

THE GUNPOWDER EMPIRES



The 16th and 17th centuries witnessed the peak of Muslim power that extended from the Maghreb and West Africa through to Central Asia, India, and beyond.

Dominating the central Islamic lands were three remarkable empires—Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal—whose political institutions and centralized bureaucracies, control of both land and maritime trade routes, and powerful armies and artillery (hence the term “gunpowder empires”) led to an unsurpassed flowering of Islamic art and culture.

This series will examine in depth these “Gunpowder Empires” along with the rulers of genius who created them.

The Lectures

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| Saturday 7 April 2018 | The Safavids | Dr. John Tidmarsh |
| Saturday 14 April 2018 | The Mughals | Maree Browne |
| Saturday 28 April 2018 | The Ottomans | Ben Churcher |

- The lectures will be held in CCANESA, University of Sydney.
- The lectures will start at 10am with a coffee/tea break at 11.30 then the second lecture at 12 noon till 1.30 followed by drinks and a chat with the lecturer.
- The cost of the series is \$80 for NEAF Members and \$105 for non-members.
- The cost of an individual lecture is \$30 for NEAF Members and \$40 for non-members.

8 April 2018

The Safavids

Dr John Tidmarsh

It was during the brilliant Safavid era of the 16th and 17th centuries that modern Iran was born. However the foundations for Safavid rule were laid much earlier, in the aftermath of the Mongol invasions, under the sufi Sheikh Safi al-Din (1252–1334) whose mausoleum in Ardabil remains one of the gems of Iranian Islamic architecture.

In 1501 under Shah Ismail I (great grandson of Sheikh Safi) Iran finally came under Safavid rule with the next 200 years witnessing an astonishing florescence in trade (and sometimes conflict) between Iran, its Ottoman and Mughal neighbours and, increasingly, China and Europe.

Safavid rule reached its peak under the enlightened (but also cruel) Shah Abbas the Great (1588–1629) with Isfahan (“the Pearl of Islam”) becoming its capital for the remainder of the Safavid period. Despite the appalling consequences of the Afghan siege (1722) which brought an end to Safavid rule, Isfahan remains one of the most dazzling and perfectly preserved cities of the Islamic world.

14 April 2018

The Mughals

Maree Browne

Further East, and slightly later, another great Islamic empire was emerging, the Mughals. With its foundations in the Fergana Valley of Central Asia, its first ruler, Babur, led his forces south through Afghanistan and on into India in the years 1525 to 1530. In the following centuries the fortunes of the Mughals, under different emperors, waxed and waned with repeated military incursions into the sub-continent and the establishment of the Mughal Empire in its northern regions. The successful campaigns were aided by the use of gunpowder weapons against the larger but less well armed Afghani and Indian military; much of this weaponry was supplied by the Ottomans.

However the Mughals are better known for their magnificent architecture and art. Mughal art and architecture was influenced by their relationship with Safavid Iran and these Persian influences were coupled with those of the indigenous Hindu and Muslim cultures to create a culture now so closely identified with the Mughals. This combination resulted in the creation of some of the most famous architectural monuments of the Islamic World, the Taj Mahal, Shahjahanabad, Fatapur Sikri, the Shalamar Gardens and many more.

The ever-growing British influence, first through the East India Company, and then full British governmental control eventually saw the demise of the Mughals in the mid-19th century. However the world is still enriched by their artistic achievements.

28 April 2018

The Ottomans

Ben Churcher

Istanbul, Mother of the World and capital of the former Ottoman Empire straddles Europe and Asia and is a showcase for the architectural and artistic achievements of the Ottomans. The domes and minarets of the Blue Mosque, the Süleymaniye Mosque and the terraces and pavilions of Topaki Palace stand testament to the richness of the cultural heritage of the Ottomans seen across its empire to this day.

The Ottoman Empire began in 1453 with the help of the world's largest artillery piece that broke through the double Theodosian Wall at the siege of Constantinople; and the Ottomans came to rule much of the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and North Africa with the aid of an advanced army and navy. At the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514 that ended with a decisive victory for the Ottomans over the Iranian Safavid Empire, the Ottoman's prowess with artillery became evident as their cannon cut down the Safavid cavalry. With the siege of Vienna, led by Suleiman the Magnificent in 1529, the Ottomans were at the doorstep of Europe and this forced a rapid militarisation by western European powers to develop a modern army capable of withstanding the Ottoman onslaught. In turn, as the Gospel of Matthew tells us, those who "live by the sword, die by the sword" and the empire born in the muzzle flash of a massive cannon was to wither under the pressure of western military powers in the Near East during World War I.

If any empire is to wear the epithet as a 'gunpowder empire' it is the Ottomans and this lecture will chart the rise and fall of the Ottomans as they cast off the shadow of the Seljuks and become one of the world's most feared military powers before descending into a self-inflicted malaise to become the 'sick man of Europe'.

Booking form

The series will be limited to 55 people and will have a minimum of 20.

Unfortunately we cannot refund payments made for this series except in exceptional circumstances.

The cost of the Whole series is \$80 for members and \$105 for non-members.

The cost of an individual lecture is \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members.

Whole Series Name: _____

No. of tickets. Member: _____ Non-member: _____

Individual Lectures. Name: _____

Lecture 1 No. of tickets. Member..... Non-member.....

Lecture 2 No. of tickets. Member..... Non-member.....

Lecture 3 No. of tickets. Member..... Non-member.....

Payment Information

Please use this booking form if paying by cheque or money order.

If paying by credit card, please use our on-line payment system. A link to the payment page can be found on the 'lectures' page at the NEAF website.

Please mail your cheque/money order along with the booking form to:

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