the [horns].⁴

Initially, the Portuguese favored the port of Malindi, which caused the decline of Kilwa and Mombasa. Re-

peatedly plagued by local rebellion, Portuguese power suffered severe blows when the Arabs of **Oman** in southeastern Arabia captured their south Arabian stronghold at Muscat (1650) and then went on to seize Mombasa (1698), which had become the Portuguese capital in East Africa. The Portuguese briefly retook Mombasa but lost control permanently in 1729. From then on, the Portuguese had to content themselves with Mozambique in East Africa and a few remaining ports in India (Goa) and farther east (Macao and Timor).

The Omanis created a maritime empire of their own, one that worked in greater cooperation with the African populations. The Bantu language of the coast, broadened by the absorption of Arabic, Persian, and Portuguese loanwords, developed into **Swahili**⁵, which was spoken throughout the region. Arabs and other Muslims who settled in the region intermarried with local families, giving rise to a mixed population that played an important role in developing a distinctive Swahili culture.

Islam also spread in the southern Sudan in this period, particularly in the dry areas away from the Nile River. This growth coincided with a waning of Ethiopian power as a result of Portugal's stifling of trade in the Red Sea. Yet no significant contact developed between the emerging Muslim Swahili culture and that of the Muslims in the Sudan to the north.

The Dutch played a major role in driving the Por-

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tuguese from their possessions in the East Indies. They were better organized than the Portuguese through the Dutch East India Company. Just as the Portuguese had tried to dominate the trade in spices, so the Dutch concentrated at first on the spice-producing islands of Southeast Asia. The Portuguese had seized Malacca, a strategic town on the narrow strait at the end of the Malay Peninsula, from a local Malay ruler in 1511 (see Chapter 15). The Dutch took it away from them in 1641, leaving Portugal little foothold in the East Indies except the islands of Ambon^o and Timor (see Map 19.2).

Although the United Netherlands was one of the least autocratic countries of Europe, the governors-general appointed by the Dutch East India Company deployed almost unlimited powers in their efforts to maintain their trade monopoly. They could even order the execution of their own employees for "smuggling"—that is, trading on their own. Under strong governors-general, the Dutch fought a series of wars against Aceh and other local kingdoms on Sumatra and Java. In 1628 and 1629 their new capital at **Batavia**, now the city of Jakarta on Java, was besieged by a fleet of fifty ships belonging to the sultan of Mataram^o, a Javanese kingdom. The Dutch held out with difficulty and eventually prevailed when the sultan was unable to get effective help from the English.

Suppressing local rulers, however, was not enough to control the spice trade once other European countries adopted Dutch methods, learned more about where goods might be acquired, and started to send more ships to Southeast Asia. In the course of the eighteenth century, therefore, the Dutch gradually turned from being middlemen between Southeast Asian producers and European buyers to producing crops in areas they controlled, notably in Java. Javanese teak forests yielded high-quality lumber, and coffee, transplanted from Yemen, grew well in the western hilly regions. In this new phase of colonial export production, Batavia developed from being the headquarters town of a far-flung enterprise to being the administrative capital of a conquered land.

Beyond the East Indies, the Dutch utilized their discovery of a band of powerful eastward-blowing winds (called the "Roaring Forties" because they blow throughout the year between 40 and 50 degrees south latitude) to reach Australia in 1606. In 1642 and 1643 Abel Tasman became the first European to set foot on Tasmania and New Zealand and to sail around Australia, signaling European involvement in that region (see Chapter 24).

CONCLUSION

Asians and Africans ruled by the Ottoman and Mughal sultans and the Safavid shahs did not perceive that a major shift in world economic and political alignments was under way by the late seventeenth century. The rulers focused their efforts on conquering more and more land, sometimes at the expense of Christian Europe and Hindu India, but also at one another's expense, since the Sunni-Shi'ite division justified Iranian attacks on its neighbors and vice versa.

To be sure, more and more trade was being carried in European vessels, particularly after the advent of joint-stock companies in 1600; and Europeans had enclaves in a handful of port cities and islands. But the age-old tradition of Asia was that imperial wealth came from control of broad expanses of agricultural land. Except for state monopolies, such as Iranian silk, governments did not greatly concern themselves with what farmers did. They relied mostly on land taxes, usually indirectly collected via holders of land grants or tax farmers, rather than on customs duties or control of markets to fill the government coffers.

With ever-increasing military expenditures, these taxes fell short of the rulers' needs. Few people realized, however, that this problem was basic to the entire economic system rather than a temporary revenue shortfall. Imperial courtiers pursued their luxurious ways; poetry and the arts continued to flourish; and the quality of manufacturing and craft production remained generally high. Eighteenth-century European observers, luxuriating in the prosperity gained from their ever-increasing control of the Indian Ocean, marveled no less at the riches and industry of these eastern lands than at the fundamental weakness of their political and military systems.

Key Terms

Ottoman Empire	Mughal Empire
Suleiman the Magnificent	Akbar
Janissary	mansabs
devshirme	Rajputs
Tulip Period	Sikhism
Safavid Empire	Acheh Sultanate
Shi'ite Islam	Oman
Hidden Imam	Swahili
Shah Abbas I	Batavia

Suggested Reading

The best comprehensive and comparative account of the post-Mongol Islamic land empires, with an emphasis on social history, is Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (1988). For a work of similar scope concentrating on intellectual history see Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 3, *The Gunpowder Empires and Modern Times* (1974).

On the Ottoman Empire in its prime see Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1650: The Structure of Power* (2002). Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (2002), compares the Ottomans with contemporary European kingdoms. Jason Goodwin, *Lords of the Horizons: A History of the Ottoman Empire* (1999), offers a brief journalistic account. Ottoman origins are well covered in Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds* (1995). For a collection of articles on non-political matters see Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914* (1994). For a sociological analysis of change in the seventeenth century see Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats* (1994).

Some specialized studies of cities and regions give a sense of the major changes in Ottoman society and economy after the sixteenth century: Daniel Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World, 1550–1650* (1990); Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (1989); Bruce McGowan, *Economic Life in the Ottoman Empire: Taxation, Trade, and the Struggle for Land, 1600–1800* (1981); and Dina Rizk Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540–1834* (1997).

Articles in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society* (1982), deal with questions relating to religious minorities. Leslie Pierce skillfully treats the role of women in the governance of the empire in *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (1993). Ralph S. Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East* (1988), is an excellent contribution to Ottoman social history.

The most comprehensive treatment of the history of Safavid Iran is in the articles in Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart, eds., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, *The Timurid and Safavid Periods* (1986). The articles by Hans Roemer in this volume provide solid political narratives of the pre-Safavid and Safavid periods. Roger Savory's important article on the structure of the Safavid state is available in a more extensive form in his *Iran Under the Safavids* (1980).

For the artistic side of Safavid history, abundantly illustrated, see Anthony Welch, *Shah Abbas and the Arts of Isfahan* (1973). Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order, and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (1984), contains the best analysis of the

complicated relationship between Shi'ism and monarchy. For Safavid economic history see Willem Floor, *A Fiscal History of Iran in the Safavid and Qajar Periods, 1500–1925* (1998); and Rudolph Matthee, *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver, 1600–1730* (1999).

A highly readable work that situates the Mughal Empire within the overall history of the subcontinent is Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 6th ed. (1999). For a broad treatment of the entire development of Islamic society in India with emphasis on the Mughal period, see S. M. Ikram, *History of Muslim Civilization in India and Pakistan* (1989). Wheeler Thackston has made a lively translation of Babur's autobiography in *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor* (1996). For a comprehensive history of the Mughals see John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (1993). See also Richard Foltz, *Mughal India and Central Asia* (1999). Irfan Habib has edited an extensive collection of articles on the Mughal Empire in its prime entitled *Akbar and His India* (1997). For the history of the Sikhs see W. H. McLeod, *The Sikhs: History, Religion, and Society* (1989). Two specialized works on the economic and trading history of India are Ashin Das Gupta and M. N. Pearson, eds., *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800* (1987), and Stephen Frederic Dale, *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade, 1600–1750* (1994).

The history of East Africa in this period is not well documented, but B. A. Ogot, ed., *UNESCO General History of Africa*, vol. 5, *Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (1992), provides a useful collection of articles. See also Tom Spear, *The Swahili* (1984), and James de Vere Allen, *Swahili Origins* (1993).

For a brief, general introduction to the relations between the Muslim land empires and the development of Indian Ocean trade, see Patricia Risso, *Merchants and Faith: Muslim Commerce and Culture in the Indian Ocean* (1995). Esmond Bradley Martin and Chryssee Perry Martin have written a popular and well-illustrated work on the western Indian Ocean entitled *Cargoes of the East: The Ports, Trade and Culture of the Arabian Seas and Western Indian Ocean* (1978). C. R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600–1800* (1973), is a classic account of all aspects of Dutch maritime expansion.

Notes

1. Quoted in Sarah Searight, *The British in the Middle East* (New York: Atheneum 1970), 36.
2. Daniel Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World, 1550–1650* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 52.
3. Quoted in Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart, eds., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, *The Timurid and Safavid Periods* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 703.
4. Esmond Bradley Martin and Chryssee Perry Martin, *Cargoes of the East: The Ports, Trade and Culture of the Arabian Seas and Western Indian Ocean* (1978), 17.

by reconstructing and refurbishing Jerusalem, the third holiest city in Islam. He rebuilt the walls of the city (which exist to this day), and constructed aqueducts, fountains, hospitals, and schools there. Likewise, the Safavids claimed to be the protectors of Shi'i Islam. In some cases, they went even further: They attempted to fit themselves into the Shi'i narrative of history. For example, at various times, according to different sources, Shah Isma'il represented himself as a descendent of 'Ali, a representative of the hidden imam, the hidden imam, 'Ali, or even God.

As had been the case earlier, religious minorities were allowed to organize many of their own affairs, including education, social services, charities, and law. Later—it is not known exactly when but probably varied from community to community—each minority religious community in the Ottoman Empire was represented in Istanbul by a religious dignitary from the sect. Each religious community came to be known as a *millet*, and this system of organizing the relationship between the state and religious communities came to be known as the millet system.

Before we can leave the discussion of the institutions of the Ottoman and Safavid empires, it is necessary to emphasize two points. What has so far been presented has been the ideal, which likely differed from the way things actually worked. Unfortunately, historians are forced to work mainly from official texts—which is like reading the *Federalist Papers* to understand how the United States government actually operates. Second, both the Ottoman and Safavid empires began as early modern empires. Their ability to control events and territory waxed and waned over time. In the past, historians assumed that direct political control was a sign of imperial strength, while lack of direct political control was a sign of decline. We know better now: The Ottoman Empire lasted more than four hundred years. The Safavid Empire lasted more than two hundred. Each empire was either very lucky or was able to adapt. At times, adaptation demanded decentralization. As we shall see, during the eighteenth century the power of local warlords was greater than the power of the central government to control them. These local warlords, such as Dhahir al-'Umar and Ahmad Jazzaar in Palestine and 'Ali Bey al-Kabir and Mehmet Ali (Muhammad 'Ali) in Egypt, were able to take control of tracts of territory that were sometimes huge. We also shall see that, by applying techniques of political organization associated with modern states, the Ottoman Empire was able to reassert central control, albeit over a geographically diminished empire. The Safavids were not so lucky: The power of the central administration began to decline following the death of Abbas the Great, and the Safavid dynasty was overthrown by Afghans in 1722.

CHAPTER 3

The Middle East and the Modern World System

The great University of Chicago historian Marshall G. S. Hodgson once wrote that if a visitor from Mars had come to earth during the sixteenth century, he would have taken a look at the political, military, and cultural power of the Middle Eastern gunpowder empires and concluded that the entire world would shortly become Muslim. These empires not only ruled vast territories, they seemed to have resolved many of the problems of governance that had frustrated their predecessors. Yet, by the seventeenth century, Middle Eastern gunpowder empires were in deep crisis. In all fairness, these empires were not the only states in crisis at this time: States from Britain and France to China also entered into periods of difficulty. The problems these empires faced were so similar that historians even have a term for what was going on: the “crisis of the seventeenth century.” Britain, France, China, and the Ottoman and Safavid empires all experienced the same problem: the inability of imperial governments to maintain their authority within their territories. Civil and religious wars wracked France and Britain. In China, the seventeenth century was marked by peasant insurrection and the collapse of the Ming Dynasty, which had ruled for almost three hundred years. The imperial Ottoman government faced popular rebellions, military revolts, and the appearance of warlords who challenged the central government from Anatolia in the north to Baghdad in the east and Yemen and Egypt in the south. The Safavid Empire was so weakened by numerous calamities that in 1722 it became easy prey for invaders from the north.

While there were probably multiple causes for the crisis of the seventeenth century, many historians have emphasized the role played by the general rise in prices that struck almost all of the Eurasian continent. Some have called this the “great inflation”; others, the “price revolution.” Historians argue that inflation is the key to the crisis because the imperial governments that ruled in Europe and Asia at that time were, unlike the states that had preceded them, particularly dependent on a cash economy. There were two reasons for this. First, governments throughout Eurasia had attempted to displace the warlords and tame the aristocracies that

had provided services to the crown by building armies and bureaucracies loyal to the central government alone. Building these armies and bureaucracies was expensive, and soldiers and bureaucrats had to be paid. Inflation raised the costs of maintaining them in the manner to which they had grown accustomed. Imperial states were, it appears, always short of money.

In addition, as newly centralized empires reached the limits of their expansion, rulers had to find new ways to legitimate their rule. As we have seen, the sultans and shahs of the Ottoman and Safavid empires could no longer claim a right to rule based on their position as warrior-in-chief or even on their personal magnetism or charisma. Imperial governments now entered a phase of their history that the great German sociologist Max Weber called the “routinization of charisma.” This was a period in which rulers and bureaucrats had to focus on the mundane problems of running the day-to-day affairs of state. No longer riding at the head of armies, emperors, sultans, and shahs had to find new means to represent their authority to their subjects and outsiders alike. Many did so by building sumptuous palaces and capital cities or by staging elaborate ceremonials that displayed the splendor of their court. This was, after all, the era of Louis XIV of France (r. 1661–1715), the “Sun King,” from whose magnificent court in Versailles power radiated. In a similar vein, a British traveler recorded the effect that Shah Abbas’s capital city of Isfahan had on both Persians and foreigners:

The City has no need of Walls, where so many Marble Mountains stand as a Guard, or Bulwark of Defence....The Circumference of the Body of the City I guess may measure Seven Miles; but if the dispersed Gardens and Seats of the Great Men, with the Palace Royal be brought into that Computation, we must allow it as many Pharsangs....Its Founder (or at least, Adorner) *Shaw Abbas* the Great, advisedly chose it for his Imperial Throne, that thence he might more readily disperse his Mandates to any suffering Part assaulted by the bold Incursions of his Enemies; irradiating like the Sun in the Firmament all within the Sphere of this Government: So that while the utmost of his Dominions are seasonably supplied with the comfortable Warmth of his Protection, he safely resides within, invulnerable.

Shah Abbas once proclaimed, “To know Isfahan is to know half the world.” Such splendor cost money.

Historians do not really know what sparked the inflation that led to the crisis of the seventeenth century. There are three main theories. Some historians claim inflation was caused primarily by demographic expansion. During the sixteenth century, they argue, the Eurasian continent experienced rapid population growth. It is estimated that during the sixteenth century alone, the population of Syria, Egypt, and Anatolia, for example, increased by 40 percent. Again, we are not really sure why this might have been the case. Some claim that the centralized states were able to provide better security for agriculturists than their predecessors had, and with better security came more agricultural production and population increase. Others maintain that the population of Eurasia naturally expanded in the aftermath of the Black Death that had devastated Eurasia during the fourteenth



Painting of the Safavid shah Suleiman and his courtiers by the Persian artist Ali Quli Jabbar, ca. 1660s or 1670s. Notice the Dutch supplicant on the shah's right. (From: Layla S. Diba and Maryam Ekhtiar, eds., *Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch, 1785–1925* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum of Art in association with I.B. Tauris, 1988), p. 120.)

century, or that populations were better able to control the spread of infectious diseases. Whatever the reason, historians argue that the increase in population put tremendous pressure on available resources and sparked an inflation as demand for goods began to exceed supply. They point to the fact that the crisis only began to abate after population growth stagnated during the seventeenth century.

Other historians argue that the unusual dependence of states on cash was reason enough for the inflation. States spent an enormous amount of money to sustain their employees. In Persia, for example, an estimated 38 percent of the state’s expenditures went to the army. Another 41 percent went to the imperial harem, the royal family, and royal attendants. States competed with the private sector for resources, and this drove up prices. States frequently compounded their problems by debasing their currencies to meet their payrolls. This meant that they often mixed the gold or silver of their currencies with baser metals and attempted to pass these new currencies off as the real thing. Because debased currency was worth less, prices rose and government employees demanded higher salaries.

It seems obvious to us now that the debasement of currencies would inevitably lead to a vicious cycle: Debasement would induce price increases, which, in turn, would encourage shortsighted governments to undertake further debasement. But during the early modern period, notions of economics, where they existed at all, were even cruder than they are today. Sometimes, this guilelessness led to absurd

consequences: Spain, for example, went bankrupt twice during the sixteenth century, first in 1557, then again in 1575. In the second instance, when King Philip II of Spain found himself overwhelmed by creditors, he simply called together church leaders who told him what he wanted to hear: Since usury (the charging of interest) was a sin, he was under no obligation to pay back his creditors. The king, finding within himself a wellspring of piety of which he had previously been unaware, obeyed. Spain was not alone in its folly: In the first half of the sixteenth century, the Netherlands, Portugal, and France, like Spain, spent almost twice as much to extract wealth from the New World and to make war on each other so that they might extract wealth from the New World than they actually wrested from the Americas.

This brings us to the third possible reason for the inflation of the sixteenth century: the Spanish conquest of the New World. When they arrived in Mexico and Peru, Spanish conquistadors found tons of precious metals in the Inca and Aztec empires. Huge amounts of gold and particularly silver flooded first into Europe, then into Asia. Wherever the precious metals hit, prices went up. In the six decades between the conquest of Mexico and Peru and 1575, prices in Western Europe increased between 300 and 400 percent. Historians, using the sudden increases in bread prices as their measure, have even timed the journey of precious metals from west to east: first Cadiz, then Paris, then Muscovy, then Istanbul and Delhi, then Beijing. Thus, in 1660 a European trader compared Persia to a huge caravansary—a stopping place and trading center for caravans—with a gate in the west and a gate in the east. Coins, he explained, entered Safavid domains from the Ottoman Empire in the west, circulated in Persia, driving up prices, and finally exited through the eastern gate of Persia to India.

While some historians remain skeptical about the circulation of New World gold and silver to points as far away as the Middle and Far East, others point out that even if the precious metals did not actually reach that far, the looting of the New World had momentous effects on economies throughout Eurasia. They argue that new stocks of precious metals increased the velocity of trade, first among the states of Western Europe, then between the states of Western Europe and the rest of the continent. According to economists, an increased velocity of trade naturally increases inflation. Even if we do not wish to take economists at their word (a good idea, in light of their more recent failings), the arrival of new stocks of precious metals into Europe and the resulting inflation certainly did produce dramatic effects throughout Eurasia. It is well known, for example, that the imperial Ottoman government was unable to halt the smuggling of huge amounts of such commodities as wood, metals, wheat, raw silk, and wool out of the Ottoman Empire and into Europe, where they fetched higher prices. This smuggling denied the Ottoman government precious customs revenues and inhibited its ability to buy social peace: After all, without an adequate supply of basic commodities, the imperial government could not guarantee that its cities would be adequately provisioned. At the same time, the smuggling denied to Ottoman artisans the raw materials they needed to produce their wares and weakened the guilds that had been established in part to protect their members.

Whatever the role of the Spanish silver, most historians agree that sometime during the sixteenth century the world economy began to undergo a revolutionary change. Among the historians who pioneered the research into this change were those who advocated something called “world systems analysis.” In its most abstract form, world systems analysis runs something like this:

From the beginning of recorded time through the beginning of the sixteenth century, much of the world had been divided into what might be called “world empires.” Taken together, these world empires made up what world systems analysts call the “system of world empires.” The system of world empires had four characteristics. First, it was possible for several world empires to exist at the same time. For example, the early Ottoman Empire existed at the same time as did the Safavid, Habsburg (Austrian), and Chinese empires. Second, world empires spread through military conquest or the threat of military conquest. In other words, a world empire was no larger than the territory from which an imperial government might be able to extract taxes or tribute. In addition, each world empire provided for most of its economic needs independent of other world empires. Trade did take place, of course, and this trade was not just in luxury items. As a matter of fact, trade often involved bulk items such as cereals or wood. But in the system of world empires the economies of the trading partners were roughly equivalent and no economy was more “advanced” or dominated another. This is a far cry from the relationship among trading nations today, as we shall see. And this brings us to the final characteristic of the system of world empires: Each world empire was roughly equivalent to any nearby empire that existed at the same time. For example, no empire was technologically superior to any other, nor was any empire organized in a manner that gave it a particular advantage over any other. This stands to reason: If an empire fell behind economically or technologically, it would fall prey to its competitors.

Beginning about 1500, the system of world empires began to change into what is called the “modern world system” or “modern world economy.” This change did not occur overnight—it required several centuries to complete. The crisis of the seventeenth century, described at the beginning of this chapter, might be seen as the birth pangs of the modern world system. (As we shall see, the strategies employed by rulers to address that crisis would, in many cases, come to define the future position of their states in that system.) Judging by the effects of the Depression of 1873, which affected every inhabited continent on the globe, we might say with assurance that by at least that year the modern world economy was in place. It has been with us ever since.

Like the system of world empires, the modern world economy possesses a number of distinguishing characteristics. Unlike the system of world empires, which was, for the most part, politically and economically fragmented, the modern world economy is politically fragmented but economically united. In other words, rather than consisting of independent empires that provided for most of their own needs, the independent states that make up the modern world economy participate in a single, integrated global economic system—a single market, if

you will. Furthermore, while world empires spread their influence solely through conquest or the threat of conquest, the modern world system spread its influence by bringing outlying districts into a single economic structure. This has occurred through conquest as well, of course, but it also has occurred through the pull of the international market. Since the sixteenth century, agricultural producers throughout the world have discovered that they might profit more from producing goods for the international marketplace than from producing merely for their own consumption. Where agriculturalists themselves did not take the initiative, governments often encouraged the transition in order to accumulate more revenue. Finally, while the system of world empires consisted of roughly equivalent states, some states in the world economy are more technologically and economically “advanced” than others and benefit more than others from the global marketplace. In effect, there are winners and losers in the modern world economy.

At first, Western European states acted as the engine that drove the modern world economy. These states brought other parts of the globe into the world market they dominated, but in a subordinate role. Thus, while states in Western Europe produced manufactured goods that they exported internationally, other parts of the globe bought the products produced in Western European factories and, in turn, produced the raw materials that fed those factories. As a result, the world economy came to be divided into distinct units: a developed core (first, states in Western Europe, then states in Western Europe and North America, then states in Western Europe, North America, and Japan) and what is called the periphery; that is, states at a lower technological and economic level. Some analysts have created a middle category, the semiperiphery, which includes states that share attributes with both core and periphery. The boundaries of the modern world economy expanded for centuries until it encompassed the entire globe. This process, which had an important effect on the Middle East, is known as integration and peripheralization.

Because states in Western Europe functioned as the core of the modern world economy at its inception, the modern world economy spread to outlying regions of the globe during periods in which the European economy expanded. One such period took place in the early nineteenth century, during the relatively peaceful years that followed the Napoleonic Wars. Not coincidentally, this is the period we associate with the industrial revolution. It was during this period that much of the Ottoman Empire became integrated into the modern world economy. Points further east—Iraq and Persia—had to wait until the second half of the nineteenth century.

To understand how the Middle East was integrated into the world economy in the status of periphery, we must go back to the sixteenth century. At their inception, both the Ottoman and Safavid empires stabilized and induced an expansion of the Middle Eastern economy. The Ottomans and Safavids, like all successful empire builders, encouraged economic self-sufficiency. They did this in a host of ways: by extending rural security, repairing and building infrastructure, making

tax collection more efficient and less harsh, removing barriers to intraregional trade, establishing government monopolies, ensuring that their principal cities received provisions, regulating labor practices in those cities, and combating piracy on the seas. In addition, because of their central location, the Ottoman and Safavid empires controlled and profited from most of the spice trade between the East Indies and Europe. They also controlled much of the trade in luxury items such as silk. During the seventeenth century, two-thirds of Persian silk went to Europe. When the Portuguese attempted to horn in on the profitable Indian Ocean trade by establishing themselves in Aden (in contemporary Yemen) in 1513, the Ottomans swatted them away a quarter century later. While the world of uncontested and uncontrollable European military supremacy might have been looming on the horizon, it had not yet arrived.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was a definite shift in the balance of power between Europe and the Ottoman and Safavid empires. This came about in the wake of the commercial revolution in Europe, which had begun in the sixteenth century. As mentioned earlier, there were many aspects to this revolution, some of which spawned it, others that were spawned by it and further encouraged its progress. The commercial revolution was a period in which new technologies of direct benefit to trade were invented and applied. Alongside these technological breakthroughs were breakthroughs in finance and the organization of trade—joint stock companies, insurance, banking—which allowed participants to increase their profits and spread risk among investors. Technological and institutional breakthroughs enabled Europeans not only to embark on voyages of discovery but to exploit them to the fullest. In 1497, Vasco da Gama discovered the Cape Route, which allowed Europeans to reach India and the Spice Islands (present-day Indonesia) by heading south around Africa’s Cape of Good Hope, that is, entirely by sea. This enabled European merchants to bypass the Ottoman and Safavid empires and monopolize long-distance trade. As a result, the Ottoman and Safavid governments lost vital customs revenues, and merchants from those empires lost access to the spice trade to their European competitors.

About two decades after Vasco da Gama’s discovery, the Spanish conquered Mexico and Peru, flooding Eurasia with tons of precious metals. Over time, all of Eurasia came to be divided into different economic zones in which prices varied widely. Where the precious metals had hit, prices were high; where they had not, prices remained at their usual levels. The division of Eurasia into different economic zones opened up new possibilities for trade. It also affected the social organization of the various zones differently. For example, since the price of grain was initially higher in Western Europe than in Eastern Europe, Eastern European nobles could increase their wealth by expanding their production of grain and selling that grain in the west. Eastern European nobles thus did everything they could to extend their control over land and the peasantry, including binding that peasantry to the land. The result was what historians of Eastern Europe call the “second serfdom.”

Vignette**Coffee**

During the sixteenth century, the European table was enriched with a multiplicity of foods introduced from the New World, including corn (maize), potatoes, yams, peanuts, squash, chili peppers, tomatoes, pumpkins, chocolate, and manioc (tapioca). Between meals, Europeans could, for the first time, sit down with a pipe of tobacco (also introduced from the New World) or chew gum made from chicle—hence “Chiclets”—likewise a New World import. This was one side of what is called the “Columbian exchange.” (In return, the inhabitants of the Americas got cattle, pigs, horses, German measles, and smallpox.)

One commodity, however, made the trip from another direction: Coffee, introduced into Europe about a century after the previously cited items, originated in the Middle East.

The history of coffee is enshrouded in legend. There is, for example, the tale of its origins: The story goes that coffee was first discovered in the ninth century when an Ethiopian goat herder noticed his goats got a bit frisky after they ate the berries of a local shrub. After sampling the berries himself, he, too, experienced the same effect, as did those who undertook coffee cultivation in Arabia when it was brought there three centuries later. There is the story of the first coffeehouse in Vienna: The emperor asked the man who acted as a guide for the Polish cavalry that raised the 1683 siege what he wanted as a reward. Rather than the usual “the hand of your daughter in marriage,” he reportedly asked for the bulging sacks he saw in the abandoned Ottoman encampment, thinking they contained gold. In fact, they contained coffee beans. Thus, the first Viennese coffeehouse. (Strudel and Linzertorten would come later.) Then there is the story of the origin of tipping: In early British coffeehouses, coffee wenches placed cups for coins on each table. On the cups was inscribed “to insure prompt service”—abbreviated T.I.P.S.

Regardless of the truth of any or all of these stories, early travelers to the Middle East were amazed by coffee and the coffeehouses they found there. One Portuguese traveler, Pedro Teixeira, stopped off in Baghdad in the mid-1580s on his way to India and reported his first encounter with coffee as follows:

Amongst other public buildings...is a *Casa de Kaoáh* [Teixeira's *kaoáh* is borrowed from the Arabic word for coffee, *qahwah*.] Coffee is a vegetable of the size and appearance of little dry beans, brought from Arabia, prepared and sold

The commercial revolution was encouraged further by the rise of new political units in Europe. One such unit was a variation on an old theme: the merchant republic. Merchant republics had emerged in the Mediterranean region centuries before the commercial revolution. City-states like Venice and Genoa were highly efficient because merchants and bankers, not feudal landlords, controlled the institutions of state. Being at the helm of state, merchants and bankers ensured that the republic's foreign policy would coincide with its trade policy. By the seventeenth century, after the discovery of the Americas had shifted the center of gravity of world trade westward and the importance of the newly emergent

in public houses built to that end; wherein all men who desire it meet to drink it, be they great or mean. They sit in order, and it is brought to them very hot, in porcelain cups holding four or five ounces each. Every man takes his own in his hand, cooling and sipping it. It is black and rather tasteless; and, although some good qualities are ascribed to it, none are proven. Only their custom induces them to meet here for conversation and use this for entertainment; and in order to attract customers there are here pretty boys richly dressed, who serve the coffee and take the money; with music and other diversions. These places are chiefly frequented at night in summer, and by day in winter....There are others like it in the city, and many more throughout Turkey and Persia.

Teixeira was not the only European fascinated by coffee. When coffee was first introduced in Europe, it caused a sensation. Little wonder: Unlike the skeptical Teixeira, most Europeans believed coffee to have the power of an aphrodisiac. In 1732–1734, the composer Johann Sebastian Bach documented the sensation caused by coffee, as well as its purported aphrodisiac powers, in his “Coffee Cantata.” In the cantata, a father confronts his daughter as follows:

*You wicked child, you disobedient girl,
oh!, when will I get my way;
give up coffee!*

To which she replies:

*Father, don't be so severe!
If I can't drink
my bowl of coffee three times daily,
then in my torment I will shrivel up
like a piece of roast goat.*

After the father promises his daughter to find her a husband if only she would give up coffee, she sings:

*If it could only happen soon
that at last, before I go to bed,
instead of coffee
I were to get a proper lover!*

(In the end, the ungrateful little vixen gets both a husband and her coffee.)

Atlantic economy had surpassed the importance of the Mediterranean economy, Britain, France, and the Netherlands eclipsed their Mediterranean rivals. These states possessed two attributes that other European states would seek to emulate. First, like the Mediterranean merchant republics, they possessed a strong central government that could maintain domestic order, guarantee commercial credit, and direct a national trade policy. Britain, France, and the Netherlands adopted the doctrine of mercantilism as their trade policy. Mercantilists believed that the more gold a state accumulated, the stronger it would be, and that if states encouraged trade, exported more than they imported, and protected their home

Vignette**Slaves, Opium, and the Course of World Trade**

The modern world economy began to take shape in the early sixteenth century. Although Spain had access to New World gold and silver, Britain, France, and the Netherlands were soon able to surpass their rival in terms of economic power. And over the course of the next two centuries Britain would eclipse its rivals as well. Along with the institutional changes discussed in this chapter, the ability of the British to dominate international trafficking in a few choice commodities propelled their ascent to the heights of economic power. Among these commodities were slaves and opium.

In 1532, the first boatload of enslaved Africans landed in the New World. This event marks the inauguration of the so-called triangle trade. British merchants, carrying guns, ammunition, and manufactured goods to Africa, traded those goods for slaves, whom they then transported to the Caribbean and North America via the infamous "middle passage." There they sold those slaves, and with the proceeds bought sugar, tobacco, and cotton. The triangle trade generated huge profits for British banking houses (and British and North American merchants), enabling Britain to surpass its economic competitors. Britain continued to reap the surpluses from this trade until 1807—the year the British government (and the United States Constitution) declared the slave trade illegal. By that time, a new system for the circulation of commodities and capital was emerging.

Beginning in the early nineteenth century, the British East India Company began selling opium grown in India to China. The company did this to pay for its administrative apparatus in India and to offset its substantial trade imbalance with China. After all, the British had an unspeakable thirst for Chinese tea and a boundless appetite for silk and *chinoiserie*, while the "celestial empire" had little use for the products

industries, they would be able to accumulate more gold. Second, unlike their predecessors, Britain, France, and the Netherlands possessed an integrated internal market that united town and countryside. This ensured the state access to the resources necessary to maintain a high level of economic activity and protect its interests abroad.

In all, beginning in the seventeenth century Britain, France, and the Netherlands were able to dominate and transform the world economic system. Why these states rose to dominance and not others is not entirely clear. Nor is it clear why this process would have taken place at all. Perhaps it was because these states were better situated to take advantage of the possibilities opened up by the Atlantic economy. Perhaps it had to do with the peculiar nature of that northwestern peninsula of the Eurasian continent where these states were located. On the one hand, Europe was small enough to allow for the rapid diffusion of the technologies and institutional breakthroughs associated with the commercial revolution. On the other hand, it was competitive enough to force states that wished to survive to explore new means of applying those technologies and institutional breakthroughs. Suffice it to say, there were European winners and losers (whatever

of Britain. Not surprisingly, the Chinese government resisted the British attempt to balance accounts by turning China into one large opium den. Twice during the nineteenth century Britain went to war with China—the "opium wars" of 1839–1842 and 1856–1860—to open up the Chinese market to their noxious export and to keep it open. As a result of the wars, the Chinese were forced to accept opium from India and make a number of their ports available for "free trade."

Like the triangle trade system, the India-China trade system that emerged in the wake of the opium wars provided a foundation upon which the worldwide circulation of commodities and capital during the mid-to-late Victorian era would rest. According to economic historian A. J. H. Latham,

The sale of Bengal opium to China was a great link in the chain of commerce with which Britain had surrounded the world. The chain worked like this: The United Kingdom paid the United States for cotton by bills upon the Bank of England. The Americans took some of those bills to Canton and swapped them for tea. The Chinese exchanged the bills for Indian opium. Some of the bills were remitted to England as profit; others were taken to India to buy additional commodities, as well as to furnish the money remittance of private fortunes in India and the funds for carrying on the Indian government at home.

Besides supporting the global economic environment that the nineteenth century Middle East economy inhabited, the Victorian-era system for the circulation of commodities and capital affected the region in other ways as well. For example, both the Ottoman Empire and Persia piggybacked onto the international trade in opium. Soon after the opium wars, the Ottoman Empire became one of the three largest producers of opium in the world (the other two being China and India), and as a result of the availability of opium in Persia, the ranks of drug smokers swelled as never before.

happened to Spain, much less Venice and Genoa?), and the transformation of the world economy that the winners induced was hardly inevitable.

It was therefore not that the Ottoman and Safavid empires were necessarily doing something wrong that allowed for the emergence of the modern world system with its Western European core. Indeed, these empires did everything that one would have expected them to have done to deal with the crisis of the seventeenth century. Strapped for cash, they curtailed the timar/tiyul systems and increasingly depended on tax farming to make up shortfalls in revenues. As we have seen, this may have resulted in the long-term alienation of resources from the imperial governments. Both governments sold offices in the bureaucracy and even the military to the highest bidder. The Ottoman government allowed members of the elite janissary corps to take jobs and raise families in places where they were stationed, thereby decreasing their incentive to fight wars on the fringes of the empire. Both governments increased taxation, further alienating the peasants whose surplus provided revenue for the state. Both governments debased their currencies, and, when this did not resolve their economic woes, debased them again. In all, the Ottomans and the Safavids worked within the parameters of a system that had become out of date.

Ultimately, both the Ottoman Empire and Persia were integrated into the world system as periphery. Integration and peripheralization would have a profound effect on the future of the region. Agricultural lands that had once been used for subsistence farming were turned over to the cultivation of cash crops like cotton, opium, and tobacco. By 1880, 20 percent of Persia's exports consisted of opium; on the eve of World War I, cotton comprised 80 percent of Egyptian exports. To facilitate these exports, European and local governments financed and built railroads and expanded ports to handle steamships, in the process changing the face of the region. Throughout the Middle East, a market economy, in which people produced commodities for sale, came to replace local marketplace economies, in which people produced mainly for their own consumption and used whatever surplus was left over to buy those items they could not produce themselves. Land itself became a commodity like any other to be bought and sold, once independent peasants became wage laborers on other peoples' estates, and tribal leaders became landlords while fellow tribespeople worked their lands as tenant laborers. In sum, Europe cultivated a colonial-style trade with Middle Eastern empires, and this relationship affected not only economic relations in the region, but social relations as well.

CHAPTER 4



War, Diplomacy, and the New Global Balance of Power

The last of the three sixteenth-century events that defined the modern world was the Protestant Reformation. From 1517 (the year of Martin Luther's public denunciation of church doctrines and practices) through 1648 (the end of the Thirty Years' War), Europeans engaged in numerous conflicts pitting Catholics against Protestants. The Protestant Reformation ended the dream of a universal Christian empire in Europe. The Peace of Westphalia that ended the Thirty Years' War recognized fixed territorial boundaries among the states of Europe and established the principle that the religion of a state's ruler would be the religion of the state. Europe was now permanently divided into a number of highly competitive sovereign states which sought to defend themselves against each other, gain advantage over their adversaries, and, at times, establish a balance among themselves. In effect, both the modern state and the international political order assembled from those states—the modern state system—might be traced to the Protestant Reformation. We shall discuss the spread of the modern state system to the Middle East in a later chapter. First, however, it is necessary to see how the emergence of modern states in Europe affected the region in other ways.

The Middle East was one of the places where the competition among European states played itself out. In the eastern Mediterranean, this competition came to be known as the "Eastern Question." At first, the Eastern Question involved Britain and France. Over the course of the nineteenth century, it came to include Britain, France, and Russia, then, finally, Britain, France, Russia, and Germany. On the northern frontier of Persia, a related competition pit Great Britain against Russia. This competition was known as the "Great Game," a term popularized by the British writer Rudyard Kipling in his novel *Kim*. Both competitions are the subject of this chapter.

Let us begin by looking at how the Eastern Question evolved. From its founding in the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire played a role in the European balance of power. The sixteenth century was the glorious era of Ottoman expansion. The empire pushed forward its borders in southeastern Europe at the expense

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BOOK FIVE

The Making of the European Age

Around about 1500, there were many signs that a new age of world history was beginning. Some of them have already been mentioned; the discoveries in the Americas and the first shoots of European enterprise in Asia are among them. At the outset they provide hints about the dual nature of this new age – that it is increasingly an age of truly world history and that it is one whose story is dominated by the astonishing expansion of one civilization among many, that of Europe. These are two aspects of the same process; there is a more and more continuous and organic interconnection between events in all countries, but it is largely to be explained by the actions of Europeans. They eventually became masters of the globe and they used their mastery – sometimes without knowing it – to make the world one. As a result, world history has for the last two or three centuries a growing identity and unity of theme.

In a famous passage, the English historian Macaulay once spoke of red men scalping one another on the shores of the Great Lakes so that a European king could rob his neighbour of a province he coveted. This was one striking side of the story we must now embark upon – the gradual entanglement of struggles with one another the world over in greater and greater wars – but politics, empire-building and military expansion were only a tiny part of what was going on. The economic integration of the globe was another part of the process; more important still was the spreading of common assumptions and ideas, of technologies and medicine. The result was to be, in one of our cant phrases, 'One World' – of sorts. The age of independent or nearly independent civilizations has come to a close.

Given our world's immense variety, this may seem at first sight a wildly misleading exaggeration. National, cultural and ethnic differences have not ceased to produce and inspire appalling conflicts; the history of the centuries since 1500 can be (and often is) written mainly as a series of wars and violent struggles, and those who live in different countries obviously do not feel

much more like one another than did their predecessors' centuries ago. Yet they are much more alike than their ancestors of, say, the tenth century and show it in hundreds of ways ranging from the superficialities of dress to the forms in which they get their living and organize their societies.

The origins, extent and limits of this change make up most of the story which follows. It is the outcome of something still going on in many places, which we sometimes call modernization. For centuries it has been grinding away at differences between cultures and it is the deepest and most fundamental expression of the growing integration of world history. Another way of describing the process is to say that the world is becoming Europeanized, for modernization is above all a matter of ideas and techniques which are European in origin. Whether 'modernization' is the same as 'Europeanization' (or, as it is now often put, 'westernization'), though, can be left for discussion elsewhere; sometimes it is only a matter of verbal preferences. What is obvious is that, chronologically, it is with European modernity that the unification of world history begins. A great change in Europe was the starting point of modern history.

I

Qing China and Mughal India

In order to understand what made Europe different, it is essential to begin with changes in China and India. In the sixteenth century these were still, by far, the wealthiest parts of humankind, and there were few signs that they, by themselves, were entering into any kind of crisis. On the contrary, the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were a time of great unification in both countries, and saw the introduction of some kind of 'modernity' that was different from what had gone before. But these modernities were also very different from what was happening in western Europe, where history took off in a completely new direction. What hit India in the eighteenth century and China nearly a century later was an entirely new form of change, a self-perpetuating, boundless and unremitting form of expansion that had never existed before in human history.

While this was developing in Europe, India had been focused on another form of change. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the country was still divided among a number of autonomous or semi-autonomous territories. And yet again it was to be a prince from outside, Babur of Kabul, who would begin a process of unification. Babur was born in 1483 in the Ferghana valley in what is today Uzbekistan. On his father's side he descended from Timur Lenk and on his mother's from Chinghis, formidable advantages and a source of inspiration to a young man schooled in adversity. He quickly discovered he had to fight for his inheritance and there can have been few monarchs who, like Babur, conquered a city of the importance of Samarkand at the age of fourteen (albeit to lose it again almost at once).

Even when legend and anecdote are separated, he remains, in spite of cruelty and duplicity, one of the most attractive figures among great rulers: munificent, hardy, courageous, intelligent and sensitive. He left a remarkable autobiography, written from notes made throughout his life, which was to be treasured by his descendants as a source of inspiration and guidance. It reveals a ruler who did not think of himself as Mongol in culture but Turkish, in the tradition of those peoples long settled in the former eastern provinces of the Abbasid caliphate. His taste and culture were formed

by the inheritance of the Timurid princes of Persia; his love of gardening and poetry came from that country and fitted easily into the setting of an Islamic India whose courts were already much influenced by Persian models. Babur was a bibliophile, another Timurid trait; it is reported that when he took Lahore he went at once to his defeated adversary's library to choose texts from it to send as gifts to his sons. He himself wrote, among other things, a forty-page account of his conquests in Hindustan, noting its customs and caste structure and, even more minutely, its wildlife and flowers.

This young prince was called in to India by Afghan chiefs, but he had his own claims to make to the inheritance of the Timurid line in Hindustan. This was to prove the beginning of Mughal India; Mughal was the Persian word for Mongol, though it was not a word Babur applied to himself. Originally, those disputatious parties whose discontent and intrigue called him forward had only aroused in him the ambition of conquering the Punjab, but he was soon drawn further. In 1526 he took Delhi after the sultan had fallen in battle. Soon Babur was subduing those who had invited him to come to India, while at the same time conquering the infidel Hindu princes who had seized an opportunity to renew their own independence. The result was an empire which in 1530, the year of his death, stretched from Kabul to the borders of Bihar. Babur's body, significantly, was taken as he had directed to Kabul, where it was buried in his favourite garden with no roof over his tomb, in the place he had always thought of as home.

The reign of Babur's son, troubled by his own instability and inadequacy and by the presence of half-brothers anxious to exploit the Timurid tradition which, like the Frankish, prescribed the division of a royal inheritance, showed that the security and consolidation of Babur's realm could not be taken for granted. For five years of his reign, the new ruler was driven from Delhi, though he returned there to die in 1555. His heir, Akbar, born during his father's distressed wanderings (but enjoying the advantages of a very auspicious horoscope and the absence of rival brothers), thus came to the throne as a boy. He inherited at first only a small part of his grandfather's domains, but was to build from them an empire recalling that of Ashoka, winning the awed respect of Europeans who called him 'the Great Mughal'.

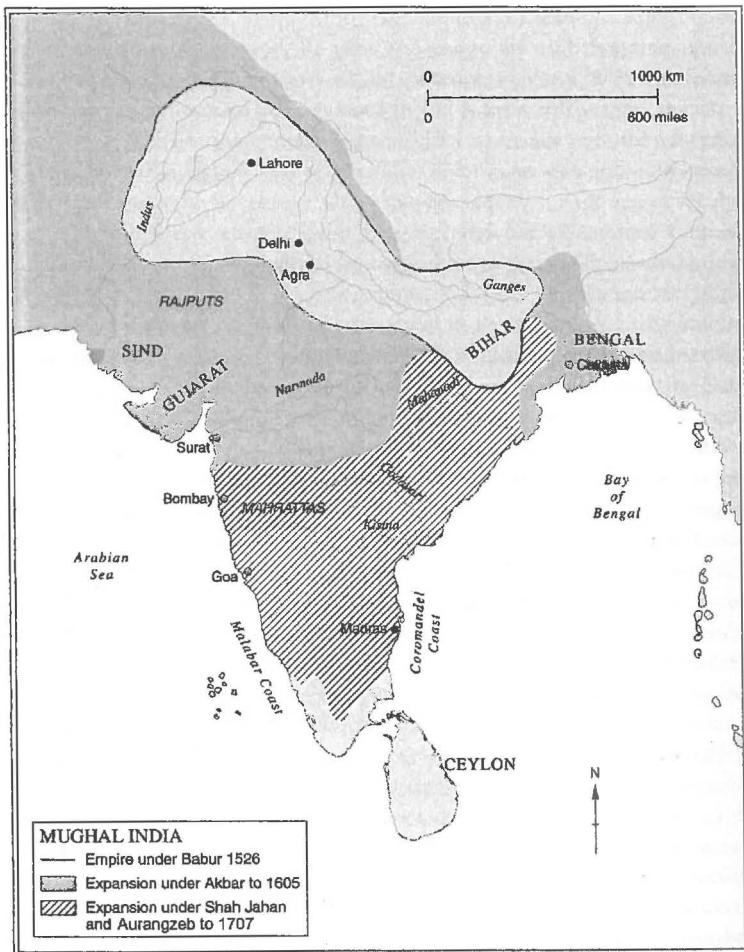
Akbar had many kingly qualities. He was brave to the point of folly – his most obvious weakness was that he was headstrong – enjoying as a boy riding his own fighting elephants and preferring hunting and hawking to lessons (one consequence was that, uniquely in Babur's line, he was almost illiterate). He once killed a tiger with his sword in single combat and was proud of his marksmanship with a gun (Babur had introduced firearms to the Mughal army). Yet he was also, like his predecessors, an admirer of learning and all things beautiful. He collected books and in his reign Mughal

architecture and painting came to their peak, a department of court painters being maintained at his expense. Above all, he was statesmanlike in his handling of the problems posed by religious difference among his subjects.

Akbar reigned for almost half a century, until 1605, thus just overlapping at each end the reign of his contemporary, Elizabeth I of England. Among his first acts on reaching maturity was to marry a Rajput princess who was, of course, a Hindu. Marriage always played an important part in Akbar's diplomacy and strategy, and this lady (the mother of the next emperor) was the daughter of the greatest of the Rajput kings and therefore an important catch.

None the less, something more than policy may be seen in the marriage. Akbar had already permitted the Hindu ladies of his harem to practise the rites of their own religion within it, an unprecedented act for a Muslim ruler. Before long, he abolished the poll tax on non-Muslims; he was going to be the emperor of all religions, not a Muslim fanatic. Akbar even went on to listen to Christian teachers; he invited the Portuguese who had appeared on the west coast to send missionaries learned in their faith to his court, and three Jesuits duly arrived there in 1580. They disputed vigorously with Muslim divines before the emperor and received many marks of his favour, though they were disappointed in their long-indulged hope of his conversion. He seems, in fact, to have been a man of genuine religious feeling and eclectic mind; he went so far as to try to institute a new religion of his own, a sort of mishmash of Zoroastrianism, Islam and Hinduism. It had little success except among prudent courtiers and offended some.

However this is interpreted, it is evident that the appeasement of non-Muslims would ease the problems of government in India. Babur's advice in his memoirs to conciliate defeated enemies pointed in this direction too, for Akbar launched himself on a career of conquest and added many new Hindu territories to his empire. He rebuilt the unity of northern India from Gujarat to Bengal and began the conquest of the Deccan. The empire was governed by a system of administration much of which lasted well into the era of the British Raj, though Akbar was less an innovator in government than the confirmor and establisher of institutions he inherited. Officials ruled in the emperor's name and at his pleasure; they had the primary function of providing soldiers as needed and raising the land tax, now reassessed on an empire-wide and more flexible system devised by a Hindu finance minister. This seems to have had an almost unmatched success in that it actually led to increases in production, which raised the standard of living in Hindustan. Among other reforms, which were notable in intention if not in effect, was the discouragement of *suttee*, the self-immolation of widows on their deceased husbands' funeral pyres.



Above all, Akbar stabilized the regime. He was disappointed in his sons and quarrelled with them, yet the dynasty was solidly based when he died. There were revolts nevertheless. Some of them seem to have been encouraged by Muslim anger at Akbar's apparent falling-away from the faith. Even in the 'Turkish' era the sharpness of the religious distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim had somewhat softened as invaders settled down in their new country and took up Indian ways. One earlier sign of assimilation was the appearance of a new language, Urdu, the tongue of the

camp. It was the lingua franca of rulers and ruled, with a Hindi structure and a Persian and Turkish vocabulary.

Soon there were signs that the omnivorous power of Hinduism would perhaps even incorporate Islam; a new devotionalism in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had spread through popular hymns an abstract, almost monotheistic, cult of a God whose name might be Rama or Allah, but who offered love, justice and mercy to all men. Correspondingly, some Muslims even before Akbar's reign had shown interest in and respect for Hindu ideas. There was some absorption of Hindu ritual practice. Soon it was noticeable that converts to Islam tended to revere the tombs of holy men: these became places of resort and pilgrimage which satisfied the scheme of a subordinate focus of devotion in a monotheistic religion and thus carried out the functions of the minor and local deities who had always found a place in Hinduism.

Another important development before the end of Akbar's reign was the consolidation of India's first direct relations with Atlantic Europe. Links with Mediterranean Europe may already have been made slightly easier by the coming of Islam; from the Levant to Delhi a common religion provided continuous, if distant, contact. European travellers had turned up from time to time in India and its rulers had been able to attract the occasional technical expert to their service, though they were few after the Ottoman conquests. But what was now about to happen was to go much further and would change India for ever. The Europeans who arrived would be followed by others in increasing numbers, and they would not go away.

The process had begun when a Portuguese admiral reached Malabar at the end of the fifteenth century. Within a few years his countrymen had installed themselves as traders – and behaved sometimes as pirates at Bombay (Mumbai) and on the coast of Gujarat. Attempts to dislodge them failed in the troubled years following Babur's death and in the second half of the century the Portuguese moved around to found new trading posts in the Bay of Bengal. They made the running for Europeans in India for a long time. They were liable, none the less, to attract the hostility of good Muslims because they brought with them pictures and images of Christ, the Virgin Mary and the saints, which smacked of idolatry. Protestants were to prove less irritating to religious feeling when they arrived.

The British age in India was still a long way off, but with rare historical neatness the first British East India Company was founded on 31 December 1600, the last day of the sixteenth century. Three years later, the Company's first emissary arrived at Akbar's court at Agra and by then Elizabeth I, who had given the merchants their charter of incorporation, was dead. Thus at the end of the reigns of two great rulers came the first contact between two countries whose historical destinies were to be entwined for so long and

with such enormous effect for them both and for the world. At that moment no hint of such a future could have been sensed. The English then regarded trade in India as less interesting than that with other parts of Asia.

The contrast between the two realms, too, is fascinating. Akbar's empire was one of the most powerful in the world, his court one of the most sumptuous, and he and his successors ruled over a civilization more glorious and spectacular than anything India had known since the Guptas; Queen Elizabeth's kingdom, meanwhile, was barely a great power, even in European terms, was crippled by debt, and contained fewer people than modern Kolkata (Calcutta). Akbar's successor was contemptuous of the presents sent to him by James I a few years later. Yet the future of India lay with the subjects of the queen.

The Mughal emperors continued in Babur's line in direct descent, though not without interruption, until the middle of the nineteenth century. After Akbar, so great was the dynasty's prestige that it became fashionable in India to claim Mongol descent. Only the first three rulers who followed Akbar matter here, for it was under Jahangir and Shah Jahan that the empire grew to its greatest extent in the first half of the seventeenth century, and under Aurangzeb that it began to decay in the second. The reign of Jahangir was not so glorious as his father's, but the empire survived his cruelty and alcoholism – a considerable test of its administrative structure. The religious toleration established by Akbar also survived intact. For all his faults, though, Jahangir was a notable promoter of the arts, above all of painting. During his reign there becomes visible for the first time the impact of European culture in Asia, through artistic motifs drawn from imported pictures and prints. One of these motifs was the halo or nimbus given to Christian saints and, in Byzantium, to emperors. After Jahangir all Mughal emperors were painted with it.

Shah Jahan began the piecemeal acquisition of the Deccan sultanates, though he had little success in campaigns in the north-west and failed to drive the Persians from Kandahar. In domestic administration there was a weakening of the principle of religious toleration, though not sufficiently to place Hindus at a disadvantage in government service; administration remained multi-religious. Although the emperor decreed that all newly built Hindu temples should be pulled down, he patronized Hindu poets and musicians.

At Agra, Shah Jahan maintained a lavish and exquisite court life. It was there, too, that he built the most celebrated and best-known of all Indian buildings, the Taj Mahal, a tomb for his favourite wife; it is the only possible rival to the mosque of Córdoba for the title of the most beautiful building in the world. She had died soon after Shah Jahan's accession and for over twenty years his builders were at work. It is the culmination of the

work with arch and dome which is one of the most conspicuous Islamic legacies to Indian art and the greatest monument of Islam in India.

Below the level of the court, the picture of Mughal India is far less attractive. Local officials had to raise more and more money to support not only the household expenses and campaigns of Shah Jahan but also the social and military élites who were essentially parasitic on the producing economy. Without regard for local need or natural disaster, a rapacious tax-gathering machine may at times have been taking from the peasant producer as much as half his income. Virtually none of this was productively invested. The flight of peasants from the land and the rise of rural banditry are telling symptoms of the suffering and resistance these exactions provoked.

Yet even Shah Jahan's demands probably did the empire less damage than the religious enthusiasm of his third son, Aurangzeb, who set aside three brothers and imprisoned his father to become emperor in 1658. He combined, disastrously, absolute power, distrust of his subordinates and a narrow religiosity. To have succeeded in reducing the expenses of his court is not much of an offsetting item in the account. New conquests were balanced by revolts against Mughal rule which were said to owe much to Aurangzeb's attempt to prohibit the Hindu religion and destroy its temples and to his restoration of the poll tax on non-Muslims. The Hindu's advancement in the service of the state was less and less likely; conversion became necessary for success. A century of religious toleration was cancelled and one result was the alienation of many subjects' loyalties.

Among other results, this helped to make it impossible finally to conquer the Deccan, which has been termed the ulcer which ruined the Mughal empire. As under Ashoka, north and south India could not be united. The Marathas, the hillmen who were the core of Hindu opposition, constituted themselves under an independent ruler in 1674. They allied with the remains of the Muslim armies of the Deccan sultans to resist the Mughal armies in a long struggle which threw up a heroic figure who has become something of a paladin in the eyes of modern Hindu nationalists. This was Shivaji, who built from fragments a Maratha political identity which soon enabled him to exploit the tax-payer as ruthlessly as the Mughals had done. Aurangzeb was continuously campaigning against the Marathas down to his death in 1707. There followed a grave crisis for the regime, for his three sons disputed the succession. The empire almost at once began to break up and a much more formidable legacy than the Hindu or local prince was waiting in the wings – the Europeans.

Perhaps the negative responsibility for the eventual success of the Europeans in India is Akbar's, for he did not scotch the serpent in the egg. Shah

Jahan, on the other hand, destroyed the Portuguese station on the River Hooghly, though Christians were later tolerated at Agra. Strikingly, Mughal policy never seems to have envisaged the building of a navy, a weapon used formidably against the Mediterranean Europeans by the Ottomans. One consequence was already felt under Aurangzeb when coastal shipping, and even the pilgrim trade to Mecca, were in danger from the Europeans. On land, the Europeans had been allowed to establish their toeholds and bridgeheads. After beating a Portuguese squadron, the English won their first west-coast trading concession early in the seventeenth century. Then, in 1639, on the Bay of Bengal and with the permission of the local ruler, they founded at Madras (Chennai) the first settlement of British India, Fort St George. The English later fell foul of Aurangzeb, but got further stations at Bombay and Calcutta before the end of the century. Their ships had maintained the paramountcy in trade won from the Portuguese, but a new European rival was also in sight by 1700. A French East India Company had been founded in 1664 and soon established its own settlements.

A century of conflict lay ahead, but not only between the newcomers. Europeans already had to make nuanced political choices because of the uncertainties aroused when Mughal power was no longer as strong as it once had been. Relations had to be opened with his opponents as well as with the emperor, as the English in Bombay discovered, looking on helplessly while a Maratha squadron occupied one island in Bombay harbour and a Mughal admiral the one next to it. In 1677 an official sent back a significant warning to his employers in London: 'the times now require you to manage your general commerce with your sword in your hands.' By 1700 the English were well aware that much was at stake.

With that date we are into the era in which India is increasingly caught up in events not of her own making, the era of world history, in fact. Little things show it as well as great; in the sixteenth century the Portuguese had brought with them chilli, potatoes and tobacco from America. Indian diet and agriculture were already changing. Soon maize, pawpaws and pineapple were to follow. The story of Indian civilizations and rulers can be broken once this new connection with the larger world is achieved. Yet it was not the coming of the European which ended the great period of Mughal empire; that was merely coincidental, though it was important that newcomers were there to reap the advantages. The diversity of the subcontinent and the failure of its rulers to find ways to tap indigenous popular loyalty are probably the main explanation. India remained a continent of exploitative ruling élites and productive peasants upon whom they batened. The states had become, to a large degree, machinery for transferring resources from producers to parasites.

In spite of its political problems, India was, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, a very rich place. The agricultural economy was probably more productive than anywhere else, much helped by an overall benign climate. Manufactures were improving, both in quality and quantity, and found significant markets outside India's own borders. In a place like Ahmadabad, in the north-western region of Gujarat, making textiles out of cotton was becoming a predominant source of employment, and in other cities the market economy was expanding too. Even though India was facing the greatest transformation in its modern history, some of the key building-blocks of its modernity were already in place. It was a very different region from what had been the case 200 years earlier, when the Mughal invasion began.

In China, change was also afoot. In the early seventeenth century the entire country was conquered by a new dynasty that called itself Qing, meaning 'bright' or 'clear'. The Qing state was a political project, created by an alliance of groups with various ethnic backgrounds in north-east China. The leading families were Manchu, descendants of the Jurchen tribes that had played such an important role during the twelfth century. But there were also Mongols, Koreans and Chinese. They regarded the Ming state as degenerate and believed that they had been chosen to receive the mandate of Heaven and revive China. Their ideology was Confucian in the sense that they extolled ancient virtues and role-models. But compared to the direction Confucian thinking in China had taken since the twelfth century, Qing ideology was a vulgarized form of the views ascribed to Master Kong, centred on simple dichotomies and prescriptions for behaviour. In reality the Qing created an ideology of domination and conquest, with themselves in the central role as redeemers of China.

The Qing project was an unlikely one, and would (a bit like the Communists in the twentieth century) have had little chance of success if it had not been for the many weaknesses of the Ming dynasty towards the end of its reign. By 1600 the Ming were seen as inefficient, obdurate and venal, and while there is strong evidence of increasing problems for the common people, especially in agriculture – possibly caused by changes in climate that had made northern China colder and drier than before – there is little evidence of the Ming doing much to help. On the contrary, the court became increasingly inward-looking, dominated by courtiers and eunuchs who did not manage to see the larger picture of what was happening outside the confines of the Forbidden City in Beijing, where they lived. Outside Beijing, the civil service continued to function reasonably well. But there was a weakness at the centre, which enemies of the regime could exploit.

The end came swiftly. After increasing inner dissension within the Ming

state, a general in the north rebelled, and moved on Beijing. The city fell in April 1644, and the last Ming emperor hanged himself on Coal Hill, behind the Forbidden City, as rebel troops were entering the front gate. Having declared their alternative Qing dynasty in 1636, the Manchus were waiting in the north. As chaos spread in China, Qing forces under the command of Prince Dorgon and the Ming defector Wu Sangui entered the capital virtually unopposed in June 1644, claiming to be there to punish traitors and resurrect virtue. Instead they proclaimed the young Qing Shunzi emperor the ruler of all of China, and began an intensely brutal campaign to overcome Ming remnants elsewhere in the country. Soon their control was complete; the last Ming pretender was hauled back from Burma in 1662 and publicly executed as an enemy of the state.

The Qing pretended to resurrect tradition, but in reality their state was a modern invention, different from anything China had seen before. Multi-ethnic from the very beginning, the Qing leaders demanded absolute political loyalty to the centre and its institutions. China became centralized in a way it had never been before. Generals and administrators only served at the sufferance of the emperor, who had informants and spies in all corners of the empire. The emperors officiated at great public ceremonies in the capital, often with elements of many religions mixed in – the Qing emperor was head of all religions, but belonged to none. The concept of empire – rational, judicious and effective – was seen as universal; the Qing state did not belong exclusively to any group in China, and it aspired to rule any country in the world that had the good sense to submit to its glory.

When glory was not enough, power helped. The Qing state was highly militarized; one historian has referred to what she calls ‘a culture of war’ in early Qing China, and that is a good description. Its army was professional and organized into eight basic élite units, called ‘banners’ by the Qing, supplemented by general infantry troops. The officer corps was multi-ethnic, like the state itself, but with a significant preponderance of Manchus and Mongols. The troops were organized into smaller units, usually according to their ethnic background – the Qing held rigid views of the capabilities of the various nationalities over which they ruled. The bannermen were well equipped with the best kinds of weapons the age could offer – including, increasingly, European-developed cannons and rifles – but the chief weapon of the Qing was the swiftness and the deadly precision of its cavalry; the new regime applied centuries of Central Eurasian knowledge about mounted warfare to create cavalry units that truly terrified its enemies.

The Qing armies were intended for both conquest and intimidation. Most of Mongolia and Tibet were brought under direct control early in the dynasty’s history. The south-east (what is today Guangxi and Yunnan) was

taken over as part of the hunt for Ming princes, and in part resettled by Qing bannermen. Taiwan was conquered in 1683. Korea and Vietnam accepted the suzerainty of the Qing, but without becoming part of the Qing state, and other coastal countries – from Burma to the Ryukyu islands – paid tribute (though often in ways that really masked sophisticated trade arrangements). Along its land-borders with Central Eurasia, the Qing pursued relentlessly expansionist aims. Its troops took control of all of the Asian Pacific coast up to north of Sakhalin island. In the west, it moved into what is today Xinjiang and beyond, against stiff resistance by the groups that lived there.

Qing expansionism in Central Eurasia brought it into contact with another expanding empire, Russia. The Qing emperors realized that they needed to neutralize this threat before they could make their final moves to bring the western parts of the region under their control. From the late seventeenth century onwards, China and Russia signed a number of agreements that were intended to divide the Central Eurasian region between them, and – finally – bring an end to the autonomy of the steppe peoples who had so greatly affected human history over the past 2,000 years. Free to move on their enemies, the Qing then started wars of attrition against the Mongolic and Turkic groups in the whole area between the Tarim Basin and the western shores of Lake Balkhash. These wars culminated in the 1750s, when the empire carried out a genocidal campaign against the defeated Zunghars, for ever destroying the western Mongols as a power in Central Eurasia. It ensured that in the future the region – ethnically speaking – would be dominated by Turkic Muslims, though the Qing attempted to settle their new territories with Chinese.

Part of the reason for the Qing’s success was the leadership provided by the Kangxi emperor (who ruled from 1661 to 1722) and his grandson Qianlong (1735–96). Kangxi was in many ways the founder of the modern Chinese ideal of an emperor. Although his upbringing had stressed martial values, he worked hard at acquiring Chinese culture and had a deep interest in learning about foreign countries, including faraway Europe. He invited learned men from all over Asia to his court, where they were joined by Muslim scholars from the Middle East and European Jesuits. The emperor made a habit of regular inspection tours of the provinces, where he ordered improvements in communications, administration or military affairs on the spot. He had a prodigious memory and worked hard, even though some of his initiatives were held back by his tendency towards what we would call micro-management – headstrong and impatient, Kangxi would tolerate no interference in his plans for China, and heads would fall if he sensed opposition.

First and foremost Kangxi was a military leader. He suppressed revolts in the outer provinces ruthlessly and began the expansion into Central Eurasia that his grandson would complete. Believing that the first duty of society was to support the army, Kangxi worked on military training issues, recruitment and logistics throughout his life, forming a military system that would remain intact until it was crushed by the European attacks in the late nineteenth century. More than any of his contemporaries in Europe or Asia, he also believed in education as a key to military preparedness, and was willing to spend huge sums on scholarly projects, including literary compilations and lexicographic studies. His great encyclopaedia, completed just before his death, ran to more than 5,000 volumes.

Kangxi's grandson Qianlong belonged to a different age. The empire was more secure, the Manchus more Sinicized and the tasks at hand more obvious. Qianlong did not have his grandfather's keen intelligence, but he was a hard-working man who did his best to understand the motives and desires that determined men's actions in his vast empire. He learnt Tibetan and Mongol, in addition to Manchu and Chinese; he worshipped at all shrines and believed firmly that each of the population groups for whom he was the emperor should be ruled according to their special characteristics (though he admitted that it was sometimes hard to tell them all apart; he confessed to his diary that he could get the Mongols mixed up with the Tibetans, and vice versa).

Qianlong had not forgotten the martial predilections of his ancestors; during the first half of his reign he successfully quelled rebellions in the south and expanded the empire further into Central Eurasia. He also intervened in Tibet, bringing that country more firmly under Qing control, with the Dalai Lama as intermediary with the Tibetans. But his later military interventions were not equally successful, mainly because they did not have clear political aims. Military operations in Burma in the 1760s aimed at crushing Burma's independent political power and using the country as a launch pad for extending Chinese control into the western parts of South-East Asia. But the mission came up against stiff Burmese resistance, assisted by the neighbouring countries. At the end of the decade the Qing had to withdraw, with only a promise of formal Burmese submission to show for their efforts. The Burmese king remained in place.

Things went even worse in Vietnam, where the Qianlong emperor intervened in the 1780s in order to put a favoured pretender on the throne. But while the massive Chinese army was able to occupy the northern parts of the country, it soon got bogged down in local warfare against battle-hardened Vietnamese rebel troops. Qianlong refused to let his soldiers withdraw, and when they finally were evacuated back to China after a

devastating Vietnamese offensive in 1789, they had to bring their Vietnamese pretender with them. The Vietnamese celebrated the withdrawal as a victory, but – like the Burmese – were quick to ask the Qing for permission to re-enter into a tribute relationship with them as soon as the Chinese forces had withdrawn. In Vietnamese lore, though, the 1789 attacks – which were conducted around the lunar New Year festival (*Tet*, in Vietnamese) – would become a symbol of their nationhood, and a symbol of a similarly named offensive against American troops 179 years later.

With his foreign policy in disarray, the Qianlong emperor turned increasingly inward towards the end of his life, focusing on matters at court. He was an avid collector, including of European clocks, and a passionate poet and essayist – in his collected writings there are over 40,000 poems and 1,300 other texts. But the old emperor also made a series of unfortunate promotions of court favourites, including that of the young Manchu Hesen, who as *de facto* finance minister plundered the treasury for what it was worth. The corruption of the Qing court at the end of Qianlong's reign ran very deep, and was similar – many Chinese thought – to the conditions that had presaged the fall of many other dynasties.

Chinese society in the late seventeenth century and into the eighteenth was marked by gradually increasing wealth and overall improvements in living standards, which – by 1800 – compared favourably with those anywhere else in the world. The best measure of this general prosperity was the increase in population; the number of inhabitants in the empire more than doubled during the early Qing era, with the total population by 1800 standing at around 380 million (against, for instance, 10 million in Britain). The population increase is accounted for by a long period of peace, but also by significant improvements in rice production and the arrival of crops from the New World, including maize and potatoes.

Society changed in other ways as well. There was a marked expansion of markets and an increased role for private merchants; it is estimated that around one-third of China's agricultural output went into some form of market exchange immediately after 1800. With the expansion of handicrafts went significant urbanization: Beijing was the world's largest city in the eighteenth century, but other cities grew too, including the new ports in the south through which a significant trade with foreign countries was carried out. Tea, silk and manufactures flowed out of China and silver (mainly from the Americas) flowed in as payment, showing the economic strength of Qianlong's empire, but also creating inflation and thereby putting pressure on subsistence farmers. The Qing continued to believe that they governed the country's economy through taxes, price controls and state procurement, but in reality private interests became more and more pronounced.

In contrast with what is often claimed, China (and India) changed a lot in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But Europe changed a lot more. Before we turn to Europe's story, it is worth looking at what some historians call 'the great divergence' of the period from 1600 to 1800, when European advantages in some areas became more and more pronounced. At first the European advantage was clearest in military technology, shipbuilding and navigation, all essential to the exploration of the world. But by the late seventeenth century it was clear that a revolution in world view, which emphasized science, technology and the accumulation of capital, was underway in parts of Europe. This intellectual revolution would eventually lead to an industrial revolution, though the latter would not be fully noticeable in terms of its effects on the world until the nineteenth century.

While China, India and other parts of Asia also went through more intense domestic change after 1600 than at most other times in their history, change here was more contained and less multi-directional than the unique events in Europe. In many fields, growth was stable and living standards were able to keep up with increases in populations already massive in size. But both India and China were seeing diminishing returns on the incremental improvements in technology that they undertook, and the societal equilibrium they seemed to have reached could easily fragment from below as a result of natural disasters, inner dissension or outside pressure. Asia, in other words, continued in directions set through direct and distinctive navigation points in its past, even though its history, in some places at least, could be seen as speeding up. It was Europe, with its reinterpretation of its own heritage and of the world around it, which was becoming intensely and truly different.

At the end of his long reign, Qianlong was still convinced that his empire was the most powerful on earth, even though he knew that it needed reform both in foreign affairs and in domestic administration. Like the rulers that were to succeed him in the early nineteenth century, Qianlong wanted gradual reform, which neither endangered his own dynasty's power nor upset China's social equilibrium. The European missions that started arriving in Beijing in the final decade of his rule pleased him not. 'If you assert that your reverence for our celestial dynasty fills you with a desire to acquire our civilization,' he wrote to Britain's King George III, 'our ceremonies and code of laws differ so completely from your own that . . . you could not possibly transplant our manners and customs to your alien soil.' The emperor of China could not imagine one world joined together. But his European visitors could.

2

A New Kind of Society: Early Modern Europe

'Modern history' is a familiar term, but it does not always mean the same thing. There was a time when modern history was what had happened since the 'ancient' history whose subject-matter was the story of the Jews, Greeks and Romans; this is a sense which, for example, is still used to define a Modern History course of study at Oxford which includes the Middle Ages. Then it came to be distinguished from 'medieval' history, too. Now a further refinement is often made, for historians have begun to make distinctions within it and sometimes speak of an 'early modern' period. By this they are really drawing our attention to a process, for they apply it to the era in which a new Atlantic world emerged from the tradition-dominated, agrarian, superstitious and confined western Christendom of the Middle Ages, and this took place at different times in different countries. In England it happened very rapidly; in Spain it was far from complete by 1800, while much of eastern Europe was still hardly affected by it even a century later. But the reality of the process is obvious, for all the irregularity with which it expressed itself. So is its importance, for it laid the groundwork for a European world hegemony.

A useful starting-point for thinking about what was involved is to begin with the simple and obvious truth that for most of human history most people's lives have been deeply and cruelly shaped by the fact that they have had little or no choice about the way in which they could provide themselves and their families with shelter and enough to eat. The possibility that things might be otherwise has only recently become a conceivable one to even a minority of the world's population, and it became a reality for any substantial number of people only with changes in the economy of early modern Europe, for the most part, west of the Elbe.

Medieval Europe, like most of the world at that time, still consisted of societies in which, for the most part, surpluses of production over and above the needs of consumption were obtained from those who produced them – peasants – by social or legal institutions rather than by the operation of the market. When we can recognize the existence of a 'modern'

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with their forefathers of the feudal age, when the techniques of knightly warfare had given western Europeans a short-lived military superiority on land, naval supremacy in the early modern age imparted such a sense of security to European seafarers that they found it possible to examine all they met with a naïve yet confident curiosity, eager both to know and to discover, and ready to borrow anything that pleased them in the tool kit of others. An upsurge of European inventiveness and ingenuity, feeding upon their enlarged knowledge of the world and its variety, both natural and human, was the inevitable and admirable result.

No other civilization responded to the new possibilities opened by ocean travel with anything remotely resembling European venturesomeness. Toying with foreign novelties did occur, most notably in the Far East, but nothing identical to ancient and well-established traditions ruffled the mind of Chinese mandarins for very long. Moslem and Hindu reaction was even more emphatically negative. Anything conflicting with ancient truths was simply repudiated and neglected—or not noticed at all.

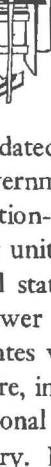
How different was Europe's response, where the convulsions of the age of Renaissance and Reformation shook European society to its core and shattered the medieval frame of European civilization entirely! The stimulus of the discoveries, and their subsequent exploitation, was not the sole cause of this transformation of Europe. Deep-seated and long-standing tensions within European civilization contributed at least as much as anything from the outside. To an examination of these internal forces and their interplay we must therefore devote the next chapter.

CHAPTER 19

Europe's Self-Transformation

1500-1648



Despite tremendous complication in detail, it is not difficult to discern the main thrust of European development in the field of politics between 1500 and 1648. As compared with the tangle of overlapping jurisdictions that had prevailed in medieval times, power tended to concentrate at relatively few centers. The European landscape came to be partitioned into a series of well-consolidated states, each controlled by a central and usually monarchical government. In the most successful cases, the scale of consolidation was nation-wide: France, Spain, England, Sweden. In central Europe, smaller units seized sovereignty: city states, princely states, and ecclesiastical states. But even here, each separate state gathered authority and power toward a single center in the same way that the larger nation states were doing. In eastern Europe the pattern became weaker, for there, in some cases, noble and town privileges remained embedded in national monarchies. This was true, for instance, of Poland and Hungary. In other cases—Russia and Turkey—political centralization ran beyond the limits of a single nationality, subjecting peoples of diverse language and religion to a single imperial rule.

Within the borders of each successful state, the powers of government expanded radically. Matters which had once been strictly local

came within the cognizance of agents of the central government. Kings and princes also acquired authority in matters of ecclesiastical administration and patronage, even in countries that remained Catholic and continued to recognize papal headship of the church. Noble rights and immunities together with town and village autonomies suffered drastic curtailment. Every sort of local authority based on inherited personal status crumbled before demands made in the name of a distant sovereign by officials whose power depended on royal or princely appointment.

This process of political consolidation may be looked at in a number of different ways. In one sense, it amounted to the application north of the Alps of techniques of government which had been first worked out in Italian city-states. Thus, for example, the merging of noble and burgher classes into a single (if tumultuous) body politic had been pioneered in Italian cities like Florence about two hundred years before French and English kings began to make much progress in that direction. Or, again, the use of standing professional armies to back up the will of the ruler was commonplace in Italy long before 1500, but became practicable in Spain and France only after that date. In the important instances, of course, state-building north of the Alps proceeded on a much enlarged territorial scale as compared to anything Italy knew. With this territorial enlargement the effective power of the leading European governments increased enormously, and the whole scale of interstate politics underwent corresponding magnification.

From another point of view, however, the complex overlapping jurisdictions of medieval political life were dissolved far more by the violent deeds and emotions connected with the Reformation than by slow seepage of Italian political practices north of the Alps. Assuredly, the effort to renew the church and make it holy had an enormous and immediate impact upon politics. Sustained and serious effort to make human life conform to God's will as revealed in the Bible changed men's minds and altered their behavior. Wholesale violence sanctified by dogmatic differences quickly erupted, and for more than a century Europe was convulsed by wars fought in the name of Christian truth—though scarcely in accordance with its precepts.

Amid all the violence and bloodshed, secular sovereigns unceasingly inched their power forward. In the principal states that became Protestant the government took over most of the properties formerly

owned by churchmen, and acquired the right to appoint, or at least to approve the appointment of, leading clergymen. Almost the same fate befell the church in countries that retained their allegiance to the pope. The fact that land and other property was not confiscated outright did not prevent Catholic rulers in Spain, France, and Austria, for example, from appointing the dignitaries and taxing the lands of the church within their domains.

From still a third viewpoint, the consolidation of political power in a comparatively small number of centers reflected the rapid elaboration of military technology. As weapons became more complicated, the exercise of organized violence became prohibitively expensive for local nobles and impossibly complex for universal authorities. The medieval knight, once he acquired a horse, armor, and training, was almost self-sufficient, or, more accurately, wherever he went he could find what he needed in the way of food and minor repairs to his equipment without much difficulty. If threatened by some superior force he could retire behind castle walls, where, if the castle were well provisioned, he could wait safely enough until the enemy went home. But when artillery and infantrymen armed with pikes and guns drove the knight first from his castle and then from the battlefield—a process lasting from about 1350 to 1550—military organization became vastly more complicated. Supplies of powder and shot, transport for heavy guns, the arts of discipline, and money to pay for everything an army needed were not within the reach of most merely local authorities and, as it proved, were too disparate for any universal monarch to muster effectively across the whole of Europe.

Dependence upon a growingly complex system of land armaments also tied governments to the sources whence such complicated devices came: that is, to artisan shops and manufactories, mining and metallurgical entrepreneurs, capitalists, bankers, and generally, to the urban element in society which alone could assemble the necessary raw materials, produce the weapons, and deliver them to the soldiery in the right assortment and at the right time. Hence, really powerful governments were those in whose territories a sufficient urban development had occurred to sustain the complex demands of the new military technology. Territorially great states like Poland, for example, in which such a development failed to occur, were unable to take advantage of their size to become correspondingly powerful.

Each of these three points of view is surely valid. Their interplay over a century and a half, acting amidst the innumerable unpredictable acts of individual men who found themselves in critical situations facing new and unparalleled choices, gives the political history of this period an unusually intense, chaotic quality.

At the time, the eventual victory of the royal and princely governments over both local and universal rivals for sovereignty was far from obvious. In some of the eastern and northern parts of Europe, for example, aristocrats and clan chieftains retained or even enhanced their liberties. This was done both in the name of Calvinist reform of church and state, as in Hungary and Scotland, and in the name of a restored and reinvigorated Catholicism, as in Poland and Lithuania.

In the Dutch provinces and in England similar political developments proceeded from very different causes, for there the royal power was dismantled by townsmen and commercial farmers who found in legal precedent and Calvinist doctrine suitable justification for their defiance of the centralizing authority.

The Dutch revolt against Philip II of Spain began in 1568 and attained definite success by 1609, when a truce was concluded that ended large-scale campaigning. The rebel provinces worked out a loose federal union in the face of the exigencies of the war against Spain. The union survived the war, and, despite recurrent friction between urban and rural elements, sufficed to make the Dutch into a world power of the first rank.

In the next generation the English civil wars (1642–48) also ran counter to the trend toward monarchical absolutism. It was the parliamentary opponents of modern, efficient royal bureaucracy who prevailed. Like the Reformation itself, the parliamentary cause was radically reactionary, for it rested both on a reaffirmation of the traditional liberties of Englishmen (*Magna Carta* and all that) and upon relentless Puritanical striving after a government of saints. But like other successful revolutionaries, the Puritans in power were compelled to betray their program. English liberties and a government of saints degenerated after the execution of King Charles I (1649) into an open military dictatorship under Oliver Cromwell (d. 1658). His earnest efforts to re-establish a parliamentary form of government ran afoul of the stubborn fact that the vast majority of Englishmen repudiated the Puritanical ideal that inspired Cromwell's armies. After Cromwell died, King

Charles II's restoration (1660) resolved the impasse; but the new king did not attempt to build up royal power as Charles I had done. Sovereignty remained with Parliament; and the English Parliament managed to balance local and national interests in such a way as to make the central government reasonably responsive to changing circumstances.

Yet, however pregnant English parliamentarianism and Dutch federalism may have been for later times, they were exceptional and entirely atypical of the age. By giving political expression to the stubborn localism of landowners and burghers, the English and Dutch governments seemed to be defending a lost cause. Only the fact that their security vis-à-vis other states rested on naval rather than on land forces explains how it was that these two maverick nations were able to play roles as great powers without submitting to the bureaucratic centralization which in other lands proved to be the price of military strength, or indeed of political survival.

International Politics

The most spectacular aspect of European politics between 1500 and 1648 was not the incessant wearing down of local jurisdictions by representatives of some central authority. However important, administrative centralization proceeded by means of innumerable petty local quarrels and decisions. Far more dramatic was the conflict at the other end of the political scale, which pitted the two great universal institutions of Latin Christendom—papacy and empire—against the emerging territorial sovereigns of western and central Europe. It seems clear, at least in theory, that Renaissance rationalism and the Reformation effort to apprehend and enforce a complete truth that could save men from uncertainty and error might both have been harnessed to support a universal state and a single church—if any single sovereign had been able to exploit the increasing technical complexity of warfare in order to organize a power so strong as to overwhelm all political rivals and hunt down all heretics.

Nothing of the sort happened. Yet in 1519, when Charles V of Hapsburg added the title and powers of Holy Roman Emperor to his already magnificent inheritance, it certainly seemed that universal monarchy might indeed prevail. For through a fortunate marriage alliance, Charles V inherited not merely his family's lands in Austria and

nearby regions of Germany, but a magnificent Burgundian inheritance as well that extended southward from the Low Countries in an irregular strip of territory lying between France and Germany. In addition, he fell heir to the Spanish crown in 1516. To this was soon added the vast new empire of the Americas, which emerged before Europe's startled eyes as first Cortez (1521) and then Pizarro (1535) unlocked the dazzling wealth of the New World. As though this were not enough, Charles's brother Ferdinand, whom he entrusted with the administration of his Austrian possessions, inherited the crowns of Bohemia and Hungary in 1526, when his brother-in-law, the Hungarian king, died without heirs when fleeing the Turks after the disastrous battle of Mohacs.

Charles's enemies were as numerous as his subjects, however, and his subjects never united for any sort of prolonged common effort. The result was therefore first stalemate, and then weakening of the imperial power, even in Germany. But a long and stormy passage intervened between the time of Charles's coronation as Holy Roman Emperor (1519) and his descendants' reluctant acknowledgment in the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) of the sovereignty of local German princes.

The king of France and the sultan of Turkey were the most consistent opponents of the Hapsburg imperial power. (Their treaty of alliance, 1536, though seldom effective in the field, was a constant reproach to the Most Christian King of France.) In addition, Charles tangled violently with the papacy, and his soldiers sacked Rome in 1527. From the 1560's, however, after Spanish arms and Spanish piety had invaded Italy, captured the papacy, and inspired the Counter Reformation, the popes began to co-operate with the Hapsburgs. The resulting alliance between empire and papacy proved capable of reconverting nearly all the inhabitants of the Austrian, Hungarian, and Polish lands which had briefly proved hospitable to Protestantism.

In Germany, however, the Reformation enormously strengthened and intensified the opposition of local princes to any consolidation of the imperial power. After initial hesitation, Charles V declared himself firmly against Martin Luther and his followers; but wars with the French and Turks, fought mainly in Italy and the Mediterranean, kept him so busy that he never had time to marshal his full force against the

Lutherans. He confessed his inability to restore religious uniformity to Germany by making peace with the Lutheran princes in 1555, guaranteeing them the right to protect Lutheran forms of worship and doctrine. In the next year, Charles abdicated, transferring Spain and its empire together with the Burgundian lands to his son, Philip, but endowing his brother, Ferdinand, with Austria and the imperial title.

Yet even this division of the inheritance did not, in the end, permit consolidation of either part. Germany remained divided and its princes nursed a lively suspicion of Hapsburg imperial ambitions. For a long time Ferdinand and his heirs followed a cautious policy, while the greater power of Spain under Philip II struggled vainly first to consolidate and then to hold dominion over the Low Countries. The success of the Dutch revolt (1568–1609) and the English victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588 did not prevent the Spaniards from retaining the rest of the Burgundian lands in Europe and dominating most of Italy while staving off the Turks in the Mediterranean, establishing their empire over a vast region of the Americas, and even, for a while, annexing Portugal and the Portuguese empire (1580–1640).

Only after Philip's death (1598) did Spanish predominance begin to fade. France had been distracted by a series of religious wars which pitted rebellious Protestants against the royal authority, but emerged again as a strong and united state under Henry IV (1589–1610). Meanwhile industrial stagnation or even retrogression diminished Spain's capacity to equip the armies and navies needed to maintain her imperial position. As a result, leadership of the Hapsburg and Catholic cause in Europe passed to the Austrian branch of the family, descended from Charles V's brother Ferdinand I. His namesake, Ferdinand II (reigned 1619–37), was a far more energetic and ruthless monarch than his predecessors had been. His agents set out in the name of Catholic restoration to overthrow local rights and immunities. The result was to fan a revolt in Bohemia (1618) into thirty years of violent war that convulsed most of Europe. The collision between Protestant and Catholic forms of Christianity envenomed the conflict, but just as much at stake were the conflicting princely and imperial claims to sovereignty. When Ferdinand's forces seemed likely to win, first the Danes, then the Swedes, and finally the French intervened against the Hapsburg imperial cause. Brutal devastation of parts of Germany ended with the

Peace of Westphalia (1648), which guaranteed the emptiness of the imperial title by recognizing the sovereignty of the separate German princes. Thenceforward, for more than two hundred years, Germany remained divided among scores of local rulers whose courts and governments imitated but could not rival the really great power that emerged from the Peace of Westphalia—that is, France.

European Colonization and Trade

The upshot of Europe's political, military, and religious history between 1500 and 1648 was, therefore, almost as confused as the events themselves. Plural sovereignties still divided the landscape, and their relations were complex and changeable as ever. Papal power remained real in much of Europe; Spain retained most of her empire both in the Americas and in Europe; and even the imperial power of the Austrian branch of the Hapsburg family found ample scope in consolidating and strengthening its administrative control over hereditary lands in Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary. The French dominance that emerged in 1648 was therefore very limited, even on the continent of Europe. When one considers naval power and overseas empire, French preponderance disappears, for England and the Dutch had both become formidable sea powers, superior to the French. They used their ships to encroach upon the Spanish and Portuguese overseas empires, dispatching traders to the Indian Ocean and colonists to the Americas.

The establishment of the Dutch and English East India companies (1600, 1601) gave a lasting and effective mercantile organization to the enterprises of these two nations in Indian and Far Eastern waters. At first it was the Dutch who won the most spectacular successes. From an initial venture in 1594, within a mere fifty years they drove the Portuguese from Malacca and Ceylon and established their power in Java, thus becoming the masters of the spice trade. Early English lodgments along the west coast of India were relatively modest.

In the Americas, however, the balance was reversed, for the English colonies in Virginia (founded 1607) and Massachusetts (founded 1620) soon outstripped the Dutch colony at New York (founded 1626). French colonization of Canada started almost simultaneously at Quebec (founded 1608). But by far the most lucrative European ventures across the Atlantic in the seventeenth century were directed toward

the smaller islands of the Caribbean, where sugar plantations, worked by slaves imported from Africa, provided a commodity in high demand at home. By the 1640's, English, French, and to a lesser extent Dutch entrepreneurs had taken the lead in this trade, overtaking the Portuguese and Spaniards, who had first experimented with sugar along the Brazilian and Caribbean coastlines.

This very rapid expansion of European settlement and trade attested the restless growth of European power vis-à-vis other less volatile peoples and civilizations. All the futilities and confusions of European politics, the brutal clash of arms, and the impassioned struggle after theological certainty which constituted the stuff and substance of European experience in these years were not entirely in vain. Men seldom accomplished what they desired, but their struggles did very greatly increase Europe's capacity to mobilize wealth, manpower, and ingenuity for political and economic purposes. The consolidation of sovereignty and the expansion of the scope of governmental activity constituted one important aspect of this evolution. The rise of joint stock companies like the Dutch and English East India companies—and of other large-scale business enterprises—was another. Equally, in the intellectual and artistic realms, a reckless pursuit of truth and of beauty, enhanced and sometimes stimulated by advances of technology (e.g. printing, the telescope), imparted to European culture a greater variety and toughness than the comparatively parochial outlook and limited knowledge of the medieval age had allowed. We must consider these changes next.

The Renaissance

The twin yet rival movements of Renaissance and Reformation emphasized different aspects of the European cultural inheritance. Men inspired by the ideal of giving rebirth to the knowledge, skills, and elegance of pagan antiquity magnified the Greco-Roman constituent of Europe's past, whereas believers anxious to reform religion on Biblical lines drew their main inspiration from the Judeo-Christian component of Western civilization. A few single-minded advocates in either camp sought to repudiate the other entirely; yet this was unusual, for a complex cross-play always existed between the two movements. Some of the greatest reformers were skilled classical scholars and found the

techniques which had been developed for establishing the correct texts of pagan authors applicable to Biblical studies too. Similarly, the artists and men of letters of the Renaissance remained deeply concerned with religion and questions of theology, not least, when, as with Machiavelli (d. 1527), they expressly renounced the Christian faith.

The Renaissance had, of course, taken form in Italy, from about 1350. A return to antiquity, with its memories of Roman greatness, naturally had strong appeal to Italians. More than that, Italian towns harbored secularly minded commoners and princely patrons who deliberately turned their attention toward things human and away from things divine.

The Italian Renaissance reached its peak just about the year 1500. Leonardo da Vinci's (d. 1519) restless probing of the natural world through his art and through minute observation of men and things, together with Niccolò Machiavelli's ruthless analysis of the nature and use of political power based upon personal experience and study of classical authors, well represents its culmination. Only a little later, Michelangelo Buonarroti (d. 1564) and Nicholas Copernicus (d. 1543)—who though he died in Poland drew his intellectual stimulus from the University of Padua where he had been trained—gave up the radical reliance on human rationality which seems implicit in the work of both da Vinci and Machiavelli. Michelangelo suffered torments of doubt about practically everything, even about the value of his art; and Copernicus' heliocentric system of astronomy, which assumed a circular instead of an elliptical orbit for the planets, was inspired by neo-Pythagorean number mysticism and actually flew in the face of observational data.

The attractions of the Renaissance ideal of beauty as created by human skill and of truth to be discovered by untrammeled exercise of human faculties were not lost on the rest of Europe. Aristocratic and courtly circles were particularly receptive north of the Alps; but wherever urban growth had created a substantial middle class—as in Holland, the Rhineland, England, and France—commoners, too, were soon attracted by local efforts to imitate or surpass Italian models. The result was the development of distinct national schools of literature and to some extent also of painting. Thus, for example, *Don Quixote* by Miguel Cervantes (d. 1616) and the plays of Lope de Vega (d.

1635) gave literary definition to the Spanish language. Modern French acquired its literary form through the labors of three utterly diverse men: François Rabelais (d. 1553), who mocked what he could not alter, John Calvin (d. 1564), who strove relentlessly to reform and sanctify all human life, and Michel Eyquem, seigneur de Montaigne (d. 1592), who recommended an aloof moderation in the face of human shortcomings. English owes its literary definition to Elizabethan writers—William Shakespeare (d. 1616) above all—and to the King James Bible (1611). Modern literary German is the creation of Luther's translation of the Bible. Most of the other tongues of Germanic Europe (Dutch, Danish, Swedish) took form also as a by-product of Protestant translations of the Bible into the vernacular.

The Reformation

+++ The other leading characteristic of Europe's cultural life in this age was the reassertion of religious concerns despite the charms of rampant secularism toward which the thought and sensibility of Renaissance Italy seemed to be moving.

Reform and reinvigoration of the Roman Catholic Church had been undertaken repeatedly in medieval Europe. By their very nature such movements challenged constituted ecclesiastical authorities, who were always tempted to declare their critics heretical. This had been the fate of John Wycliffe (d. 1384) in England and Jan Hus (d. 1415) in Bohemia, each of whom nevertheless attracted a considerable body of followers. The healing of the Great Schism in 1417 through the restoration of papal monarchy at the Council of Constance made it harder for heresy to flourish in the following century. In Spain, particularly, religious conformity and political loyalty tended to coincide. The crusading spirit, fanned by centuries of war against the Moors (driven from Granada only in 1492), continued to inspire the Spanish imperial effort both in Europe and overseas. A uniquely close relationship between church and state resulted. Elsewhere, pope and monarch usually collaborated in taxing the clergy, but were otherwise as often at odds as in alliance.

The papacy itself claimed sovereignty over part of Italy, and some popes allowed their pursuit of political advantage in the peninsula to

outweigh the spiritual headship over Christendom their predecessors had so vigorously asserted. Elsewhere in Italy and Germany bishops and abbots often followed the pope's example.

Amidst such a tawdry religious scene, Martin Luther's (d. 1546) conviction, based on poignant personal experience of how a sinful man might still win through to salvation, flashed like the sword of an avenging angel. Luther initially challenged the validity of the sale of indulgences. Sales of these documents, which purported to relieve suffering souls from the torments of Purgatory, had been organized in a thoroughly commercial spirit as part of a campaign to raise money to build a new St. Peter's cathedral in Rome. According to the conventions of traditional scholastic debate Luther publicly denied the value of indulgences by posting 95 theses on the church door at Wittenberg in 1517. But instead of remaining a matter of academic controversy, Luther's views spread like wildfire through Germany. Public debates with champions of the papacy rapidly drove Luther toward more radical and complete exposition of his convictions. Three eloquent pamphlets written in 1520—*An Appeal to the Nobility of the German Nation*, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, and *The Freedom of a Christian Man*—defined the heart of Lutheranism. Subsequent controversy developed numerous differences in doctrinal formulation between Catholics, Lutherans, and other kinds of Protestants. At the center of this theological strife was the question of the source of religious authority. Luther rested his case on the Bible and his own personal experience of what he felt to be the freely given grace of God. He further denied that the clergy had any necessary mediating role between the individual sinner and God, and boldly proclaimed the priesthood of all believers.

The printing press spread Luther's views rapidly and widely through Germany and adjacent lands. His protest speedily gathered other discontents behind the banner of church reform. Luther's attack on the papacy, for example, attracted many in Germany who felt aggrieved at being taxed and exploited by foreigners; but this expression of German nationalism was soon stifled by the refusal of the emperor, Charles V, and of other important rulers in Germany to become Lutheran.

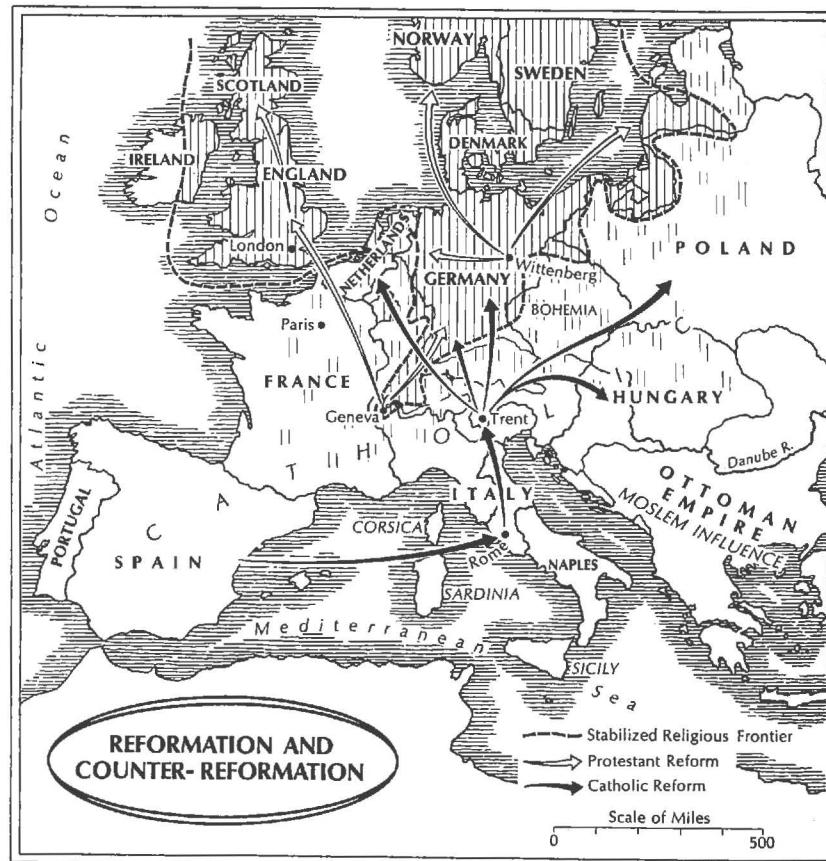
Instead, therefore, of becoming German, the Protestant movement became European, particularly after John Calvin established his head-

quarters in Geneva (1541) and made it the center of a vigorous propaganda. England, for example, broke with the pope in 1534, but the Church of England became Protestant in doctrine only by degrees, very largely under stimulus from Geneva. Simultaneously the Dutch and Scots made Calvinism dominant in their countries. In France, on the contrary, the government remained Catholic. French Protestantism, after a promising start, lost its *élan* about 1600. In Italy, Protestantism never commanded wide support and withered quickly when the force of revived Catholicism became apparent. Scandinavia, on the other hand, became Lutheran, along with almost half of Germany. Local nationalisms, which were beginning to emerge all over Europe, played important parts in determining each of these results.

Social and economic protest also made a brief appearance in Lutheran dress. But when rebellious peasants took Christian liberty to mean relief from dues and rents, Luther denounced them violently (1525). Thereafter, social unrest and religious radicalism found expression among Anabaptists and other sects. These groups met severe persecution, and survived mainly among the poor, and often as secret or semi-secret groups.

The drastic nature of the social and economic changes that came to Europe between 1500 and 1648 contributed powerfully to religious controversy. Yet it would be wrong to forget that the search for an absolutely certain religious truth gathered enormous energy behind it simply because of the inherent attractiveness of a definite and coherent world view. Peace of mind required authoritative and adequate answers to the uncertainties that daily experience thrust so remorselessly upon a large proportion of Europe's population. Luther was sure about how he himself had gained God's grace. This was one of the secrets of his success, since others wished desperately to achieve a similar state of inward grace and assured salvation. When a man did achieve certainty, he naturally wished both to communicate the saving truth to others and to denounce error in all its guises. A great outpouring of preaching and writing, aimed at such explication, was soon supplemented by systematic schooling in carefully drawn-up catechisms. Defenders of the papacy presently developed Roman Catholic counter-propaganda. All across Europe a far greater knowledge of Christian doctrine and an emotionally deeper commitment to chosen or inherited forms of the faith resulted.

One of the ironies of Protestantism was its tendency to split into sects and sub-sects. The reformers never abandoned the ideal of a single Catholic church embracing all Christians. But the Bible—their sole source of religious authority—was capable of diverse interpretation. Truths that seemed self-evident to one man did not always seem so to others who were just as sincere and equally eager for the certainty of salvation. In such a case each was compelled to denounce the other as a preacher of false doctrine, and often did so with more vigor than charity. Yet as the white heat of the first generation of reform receded, efforts to build a church organization and enforce doctrinal conformity met with success in most parts of Protestant Europe. In



England the process was more drawn out. Piecemeal reform under the Tudors (1534–1603) failed to satisfy a powerful group of rigorists, or Puritans. Their effort to make over all human life in accordance with God's will did not exhaust itself until after the utter failure of the government of saints under Oliver Cromwell (1658).

The Roman church reacted slowly to the Protestant challenge. At first many hoped that reconciliation could be achieved. Pious and educated Catholics, who were best capable of meeting the Protestant movement on its own terms, often hesitated to divide Christendom even more deeply by counter-attacking against the Lutherans. Yet the passionate drive for theological certainty which armed the Protestants could also be harnessed to the Catholic cause. St. Ignatius Loyola (d. 1556) did so. After a conversion experience as poignant as Luther's, he set out to preach the truth as a soldier of the pope. He soon collected a group of like-minded young men around himself and then organized them into the Society of Jesus, which speedily became a most effective agent for the defense and propagation of Catholicism, both in Europe and overseas. When the Jesuit order was still in its infancy, the Council of Trent (1545–63) assembled. After lengthy and thrice-suspended sessions, it succeeded in decreeing a number of practical reforms and defined disputed points of doctrine in a firmly anti-Protestant sense.

Thereafter the initial ambiguity of the appeal for church reform faded, and men everywhere in Europe were confronted by the spectacle of a comparatively well-organized, united, and reformed Roman Catholic church locked in combat with an equally determined but not nearly so tightly organized Calvinist movement, while Lutherans and conservative churchmen in England looked on with a general distaste for both of the protagonists. Eventually, the failure of pope and emperor in the Thirty Years' War (1618–48) and the almost simultaneous failure of the Puritan revolution in England (1640–60) turned many men's minds away from religious controversy, which, in the course of both conflicts, had often become a transparent disguise for ignoble political and economic interests.

The Growth of Science

As a matter of fact, throughout the Reformation period a small but important company of men had not permitted the quest for theo-

logical certainty to eclipse other, more mundane concerns. Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), for example, lived through the height of Europe's religious conflicts, yet found it preferable to devote himself to physical and astronomical investigations. His defense of Copernican astronomy on the basis of telescopic observation and mathematical reasoning, and his ingenious efforts to give mathematical expression to carefully recorded observational data, inaugurated lines of inquiry which physicists and astronomers have not yet exhausted. René Descartes (d. 1650) was another who deliberately turned his back on theological controversy and instead set out to create a mathematically rigorous philosophy which would, with sublime impartiality and on the basis of reason alone, provide answers to metaphysical as well as to all other questions about which men had quarreled so bitterly and desperately since the time of Luther and before.

Other intellectual traditions were active and fruitful too. Paracelsus (1541), Andreas Vesalius (d. 1564), and William Harvey (d. 1657) successfully challenged the authority of Galen in medical matters, as much on mystical and neo-Platonic grounds as upon the basis of more exact observation of human anatomy. Similarly, a superstitious mystic, Johannes Kepler (d. 1630), strove vainly to discover the harmonic ratios among the orbits of the planets, but did, after vastly laborious computation, discover a mathematical formula that exactly described the elliptical motions of each separate planet in its orbit—thus, incidentally correcting Copernicus and removing one of the most important objections to the Copernican hypothesis. Still another tradition, optimistic and empirical, was represented by Francis Bacon (d. 1626), who argued that careful observation and systematic collection of information would allow men to unlock nature's secrets without the help of either religious revelation or mathematical reasoning.

Invention of a number of new instruments, particularly the telescope (*c.* 1608) and the microscope (*c.* 1590), the pendulum clock (*c.* 1656), thermometer (*c.* 1654), and barometer (*c.* 1643), gave the observations and experiments of the small company of natural philosophers much greater precision than had been possible in earlier ages. This, together with the vast influx of miscellaneous information flooding into Europe from overseas, provided a rich diet for those who preferred such studies to the controversies of theologians. Hence, when (after 1648) hostile religious camps came to be widely discredited among re-

flective men, the natural philosophers were ready and primed to offer a world view less complete perhaps but scarcely less fascinating than the rival theologies that had dominated the attention of earlier generations.

Yet it would be wrong to suggest that science supplanted religion. On the contrary, the Reformation age left behind a heightened religious concern in all walks of life. Science and other secular inquiries did not expressly oppose the claims of religion, which had been pitched so very high by reformers of both Protestant and Catholic persuasions. Rather, secular investigation grew up and thrived in the interstices of knowledge which were treated as matters of indifference by theologians. Later, after about 1650, scientific investigation attained enough respectability that scientists and men of learning—at least those who lived in the most active centers of European civilization—no longer had seriously to worry about how their discoveries would fit into the frame of official theology. Quarrels continued to arise. But neither clergymen, defending Christian truth, nor scientists, arguing some new idea, were able to suppress or overthrow those who disagreed with them. Both appeal to force and appeal to the necessity for universal agreement on matters of importance, which had seemed self-evident and necessary in the Reformation age, slowly ceased to carry much conviction to politicians and the public.

Emergence of Cultural Pluralism

††† Thus the upshot of Europe's long travail between 1500 and 1648 was strangely contrary to what almost all the great men of the age had desired. Instead of discovering and enforcing a universal truth, Europeans discovered that they could agree to disagree. Intellectual pluralism established itself on European soil more flagrantly than ever before. No official hierarchy of knowledge provided a complete scheme for understanding the world—as had been the case, in theory if not in practice, in medieval times. Each separate church, nation, and profession was in a position to pursue truth according to its own lights. Such diversity assured the continued and very rapid development of European thought down even to our own time.

Art and letters also exhibited an increasing pluralism. The rise of the vernacular which had occurred at the beginning of our period created separate national schools of literature. Painting, too, tended to di-

verge from the pattern established by the great Italians, so that Spanish (Velasquez, d. 1660; El Greco, d. 1614), Dutch (Rembrandt, d. 1669), and Flemish (Rubens, d. 1640) schools, each with distinctive traits, developed within the general European tradition. Architecture remained less variable. In all of Catholic Europe a baroque elaboration of Renaissance styles prevailed, whereas in most Protestant lands variations upon Gothic held the ground.

The trauma of emergence from the medieval mould was enormous. Never since have Europeans faced more agonizing or more pervasive uncertainties. Yet the severity of the experience called forth human genius and individual achievement on a most unusual scale. Columbus and Cortez, Luther and Loyola, Leonardo da Vinci and Descartes, Copernicus and Galileo—to name only a few of the greatest—were makers of the modern world in a more profound sense than were men of earlier or later generations who did not confront, as these men did, the challenges of a new world—both literally and metaphorically—opening before their startled eyes. The surpassing success with which these and scores of thousands of other Europeans rose to meet this unprecedented opportunity is best attested by the subsequent career of Western civilization, of which we and all the world are heirs.

CHAPTER 20

*Europe's Outliers:**Russia and the Americas*

1500-1640



At a time when China, India, and the Middle East found it unnecessary to make more than trifling accommodation to the European presence along their shores, Russian and American populations were already deeply entangled with western Europe. Paralyzing collapse came to Amerindian higher cultures, and the new institutions planted on American soil by the conquistadors in every case derived directly from Spain. Russian institutions were much tougher and did not crumble like Amerindian institutions at the first approach of armed strangers. Yet Russia, too, found it hard to shift from resisting traditional pressures from the steppe to resisting the quite novel challenges coming from western Europe. Severe strain in both church and state registered the difficulties of this about-face, which was quite as profound as western Europe's simultaneous struggle to emerge from its medieval chrysalis.