



# Islamic Land-Based Empires

Study the new Islamic Empires that developed in the Middle East and India



# Empires: Land-based and Sea-based

- Sea-based empires as one major theme but also traditional land-based empires that continued to dominate the Middle East and Asia (and a new land-based empire; Russia)
  - Land-based empires continued to rely on armies, roads, and inland urban areas
    - Both sea-based and land-based powers made use of guns, cannons, and muskets
- The era after 1450 is commonly called the Age of Gunpowder empires due to the use of guns to subjugate enemies and build control

# Ottoman, Safavid, and the Mughal Empires



- Islamic
- Represent the height of Muslim political and military power in world history
- Countered the growing European global influence
- All three on decline by 1750; sea-based powers were still on the rise

# The Ottoman Empire

- Began as small warrior state in a frontier inland area
  - Named for Osman
  - Peak during the 16<sup>th</sup> c (lasted until 1922)
- Ottomans successfully conquered territory in eastern Europe, stopped at the gates of Vienna



# The Rise of the Ottomans



- Anatolia a stage for conflict
  - Hittites
  - Alexander the Great
  - Romans
  - Seljuk Turks
  - Crusaders
  - Mongols
- Osman's group came to dominate
- Captured Constantinople; renamed Istanbul
- Hagia Sophia became a mosque
- Reached its height under Suleiman the Magnificent
  - Conquered Belgrade
  - Laid siege to Vienna – winter made it difficult/retreated
  - Turning point in history?
  - Controlled the water traffic between the Black and Mediterranean Seas
  - Venice as a tributary state
  - Ottoman army continued to expand and defend frontiers

# Ottoman Empire

## Political Characteristics



- Sultans political and military leaders
- Early days
  - Army elites cavalry leaders; land grants as rewards
  - 16<sup>th</sup> C develop into warrior aristocracy
  - Great deal of control over land and food production
- New elite military group, Janissaries, checked their power
  - System known as devshirme required Christian boys to become slaves of sultan
  - Given guns and heavy artillery (too heavy for cavalry)
  - Came to control the weapons that ensured the Ottomans continuing military success
    - Gave them political and economic power
  - Old aristocrats found themselves out of military power just as economic weaknesses greatly reduced incomes from their lands
  - Janissaries had a say in the sultan's decisions by the mid-16<sup>th</sup> c

# Ottoman Empire

## Political Characteristics (cont)



- Ottoman sultans large bureaucracies centered in Istanbul
- Vizier – head of imperial administration (day to day work)
  - Early sultans took active part; over time viziers gained power
  - Power challenge by Janissaries, fading cavalry leaders, and Islamic religious scholars
- Ottomans plagued by problems of succession
  - Common for sons to go to war with each other

# Ottoman Empire

## Economic Challenges

- Istanbul
  - Wealthy
  - Cosmopolitan
  - Controlled trade routes
  - Primary seaport
  - Bazaars
- Economic decline set in by the mid 17<sup>th</sup> c
  - Empire probably reached the limits of expansion
- Empire too large to be maintained
  - Corruption among local governments
- High taxes for peasants
  - Peasants revolts
- Succession issues –sons of sultans held as hostages to prevent coups
  - Led to sheltered, pleasure loving less competent rulers
- Demands by Janissaries not only for political power but also for high salaries
  - Sultan began to reduce number of landholding cavalrymen, causing unrest among displaced cavalrymen





# Ottoman Empire

## Economic Challenges (cont)



- Inflation caused by increasing amount of New World silver – negative global effect
- Ottoman sultan collected taxes according to legally fixed rates
  - as value of silver declined, tax revenues stayed the same
- Ottomans were at a disadvantage when trading in the world market
  - Religious law limited the government ability to reform tax laws
  - When bureaucrats came up with special surtaxes, met with resistance

# Ottoman Empire

## Cultural and Social Characteristics

- Majority Sunni
  - As a result of expansion; large numbers of Christians and Jews
- Istanbul cosmopolitan
  - Crossroads of trade
  - Sultans supported public works
- Invited religious scholars, artists, poets, and architects
  - Hagia Sophia restored as a mosque
  - Aqueducts built
  - City walls repaired
- Suleymaniye Mosque with impressive domes
- Social structure
  - Large numbers of merchants and artisans
  - Artisans organized into guilds
    - Standards high; supervised by the government



# Ottoman Empire

## Cultural and Social Characteristics (cont)

- Clerics influence apparent in success insulating the empire from new cultural and technological developments in Europe
  - Saw European societies as backwards and own civilization as superior
- This idea kept them from understanding the tremendous changes Europe was bringing to the world
  - Printing press brought by Jews after being expelled from Spain; not allowed to print anything in Turkish or Arabic
  - As a result, the empire virtually untouched by the print revolution



# Ottoman Empire

## Cultural and Social Characteristics (cont)



- Changing balance of power best illustrated by the loss of the “Ottoman Lake”
  - Famous sea battle at Lepanto
  - Ottoman loss to Philip II of Spain
  - Rebuilt fleet but never regained control of the Mediterranean
- Also lost power as Portuguese gained control over the lucrative trade in Indian Ocean

# Safavid Empire

- Grew from Turkish nomadic group (similar to Ottomans)
- Shi'ite
  - True heirs of Islam were the descendants of Ali
    - 12<sup>th</sup> descendant disappeared as a child; the Hidden Imam
- Ismail led army who united large area south of the Caspian Sea
  - Declared the official religion to be Twelver Shi'ism based on the legacy of the Hidden Imam



# Safavid Empire (cont)



- As Safavids expanded they came into conflict with Ottomans
- Hostilities intensified by Shi'ite Sunni split
- Met at Chaldiran in NW Persia
  - Religious conflict at the heart
  - Illustrated the importance of the new gunpowder technology
  - Ismail sent cavalry – qizilbash (redhead for distinctive turbans) armed with sword and knives to fight Janissaries with their cannons and muskets
- Safavids slaughtered, Ottomans won decisive victory but didn't follow up due to approaching winter
- Safavids recovered, built up artillery, and continued to fight Ottomans for two centuries
- Battle at Chaldiran a marker event
  - Set the limits for Shi'ite expansion with consequences still apparent today
  - Iran is in the midst of predominantly Sunni countries conflicts continue

# Safavid Empire (cont)

- Shah Abbas I – Safavids at peak
  - Captures boys in Russia and educated to be soldiers; converted to Islam (similar to Janissaries)
  - Slave infantrymen trained to use firearms
  - Gave increasing power at the expense of the traditional qizilbash
- Abbas brought in European advisors to assist in wars with Ottomans
  - Improved cannons and musket
  - Army swelled in size and efficiency, but no Safavid navy built to compete with the sea-based trade that was transforming the world



# Safavid Empire

## Politics and Religion

- Safavid rulers based authority on military prowess and religious authority
  - Traced authority to Sufi religious order
  - Expansion seen as extension of Islam to new lands
- Saw the Europeans as infidels
  - Also believe that defeating the Sunni was an act of faith
- Persian traditions shaped by Safavid political system
  - Sumptuous palaces
  - Highly ritualized court
- Local mosque officials, mullahs, supervised and supported by state
  - Gave government the upper hand





# Safavid Empire

## Economic and Social Organization



- Turkish chiefs challenged early shahs
  - Chiefs gradually transformed into warrior elite (similar to cavalry elite in Ottoman Empire)
  - Supervised farms, asserted political power, captured powerful positions in the imperial bureaucracy
- Shahs appointed Persians to fill other bureaucratic positions
  - Gave authority to slave infantrymen

# Safavid Empire

## Economic and Social Organization (cont)

- Shahs supported trade
- Isfahan (capital) major center of international trade
  - Network of road and workshops to manufacture textiles and rugs
  - Inland – not as many traders as Istanbul (why?)
  - Guilds
    - Silk production
    - Carpets – signature business
- Also negatively impacted by inflation caused by flood of silver
- Not cosmopolitan
- Armenians kept in suburbs across river; most people in city were Shi'ite
- Majority of people lived in rural areas, farming
- Nomadic groups

Economic

Social

# Safavid Empire

## Cultural Characteristics

- Mixture of Turkish and Persian
  - Iranians scholars more likely to use Persian
    - In other Islamic lands more likely to read and write in Arabic
- Cultural traditions like poetry, history, drama, and fiction kept Persian identity strong
  - Gradually separate identities seen by the time the Mongols invaded
  - When Ismail created Iran as a Shi'ite state reinforced differences
- Architecture
  - Mosques in Islamic world relied on domes
    - Safavid domes decorated in brightly colored floral patterns that resemble Persian carpets
    - Istanbul known for massive simplicity
- Calligraphy styles also different



# Safavid Empire

## Cultural Characteristics (cont)



- Blended Sufi mysticism with militant political objectives
- Safavids traced ancestry to Safi al-Din, leader of Sufi religious order in NW Persia; empire founded on Sufi beliefs
- Ismail deployed armies to spread Shi'ism w/an emphasis on mystic union w/God
  - Later Safavid shahs banned Sufi orders from the empire but Sufism continued to thrive
- Like the Ottomans, Safavids gradually lost vigor
  - Collapsed in the 1720s
  - Victim of
    - Islamic infighting
    - Ever-growing dominance of sea-based powers

# Mughal Empire

- 1450 – much of Indian subcontinent tenuously controlled by the Delhi Sultanate
  - Muslim leaders presided over a population that remained primarily Hindu – religious frictions (continues today)
- 1523 Babur founded Mughal Empire
  - Descendent of Timur and Genghis Khan
- Dominated until the early 1700s (continued to rule in name until 1858)



# Mughal Empire (cont)



- Babur's invasion motivated by
  - Loss of ancestral homeland through intertribal warfare
  - Dreams of living up to reputation of ancestors
- Military strategies responsible for success in capturing Delhi
  - Family's control challenged after his death but son Humayan recaptured northern India and expanded the empire
- The empire reached its height in power and influence under Babur's grandson Akbar

# Mughal Empire

## Political Characteristics

- Autocratic (like Ottoman and Safavid)
  - Power based on military might and religious authority
  - No navy (like Safavids), relied on army
- Fought the infidels (the Hindu) spreading Islam
  - Some more tolerant (Akbar)
- Succession issues (like Ottomans and Safavids); Mughal princes fought each other to become heir
  - Political instabilities caused by family controversies always threatened the empire



# Mughal Empire

## Political Characteristics (cont)

- Akbar incorporated rajas (regional Hindu leaders) into military and bureaucratic positions to alleviate tensions
  - Policy of cooperation and encouraged intermarriage
  - Abolished jizra
  - Ended ban on the building of new Hindu temples
  - Ordered Muslims to respect cows
  - Built strong bureaucracy modeled on a military hierarchy for collecting taxes
- Each region surveyed and tax rates based on the regions potential for wealth
- Most local officials (usually Hindu) kept positions if swore allegiance to Mughals and paid taxes
  - Reforms encouraged cooperation; great grandson Aurangzeb reinstated many restrictions on the Hindus





# Mughal Empire

## Economic and Social Characteristics



- Land revenue granted to military and government officials in exchange for service (also in the Ottoman and Safavid)
  - Grew wealthy
- As Mughal empire expanded, controlled commercial networks based on cotton, indigo, and silk
  - By 17<sup>th</sup> c overland trade with Europe going strong
- Indian merchant ships were privately owned; many Indian goods carried into the Indian Ocean trade circuit were on Dutch and English vessels
  - Europeans brought trade goods from throughout Asia to trade for Indian cotton cloth and clothing due to growing demand in Europe

# Mughal Empire

## Economic and Social Characteristics (cont)

- Patriarchal (same as Ottoman and Safavid)
- Wives of rulers played key roles in all three empires
  - Suleiman the Magnificent's wife convinced him to execute his eldest son so her son could succeed to the throne (Ottoman)
  - One Safavid ruler's wife so enraged the qizilbash that they murdered her
  - Mumtaz Mahal, wife of Mughal Shah Jahan also amassed power. Taj Mahal built for her but plans for a black marble monument ended when Shah was imprisoned by his sons in a struggle for succession



# Mughal Empire

## Economic and Social Characteristics

### (cont)

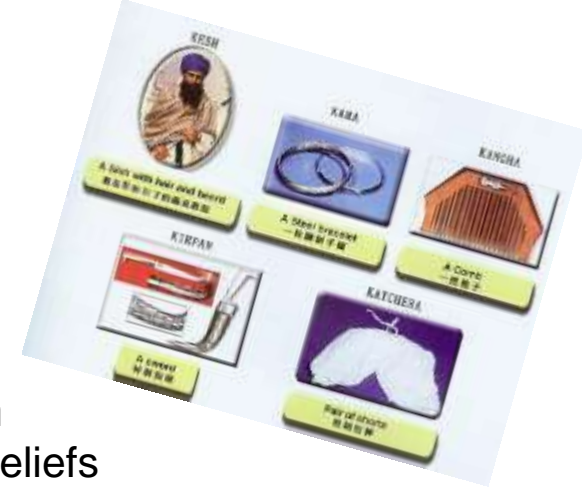
- Status of women overall low in Indian society
- Child marriage common (brides as young as nine)
- Sati spread even though outlawed
- Seclusion (purdah) strictly enforced for upper class women
- Women veiled



# Mughal Empire

## Cultural Characteristics

- Religious conflicts permeated society
- Akbar tried to reconcile the two with new Divine Faith
  - Combined Muslim, Hindu, Zoroastrian, Christian, and Sikh beliefs
  - Wanted to unite under one realm and cement loyalty to the emperor
- Before Babur invaded, Nanuk (1469 – 1539) stressed meditation as a means of seeking enlightenment; drew upon both religions
  - Became guru of Sikhism
  - People formed a community free of caste distinctions
- Mughal Shah Aurangzeb changed the nature of Sikhism when ordered the ninth guru beheaded because he refused to convert to Islam (1675)
  - Tenth guru vowed to avenge his father's death; led **army of the pure** to challenge Mughal army
- Sikhs reflect devotion by not cutting hair (beneath turbans) and carry symbols of faith (comb, steel bracelet, sword or dagger)
  - Sikh rebellions combined with other upheavals seriously weakened the Mughals



# Mughal Empire

## Cultural Characteristics (cont)



- Jahangir and Shah Jahan followed Akbar but less interest in military conquests and politics
  - Patrons of the arts
  - Promoted paintings of miniatures depicting life at court, battles, animals, and plants
  - Built public buildings
    - Blend of Persian and Hindu influence with lavish ornamentation
      - Ornamented tiles with semiprecious stones in lavish patterns
      - Taj Mahal
- Fatehpur Sikri – Akbar built an entirely new capital city
  - Abandoned after his death
  - Beauty famous throughout Islamic world
  - Library contained largest collection of books in the world
  - Scholars of all religions came
  - Akbar illiterate but loved to be read to
- Akbar's reputation as an important leader is based partly on his ability to revive a sense of political and cultural unity in the subcontinent (since Gupta)

# Mughal Empire

## Cultural Characteristics (cont)

- Jahangir and Shah Jahan neglected political, economic, and military issues; loved pleasure
- Aurangzeb tried to restore the empire but also to rid India of Hinduism; stirred up resentment
  - Conquered more land but the expenses of war left treasury empty
  - Local leaders plotted against him
  - Rolling back Akbar's reforms undermined his government
  - After he died the empire was larger than ever but unstable
- Europeans took advantage
  - Dutch, British, and French joint-stock companies eagerly sought to expand profitable trade in India



# Comparisons: Islamic Empires

Political	Economic and Social	Cultural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sultan/shah autocratic (all)</li> <li>•Large bureaucracies(all)</li> <li>•Land grants to aristocracy usually in reward for military service (all)</li> <li>•Relied on gunpowder (all)</li> <li>•Ottomans had powerful army and navy</li> <li>•Safavids and Mughals no navy</li> <li>•1750 all in decline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Based on agriculture (all)</li> <li>•Trade important to all but Ottomans more favorably located</li> <li>•Safavids and Mughals had inland capitals; sea vessels privately owned –left control of sea ports to Europeans</li> <li>•Economies at a disadvantage because of inflation New World silver (all)</li> <li>•1750 all in economic decline</li> <li>•Patriarchal (all) but wives of rulers and other elite had influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Safavids Shi'ites</li> <li>•Ottomans and Mughals Sunni</li> <li>•Cultural difference contributed to warfare between Ottomans and Safavids</li> <li>•Mughals ruled over Hindu majority</li> <li>•All encouraged the arts and unique artistic styled developed in art and architecture</li> <li>•Domed buildings and calligraphy</li> <li>•Persian calligraphy emphasized in Safavid</li> </ul>

# Change Over Time: India

## 8000 BCE - 1750

8000 BCE – 600 BCE	600 BCE – 600 CE	600 – 1450	1450 - 1750
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First civilization; Indus River Valley</li> <li>▪ Mohenjo Daro and Harappa</li> <li>▪ Aryans invaded</li> <li>▪ bring their religion and customs that became the foundation of Hindu society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buddhism began during 6<sup>th</sup> C BCE</li> <li>• Diffused from India to east and SE Asia</li> <li>• Maurya and Gupta temporarily united India politically</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fragmented political rule until 13<sup>th</sup> C</li> <li>• Hindu religion and culture the glue that kept Indian identity</li> <li>• Turkish invasions beginning in the 13<sup>th</sup> C disrupted the regional kingdoms</li> <li>• Delhi Sultanate formed by Afghan Turks</li> <li>• Brought Islam with them, introducing friction between Muslims and Hindus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Babur led army into India that toppled Delhi Sultanate</li> <li>• Mughal Dynasty stronger than Delhi sultanate</li> <li>• Akbar tried to reconcile difference between Muslims and Hindu</li> <li>• Religious tolerance increased</li> <li>• Mughals less powerful in the 18<sup>th</sup> C than in previous times</li> </ul>