Civilizations of the Fifteenth Century: The Islamic World

By Rosemary Groux

Themes to watch: Development and Interaction of Cultures & State building, Expansion, and Conflict
The Islamic Heartland: The Ottoman Empire

- 14\textsuperscript{th} to 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries
- New dominance in Islam; unity
- Constantinople fell 1453
- Covered much of old Byzantine lands
- New Christian-Muslim interaction
The Islamic Heartland: The Ottoman Empire

- Bayezid II “the just”: (1481-1512)
  - Son of Mehmed II
  - Consolidated Ottoman rule in Balkans, Anatolia, Eastern Mediterranean; expanded territory
  - Stepped away from Europe, very pious
  - Fought with Safavids (Sunni vs. Shia)
  - Abdicated in April 1512 in favor of son Selim
The Islamic Heartland: The Ottoman Empire

- Selim I “the Grim”: (1512-1520)
  - Started reign from unrest
  - Added Syria, Egypt
  - Also fought with Safavids; internal rebellion
The Islamic Heartland: The Ottoman Empire

• Suleyman I “the Magnificent”: (1520-1566)
  - Campaigned against Central Europe; conquered Rhodes, broke Hungary; laid siege to Vienna (1529)
    - Hungarian king made vassal (Janos Zappolya)
  - Campaigned against Persia 3 times; subdued Safavids
  - Made naval forays around Mediterranean, North Africa; fought with navies of Venice and Spain (1538)
  - Completed transformation of Constantinople to Istanbul
  - End years marked conflict between sons
The Islamic Heartland: The Ottoman Empire

• Letter from Ogier Chiselin be Busbecq, Ambassador to Ottoman Empire from Holy Roman Empire

• “There is no district with any considerable amount of population, no borough or city, which has not a detachment of Janissaries to protect the Christians, Jews, and other helpless peoples”

• “it is the patience, self-denial, and thrift of the Turkish soldier that enable him to face the most trying circumstances and come safely through the dangers...What a contrast to our men!....we cannot both exist in safety”

• “No distinction is attached to birth among the Turks; the deference to be paid to a man is measured by the position he holds in the public service”

• “These are not our ideas, with us there is no opening left for merit; birth is the standard for everything; the prestige of birth is the sole key to advancement in the public service”
The Islamic Heartland: The Safavid Empire

- 1501-1722
- Turkic, but came from Sufi order; Persia (Iran)
  - Safi al-Din
- Shia Muslims, not Sunni – led to conflict with Ottomans
- Built off previous ruling traditions (Mongol)
- Start of modern Persian history
- Diplomatic/commercial interaction with Europe
The Islamic Heartland: The Safavid Empire

- Esma’i I (Isma’il): (1501-1524)
  - Transformed Safavids from religious order to political dynasty
  - Conquered other peoples in Persia with help of Qezelbas
  - Formed state with overlapping religious/political boundaries
  - Fought with Selim I
    - “You have denied the sanctity of divine law...[Therefore] the ulama and our doctors have pronounced a sentence of death against you, perjururur and blasphemer” – Letter from Selim I to Esma’il, 1514
The Islamic Heartland: The Safavid Empire

- Shah Abbas I (1587-1629)
  - Greatest Safavid ruler, known for being just
  - Goal to centralize power and secure borders
    - Balanced power between groups
  - Fought Ottomans several times, recaptured towns
  - Policies helped ensure survival of empire
  - Patron of Arts, encouraged trade
  - Opened Persia to wider world
  - Constant wars drained treasury
  - Moved capital to Esfahan
  - Religiously tolerant
  - Some decisions sowed seeds for eventual downfall of empire
The Islamic Heartland: The Songhay (Songhai) Empire

- Largest West African State
- Major center of Islamic learning and trade (Timbuktu)
- “Caliph of Land of the Blacks"
- Capital: Gao
- Fell to Morocco in 1591
The Islamic Heartland: The Songhay (Songhai) Empire

• Sonni Ali (1464-1492)
  ❖ Started Songhay expansion
  ❖ Drove out Tuaregs, conquered Tumbuktu and Jenne
  ❖ Lukewarm Muslim
  ❖ Built navy
  ❖ Controlled Niger trade, taxed Saharan
  ❖ Alternately praised and criticized

• Muhammad Toure (1493-1528)
  ❖ Usurped throne
  ❖ Cemented empire, reached greatest extent
The Islamic Heartland: The Mughal Empire

- Founded 1526 by Zahir al-Din (Babur)
- Continuation of Muslim/Hindu interaction
- Political unity over most of India
- Effort to blend Muslims and Hindus into partnerships
  - Vijayanagara
The Islamic Heartland: The Mughal Empire

- Akbar (1556 – 1606)
  - Had to re-conquer most of kingdom
  - Considered greatest Mughal Emperor
  - Muslim, but very religiously tolerant
    - Hindu Rajputs
    - Encouraged inter-religious discussion
  - Centralized financial system
  - Made two big changes in administration system
    - Military officers promoted by emperor
    - Administrators given military ranks
  - Culturally open to Europe & ME, traded
  - Encouraged literature and the arts
  - Expanded the Empire
• “Indian towns appear pleasant from afar; they are adorned with many towers and high buildings in a very beautiful manner. But when one enters them, one finds that the narrowness, aimless crookedness and ill planning of the streets deprive these cities of all beauty...if a traveler has seen one of these cities, he has seen them all.” From Commentary of Antonio Monserate, Jesuit
The Islamic Heartland: The Mughal Empire

• Shah Jahan (1628-1658)
  ✷ Reign cultural peak of Empire
  ✷ Expanded empire further south
  ✷ Art patron
  ✷ Passionate about building
    ➢ Built Taj Mahal, several Mosques, Red Fort (palace-fortress)
  ✷ Moved capital from Agra to Delhi (Shahjahanbad)
  ✷ Almost bankrupted empire
  ✷ Sons started fighting for succession, winner (Aurangzeb) imprisoned him in Red Fort for rest of life
    ➢ Aurangzeb sent empire into decline
The Islamic Heartland: The Mughal Empire
The Islamic Heartland: Significances

• Brought Islamic world greater political coherence, military might, economic prosperity, and cultural achievements than ever before
  ❖ “Second flowering of Islam”

• Spread Islam to new areas (Southeast Asia)
  ❖ Indian Ocean trade in Muslim hands
  ❖ Malacca rose as major port
Discussion

• To what effect are the AP themes from the beginning theme manifested in these empires? In other words, why are these themes important in shaping the Islamic world, both in the 15\textsuperscript{th} century and today?
Works Cited and Referenced

Works Cited and Referenced

Picture Citations

- http://www.mideastweb.org/ara_ottoman1580.gif
- http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~fisher/hst373/Maps/OttomansBayezidII.JPG
- http://www.paradoxplace.com/Insights/Topkapi/Ottoman_Images/Ottoman%20Empire%201300-1683.jpg
- http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a8/SONGHAI_empire_map.PNG
- http://www.altiusdirectory.com/Arts/images/Tajmahal.jpg