Chapter 28

The Islamic Empires
The Islamic Empires, 1500-1800
Osman leads bands of semi nomadic Turks to become ghazi: Muslim religious warriors

Captures Anatolia with light cavalry and volunteer infantry
- Later, heavy cavalry

In Balkans, forced Christian families to surrender young boys to military service: devshirme
- Often grew up to be exceptionally loyal Janissaries
Mehmed II (“the Conqueror,” r. 1451-1481)

- Capture of Constantinople, 1453
- Renamed Istanbul
- Transformation from warrior sultan to emperor of “two lands” (Europe, Asia) and “two seas” (Black Sea, Mediterranean)
- Planned to capture Pope, unsuccessful
Suleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566)

- Expanded into Asia, Europe
- Besieged Vienna, 1529
- Develops naval power
The Safavid Empire

- Ismail young military leader, r. 1501-1524
- Orphaned, parents killed by enemies
- Becomes Shah, proclaims official religion of realm Twelver Shiism
  - Twelve infallible imams after Muhammad
  - 12th imam in hiding, ready to take power
  - Wore distinctive red hat, called *quzilbash* (“red heads”)
- Empire called Safavid, after Safi al-Din (1252-1334), Sufi thinker
Shiite Pilgrims at Karbala
Battle of Chaldiran (1514)

- Ottoman Selim the Grim attacks Safavids
- Heavy use of Ottoman gunpowder technology give them the upper hand
- Ismail escapes, two centuries of ongoing conflict
- Shah Abbas the Great (r. 1588-1629) revitalizes weakened Safavid empire
  - Reforms administration, military
  - Expands trade
  - Military expansion
The Mughal Empire

- Zahir al-Din Muhammad (Babur the Tiger), Chagatai Turk, invades northern India for plunder, 1523
- Gunpowder technology gives Babur advantage
- Founds Mughal (Persian for Mongol) dynasty
- Expands through most of Indian subcontinent
Akbar (r. 1556-1605)

- Grandson of Babur
- Wins fear and respect after throwing Adham Khan, leader of the army, out the window twice
  - Second time just to make sure he was dead
- Created centralized government
- Destroyed Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar
- Religiously tolerant, promoted “Divine Faith”
  - Syncretic form of Islam and Hinduism
Aurangzeb (r. 1659-1707)

- Expands Mughal empire into southern India
- Hostile to Hinduism
  - Demolished Hindu temples, replaced with mosques
  - Tax on Hindus to encourage conversion
Common Elements of Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Empires

- Empires based on military conquest ("gunpowder empires")

- Prestige of dynasty dependent on piety and military prowess of the ruler
  - Close relations with Sufism, ghazi tradition

- Steppe Turkish traditions
  - Issuance of unilateral decrees
  - Intra-family conflicts over power
    - 1595 Sultan massacres 19 brothers (some infants), 15 expectant women (strangulation with silk)
Women and Politics

- Women officially banned from political activity
- But tradition of revering mothers, 1st wives from Chinggis Khan
- Süleyman the Magnificent defers to concubine Hürrem Sultana
  - Originally Roxelana, Ukrainian woman
  - Convinces husband to murder eldest son in favor of her own child
Agriculture and Trade

- American crops effect less dramatic change in Muslim empires
  - Coffee, tobacco important
  - Initial opposition from conservative circles, fearing lax morality of coffee houses

- Population growth also reflects territorial additions and losses

- Trade with English East India Company, French East India Company, and Dutch VOC
Population Growth

- Mughal
- Safavid
- Ottoman
Religious Diversity

- Ottoman Empire: Christians, Jews
- Safavid Empire: Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians
- Mughal Empire: Hindus, Jains, Zoroastrians, Christians, Sikhs
- Mughal Akbar most tolerant
  - Received Jesuits politely, but resented Christian exclusivity
  - Enthusiastic about syncretic Sikhism, self-serving “Divine Faith”
Status of Religious Minorities

- Non-Muslim protected people: *dhimmi*
  - Payment of special tax: *jizya*
  - Freedom of worship, property, legal affairs

- Ottoman communities: *millet* system of self-administration

- Mughal rule: Muslims supreme, but work in tandem with Hindus
  - Under Akbar, *jizya* abolished
  - Reaction under Aurangzeb
Capital Cities

- Istanbul cultural capital of Ottoman empire, massive monumental architecture
- Rededication of Hagia Sofia church as Aya Sofiya mosque
- Ishafan major Persian city
- Akbar builds magnificent Fatehpur Sikri
  - Chooses site without sufficient water supply, abandoned
  - Taj Mahal example of Mughal architecture
Deterioration of Imperial Leadership

- Ottoman princes become lazy through luxury
  - Selim the Sot (r. 1566-1574)
  - Ibrahim the Crazy (r. 1640-1648)
- Attempts to isolate them compounds the problem
- Religious tensions between conservatives and liberals intensify
  - Role of women
- Wahhabi movement in Arabia denounces Ottomans as unfit to rule
  - Force destruction of observatory, printing press
- Safavid Shiites persecute Sunnis, non-Muslims and even Sufis
Economic and Military Decline

- Foreign trade controlled by Europeans
- Military, administrative network expensive to maintain
  - Janissaries mutiny when paid with debased coinage, 1589, other revolts follow
- Unproductive wars
- European military technology advances faster than Ottomans can purchase it
Cultural Conservatism

- Europeans actively studying Islamic cultures for purposes of trade, missionary activities
- Islamic empires less interested in outside world
- Swiftly fell behind in technological development
  - E.g. Jews from Spain establish 1st printing press in Anatolia in late 15th century
  - But printing of books in Turkish and Arabic forbidden until 1729
    - Handwritten books preferred, but weak levels of dissemination