ISLAMIC GUNPOWDER EMPIRES

Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals

DOUGLAS E. STREUSAND

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About the Cover
The cover image is a detail from a painting produced 1590–1595 in opaque watercolor and gold on paper by the artist Tulsi Kalan depicting the 1577 battle that preceded the Mughal capture of the Fort at Bundi in Rajasthan. This folio (IS.2:103-1896) is from a copy of the *Akbarnama* (*Book of Akbar*), the official biography of Akbar, the third Mughal Emperor (r. 1556–1605) in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Cover image © Stapleton Collection/Corbis.

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Preface

I first conceived of this book as a graduate student in the early 1980s, began it as a project in 1990, and have taken twenty distracted years to complete it. Its purpose has remained constant: to provide a coherent, current, and accessible introduction to the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires, using comparison to illuminate their distinctive features. Within that general mission, I sought to accomplish the following objectives:

- to put the three empires in the context of their common background and political goals
- to incorporate current historiography into a new synthesis rather than recycle the findings of earlier general accounts
- to reevaluate the concept of the gunpowder empire and provide a more accurate and complete explanation of the growth and durability of the three empires
- to explain the complex, diverse, and dynamic political ideologies of the empires
- to present the empires as part of a connected Islamic world that was itself part of a more broadly connected global system in which commercial and cultural networks crossed political boundaries
- to assess the issue of the decline of the three empires without reference to the eventual global superiority of the West
- to depict the historiography of the empires as dynamic rather than static

Islamic Gunpowder Empires is not a comprehensive history of the Islamic world in the early modern era; it is both spatially and topically incomplete. It excludes Morocco, sub-Saharan Africa, central Asia, and Southeast Asia

and pays insufficient attention to social, cultural, and intellectual history. As a study of power and political order, it focuses on political, military, and economic history, on the problems of power and the burdens of power holders. It does not ignore social and cultural history entirely but seeks to place those topics in political context.

Although a history of power, this volume developed in the light of a history of conscience, Marshall G. S. Hodgson's *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*. Though Hodgson died more than forty years ago, *The Venture of Islam* remains the greatest study of Islamic civilization. Book 5, in which Hodgson propounds his conception of gunpowder empires, suffers more from the incompleteness caused by his sudden death than any other part of the book. I undertook this project in hope of providing a current and coherent alternative to that section of Hodgson.

In doing so, I sought to continue Hodgson's enterprise of presenting the complexity and diversity of Islamic civilization. Like Western civilization, Islamic civilization is, and has been, a composite of different elements in tension. The equation of Islamic civilization with Islam and of Islam with the Shariah obscures, distorts, and oversimplifies complex realities. The emphasis on the wide variety of principles of political legitimacy operating in the three empires draws attention to this complexity. I intend this book as "history-minded" history," as J. H. Hexter explains the concept in his well-known essay "The Historian and His Day," but history-minded history inevitably illuminates the present.[1]

The target audience for the book is upper-level undergraduates, who have taken a world history survey. The book will fit into an Islamic civilization survey course, the original venue for which Hodgson produced *Venture*, or serve as the nucleus for a course on the three empires. It differs from most undergraduate texts in that it encompasses historiographic controversy. I believe that students will benefit from knowing that historians disagree and interpretations change.

In the two decades since I began the project, the historians of all three empires have been extremely productive. I have been hard put to keep pace with them and have tried to do so systematically only with works published up to 2006; I have consulted later works for clarification of particular problems or simple convenience.

Because I have completed the book while on the faculty of the Marine Corps Command & Staff College, a unit of Marine Corps University, I

must include the mandatory disclaimer that it does not speak for Marine Corps University or for any agency of the U.S. government. I have, in fact, the same, if not greater, academic freedom here as at a civilian university. The college and university leadership has been strongly supportive of my research but expressed little interest in its content.

Although at various times I have studied original sources, both documents and texts, on all three empires, I have conducted extensive research only on the Mughals. The Mughal chapter is derived in great part from my *Formation of the Mughal Empire* and from further research that I hope will appear in a later book on the Mughals. The Ottoman and Safavid chapters depend on the work of other historians. Some of the interpretation is original, but none of the research is. My many professional colleagues who have spent untold hours deciphering Ottoman archival documents may resent my intrusion into their field; I can only respond that if my book succeeds in its purpose, its readers will swiftly progress from my work to theirs. Like most general works, it is likely to satisfy its readers in its treatment of everything but their own specialties.

The introduction explains the historiographic setting and interpretive themes of the book. The second chapter, "Common Heritage, Common Dilemma" explains the shared political traditions and structures and the political impasse in the Islamic world that the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal polities overcame. The three substantive chapters begin with a brief description of the history and institutions of each empire, followed by chronological summaries and sections on the military political institutions, economies, societies, and cultural forms. The conclusion deals with overall interpretive issues.

Notes

1. J. H. Hexter, "The Historian and His Day," in *Reappraisals in History: New Views on History and Society in Early Modern Europe*, with a foreword by Peter Laslett (Evanston, IL: Northwestern Univesity Press, 1961), 1. Multiple reprints. Hexter attributes the concept to R. L. Schuyler.

Author's Note and Acknowledgments

Twenty years have passed since Peter Kracht, the original editor for the project at Westview, called me about writing this book. The reader may have no interest in the circumstances that caused the long delay but is at least entitled to an explanation. For my part, I received no outside funding to support the project and spent most of those years engaged in child rearing as well as other professional pursuits. I have had a full-time university affiliation only since 2005 and never had ready access to a major research library. The only form of institutional support I have received has come from the Institute of World Politics (IWP), where I have taught as an adjunct professor since 2006, which provided me with research assistance in the summers of 2008 and 2009.

Much has changed over those two decades. My parents, Jane and Alan Streusand, who were enormously supportive of my aspirations in general and of this project in particular, have passed from the scene. My daughters, Deb and Rachel, have grown from cute little girls into formidable young women. I do not rue the time I spent nurturing them rather than this book. My wife, Esther, has been the constant; I hope she shares in the satisfaction of the project's completion.

Quite a number of people have provided concrete assistance over the years. I take great pleasure in acknowledging the contribution of my dear friend Rochelle Kessler, who is responsible for the selection of the illustrations, their captions, and the note on the cover. Ernest Tucker of the U.S. Naval Academy has read multiple versions of the manuscript and given me unflagging support from beginning to end. Michael O'Neal, my former student at the IWP, read most of the text and provided valuable,

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Because of the overlap between the research for this book and my graduate training, my intellectual acknowledgments must include my teachers. John Woods taught me Iranian, including Safavid, history. His understanding of the politics in the greater Iranian world during the era of Turko-Mongol dominance underlies much of my interpretation of the three empires. Halil Inalcık, the greatest historian of the Ottoman Empire, taught me Ottoman history and encouraged me to take a comparative approach to the Ottomans and their contemporaries. The late Bernard S. Cohn supervised my study of the Mughal Empire and, with Ronald Inden, taught me of Indian society and culture. Messrs. Woods, Inden, and Cohn encouraged me to focus on doctrines of kingship. Susanne H. Rudolph and Lloyd Rudolph encouraged my use of comparative methodology in approaching problems of state formation. William McNeill contributed to the work in several ways. At the University of Chicago, he encouraged my interest in military organization and steadily directed my attention to crucial questions and variables I had missed. As editor, with Ross Dunn of the University of California, San Diego, of the Essays in World History series, he developed the concept of the book. Lastly, when it became clear that my work did not fit the original profile, he supported the completion of the project as I envisioned it. My other professors at the University of Chicago, Richard Chambers, Walter Kaegi, Heshmat Moayyad, C. M. Naim, and John R. Perry; R. Stephen Humphreys, now of the University of California, Santa Barbara; Bruce Lawrence of Duke University; and Richard Eaton of the University of Arizona also assisted in the development of my ideas.

Of course, none of these worthy scholars is responsible for any errors of commission or omission.

At Marine Corps University (MCU), I am grateful to Maj. Gen. Donald R. Gardner, USMC (Ret.), president emeritus; Maj. Gen. Robert B. Neller, USMC, current president; Dr. Jerre Wilson, vice president for academic affairs; Maj. Gen. John A. Toolan, USMC, and Col. Tom Greenwood, USMC (Ret.), past directors of the Command & Staff College (C&SC); Col. Ray Damm, the current director; and especially Dr. Charles D. (Doug) McKenna, the dean of academics, for making MCU and C&SC a wonderful and nurturing place to work. I also appreciate the assistance of Rachel Kingcade and Cynthia Evans of the university's Gray Research Center.

A community of others, old friends and new, sustained me through the project In alphabetical order, they are Erica Anaya, Bruce Bechtol, Marcy Bixby, Patrick Clawson, Linda Feldman, Jocelyn Gebhardt, Paul Gelpi, Kit Goldman, Bill Gordon, the late William C. Green, John Gregory, Richard Horowitz, Ken Katzman, Rochelle Kessler, Andy and Julie Klingenstein, Barbara Lane, Chris Lay, John Lenczowski, Michael and Claudia Lewis, Mark Mandeles, Frank Mavlo, Mark Moyar, Jim Phillips, Daniel Pipes, Robert Schadler, the late Lt. Gen. Robert L. Schweitzer, USA (Ret), Jack Tierney, Alan Tonelson, Dalton West, and John Zucker. To my friends at Congregation Or Chadash, this book provides a partial resolution to the mystery of what I do every day. My office mates at C&SC, CDR Joe Arleth, USN, and Lt. Col. Loretta Vandenberg, USMC, have been wonderful company. My students at C&SC have been a tremendous source of inspiration and pleasure. I will name one from each category of students—each of the U.S. services, interagency, and international—to stand for all the others: Lt. Col. Robert E. McCarthy, USMC; Maj. Eric M. Johnson, USA; CDR Alexander R. Mackenzie, USN; Maj. Matthew R. Modarelli, USAF; Mr. Curt Klun of the Drug Enforcement Agency; and Lt. Col. Per Olav Vaagland, Norwegian Army.

At Westview Press, Peter Kracht brought the project to life, Steve Catalano revived it, and Karl Yambert saw it to completion. Michelle Welsh-Horst ably saw it through production, and Jennifer Kelland Fagan did a superb job of copyediting an extremely demanding text.

Tim McCranor helped me review the page proofs.

David Audley and Richard Sharpe have marched with me through the completion of the project. I am grateful to Anthony Price and Bernard Cornwell for their company.

Note on Transliteration and Dating

There is no standard system of representing Arabic, Persian, and Turkish words in English, and even if there were, it would not solve the problem of transliteration for this book. The Safavids and Mughals used Modern Persian as the language of politics, administration, and high culture. The Ottomans used Ottoman Turkish, a form of Western Turkish written in Arabic script with many Persian words and expressions. Most academic writers use one of the scholarly systems of transliteration for Persian and use Modern Turkish, which began as a phonetic transliteration of Ottoman, for Ottoman. But most students find the diacritical marks used in scholarly transliteration confusing, and Modern Turkish uses a variety of characters unfamiliar to English readers. Using different transliteration systems for the two languages would obscure the essential similarity of the vocabularies the empires used. For this reason I have employed a simplified form of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* system of transliteration, omitting diacritical marks entirely, and transliterated all words of Arabic or Persian origin in the Persian form, with some minor exceptions, such as using the Turkish Mehmed rather than Muhammad. I have formed plurals with the English *s*, but put the *s* in roman, not italic, font, to indicate that it is not part of the foreign word. I have transliterated words of Turkish origin used only in Ottoman in a simplified Turkish form. But in order to facilitate further reading in Ottoman history, I have put the Modern Turkish forms of Ottoman words in parentheses after their use and in the glossary, unless the form is identical to my Persianate transliteration. The Modern Turkish transliterations are always given in the singular. Students must appreciate, however, that

the absence of a standard transliteration system means that they will encounter different forms of the same words. Safavid is sometimes Safawid; Mughal is sometimes Moghul.

I have given dates only in the Gregorian calendar. Since most Hijri years straddle two Gregorian years, it is in some cases uncertain in which Gregorian year an event took place. I have joined the two Gregorian years with a dash in these cases.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

There is no list of seven wonders of the early modern world. If there were, it would certainly include the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey, the royal complex in Isfahan, Iran, and the Taj Mahal in Agra, India. These architectural and artistic achievements alone would justify the study of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires that produced them. The importance of the three empires, however, goes far beyond what they wrought in stone.

To a world historian, they were among the most powerful and influential polities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and, in the case of the Ottomans, the fifteenth century as well. They dominated much of the environment that Europeans encountered in their first era of exploration and expansion; their history is inextricably intertwined with that expansion. The image and influence of these empires affected Western views of non-Western societies profoundly. To a historian of Islamic civilization, they represent an era of cultural achievement second, perhaps, only to the first flowering of Islamic civilization in the time of the Abbasid caliphate, as well as a new form of polity that produced a level of order and stability not achieved for some five centuries before. For political historians, the empires offer an example of the evolution of new political doctrines, institutions, and practices in response to continuing challenges. For military historians, they were among the first to use firearms effectively. Significant developments in popular piety and religious identity took place under their sponsorship. Their impact on the contemporary world also garners attention. Much of the disorder in the post–Cold War

world, in the former Yugoslavia and in Iraq, reflects the difficulty of replacing the Ottoman regional order. The Safavid dynasty set the pattern of modern Iran by combining the eastern and western parts of the Iranian plateau and establishing Shii Islam as the dominant faith. The idea of political unity in South Asia passed from the Mughals to the British and into the present. For all these reasons, the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires deserve and demand close attention.

This book offers a comprehensive introduction to the three empires, intended for students and other readers with some general familiarity with world history and Islamic civilization. It attempts to bridge the gap between general texts on world and Islamic history, such as Marshall G. S. Hodgson's *The Venture of Islam* and Ira Lapidus's *A History of Islamic Societies*, and the specialized literature on the three empires. As the title implies, this book is a study of empire, an analysis of power and order. It is not a comprehensive history of the early modern Islamic world or even of the areas ruled by the empires. I focus on political and military history, with economic history not far behind. Social, cultural, and intellectual history receive much less attention, except when they pertain to political matters, though I do not neglect them entirely. I do not pretend, however, to give all components of society equal attention; the inequality of my treatment reflects, I hope accurately, the inequalities of the time.

INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Comparison of the three empires began with the Western travelers that visited them. They form a natural unit for study because of the sharp disparity between them and their predecessors in the Islamic world. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with the exception of the steadily expanding Ottoman principality in Anatolia and the Balkans and the distinctive, nondynastic Mamluk kingdom of Egypt and Syria, most principalities lasted only a few generations. Their rulers—dynasties like the Aqquyunlu, the Qaraquyunlu, the Tughluq, the Lodi, and the Muzaffarid—have fallen into obscurity. No evidence of their fluid boundaries remains on modern maps. Instability was chronic. To paraphrase Hodgson, politics had reached an impasse. The extent, durability, and centralization of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires show that their regimes broke that impasse.[1] Hodgson and his University of Chicago colleague William H. McNeill label them "gunpowder empires." Following the distinguished

Russian scholar V. V. Bartold, they attribute Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal political success to their ability to use artillery to take stone fortresses. The term *gunpowder empire* has remained current, but as the book explains, the gunpowder-empires hypothesis, as Hodgson and McNeill articulate it, is not an adequate or accurate explanation. The phrase "gunpowder empires" in the title means "empires of the gunpowder era" not "empires created by gunpowder weapons."

The concept of gunpowder empire implies a fundamental similarity among the three polities. Despite immense geographic, social, and economic differences, the three empires faced similar political, military, and administrative problems and carried the same set of political and institutional traditions. Politically, the doctrine of collective sovereignty and the appanage system, established in the Islamic world by the Saljuqs in the eleventh century and a vital part of the political legacy of the Chingiz Khanid Mongols, prevented lasting political unity. The impossibility of the central collection and distribution of revenue in vast empires with incompletely monetarized economies made fiscal decentralization inevitable, thus fostering political disunity. In Anatolia, Iraq, and Iran, tribes of pastoral nomads dominated political life, and empires consisted of tribal confederations; the patrimony of such confederations affected politics elsewhere. The three empires overcame these common problems, but in different ways, under different conditions, and along different timelines. Gunpowder empire is a convenient classification that facilitates comparison and contrast, not an ideal type that the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals approximated.

The difference in timelines requires clarification. Because the reigns of the Ottoman sultan Sulayman I (1520–1566), known in the West as Sulayman the Magnificent and in the Islamic world as Qanuni-Sulayman (Sulayman the Lawgiver), the Safavid shah Abbas I (1588–1629), and the Mughal emperor Akbar (1556–1605) overlapped, many historians have seen them as comparable figures. But Akbar and Abbas did for their dynasties what the Ottoman sultans Murad II (1421–1451) and Fatih Mehmet (1451–1481) did for theirs. They gave Safavid and Mughal institutions mature form nearly a century after the Ottomans achieved it. The Mughal ruler most comparable to Sulayman I was Shah Jahan (1628–1658).

Explaining the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal success in maintaining larger, more centralized, and more enduring polities than their predecessors is the fundamental interpretive theme of the book. Three aspects receive particular attention: military organization, weapons, and tactics; political

ideology and legitimacy; and provincial government. The gunpowder-empires hypothesis, though inadequate as Bartold, Hodgson, and McNeill present it, correctly draws attention to the significance of military superiority. Discussion of the military systems of these empires raises another question. For some fifty years, the concept of a European military revolution in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries has dominated the study of warfare in this era. The three empires did not go through the same transition. This book addresses the question of why.

Success in battles and sieges could not, however, have won and held the loyalty and cooperation of the diverse populations that the three empires ruled. The Christian subjects of the Ottomans and Hindu subjects of the Mughals did not regard themselves as captive populations. The three empires had complex, multifaceted, and dynamic forms of legitimacy that reflected several separate political traditions and evolved over time. The implementation of the ideological programs of the three empires had a profound effect on the religious life of their populations and thus on religious affiliation and identity throughout the Islamic world today. This process resembles what European historians call confessionalization. In Susan Boettcher's words,

> Confessionalization describes the ways an alliance of church and state mediated through confessional statements and church ordinances facilitated and accelerated the political centralization underway after the fifteenth century—including the elimination of local privileges, the growth of state apparatuses and bureaucracies, the acceptance of Roman legal traditions and the origins of absolutist territorial states.[2]

The concept of confessionalization asserts that church and state efforts to enforce the Peace of Augsburg principle of *cuius region eius religio* (the religion of the ruler should be the religion of the ruled) led to the development of national and linguistic, as well as religious, identities. The Safavids, from the beginning, imposed a new religious identity on their general population; they did not seek to develop a national or linguistic identity, but their policy had that effect. The text develops this theme in analyzing all three empires.

In addition to explaining imperial consolidation, the book emphasizes two other themes: the place of the empires in a connected world and the nature and causes of the changes in the empires in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Western historiography has generally de-

fined the boundaries between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe on the west and the Safavid Empire on the east not only as zones of conflict but also as serious barriers to the movement of commerce, ideas, and individuals. The conflicts were not chronic; nor were the barriers impermeable. The Safavid imposition of Shiism fractured, but did not destroy, the cultural unity of the Islamic world. Even after the Portuguese established themselves in the Indian Ocean, most East Asian and South Asian products reached Europe through the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean. The Ottoman efforts to impose commercial blockades on the Safavids in the early sixteenth century had little lasting effect. There was a vast disparity between the cultural and intellectual lives of Renaissance and Reformation Europe and the Islamic world, but some ideas, especially those associated with esoteric learning, had influence in both regions.

A generation ago, the last of the interpretive themes would have been decline. Since the Safavid and Mughal empires effectively disappeared in the first third of the eighteenth centuries, the word "decline" is indubitably appropriate for them. But the Ottoman Empire survived, and Ottoman historiography has begun to emphasize transformation under stress, rather than decline, as the best categorization of the changes it underwent. Without question, Ottoman power and wealth declined relative to European rivals, but the current generation of historians emphasizes their resilience rather than degeneration. For most of the last century, historians paid more attention to the ends of these empires than to their establishment and consolidation. Some have done so simply because they could rely more heavily on materials in European languages.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, European colonial historians recounted imperial triumphs. A book title from the thirties, *Rise and Fulfillment of British Rule in India*, exemplifies this type of literature. As resistance to colonialism developed and colonies began to gain independence, nationalist historians looked back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to explain their loss of independence and find lessons for the future.

Nationalist historiography has overlapped with Marxist historiography of varying levels of sophistication, which depicts European expansion as the spread of global capitalist exploitation. The most influential Marxist scholar of the early modern period in recent decades, Immanuel Wallerstein, depicts the development of a "modern world system," in which the capitalist economies of Europe form the capitalist center and reduce the

rest of the world to an economic periphery.[3] In contrast to this approach, I emphasize the internal dynamics of the three empires. The political transformation of the Islamic world affected European overseas expansion more than European commercial and maritime activities contributed to the decline of the three empires.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The three empires have spawned vast and disparate historiographies, which of course form the basis of this volume. This book rejects the postmodernist/deconstructionist assumption that objective scholarship is impossible because no one can escape the restrictions and compulsions of his personal, political, and cultural biases. In the specific case of Western studies of the non-Western world, deconstructionists contend that those biases have made such studies, especially of the Islamic world, the intellectual component of Western imperialism and neocolonialism. This rejection is not, however, a complete dismissal. Shorn of the political agenda, extreme claims, and shrillness that typify this type of scholarship, it can be a fruitful line of inquiry. Long before the bitter controversy over Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Martin Dickson demonstrated the fallacy of using cultural or civilizational degeneracy as a mode of historical explanation. Bernard Cohn's judicious studies of British intellectual attitudes toward India provide significant insights into the nature of British rule.

The literature on the Ottomans is far vaster and more diverse than the literatures on the Safavids and Mughals for several reasons. From the fifteenth century onward, the Ottoman Empire was an integral part of the European power structure and drew attention from European historians from the beginning. The depth and variety of sources on the Ottomans far exceed what is available on their contemporaries. An immense number of Ottoman archival documents exist in collections in Turkey and the Ottoman successor states in the Balkans and the Middle East. There are many European documents, diplomatic and commercial, in various collections. European travelers' accounts, the Ottoman chronicle tradition, and European accounts of the European wars with the Ottomans provide the narrative framework. Those narrative works formed the basis for the beginning of Ottoman studies in the West. Three massive histories, produced in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall, Johann Wilhelm Zinkeisen, and Nikolai Iorga,

embody the fruits of this tradition. These works provide a more complete chronological framework than any narrative work on the Safavid or Mughal empires.

Even as the tradition of narrative history reached its height and the Ottoman Empire came to an end, a new school of Ottoman studies appeared. Mehmet Fuad Köprülü (1890–1966) brought the social and economic concerns of what became the French Annales School to Turkey in the twenties and thirties. He and his students, most importantly Halil Inalcık, have advanced the study of Ottoman history far beyond that of any other Islamic society and moved historical studies within Turkey far ahead of those in any other part of the Islamic world. The existence of the Ottoman archives made this school possible. Omer Lutfi Barkan began the exploitation of the archives in the 1940s and 1950s. In the half century since then, the use of the Ottoman archives has led to the development of an extensive scholarly literature on Ottoman social and economic, as well as political, history.

Halil Inalcık has been the most influential Ottoman historian for half a century. The Ottoman section of this book follows his studies in almost all areas, more because of his stature within the field than because he was my teacher. Three of his articles, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest," "The Socio-Political Effects of the Diffusion of Fire-arms in the Middle East," and "Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire," inspired this book. In the last several decades, numerous historians, imitating the examples of Inalcık and Barkan and frequently instructed by them, have advanced every aspect of Ottoman historiography. Suraiya Faroqhi discusses this historiography at length in her *Approaching Ottoman History*.

To master Ottoman historiography is a lifework; Safavid historiography takes a year. There are still only four comprehensive accounts of the Safavids in English. Prior to 1993, literature on the Safavids was extremely sparse. There is much less Safavid history than Ottoman history—roughly two centuries compared with six—and the scarcity of documents makes much of the history of the dynasty inaccessible. The Pahlavi regime's exaltation of the pre-Islamic past, the disruption caused by the Iranian Revolution, and the diplomatic difficulties of the Islamic Republic have also hindered Safavid studies. Since 1993, however, a new generation of historians has transformed Safavid historiography. Because of the lack of archival documents, this literature differs significantly from most contemporary research on the Ottomans. These works either deal with the

Safavid regime and ruling class or with international trade, about which European documents provide much of the information.

Mughal historiography occupies an intermediate position. Though the Mughal Empire never challenged the European powers the way the Ottomans did, it was immensely important to the British, who explicitly perceived themselves as the imperial heirs to the Mughals in India. Their concern with the Mughals led them to produce a series of narrative histories, culminating in the *Cambridge History of India* dealing with the Mughals, studies of institutional and administrative history, and, perhaps most importantly, a massive series of editions and translations of chronicles.

Studies of Mughal history in the subcontinent developed in parallel with the Indian independence movement. In the twentieth century Indian authors produced a series of narrative works on the reigns of the major Mughal rulers. Sir Jadunath Sarkar, the most famous and accomplished of the Indian narrative historians, produced massive accounts of the reign of Aurangzeb (1658–1707) and later Mughal history. These authors view the principle of religious toleration, established by Akbar, as the key to the Mughals' success and Aurangzeb's abandonment of that principle as the step that doomed the empire. They see this understanding of Mughal history as a guide for the future politics of the subcontinent. Sarkar, for example, ends his work on Aurangzeb with a chapter called "Aurangzeb and Indian Nationality," with a final section headed "The Significance of Aurangzeb's Reign: How an Indian Nationality Can Be Formed."[4] Pakistani historians invert this interpretation, condemning Akbar for abandoning Islam and lauding Aurangzeb for returning to it, despite the political cost.

Since the independence of India and Pakistan, most work on the Mughals has taken place at Aligarh Muslim University, the leading Muslim educational institution in the subcontinent despite its location in India. The Aligarh historians, including K. A. Nizami, Irfan Habib, Iqtidar Hussein Siddiqui, Iqtidar Alam Khan, M. Athar Ali, Shirin Moosvi, and most recently Farhat Hasan, have produced a broad range of works on political, economic, and social history, focused primarily on Mughal decline. Satish Chandra, the one major Indian historian of the Mughals not affiliated with Aligarh, had been extremely productive. Not surprisingly, since most of these historians are Muslims with a secular orientation and many are Marxists, they absolve Aurangzeb—and thus Islam—of causing the fall of the empire and focus instead on economic factors. Some of the Aligarh historians have also focused on the study of the Mughal ruling class, collecting

and classifying vast amounts of data. Two American historians, John F. Richards and I, have focused attention on the patterns of behavior of the ruling class. There is a steady flow of research on the Mughals, generally within the framework of the historiography already described, and several new general works on the topic have appeared recently. Richards's contribution to *The New Cambridge History of India*, however, remains the best comprehensive treatment of the Mughals.

This book, then, seeks to integrate these disparate historiographies in a form accessible to undergraduates and even, should they be so inclined, general readers. It consists of five chapters in addition to this introduction. The second chapter, "Common Heritage, Common Dilemma," describes the common heritage of political ideas and the governmental and military institutions and practices that the three empires shared. The next three chapters, the main body of the book, cover the three empires. They each provide a chronological narrative and discuss topics such as sovereignty, faith, and law; expansion and military organization; central and provincial administration; economy, society, and culture; and transformation or decline. The concluding chapter addresses major interpretive issues.

Although the three main chapters have the same structure, they do not correspond exactly. The Ottoman chapter is significantly longer than the other two, and the Mughal chapter longer than that for the Safavids. The Ottoman chapter deserves its length for several reasons. The history of the Ottoman principality dates to circa 1300, two hundred years before the Safavid and Mughal empires developed. Although both the Safavids and the Mughals had precursors dating from the late fourteenth century, the two empires did not develop directly from those roots, as the Ottoman Empire did. The Ottoman Empire survived beyond the third decade of the eighteenth century essentially intact because it evolved what amounted to a new regime: a new military organization, new tax system, and new provincial elite. Neither of the other empires underwent such a transformation. The Ottomans had a far more complex geopolitical environment than the others. In the first half of the sixteenth century, their grand strategic concerns extended from the eastern Mediterranean to Sumatra. Theirs was a global empire on interior lines. Only the Ottoman Empire had a significant navy. The Mughal chapter is longer than that for the Safavids because the empire was larger in area and population, more diverse, and wealthier. The Safavid Empire, unlike the other two, did not expand steadily through its history.

Notes

1. Cf. Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 3:3: "The pattern of society and culture that had been formed after the fall of the High Caliphal state had come to some crucial impasses."

2. Susan R. Boettcher, "Confessionalization: Reformation, Religion, Absolutism and Modernity," *History Compass* 2 (2004): 1.

3. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, 3 vols. (New York: Academic Press, 1975–1988), is the centerpiece of an enormous literature. Immanuel Wallerstein, *World Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), does what its title implies. Wallerstein's work has spawned an enormous literature; his influence is difficult to overestimate.

4. Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, 5 vols. as 4 (Delhi: Orient Longman, 1973), 5:362–378.

Chapter 2

COMMON HERITAGE, COMMON DILEMMA

The three empires shared a common heritage and a common dilemma. This chapter analyzes the heritage and explains the origin and nature of the dilemma. It has three sections: a description of the essential characteristics of the Abbasid Empire and the devolution of its power, an analysis of political theory and practice in the post-Abbasid environment, and a review of the concepts of the Shariah, Sufism, and jihad. The Abbasid regime defined and articulated a set of political norms and expectations that remained influential throughout the subsequent history of Islamic civilization; its collapse and ultimate disappearance defined the political landscape. Although two of three empires were mostly outside the territory that the Abbasids had ruled, the political challenges they overcame nonetheless reflect the post-Abbasid political, military, economic, and cultural matrix.

The Abbasids were imperial rulers from 750 to 945, imperial figureheads from 945 to 1180, and regional rulers with imperial pretensions from 1180 until the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258. Although they used the title caliph rather than a word meaning "emperor," the Abbasid polity resembled the agrarian bureaucratic empires that had ruled Iraq, the Abbasid heartland, for more than two millennia. It was the third polity that caliphs had governed. The first, the caliphate of Medina (632–661), governed a confederation of tribes, united by Islam, that conquered Egypt

and the Fertile Crescent and began penetration of the Iranian plateau. The second, the Umayyad Empire (661–750), with its capital at Damascus, occupied an intermediate position between the Medinan caliphate and the Abbasid Empire. It retained an Arab tribal army, but the regime had become an empire based on agricultural taxes and adopted the institutions and practices of bureaucratic empires.

The Abbasids eliminated the Arab ethnic and tribal basis of power and identity and established a cosmopolitan imperial regime. The political patterns and institutions of the Abbasids incorporated much of the theory and practice of the Sasanian Empire, which ruled both Iraq and the Iranian plateau for more than four centuries before the Arab conquest in the seventh century. The Abbasid caliphate was an Irano-Islamic empire. The regime reflected the legacy of millennia of imperial rule in the region, not of the caliphate of Medina in the seventh century or the legal conception of the caliphate. It was the last empire to draw its principle revenue from the Sawad, the heavily irrigated lands of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, which had nourished empires from Sumerian times on. This concentrated agricultural wealth supported a centralized, bureaucratic regime and a salaried, subordinate army. The empire extended far beyond the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, of course, but the ultimate pattern of governance derived from there.

Traditional attitudes and scholarship, both Muslim and Western, regard the transformation of the caliphate into an imperial monarchy as a betrayal, a denial of Islamic political norms, and a corruption and distortion of the caliphate. More recent scholarship has altered this image considerably, although no new consensus has emerged. The word "caliph" is an Anglicization of the Arabic *khalifa*, which means "deputy" or "successor." Caliphate (*khilafa*) denotes both the office of caliph and the principality or empire ruled by him; thus, the term *Abbasid caliphate* refers both to the period during which the Abbasid dynasty held the office of caliph and to the area it ruled. The traditional view holds that *khalifa* was short for *khalifat rasulullah*, meaning "deputy" or "successor of the Prophet of God," and that it implied neither the religious status of prophet nor the political status of king. In this view, the authority of the caliph derived from the Muslim community's recognition of his position as the successor to the Prophet and was merely political and administrative. The use of the title *khalifatullah*, "deputy of God," beginning with the third caliph, Uthman, began, in this view, the corruption of Islamic politics.

More recent scholarship suggests that the rulers of the Muslim community used the title *khalifatullah* from the beginning. Though not prophets, they had religious as well as political authority, interpreting as well as enforcing divine decrees. This conception of the caliphate resembled the sacral kingship of ancient Middle Eastern imperial tradition. Though lacking the exaltation of the ruler's position, it included authority over questions of religious doctrine. This model of the caliphate resembles the Shii concept of the imamate more than it does the standard model of the Sunni caliphate. If it is accurate, the early caliphs had some of the attributes of what the later caliphs clearly were, sacral kings.

In his landmark work *Kingship and the Gods*, Henri Frankfort distinguishes between two forms of kingship in the ancient Near East, divine and sacral. Divine kingship, in which the king himself is a god, developed in Egypt. Sacral kingship, in which the king is an ordinary mortal who receives a divine mandate to rule, developed in Mesopotamia. The sovereignty of the ruler on earth mirrors that of the single or dominant deity in the universe. The common analogy of the king as the shepherd of his subjects reflects the concept of sacral kingship. The shepherd is responsible for, but not to, his flock; he answers not to the sheep but to the flock's owner—by analogy, God. Ancient Near Eastern conceptions of kingship reached Islamic civilization through Sasanian Iran. The Iranians used the term *farr* for sovereignty; their iconography frequently showed their monarchs receiving a winged disk, representing *farr*, from God. The concept of the circle of justice, which dates back at least to the time of Hammurabi, was an inherent part of the Near Eastern tradition of sacral kingship. It remains influential to this day. It is a model of how society and polity should function.

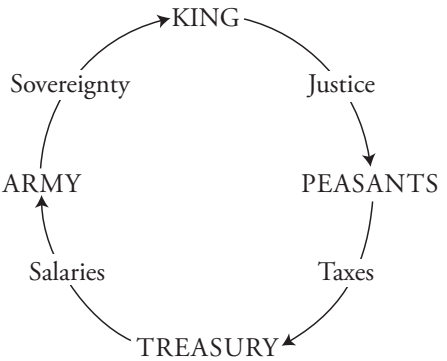

FIGURE 2.1 Circle of Justice

As Figure 2.1 shows, the king sits at the apex of the circle and maintains justice (primarily reasonable and predictable taxation and protection from oppressive officials). The peasants pay taxes into the treasury. The treasury pays the army. The army completes the circle by making the king secure and powerful. The proper functioning of the state protects the true religion, for the state and religion are brothers. The circle also assumes that there is a correspondence between the political and social order on earth and the natural order of the universe. Maintenance of the circle ensures the proper operation of the universe, meaning, most importantly, the right amount of rain at the right time to ensure agricultural productivity. Sacral kingship and the circle of justice explain the nature of the Abbasid regime far better than any concept of Islamic origin.

The circle of justice became a part of Arabic literature in the eighth century, when the process of translating Persian texts into Arabic began, but it became one of the functional norms in the seventh century when the caliph Umar took over the existing administrative systems of the newly conquered lands of Iraq and Syria. Many important Muslim writers incorporated the circle of justice into their work, including Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (1058–1111), the most influential of all Sunni authors. He writes in this *Nasihat al-Muluk* (Advice for Kings), "The Religion depends on the monarchy, the monarchy on the army, the army on the suppliers, suppliers on prosperity, and prosperity upon justice."[1]

Most Western interpreters of Islam have regarded the transformation of the caliphate into an imperial monarchy as an abandonment of the egalitarian political program of Islam. H. A. R. Gibb, perhaps the most prominent Western student of Islamic civilization in the twentieth century, blamed Sasanian influence:

> The Sasanian strands which had been woven into the fabric of Muslim thought were, and remained, foreign to its native constitution. The ethical attitudes which they assumed were in open or latent opposition to the Islamic ethic, and the Sasanian tradition introduced into Islamic society a kernel of derangement, never wholly assimilated yet never wholly rejected.[2]

Recent scholarship, however, has demonstrated that the mainstream of Muslim thinkers embraced both sacral kingship and the circle of justice. The Irano-Islamic synthesis was in fact an Irano-Shari synthesis. The opposition to this synthesis took place on the fringes, in the form of pietist

quietism, both Sunni and Shii, and revolutionary activism, usually but not always Shii.

The next significant religio-political transition, the bifurcation of the Prophet's legacy, took place in the middle of the ninth century. The caliphs retained the political leadership of the political community Muhammad had created but no longer acted as his spiritual successors. The ulama, the experts in Islamic law, became the primary exponents and interpreters of the Prophet's teaching. The basic conceptual and institutional patterns of the Shariah, *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and the schools of law (Arabic *madhab*, pl. *madhabib*; Persian sing., *mazhab*; Modern Turkish sing., *mezheb*; the meaning is closer to religious denomination than legal school), matured at this time. This division of authority became an enduring feature of Islamic societies. The degree of the ulama's political influence varied, but it was influence, not power.

The military and financial structure of the Abbasid Empire reflected that of its Sasanian predecessor. Iraq's agricultural productivity made a highly centralized administration, with a professional army paid directly from the central treasury, possible. The nature of the Abbasid army changed significantly in the early ninth century with the development of military slavery.

BOX 2.1 Military Slavery

Although their careers began as involuntary servitude and they had the legal status of slave, military slaves' status and function differ so dramatically from the common image of slavery that the term is misleading. In late childhood or early adolescence, military slaves, known in Arabic as *ghulam*s (young men) or *mamluk*s (owned), were acquired by rulers through purchase or capture; most were Turkic nomads from central Asia. They were well treated, often well educated, and given rigorous military training. They became highly capable soldiers, intensely loyal to their masters and to each other. Legal freedom, which most of the military slaves received in early adulthood, did not alter these relationships.

The systematic recruitment of military slaves began during the reign of the caliph al-Mamun (r. 813–833). It became a common feature of Muslim polities, surviving into the nineteenth century. Because of its frequency

(continues)

(continued)

in the Islamic world and extreme rarity outside it, the issue of a connection between military slavery and Islam has received much attention from scholars. Daniel Pipes, in the first systematic approach to the issue, summarizes his argument in the following four propositions:

> (1) that the impossibility of attaining Islamic public ideals caused Muslim subjects to relinquish their military role; (2) that marginal area soldiers filled this power vacuum; (3) that they rapidly became unreliable, creating the need for fresh marginal area soldiers and a way to bind them; (4) that military slavery supplied a way both to acquire and to control new marginal area soldiers.[1]

Hugh Kennedy, the leading Abbasid military historian, flatly disagrees with Pipes:

> The choice of men from these marginal areas to form the elite of armed forces was not because others refused to join up or because most Muslims disdained to serve a Caliphate which they felt had abandoned the ways of true Islam.[2]

He maintains that the caliphs hired outsiders because they lacked political baggage and outside loyalties and had significant military skills. But even if Kennedy's analysis is correct regarding the origin of military slavery in Abbasid times, there must be some explanation for the ubiquity of military slavery in the Islamic world and its virtual absence elsewhere.

In the post-Abbasid period, military slavery became one of the two standard forms of military organization, the other being tribal military armies. Rulers and ranking military and civilian officials (often former military slaves themselves) acquired contingents of slave soldiers. In northern India in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries and in Egypt and Syria from the thirteenth through the early sixteenth centuries, military slaves ruled without a ruling dynasty. In the latter case, the Mamluk kingdom, multiple generations of military-slave elites ruled the principality, transmitting their status to slaves they had acquired rather than to their biological descendants.

NOTES

1. Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), 193.

2. Hugh Kennedy, *The Army of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State*. Warfare and History, ed. Jeremy Black (London: Routledge, 2001), 196.

As the discussion in Box 2.1 explains, historians do not agree on the reason for the evolution and persistence of this institution. Whatever the explanation, it clearly provided the Abbasids with a capable and cohesive army dependent on the central treasury and with no loyalty or connection to the general population. Military slavery became one of the two common forms of military organization in the Islamic world in the post-Abbasid period and remained a common feature in Islamic societies until the nineteenth century.

The highly centralized Abbasid regime, funded by agricultural taxes and maintained by a slave army paid from the central treasury, became the model of ideal government for the bureaucrats and administrators of later Islamic history. The Abbasids themselves could not maintain that ideal for long. The fratricidal struggle for the throne between al-Mamun and al-Amin (the fourth *fitna*, 809–813) marked the beginning of the loss of Abbasid authority in the outer provinces. The murder of the caliph al-Mutawakkil by his own military slaves in 861 began the process of political degeneration. The loss of control of the outer provinces and weakening of the regime at the center continued until the Abbasids became mere figureheads, under the tutelage of the Buyids (945–1055) and then the Saljuq Turks.

The explanation of Abbasid collapse begins with environmental change. The agricultural base of the Abbasid regime deteriorated due to erosion and rising soil salinity in the Sawad, the plain between the Tigris and the Euphrates. Given the economic conditions of the era, with taxes frequently paid in grain rather than currency and no economical method of transporting grain for long distances except over water, only a concentration of highly productive agricultural land could make fiscal centralization possible. The decline of Sawad agriculture changed the politics of the Middle East fundamentally. Except in Egypt, centralized government based on the concentrated collection of agricultural tax was no longer possible. Fiscal decentralization was inevitable; political decentralization soon followed. Fiscal decentralization generally took the form of the payment of soldiers, especially ranking officers, by land-revenue concessions rather than cash salary. Such concessions were not intended to include the grant of governing authority but in practice commonly did so. These revenue concessions, usually called *iqta*, resembled the Western fief only superficially, since such concessions were temporary, revocable, and did not imply governmental authority, though *iqta* holders frequently usurped it. Paying soldiers by revenue assignments inevitably weakened the government's control over both

the territory assigned and the soldiers paid. The weakening of the regime at the center made holding the provinces difficult.

The decline in agricultural productivity extended beyond the Sawad. The climate of the entire region, which Marshall G. S. Hodgson calls the Arid Zone, apparently became dryer at this time. In much of what had been the Abbasid Empire, the ecological conditions became less favorable to agriculture and more favorable to pastoral nomadism. Agriculture required considerable investment, while pastoral nomadism was a profitable use of land. The Turks of the eleventh century and the Mongols of the thirteenth usually did not destroy intact irrigation systems; they wrecked, or simply ignored, works that offered little return on further investment. Their rule thus produced a decline in the cultivated area and an increase in the amount of land devoted to animal husbandry. There was less agricultural revenue to pay professional soldiers and more land suitable for the use of pastoral nomads, whose military skills, primarily as mounted archers, exceeded the capabilities of any soldiers other than professionals. In this circumstance, the military power of mounted archers gave them political dominance in most of the central Islamic lands, including the Iranian plateau, Iraq, and Syria. Mounted archers exercised their supremacy through confederations of tribes, ruled by dynasties that claimed a divine mandate to rule, including the Saljuqs, Chingiz Khanid Mongols, Timurids, and, ultimately, Safavids. The Saljuqs led a confederation of Turkic tribes known as the Oghuz. When the Oghuz settled in Anatolia, they became known as Turkmen (this word is transliterated or Anglicized in several ways, including "Turcoman," "Turkman," and "Türkmen").

The collapse of Abbasid authority and the growing nomad dominance altered the pattern of politics fundamentally. As Abbasid provinces became autonomous regional kingdoms, their rulers sought to justify their autonomy. The Shii Fatimids had conquered North Africa, Egypt, and part of Syria over the course of the ninth century; they rejected the Abbasid legacy entirely. In most of the rest of the empire, the regional rulers sought to maintain the pretext that they acted as Abbasid governors. There were exceptions; the Shii Buyids drew on the traditions of Iranian monarchy. But for the most part, the regional rulers sought to justify their positions within the Abbasid system, obtaining recognition of their positions from the caliph while simultaneously attempting to justify their rule on its own merits. Eventually the concept of the sultanate emerged. The title of sultan implied unrestricted sovereignty with caliphal certification, implying Sunni piety and Shari (the ad-

jective for Shariah) rigor. Mahmud of Ghazna (r. 998–1030) was the first person to hold this title; the Saljuqs were the first dynasty of sultans. The Iranian titles *padishah* (protecting king) and *shahanshah* (king of kings) came back into use at this time. These terms expressed, however, the norms and mind-set of the Iranian tradition of monarchy.

The loss of political power naturally called the position of the Abbasids into question. Could a caliph be a caliph if he had no more than ritual power? An impotent figurehead could not be a sacral king, but he could form an essential link to the legacy of the Prophet, not as an interpreter of the message but as a symbol of the continuity of the Muslim community, the *umma*. As H. A. R. Gibb demonstrated half a century ago, the Sunni legal theory of the caliphate, expressed in Abu al-Hasan Ali al-Mawardi's (974–1058) *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya* (Ordinances of Government) and the writings of Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (1058–1111) on the subject, among other works, took form in response to this situation. That these theoretical writings define the caliph as something other than a sacral king makes sense given the circumstances.

The devolution of Abbasid authority meant the dispersion of Abbasid bureaucrats. The regional dynasties needed administrators, and those administrators carried and transmitted the norms and practices of Middle Eastern imperial bureaucracy. From Morocco to Bengal, and for nearly a millennium, the bureaucrats of the Islamic world sought to make governments conform to the Abbasid model of centralized, agrarian rule. Famous examples of this tradition, the *Siyasat-Nama* (Book of Government) or *Siyar al-Muluk* (Rules for Kings) of Nizam al-Mulk Tusi (1018–1092) and al-Ghazali's *Nasihat al-Muluk* (Advice for Kings), were written during the eleventh century. (Some scholars doubt that al-Ghazali wrote the entire *Nasihat*, but even if he did not, the attribution to him places it in the mainstream of Islamic thought.)

Both Nizam al-Mulk and al-Ghazali were pivotal figures in the development of Islam and Islamic civilization; one might describe the eleventh century as the axial age of Islamic civilization. Nizam al-Mulk, the vizier of the Saljuq sultans Alp Arslan (r. 1059–1063 in Khurasan and 1063–1073 as paramount ruler) and then Malikshah (r. 1073–1092), helped to set a pattern of government that persisted for perhaps a century; he also sponsored the establishment of the first madrasas, or religious colleges, which became the institutional bases of Sunni Islam. His political theory reflects the Iranian tradition of monarchy and government, including

sacral kingship, the circle of justice, implying tight central supervision of provincial administration, and the interdependence of just government and right religion. His regime faced the revolutionary threat of the Nizari Ismailis (Sevener Shiis, better known as the Assassins), who sought to overthrow the Saljuq regime and the established political and social order through targeted assassination; his writing reflects the ubiquity and severity of this danger. He himself fell victim to the Assassins in 1092. The fundamental characteristics of the Saljuq polity, as well as of most other kingdoms of the middle periods of Islamic history, frustrated Nizam al-Mulk and the political agenda he represented. The Saljuq concept of kingship, fiscal decentralization, and nomad power made the Abbasid and Sasanian models impossible to emulate.

The Saljuqs, like other Turks and Mongols, also believed in sacral kingship, but their version included collective sovereignty. An origin myth or other portent demonstrated the validity of the claim to a divine mandate. The Saljuq dynastic myth included the story of the eponymous founder of the dynasty, Saljuq, urinating sparks that set the world on fire, graphically illustrating the idea that each of his descendants carried a spark of sovereignty. In the Chingiz Khanid case, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, a chronicle written shortly after Chingiz Khan's death, articulates his divine origin and sovereignty. The founders of these empires made the original distribution of appanages to their sons (and other male relatives if, as in the Saljuq case, the progenitor of the family did not actually begin the empire). After their deaths, family councils or, more often, internecine warfare settled the distribution of appanages and succession to the paramount throne. Continuing warfare over succession and appanage distribution led to the fragmentation of these polities into small, struggling principalities, usually by the third generation. Tribal chieftains frequently used princes as figureheads in their efforts to expand tribal and personal power. Collective sovereignty thus dovetailed with fiscal decentralization, creating a series of decentralized polities.

John E. Woods's study of the Aqquyunlu polity, a Turkmen tribal confederation that dominated eastern Anatolia and Azerbaijan in the second half of the fifteenth century, provides concepts and vocabulary for the description of such confederations. The ruling dynasty was the paramount clan. The Aqquyunlu confederation consisted of the relationship between the leaders of confederate tribes, numbering some fifty Turkish and Kurdish tribes in all. The men of these tribes furnished most of the military power

of the confederation; their leaders had the most important military offices of the state. These offices included the chief of staff and president of the supreme administrative council (*amir-i divan* or *divan begi*; the council was called the *divan-i ala*), the commander in chief (*amir al-umara*), and other military administrators. To counterbalance the power of the confederate tribes, the rulers maintained personal military retinues, known as war bands. Their members were generally also Turks (or Mongols) who had abandoned their tribal affiliations to tie themselves to the ruler alone. Members of the war band filled court positions, such as chamberlain, reflecting their personal closeness to the ruler. In some cases, paramount rulers recruited military slaves for their war bands. The war band strengthened the ruler's position, but not enough to counterbalance the power of the confederate tribes. In some cases, rulers sought to reduce the nomads' influence by pushing them to the frontier, where they could continue to expand the empire without interfering with the central government.

The Saljuq use of this policy led to the Turkic occupation of Anatolia. After the Saljuq conquest of Iran, Iraq, and Syria, the rulers pushed the Turkmen to the Anatolian frontier. This steady movement led to constant pressure on the Byzantine frontier and eventually the conquest of major Byzantine cities. When the Byzantine emperor Romanus Diogenes led his army east against the Turkmen in 1071, the Saljuq sultan Alp Arslan brought the imperial Saljuq army against the Byzantines. The sultan's decisive victory at Malazgirt began the permanent Turkic conquest of eastern and central Anatolia. A branch of the Saljuq dynasty, known as the Saljuqs of Rum (Rome, Anatolia), ruled eastern and central Anatolia from their capital at Konya.

The Saljuq Empire gradually fragmented during the twelfth century, except for the Rum Saljuq kingdom. The most important successor state, the Khwarazm-Shah Empire, which briefly dominated the Iranian plateau in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, is notable primarily because Ala al-Din Muhammad Khwarazam Shah provoked the first Mongol penetration of the Middle East. This incursion in 1219 led to a limited Mongol presence in the Middle East and ultimately to the Battle of Köse Dagh in 1243, in which the Mongol general Bayju defeated the Rum Saljuqs and established Mongol control over eastern Anatolia. The Mongols drove the Turks westward into Byzantine territory, thereby creating the frontier environment in which the principality that became the Ottoman Empire took root.

The Mongol invasion of the Middle East in the mid-thirteenth century led to the final destruction of the Abbasid caliphate in 1258 and the

establishment of the Mongol Il-Khanid kingdom. The Il-Khans ruled the Iranian plateau, Iraq, and eastern Anatolia until the devolution of the empire in 1335. The Il-Khanate and its Mongol neighbor to the east, the Chaghatay khanate, created the environment in which the precursors of the three empires developed. Hodgson, following Martin Dickson, developed the concept of the military patronage state to describe the post-Mongol polities. He lists the distinctive characteristics of the military patronage state as follows:

> first, a legitimation of independent dynastic law; second, the conception of the whole state as a single military force; third, the attempt to exploit all economic and high cultural resources as appanages of the chief military families.[3]

In military patronage states, all the recipients of government salaries, be they soldiers, bureaucrats, or ulama, had military (*askari*) status. Taxpayers, whether they were peasants, artisans, merchants, or nomads, were *raya* (flock). This distinction cut across ethnic lines in concept, though in practice the Turkic and Mongol pastoral nomads were all *askari*, and the vast majority of the settled population was *raya*.

The Turko-Mongol dynasties could not govern without civilian ministers and bureaucrats, the Tajiks. The term *Tajik* literally means "ethnic Persian" but figuratively refers to the literate elites who staffed the financial administrative components of these regimes. Educated by their elders, these officials consistently strove to implement the policies of agrarian empire, notably centralized rule and direct payment of armies. The Turks filled executive and military officials; Tajiks held financial and administrative positions. The paramount rulers in tribal confederations naturally sought to maximize their own power. Their interests thus coincided with those of the Tajik bureaucrats. Robert Canfield and others have labeled the composite polities and societies that this circumstance produced Turko-Persia. The clash of political agendas was not a matter of mere ethnic tension or rivalry. There were ethnic tensions to be sure, but what mattered in politics was the clash of political cultures, expectations, and concepts of legitimacy. As time went on, Turkish speakers often took Tajik roles; not all ethnic Turks were political Turks.

The Turko-Mongol dynastic myths had limited appeal to the Tajik populations. Before the Mongol conquest of Baghdad, Sunni Muslim rulers gen-