The Muslim Empires

Chapter 21
Three Islamic Empires
Grow Out of Chaos Created by Earlier Mongol Invasions

- Ottoman Empire in Asia Minor
- Safavid Empire in Persia
- Mughal Empire in India
Comparison to Rise of Russian Empire

- Giant land empires in Asia
- Inclusion of Muslim peoples
- Some interaction with western overseas expansion
- Used new military technology to take lands
- Major contrast—far less western interaction and more control over their own dealings with world economy
Ottoman Empire

- Empire spreads into Balkan Peninsula
- Defeat of Constantinople by Mehmed II occurs in 1453, renamed as Istanbul
- Extended control through Syria into Egypt and across northwest Africa
- Attacked as far into Europe as Vienna, Austria, by 1683
Warfare and Expansion Central to the Empire’s History

- Warrior aristocracy grew that eventually challenged the power of the sultans
- Infantry divisions made of troops called Janissaries
- Composed of boys from the Balkans taken into slavery, educated, converted to Islam
- Eventually became key players in court politics
The Court of the Sultan

- Sultan was absolute monarch, but he was forced to play politics with his warrior elite and religious scholars.
- Lived in splendid palaces, separated from the lives of the poor people in the empire.
- Appointed a vizier to run the empire on a day to day basis.
Istanbul Restored to Greatness

- Cathedral of Saint Sophia converted to Muslim mosque
- Beautiful buildings spring up around the city
- Suleiman the Magnificent builds the Suleymaniye mosque
Istanbul

- Mansions, rest houses, schools, hospitals are built throughout the city
- Harbors berthed ships from around the world
- Bazaars sold best goods from the rest of the world
- Coffeehouses were key to social life of the capital
- Merchants and artisans produced fine goods to trade
Ottoman Decline

- Dynasty endured 600 years, warding off powerful enemies in Russia, Austria, Spain, and Persia
- Seen in the 1800s as the “sick man” of Europe
- Limits of growth by warfare led to corruption of government by Ottoman officials
- Demands for more taxes from peasants led to internal rebellions
- Great warrior emperors were replaced by weak, effete rulers interested only in a wealthy life
- Discipline in the army fell and losses began to occur
Western Europe Bypasses Ottoman Empire

- Control of eastern Mediterranean lost at Battle of Lepanto in 1571
- Portuguese victories in Indian Ocean give them greater power in the Indies
- Loss of tax collections on trade
- Hit hard by the inflation of prices in Europe in the 1500s
Marginalization in the World Economy

- Ottomans believed Europe was unimportant
- Western trade and reforms blocked
- Isolation led to inability to defend borders adequately and reduction in area of control
Safavid Empire of Persia

- Sail al-Din started empire in early 14th century with Sufi roots
- Religious reform led to influence of Shi’a Islamic beliefs by Red Heads
- Isma’il takes Tabriz in 1501 and creates position of shah (emperor)
Battle of Chaldiran, 1514

- Safavid forces face Ottomans
- Clash between the empires and competing ideas of Shi’a and Sunni faith
- Gunpowder used by Ottomans to withstand cavalry attack by Safavids
- Ottomans unable to advance
- Shi’ism confined to Persia
Power Struggle In the Empire

- Turkic warriors challenged Safavid emperors in the lands they controlled
- Tahmasp I began process of making Turks a warrior noble class
- Also created a Janissary troop of slaves captured in southern Russia
Abbas the Great

- Capitalized on previous Islamic knowledge about gunpowder
- Brought in European advisors to train his army in use of cannons and muskets
- Built standing army to protect himself and the empire
Persian Influences Grow in Safavid Empire

- After Chaldiran, Persian language replaces Turkish at the court
- Padishah exalted in power
- Opulent palaces built
- Descent claimed from imams (successors of Ali)
- Mullahs aligned with rulers, required to curse first three caliphs, and teach approved lessons in state schools
- Conversion of Iranians to Shi‘a completed through these requirements, setting them apart from Turks and Arabs
Abbas Makes Isfahan Great

- Built roads, encouraged trade with Muslim neighbors, India, China, and Europeans
- Built Isfahan around a great square
- Founded colleges, constructed numerous public baths, great mosques with tiles in geometric designs
While women were dominated by men, recent evidence shows some efforts to retain rights:
- Wearing brightly colored robes
- Not covering faces in public
- Influence of wives and concubines on royal princes
- Protection of inheritance rights
Decline of the Safavid Empire

- Rulers after Abbas were controlled and weak
- Afghans attack Isfahan in 1722, and city falls
- Nadir Khan Afshar rises to power, but area became a battleground for its powerful neighbors and nomadic raiders
Mughal Empire in India

- Babur moves from Kabul back into northern India in 1526
- Uses gun carts, movable artillery, and cavalry tactics unknown to the Hindu warriors that terrified their supply elephants
- Conquered Indus and Ganges plains in two years
Akbar Extends Mughal Power

- Great ruler who was contemporary of Elizabeth I, Philip of Spain, Suleyman the Magnificent, and Abbas I
- Built strong military and administrative system
- Patronized arts, encouraged religious contact between Muslims, Christians, and Hindus
- Treated Hindus kindly and encouraged intermarriage between Mughal aristocracy and Hindu Rajputs
Akbar Created Splendid Society

- Promoted women’s rights allowing widow remarriage, prohibiting sati, and approved special days to allow women out of their homes
- Built great cities at Delhi, Agra, and Lahore
European Traders Come to India for Cotton Products

- Easily washed, inexpensive, finely crafted
Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb follow Akbar

- Patrons of the arts
- Shah Jahah had Taj Mahal built as a burial tomb for his wife

- Aurangzeb’s rule was disastrous
  - Tried to extend control through all of India; ruled 50 years, conquered far into the south, but drained the treasury and lost control of northern India
  - Tried to rid India of Hindu influences
Empire Was Weak

- Attack from the north was imminent
- European trading companies established huge trading posts and began to exert pressure in India
- Aurangzeb left no heirs to his throne