

## LESSON 2

# The Ottomans and the Şafavids

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What factors help unify an empire?
- How can the creation of a new empire impact the people and culture of a region?

## READING HELPDESK

## Academic Vocabulary

- administrator
- conform

## Content Vocabulary

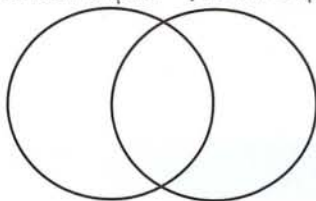
- shah
- orthodoxy
- anarchy

## TAKING NOTES

## Key Ideas and Details

**Comparing and Contrasting** Use the Venn diagram to compare and contrast the Ottoman and Şafavid Empires.

Ottoman Empire    Şafavid Empire



## IT MATTERS BECAUSE

*The Şafavid Empire was the shortest lived of the three Muslim empires, but was nonetheless influential. The Shia faith, declared as the state religion, unified the empire, but also brought it into conflict with the Ottomans, who were Sunni Muslims.*

## Problems in the Ottoman Empire

**GUIDING QUESTION** *What led to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire?*

The Ottoman Empire reached its high point under Süleyman I, known as the empire's greatest ruler. Süleyman (1520–1566) was also a great military leader, who led his army on 13 major military campaigns. He doubled the size of the Ottoman Empire. Europeans called him the “Grand Turk” and the “Magnificent.”

To his own subjects, however, Süleyman was known as the “Lawgiver.” Eager to provide justice for his subjects, he reorganized the government, regulated the laws of the empire, and saw that they were properly enforced. However, it might also have been during Süleyman's rule that problems began to occur. Having executed his two most able sons on suspicion of treason, Süleyman was succeeded by his only surviving son, Selim II (the Sot, or “the drunken sultan”).

The problems of the Ottoman Empire did not become visible until 1699, when the empire began to lose some of its territory. However, signs of internal disintegration had already appeared in the early 1600s.

After the death of Süleyman, sultans became less involved in government. They allowed their ministers to exercise more power. The training of officials declined, and senior positions were increasingly assigned to the sons or daughters of elites. Members of the elite soon formed a privileged group seeking wealth and power. Earlier, the sultans had regarded members of the ruling class as the “sultan's slaves.” Now the sultan became the servant of the ruling class. Moreover, the central bureaucracy lost its links with rural areas. Local officials became corrupt, taxes increased, and palace intrigue grew. Constant wars depleted the imperial treasury.

Another sign of change within the empire was a growing wealth and the impact of Western ideas and customs. Officials and merchants began to imitate the lifestyles of Europeans. They wore European clothing and bought Western furniture and art objects. During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, coffee and tobacco were introduced into polite Ottoman society. Cafes, where both were consumed, began to appear in the major cities.

Some sultans attempted to counter this by outlawing such goods as coffee and tobacco. One sultan patrolled the streets of İstanbul at night, ordering the immediate execution of subjects he caught in illegal acts. Their bodies were left on the streets as an example to others.

As Europeans opened sea trading routes with East Asia they used the overland trade routes less and less. These land routes passed through the Ottoman Empire, and this loss of trade resulted in economic problems. The Ottomans did not invest in manufacturing. Their guilds had strict price regulations and could not compete with inexpensive manufactured goods from Europe. This declining economy left little money for military expansion.

#### ✓ READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Determining Cause and Effect** How did some sultans respond to the influence of Western goods in the Ottoman Empire?

## The Şafavid Empire

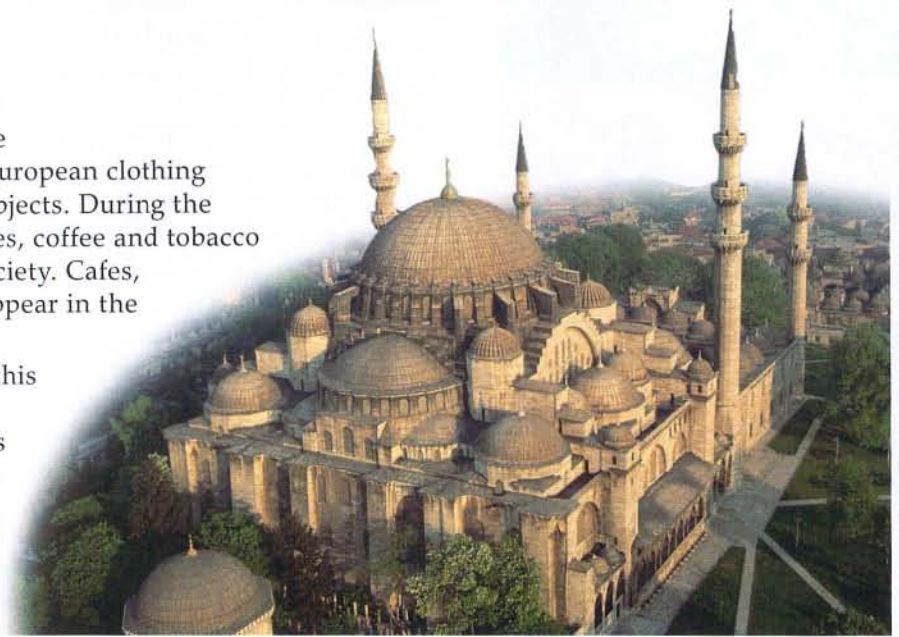
**GUIDING QUESTION** *What was the source of conflict between the Ottomans and the Şafavids?*

After the empire of Timur Lenk (Tamerlane) collapsed in the early fifteenth century, the area extending from Persia into central Asia fell into anarchy. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, however, a new dynasty known as the Şafavids (sah • FAH • weedz) took control. Unlike many of their Islamic neighbors who were Sunni Muslims, the Şafavids became ardent Shias.

The Şafavid dynasty was founded by Shāh Esmā'īl (ihs • MAH • eel), who, in 1501, used his forces to seize much of Iran and Iraq. He then called himself the **shah**, or king, of a new Persian state. Esmā'īl sent Shia preachers into the Anatolian Peninsula to convert members of Turkish tribes in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman sultan tried to halt this activity, but Esmā'īl refused to stop. Esmā'īl also ordered the massacre of Sunni Muslims when he conquered Baghdad in 1508.

Alarmed by these activities, the Ottoman sultan, Selim I, advanced against the Şafavids in Persia. With their muskets and artillery, the Ottomans won a major battle near Tabrīz. However, a few years later, Esmā'īl regained Tabrīz.

During the following decades, the Şafavids tried to consolidate their rule throughout Persia and in areas to the west. The Şafavids were faced with the problem of integrating various Turkish peoples with the settled Persian-speaking population of the urban areas. The Shia faith was used as



▲ The Süleymaniye Mosque in İstanbul, built between 1550–57

#### ► CRITICAL THINKING

**Interpreting Significance** Why is it significant that the mosque design was inspired by the Byzantine church of Hagia Sophia?

**shah** king (used in Persia and Iran)

## BIOGRAPHY



### Shāh 'Abbās (1571–1629)

Also called 'Abbās the Great, Shāh 'Abbās came to the throne in 1588. He organized a permanent army and drove the Ottoman and Uzbek armies out of Persia. He moved the Persian capital from Kazvin to Eşfahān, where he established trade relationships with European ambassadors. Shāh 'Abbās showed tolerance in religion but punished corrupt government officials severely. He was also a notable patron of the arts.

#### ► CRITICAL THINKING

**Summarizing** What made the rule of Shāh 'Abbās successful?

**administrator** one who manages the affairs of a government or a business

a unifying force. Esmā'īl made conversion to the Shia faith mandatory for the largely Sunni population. Many Sunnis were killed or exiled. Like the Ottoman sultan, the shah claimed to be the spiritual leader of all Islam.

In the 1580s, the Ottomans went on the attack. They placed Azerbaijan under Ottoman rule and controlled the Caspian Sea with their fleet. This forced the new Şafavids shah, 'Abbās, to sign a peace treaty in which he lost much territory in the northwest. The capital of the Şafavids was moved from the northwestern city of Kazvin to the more centrally located city of Eşfahān. Eşfahān became one of the world's largest cities with a population of 1 million.

Under Shāh 'Abbās, who ruled from 1588 to 1629, the Şafavids reached the high point of their glory. Similar to the Ottoman Empire, **administrators** were trained to run the kingdom. Shāh 'Abbās also strengthened his army, which he outfitted with the latest weapons. In the early seventeenth century, Shāh 'Abbās moved against the Ottomans and returned Azerbaijan to the Şafavids.

After the death of Shāh 'Abbās in 1629, the Şafavid dynasty gradually lost its vigor. Most of 'Abbās's **successors** lacked his talent and political skills. Eventually, the power of Shia religious elements began to increase at court and in Şafavid society at large.

Intellectual freedom marked the height of the empire. However, the pressure to **conform** to traditional religious beliefs, called religious **orthodoxy**, increased. For example, Persian women had considerable freedom during the early empire. Now they were forced into seclusion and required to wear a veil. Treatment of non-Muslims deteriorated as well.

In the early eighteenth century, the Şafavid dynasty collapsed. The Turks took advantage of the situation to seize territories along the western border. Persia sank into a long period of political and social **anarchy**.

#### ✓ READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Analyzing** What was the role of religion during the rule of Shāh Esmā'īl?

## Life under the Şafavids

**GUIDING QUESTION** What was life like under the Şafavids?

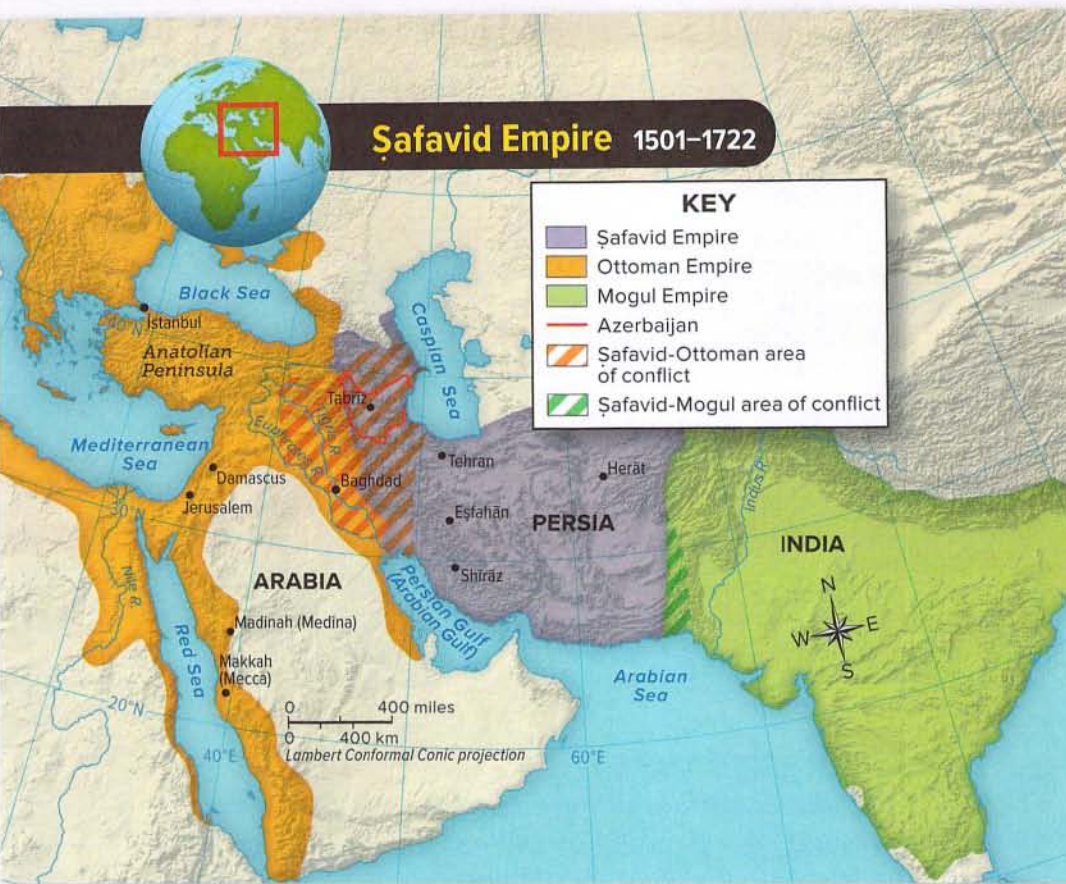
Persia under the Şafavids was a mixed society. The combination of Turkish and Persian elements affected virtually all aspects of Şafavid society.

As Shia Islam was the state religion, the Şafavid rulers were eagerly supported by Shias. Shahs were more available to their subjects than were rulers elsewhere. "They show great familiarity . . . even to their own subjects, eating and drinking with them pretty freely," remarked one visitor.

Strong-minded shahs firmly controlled the power of the landed aristocracy. In addition, appointment to senior positions in the bureaucracy was based on merit rather than birth. For example, Shāh 'Abbās hired foreigners from neighboring countries for positions in his government.

The Şafavid shahs played an active part in trade and manufacturing activity. Across the empire, bazaars in regional capitals provided citizens with access to a variety of goods and merchandise. Merchants came from across Central Asia to trade in the Şafavid region.

The bazaar was the heart of their commerce. Many bazaars were enclosed and had high vaulted ceilings that covered narrow rows of stalls. Specific sections housed similar types of goods for shoppers' convenience. Spaces for manufacturing, storage, and merchants' offices stood alongside shops. Caravansaries attached to the bazaar received trains of camels or mules loaded with goods. In the caravansary, newly arrived trade goods were sold wholesale. In the bazaar, they were sold retail.



## Safavid Empire 1501–1722

**KEY**

- Şafavid Empire
- Ottoman Empire
- Mogul Empire
- Azerbaijan
- Şafavid-Ottoman area of conflict
- Şafavid-Mogul area of conflict

### GEOGRAPHY CONNECTION

Differences between the Şafavids and the Ottomans led to conflict.

- 1 PLACES AND REGIONS** Which rivers flowed through the area disputed by the Ottomans and Şafavids?
- 2 THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS** Why would Tabrīz be a likely spot for a battle?

Despite its trading activity, Şafavid Persia was probably not as prosperous as its neighbors to the east and west—the Moguls and the Ottomans. Hemmed in by European sea power to the south and the land power of the Ottomans to the west, the Şafavids found trade with Europe difficult.

In terms of culture, knowledge of science, medicine, and mathematics under the Şafavids was equal to that of other societies in the region. Persia also witnessed an extraordinary flowering of the arts during the reign of Shāh ‘Abbās. Silk weaving and carpet weaving flourished, stimulated by the great demand for Persian carpets in the West. Persian painting enjoyed a long tradition. Riza-i-Abbasi, the most famous artist of this period, created exquisite works. Soft colors and flowing movement dominated the features of Şafavid painting.

#### READING PROGRESS CHECK

*Differentiating* What is the difference between a bazaar and a caravansary?

**conform** to adhere to rules or standards; to fit in

**orthodoxy** traditional beliefs, especially in religion

**anarchy** political disorder; lawlessness

## LESSON 2 REVIEW

### Reviewing Vocabulary

- 1. Identifying** Provide an example of a Persian shah and explain his duties and achievements.

### Using Your Notes

- 2. Comparing** Using your Venn diagram, discuss the similarities between the Ottoman and Şafavid empires.

### Answering the Guiding Questions

- 3. Explaining** What led to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire?

- 4. Interpreting** What was the source of the conflict between the Ottomans and the Şafavids?

- 5. Summarizing** What was life like under the Şafavids?

### Writing Activity

- 6. Argument** Write a paragraph that supports or refutes this statement: Süleyman I was a cruel leader who was more interested in expanding his empire than in protecting or providing for his subjects.