

3 Muslim Empires

THE EARLY MODERN WORLD (1450 – 1750)

*Ok, so
there is a
4th too.*



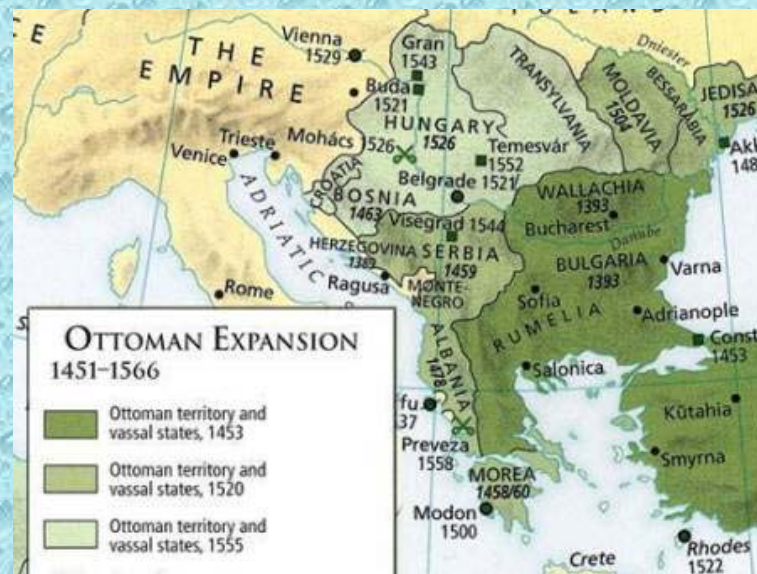
Map 13-4
Ways of the World, First Edition
© 2009 Bedford/St.Martin's

Ottoman Empire (1300 until 1750) it'll die after WWI

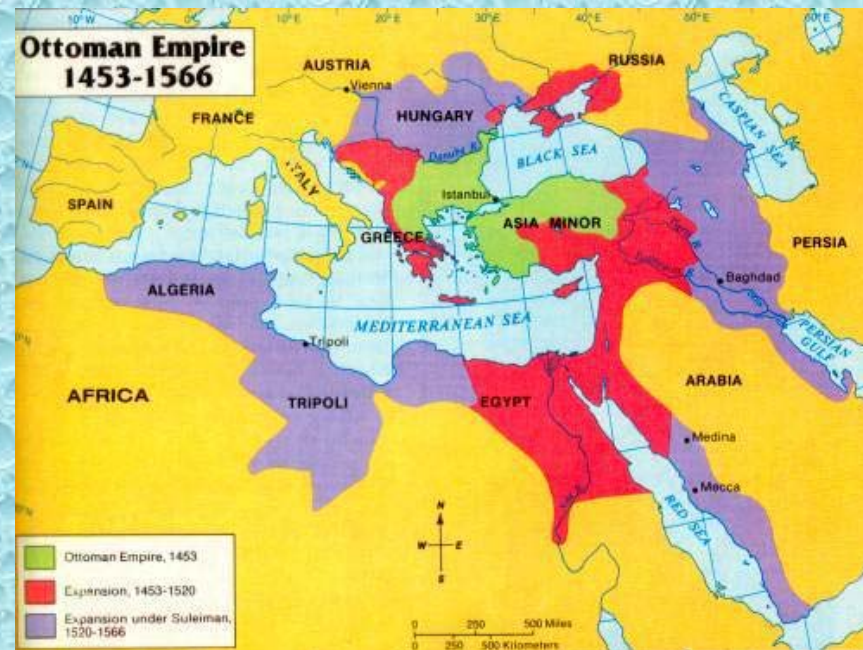
- Toward the end of the Byzantine Empire there were lands in Turkey that were becoming more and more independent, some simply paid tribute to the remaining Mongols.
- Originally a small state in northern Turkey, the Ottoman Empire was able to emerge and expand in size due to . . .
 - The emir Osman who united the Turks, formed alliances, and waged military campaigns. Supporters of Osman were called the *Osmanlis*, which became known as the *Ottomans* in the West.



- It's central location at Istanbul gave it close proximity to Mediterranean and Middle East trade (formerly Constantinople of the Byzantine Empire – it came to an end in 1453)
- New military strategies
 - use of gunpowder / cannons; in fact over time all 3 Muslim Empires will earn the nickname of “Gunpowder Empires” for their adoption of firearms.
 - the use of Janissaries



- Suleiman the Magnificent is often called the greatest of the Ottoman rulers. He expanded the empire into central Europe, enforced religious tolerance, and established an effective government bureaucracy (The Ottoman government / monarchy was fashioned more like European monarchs than traditional Islamic caliphates. The Sultan after all was ruling from the old Constantinople!)





- In the late 1400s the Ottomans began to conflict with Venetians over Med. Trade, but in the end the Ottomans considered it a waste of resources for a massive “land power” to conquer a “flimsy sea power” and just accepted tribute. Their defeat at the naval Battle of Lepanto also triggered this move.

- Traditionally Turkish soldiers fought on horseback (*cavalry*) with bows, but the adoption of using Christian prisoners as infantrymen (*foot soldiers*) with firearms known as Janissaries became more commonplace.
- These new converts received an education and even filled positions in government departments.
- Over time, the ranks of Janissaries began to be filled by male children from the Balkans, not just POWs (*devshirme system*).



- The Ottomans became “the most powerful and best organized state in Europe and the Islamic world.” Suleiman was the most powerful man in the world.
- However, in the decades after his death (late 1500s to the mid 1600s) a crisis emerged because of the growing emphasis on and influence of the Janissaries.
- Lands and funds that were going to cavalryman were being redirected to the imperial treasury. Additional taxes increased resentment, and led to rebellions.

- The military crisis led to a change for the Ottoman Empire after 1650.
 - The Devshirme system was discontinued (membership into the Janissary ranks became hereditary).
 - Sultans became reclusive, constantly in fear of coups.
 - Taxes on farming replaced the land-grant system, which had allowed cavalrymen to collect taxes in return for land.



- The Ottomans were at their height in the mid to late 1500s, but after the crisis it was clear to their neighbors they were now in decline.
 - The port city of Izmir became a cosmopolitan trading center dominated by European traders.
 - The Ottoman government prohibited tobacco, but couldn't enforce their decree, the crop became popular.
 - Janissaries became ineffective, sometimes hiring substitutes to go into battle. Most elites resisted change that would hurt their standing.
 - Parts of the empire ([Egypt](#), [Baghdad](#)) began to exert independence from the sultan.
 - The influx of Spanish silver into the global economy, which was mined in their New World colonies caused inflation and the devaluing of Turkish silver.

- **Safavid Empire (1502 – 1722)**
- The Safavid Empire (Persia / Iran) was also in decline around the same time; just as the Europeans are rising *(What's the title of our next unit? Hmmm... Are the Europeans that great, or is the rest of the world in decline?)*



- The Safavid Empire was born out of the old Mongolian khanate of Il-Khan, which was taken over by Tamerlane (Timur), but whose sons more or less divided his lands.
- In 1502, Ismail proclaimed himself the Shah of Iran and declared that the area would practice Shi'ite Islam (However, the population at first rejected his efforts. Sunni refugees were forced to find asylum in neighboring lands during a century of persecutions by the government).



- The development of Shia Islam is a major contrast to the rest of the Islamic world.
- The notion of the “Hidden Iman” (the 12th descendent of Ali is the proper religious authority) allowed the ulama (Islamic scholars) to have greater freedom from government interference (i.e. *who does the Shah think he is meddling in details of the faith?!*) and take a stronger role in political affairs than their Ottoman counterparts.
- Also, Iranians commemorated the martyrdom of Ali’s son who was killed by Sunnis.

- In contrast to the coastal Ottoman capital of Istanbul where high walls surrounded the sultan's palace, the inland Safavid capital of Isfahan had a large open plaza to receive dignitaries (this was probably a rare occurrence given the city's location).
- While Isfahan may have appeared more open, it was much less cosmopolitan than Istanbul.
- However, both capitals did consist of narrow streets and houses crowded against one another, also women were rarely seen in public.

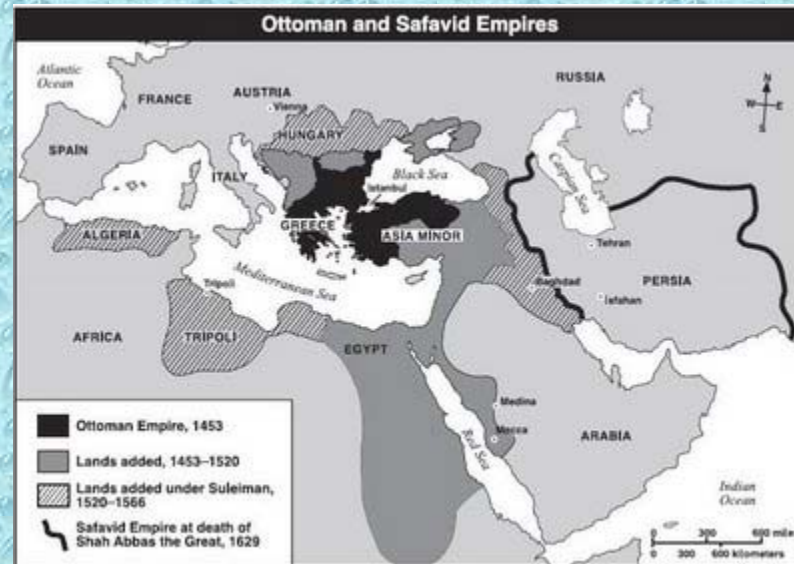
- Economically, silk (from northern Iran) was a major component of Safavid foreign trade, but the manufacturing of carpets (usually made by women & girls) became synonymous of Persian culture and a national industry.



- Under Shah Abbas (late 1500s) the empire experienced a golden age where cultural exchanges intensified (with Ottomans & India), government reform took place (the beginning of religious tolerance, and the use of gunpowder in the army).

Ottomans and Safavid

- Similarities:
 - Both land powers (did not focus on the sea)
 - Used a land grant system to support an army
 - Both began to decline around the same time
 - Role of women in society (they could retain their property after getting married, but seldom in public).



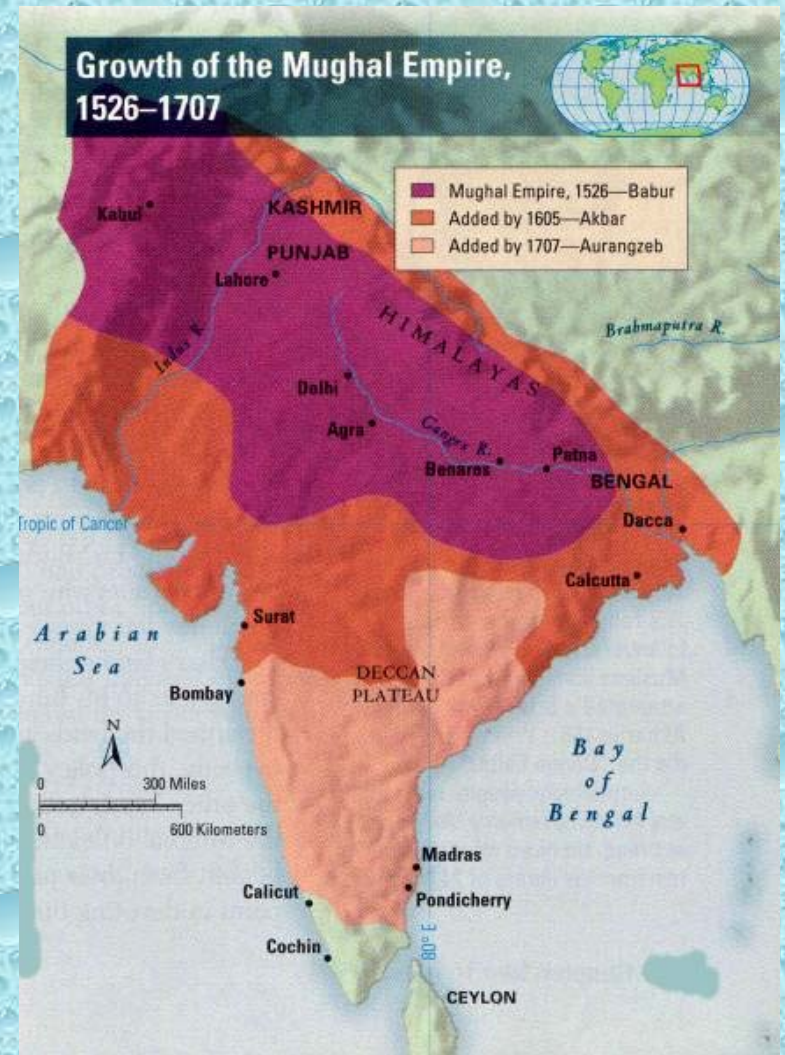
Source: Elisabeth Gaynor Ellis and Anthony Esler, *World History: Connections to Today*; Prentice Hall (adapted)

- Differences:

- Although mostly Sunni, there was religious tolerance in the Ottoman Empire, strictly Shia in Safavid
 - Culture (Arabic vs. Persian languages), (architecture included more turquoise & mosaic tiles in Safavid)
 - The Safavids were at first reluctant to adopt gunpowder
- As early as 1258 when the Mongols captured Baghdad and Egypt became the new nucleus of the Arab world (thus almost cutting off Iran from what was going on) Persia was set to take a different path than the rest of the Islamic world.

Mughal Empire (1526 –1761)

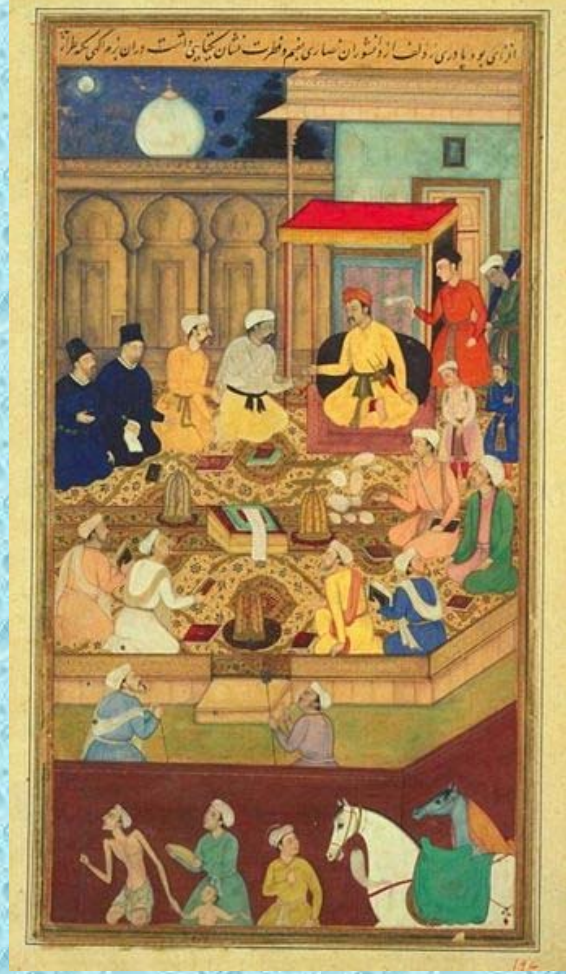
- The Mughal Empire (Northern India then expanded further south) was founded by Babur who defeated the sultan of Delhi. Although mostly Hindu, India would be ruled by a Muslim dynasty that originated in central Asia.
- Since the fall of the Guptas (500s) India was mostly fragmented. Unlike marauding bands who came into India simply to raid, Babur stayed and created an empire.



- Under Akbar (Babur's grandson) India was able to establish a centralized government and a land grant system (government officials and military officers received land in return for service).
- Cotton cloth was a major component of the economy.
- India prospered under his leadership.
 - Improved legal code
 - The civil service had a fixed graduated salary scale to prevent corruption
 - Created standardized weights & measure



- Akbar made an effort to reconcile Hindu and Muslim differences. He understood that Hindus, Rajput princes, and others simply wanted dignity.
 - He did away with a tax on non-Muslims
 - He allowed disputes between Hindus to be decided by Hindu law.
 - He let Rajput princes enter royal palaces armed.
 - His wife was Hindu.

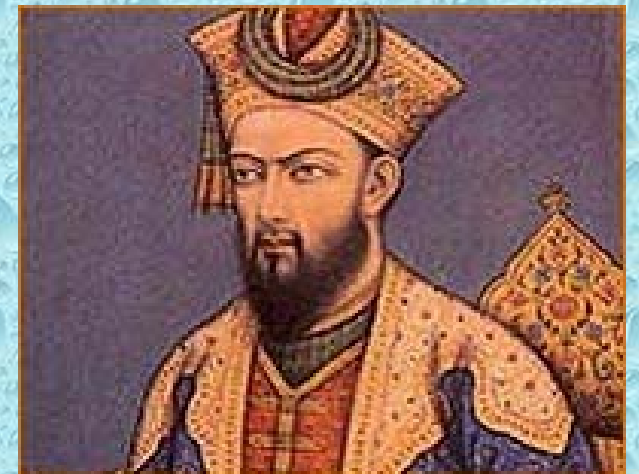


- *As Akbar got older he turned to mysticism; he even tried to blend Islam and Hinduism. This alarmed the orthodox / conservative Muslims amongst his followers and may be the reason why future Mughal leaders became less religiously tolerant.*

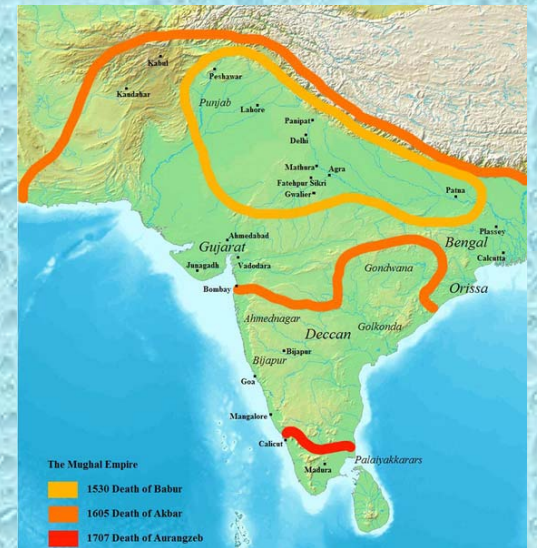
- The Taj Mahal was built by a successor - Shah Jahan in memory of his wife.



- Even though Hinduism remained the dominant faith on the subcontinent, Islam did gain some converts. (It spread through India via the use of new farm lands that were usually owned by Muslims, but labored by Hindus. This is somewhat similar to the method of persuasion by Islamic merchants in SE Asia).
- A new religion, Sikhism also spread (a monotheistic faith that it stressed meditation as a way of achieving salvation).
- However, religious tolerance came to an end under the rule of (Akbar's great grandson) Aurangzeb (ex: restrictions were again put on Hindus, a Sikh guru was beheaded, he had elephants trample a crowd of Hindu protestors).



- As Mughal territory expanded further south, Aurangzeb failed to unify these new lands into the imperial structure (As a result, he was forced to confront armies of Sikhs, Hindus, and even Muslims).



- By the early 1700s, the empire was crumbling.
 - Local officials set up essentially autonomous states.
 - Roads and bridges went unrepaired.
 - Unlike European powers, the Mughals did nothing to foster a mercantile / middle class.
 - Europeans traders began arriving (The British East India Company obtained the right to collect taxes in Calcutta in 1701).

The 3 Muslim Empires:

- Similarities:

- Land grant systems (soldiers got land for service for which they could tax inhabitants) (*similar to feudalism?*)
- Land powers, no real emphasis on a navy
- Muslim
- Decline around the same time

- Differences:

- Mughal India much farther away from the heart of the Islamic / Arab world, even more so than Safavid
- Religious toleration (*Ottomans allowed people to hold on to prior identities, Safavid was strict Shia became more tolerant, Mughal was tolerant then became intolerant*)



Suleiman



Shah Abbas



Akbar