

# Chapter 28 - The Islamic Empires

Tuesday, March 13, 2018 7:06 PM

## Formation of the Islamic Empires

### The Ottoman Empire

#### Osman

- Osman founded the dynasty and continued from 1289 to 1923, an unusually successful frontier state.
- Ottomans sought to be *ghazis*, Muslim religious warriors that sought to get rid of polytheism, so they waged holy war to expand.

#### Ottoman Expansion

- Ottomans were located on the Byzantine empire's border, giving them a huge opportunity to wage holy war.
- Converts in the lands they conquered flocked to them to become *ghazis*. These warriors settled in the new frontier districts, taking booty to enrich themselves and the central government.
- Expansion was driven by a military machine, with *ghazi* recruits being in two forces: light cavalry and volunteer infantry... professional cavalry financed by land grants was added later.
- *Devshirme* - Institution by which Ottomans demanded Balkan Christians to give boys as tribute who were culturally assimilated and then trained to become Ottoman civil administrators or the military as slaves of the sultan.
- *Janissaries* - The devshirme soldiers, who were recognized for their loyalty and use of the newest military technology including GUNPOWDER WEAPONS.

#### Mehmed the Conqueror

- Captured Constantinople and made it the Ottoman capital (Istanbul), and turned it into a commercial center.
- Expanded into western Europe, and laid the foundations for an absolute monarchy.

#### Suleyman the Magnificent

- Promoted Ottoman expansion in southwest Asia and in Europe.
- Terrorized the Hapsburgs, took Hungary and Baghdad.
- Turned Ottomans into a major naval power in the Aegean and Black Sea, as well as allowing loyal pirates to sail under the Ottoman flag (so not all of this was out-of-pocket).

### The Safavid Empire

- Shah Ismail (1501-1524) was a Twelver Shia, declared it the official religion of Persia.
- Seized control of the Iranian plateau and imposed Shia Islam on the Sunni population.

#### The Safavids and Twelver Shiism

- Used propaganda to control accounts of their rise to power, and changed religious preferences until they found adequate support with Twelver Shiism.
- *Qizilbash* were the Turkish followers of Ismail's father, named for their distinctive hats in memory of the twelve Shia imams.
- *Qizilbash* were loyal supporters of Ismail, believing he was an incarnation of Allah or the hidden twelfth imam that would make them invincible in battle, and this made them fanatically loyal.

#### Battle of Chaldiran

- Sunni Ottomans hated the Shia Safavids, so Ottomans persecuted Ottoman Shias and planned to invade the Safavid territory.
- This was a critical battle that resulted in the defeat of the Safavids and occupation of Tabriz,

Ismail's capital city, and greatly damaged though did not destroy the Safavid state (due to Ottoman lack of resources).

- Later Safavid rulers recovered from this, relying on the Persian bureaucracy to help rule and adopting more conventional Twelver Shiism instead of the extreme ideology of Ismail.
- Gave land grants to *qizilbash* officers to get their loyalty.

### **Shah Abbas the Great**

- Fully revitalized the empire during reign from 1588-1629.
- Moved capital to Isfahan, encouraged foreign trade, and reformed military and administrative institutions.
- Increased use of gunpowder weapons, got European assistance against the Ottomans and Portuguese (in Persian gulf).
- Used all this new fancy military stuff to harass the Ottomans for years, as well as to defeat the Uzbeks, expel the Portuguese, and expand territory.

## **The Mughal Empire**

### **Babur**

- Dude who claimed descent from Chinggis Khan and Tamerlane.
- Unlike Ottomans who wanted to be *ghazis*, or Safavids who wanted to be Shia champions, Babur didn't use this religious lever to get an arm up.
- Used gunpowder weapons to overtake the Delhi Sultanate
- Died in 1530, having built a loosely knit empire in India under the Mughal ("Mongol") Dynasty.

### **Akbar**

- Created centralized administrative structure with ministries for each province.
- Military campaigns consolidated Mughal power in southern India.
- Enacted a policy of religious toleration, promoted the "divine faith" that attempted to combine all of the religions (Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism later) - didn't catch on, but A for Effort.

### **Aurangzeb**

- Military emperor that expanded the empire to almost all of the Indian subcontinent.
- Broke Akbar's policy of religious toleration, demolished Hindu temples and established a tax on Hindus.
- Provoked deep hostility between Hindus and Muslims.

## **Imperial Islamic Society**

- There were huge similarities in development of the Gunpowder Empires (Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal).
- Relied on bureaucracies inspired by steppe traditions.
- Adopted similar economic policies, attempted to maintain harmony among many religions, provided for public welfare, and promoted literary and artistic talent.

## **The Dynastic State**

- The Gunpowder Empires were military creations, personal possessions of their rulers.
- Rulers had personal command of the armies, adopted whatever policies they wanted, and owned all the land to distribute to peasants in exchange taxes.

### **The Emperors and Islam**

- Prestige and authority of the dynasty was from the piety and military expertise of the current ruler and predecessors.
- Each empire associated closely with famous Sufis, and devotion to Islam encouraged expansion of the faith.

- Steppe influence: the *ghazi* mentality of spreading Islam by fighting infidels/heretic similar to steppe tradition of routine fighting and leadership roles for successful warriors.

### **Steppe Traditions**

- Emperors did as they pleased, such as the *kanun* of Suleyman - the leader makes the laws, and the Safavids and Mughals who took control of religious matters.
- Steppe family matters were a facet of society, father-son disputes became huge controversies and sometimes rebellions.
- Steppe succession problems occurred too: on the steppes, succession to the throne became a huge battle, so the emperors ended up killing their brothers and expectant mothers... this turned into confining them in the imperial harem without being allowed outside.

### **Women and Politics**

- Women played important roles in managing Islamic empires despite Islam disallowing them from holding a role in public affairs.
- Wives, mothers, or favorite concubines of rulers became advisors and sometimes mothers of the ruler's successor in the Ottoman empire.
- In Safavid and Mughal empires, women were sometimes the de facto ruler with their husbands as figureheads, and some took political initiatives if they thought their ruler-relative wasn't being effective.

## **Agriculture and Trade**

### **Food Crops**

- Foundation for each Islamic empire was the agricultural economy, because surplus production was used to finance armies and bureaucracies.
- Aside from traditional wheat, Colombian exchange brought maize, potatoes, tomatoes, and other crops.
- Coffee and tobacco became common in the Safavid and Ottoman empires by the 1500s.

### **Tobacco**

- Coffeeshouses were established in the Ottoman empire so customers could get their fix of nicotine (tobacco) and caffeine (coffee) at the same time.
- Moralists thought that these new introductions were against Islam, and Sultan Murad IV banned tobacco and coffee though this war on drugs did not work (take a lesson from history America...)

### **Population Growth**

- Overall, American food crops had less of an effect on the Islamic empires than everywhere else.
- Population surged in the Mughal Empire, but more due to traditional agriculture than the introduction of new crops.
- Safavids grew more slowly, and the Ottomans did grow but shrunk after 1600 due to shrinking territory.

### **Trade**

- Islamic empires owned prominent long-distance trading areas and were active in global trade networks.
- Ottomans oversaw Bursa, exchange caravan route that brought Persian raw silk to the Italian market; Ottomans also used trading power to build alliances with France and England against Spain.
- Safavids had Isfahan, giving the Europeans raw silk, carpets, ceramics, and high-quality craft items in exchange for military advisors with gunpowder weapons, as well as naval services.
- Mughals were not as focused on foreign trade, due to the size of the thriving domestic economy; they still got a lot of income from foreign trade, allowed creation of trading colonies by Portuguese, English, French, and Dutch.

- Mughals also formed trading empires of their own, sailing the Indian Ocean and going overland to Russia.

## Religious Affairs in the Islamic Empires

### Religious Diversity

- All Islamic empires had extremely religiously and ethnically diverse populations.
- You may just want to look at book page 766 if you want to see all these religions because I'm not typing them out. I doubt they'll be on the test though, just know that Mughals were mostly Hindu even though they were ruled by Muslims.

### Christian Mission in India

- Portuguese Goa was a Christian mission in India that provided Christian religious instruction for Indians.
- Akbar invited Jesuits to his court in 1580, but they failed to convert him to Christianity.

### Akbar's Divine Faith

- Akbar supported early Sikhs who had a syncretic religion of Islam and Hinduism.
- Made his own "divine faith" which emphasized loyalty to the emperor but borrowed from other religious traditions.
- Mostly drawn from Shiite and Sufi teachings, glorified the emperor, and was tolerant of Hinduism as it tried to bridge the gap between all of India's cultural and religious communities.

### Status of Religious Minorities

- Islamic empires did not require conquered people to be Muslim, but gave them *dhimmi* (protected) status that could retain personal freedom and community control of public and legal affairs as long as they paid the jizya tax and remained loyal.
- Ottomans had *millet* system, allowing millets to retain civil laws, traditions, and languages, while managing their rites of birth, marriage, death, health, and education stuff.
- Mughals kept powerful government roles for the Muslims, but Hindus and Muslims cooperated closely in day-to-day affairs.
- Akbar particularly worked to integrate the two groups; he abolished *jizya*, tolerated all faiths, and sponsored discussions between each major religious group (Muslim, Hindu, Jain, Zoroastrian, Christian).

### Promotion of Islam

- Muslims were afraid of tolerance because they thought it could corrupt their religious identity and cause them to be sucked into the caste system.
- Aurangzeb reinstated the jizya and promoted Islam, causing bitterness in the Hindu community.

## Cultural Patronage of the Islamic Emperors

- Islamic rulers wanted to increase prestige through public works projects.
- Attempted to attract outstanding religious scholars and artists to their courts.
- They allocated resources to mosques, palaces, government buildings, bridges, foundations, soup kitchens, all with splendid architecture.
- Designed cities with courtyards and open spaces, and shaded avenues, and all that good stuff.
- Mughals also blended central Asian and Hindu architecture, with mosques, fortresses, palaces, and sometimes even cities.

### Mughal Constructions

- Fatehpur Sikri: Akbar's capital from 1569 to 1585, demonstrated his strength and imperial ambitions.
- Taj Mahal: Mausoleum out of white marble built by Shah Jahan for his wife.

## The Empires in Transition

- Underwent dramatic change in the 1500s through 1700s.
- Safavid empire fell after Afghan tribesmen blockaded Isfahan until it starved to death, then killed the Safavid officials in 1722.
- Mughal India turned into provincial rebellions and fell under British imperial rule midcentury 1700s.
- Ottomans got put under pressure in the 1700s and 1800s from European and Russian states.

## Deterioration of Imperial Leadership

- Muslim political theorists were huge on diligent, virtuous, and just rulers.
- Each empire had a good amount of strong leaders.

### Dynastic Decline

- All three dynasties had rulers that were incompetent.
- Corruption and greedy rulers were rampant in each empire.
- Weak rule provoked mutinies in the army, provincial revolts, political corruption, economic oppression, and insecurity in the Ottoman empire.

### Religious Tensions

- Conservative Muslims in the Ottoman empire were against astronomy, the printing press, Sufism, women in political roles, and contradiction of Islamic law.
- Safavid Shias convinced the shahs to persecute the Sunnis and Sufis.
- Mughals had issues between Sunni, Shiite, and Sufi branches of Islam *as well as* issues between Hindus and other religions. Eek.

## Economic and Military Decline

- Each empire had strong a domestic economy and prominent roles in global trade.
- By 1700s, they were becoming lands that depended on goods from elsewhere due to troubles with domestic economy.

### Economic Difficulties

- When empires expanded, they could fund their armies with the new resources from conquered lands. This conquest slowed and even reversed, putting strain on resources.
- These empires fought wars which drained their savings and they had no fresh resources to replenish it.
- They raised taxes, sold public offices, and accepted bribes, but these were counterproductive because they did long-term economic damages.
- They were exploited by foreign economies and did not establish commercial stations abroad (though Indian merchants had private trading companies).

### Military Decline

- Each Islamic empire relied on foreign armaments from Europe and could not keep up with new European technologies, so they relied on them entirely.
- The Ottoman navy closed its shipbuilding operations, opting for importation from foreign shipyards.
- This was bad because these empires could not keep up with the more advanced European tech.

## Cultural Conservatism

- Islamic empires neglected cultural developments in the larger world.
- Europeans, when visiting Islamic lands, learned from them and published stuff about them.

### Piri Reis

- Sometimes the information flowed from Europe to the Islamic world.
- Piri Reis was an Ottoman cartographer that used European maps to produce large-scale maps and

the *Book of Seafaring*.

### **Cultural Conservatism**

- Few Muslims went to the infidel lands of "the Franks" because they were convinced of their superiority... so Muslims remained oblivious of European cultural and tech advancements.
- Muslims did get ahold of telescopes and stuff in 1703, but Muslim clerics kicked those out. Bad move guys... bad move, and that's coming from a fellow Muslim.

### **Printing Press**

- Printing spread through the Ottoman empire in 1724, but conservative Muslims forced it to shut down in 1742... it re-opened again in '84, but that was pretty late.
- Mughals also printed as early as the 1550s.
- Somewhat due to aesthetics, because people just preferred handwritten books to printed works, but also due to conservative clerics' desire to avoid proliferation of new "dangerous" ideas to the public that could incite resistance or rebellion.
- Similar to China and Tokugawa Japan in that they all resisted western European cultural influences in the name of political and social stability... which ultimately failed as a result.

*Summary:* Like China and Japan, the Islamic empires largely retained control of their own affairs throughout the early modern era. Ruling elites of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires came from nomadic Turkish stock, all drawing on steppe traditions in organizing their governments. But the rulers also adapted steppe traditions to the needs of settled agricultural societies and devised institutions that maintained order over a long term. During the 1500s and 1600s, all the Islamic empires enjoyed productive economies that enabled merchants to participate actively in the global trade networks of the early modern times. By the early 1700s, however, these same empires were experiencing economic difficulties that led to political and military decline. Like the Ming, Qing, and Tokugawa rulers in east Asia, the Islamic emperors mostly sought to limit foreign and especially European influences in their realms. The Islamic emperors ruled lands that were religiously and ethnically diverse, and most of them worried that the expansion of foreign religious and cultural traditions would threaten political and social stability. They allowed their subjects to practice faiths other than Islam, and the Mughal emperor Akbar even promoted a syncretic religion in hopes that it would defuse tensions between Hindus and Muslims. For the most part, however, rulers of the Islamic empires followed the advice of conservative Muslim clerics, who promoted Islamic values and fought the introduction of foreign cultural imports, such as the printing press and European science, that might undermine their authority. By the late 1700s, the Safavid empire had collapsed, and economic difficulties with cultural insularity had severely weakened the Ottoman and Mughal empires.