Three powerful Islamic empires emerged in India and SW Asia after the 15th century. Beginning w/ the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 C.E., Turkish warriors & charismatic leaders established first the Ottoman empire, then the Safavid dynasty in Persia, (1502) & finally the Mughal dynasty in India. (1526) Three distinct empires emerged w/ different cultures & traditions. Yet there are some striking similarities, including:

- **Autocratic rule.** All three empires began as military states in which all power & prestige centered on the person of the ruler. All three were plagued by problems of succession from one ruler to the next.

- **Islamic faith.** All three empires embraced Islam. Sizeable Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire & a large Hindu majority in India forced those rulers to craft policies of religious toleration. The Safavid dynasty followed the Shiite (Shi’a) sect of Islam, which brought them into conflict w/ their Sunni Ottoman neighbors.

- **Inward-looking policies.** Although all three Islamic states maintained power through the military, neither the Safavid nor the Mughal dynasties developed a navy or a merchant fleet. Military resources were concentrated on defending inland borders. The Ottoman did have a powerful navy at one time, but by the 18th century, Ottoman armaments were outmoded & usually of European manufacture.

- **Agricultural economies.** Agriculture was the basis of the Islamic empires, & the majority of the population was engaged in raising & processing food. In the 17th & 18th centuries, the Ottoman & Safavid populations grew slowly; the population in India grew more dramatically.

- **Ambivalence toward foreign trade.** All three empires existed along important historic trade routes & derived benefit from their locations. The Safavids actively encouraged foreign trade. However, none of the three states sent merchants abroad or encouraged new industries.

- **Cultural insularity.** The Islamic empires did not seek out new ideas or technologies & proved hostile to innovation by the 18th century. Like leaders in the Qing & Tokugawa dynasties, (Ch 27) Islamic conservatives feared that new ideas would lead to political instability.

### 1. Formation of the Islamic Empires

#### A. The Ottoman Empire (1289-1922)

1) **Founded 1289 by Osman Bey, led Muslim religious warriors (ghazis)**

2) **Ottoman expansion into Byzantine empire**
   a. Organized ghazi into formidable military machine
   b. Central role of the Janissaries (slave troops)
   c. Effective use of gunpowder in battles & sieges

3) **Mehmed the Conqueror (r. 1451-1481)**
   a. Captured Constantinople, 1453; became Istanbul, the capital
   b. Absolute monarchy; centralized state
   c. Expanded to Serbia, Greece, Albania; attacked Italy

4) **Suleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566)**
   a. Sultan Selim the Grim (r. 1512-1520) occupied Syria & Egypt
   b. Suleyman the Magnificent expanded into SW Asia & central Europe (nearly captured Vienna, 1526)
   c. Suleyman also built a powerful navy, challenged European fleets

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How did rulers finance their territorial expansion?
B. The Safavid Empire
1) The Safavids, Turkish conquerors of Persia & Mesopotamia
   a. Shah Ismail (r. 1501-24) claimed ancient Persian title Shah
   b. Proclaimed Twelver Shiism the official religion; imposed it on
      Sunni population
   c. Followers known as qizilbash (or “Red Hats”)
2) Twelver Shiism
   a. Traced origins to twelve ancient Shiite imams
   b. Ismail believed to be the 12th, or “hidden,” imam, or even an
      incarnation of Allah
3) Battle of Chaldiran (1514) (MKD!)
   a. Sunni Ottomans persecuted Shiites w/in Ottoman empire
   b. Qizilbash considered firearms unmanly; were crushed by
      Ottomans at Battle of Chaldiran, 1514
4) Shah Abbas the Great (1588-1629) revitalized the Safavid empire
   a. modernized military; sought European alliances against Ottomans
   b. new capital at Isfahan; centralized administration

C. The Mughal Empire
1) Babur (1523-1530), founder of Mughal (“Mongol”) dynasty in India
   a. Central Asian Turk invaded India, 1523, seized Delhi in 1526
   b. By his death in 1530, Mughal empire embraced most of India
2) Akbar (r. 1556-1605), a brilliant charismatic ruler
   a. Created a centralized, absolutist gov’t
   b. Expanded to Gujurat, Bengal, & southern India
   c. Encouraged religious tolerance between Muslims & Hindus
   d. Developed a syncretic religion called “Divine Faith”
3) Aurangzeb (1659-1707)
   a. Expanded the empire to almost the entire Indian subcontinent
   b. Revoked policies of toleration: Hindus taxed, temples destroyed
   c. His rule troubled by religious tensions & hostility

2. Imperial Islamic Society
   A. The Dynastic State
      1) The emperors & Islam
         a. All three empires = created by military conquest
         b. Authority based on personal piety & rulers’ military prowess
         c. Islamic devotion encouraged rulers to extend faith to new lands
      2) Steppe traditions
         a. Autocratic: emperors imposed their will on the state
         b. Ongoing problems w/ royal succession. e.g. Ottoman rulers could
            legally kill his brothers after taking the throne (!)
      3) Royal women often wielded great influence on politics

   What role did religion play in legitimizing political rule?
B. **Agriculture and Trade**
   1) Food crops the basis of all three empires
      a. Major crops: wheat & rice
      b. new American crops had little effect
      c. Coffee & Tobacco imports very popular
   2) Population growth less dramatic than in China or Europe
      a. Significant pop. growth in India from more intense agriculture
      b. Less dramatic growth in Safavid & Ottoman realms
   3) Long-distance trade important to all three empires
      a. Ottoman & Safavid empires shared segments of E-W trade routes
      b. Safavids offered silk, carpets, ceramics to European trading co’s
      c. The Mughal empire less attentive to foreign or maritime trading
      d. Mughals allowed stations for English, French, Dutch trading co’s

C. **Religious Affairs In The Islamic Empires**
   1) Religious diversity created challenges to the rule of the empires
   2) Religious diversity in India under the rule of Akbar
      a. Jesuits welcomed by Akbar, but he wasn’t interested in an exclusive faith
      b. Akbar tolerated **Sikhism**, new faith combining elements of Hinduism & Islam
      c. Advocated syncretic “divine faith,” emphasizing loyalty to emperor
   3) Religious minorities generally tolerated in Islamic states
      a. In Ottoman empire, conquered peoples protected, granted religious & civil autonomy in their own communities (**millet**)
      b. In India, Muslim rulers closely cooperated w/ Hindu majority
      c. Under Aurangzeb: Islam proclaimed official state religion, nonbelievers taxed

D. **Cultural Patronage of the Islamic Emperors**
   1) All three sponsored arts & public works: mosques, palaces, schools, hospitals, etc.
   2) Istanbul, the Ottoman capital, a bustling city of a million people
      a. Topkapi palace housed gov’t offices & Sultan’s residence
      b. The Suleymaniye blended Islamic & Byz. architectural elements
   3) Isfahan, Safavid capital, the “queen of Persian cities”
   4) Fatehpur Sikri, Mughal capital, created by Akbar
      a. Combined Islamic style w/ Indian elements
      b. Site abandoned because of bad water supply
      c. The **Taj Mahal**, exquisite example of Mughal architecture
3. The Empires in Transition

A. The Deterioration of Imperial Leadership 16th - 18th Centuries
   1) Decline caused by negligent rulers, factions, & gov’t corruption
   2) Tensions ✗ when relig conservatives abandoned tolerance policies
      a. Ottomans resisted innovations telescope & printing press
      b. Safavids: Shiite leaders urged the shahs to persecute Sunnis, non-Muslims, & even Sufis
      c. Mughal: Aurangzeb’s policies provoked deep animosity of Hindus

B. Economic and Military Decline
   1) Strong economies in 16th century; but stagnated by 18th century
      a. Territorial expansion ended; difficult to support armies & bureaucrats
      b. Series of long & costly wars
      c. Officials resorted to raising taxes or corruption to deal w/ financial problems
      d. Failure to develop trade & industry; lost initiative to European merchants
   2) Military decline
      a. Importing European weapons only promoted European weapon industries
      b. Imported arsenals outdated
      c. Ottomans even purchased military vessels from abroad

C. Cultural Insularity
   1) Cultural conservatism
      a. Ottoman cartographer, Piri Reis, gathered European maps
      b. Muslims seldom traveled to the West, confident of superiority
      c. Ignorant of Euro tech. developments—hostile to telescope, 1703
   2) Resistance to printing press
      a. Introduced by Jewish refugees to Anatolia, late 15th C
      b. Ottoman authorities at first banned printing in Turkish & Arabic
      c. Ban lifted in 1729, but conservatives forced closure of a Turkish press, 1742
      d. Mughal rulers showed little interest in printing technology
   3) Foreign cultural & technological innovations seen as a threat to domestic political stability

What obstacles to empire-building did empires confront, and how did they respond to these challenges?

What was the relationship between imperial expansion and military technology?