

# **ISLAMIC GUNPOWDER EMPIRES**

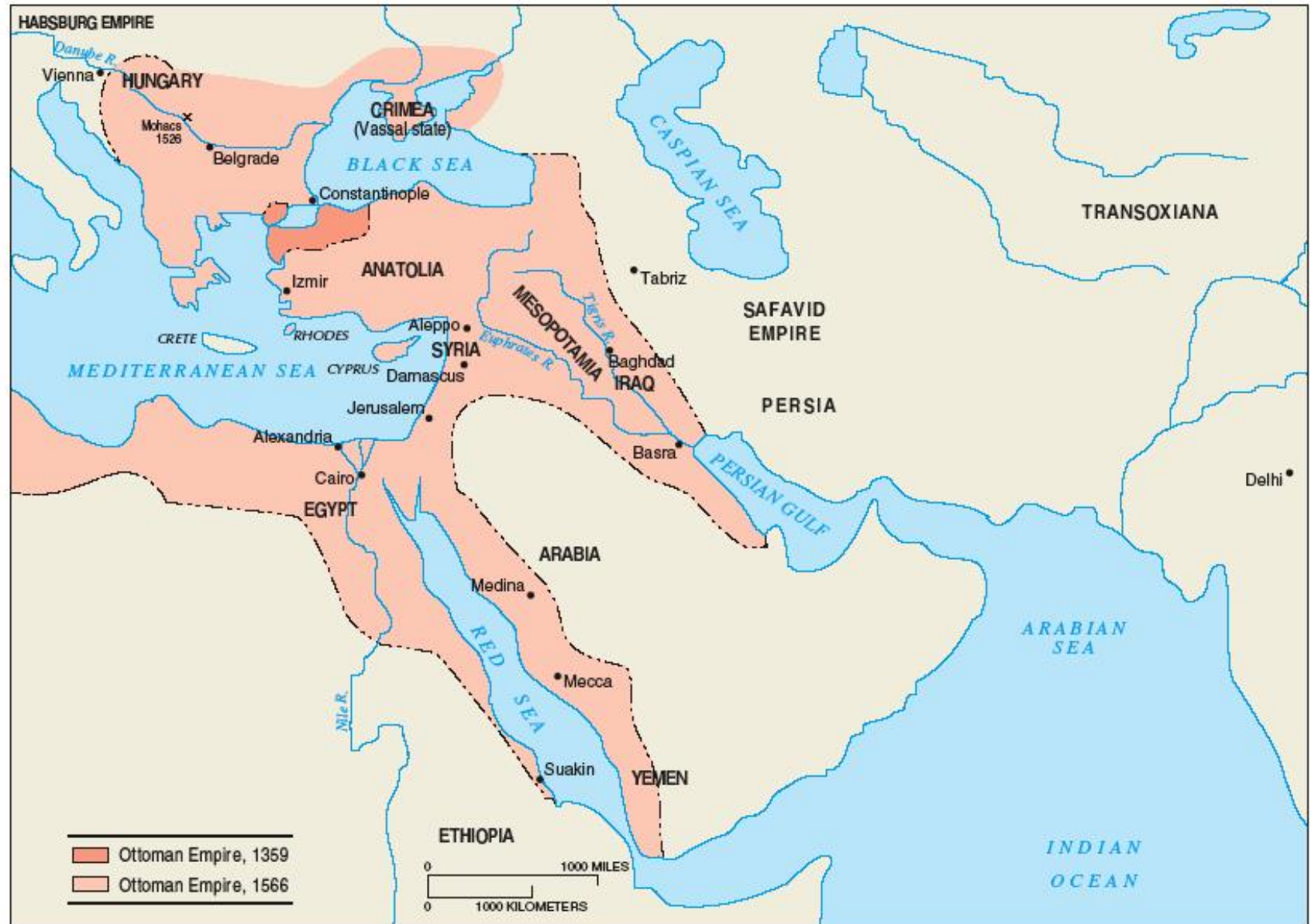
**The Early Modern World,  
1450-1750 CE**



# COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

- Religion (of the rulers at least...)
- All three Islamic empires were military creations
- Governing
  - Autocratic: emperors imposed their will on the state
  - Ongoing problems with royal succession
  - Ottoman rulers legally killed brothers after taking the throne
- Influence of Royal and Upper-Class Women
  - Harem
  - Harem politics: women often influenced policies, selections

# OTTOMAN EMPIRE



# RISE OF OTTOMAN EMPIRE

- Founded in 1289 by Osman, who commanded a large group of Muslim warriors
- Later Expand into outer regions of Byzantine Empire
- Successful b/c of gunpowder in early sieges
- Use of Janissary Corps
- 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries: Expand into South Eastern Europe
- 1453: Conquer Constantinople
  - Under the leadership of Mehmed II (r. 1451-1481)
    - Absolute monarchy; centralized state
    - Attacked Italy



# POLITICS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

- Sultans control politics and economy
- Promoted religious toleration to “People of the Books”
- Separate themselves from the masses
- Face many issues with succession
- Harem
- Sultans will promote cultural heritage and development
  - Architecture
  - Coffeehouses



# OTTOMAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- **Four Main Social Groups:**
  - Men of the pen-Judges, Imams
  - Men of the sword- Military
  - Men of negotiations- Merchants
  - Men of husbandry- Farmers
- **Less Structured in Rural Areas**
  - **Askeri:** Protectors/Military
  - **Raya:** Subjects
- **Social Mobility becomes more rigid over time**
- **Women had no rights aside from tradition, class, husbands' wishes**



# THE OTTOMAN MILLET SYSTEM

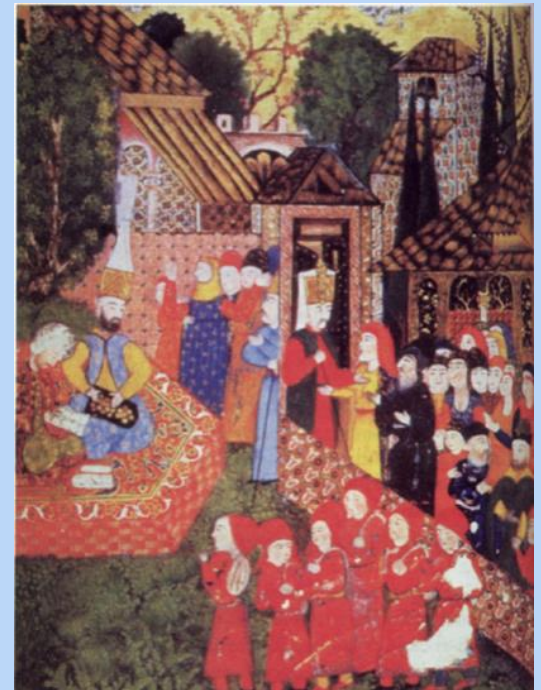
- **Millet System: Different communities based on religion throughout the empire**
- **Each millet was headed by its own religious dignitary**
  - **Advised sultan on affairs in the community**
  - **Was punished by sultan for problems of the community**
- **In the millet system each community was responsible for**
  - **Taxes**
  - **Education**
  - **Legal Matters: Marriage, Divorce, Inheritance**

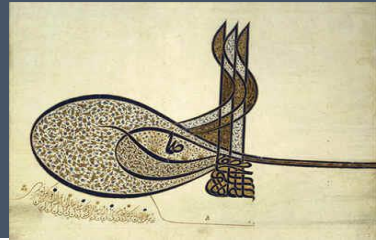


# SLAVERY IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

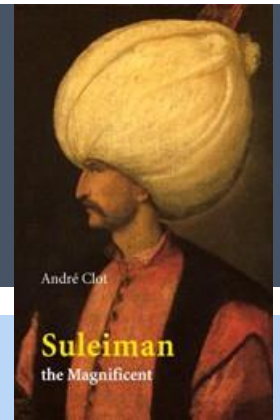
## ■ Devshirme System:

- Young Balkan, Christian males between the ages of 8 and 15
- Educated in Palace schools, converted to Islam
- Learned several languages (Turkish, Arabic, Persian)
- Trained in military techniques
- Pledged absolute allegiance to Sultan
- Received highest offices in Empire
- Others were forced to work for farmers
- Some become the elite infantry of the Ottoman Empire – Janissary Corps





# SULEYMAN THE MAGNIFICENT



- **Empire at its height under Suleyman**
  - **Reigned 1520-1566**
    - Came to power through murder of brothers
  - **Conquered lands in Europe, Asia, Africa**
    - Syria, modern-day Israel, Egypt
    - Hungary, Croatia, Rumania
    - Siege of Vienna (Austria) in 1529 failed
    - Built powerful navy to rule Mediterranean
  - Encouraged development of arts
  - Beautified Constantinople with mosques
- **Empire began a slow decline after Suleyman**



# SAFAVID PERSIA (1501-1736)



# ORIGINS OF THE SAFAVID EMPIRE



- **Founder: Shah Ismail (r. 1501-1524)**
  - **Conquers much of modern-day Iran and Iraq**
  - **Title “Shah” was originally used by ancient Persian dynasties**
  - **Shi’a Islam**
  - **Religiously intolerant – forced conversion**
  - **Tries to convert Sunni Muslims in Ottoman Empire but is stopped by Suleyman**

# SHAH ABBAS THE GREAT

## (R. 1588-1629)

- Greatest of all Safavid leaders
- Took out all of his political opponents
- Went to war with Ottoman Empire to regain territories lost in earlier battles
  - Safavids fail at this effort BUT, they sign a peace treaty with the Ottomans (1612) and regain some territory
- Modernized military
- Made Alliances with Europe
- Invited European merchants into country
- Created strong bureaucracy



# SAFAVID SOCIETY AND ECONOMY/CULTURE

## SOCIETY

- Traditional Social Structure
- Women are forced to wear the veil and live in seclusion
- Young boys kidnapped and enslaved (like Janissaries)
- Strong emphasis on artisans, engineers and merchants

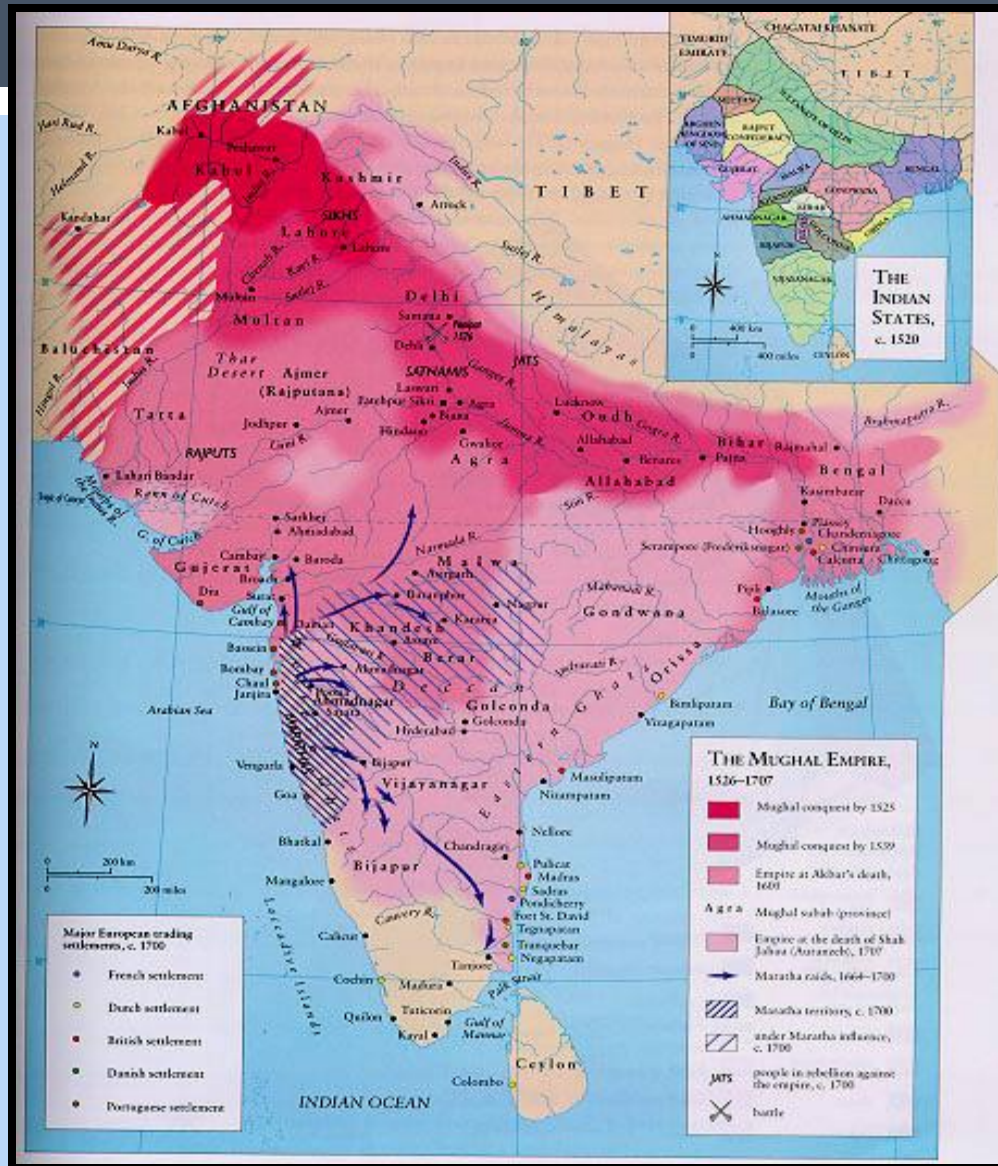
## ECONOMY/CULTURE

- Main Exports: Silk items and Persian rugs
- Government invests money in cultural achievements
  - Isfahan (capital)
  - Architecture (City planning; mosques)
  - Literature, poetry and music

# DECLINE OF THE SAFAVID EMPIRE

- Leaders kept in seclusion from the people
- Inept leadership
- Invaded by nomadic tribes in 1722
- Gets caught in the middle of many territorial and political battles

# MAP OF THE MUGHAL STATE





# MUGHAL EMPIRE

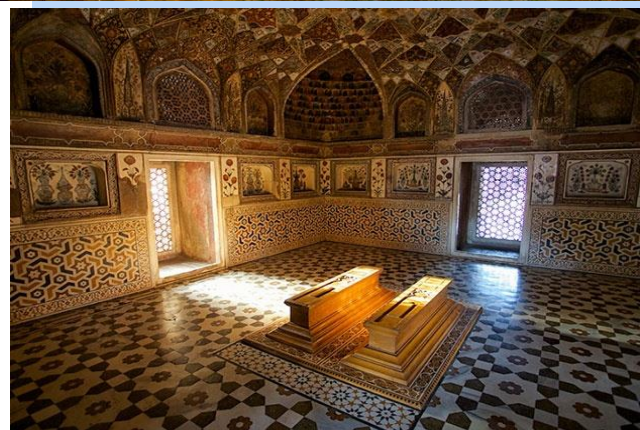
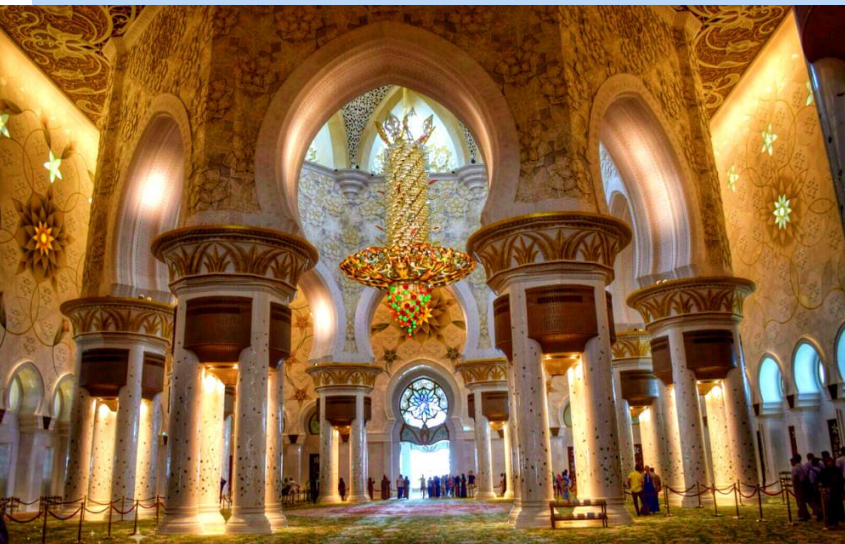
- Babur invaded northern India in 1523
- Babur is a descendent of the Mongol Dynasty
- Controlled Afghanistan and most of India

# MUGHAL EMPIRE

- Akbar (1556-1605) ruled with absolute power and moved into southern India
- Tolerant to most religions
  - Attempted to reduce tensions between Hindus and Muslims
  - Allowed intermarriage between religions
  - Attempted to create religion that syncretizes both religious customs
- Improved the status of women
  - Prohibited Sati: a ritual widows threw themselves onto the funeral pyres of their husbands
  - Encouraged widows to remarry
  - Discouraged child marriages

# MUGHAL EMPIRE

- Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal to house remains of his wife



# MUGHAL EMPIRE

- Aurangzeb (1659-1707) conquered most of India except for the most southern tip
- Intolerant to other religions
  - Taxed Hindus and destroyed their temples
  - Forced conversion of Islam onto others
  - Caused more tensions between Hindus and Muslims

# SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ISLAMIC GUNPOWDER EMPIRES

Unit 3: the  
Earl  
Modern  
Period,  
1450-1750  
CE

# TRADE & DEMOGRAPHY

Agriculture: the basis of all three empires

- Major crops: wheat, rice
- Imports of coffee, tobacco very popular
  - Coffee discovered in Jaffa Province (Ethiopia)
  - Coffee houses developed, a major social tradition
- Peasants
  - Tended to be overtaxed, overworked by nobles

■ Trade

- Long-distance trade important to all three empires
  - Ottomans, Safavids shared parts of east-west trade routes
- Safavids offered silk, carpets, ceramics to Europeans
- Mughal empires less attentive to foreign or maritime trading
  - Mughals permitted stations for English, French, Dutch
  - Europeans gradually exclude Indian influence

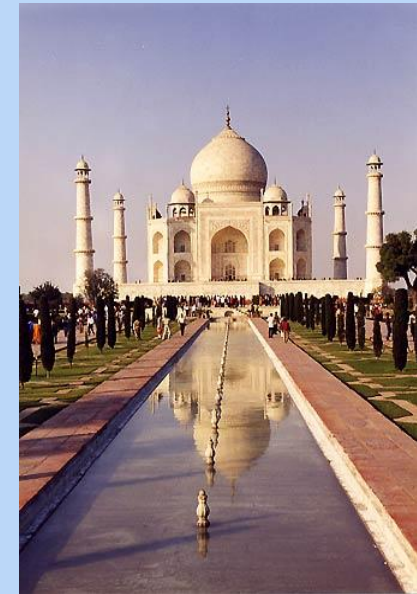
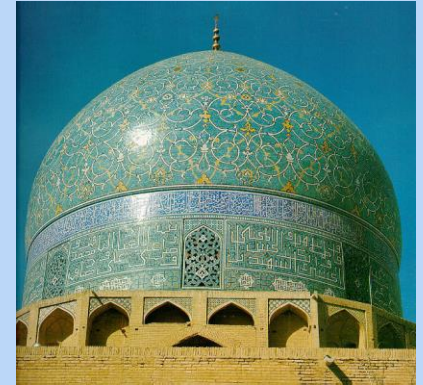
# RELIGION

- **Religious diversity**
  - **Created challenges to rule of empires**
  - **Uniformity hard with religious differences**
- **Religious minorities**
  - **In Ottoman empire**
    - **Conquered peoples protected, granted religious, civil autonomy**
    - **Organized into quasi-legal millets to regulate own affairs**
    - **Much of population was Christian, Jewish**
    - **Each communities had own millet which handled judicial affairs**
  - **In India**
    - **Majority of population was Hindu**
    - **Early Muslim rulers closely cooperated with Hindu majority**
    - **Under Aurangzeb: Islam proclaimed state religion, nonbelievers taxed**
  - **In Persia**
    - **Shia were fanatical**
    - **Forced conversion**



# CULTURE

- **Sponsored arts and public works**
  - Golden Age of Islamic art, architecture
  - Mosques, palaces, schools, hospitals, caravanserais
- **Istanbul**
  - Ottoman capital, a bustling city of a million people
  - Topkapi palace housed government, sultan's residence
  - Suleyman blended Islamic, Byzantine architecture
- **Isfahan**
  - Safavid capital
  - The "queen of Persian cities"
  - The central mosque is a wonder of architecture
- **Fatehpur Sikri, Mughal capital, created by Akbar**
  - Combined Islamic style with Indian elements
  - Site abandoned because of bad water supply
  - Taj Mahal, exquisite example of Mughal architecture





# DECLINE OF GUNPOWDER EMPIRES

## ■ Dynastic decline

- Caused by negligent rulers, factions
  - Former elite military units often became threats
- Government corruption
- Harem politics
  - Rulers took to drinking, partying too much
  - Rulers' mothers, wives jockeyed for position, sons

## ■ Tensions increased

- Religious conservatives abandoned tolerance
- Ottoman conservatives
  - Resisted innovations like the telescope, printing press
  - Resisted western military innovations, industrialization
  - Discouraged merchants, commercialism
- Safavid Empire
  - Shiite leaders urged shahs to persecute Sunnis
  - Non-Muslims lost many protections
- Mughal India
  - Aurangzeb's policies provoked deep animosity of Hindus
  - Rise of Christians with coming of Europeans

# REASONS FOR DECLINE

- **Economy and Military Expansion**
  - Series of long and costly wars with no financial support
  - Economy Stagnated by 18<sup>th</sup> century
    - Officials resorted to raising taxes to deal with financial problems
    - Official, unofficial corruption lost millions in revenue to state
  - Failure to develop trade and industry
- **Military decline**
  - Imported European weapons but never made their own
  - Arsenals outdated; tactics outdated; systems outdated
  - Ottoman Empire
    - Even purchased military vessels from abroad
    - Europeans developed extremely modern militaries
  - India
    - Mughals refused to build a navy, let Europeans rule seas
    - Led to loss of Mughal provinces
    - Local princes, rulers assumed control, defied Mughals
- **Rise of Banditry, Piracy**
  - In countryside, many poor peasants took to banditry
  - On seas, many ports and merchants too to piracy
  - Trade disrupted, made Europeans mad who often retaliated

# CULTURAL INSULARITY

- **Cultural conservatism**
  - Muslims seldom traveled to the West, confident of their superiority
  - Science, technology ignored as it is western, threat
  - Ignorant of European technological developments
  - Hostile to European, Christian inventions, institutions
- **Social conservatism**
  - Middle classes failed to develop in Muslim states
  - Growing gap between ruling elite, peasants/slaves
  - Growing antagonism between religious elites, ruling elites
- **Resistance to printing press**
  - At first, Ottomans banned printing in Turkish, Arabic
  - Ban lifted in 1729; conservatives closed Turkish press in 1742
  - In India, Mughals showed little interest in printing technology
- **Xenophobia becomes a cultural trait of Islam**
  - Foreign cultural innovations seen as a threat to political stability
  - Inability to grasp aspects of modern politics, state structures
  - Muslims cannot believe what is happening to them
  - More irritating that it is the Christian Europeans who are ruling