

Gunpowder Empires: The Mughals

Islam and Hinduism Collide

Rise of the Mughals

- ▶ Mughal Empire (1526 to 1857 CE)
- ▶ Delhi Sultanate rules northern India between 1335 and 1526 CE
 - ▶ Mix of Turkic Hindu and Muslim leaders
- ▶ Babur (1483 to 1530 CE) founds the Mughal Empire
 - ▶ Descendent of Chinggis Khan on his mother's side
 - ▶ Somewhat devout Sunni Muslim (prayer, yes. lots of alcohol, also yes.)
 - ▶ Conquers the city of Delhi in 1526, takes portions of Afghanistan through northern India by 1530



Reign of Abu Akbar

- ▶ Abu Akbar (r. 1556 to 1605 CE)
 - ▶ Babur's grandson, continues military expansion
 - ▶ Uses conquest, taxation, tribute systems, marriage alliances, and negotiation to extend territory south
 - ▶ Sets up policies and procedures for Mughal government
- ▶ Illiterate military leader with a strong interest in religious philosophy, art, and science
 - ▶ Tutored by Sufis and Sikhs, in addition to Sunni Muslims
 - ▶ Against forced conversions

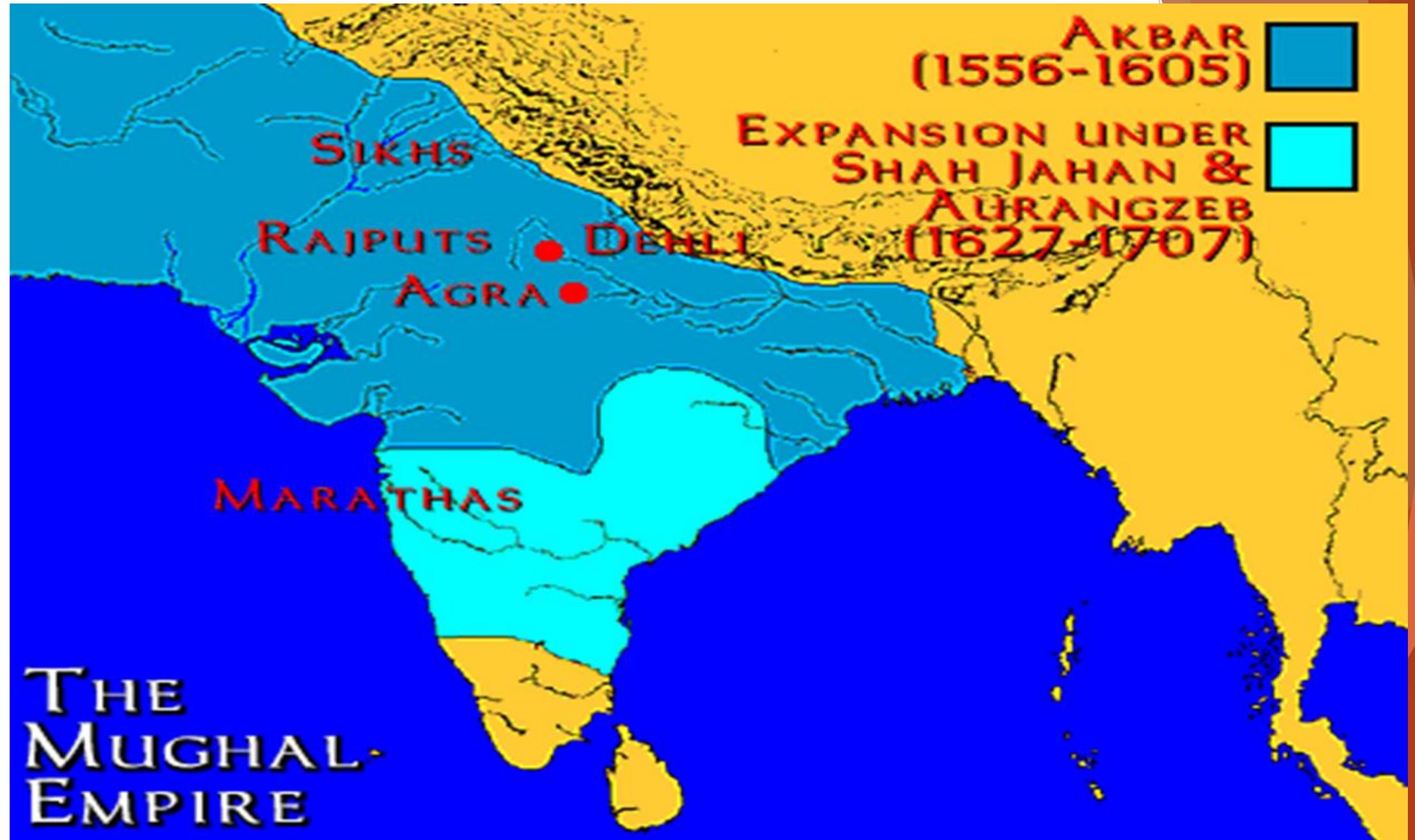


Reign of Abu Akbar

- ▶ Sunni Muslims held top positions in Akbar's court, BUT
 - ▶ Shi'ites and high caste Hindus held important posts at court as well
 - ▶ Christians, Jains, Jews, Sikhs, and Sufis also acted as advisors
- ▶ Eliminated the jizya for non-Muslims
 - ▶ Sensible taxation policy: only about 20% of the population was Muslim
- ▶ Local officials very good at collecting taxes during Akbar's reign
 - ▶ Mansabdars paid in a percentage of all taxes collected, therefore there was an incentive to collect ALL (or even more than all) taxes an area owed

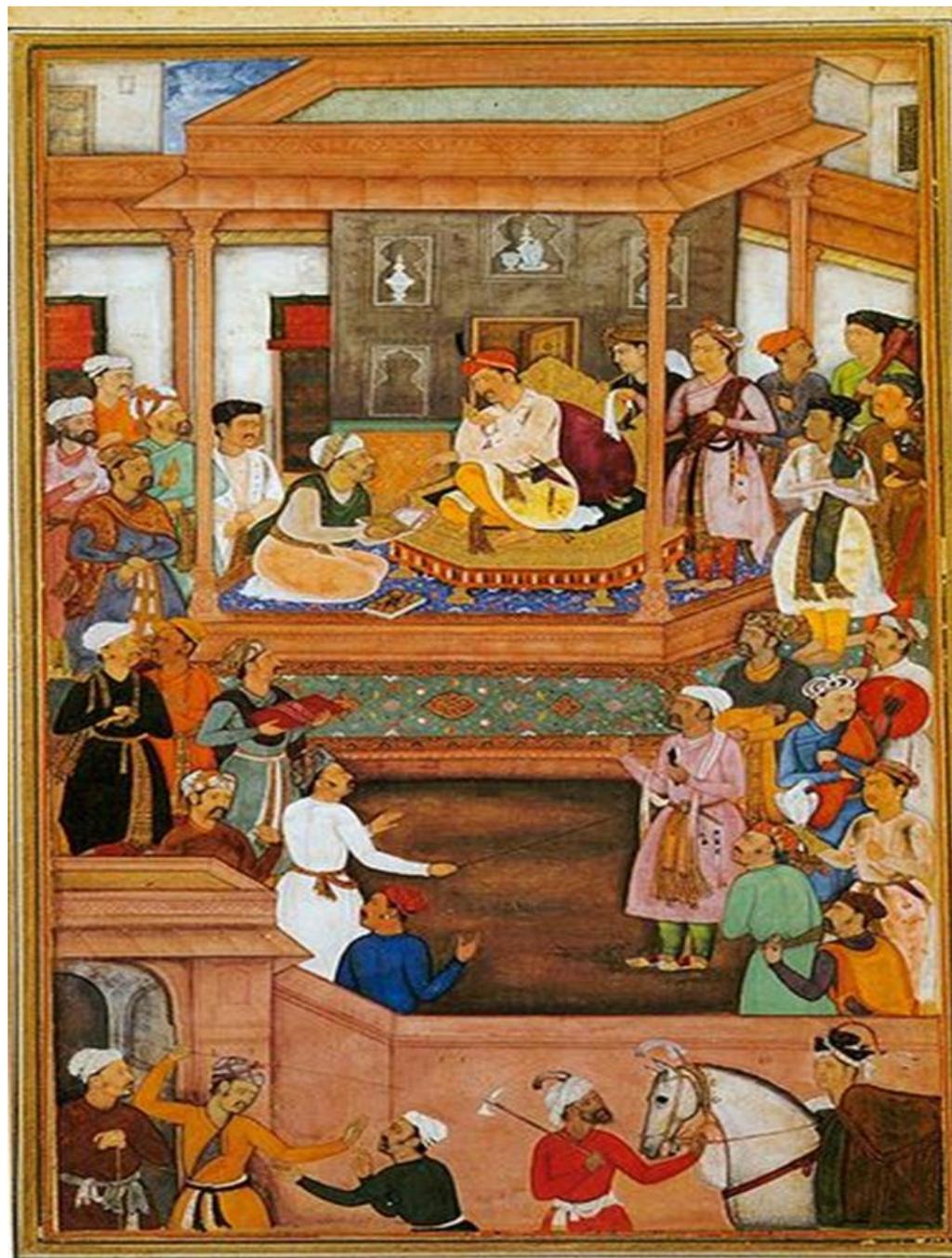
www.youtube.com/user/Sominal143





Religion in the Mughal Empire

- ▶ Official religion of the court is Sunni Islam
 - ▶ About 80% non-Muslim population
- ▶ Sulh-i-Kul (universal toleration, or “peace to all”)
 - ▶ Official policy instituted by Akbar allowing for religious toleration for all subjects
 - ▶ Hindu areas = largely ruled by local law
- ▶ Din-i-Ilahi movement
 - ▶ Akbar’s attempt at incorporating ALL major belief systems into one faith (which would glorify and sanctify the rule of the Mughal emperor, too)



Society in the Mughal Empire

- ▶ Harem system used in Mughal court
 - ▶ Purdah adopted by high caste Hindus, as well as Muslims- isolation of women seen as a status symbol
 - ▶ Discussed in terms of “protecting” women, or “preserving purity”
 - ▶ Related: tradition of sati?
- ▶ Some rights for high-class women:
 - ▶ Could own and inherit property
 - ▶ Positions, titles, and salaries for court appointments
 - ▶ Artistic expression encouraged
- ▶ Marriage and family
 - ▶ Arranged marriages VERY VERY VERY common (high caste especially)
 - ▶ Betrothals (and marriages) occurred at young ages, especially for girls

Art and Culture in the Mughal Empire

- ▶ Influence of Arabic, Persian, and Hindu influences
 - ▶ Painting and miniatures from Persia by the 1400s
 - ▶ Akbar encouraged adoption of Western techniques (Renaissance styles)
- ▶ Construction of many mosques, mausoleums, monuments, and palaces as a means of showing the strength of the empire
- ▶ Literary production (many at the hands of women)
 - ▶ Poetry written in Persian
 - ▶ Plays and stories (in Persian) revive Hindu epics and religious traditions







The National Portrait Gallery's new exhibition *The Indian Portrait 1560-1860* - which opens on March 11th - will reveal a six-foot, 17th-century life-size portrait of the Emperor Jahangir which they claim is the largest painting to come from the Mughal empire. Jahangir holding a globe, Mughal, attributed to Abu'l-Hasan, 1617. Private Collection.

Economics in the Mughal Empire

- ▶ Industry and Trade
 - ▶ Thrived under the reign of Akbar, and then begin to decline
 - ▶ Production of goods → Vaisya caste
 - ▶ Sale of goods → Muslim and European merchants
- ▶ Exports and Imports
 - ▶ Exports = textiles (cotton), tropical foods, spices, gems
 - ▶ Imports = alcohol and silver
- ▶ Stagnation in the agricultural sector

Decline of the Mughal Empire

- ▶ Overspending
 - ▶ Nur Jahan's building projects and personal expenditures
 - ▶ Continued attempts at expansion
 - ▶ Construction of mosques, monuments, palaces, etc. (TAJ MAHAL!)
- ▶ Weak leaders
 - ▶ Jahangir (Akbar's son) was preoccupied with art, had problems with alcoholism
 - ▶ Shah Jahan increasingly disconnected from reality





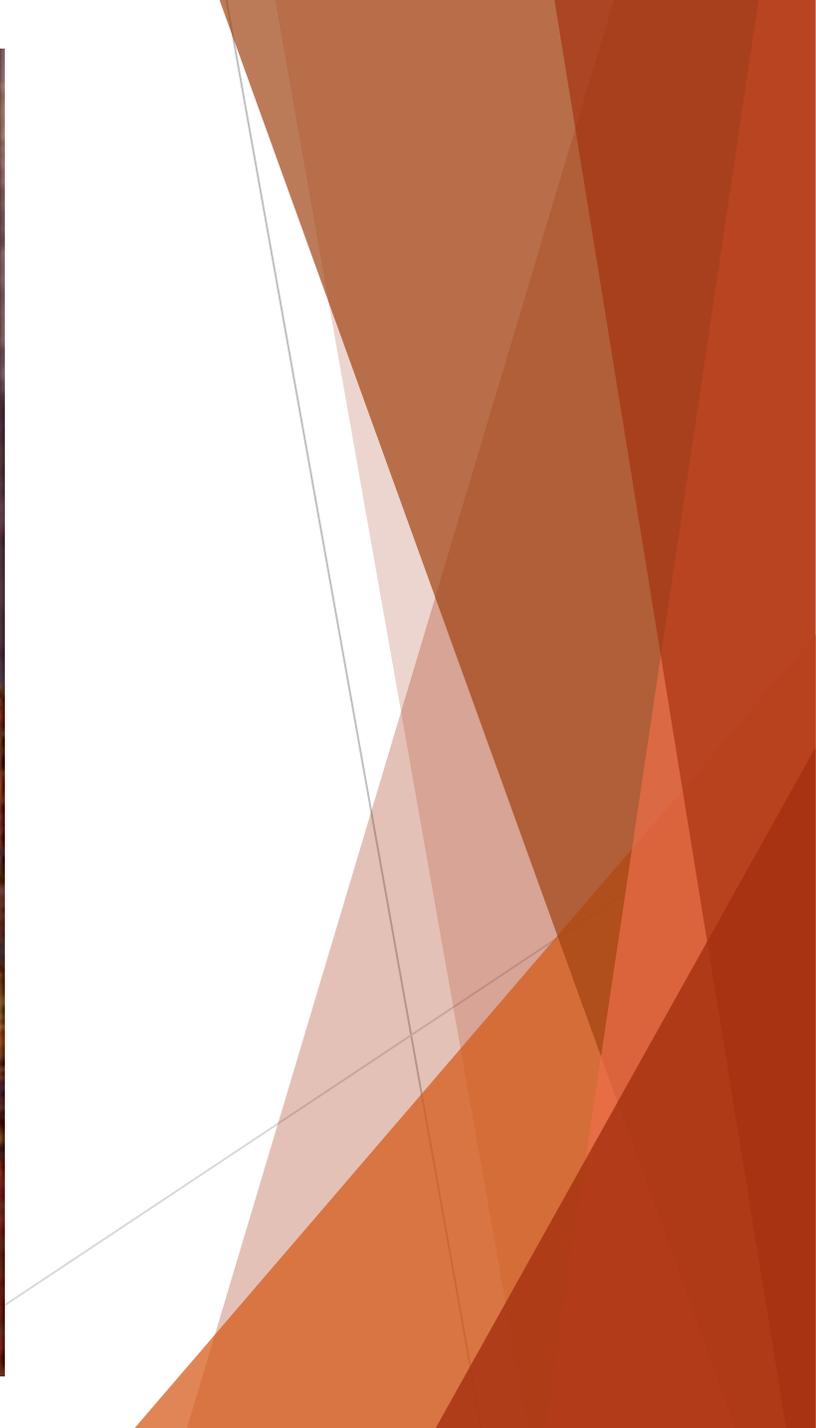


Decline of the *Mughal Empire*

- ▶ Failure to address social and economic problems
 - ▶ Incredible wealth disparity
 - ▶ Heavy taxes on poorest of the poor
 - ▶ No changes to improve agricultural efficiency → famine
- ▶ Climatic variation → Little Ice Age

Reign of Aurangzeb

- ▶ Last really effective Mughal leader
 - ▶ Violent take over of the throne
 - ▶ Devout Sunni Muslim, blames empire's difficulties on lack of devotion
 - ▶ Undertakes a program of "Islamization"
- ▶ Outlaws: court music, sati, illegal taxation
 - ▶ Illegal to build new Hindu temples
 - ▶ Reinstates jizya
 - ▶ Supported forced conversion
- ▶ Tries to outlaw: drinking, gambling, prostitution



Final Collapse of the Mughal Empire

- ▶ By the 1700s, the Mughal emperor was a mere figurehead
- ▶ Reversion to local rule (caste system = stability, remember?)
 - ▶ Merchants become very wealthy and powerful, make connections with Europeans
- ▶ Europeans increasingly involved in Mughal empire
 - ▶ Portuguese present by the 1500s, England and Netherlands shortly thereafter
 - ▶ Britain wants textiles (and later, raw cotton) to trade for spices in Indonesia
 - ▶ British East India Trading Company given a charter by British government, free reign AND AN ARMY
- ▶ British take control of Mumbai in 1661, have continued presence in India until 1947

