

Prompt: Evaluate the relative importance of gunpowder as a cause of empire expansion during the period 1450-1750.

Document 1

“In the 15th and 16th centuries, three great powers arose in a band across western and southern Asia. The Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal dynasties established control over Turkey, Iran, and India respectively, in large part due to a Chinese invention--gunpowder.

In large part, the successes of the western empires depended on advanced firearms and cannons. As a result, they are called the "Gunpowder Empires." This phrase was coined by Marshall G.S. Hodgson and William H. McNeill. The gunpowder empires monopolized the manufacture of guns and artillery in their areas. However, the Hodgson-McNeill theory isn't regarded as sufficient for the rise of these empires, but their use of the weapons was integral to their military tactics.”

Dr. Kallie Szczepanski, “The Gunpowder Empires: Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal.” [ThoughtCo](#), 5/23/19

Document 2



Johann Hieronymus Loschenkohl, “Ottoman Mufti blesses cannons with holy rose water” before the start of the Austrian-Ottoman war, 1788

Document 3

“The Turkish monarch going to war takes with him over 40,000 camels and nearly as many baggage mules, or which a great part, when he is invading Persia, are loaded with rice and other kinds of grain. These mules and camels also serve to carry tents and armor, and likewise tools and munitions for the campaign...The invading army carefully abstains from encroaching on its supplies at the outset, as they are well aware that, when the season for campaigning draws to a close, they will have to retreat over districts wasted by the enemy, or scraped as bare by countless hordes of men and droves of baggage animals, as if they had been devastated by locusts; accordingly they reserve their stores as much as possible for this emergency.”

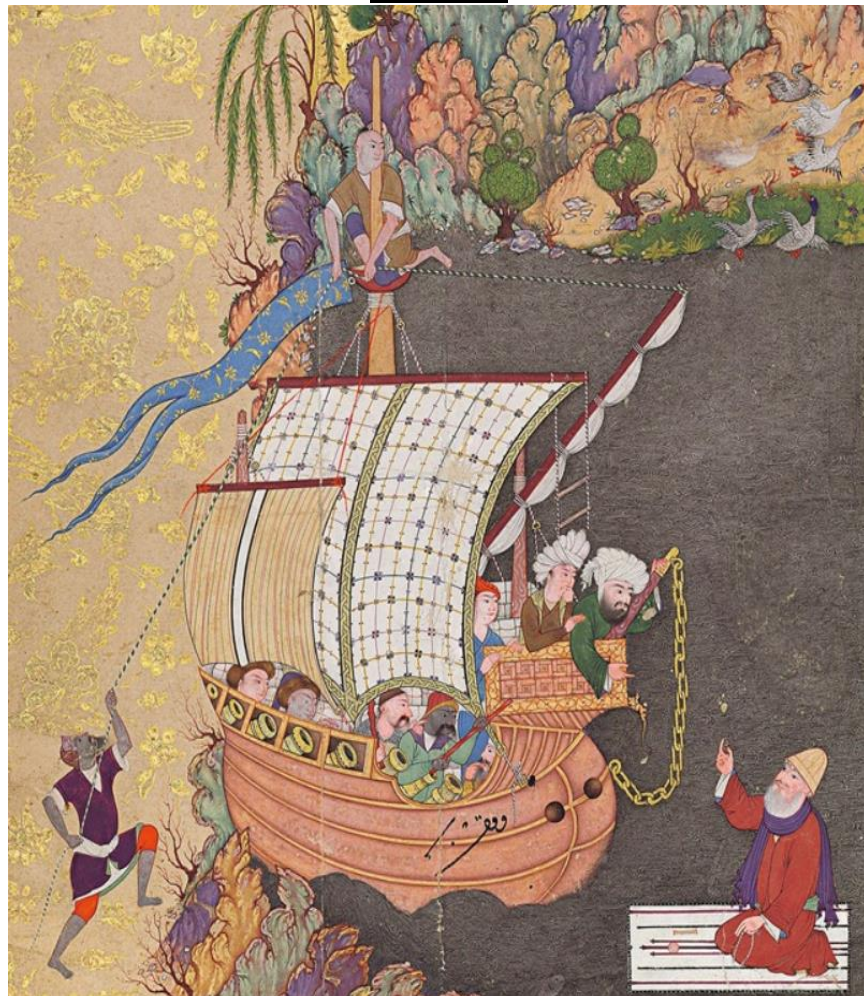
Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Austrian Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, [The Turkish Letters](#), 1581

Document 4

“He is very valiant and has a great liking for warfare and weapons of war, which he has constantly in his hands: we have been eye-witnesses of this because, whenever we were with him, he was adjusting his [swords], testing his [muskets], etc: . . . This is the great experience, which he has obtained of warfare over so many years, that he makes it in person and from the first has made him a fine soldier and very skilled, and his men so dexterous that they are little behind our men in Europe. He has introduced into his militia the use of and esteem for [muskets], in which they are very practiced. Therefore it is that his realm has been so much extended on all sides. . . . All the above mentioned soldiers, who will total some 100,000, receive pay for the whole year.”

Father Paul Simon, Vatican ambassador to the Safavid court of Shah Abbas in Isfahan, his report to Pope Clement VIII, 1605

Document 5



Safavid Isfahan, “Impoverished Sufi mystic on prayer rug & merchant vessel”, painting c. 1600

Document 6

“The word *Ragipous* signifies *Sons of Rajahs*. These people are educated from one generation to another in the profession of arms. Parcels of land are assigned to them for their maintenance by the Rajas whose subjects they are, on condition that they shall appear in the field on the summons of their chieftain....they only require to be well led, for their minds are made up to die in his presence rather than abandon him to his enemies....Who then can wonder that the Great Mughal, though a Muslim, always keeps in his service a large retinue of Rajas, treating them with the same consideration as his other Omrahs, and appointing them to important commands in his armies?...Prince Dara was enabled to assemble a numerous army, finer than perhaps had ever trod the plains of Hindoustan (India). The lowest calculation makes it amount to one hundred thousand horse, more than twenty thousand foot, and eighty pieces of cannon; besides an incredible number of camp-followers, and those bazaar dealers, so necessary for the support of an army in peace as well as in war..”

Dr. François Bernier, French traveler and personal physician to Dara, the son of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656 – 1668

Document 7



Book of the Reign of Akbar, Bulls drag guns up hill during Mughal attack on Ranthambhor Fort, 1568