Islamic Empires of the Middle East

How were they conquered, how were they ruled, and why did they fall?
The gunpowder empires dominated Asia, North Africa, and southeastern Europe in the sixteenth century.
Ottoman Empire
Mongol rule in the 1300’s left the area around Anatolia (Turkey) in chaos and shambles.
Turkish tribal people went from being mounted archers to using gunpowder weapons.
Cannons and guns were ignited with gunpowder, which Arabs called “snow from China”. The Chinese had invented gunpowder when trying to make pills from sulfur, potassium, and sodium nitrate. Discovering these gases expanded, they figured out how to harness their explosive power.
The Ottoman Turks, a remnant of the Seljuk Turks, organized themselves, conquered other Turkic tribes in the area, and ended up conquering an entire empire centered in Anatolia.
The Ottoman Empire was named after an early leader named Osman.
Ottoman imperial armies were dominated by infantry troops called Janissaries (janissaries means recruits in Turkish). Some of these troops were captured Christian boys, captured in a process called devshirme, removed from their families, required to learn Turkish, converted to Islam, and trained for Janissary units.
JANISSARY COMMANDER
JANISSARY OFFICER
Sultan Mehmet II conquered Constantinople in 1453. Sultans were a combination of Turkic warrior princes, Muslim caliphs, and conquering emperors. They had absolute authority and were strong leaders.
Ottoman armies extended the empire into the area which had been the Byzantine Empire, North Africa, spreading to the Balkans, Bulgaria, and the Black Sea. Their fleets ruled the eastern Mediterranean. Their relationship with Christians they conquered was mixed.
Suleiman ruled from 1520-1566, a time of cultural flowering. By this time the empire had 50 million people.
Suleiman Mosque, Istanbul
On paper Sultans were absolute monarchs, but to maintain power they had to play factions off against each other, aristocratic warriors against Janissaries and religious leaders against military leaders for control of the bureaucracy.
Decline of the Ottoman Empire

• As empire became large, leaders grew distant and corrupt
• Army too costly
• Trade declined
• Leaders resisted change and failed to keep up with advances in technology.
European printing press 1439
European microscopes 1600’s
European telescope of 1700’s
Safavid Empire
The gunpowder empires dominated Asia, North Africa, and southeastern Europe in the sixteenth century.
Abbas the Great (1587-1629)
Mosque Abbas the Great built.
Imam Square built by Abbas the Great.
Babur the Tiger.
Mughal Empire
Akbar 1556-1605
Aurangzeb 1658-1707