WORLD HISTORY

THE BIG ERAS

# MIDDLE AGES

## 300–1500 CE

Ross E. Dunn *General Editor*

## Patterns of Interregional Unity

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS, UCLA

WORLD HISTORY
THE BIG ERAS
BIG ERA FIVE

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General Editor

Ross E. Dunn

Professor Emeritus of History
*San Diego State University*

Associate Director
*National Center for History in the Schools*

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The units in this book are drawn from the Landscape Teaching Units of World History for Us All, a web-based model curriculum for world history (http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu). The website is continuously evolving with new content being added. If a topic is not included here, please visit the website to see if it is currently available.

A Companion to World History for Us All
A Model Curriculum for World History
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Project Coordinator: Dr. Aaron Willis
Editorial Assistants: Rosemary McGuinness, Emily Rose Oachs
Book Layout: Linda Deverich, Mark Gutierrez, Kristopher Morris
Cover Design: Mark Gutierrez

Social Studies School Service
10200 Jefferson Boulevard, P.O. Box 802
Culver City, CA 90232-0802
United States of America

(310) 839-2436
(800) 421-4246

Fax: (800) 944-5432
Fax: (310) 839-2249

www.socialstudies.com
access@socialstudies.com



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# Contents

# Publisher's Note

## BACKGROUND

The Big Era lessons emphasize the relationships between particular subject matter and larger patterns of historical meaning and significance. This inclusive, context-focused approach is primarily concerned with forging connections on a global scale, thereby encouraging students to construct the globally integrated chronological framework essential to achieving deeper historical understanding. The lessons may be used flexibly, depending on interest, school curriculum requirements, and instructional time available.

This volume brings together the Landscape Teaching Units of Big Era Five in World History for Us All, a web-based model curriculum for world history available online at http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu. The nine Big Eras constitute the periodization plan and the basic organizational structure of the World History for Us All curriculum. Many teachers have requested a printed version of the Big Era units, or lessons, to help guide them and their students in exploring historical developments, continuities, and turning points on a larger scale than textbooks or content standards lists offer.

## GENERAL APPROACH

Chapters begin by explaining the educational value of their particular historical moment, identifying the topic's relevance and positioning it within the context of the global landscape. Outlining salient information in a written description and visually situating the era on a time line, the chapter's introductory section foreshadows the content and underlying themes of the chapter, preparing students to draw informed connections among historical events.

The Three Essential Questions and Key Themes encourage students to engage in critical, higher-order thinking as they solidify their comprehension of major world trends. (See below for further description.) Additional introductory material enumerates the chapter's learning objectives, estimates the time commitment required, and lists the materials necessary to complete the lessons.

The lessons offer a varied selection of activities, readings, primary source documents, discussion questions, assessments, and extension activities. The teacher's guides, containing instructions for lesson preparation, procedure, and background information, are followed by each lesson's reproducible student handouts. Charts, graphs, and maps referenced in the lesson are also provided.

Correlations to National History Standards are listed to enhance convenience for teachers designing their curricula to align with these content recommendations. All the lessons in this volume support learning and practice of critical-thinking skills. By teaching these lessons, instructors will help students develop the skills charted in both the Common Core State Standards Initiative and the *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards*. Extensive correlations for this volume to Common Core State Standards are found on the web-based product page at http://www.socialstudies.com/c/product.html?record@TF45334. The resource sections recommend books, articles, and digital content selected as means to further explore the chapter's historical concepts and expand the scope of understanding for both educators and students.

This book and the World History for Us All model curriculum use the secular designations BCE (Before the Common Era) and CE (Common Era) in place of BC and AD. This usage follows the format of the National Standards for History and the Advanced Placement World History course. It in no way alters the conventional Gregorian calendar. We also use BP (Before Present) for historical periods approximately prior to 10,000 BP.

## GEOGRAPHICAL TERMS

### *Afroeurasia*

Afroeurasia is the landmass made up of Africa and Eurasia combined. Afroeurasia was formed during the last forty million years by the collision of the tectonic plates containing Eurasia and those containing Africa and Arabia. This geographical expression serves as a helpful tool in discussing large-scale historical developments that cut across the traditionally defined continental divisions of Africa, Asia, and Europe. Even though Africa is separated from both Europe and Asia by the Mediterranean and Red seas (except at the Isthmus of Sinai where modern Egypt meets Israel), these bodies of water have historically been channels of human intercommunication, not barriers to it. Therefore, we may think of both the Mediterranean and the Red Sea as "lakes" inside Afroeurasia.

### *America, the Americas*

The Americas are made up of the continents of North America and South America, including neighboring islands, notably the islands of the Caribbean Sea. Until the twentieth century, most geography books classified North and South America together as a single continent, labeling them the "New World" ("new" to Europeans beginning in the late fifteenth century CE) as opposed to the "Old World," that is, Afroeurasia. In the twentieth century, school children in the United States and most other countries (though not in some Latin American states) were taught to see the "Western Hemisphere" as comprising two distinct continents, joined only by the narrow Isthmus of Panama. However, humans in North and South America have never been entirely disconnected from one another. As far as we know, humans first migrated from North to South America 14,000 years ago, or longer, by advancing along either the Isthmus or its coastal waters. Also, it is not hard to perceive the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea as two "internal seas" of a single American landmass, much the way we may think of the Mediterranean and Red seas as "inside" Afroeurasia. The Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico are bounded on three sides by land and on the west by a long string of closely clustered islands.

### *Australasia*

The continent of Australia, plus New Guinea, New Zealand, Tasmania, and other neighboring islands make up Australasia. During the last Ice Age, when sea levels were lower, Australia, New Guinea, and Tasmania comprised a single landmass known as Sahul. Human settlement of Australasia began as many as 60,000 years ago, although Polynesian mariners did not reach New Zealand until about 1000 CE.

### *Eurasia*

Eurasia is the landmass made up of Asia and Europe. Today, this term is widely used in history and geography education. The idea that Europe and Asia are separate continents goes back many centuries, but scholars who accept the definition of a continent as "a large landmass surrounded, or nearly surrounded, by water" know that the definition applies to neither Europe nor Asia because these two landmasses are conjoined. Moreover, the Ural Mountains, designated by eighteenth century European geographers as the proper boundary between the European and Asian continents, have never been a serious obstacle to the flow of migrants, armies, trade goods, or ideas. In this book, Europe is defined as a subcontinent of Eurasia (or Afroeurasia), analogous to South Asia or the Indochinese peninsula.

### *Great Arid Zone*

A climatic map of Afroeurasia shows that a good part of the landmass is a belt of dry or semi-dry country that extends all the way from the Atlantic coast of Africa in a generally northeasterly direction to the northern interior of China. This enormous tract comprises a chain of interconnected deserts, mountains, and semi-arid steppes. A steppe may be defined as flat or rolling grassland, equivalent to what Americans call "prairie" and Argentineans call "pampas." The main climatic characteristic of the Great Arid Zone is low annual rainfall, which may range from an average of less than 5 inches in the driest of deserts to 20 inches or so in better watered steppes. For several millennia the Great Arid Zone has been home to pastoral nomadic peoples. Where water has been available from rivers, springs, or wells, it has also been home to farming societies and even large cities.

### *Indo-Mediterranea*

The region of lands and seas extending from the Atlantic coasts of Europe and North Africa to North India is known as Indo-Mediterranea. This expression includes the Mediterranean basin as a whole and extends eastward across Southwest Asia to northern India as far as the Bay of Bengal. In the long term of human history from at least the third millennium BCE to modern times, this region has been characterized by a proliferation of clusters of dense population (notably in river valleys) and by intense commercial and cultural interchange.

### *Inner Eurasia*

The huge interior landmass of Eurasia, whose dominant features are flat, semi-arid regions of steppe and forest, is known as Inner Eurasia. David Christian defines Inner Eurasia as the territories ruled by the Soviet Union before its collapse, together with Mongolia and parts of western China. Poland and Hungary to the west and Manchuria (northeastern China) to the east may be thought of as Inner Eurasia's borderlands. The northern margins are boreal forest and Arctic tundra. The southern boundaries are the Himalayas and other mountain chains.

### *Oceania*

The basin of the Pacific Ocean and its approximately 25,000 islands make up Oceania. Human settlement of this enormous region, sometimes called the Island Pacific, began in western islands near New Guinea about 1600 BCE. Polynesian mariners reached both Hawaii to the northeast and Easter Island to the far southeast around 500 CE. The majority of the islands lie in the tropical belt south of the Equator. The first peoples of Oceania spoke mostly Polynesian languages. Some geographers include both the large island of New Guinea and the continent of Australia as part of Oceania.

### *Southwest Asia*

Southwest Asia is the designation of the region extending from the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea to Afghanistan. It includes Turkey and the Arabian Peninsula, but not Egypt or any other part of Africa. This region is often referred to as the Middle East, but this book uses the term "Middle East" only in the context of history since the start of the twentieth century. (For earlier periods, "Middle East" causes confusion because it is used sometimes as a synonym for Southwest Asia, sometimes to encompass Southwest Asia plus Egypt, and sometimes to embrace the entire region from Afghanistan to Morocco.)

## THREE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

The Three Essential Questions introduce overarching thematic questions that stand at the crux of historical understanding. These questions provide three distinct lenses through which to examine the constantly evolving relationships that shape human civilization: the relationships between humans and the environment, humans and other humans, and humans and ideas. The study of these relationships—which have proven to be enduring aspects of the human experience—and their corresponding questions function as guides for organizing classroom activities and discussion. Prompted by the Three Essential Questions, students identify how the content of each chapter relates to these themes and utilize this information to predict future patterns of activity and thought.

### *Humans and the Environment*

These questions require students to consider how humans have lived, how they have treated the earth, and how their power over the earth has grown, while relating each chapter's content to the underlying question, "How has the changing relationship between human beings and the physical and natural environment affected human life from early times to the present?"

### *Humans and Other Humans*

These questions explore the relationships among humans themselves and how those relationships have evolved, while relating each chapter's content to the underlying question, "Why have relationships among humans become so complex since early times?"

### *Humans and Ideas*

These questions push students to examine how ideas influence historical development and how events shape ideas, while relating each chapter's content to the underlying question, "How have human views of the world, nature, and the cosmos changed?"

## KEY THEMES

The lessons in this volume address a number of historical themes. A theme is defined here as a topic that addresses a particular sphere of human activity over time. Themes are concerned with broad aspects of change of enduring importance in the human experience. Historical learning usually works best when students begin their investigations in world history with distant eras and move forward, connecting patterns of cause and effect over time. Nevertheless, attention to thematic issues offers ways to connect the study of particular periods and regions of the world to enduring aspects of the human condition. This encourages students to think more coherently, systematically, and comparatively about the past. Teachers may wish to emphasize one or more of the key themes suggested here in connection with any of the chapters and lessons in this book.

**Key Theme 1:** Patterns of Population

**Key Theme 2:** Economic Networks and Exchange

**Key Theme 3:** Uses and Abuses of Power

**Key Theme 4:** Haves and Have-Nots

**Key Theme 5:** Expressing Identity

**Key Theme 6:** Science, Technology, and the Environment

**Key Theme 7:** Spiritual Life and Moral Codes

For in-depth discussion of these themes and for investigative questions that link them to the Three Essential Questions, go to World History for Us All (http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu, Questions and Themes, The Seven Key Themes).

# Introduction

For more than five millennia the population of Afroeurasia grew steadily, forming larger and more complex political units, such as the Han Chinese, Persian Achaemenid, and Roman empires. Around 300 to 400 CE, this cycle of empire building came nearly to a halt, and for a time even reversed itself. The time of the ancient world came to a close, and over the 1,200 years of Big Era Five, many elements of the modern world first came into view. In this introduction, we examine some of the dynamics at work and explore their significance.

One distinguishing feature of this era was its unusual demographic (population) history. Overall there were fluctuations with a long-term upward trend, culminating in a significant rise at the end of the period to reach 400 million people globally. This number broke the ceiling on growth that had limited the population advances of earlier agrarian societies. The population surge of Big Era Five was linked to the spread of innovations in agriculture, especially numerous small changes that improved irrigation, domestic animal breeds, and enrichment of the soil. These advances, which took place from Europe and West Africa to China and Japan, increased the number of people able to derive sustenance from a given acre of land. Long distance trade also supplied people with a more varied diet and numerous products that improved the quality of life.

Politically, Big Era Five was marked by the founding of a kaleidoscope of city-states, kingdoms, and empires. For the first time, large empires appeared in West Africa, Mesoamerica, and South America. States and their corresponding economic systems became more complex. A few empires emerged that were even bigger than the Han and Roman states of earlier times. The largest of these were the Arab Muslim Empire of the eighth century and the Mongol Empire of the thirteenth century.

Long distance commerce grew and cities multiplied across Afroeurasia, especially between 1000 and 1500 CE. Big Era Five saw the emergence of the Indian Ocean basin as a new focus of busy economic interchange. Notably, during the era of the Mongol Empire and the several big Mongol states that followed it, the silk roads across Afroeurasia bustled with caravan trade

in silks, cottons, spices, tea, horses, ceramic wares, and numerous other products. Caravans and ships also carried ideas. During this era a great deal of scientific and technological cross-fertilization took place, especially in Afroeurasia, but also in the Americas. In the Americas, artistic and architectural techniques and styles spread from the Olmec city-states of the second and first millennium BCE far and wide across Mesoamerica and to Native American peoples farther north.

Culturally, Big Era Five featured the consolidation of several belief systems and the continuing retreat of the purely local religions of farmers, foragers, and pastoral nomads. The number of distinct religious traditions in the world almost certainly declined significantly, even as universalist religions—those that appealed to people across boundaries of language and local culture—grew by leaps and bounds. Islam, the youngest of the major world belief systems, emerged in the seventh century CE. Islam, together with Christianity and Buddhism, offered a universal message of comfort, moral living, and salvation that resulted in widespread appeal.Not all individuals and societies benefited equally—or benefited at all—from these trends in political, economic, and cultural growth. Millions fell victim to conquests, millions more paid heavy taxes to authoritarian rulers, and slavery continued to thrive. Nevertheless, an array of ingenious technological advances allowed humankind to feed, clothe, and shelter itself even as the global population grew faster than in any earlier era.

CHAPTER 1

*By Ernest O'Roark and Eileen Wood*

# Centuries of Upheaval in Afroeurasia


## WHY STUDY UPHEAVAL IN AFROEURASIA?

Many of the major long-lived empires that dominated Afroeurasia between 1200 BCE and 500 CE suffered collapse between 200 and 600 CE. This chapter is an investigation of the reasons behind this disintegration, using the Han, Roman, and Gupta empires as models. Students naturally look for, and will readily latch onto, simple monocausal explanations for such events. It is therefore important for students to learn that major events in history often have highly complex interrelated causes and that they must learn to probe beyond simplistic answers to really understand what happened and why. The chapter begins with a look at the definition of empire and the ingredients that make an empire successful. Students are then asked to speculate about what might go wrong that could bring down such an empire. The rest of the chapter seeks to answer this question. In the second and third lessons, students investigate the demise of the Han and Roman empires. In both cases, students use a variety of materials including graphic organizers to discover the enormous number of interrelated factors that contributed to the downfall of both empires. The attempts made to reestablish unity are also studied, contrasting the successful unification of China under the Sui emperor Wen with Emperor Justinian's failed attempt to reunite Rome. The Gupta Empire is examined in the fourth lesson, which begins with a study of the empire's rise and the "golden age" in India that resulted. Students are then introduced to the Hepthalites, the

pastoral nomads from Central Asia who, in a swift and brutal campaign, annihilated the Gupta. The Gupta model demonstrates to students that, although enduring empires often collapsed for complex reasons, occasionally an overwhelming force armed with superior military technology and tactics obliterated an otherwise strong and well-organized empire. Sometimes the answer is simple after all. Students must consider all of the models in the final lesson, which consists of a writing assessment answering the question, "Why do empires fall?"

## OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Identify characteristics of empire.
2. Explain multiple causes for the fall of the Han Empire.
3. Research and evaluate the multiple causes for the fall of Rome.
4. Describe Justinian's attempt to re-create the Roman Empire and why it failed.
5. Describe the rise of the Gupta Empire and its golden age.
6. Give reasons for the success of pastoral nomads in Inner Eurasia.
7. Explain the role of pastoral nomads in the collapse of the Gupta Empire.
8. Use evidence from the Han, Roman, and Gupta empires to identify reasons for the demise of long-enduring empires.

## TIME AND MATERIALS

This chapter should take 5 to 8 class periods, depending on the length of the class, the abilities of students, and whether teachers choose to teach all parts of each lesson. Materials required:

- Variety of texts or access to the Internet to conduct research on China's emperor Wen and the Sui Dynasty and research on the fall of the Roman Empire.
- A rhyming dictionary.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The era from 200 to 600 CE was a time of dramatic change across much of Afroeurasia. Successful, long-enduring empires that had risen and flourished during the preceding centuries began to flounder. One by one, nearly all were extinguished by the end of the sixth century. Why and how this happened in such a limited span of time is the subject of this chapter.

### *The Han Empire in China*

The first to fall was the Han Dynasty in China. The Han demise was a complicated affair. Not surprisingly, a large part of the story involved pressure from pastoral nomads who lived

along China's northern borders. Over the preceding centuries a confederation of nomadic groups known as the Xiongnu amassed so much power in horse cavalry that they were able to extort resources from the Han in return for agreeing to keep the peace. The Han cooperated, finding it cheaper to pay the Xiongnu than to fight them. For a while, this compromise worked well. But in 51 CE, a succession dispute divided the Xiongnu into two groups. This set off a chain reaction that had a severe impact on the Han. The Xiongnu nearest the Chinese border took the payment intended for the entire confederation. The farther group immediately retaliated, attacking the Han (for not paying) as well as their greedy Xiongnu kinsmen. As the confederation disintegrated, individual groups began to demand separate payments from the Han. The costs to the Han rose considerably, and at the same time nomadic cavalry raids increased. The Han were not getting what they continued to pay for.

At the same time, nature entered the fray as an enemy of the Han. In 153 CE a swarm of locusts laid waste to large areas of farmland. Deforestation that had started in much earlier times produced erosion and floods. The Huang He (Yellow River) filled with silt and began to flood more frequently, with more devastating results. Infectious diseases new to China began to arrive via the silk roads, causing widespread epidemics.

The misery these disasters caused was compounded by the increasingly desperate economic situation of the peasants. Over time, the long-standing tradition of dividing land equally among all sons had reduced the size of the average farm to the point where farmers could not make enough from the land to pay their taxes. Farmers had little choice but to give over their small plots to wealthy aristocratic landlords whose legal status exempted them and their dependents from taxes. Thus the wealthy landlords grew richer, the peasants became poor tenant farmers, and the Han government lost tax revenue. As conditions worsened, poverty and frustration fueled a series of peasant revolts.

All of these dilemmas placed heavy demands on the Han government and called for creative and decisive leadership. But internal competition for power among factions within the Han court paralyzed the government and left it incapable of dealing effectively with the empire's many problems. The rising power of large landowners and the increasing independence of Han generals continually eroded the power of the emperor. In 220 CE the dynasty collapsed, and the most powerful among the generals divided the empire into several smaller kingdoms.

## *The Roman Empire*

Rome was next. Many of the same pressures that brought down the Han plagued the Romans as well. Similar in size to the Han Empire, but more linguistically and culturally diverse, Rome was even more difficult to hold together in the face of such pressures.

As with the Han, increased trade along the silk roads brought new contagious diseases from afar. These diseases repeatedly ravaged populations throughout the empire. Because conditions were worst in the cities during such outbreaks, those who could afford to do so fled to their country villas.

Neighboring pastoral societies were also a problem for both the Han and Roman empires. Rome had a long and turbulent border with Germanic peoples, called Goths, who lived to the north and east along the Rhine and Danube rivers. Roman rulers wished to keep the

Germanic Goths out of Roman territory, but raids were frequent and the financial and logistical burden of maintaining troops along the border was enormous. Eventually the Romans ended up with an arrangement similar to the one established by the Han with the Xiongnu. The Romans paid Gothic chiefs an annual tribute in return for an end to raids on Roman territory. In addition, the Romans allowed Goths to cross the border to sell their goods in Roman markets. In fact, many Germanic warriors served in the Roman army. This arrangement worked well for a time. One result of this interaction was that many Germanic men and women converted to Christianity, which by the fourth century CE was the religion of Rome.

The Huns brought this fragile peace to an abrupt end around 375 CE. After crossing the Volga River from Central Asia and conquering the farming peoples there, the Huns swept into eastern Europe and attacked Germanic settlements. Trapped between the borders of Rome and the onrushing Huns, the terrified Goths requested and received Rome's permission to migrate west of the Danube. The crossing was a disaster. According to the Roman historian Ammianus, the desperate refugees took to the dangerous, rain-swollen river, clinging to almost anything that would float. Some tried to swim. For those who survived the crossing, their problems were just beginning. The generals in charge of the refugees mishandled their resettlement, starving and mistreating them in the process. Within three years, these Germanic groups had regrouped and took their revenge, defeating a Roman army at Adrianople and killing the emperor Valens. This was the first time a Roman army had been beaten by Germanic peoples in Roman territory. It signaled an end to Roman military superiority. Other Goths, as well as the Huns, soon took notice.

The disappearance of Roman military invincibility was due in large part to serious economic and political problems within the empire. Epidemics and war led to a steep decline in population during the third and fourth centuries. The loss may have been as high as thirty percent. Labor shortages developed. Trade and business slowed. Tax revenues plummeted. At the same time, the gulf between rich and poor grew. The emperor Diocletian attempted to save the empire by dividing it into more manageable eastern and western sectors governed by its own set of co- rulers. Making such reforms was politically risky and required the cooperation of the wealthy senatorial class. To gain that cooperation, Diocletian exempted rich families from taxes, shifting the burden to the lower classes. Members of the senatorial class could expect to earn as much as 120,000 gold pieces a year. Peasant farmers typically earned about five. Farmers who could not pay their taxes were sold into slavery along with their children. Aristocratic landlords gained land and wealth, while ordinary Romans sank into poverty or slavery. The benefits of Roman citizenship became less apparent to many Romans, and loyalties faded accordingly. With conditions deteriorating in Rome, the emperor Constantine established a new capital at the Greek city of Byzantium, known henceforth as Constantinople. This city was in the more populous and richer eastern part of the empire. And its strategic and easily defensible location astride the major maritime trade route between the Mediterranean and Black seas ensured its survival and continued prosperity regardless of Rome's fate. The elites of Rome flocked to the new city, continuing the economic abandonment of the old capital that had started during earlier outbreaks of disease.

So by the time the Germanic army defeated Rome in 378 CE, the stage was set for collapse. The western empire, all but abandoned by the east, was ill-equipped to deal with the flood of Germanic and Hunnic migrants who surged across the borders. Indeed, these movements had the character of migrations of entire populations, along with their livestock and belongings, intent on making parts of the western empire their home. The Goths were divided into a number of groups. One of them were the Visigoths. Their chieftain, Alaric, led an attack on Rome and sacked the city in 410. Another group, the Vandals, did so again in 455. In 476 a Germanic general deposed the last western emperor. Meanwhile, the eastern empire, which became known as the Byzantine Empire, or Byzantium, had enough financial and military resources to deter would-be invaders, including the Huns. In fact, Byzantium survived for another thousand years.

## *The Gupta Empire in India*

The story of the rise and fall of the Gupta Empire is in many ways different from that of the Han and Roman empires. The Gupta Empire was much younger, dating to about 320 CE. Before the rise of the Gupta, India had been governed by a number of kingdoms. All of them prospered from the enormous amount of trade that flowed through the region. Both the Han and Roman empires were major consumers of Indian cotton and spices. Chandra Gupta, the Gupta founder, built his empire by conquering some neighboring kingdoms and establishing alliances with others. Unlike the Romans or Han, who favored central control, the Guptas gained the loyalty and support of regional kingdoms by allowing them to retain a great deal of autonomy.

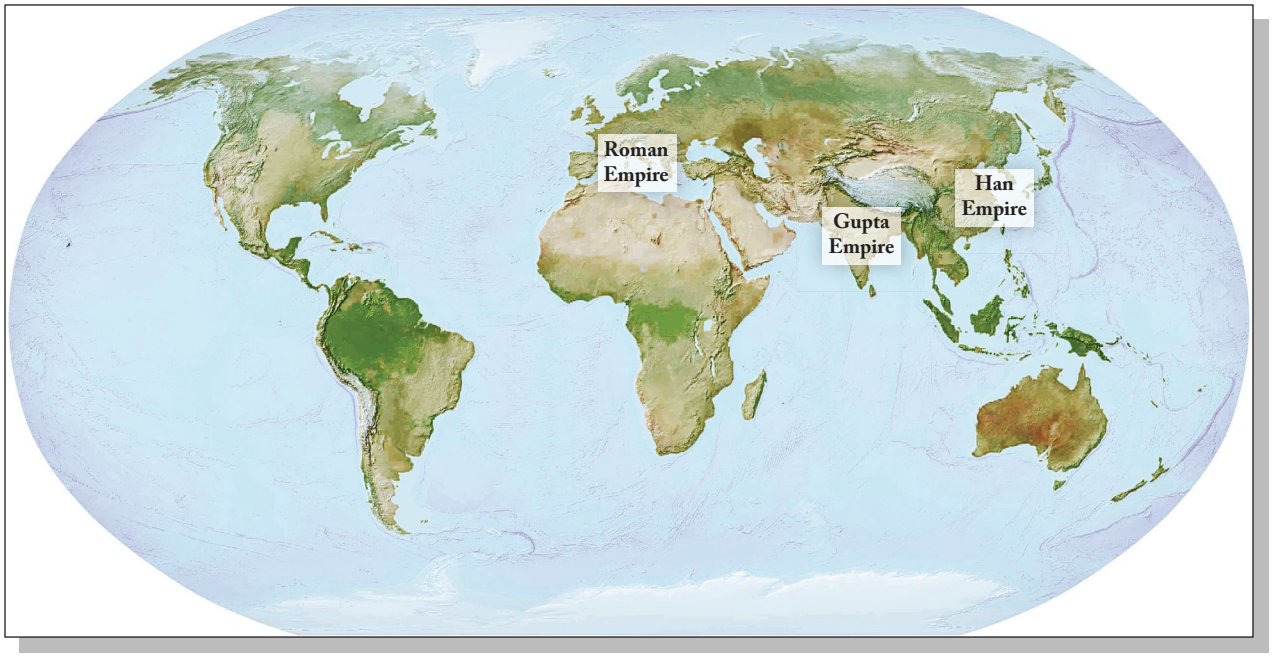
So long as the empire remained united and good order was maintained by regional authorities, Gupta rulers were content to devote most of their energy to promoting learning, religion, and art. This they did in spectacular fashion, resulting in what has been termed a "golden age" for India. Gupta scholars made remarkable achievements in many fields, including literature, astronomy, and mathematics. Important discoveries were passed along the trade routes to be adopted by other civilizations. One example is the use of Hindi (later termed Arabic) numbers, place value, and the decimal system. Gupta rulers also enthusiastically supported a revival of Hinduism, which had earlier suffered a decline, owing to the rise of Buddhism. During Gupta rule the caste system was codified in greater detail, forming the basis for Indian law for centuries to come. For over two hundred years, India enjoyed a high level of organization, peace, and prosperity.

While Han China and Rome struggled to deal with attacks by pastoral nomads, the formidable Hindu Kush and Himalaya mountains gave the Gupta some protection. The powerful Sassanian Empire in Persia also provided something of a buffer against nomad invasion. But such defenses could not last forever. Central Asian nomads, sometimes referred to as White Huns or Hephthalites, invaded and occupied Bactria (Afghanistan) during the fourth century. In 455 CE, they crossed the Hindu Kush and invaded Gupta territory. Gupta forces at first repulsed the Hephthalites. But defense was costly, and attrition of resources eventually left the Gupta at the mercy of the invaders, who finally rampaged across northern India. With Gupta authority fading, India broke up once more into regional kingdoms. By 550 the empire was gone. So, in contrast to the complicated stories of disintegration that explain the fall of the Han and Roman empires, the Gupta story is relatively simple.

Common elements help explain why all of these empires collapsed between 300 and 600 CE. The most obvious common thread is the role of pastoral nomads. Competition among various groups of herding peoples for diminishing land and resources, combined with the comparative wealth of the settled empires they bordered, led nomadic confederations to first raid, then invade their neighbors. This set off a chain reaction of events that, when combined with internal weaknesses, helped bring down the Han and the Romans, while the Gupta simply fell victim to their conquests directly. The growth of trans-hemispheric trade, which had greatly enriched all three empires, also helped destroy the Han and Roman empires because long-distance communications permitted infectious diseases to travel across Afroeurasia and trigger widespread epidemics. India, however, seems to have been little affected by such outbreaks.

In the case of both the Han and Roman empires, wealth from trade was accumulated and concentrated in the hands of a relatively small elite class whose greed and indifference toward ordinary citizens led to widespread poverty and disillusionment. In the end, neither empire had the support of the majority of its own people. When these empires fell, few ordinary people mourned their passing. Internal political struggles also marked the final days of both the Han and Roman empires. Both had long survived such struggles in the past, but combined with other pressures, chronic infighting left governments unable to deal with crises at critical times.

By the time the Gupta succumbed to the Hephthalites, trade and communication had already begun to falter across Afroeurasia. Trade became more limited and dangerous to conduct. Warfare became more local. Where once great empires tied many diverse peoples together, there stood fragmented, regional kingdoms whose outlook was far more geographically and culturally limited. China, with its common script and traditions, was eventually able to regain unity under the Sui. India would not see unification again until the Mughals arose in the early sixteenth century. The Mediterranean basin never regained unity.



## THREE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

### *Humans and the Environment*

In his book *Collapse* (see Resources), Jared Diamond wrote that "Rome became increasingly beset by barbarian invasions. . . . Eventually, it was the barbarians rather than Romans who won the battles: what was the fundamental reason for that shift of fortune? Was it because of changes in the barbarians themselves, such that they became more numerous or better organized, acquired better weapons or more horses, or profited from climate change in the Central Asian steppe? In that case, we would say that barbarians really could be identified as the fundamental cause of Rome's fall. Or was it instead that the same old unchanged barbarians were always waiting on the Roman Empire's frontiers, and that they couldn't prevail until Rome became weakened by some combination of economic, political, environmental, and other problems? In that case we would blame Rome's fall on its own problems, with the barbarians just providing the coup de grace" (13–14). Debate these questions.

### *Humans and Other Humans*

Identify through library and Internet research the empires, kingdoms, or dynasties that have endured for five hundred years or more. What might have been the "secret of long life" for these states? Do you think that some modern states, for example, the United States, might endure that long or longer? Why or why not?

### *Humans and Ideas*

Make a list of dramatic films you have seen or heard about that depict life on Earth (or in a particular country or city) following the "collapse of civilization." Why do people often find these movies intriguing and entertaining? What are some of the points these films try to make? Representative examples are *Planet of the Apes, The Day after Tomorrow, The Postman, The Road Warrior, The Book of Eli,* and *The Road*.

## KEY THEMES

This chapter addresses the following historical themes:

**Key Theme 3:** Uses and Abuses of Power

**Key Theme 6:** Science, Technology, and the Environment

## CORRELATIONS TO NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

**National Standards for World History**

Era 3: Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires, 1000 BCE–300 CE. 1D: The student understands how pastoral nomadic peoples of Central Asia began to play an important role in world history. Era 4: Expanding Zones of Exchange and Encounter, 300–1000 CE. Standard 1: Imperial crises and their aftermath, 300–700 CE.

## INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Diamond, Jared. *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. New York: Viking, 2005. In this book the author of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* investigates how and why both past and modern societies have crumbled. Lively reading for high school students.

Fagan, Brian. *Floods, Famines, and Emperors: El Niño and the Fate of Civilizations*. New York: Basic Books, 1999. Fagan writes in an accessible, sometimes humorous, style.

Frankel, Hans H., trans. "The Poem of Mulan." In *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady: Interpretations of Chinese Poetry*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976.

Galinsky, Karl. *Classical and Modern Interactions*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992.

Heather, Peter. *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Kenoyer, Jonathan Mark, and Kimberley Heuston. *The Ancient South Asian World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. This is a volume in the series The World in Ancient Times, published by Oxford University Press for young readers. The series offers superb illustrations and maps.

Kleeman, Terry, and Tracy Barrett. *The Ancient Chinese World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. This is a volume in the series The World in Ancient Times, published by Oxford University Press for young readers. The series offers superb illustrations and maps.

Mellor, Ron, and Marni McGee. *The Ancient Roman World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. This is a volume in the series The World in Ancient Times, published by Oxford University Press for young readers. The series offers superb illustrations and maps

Moorhead, John. *The Roman Empire Divided, 400–700*. London: Longman, 2001.

Ponting, Clive. *A New Green History of the World: The Environment and the Collapse of Great Civilizations*. Rev. ed. New York: Penguin, 2007.

Procopius. *History of the Wars.* 7 vols. Translated by H. B. Dewing. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914. Quoted in the Internet Medieval Sourcebook, edited by Paul Halsall, Fordham University, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html.

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Rosen, William. *Justinian's Flea: Plague, Empire, and the Birth of Europe*. New York: Viking, 2007.

Tainter, Joseph. *The Collapse of Complex Societies.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Yoffee, Norman, and George Cowgill, eds. *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988.

Ward-Perkins, Bryan. *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

LESSON 1

# Empire

## *Preparation*

1. Duplicate Student Handout 1.1.1 for High School students or 1.1.2 for Middle School students.
2. Review the fact that, for several centuries, a number of complex and enduring empires had dominated large parts of Afroeurasia. Among these were the Han Empire in China and the Roman Empire in the Mediterranean Basin. In spite of their vast size, wealth, and power, all of these large empires suffered catastrophic collapse between 200 and 600 CE. The central question that concerns us in this chapter is why this near-simultaneous series of disintegrations took place.

## *Activities*

In order to understand why empires fall, it is first necessary to have a clear idea of what an empire is and what it takes for an empire to survive and thrive.

1. Ask students, "What is an empire? How is an empire different from a kingdom?" As part of the discussion, have students name examples of empires they have heard of. Have students also list the names of states they know that were not called empires. Build a working definition of empire by discussing the differences between the listed examples.
2. Have students read Student Handout 1.1.1/1.1.2. Have them compare their definitions to the explanation given in the reading.
3. Would you rather rule a kingdom or an empire? Explain your thinking.
4. Although some large empires survived for a very long time, even the strongest and most organized among them disintegrated in the early centuries CE. What do you think may have caused their collapse? Note: Explain to students that in subsequent lessons, their predictions will be tested as they examine the fall of the Han, Roman, and Gupta empires.
5. Have students refer to Student Handout 1.1.1/1.1.2. to make a list of things that seem necessary for an empire to survive and be successful. Rank your completed list according to importance. Place a 1 next to the most important item, a 2 next to the second most important, and so on.

# *What Is an Empire? High School Version*

An empire is the political rule of one group of people over other people who may have differing languages and customs. In contrast, a kingdom is a smaller political state composed of people who often share a common set of cultural characteristics. If a kingdom is well organized and powerful enough to rule over other lands, it can become an empire. Throughout history, empires were often built through conquest, and conquered peoples were forced to become subjects of the empire. But occasionally, people in neighboring territories saw benefits to being part of a larger, more complex political and economic organization. So they joined an empire willingly. Either way, empires were made up of kingdoms, at least in part, in much the same way that modern countries are made up of states or provinces.

Empires were much more difficult than kingdoms to organize and sustain. A massive bureaucracy was needed to govern diverse peoples under a single administration. Language and cultural barriers had to be overcome. (The language of the ruling power often became the official language used for government and trade throughout the empire.) Extensive transportation and communication networks had to be built, maintained, and protected, so that the natural riches of the empire's far-flung provinces could be brought to the ruling center. Long distance trade, the economic lifeblood of an empire, had to be regulated and a common currency established. Taxes needed to be collected and legal systems established. Much effort and money had to be devoted to maintaining the military so that it could protect trade, enforce laws, and defend the empire from its enemies, both external and internal.

All this had to be accomplished in a balanced fashion. For example, enough tax money had to be collected to pay for the roads, armies, and bureaucracies needed to run the empire. But if the tax rate was too high, it could impoverish people, ruin commerce, and actually reduce the amount of money flowing into the treasury. This type of economic blunder could lead to rebellion. Similarly, government officials needed authority to do their jobs effectively, but they had to be closely monitored to ensure that they did not abuse their positions of power and enrich themselves at the expense of the empire and its people. Widespread corruption could also anger an empire's subjects and incite them to rebellion. Imperial powers tried to win the loyalty of their subjects by granting privileges such as citizenship and local autonomy and by sharing knowledge and technology. At the same time, they had to be careful that subject peoples did not gain so much power and knowledge that they could break away from or overthrow the government. Such equilibrium was difficult to maintain. Empires had to be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances and challenges, while keeping everything in balance. Several large empires in Afroeurasia maintained this balance for long periods of time. But from the third to seventh centuries, three of the most powerful and enduring empires began to weaken and disintegrate.

Source: Howard Spodek, *The World's History,* 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000).

# *What Is an Empire? Middle School Version*

An empire is the rule of one group of people over other groups who have different languages and customs. An emperor rules an empire.

A kingdom is a smaller state made up of people who share the same culture. If a kingdom is strong enough to rule over other lands, it can become an empire. Throughout history, empires were built through wars. Conquered lands were forced to become part of the empire.

Empires were more difficult to rule than kingdoms. A well-organized government was needed to keep the many different lands and people united under the emperor's rule. Transportation networks had to be built and protected so that products from the empire's far corners could be brought to the capital. Long distance trade had to be established and taxes collected. Money was needed to build an army that would protect trade and defend the empire.

Enough tax money had to be collected to pay for the roads, armies, and officials needed to run the empire. But if taxes were too high, people couldn't pay them. Trade suffered, and the amount of money flowing into the treasury decreased. This type of economic mistake could cause people to rebel.

Emperors tried to win people's loyalty by making people citizens and by sharing knowledge and technology. But emperors had to be careful that people did not gain so much power that they could break away from or overthrow the government. Some empires throughout Afroeurasia maintained this balance for long periods of time. But from the 3rd to 7th centuries, three of the most powerful empires began to weaken and collapse.

Source: Adapted from Howard Spodek, *The World's History*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000).

LESSON 2

# A Concatenation of Miseries

## CSI Han China

### *Preparation*

1. Duplicate copies of Student Handouts 1.2.1–1.2.3.
2. Explain that the first empire to fall was the Han. This lesson is an investigation into the Han Empire's demise and why it occurred. One clue to what happened is found in China's later literature concerning this period.

### *Activities*

1. Ask students if they have ever seen the Disney movie *Mulan*. Explain that the original story is a poem that focuses on one of the problems that helped lead to China's downfall. Distribute Student Handout 1.2.1. Read aloud and discuss the poem, as well as the paragraph that follows. Have students answer and discuss the questions. (Note that in the Disney version of *Mulan*, the leader of the invaders is named Xiongnu.)
2. Explain that constant struggle with northern nomads was indeed one of the contributing factors in the collapse of the Han. But it was not the whole story. To get a real picture of the empire's fall, students will use a graphic organizer. Distribute Student Handout 1.2.1. Give students a few moments to react to it. Students may express astonishment (dismay?) at the organizer's complexity. This is a good thing since the complexity of the story is the point. Emphasize that it is important in reading the organizer to follow the arrows. Explain that many of the events listed have a cause-and-effect relationship. They are like rows of dominos that fall one into the next.
3. Give students either Student Handout 1.2.3 for higher level students or Student Handout 1.2.4 for lower level students. Have students work in small groups to examine the graphic organizer and answer the discussion questions. Follow this up with a full-class discussion of the answers. In the course of this discussion, emphasize how interrelated the many factors are that contributed to the fall. Also as part of this discussion, compare the causes to the predictions made by students in the first lesson.
4. Some of the vocabulary in the graphic organizer may be unfamiliar to younger students. Student Handout 1.2.2 may be used as a pre-reading activity if needed.

5. **Optional Extension:** Explain to students that the collapse of the Han Empire resulted in more than three hundred years of political fragmentation and unrest in China. However, by the late sixth century, China was again reunified under Emperor Wen, who founded the Sui Dynasty. Assign students to research Emperor Wen and the Sui Dynasty (581–618 CE) to discover how Wen managed to resurrect a united Chinese empire. Compile a class listing of what the students discover. Compare Wen's actions to the list of things necessary for the success and survival of an empire that students compiled in the first lesson.

# *The Poem of Mu-lan*

Tsiek tsiek and again tsiek tsiek,
Mu-lan weaves, facing the door.
You don't hear the shuttle's sound,
You only hear Daughter's sighs.
They ask Daughter who's in her heart,
They ask Daughter who's on her mind.
"No one is in Daughter's heart,
No one is on Daughter's mind.
Last night I saw the draft posters,
The Khan [Emperor] is calling many troops,
The army list is in twelve scrolls,
On every scroll there's Father's name.
Father has no grown-up son,
Mu-lan has no elder brother.
I want to buy a saddle and a horse,
And serve in the army in Father's place.

At dawn she takes leave of the Yellow River,
In the evening she arrives at Black Mountain.
She doesn't hear the sound of Father and Mother calling,
She only hears Mount Yen's nomad horses cry tsiu tsiu.
She goes ten thousand miles on the business of war,
She crosses passes and mountains like flying.
Northern gusts carry the rattle of army pots,
Chilly light shines on iron armor.
Generals die in a hundred battles,
Stout soldiers return after ten years.
On her return she sees the Son of Heaven [Emperor]
The Son of Heaven sits in the Splendid Hall.
He gives out promotions in twelve ranks
And prizes of a hundred thousand and more.
The Khan asks her what she desires.
"Mu-lan has no use for a minister's post.

I wish to ride a swift mount
To take me back to my home."

When Father and Mother hear Daughter is coming
They go outside the wall to meet her, leaning on each other.
When Elder Sister hears Younger Sister is coming
She fixes her rouge, facing the door.
When Little Brother hears Elder Sister is coming
He whets the knife, quick quick, for pig and shee
"I open the door to my east chamber,
I sit on my couch in the west room,
I take off my wartime gown
And put on my old-time clothes."
Facing the window she fixes her cloudlike hair,
Hanging up a mirror she dabs on yellow flower-powder.
She goes out the door and sees her comrades.
Her comrades are all amazed and perplexed.
Traveling together for twelve years
They didn't know Mu-lan was a girl.

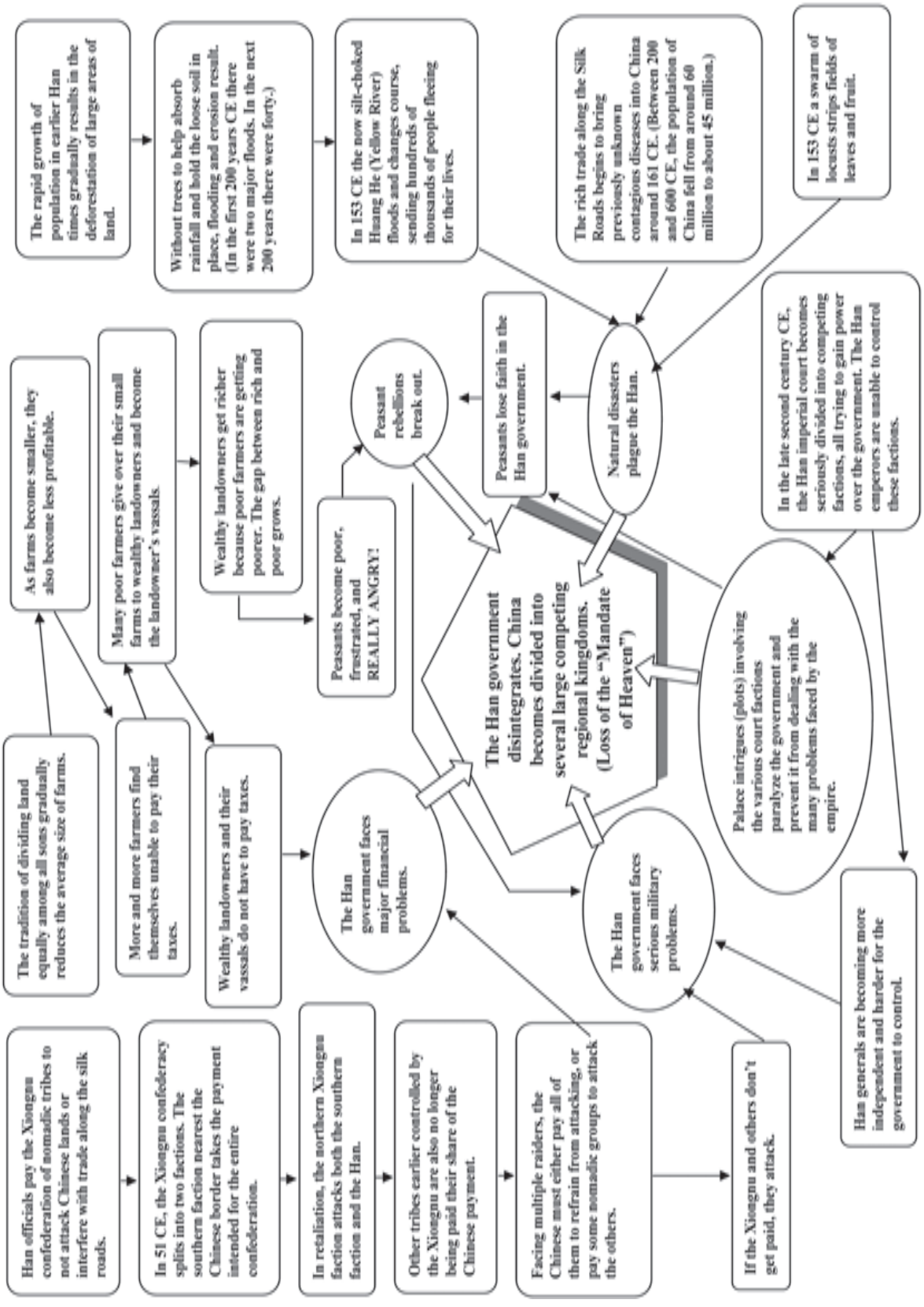
Source: "The Poem of Mu-lan," in *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady: Interpretations of Chinese Poetry*, trans. Hans H. Frankel (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976), 68–70.

"The Poem of Mu-lan" first appeared during the later Tang Dynasty, but the story reflects the long history of nearly continuous military struggles against the nomadic Xiongnu, who lived on China's northern borders. The Han Dynasty was able to keep the Xiongnu at bay for several hundred years through a combination of military defense and simple bribery. (Han officials found that it was cheaper to pay the Xiongnu to refrain from attacking than to fight them.) But the uneasy truce between the Han and the Xiongnu began to unravel around 50 CE. This crisis, in concert with many others, helped bring down the Han.

## *Consider the following questions:*

1. What clues can you find in the poem that Mu-lan was fighting the Xiongnu?
2. Use evidence from the poem to explain how Chinese emperors obtained soldiers for their armies.
3. Why do you think Mulan refused the emperor's offer of a government job as a reward for her loyal military service?
4. **Discussion Question**: How does "The Poem of Mu-lan" compare to Disney's movie *Mulan*?

# *Han Dynasty Graphic Organizer*



# *What Happened and Why?*

Often historians have to wrestle with complex sets of individual events and interrelated factors that together explain the how and why of major historical events. This can be quite a challenge because it is sometimes only possible to understand what really happened if *all* of these many interwoven details are taken into consideration. One way to accomplish this is to use a graphic organizer, which is a visual means of displaying not only the events and factors but also how many details are related to one another. In this activity you will use the Student Handout 1.2.2 Graphic Organizer to understand why the Han Dynasty collapsed.

## *Directions*

Read carefully the complex graphic organizer that details the disintegration of the Han Empire in China. Be careful to follow the arrows since they show how circumstances and events were related to one another.

## *Discussion Questions*

1. List what you believe are the four or five main reasons for the collapse of the Han Empire.
2. Of the reasons you listed, which single reason do you think was the most important?
3. Given what you have learned from the graphic organizer, do you believe that the fall of the Han could have been prevented? Why or why not?
4. Imagine you were an adviser to the Han emperor. What advice would you have given him?
5. Describe what you think took place in the final days of the Han Empire.
6. Challenge! In a single sentence explain the collapse of the Han Empire. (No run-ons!)

## *Assignment*

Use the graphic organizer and the ideas brought out by the discussion questions to help you compose in your own words a well-organized, multiparagraph explanation of how and why the Han Empire collapsed.

## *Challenge*!

*"For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong."*

> This is a famous quotation by H. L. Mencken. Based on what you learned in this lesson, explain what you think the author of the quotation was trying to say.

# *The Fall of the Han Dynasty*

Use the Student Handout 1.2.2 Graphic Organizer to answer these discussion questions.

1. What major financial problems did the Han Empire have?

2. What major military problems did the Han face?

3. Why did peasants rebel against the Han government?

4. What natural disasters contributed to the fall of the Han?

5. Why was the Han government unable to solve the many problems China was having?

## *Did you get the main idea?*

Place an "X" next to the statement below with which you most agree. In the space below, explain your choice using specific evidence from the Graphic Organizer and this activity.

_____The fall of the Han Empire has a simple cause that can easily be explained.

_____The fall of the Han Empire is a complex story that involves many causes.

LESSON 3

# Rome Did Not Fall in a Day

## *Preparation*

1. Duplicate copies of Student Handout 1.3.1 and Student Handout 1.3.2. Gather a variety of texts and other research materials related to Student Handout 1.3.2. Or, arrange to use the school library. If you intend to teach the optional extension activity, also use Student Handout 1.3.3.
2. Review the conclusion of the previous lesson that the fall of the Han Empire was a very complex story involving many interrelated factors. Explain that the next big empire to fall was the Roman Empire. Was this also a complicated affair? Were there similar causes for the fall of Han and Rome, or was Rome's fall a completely different story? This next lesson will explore these questions.

## *Activities*

1. Explain to students that to understand what happened in the final years of the Roman Empire, it is useful to examine an important event during that time in order to see some of the forces at work. The historical fiction story "The Crossing" is an account of real events that took place along the Danube River in 376 CE.
2. Give students "The Crossing." Instruct them to read the story, keeping in mind the central questions of this chapter. What factors are found in this story that might have helped bring down the Roman Empire? (Teachers may employ a variety of reading strategies to complete the activity depending on the level of students. The story's reading level is approximately 8th grade.) Have students answer the discussion questions at the end of Student Handout 1.3.1.
3. Hold a class discussion of the questions. Ask students to cite factors that might have led to the eventual destruction of the empire. Remind students of what they learned in their examination of the fall of the Han. Are there any similarities? What "falling dominoes" could have resulted from the events portrayed in the story? Do "The Poem of Mu-lan" and "The Crossing" have anything in common?
4. Explain the other forces at work beyond those illustrated in "The Crossing" to help explain the decline of Rome. In fact, historians continue to debate a rather long list of causes for the fall of Rome. In the next activity, students will join in this debate.
5. Distribute Student Handout 1.3.2. Review the directions and have students select research topics, then direct students to complete the task.

6. Explain to students that the next step is to share the research in order to evaluate the significance of the possible factors. Have students present their findings to the class. Instruct students to take notes during each presentation.
7. Have students use the compiled list of factors and their notes to rank the factors in order of significance. In a class discussion, have students share their rankings and debate the relative significance of the causes presented. See if there is a class consensus as to the most important factors.
8. Have students compare the story of the fall of Rome to the fall of the Han by answering the questions posed in the lesson's Introduction. Also have students once again compare what they have learned so far regarding the predictions they made in Lesson 1.

## *Optional Activity*

Remind students of the Student Handout 1.2.2 Graphic Organizer, which illustrates the fall of the Han. Ask students whether a graphic organizer showing the fall of Rome would look similar or different. Challenge students to create such a graphic organizer.

## *Optional Extension Activity*

Explain that, as was the case with China, attempts were made following the fall of Rome to reunite the empire. Have students research the Byzantine emperor Justinian and his attempts to resurrect Rome. Instruct students to discover whether, like Emperor Wen, Justinian's efforts were successful. As part of a follow-up discussion of Justinian's ultimate failure, have students read Student Handout 1.3.3. Discuss the plague's impact on Justinian's efforts. Procopius, the author of the Student Handout 1.3.3 selection, was a Byzantine Greek historian who wrote during the sixth century CE. He died around 562.

# *The Crossing*

By Ernest O'Roark and Eileen Wood

A frigid blast of wind nearly ripped the cloak from Athaneric's shoulders as he stared at the swollen river below. A steady rain added to the early morning chill. Athaneric shuddered, but not from the cold. He stood atop the riverbank, transfixed by the horrifying scene playing out before him and fearful of the menace that loomed from behind. Although he was only fifteen, Athaneric was already a veteran survivor of countless raids by the terrifying Huns. Relentlessly, the Huns had driven his people from their homeland toward this watery border. Below him Athaneric's family, with the rest of the Tervingi people, made feverish preparations to cross the Danube River. Their destination, shrouded in mist this bleak morning, was the Roman Empire. At any moment the Huns could arrive and wholesale slaughter or slavery would surely be the result. The entire tribe had to attempt the hazardous crossing by whatever means possible. There were few real boats, so Athaneric watched as hundreds of men, women, and children struggled to put together anything that would float. Some chopped furiously at large tree trunks, carving them into crude canoes. Others lashed logs together to form makeshift rafts.

In spite of the danger posed by the Huns, Athaneric was reluctant to cross the river. His father had told him all about the treacherous Romans. Nine years earlier, Valens, the Roman emperor, had broken a treaty with the Tervingi and invaded their land. As incentive for his soldiers, Valens had offered to pay his men a bounty for every Tervingi head they could deliver. Many Tervingi had died. Now that same emperor had given his permission for the Tervingi and other Goths to cross into Roman territory. What, thought Athaneric, do the Romans have in mind for us now?

The sky darkened as the rain fell more heavily. Athaneric frowned and pulled his cloak closer about him as he considered the Danube. In the best of conditions, the river was dangerous to cross. But the heavy rains had added to the danger considerably, making the river wider and swifter than he had ever seen it.

"Come, boy!" His father's voice startled Athaneric from his thoughts. "We must go now before this rain swells the river any further."

Athaneric turned with a sigh and slowly approached the crude raft that would either take his family to other side or drown them in the attempt. Unaware of the danger, Athaneric's young brother and sister laughed and chatted excitedly as they climbed in. His mother, struggling to keep up a brave front, sat between the pair, holding onto their hands tightly. Athaneric helped his father shove the raft off the muddy bank, then scrambled aboard as it entered the rushing current and hurtled downstream. The children yelped in surprise as the raft pitched crazily from side to side. But gradually the raft stabilized and Athaneric and his father took up their paddles and began to guide their little craft toward the opposite shore.

Suddenly, Athaneric spotted a shape in the water ahead, barely visible through the downpour. In a matter of moments they were upon it, and Athaneric realized that someone was trying to swim across the raging river. The man was flailing his arms, fighting the powerful current with all his strength. But that strength was clearly failing. The man lunged toward their raft as it approached in a desperate attempt to grab hold. But the current was too strong. In a flash they were past him. Athaneric looked back, but the man was gone.

"Look sharp!" Athaneric's father cried out as another raft, larger than theirs, appeared, headed on a collision course with them. Fearing that their frail craft would never survive such a collision, Athaneric and his father threw all their strength into furious paddling to alter their course. Sweat mingled with raindrops as father and son fought the powerful current of the rain-swollen Danube. Time seemed to slow as the larger raft and its human cargo drew nearer and nearer. Athaneric saw that the people on the other raft had finally noticed the danger and they too were working to avoid the collision. But, would their efforts be too late? It was close. The two rafts touched briefly, and the smaller craft began a slow spin in response.

Athaneric and his father continued to paddle for what seemed like hours until the far bank began to take shape. Athaneric could just make out the forms of Roman soldiers standing on a low ridge overlooking the riverbank. Finally, their raft washed up onto the muddy bank, as did scores of others. Confusion reigned as the first to arrive scrambled to get out of the way of others trying to pull themselves ashore. The Roman soldiers stood watching, but did nothing to helExhausted, Athaneric and his family managed to climb onto the low ridge above the river. There, the Romans herded them and other Tervingi families into open areas a short way inland where they were ordered to camp. No food or blankets were offered to the cold, wet refugees.

The next day, as more and more Tervingi made the crossing, Athaneric's father and other elders were summoned to a meeting with the Roman generals in charge. When Athaneric's father returned to the camp a short time later, he was visibly shaken. "The Romans are making unreasonable demands of us in return for allowing us to settle here in Thrace," he began. "First they demanded that we give up all our weapons, but we rejected that idea. It would leave us totally defenseless in Roman territory, and we know the Roman tendency to make slaves of all those they can conquer. Besides, what sort of a warrior would a Tervingi be without his weapons? But when we remained adamant about not giving up our weapons, the Romans insisted that we give them hostages in return—our youngest males." With this, he looked sadly in the direction of Athaneric's little brother, who was playing with another small boy nearby. "As agreed by their emperor, we are being given land to farm, but it will be months before we can harvest our crops. The Romans refuse to give us food in the meantime if we do not agree to their terms. They mean to starve us! What are we to do? We cannot go back."

Just days later, the sounds of children crying and mothers screaming filled the air as Roman soldiers gathered up all the little Tervingi boys and herded them out of the camp like so many cattle. In return for these tiny hostages the Romans doled out just enough food for the refugees to survive. The emaciated Goths struggled to clear their new farmland, plant their crops,

and tend the fields. Many foraged in the countryside to keep starvation at bay. Still the Romans did nothing to help. As time passed and conditions worsened, anger and resentment toward the Romans grew.

The very young and very old suffered the most. Many died, including Athaneric's little sister. Athaneric grew to hate the Romans and vowed that when he was old enough to be a Tervingi warrior, he would join his father and the other great warriors of his tribe to avenge the injustices and hardships inflicted on them by the Romans and their treacherous emperor, Valens.

## *Comment*

The story of Athaneric's crossing of the Danube is historical fiction. It is based on real events that took place in 376 CE as recorded by the Roman historian Ammianus. Blame for the mistreatment of the refugees must fall on two Roman generals, Lupicinus and Maximus, who had been put in charge of the fleeing Goths. Emperor Valens had given these generals money to provide food for the Goths to tide them over until the harvest, but the generals apparently pocketed the money instead. Just two years later the Goths took their revenge. A combined force of Gothic tribes rebelled against the Romans in 378 and defeated a Roman army at the Battle of Adrianople. Valens was killed in the clash. This was the first time a Roman army had ever been destroyed by a "barbarian" people inside Roman territory, but it would not be the last.

## *Discussion*

1. Why did the Goths want to cross the Danube into Roman territory?
2. Why did the Goths distrust the Romans?
3. What mistakes did the Romans make in dealing with the Goths?
4. Describe the result of the mistakes made by the Romans in this event.
5. What effect do you think the news of the Gothic victory over the Romans at Adrianople would have had on other "barbarian" tribes located along Rome's borders?

# *Forty-Two Reasons for the Fall of Rome*

Historians offer many theories to explain why the Roman Empire declined. Some are logical, compelling reasons. Others are pretty silly. Below is a list of factors that may have contributed to the fall of Rome. Choose one and research how that factor did (or did not) contribute to the demise of the empire.

Attila and the Huns
Bread and circuses
Bureaucracy
Corruption
Decline of trade
Deforestation
Depletion of mineral resources
Disease and epidemics
Division of empire
Excessive urbanization
Germanic peoples
Inadequate educational system
Inferior technology
Inflation
Lack of good leadership
Lack of orderly imperial succession
Large estates
Laziness
Lead poisoning
Loss of military discipline
Loss of population
Mercenary system
Military spending
Money, shortage of
Natural disasters
Odovacer (King of Italy)
Outflow of gold
Overexpansion
Political corruption
Population pressures
Poverty
Religion
Rise of uneducated masses
Ruin of middle class
Slavery
Soil exhaustion/erosion
String of misfortunes
Taxation
Unemployment
Unwise foreign policy decisions
Urban decay
Wars

Source: Alexander Demandt, *Der Fall Roms* (Munich: Beck, 1984), 695. The author lists 210 possible reasons for the fall of the Roman Empire. For an English version of the list, see http://crookedtimber.org/2003/08/25/decline-and-fall.

See also Karl Galinsky, *Classical and Modern Interactions* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 53–73.

# *The Plague, 542 CE*

**Procopius, *History of the Wars* II.xxii-xxxiii**

DURING these times there was a pestilence, by which the whole human race came near to being annihilated. Now in the case of all other scourges sent from heaven some explanation of a cause might be given by daring men, such as the many theories propounded by those who are clever in these matters. . . . But for this calamity it is quite impossible either to express in words or to conceive in thought any explanation, except indeed to refer it to God. For it did not come in a part of the world nor upon certain men, nor did it confine itself to any season of the year, so that from such circumstances it might be possible to find subtle explanations of a cause, but it embraced the entire world, and blighted the lives of all men, though differing from one another in the most marked degree, respecting neither sex nor age. . . .

It started from the Egyptians who dwell in Pelusium. Then it divided and moved in one direction towards Alexandria and the rest of Egypt, and in the other direction it came to Palestine on the borders of Egypt; and from there it spread over the whole world, always moving forward and traveling at times favorable to it. . . . And in the second year it reached Byzantium in the middle of spring, where it happened that I was staying at that time. . . . With the majority it came about that they were seized by the disease without becoming aware of what was coming either through a waking vision or a dream. And they were taken in the following manner. They had a sudden fever, some when just roused from sleep, others while walking about, and others while otherwise engaged, without any regard to what they were doing. And the body showed no change from its previous color, nor was it hot as might be expected when attacked by a fever, nor indeed did any inflammation set in, but the fever was of such a languid sort from its commencement and up till evening that neither to the sick themselves nor to a physician who touched them would it afford any suspicion of danger. It was natural, therefore, that not one of those who had contracted the disease expected to die from it. But on the same day in some cases, in others on the following day, and in the rest not many days later, a bubonic swelling developed; and this took place not only in the particular part of the body which is called *boubon*, that is, "below the abdomen," but also inside the armpit, and in some cases also beside the ears, and at different points on the thighs. . . .

There ensued with some a deep coma, with others a violent delirium, and in either case they suffered the characteristic symptoms of the disease. For those who were under the spell of the coma forgot all those who were familiar to them and seemed to lie sleeping constantly. . . . But those who were seized with delirium suffered from insomnia and were victims of a distorted imagination; for they suspected that men were coming upon them to destroy them, and they would become excited and rush off in flight, crying out at the top of their voices. And those who were attending them were in a state of constant exhaustion and had a most difficult time of it throughout. . . . For when the patients fell from their beds and lay rolling upon the floor, they kept putting them back in place, and when they were struggling to rush headlong out of their houses, they would force them back by shoving and pulling against them. And when water chanced to be near, they wished to fall into it, not so much because of a desire for drink (for the most of them rushed into the sea), but the cause

was to be found chiefly in the diseased state of their minds. They had also great difficulty in the matter of eating, for they could not easily take food. And many perished through lack of any man to care for them, for they were either overcome by hunger, or threw themselves down from a height. . . .

Now some of the physicians who were at a loss because the symptoms were not understood, supposing that the disease centered in the bubonic swellings, decided to investigate the bodies of the dead. And upon opening some of the swellings, they found a strange sort of carbuncle that had grown inside them. Death came in some cases immediately, in others after many days; and with some the body broke out with black pustules about as large as a lentil and these did not survive even one day, but all succumbed immediately. With many also a vomiting of blood ensued without visible cause and straightway brought death. . . .

Now the disease in Byzantium ran a course of four months, and its greatest virulence lasted about three. And at first the deaths were a little more than the normal, then the mortality rose still higher, and afterwards the tale of dead reached five thousand each day, and again it even came to ten thousand and still more than that. . . .

At that time all the customary rites of burial were overlooked. For the dead were not carried out escorted by a procession in the customary manner, nor were the usual chants sung over them, but it was sufficient if one carried on his shoulders the body of one of the dead to the parts of the city which bordered on the sea and flung him down; and there the corpses would be thrown upon skiffs [boats] in a heap, to be conveyed wherever it might chance. . . .

Such was the course of the pestilence in the Roman Empire at large as well as in Byzantium. And it fell also upon the land of the Persians and visited all the other barbarians besides.

Source: Procopius, *History of the Wars*, 7 vols., trans. H. B. Dewing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 1: 451–473. Qtd. in the Internet Medieval Sourcebook, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html.

LESSON 4

# The Lights Go Out in India

## *Preparation*

1. Gather texts and other research materials related to Gupta India or arrange to use the school's library. A rhyming dictionary is also very useful for the first activity. Duplicate copies of Student Handouts 1.4.1, 1.4.2, and 1.4.3.
2. Remind students of the conclusions reached in the previous two lessons. Both the Han and Roman empires disintegrated as a result of many complex, interrelated factors. Did the Gupta Empire suffer the same fate?

## *Activities*

1. Explain that one important form of literature from this time period is the epic poem. An epic poem is a long poem that tells a story. The story to be told in this case is the "golden age" of India, which was the era of the Gupta Empire. This story is important because it helps us better understand the significance of the empire's collapse. In the previous two lessons, students were given stories to read that illustrated such important points. In this lesson students will compose the story themselves.
2. Give students Student Handout 1.4.1. Review the directions, discuss examples, and answer questions. Assign or have students choose sections of the poem to research and compose. Have students work in small groups to complete their portion of the poem.
3. Compile the student's finished poems into one complete class version of the story. Duplicate copies of the poem for all students. Hold a "reading" of the completed epic poem. Discuss the significance of the many accomplishments of Gupta India.
4. Point out that although the accomplishments of the Gupta golden age are very impressive, this lesson is really about the demise of the Gupta Empire. So how could such a successful and brilliant empire suddenly collapse? Is the story similar to that of the Han and the Romans?
5. Give students Student Handout 1.4.2. Assign students to read this description of the end of the Gupta Empire. Point out that as a result of the Hepthalite invasions, the Gupta Empire was completely annihilated. Even though the Hepthalites were eventually defeated, India fragmented into dozens of small kingdoms and was not united again on a large scale for almost a thousand years.
6. Ask students to compare the story of the end of the Gupta Empire to the fall of the Han and Roman empires. Students should be able to articulate the idea that this story is much simpler That is, an overwhelming force simply smashed an otherwise fairly healthy empire.

7. Pose this rhetorical question (if students have not already asked it): If the Gupta Empire was well organized and healthy, how could it be so decisively overwhelmed by a bunch of nomads? Distribute Student Handout 1.4.3. Read and discuss.

8. Conclude the chapter with a brief overall discussion of what happened to the three empires. Have students cite the important similarities and differences among the stories. Refer back to the first lesson that defined what an empire was and what was needed for one to survive and thrive. Remind students of their predictions in Lesson 1, and discuss how close their predictions actually came to the real causes.

# *Golden Age Epic Poem*

An epic poem is a long narrative poem that celebrates a people's heroic traditions. As you study the Gupta period of South Asian history, you will create an epic poem to emphasize important events, people, and ideas of that golden age.

Research the events, people, and ideas important to the Gupta period. Make your notes thorough and clear.

1. Select from your notes the events, people, and ideas that you feel are most significant. Then compose verses that tell the story. Your epic poem must:

    - contain rhyming couplets. (The end of each pair of lines must rhyme.)
    - have a meter that scans. (There must be the same number of beats or syllables in each line.)
    - must contain 20 or more couplets. You may break the poem into as many stanzas as you like.
    - be historically accurate.

Here are five examples of rhyming couplets:

India, land of many races,
Countless languages, varied faces;

Of Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and Sikhs,
Of palaces built of golden bricks,

Towering mountains and fertile plains,
Hot, dry deserts and tropical rains.

How did India come to be?
Let's examine her history.

These events that made her diverse
Are to be rendered verse by verse.

# *The Hephthalites (The Who?)*

Beyond the settled civilizations of Eurasia lived the little-known pastoral nomads of the Central Asian steppes. A great migration southward of one of these groups, known variously as the Hephthalites, Hunas, or White Huns, had a devastating effect on India. Beginning in the fifth century CE, wave after wave of these invaders terrorized settled peoples in lands ranging from the Tigris and Euphrates to the Ganges river valleys.

The origin of the Hephthalites is something of a mystery. The earliest information about them comes from Chinese chronicles. These accounts claim that the Hephthalites were originally a tribe of the great Yue-Chi, who lived north of the Great Wall. In the sixth century, the Roman historian Procopius wrote that the Hephthalites were "of the stock of the Huns in fact as well as in name; however they do not mingle with any of the Huns known to us. . . . They are the only ones among the Huns who have white bodies and countenances which are not ugly." Because Procopius described them as having Caucasian features, some historians believe that the Hephthalites may have been related to the Persians. Others think that they may have been distantly related to the Xiongnu, a pastoral people who lived in Mongolia and regularly harassed the Chinese.

Like other pastoral nomads of the Central Asian steppes, the Hephthalites had a markedly different way of life from that of the settled peoples with whom they came in contact. Moving frequently in search of game, water, and fresh grazing land for their animals, they practically lived on horseback. Portable round tents called yurts were their homes. Their clothing was made of felt or animal skins and included leather boots and fur caps. Hephthalite men were distinguished by their shaved heads, except for two braided pigtails behind their ears and a patch of hair on toMany men also wore long wooden earrings.

According to two Chinese pilgrims, Sung Yun and Hui Sheng, who visited them in 520 CE, "The Hephthalites have no cities, but roam freely and live in tents. They do not live in towns; their seat of government is a moving camThey move in search of water and pasture, journeying in summer to cool places and in winter to warmer ones.…They have no belief in the Buddhist law and they serve a great number of divinities." In the mid-fifth century, the Hephthalites expanded westward, probably because another nomadic group was pressing them from the east. As early as 440, their armies took Samarkand and Bactria (now Uzbekistan).

After the death of the Gupta ruler Skandagupta in 470, the Hephthalites entered India, destroying towns and villages along the Ganges River. Pataliputra, the Gupta capital, was reduced in population to the size of a village. They persecuted Buddhists and burned their monasteries. Their conquest was accomplished with such brutality that the Gupta Dynasty was completely extinguished. The Guptas were not the only Hephthalite victims. In 484 the Hephthalites struck westward into Persia, invading the Sassanian Empire. They destroyed agricultural lands and killed the Sassanid king before withdrawing to the east once more.

Toramana and Mihirakula, the most famous of the Hephthalite kings, ruled India in the first half of the 6th century. Toromana led the successful invasion of India. His son, Mihirakula, succeeded him in about 515. In 520, the Chinese ambassador Song-yun described this king

as cruel, vindictive, and barbarous, not believing in the law of Buddha, having seven hundred war-elephants, and living with his troops on the frontier. About ten years later the Greek Cosmas of Alexandria described Mihirakula as a ruler who exacted an oppressive tribute from subject peoples with the help of a large army of cavalry and war elephants. Mihirakula's reputation was so fierce that even today, oral accounts in India still include stories of him amusing himself by rolling elephants down a precipice and watching their agonies.

The cruelty of Mihirakula's rule caused a number of Indian princes to form a confederation and revolt against him in about 528. He was not killed in this rebellion, however, but fled to Kashmir, where a few years later he seized the throne and then started attacking neighboring kingdoms. He died in about 540.

Between 557 and 561, the Sassanid king opened contacts with a Turkic nomadic group that had appeared from Inner Eurasia. Seeking revenge for the Hephthalite murder of his grandfather, who had been king before him, he formed an alliance with the Turkic leader. This chief had the largest and most powerful army in the region; he finally conquered the Hephthalites and killed their king. By 565 only a small number of Hephthalites remained in India. Their decline marked a turning point in the story of Inner Eurasia. The allies of the Persian king were Turks, a new power that would dominate the steppes for next few centuries.

# *Shock and Awe: Nomad Style*

To the settled peoples who witnessed it, the arrival of nomadic peoples from the steppes of Inner Eurasia must have been an awesome and terrifying sight. They struck like lightning on swift, sure-footed horses, showering their victims with arrows. Then they galloped off before any counterattack could be organized, only to reappear when least expected. In wave after wave they came, wearing down their enemy until victory was theirs. Pillage and looting often followed, for the raiders were not interested in acquiring land and they did not fight for a particular cause or religion. Rather, warfare was the means by which the nomadic raiders extracted valuable resources from the rich settled-peoples living within their range.

Who were these people and how did they manage to overwhelm the defenses of the well-organized civilizations they encountered? There is much we do not know about the origins and makeup of the many tribal groups that populated the steppes of Inner Eurasia. The pastoral nomadic way of life that evolved in this region took good advantage of the vast treeless grasslands of the steppes, which were perfect for grazing animals. Pastoral nomads raised horses, cattle, camels, sheep, and goats, and they moved from place to place in order to have fresh grazing land continuously available. We know from historical records the names of many groups. (And, in some cases, many names for a single group.) But because victims who did not know the history of their attackers wrote these records, it is unclear whether or how some of the nomadic groups were related. One example of this confusion is the group known as the Huns. They may be related to other Inner Eurasia Asian groups, including the Hephthalites and the Xiongnu. But lacking more definitive evidence, historians have been unable to determine whether any or all of these groups were related beyond a shared way of life.

One reason why the pastoral nomads of the steppes were such successful warriors was their superior technology. Although they were materially a more simple people than those they raided, these nomads developed or acquired particular technologies that enabled them to thrash just about everyone they encountered. These technologies included:

**The horse**. From early times, Inner Eurasian nomads bred excellent horses well suited to the arid steppes. Their horses were fast, easy to take care of, and could survive harsh winters. The Chinese prized Inner Eurasian horses, calling them "Heavenly Horses." Horses were one of the main objects of trade between the Chinese and nomadic peoples. Not surprisingly, nomad children were taught from a very young age how to ride, and they spent much of their lives on horseback. In referring to one nomadic group north of the Black Sea, the Greek historian Herodotus said, "Their country is the back of a horse." In short, the nomads of the steppes possessed the best horses and the most expert cavalry on the continent.

**The bow.** The composite bow was an innovation developed by the nomads of Inner Eurasia. It was easily one of the most powerful weapons of its time. Because of its laminated, curved design, it had more than double the tension and power of ordinary bows. Barbed, iron-tipped arrows fired by this weapon could penetrate armor.

**The iron stirrup**: Although the stirrup was probably invented in China, the neighboring nomadic peoples were quick to adopt any good technology having to do with horses. The use of stirrups gave a rider more control over his horse as well as better balance. With stirrups and very secure saddles, nomad cavalry were able to ride their fast, well-trained horses at a full gallop, while using their powerful bows to shoot with deadly accuracy in any direction.

## *Questions*

1. Why do you think the written records about the various nomad groups of Inner Eurasia were written by their victims?

2. Which of the three technologies do you think was the most important to the success of the steppe nomads?

3. What do you think would be the best defense against raids by the nomads of Inner Eurasia?

## *Assessment*

Have students compose a multiparagraph essay answer to the question, "Why do empires fall?" Hand out an Assessment Rubric to students before they begin writing so that they may use it as a guide. Use the rubric then to grade and give students feedback on their compositions.

CHAPTER 2

*By Sharon Cohen and Susan Douglass*

# Afroeurasia and the Rise of Islam


## WHY STUDY THE RISE OF ISLAM?

The study of religions in world history and geography courses is a basic requirement in every state's academic standards, just as it is a major feature of the National Standards for World History. The importance of studying the origins, beliefs, practices, and spread of religion is a matter of consensus because this subject has contemporary relevance. Also, religious movements have been enormously significant in human history. Religious beliefs and practices have brought forth traditions and institutions that have shaped urban and rural life, built empires, and contributed to trade, literacy, and scientific development. Religious movements have influenced conflict and cooperation on many levels, and stimulated migration and travel.

The rise and spread of Islam in the seventh century CE and later profoundly affected large parts of Afroeurasia. This topic offers students an opportunity to study several interlinked historical processes. The story of the origins of Islam itself reaches as far back into the history of Southwest Asia as human settlement itself, since Muslims believe that the revelation given to Muhammad during the seventh century was only the final one in a continuous sacred exchange reaching back through all of the biblical prophets to Adam and Eve. The story also includes the rise and fall of empires from Mesopotamia to the Romans and Persians, and the rapid expansion of territory under Muslim rule under the early caliphate and the Umayyad Dynasty. The spread of Islam is a distinct phenomenon that historians relate to rapid advances in urbanization, the growth of trade networks in Afroeurasia, and a series of migrations. Islam also gradually spread as a faith and way of life among the populations of a region extending from the Iberian Peninsula

to the borders of China. Not until about four centuries after the conquests of Southwest Asia, North Africa, and parts of Inner Eurasia did Islam become the majority faith of the population in those regions. Even then, religious diversity remained a hallmark of those societies matched only in modern multicultural societies like the United States.

This chapter traces the rise of Islam, its spread, and the development of Muslim civilization. It also addresses Islam's impact on Afroeurasia as a whole.

## OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Locate the Arabian Peninsula and the bodies of water and landmasses adjacent to it. Identify important cities such as Jerusalem, Mecca (Makkah), Medina (Madinah), Damascus, Baghdad, Constantinople, Cairo, Cordoba, and Samarkand.
2. Describe the basic beliefs and practices of Islam, including the Five Pillars, and explain their relationship to Muslim life, culture, and civilization.
3. Distinguish between the rapid expansion of territory under Muslim rule and the gradual spread of Islam among various societies.
4. Analyze the relationship between the spread of Islam and the use of the Arabic language in scholarship and trade.
5. Identify social and political institutions that emerged in Muslim society in response to religious practices, and give examples of diverse ways in which these institutions manifested themselves in different regional traditions.
6. Relate the spread of Islam to the expansion of trade in Afroeurasia from the seventh to the sixteenth centuries CE.
7. Compare primary sources and relate them to geographic information about interregional trade relations in Afroeurasia.
8. Relate the spread of Islam to the expansion of urbanization in Afroeurasia from the seventh to the twelfth centuries CE.

## TIME AND MATERIALS

These lessons take 3–5 class periods to complete.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

During the millennium after 300 CE, significant changes occurred across Afroeurasia. Large states such as the Roman Empire in the Mediterranean region and the Han Dynasty in China collapsed. Large, multiethnic states, such as the Arab Empire and the Mongol Empire,

formed and reformed. Throughout this period, invasions, migrations, and state-building activities strengthened and extended contacts among people in different parts of the Eastern Hemisphere and stimulated the exchange of goods and ideas over long distances. By the end of Big Era Five an interconnected system of commercial and cultural interchange extended across most of Afroeurasia.

This network—moving at the pace of sailing ships and pack animal caravans—enabled a wide variety of economic, intellectual, religious, and technological exchanges. Independent, profit- seeking merchants traded over long distances in both bulk and luxury products, stimulated technological innovation, and enriched the treasuries of political authorities. Trade, the spread of religions, and urbanization promoted the exchange of scientific ideas and the arts. Migrations and the spread of food and fiber crops enhanced agriculture and contributed to trade. In the period of especially remarkable economic growth in Afroeurasia from about 600 to 1500 CE, China and India became the biggest manufacturing centers. The Muslim lands of Southwest Asia served as the turnstile of the hemisphere, its cities generating their own finished goods and trans-shipping wares in huge quantities from one part of the hemisphere to the other. After 1000, Europe also emerged as a new center of growth, urbanization, and commerce. As trade grew, peoples of many regions were drawn into a single network.

## THREE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

### *Humans and the Environment*

How did humans overcome the difficulties of transporting goods and people across long distances and over difficult terrain using only pack animals, carts, and wagons?

### *Humans and Other Humans*

In what ways did the spread of Islam facilitate contacts and communication among far-flung groups of people? Why might individuals who share a religion prefer to do business with one another rather than with people of another religion?

### *Humans and Ideas*

How did the growth of Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam in the first millennium CE affect the exchange of scientific knowledge, technology, and the arts? How do religions today contribute to the development and spread of new ideas in the arts, such as painting, architecture, and music?

## KEY THEMES

This chapter addresses the following historical themes:

**Key Theme 2:** Economic Networks and Exchange

**Key Theme 6:** Science, Technology, and the Environment

**Key Theme 7:** Spiritual Life and Moral Codes

## CORRELATIONS TO NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

**National Standards for History**

Era 4: Expanding Zones of Exchange and Encounter, 300–1000 CE. Standard 2: Causes and consequences of the rise of Islamic civilization in the seventh-10th centuries; Standard 3: Major developments in East Asia and Southeast Asia in the era of the Tang dynasty, 600–900 CE; Standard 4: The search for political, social, and cultural redefinition in Europe, 500–1000 CE; Standard 7: Major global trends from 300–1000 CE.

Era 5: Intensified Hemispheric Interactions, 1000–1500 CE. Standard 1: The maturing of an interregional system of communication, trade, and cultural exchange in an era of Chinese economic power and Islamic expansion

## INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

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LESSON 1

# Primer on Islamic Beliefs and Practices

## *Materials*

Student Handouts 2.1.1 and 2.1.2

## *Objectives*

Students will be able to:

- Describe the basic beliefs of Islam and list its two major authoritative sources.
- List the Five Pillars of Islam and associate each one with its definition and basic practices.
- Explain several levels of meaning of the Five Pillars and associate each with social and cultural practices.

## *Procedure*

1. Distribute and assign Student Handout 2.1.1. Use study questions to review and develop understanding of the basic information on Islamic beliefs and practices.
2. Distribute the blank graphic organizer table on the significance of the Five Pillars of Islam (Student Handout 2.1.2) and have students fill it in using class brainstorming techniques. Check answers using the model graphic organizer (also Student Handout 2.1.2).

Islamic Center of America in Dearborn, Michigan

# *Islamic Beliefs and Practices*

The word "Islam" means "peace through submission to God." Muslim practice is defined by the Koran (holy scripture) and the Sunnah, or example set by Prophet Muhammad and transmitted through the Hadith (recorded words and deeds). Islam is a universal religion, meaning that anyone may accept its beliefs and become a Muslim, or follower of Islam. A Muslim is "one who seeks peace through submission to God." This means striving to reach a goal rather than achieving a fixed identity. "Seeking the face of God" is an expression often used to describe this lifetime goal. To fulfill the identity of a Muslim, a person must carry out certain acts and live a moral, God-fearing life.

These basic acts required of a Muslim are called the Five Pillars. Accepting Islam requires only that a person state the basic creed, "There is no god but God" and "Muhammad is the messenger of God." That is the first of the five basic acts or duties. The Five Pillars of Islam are:

1. *shahadah*—to state belief in One God and the prophethood of Muhammad
2. *salat*—to pray five obligatory prayers each day
3. *siyam*—to fast from dawn to sunset during the month of Ramadan each year
4. *zakat*—to pay obligatory charity each year,
5. *hajj*—to make the pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime.

The following sections describe the pillars in detail.

1. **Shahadah (the Islamic Creed)** The declaration of faith in Islam is a simple statement that begins *Ashud anna* ("I witness that") and continues with the statement *La illaha illa Allah* ("There is no god but God") and ends with the affirmation *wa Muhammad rasul Allah* ("and Muhammad is the messenger of God"). The first part defines the role of the Muslim, a continuous striving throughout life. This striving reaches into all aspects of personality and activity toward the self, the family, the community, the entire community of humankind, and the natural environment. The second part affirms the existence of one God by negating the existence of any other creature that people might worship, or any partner with God. It underlines the Muslim's direct relationship with God as a witness and as a servant of God. No central authority nor privileged persons stand between God and the individual. The third part of the creed witnesses that God sent prophets to humankind, as stated in the scriptures revealed before the Koran. Then it affirms that Muhammad was a prophet, or messenger, who received revelation (the Koran) and guidance from God. Among the earlier revelations mentioned in the Koran are the Torah (given to Moses), the Psalms (given to David), and the Evangelium (given to Jesus). This series of prophets and revelation includes—among others—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, Jesus, and Muhammad, according to the universally accepted teachings of Islam. The Koran states that what was revealed to Muhammad confirmed the basic message of the earlier scriptures.

2. **Salah (Muslims' Daily Prayer)** is the five daily prayers that are the duty of every Muslim. Muslims perform the recitations and physical movements of *salah* as taught by their prophet Muhammad, according to Islamic sources. Each of the five prayers can be performed within a window of time. (1) between dawn and sunrise, (2) noon to midafternoon, (3) between midafternoon and just before sunset, (4) at sunset, and (5) after twilight until nighttime. Prayer time is determined by the sun's position, which Muslims today calculate by clock time, using charts that change with the longer and shorter days of each season. Before praying, Muslims perform a brief ritual washing. This purification prepares the worshipper for entering the state of prayer, of standing before God. It is a symbol of the cleansing effect of prayer. No matter what language they speak, all Muslims pray in the Arabic language.

   In the *salah*, Muslims recite specific words and selected verses from the Koran while standing, bowing, kneeling with the hands and forehead touching the ground, and sitting. Each cycle of movements is one *rak'at*, or unit of prayer, and each of the five prayers has between two and four units. At the end of the prayer, and throughout their lives, Muslims pray informally, asking for guidance and help in their own words. They also recite special prayers passed down as the words of the prophets. If two or more Muslims pray together, one of them will be the *imam* (prayer leader) and the others form rows behind the *imam*.

   *Masjid* is the Arabic name for an Islamic house of worship. The common English term "*mosque*" is a French version of the Spanish word *mezquita*. The *masjid* is named after the position of prayer called *sujud*, which means kneeling with the hands and forehead touching the ground. The *masjid* is a simple, enclosed space oriented toward the city of Mecca (on the Arabian Peninsula), where Islam's holiest place—the Ka'bah—is located. There is no furniture except mats or rugs, and Muslims stand shoulder to shoulder in rows, following the movements of the prayer leader all together. Because of these movements and the closeness of the worshippers, women pray together in rows behind the men.

3. **Sawm (Fasting).** During one month each year, Muslims fast, meaning that they do not eat or drink anything between dawn and sunset. Fasting is a duty for adults, but many children participate voluntarily, for at least part of the day, or only a few days. The fast begins with *sahoor* (a predawn meal). While fasting, Muslims perform the dawn, noon, and afternoon prayers and go about their normal duties. At sunset, Muslims break their fast with a few dates and water, then pray, then eat *iftar* (a meal that breaks the fast). *Iftar* is usually eaten with family and friends, or at the *masjid*, which hosts meals donated by community members for all. After the evening prayer, many Muslims go to the *masjid* for congregational prayers that feature a reading of one-thirtieth of the Koran each night. They complete the whole Koran by the end of the month.

   The Koran links fasting with the practice of earlier prophets and religions: "*You who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that you may*

*learn self-restraint*." (Koran 2:183) The fast begins at dawn on the first day of Ramadan, the tenth month of the Islamic lunar calendar.

Muslims may fast individually during the year, but doing it as a community magnifies the experience. The rhythm of life changes, and people's relations soften. Daily schedules change, and some workplaces and schools can adjust their schedules. Living outside majority Muslim countries, Muslims find ways to cope and make the most of Ramadan. Gathering with others is an important part of that, whether in homes or in *masjids* and community centers.

Each individual experiences hunger and its discomforts, but in a few days, the body gets used to it. Muslims are supposed to fast in the spirit as well, and make extra effort to avoid arguments, conflicts and bad words, thoughts, and deeds. Fasting builds will-power against temptation, helps people feel sympathy for those in need, and encourages generosity toward others. Fasting causes physical and psychological changes, and many claim that it is a healthy way to purify the body. Fasting helps people to reevaluate their lives spiritually and draw closer to God.

4. **Zakah (Charity as a Duty)** is the annual giving of a percentage of a Muslim's wealth and possessions beyond basic needs. The word means "purification," meaning that a person is purified from greed by giving wealth to others. When Muslims have cash savings for a year, they give 2.5 percent of it as *zakat. Zakat* on other forms of wealth, such as land, natural resources, and livestock, is calculated at different rates. Paying the *zakat* reminds Muslims of the duty to help those less fortunate, and that wealth is a gift entrusted to a person by God rather than a possession to be hoarded selfishly. Prophet Muhammad set the precedent that *zakah* was collected and distributed locally, and what remained after meeting local needs was distributed to the larger Muslim community through the general treasury. *Zakah* money belongs to several categories of persons: "*The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those [public servants] who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarers; a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is knower, Wise*." (Koran 9:60).

   Muslims may distribute *zakah* to needy and deserving people and groups on their own, and each person is responsible for figuring out the amount owed. Of course, 2.5 percent is a minimum amount, and more may be given.

   Islamic traditional sources mention charity often. A *hadith* of the Prophet said "*Charity is a necessity for every Muslim."* He was asked, "*What if a person has nothing?"* The Prophet replied, "*He should work with his own hands for his benefit and then give something out of such earnings in charity."* The Companions asked, "*What if he is not able to work?"* The Prophet said, "*He should help poor and needy persons."* The Companions further asked, "*What if he cannot do even that?"* The Prophet said, "*He should urge others to do good*." The Companions said, "*What if he lacks that also?"* The Prophet said, "*He should check himself from doing evil. That is also charity*."

5. **Hajj (Journey to Mecca).** The basic act of worship in Islam is the pilgrimage (journey) to the city of Mecca during a certain time of year. The *hajj* rites symbolically reenact the trials and sacrifices of Prophet Abraham, his wife Hajar, and their son Isma'il over 4,000 years ago. Muslims must perform the *hajj* at least once in their lives, provided their health and finances permit. The *hajj* is performed annually by more than 2 million people during the twelfth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, *Dhul-Hijjah*. In commemoration of the trials of Abraham and his family in Mecca, which included Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son in response to God's command, Muslims make a pilgrimage to the sacred city at least once in their lifetime. The *hajj* is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, and thus an essential part of the faith and practice of Muslims.

   Muslims from all over the world, including the United States, travel to Mecca (in today's Saudi Arabia). Before arriving in the holy city, Muslims enter a state of being called *ihram*. They remove their ordinary clothes and put on the simple dress of pilgrims—two seamless white sheets for men and, usually, white dresses and head covering for women. The pilgrims are dressed in the same simple clothes. No one can tell who is rich, famous, or powerful. White clothes are a symbol of purity, unity, and equality before God. The gathering of millions of pilgrims at Mecca is a reminder of the gathering of all humans before God at the Judgment Day. It is a symbol of the Muslim *ummah*, because pilgrims gather from all corners of the earth. It is a symbol of the past, because the pilgrims visit places where Abraham and his family faced the challenge of their faith, and where Muhammad was born and preached. Pilgrims go around the Kaaba. According to Islamic teachings, it was the first house of worship for one God on earth. Pilgrims call *"Labbayka Allahumma Labbayk,"* which means *"Here I am at your service, O God, here I am!"* This echoes the call of Abraham in the Hebrew Bible, in answer to the call of God. Pilgrims also walk seven times between the hills named Safa and Marwah, where they recall how Ishmael's mother searched for water for him, and the spring of water called Zam-zam flowed under his foot, and still flows.

   Other stations of the pilgrimage are nearby Mecca, where they perform prayers, camp overnight, and stand all together on the Plain of Arafat asking for God's forgiveness and guidance. They recall Abraham's struggle with Satan by casting pebbles at three stone columns. Pilgrims complete the hajj by sacrificing a sheep or other animal, whose meat is to be shared with family, friends, and those in need. Nowadays a meat processing plant near the place of sacrifice helps distribute the meat around the world. The sacrifice reminds of the biblical and Koranic story telling how Abraham was willing to sacrifice even his son for God, and a ram appeared in the boy's place.

   Pilgrims leave the state of *ihram* by trimming or cutting their hair and returning to Mecca for a final visit to the Kaaba. A Hadith of Prophet Muhammad says that a pilgrim "*will return as free of sin as a newborn baby*." The pilgrimage brings Muslims from all around the world, of different nationalities, languages, races, and regions, to come together in a spirit of universal humanity to worship God together.

And when We made the House at Mecca a place of assembly and a place of safety for humankind, saying: Take as your place of worship the place where Abraham stood to pray. And We laid a duty upon Abraham and Ishmael: Purify My house for those who go around and those who meditate therein and those who bow down in worship.

And when Abraham prayed: My Lord! Make this a city of peace region of security and feed its people with fruits, such of them as believe in God and the Last Day, He answered: As for him who disbelieves, I shall leave him content for a while, then I shall compel him to the doom of fire--a hapless journey's end!

And remember when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House, with this prayer: Our Lord! Accept from us this service. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Hearer, the Knower.

Source: Surat al-Baqara, Ayah 125–128 (adapted from Marmaduke Pickthall translation).

## *Study Questions*

1. What is the most basic belief for Muslims?
2. What is the Islamic statement of belief called?
3. Identify and describe the prayers required of Muslims. How do Muslims prepare for prayer?
4. Who is required to pay the *zakat*, and who may receive it?
5. Which of the Five Pillars is linked to the lunar month of Ramadan? When, why, and how do Muslims fast?
6. What is the hajj, and how often must a Muslim perform it? What is the significance of clothing for the hajj?
7. What is the relationship of Abraham to the fifth pillar of Islam?

Source: This handout is reprinted by permission from the booklet *Muslim Holidays* (Fountain Valley, CA: Council on Islamic Education, 2002), 65–69.

Afghan politicians and other Muslim diplomats praying at the US Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan

# *The Five Pillars' Many Dimensions*

The Five Pillars of Islam are formal acts of worship—essentials of practicing Islam. Islamic teachings also require a person to live according to moral values and to work toward just relations among people in the family, community, and the world. Simply put, Muslims are supposed to live in knowledge that every act happens in the sight of God.

Even though there is much more to living as a Muslim than the Five Pillars, these universal acts have influenced Muslim societies in many ways. The Five Pillars are individual acts, but they have social effects. Each has a spiritual meaning, but it also has worldly significance. During more than fourteen hundred years of Muslim history, practice of the Five Pillars has shaped the places where Muslims live, the form of their homes and cities, their buildings and cultural institutions, and even the links between regions of the world where Muslims live and travel.

**Belief in one God**, the first pillar of Islam, helped spread a simple message that attracted many people over time. The idea of spreading the message and living out its ideas opened up whole new branches of learning, like law and the sciences. Curiosity to know and understand led to the building of libraries and the spread of science and technology across much of the world.

**Daily prayer**, the second pillar, resulted in the constructions of *masjids* (mosques) everywhere that Muslims live. From the simplest mud-brick structures to huge, decorated edifices of stone, brick, and tile, a wide variety of *masjid* styles developed in different Muslim regions. To have a clean place to pray, Muslims often use a mat or carpet at home or elsewhere. Local design traditions and techniques produced wonderful designs for these rugs. The need Muslims had to know the exact time for prayer and the direction of Mecca from any place in the world encouraged the sciences of mathematics, astronomy, and geography. The rhythm of the prayer times regulated daily life in Muslim societies everywhere.

**Zakah**, the third pillar, provided a steady source of charity because it is required, though additional giving is voluntary. One way of giving is to donate the money from a business on a regular and permanent basis, for example, from the sale of fruit from an orchard each year. These goods and money may be put into a foundation, as a kind of contract with God, or a trust fund that would last as long as the source lasted. By comparison, today in the United States wealthy people and organizations of many faiths give money to charitable foundations for hospitals, education, the arts, and other purposes.

**Ramadan fasting**, the fourth pillar, has been a special month of the year for Muslims for more than fourteen hundred years. The rhythm of daily life changes, and Ramadan is a time of charity, community, and celebration that affects everyone in the society. Like the winter holiday season in the United States and Europe, the month-long celebration brings an economic boost to merchants and producers. Families host guests, and those who are able provide prepared food for anyone who attends the *masjid* in time for the *iftar*, the meal that breaks the daily fast. At the end of the month, gift giving and obligatory charity in the form of foodstuffs and other necessities have a ripple effect on society's prosperity and well-being. This burst of energy is balanced by an overall slowing of the pace of life and work, with the idea of putting more time and energy into the spiritual side of life.

The fifth pillar the hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca each year, has had an enormous effect on Muslim societies and on the world. Muslims from Arabia, Africa, many parts of Asia, and now the Americas and Europe have made their way to the city of Mecca for the annual pilgrimage. The idea of the pilgrimage obliged people in the smallest villages to look outward on the world. The journey renewed contact among the world community of Muslims, helping to unify beliefs, practices, and knowledge. Muslim rulers were proud to build roads, watering places, ports, and waystations, doing their part to help pilgrims achieve the goal of the hajj. It did not matter that the Muslim world did not remain politically unified after the eighth century CE because Muslim society took on a dynamic of its own. Islam continued to spread, and new ideas, technologies, and even new foods and clothing spread with it.

When Muslims today carry out the Five Pillars, these basic acts of worship continue the traditions of unity-in-diversity among Muslims. These simple, regular practices have had far-reaching effects in many areas of Muslim life and civilization.

| Name | Meaning | Spiritual | Worldly | Individual | Communal | Cultural Influences |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SHAHADA** | To say the creed "*There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God*" | Reminds that there is one Creator who sent messengers and revealed words of guidance to humans | Muslims may not worship idols and should not prefer material things of life to moral life and belief | Each human being has a direct relationship with God | The basic message of Islam is universal. Muslims accept that earlier prophets, scriptures, and religions were true | No central religious authority nor priesthood, though Shi'i Muslims grant greater spiritual authority to the office of the imam than do Sunni Muslims; limitation on the power of worldly authority over Muslim societies; Islamic jurisprudence (Islamic law system) developed and Arabic language of Koran spread |
| **SALAT** | To perform the five daily prayers as Muhammad did | Obedience to God's command to worship; regular purification during each day | Physical act and spiritual act joined; healthful exercise and mental relaxation | Self-discipline and self-renewal woven into life patterns; opportunity to seek forgiveness and ask God for help | Binds society together in regular worship and contact; established regular pattern to daily and weekly social life. | *Masjids* (mosques) exist everywhere groups of Muslims live, with their own architecture, decoration, and sacred art; need-to-know prayer times led to study of astronomy, math, geography, and to colleges and universities |
| **ZAKAH** | Giving to the poor and those in need a percentage of wealth beyond basic needs | Purification of wealth by giving a portion away—"a loan to God" | Constant and dependable stream of charity available to Muslim society | Limitation on greed and accumulation of wealth; stimulated both required and voluntary additional charity | Early development of charitable institutions and foundations; collective public works free from state control, tax exempt | Charitable foundations (*waqf*) developed as permanent source of funding for mosques, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, wells, and traveler accommodations; institutionalized help for the poor |
| **SIYAM** | Fasting from dawn to sunset during the month of Ramadan (ninth lunar month) | Fasting a tradition of prophets; purpose to come near to God; annual renewal of spirit | Fasting is said to contribute to health, rid the body of poisons | Self-discipline and sense of achievement; breaking up bad eating habits; God-consciousness | Whole community participates, visits, shares food, renews contact; additional prayers and Koran readings | Ramadan an international celebration all over Muslim world; stimulated math and astronomy for setting lunar calendar |
| **HAJJ** | Making the journey to Mecca to perform the rites during the pilgrimage season | "Dress rehearsal for Judgment Day"; standing before God; recalls obedience of Abraham | Orients Muslims even in remote places toward a world community; encourages travel and communication | Developed sense of individual being accountable to God; gave people desire to travel, think beyond own location | Brought people together to trade and exchange knowledge; organized huge pilgrim caravans from each city; established roads, wells, and ports for better travel | Contributed to the mobility and connectedness of Muslim society in fourteen centuries; renewed common beliefs and practices, overcoming local traditions; increased trade and scholarship |

| Name | Meaning | Spiritual | Worldly | Individual | Communal | Cultural Influences |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SHAHADA | | | | | | |
| SALAT | | | | | | |
| ZAKAH | | | | | | |
| SIYAM | | | | | | |
| HAJJ | | | | | | |

Source: This handout is reprinted by permission from the booklet *Muslim Holidays* (Fountain Valley, CA: Council on Islamic Education, 2002), 65–69.

LESSON 2

# The Spread of Islam

## *Materials:*

- Student Handouts 2.2.1, 2.2.2, and 2.2.3
- Large wall map of the Eastern Hemisphere suitable for a bulletin board display
- Multicolored sticky-note strips in five bright colors

## *Objectives*

Students should be able to:

- Relate the spread of Islam to historical events and processes of historical change.
- Trace the spread of Islam chronologically and regionally.
- Assess the importance of cultural and political factors in the spread of Islam.
- Evaluate the importance of shifts in economic and political power that accompanied the spread of Islam.
- Evaluate the importance of and cultural influence among states and regions accompanying the spread of Islam.
- Use a map key to identify and locate regions of Afroeurasia.

## *Procedure*

1. Assign or read as a class Student Handout 2.2.1. Study questions at the end of the reading give suggestions for comprehension and discussion activities. Draw particular attention to the historical distinction between the rapid expansion of territory under Muslim rule and the gradual spread of Islam among the populations. Discuss previous ideas students may have about the spread of Islam "by the sword" or about "instant conversion" of regions to any world faith. Explain that conversion has usually been a gradual process.
2. Ask students to list the reasons why people might have changed from the religion they grew up with.
    a. What are the conditions for converting from one faith to another (being exposed to different ideas, evaluating potential advantages and disadvantages of conversion, and so on)?
    b. What influences might play a role in a decision to convert (social, political, or economic)?

c. Is it more challenging for individuals to join a faith when it appears to be a minority faith or when its members form the majority?

d. How do poverty and persecution of members of the faith, or, conversely, the wealth and power of adherents affect individual choice about conversion?

e. How might people across a wide geographic area learn about the beliefs of a faith? What role might spiritual leaders play?

f. What other role models, such as traders, travelers, and teachers, might influence people in converting?

For further reading on the spread of world religions, see Jerry H. Bentley, *Old World Encounters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

3. Distribute Student Handout 2.2.2. Discuss the introduction to preview the information the students will find in the chronology. Reinforce for students the difference between the historical concepts of expanding Muslim-ruled territory and the spread of Islam among peoples in Africa, Asia, and Europe.

   a. Discuss the major events listed in all six historical segments into which the chronology is divided. Students should pay particular attention to items on the chronology that represented advances as well as setbacks for the spread of Islam.

   b. Adaptation for middle school: Teachers may find it useful to break up the chronology into parts that correspond to historical periods or geographic regions being studied in class, using the chronology in conjunction with individual units corresponding to textbook chapters or content standards. By doing so, students can focus on five or six items at a time. If the class is making a world history time-line on the wall or in a notebook, they can insert these items from the chronology into the larger time line.

   c. Discuss how these events described in the chronology may relate to events taking place in other regions and societies.

4. This is a bulletin board activity, correlating chronology to geography.

   a. Make a master copy of the Student Handout 2.2.2 by photocopying an enlarged version. Distribute copies of the chronology to members of the class. Divide them into six groups, each group taking one of the six historical segments. Give each group a set of rectangular sticky-note strips, each set in a different bright color. Each of these colored sets corresponds to one of the six historical periods.

   b. Have students in each group identify the historical events on their section of the chronology that relate to the spread of both Islam and Muslim rule. Also identify any events that indicate retreat of Islam or Muslim rule. Write brief summaries and dates of these events on the colored sticky notes.

   c. At the end of the work period, have each group attach their strips to the classroom's wall map of the world at a location or locations appropriate to the event. (A physical map is preferable to a modern political map for this exercise.) The collection of strips on the map will show patterns in the sequence of the spread of Islam and Muslim rule from the seventh century to about 1500 CE. Make a map key on or next to the map using the six color sticky notes.

5. In this activity, students graph rates of conversion to Islam by region.

   a. Using Handout 2.2.4, have students read the background information to the graph of conversion rates in five Muslim regions during the period from the seventh to the end of the thirteenth century. Go over any unfamiliar terminology and discuss the study questions. Provide examples or brainstorm sources that historians and even contemporary demographers might use to gain information about ordinary people (e.g., census data, tax registers, birth and death registers).

   b. Read the sample entry from a Persian biographical dictionary (Student Handout 2.2.5) and discuss what sort of information is provided. What are some similarities and differences in the kind of information provided, compared with biographical entries written today?

   c. Assess students for their understanding of the labels on the graph and the key. Emphasize to the students that the horizontal axis of the graph refers to dates, both in the Hijri (AH) and Common Era (CE) dating systems. It is also important to note that the percentages on the vertical axis do NOT represent percentages of total population but percentages of individual converts from a sample derived from biographical dictionaries.

      i. Ask students to discuss or to write essays on the study questions related to the graph.

6. **Extension activity**: Compare the map produced for the bulletin board activity (no. 4 above) with Student Handout 2.2.3, a published map on the spread of Islam. What agreement or disagreement do you find?

# *The Spread of Islam*

## *A Slow Process.*

In the century after Muhammad's death, Muslims conquered territory from the Atlantic to the borders of China. Many students reading this often wrongly imagine that this huge region instantly became Islamic, meaning that most of the people living in those lands quickly became Muslims. To the contrary, the spread of Islam in these vast territories took centuries, and Muslims made up a small minority of the population for a long time. In other words, the expansion of territory under Muslim rule happened very rapidly, but the spread of Islam in those lands was a much slower process. There are several kinds of historical evidence of this gradual conversion process that we will examine in this lesson.

## *"Let there be no compulsion in religion."*

The Koran specifies, "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (2:256). This verse states that no person can ever be forced to accept religion against his or her will. It tells Muslims that they cannot force people to convert to Islam. Muhammad set a precedent as the leader of Medina. Under his leadership the Muslims practiced tolerance toward those of other religions. They were signers of the Constitution of Medina and of treaties with the non-Muslim groups. According to tradition, Muhammad often discussed religious ideas with the Jews, Christians, and polytheists (believers in many gods), and he heard their questions about his teachings. The Koran records some of the questions that people put to Muhammad, and his replies. Muslim leaders after Muhammad were required to be tolerant, based on the authority of both the Koran (in this and many other verses) and the Sunnah, that is, custom practiced by Muhammad or by early members of the Muslim community.

With some exceptions, Muslim leaders have adhered to this precedent over time. One major type of evidence for tolerance by Muslim political leadership is the persistence of many religious minorities in the lands Muslims have ruled. Spain is one example, where Christians and Jews lived and worshipped under Muslim rule and contributed to the society in many ways. The writings of well-known Jewish and Christian scholars, physicians, scientists, and artisans still exist. After the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from Spain following the conquests of Ferdinand and Isabella, Jews settled in North Africa under Muslim rule. They were also invited by the sultan of the Ottoman Empire to settle in Istanbul. Some of these communities still exist today. In Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey, for example, Christian and Jewish groups that predate the coming of Islam still exist, as do the Coptic Christians in Egypt, after fourteen hundred years of Muslim rule there.

## *Becoming Muslim.*

Muhammad preached Islam at Mecca and Medina in Arabia for about twenty-three years, while he received revelation of the Koran, according to Islamic teachings. For the first ten years (612 to 622 CE) he preached publicly at Mecca. After the migration to Medina, he preached for ten

years, until his death in 632, only in his own house—the first *masjid* (mosque)—to people who came to hear him. Preaching in houses or in the *masjid* became the pattern in Islam.

To accept Islam, a person only has to make the profession of faith (*shahada*) in front of two or more witnesses. Even after a person has accepted Islam, he or she may take a long time to learn and apply its practices, going through many different stages or levels of understanding and practice over time. As Islam spread among large populations, this process was multiplied.

Different individuals and social classes may have had different understandings of Islam at the same time. Also, many local variations and pre-Islamic customs remained, even after societies had majority Muslim populations for a long time. These differences have been a source of diversity among Muslim societies and regions.

## *Growth of Muslim Population.*

It is quite easy to map the large territory ruled by different Muslim political groups, or to illustrate the expansion of an empire. We can shade in areas of a map, and we can track the dates of Muslim rulers and dynasties from the time of Muhammad to the present day. It is more difficult, however, to understand why historians speak of a geographic area as a "Muslim region," "Muslim society," "Muslim civilization," or even "the Islamic world." At a minimum, such terms must mean that most of the people who lived in those places considered themselves to be Muslims, that is, people who believed in the religion called Islam. By what point in time did the majority of people in those places accept Islam, and how rapid was its spread? What effect did the gradual or rapid spread of Islam have on language, customs, art, and politics? How did the fact that many people were converting to Islam relate to the development of Muslim culture and civilization? We know, of course, that substantial numbers of people in those regions continued to practice the faiths they had belonged to before Islam, including Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, and Hindus. The social contributions of people of these religions continued under Muslim rule. As these former majorities became minorities, how were they affected? How did the presence of a large region in which the majority of its inhabitants were Muslim affect adjoining regions where the majority accepted other faiths?

## *The Process of Conversion.*

In the decades after Muhammad's death, nearly all of the inhabitants of Arabia accepted Islam, except Christian and Jewish communities, which were allowed to continue practicing their faiths. As Muslim rule extended into regions beyond the Arabian tribal system, however, *khalifas*, that is, the successors of the Prophet as leaders of the Muslim community, did not encourage conversion to Islam among the populations of newly conquered areas.

Nevertheless, during the early caliphates (632–750 CE), non-Arabs began to accept Islam. Conversion took place at first among the lowest classes of people. Men and women migrated to Muslim garrison cities to look for jobs and to offer their services to the ruling group. Learning about Islam in these centers, some converted and expanded the Muslim population. These migrants became associates, or *mawali*, of Arab tribes, a traditional method of integrating outsiders. Some migrant Arab and *mawali* converts founded families that later made important contributions in preserving and spreading Islamic knowledge. They became scholars of Islamic

law, history, literature, and the sciences. In this way, Islam spread in spite of the policies of political rulers, not because of them.

During the years of the Umayyad Caliphate (Umayyad Dynasty) from 661–750 CE, the overwhelming majority of non-Arab populations of the empire, which stretched from Morocco to Inner Eurasia, did not practice Islam. Toward the end of that time, the North African Berbers became the first major non-Arab group to accept the faith. Within a few centuries, Christianity disappeared almost completely in North Africa (today's Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco), though Christian groups persisted in many other Muslim regions. Jews remained as a small minority, with many living in Muslim Spain. The spread of Islam among Iranians and other peoples of Persia was the second major movement, beginning about 720 CE. Both of these early groups of converts caused problems for the central government. In North Africa, Berbers set up an independent caliphate, breaking up the political unity of Islam. In Persia the revolution arose that replaced the Umayyad with the Abbasid Dynasty in 750, though only a small proportion of the population of Iraq (ancient Mesopotamia, centered on the Tigris-Euphrates Valley) had at that time accepted Islam. From then, however, Islam was no longer the religion of a single ethnic or ruling group, and the rates of conversion climbed more rapidly in lands under Muslim rule.

For example, Arab Muslim forces conquered Egypt in 642, but by 700 few Egyptians had become Muslims. By 900 CE, about 50 percent of the population was probably Muslim, and by 1200, more than 90 percent. In Syria, Islam spread even more slowly. There, the 50 percent mark was not reached until 1200, nearly six hundred years after the arrival of Islam. Iraq and Iran probably reached a Muslim majority by around 900 CE, like Egypt. In much of Spain and Portugal, Islam became established in the five hundred years following the initial conquests of 711 CE, though it may never have become the majority faith. After Spanish Catholic armies completed the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in 1492, many Muslims and Jews were either expelled from Spain or converted to Christianity. Islam continued to exist, however, until after 1600. As in Spain and Portugal, Islam withered away in Sicily, the Mediterranean island that Muslims had conquered in the ninth century.

In Persia, Inner Eurasia, and India, Muslim law treated Zoroastrians, Buddhists, and Hindus just as it treated Jews and Christians. Muslim rulers offered adherents of these religions protection of life, property, and freedom of religious practice in exchange for the payment of a tax, as an alternative to military service. In Sind (northwestern India) the Buddhist population seems to have embraced Islam in the eighth and ninth centuries. Buddhism disappeared entirely in that region. Hinduism, however, declined there more slowly than Buddhism did.

All of the lands described above had Muslim rulers. After the decline of the unified Muslim empire—from about 750—Islam gradually spread to lands outside the boundaries of Muslim rule. After 1071, Anatolia (or Asia Minor), which makes up most of modern Turkey, came under the rule of Turkish animal-herding groups that had become Muslims. Islam spread gradually for centuries after that, and when the Ottoman-Turkish empire enfolded much of southeastern Europe in the mid-fourteenth century, most Albanians and Bosnians, as well as some Bulgarians, became Muslims.

## *Continuing Spread.*

Beginning in 1192, other Muslim Turkish military groups conquered parts of India, including most of the north all the way to present-day Bangladesh, which borders the Bay of Bengal. The number of Muslims in India gradually increased from that time. The people of Bangladesh had been Buddhists, but beginning about 1300 they rapidly embraced Islam. Elsewhere in India, except for Punjab and Kashmir in the far northwest, Hinduism remained the religion of the majority.

In South India and Sri Lanka, both merchants and Sufi preachers, that is, followers of mystical Islam, spread the faith. By 1300, traders and Sufis also introduced it to Southeast Asia. Over the next two centuries, Islam spread from Malaysia to the great archipelago that is today Indonesia.

Entering a region where Buddhism, Hinduism, and local polytheist religions existed, Islam required several centuries to become well established. In Inner Eurasia beginning in the eighth century, Islam gradually spread to the original homelands of the Turkic-speaking peoples until it became the main religion of nearly all of them. Islam also spread into Xinjiang, the western part of China, where it was tolerated by the Chinese empire. Islam entered southern China through seaports, such as Guanzhou, the city where the earliest *masjid* exists.

## *Africa.*

Before 1500, Islam spread widely in sub-Saharan Africa. Before 1000 CE, the first major town south of the Sahara that became majority Muslim was Gao, a commercial center located on the Niger River in Mali. Over the centuries, many other rulers and parts of their populations followed this pattern. By 1040, groups in Senegal had become Muslims. From there, Islam spread to the region of today's Mali and Guinea. Muslims established the kingdom of Mali in the thirteenth century and the Songhai Empire from 1465 to 1600. Farther east, Kanem-Bornu near Lake Chad became Muslim after 1100. In West Africa, like Turkestan, India, and Indonesia, traders and Sufis introduced Islam. When rulers accepted the faith, numerous Muslim scholars, lawyers, teachers, and artisans migrated into the region to help build Muslim administration and cultural life. African Muslim scholars became established in major towns like Timbuktu, where they taught and practiced Islamic law as judges. By 1500, Islam was established in West Africa in a wide east-west belt south of the Sahara. Local polytheistic religions remained strong, however, and Islam did not become the majority faith in this region until the nineteenth century.

In East Africa, traders spread Islam along the coast beginning at least by the tenth century. By the fourteenth century, the numerous commercial city-states along the coast from today's Somalia to Tanzania were predominantly Muslim. In the Sudan, south of Egypt, the population of Nubia gradually became Muslim during the fourteenth century, through immigration of Muslim Arab pastoral groups and because Christian rule became weak in that region.

### *Strong Governments and the Spread of Islam.*

By understanding that the expansion of Muslim rule was different from the spread of Islam, we can see an interesting trend. Ironically, Islam has spread most widely and rapidly among populations at times when Muslim rule was weaker and less unified. When Muslim political regimes were decentralized, disunited, or completely absent, Islam as a religion flourished and often spread to non-Muslims. Influence by traders and Sufis and influence of Muslim scholars, lawyers, and artisans in the cities aided the spread of Islam to new areas. On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire in southeastern Europe, or the sultanate of Delhi, and the later Mogul Empire of India had little success in spreading Islam, though they did gain territory. Non-Muslim populations seem to have viewed these powerful, tax-gathering Muslim rulers negatively, and so they resisted conversion to Islam. Whoever did embrace Islam in such circumstances, if not for material gain, usually did so because of the efforts of merchants, teachers, and traveling Sufi preachers, who were not part of the government.

### *Study Questions*

1. In what important way was the conquest of territory by Muslims different from the spread of Islam?
2. How many centuries do historians think it took from the time Islam was introduced until it became the religion of the majority population in Egypt, Syria, Iran, and Spain?
3. To which regions did Islam spread mainly as a result of trade and travel?
4. How might laws tolerating other religions have affected the spread of Islam among the population?
5. Construct a simple time line tracing the spread of Islam using the dates in the text above.
6. Locate the regions mentioned in the text on a map, and make labels showing the dates when (1) Islam was introduced there and (2) when it embraced a majority of the population. Compare your map with Student Handout 2.2.3 map.

# *Chronology of the Spread of Islam*

Beginning more than fourteen hundred years ago, Islam has spread from the small trading town of Mecca on the Arabian Peninsula to become a world religion practiced on every continent. Like other world religions, Islam has been spreading ever since its origin, both through migration of Muslims to new places and by individuals who have accepted Islam as their religion, having chosen to convert from other religions.

During the first century after Muhammad began preaching, rapid expansion of the territory under Muslim rule took place as a result of military campaigns. This territory did not instantly become Islamic, meaning that most people rapidly became Muslim. Rather, the spread of Islam among the population took centuries, even in the regions conquered in the seventh century CE.

The following chronology marks dates when various regions were first introduced to Islam. It also gives the dates when Muslims probably became a majority of the population in those regions. The time line also records trends in cultural and religious influence by both Muslims and non-Muslims that affected the spread of Islam.

**7th Century CE**

622 Muhammad and the Muslims migrated from Mecca to Medina at the invitation of the Medinans. Muhammad became the city's leader, and the first Muslim community was established.

630 Mecca surrendered to the Muslim force, placing the city under Muslim rule. Many members of Quraysh accepted Islam shortly after.

632 Muhammad died, leaving much of the Arabian Peninsula under Muslim rule.

634–650 Muslim armies defeated Byzantine and Persian imperial armies, bringing Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and Iran under Muslim rule, including the cities of Jerusalem, Damascus, and Alexandria.

**8th Century CE**

711–715 Spain, Turkistan, and Sind (northern India) were brought under Muslim rule.

750s Muslim soldiers settled in Chang'an (Xian), the largest city in China. Muslim merchants also visited and settled in southern Chinese ports.

**9th Century CE**

*c. 800–850 Islam became the faith of the majority of people in Iran.

819 The Samanids became the first independent Muslim state in northeastern Iran and Inner Eurasia. By the 900s CE, Islam became the majority religion in that region.

*c. 850–900 Islam became the majority religion in Iraq, Egypt, and Tunisia.

| | |
|---|---|
| **10th–12th Centuries CE** | *c. 940–1000 Islam became the majority religion in Muslim-ruled parts of the Iberian Peninsula (today's Spain and Portugal).<br><br>1099–1187 Western European Crusader armies held Jerusalem.<br><br>11th c Muslim traders in West Africa began to spread Islam. Muslims settled in the Champa region of Vietnam and introduced Islam.<br><br>1040s The Almoravids, a Muslim Berber ruling group, spread Islam in Mauritania and other parts of West Africa. They campaigned against the Soninke kings of Ghana.<br><br>1060s The Almoravids ruled in North Africa and Muslim Spain (al-Andalus). The empire of Ghana weakened. |
| **13th–14th Centuries CE** | *c. 1200 Islam became the majority religion in Syria.<br><br>13th c. Ghana's empire collapsed and Mali rose. Rulers of Kanem, near Lake Chad, became Muslim.<br><br>End 13th c. Muslims settled in northern ports of Sumatra (today's Indonesia). Muslim traders had close trade and cultural contacts in the trading cities on the east Indian coast, such as Gujarat.<br><br>c. 1300 Islam became the majority faith in Anatolia (part of today's Turkey).<br><br>1295 The Ilkhan ruler Ghazan the Reformer was the first Mongol leader to become Muslim, along with most of his Mongol generals.<br><br>1324–25 Mansa Musa, king of Mali, made the pilgrimage journey to Mecca, strengthening Mali's links with Islam.<br><br>14th c. Mali, Gao, and Timbuktu, cities on the Niger River in western Africa, became important centers of Muslim trade and scholarship. |
| **15th Century CE** | 15th c. A ruler of Malacca converted to Islam, while that port city was becoming an important stop on the China-Indian Ocean trade routes. From Malacca, Islamic influence spread in the Malay Peninsula and nearby islands.<br><br>1453 Ottoman forces conquered the city of Constantinople, ending the Byzantine Empire.<br><br>1085–1492 Spanish Christian forces carried out reconquista in the Iberian Peninsula.<br><br>1495 Muslims and Jews were expelled from Spain, while others were forced to convert to Christianity. |

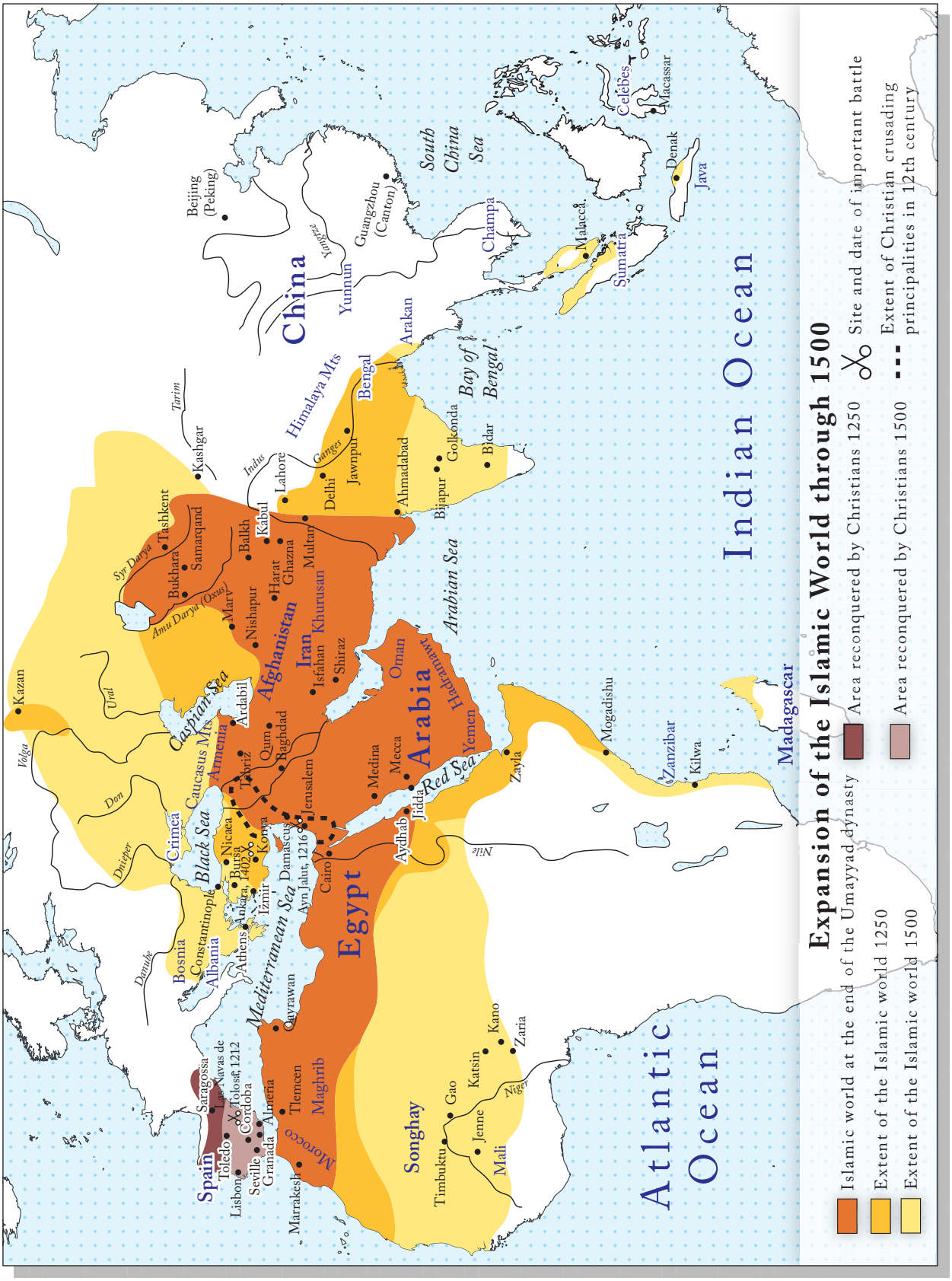
Sources: Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

Khalid Y. Blankinship, "Politics, Law and the Military," in S. L. Douglass, ed., *World Eras: Rise and Spread of Islam, 622–1500* (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Group, 2002), 230–232.

Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam,* vols. 1–2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

Francis Robinson, ed. *Atlas of the Islamic World Since 1500* (New York: Facts on File, 1982).

# *Map of Expansion of Islam*



# *Graphing Rates of Conversion to Islam by Region*

The spread of Islam during the medieval period is difficult for historians to describe because there is a lack of population data for a period so long ago. Historians have a lot of evidence that Islam was spreading, but this evidence is hard to quantify. For example, there is ample evidence in literary works and government documents that the Arabic language was spreading, and the number of mosques built during those periods was clearly rising. Literature shows that many writers were concerned with Islamic topics, and chronicles of political history describe issues affecting their Muslim subjects. But determining how rapidly or slowly Islam was spreading and when a majority of the population in different regions had accepted Islam has been a mystery.

## *Creative Historical Thinking.*

The historian Richard W. Bulliet made a pioneering effort to measure the spread of Islam by making creative use of an important Arabic literary source, the biographical dictionary. Like today's *Who's Who* of prominent Americans, these dictionaries were produced in Muslim regions from a very early period. Compilers of biographical dictionaries collected information about prominent individuals in many walks of life, such as important religious scholars, government officials, judges, poets, and teachers of the traditions of the Prophet (Hadith). Biographical dictionaries recorded prominent citizens of a particular city, those who died during the reign of particular rulers or dynasties, or famous individuals in a particular profession. Some of the biographers compiled dictionaries from earlier collections of biographies. Taken together, these sources exist for many regions and provide a wide variety of information on thousands of individuals over centuries.

## *What's in a Name?*

By studying the biographical data, Bulliet developed a theory showing how rapidly Islam spread in various regions between the sixth and thirteenth centuries. To gather information on conversion to Islam by prominent individuals and families, he took advantage of the traditional Arab practice of naming people. A person might be named, for example, Abdullah al-Dimashqi. Abdullah was his given name, and his family name reveals that he was from Damascus. A name also typically included the father's, grandfather's and even great grandfather's name to identify the family. For example, a biographical dictionary would list a name like Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Sulaiman ibn Yaqub al-Dimashqi. ("Ibn" means "son of.") Each person's biographical entry might include several generations. In Muslim tradition naming a child is very important, and parents are encouraged to give children good names to live up to. Popular names come from the Koran, or from prophets, or from important companions of the Prophet Muhammad.

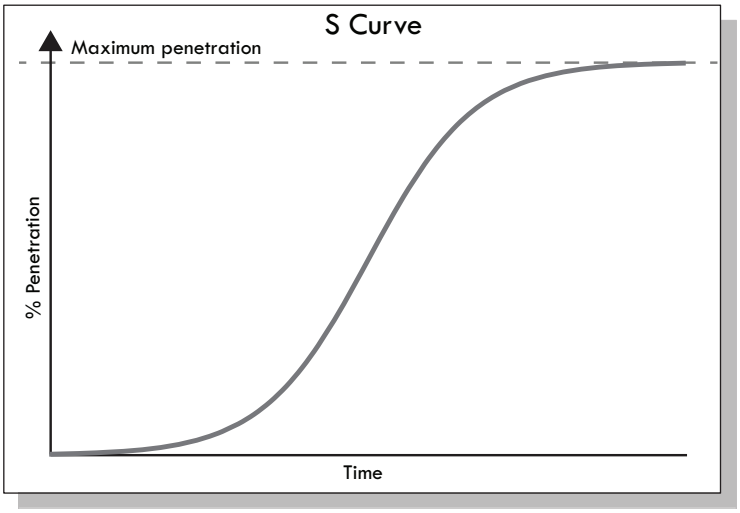
Bulliet noticed that the chains of names often included non-Arab, pre-Islamic names. If the great-great grandfather of an individual carried the Persian name Cyrus, for example, that name pointed to the generation in which the person's family had first converted to Islam. Hundreds of biographical entries show a similar pattern of naming and often describe in the entry how that person converted. By figuring out approximately how many years passed between

the conversion of those ancestors and the deaths of individuals listed in the dictionary, Bulliet could plot conversions to Islam in various places. These dictionaries, taken together, provided a data sample made up of thousands of names over many centuries, ranging across major Muslim regions such as Egypt, Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Muslim Spain.

### *How People Adopt New Ideas.*

Using a technique from modern scientific data analysis, Bulliet set out to find meaningful patterns in the information on conversion to Islam. He learned about a type of graph used to analyze how human populations adopt technological innovations. For example, when microwave ovens were invented and marketed for the first time, not many people used them. Then advertising at trade shows and in magazines and on radio and television made more people aware of these appliances. Gradually, more people tried the new technology. Some of the early users liked their ovens and told their neighbors. Microwaves became easier to use, and more people saw their advantages. As the number of people who owned them increased, products like microwavable snacks and dinners appeared with cookbooks full of microwave recipes. The number of microwave purchases started to increase rapidly, the price went down, and competing models appeared everywhere. Today, microwave ovens are standard in nearly every household and business in the United States. Sure, a few people suspect that "nuking" their food is unhealthy, and may never buy an oven. But the process of adopting microwaves in the United States is complete.

The graph for adoption of a new technology looks like an S-curve. The curve starts out flat, like the bottom of a hill. The risk takers who first adopt something new are called early adopters. As more and more people hear about a new idea and buy into it, the bandwagon effect kicks in, and the curve rises more steeply. Early and late majorities are the people who hop on the bandwagon until 50 percent of the people who will use the new technology is reached and exceeded. Then the market of potential users gets saturated, the pace of adoption slows down, and the curve flattens out. At that point most people already use the new technology, and over time even some laggards join in, waiting until everybody else has already done so. Some people never adopt the technology at all. This model could demonstrate the spread of personal computers, for example, or use of e-mail and the Internet between the 1970's, when a few specialists used it, to today, when people all over the world communicate online.

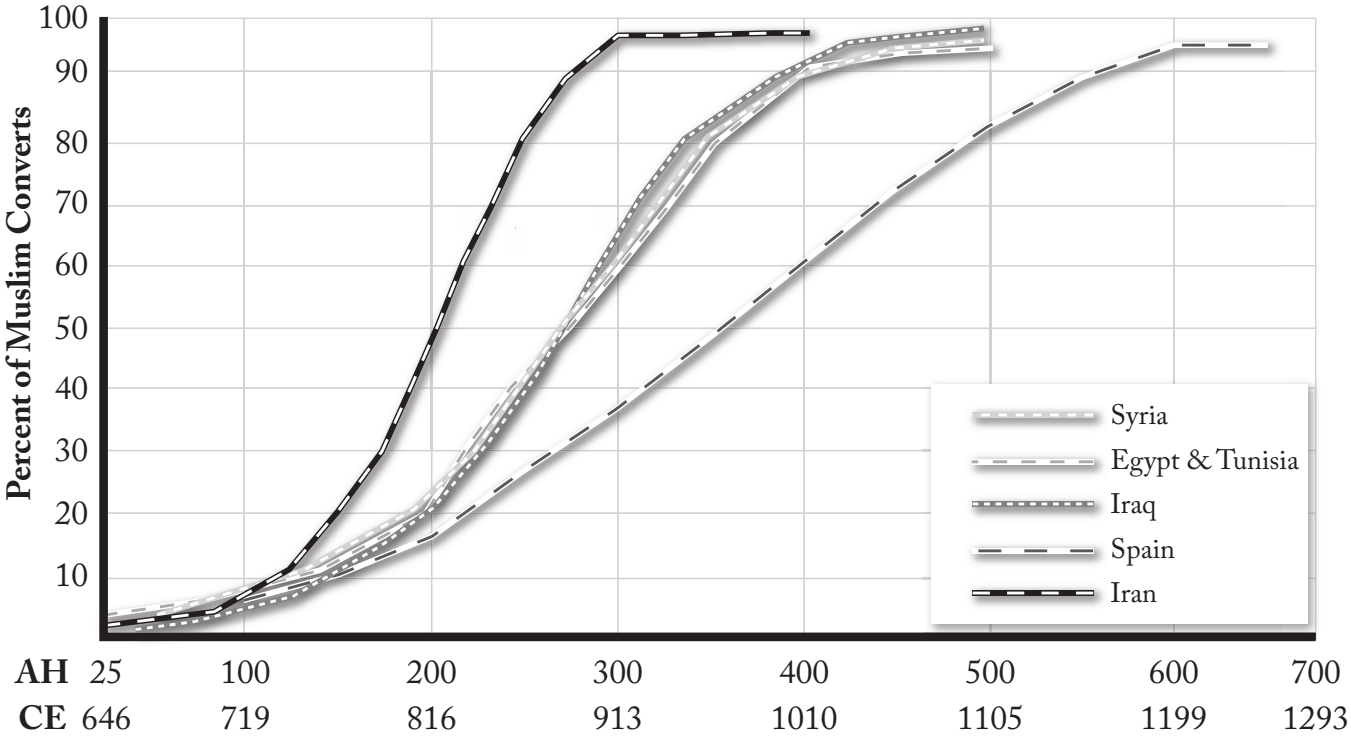


## *Applying the Model to Religious Conversion.*

Bulliet recognized that individuals in the biographical dictionaries made up a population set similar to people adopting a new idea or product. Conversion is a social process in which people gain information about a new faith, at some point adopt that faith, and begin to live by its practices. They also share information with others. They may migrate to a new place and become exposed to the new ideas. The story of Muhammad and the Muslim community showed that at first a very small number believed in his teaching, and they suffered as a minority. As the faith became more prominent and successful, numbers increased rapidly. By the time of Muhammad's death, much of Arabia had adopted Islam. The story in other regions might not be as dramatic or rapid, but still might follow a similar pattern.

For Bulliet, preparing and analyzing the data involved many decisions and careful guesses in some cases. When he wrote his book, he laid out these problems, such as finding the average length of a generation between an individual, his father, and grandfathers, and dating the various entries accurately on the time line. In order to see how a creative historian works, it is worthwhile to read Bulliet's book.

The graph on the next page summarizes some of Bulliet's findings about conversion to Islam in five major regions: Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Spain, between 646 and 1293 CE, that is, the first six centuries after Muhammad's death. It is clear that the data for conversion to Islam fit the S-curve model. Of course, historians still test these ideas and contribute research on the problem. Having a better idea of how and when Islam spread in these regions helps historians better understand many other events in Muslim history and compare the spread of Islam with other religions in world history.




**AH** - Anno Hijri (Muslim Calendar) Dates **CE** - Common Era Dates

## *Study Questions*

1. What kind of historical source provided data for the graph? How did this source provide clues about when people converted to Islam?
2. What is the connection between microwave ovens and medieval Muslims?
3. Using the graph key, identify each colored line. Which Muslim region experienced the earliest wave of conversions to Islam? Which region was the latest in time? Which regions experienced a parallel process of conversions to Islam?
4. During the Umayyad Dynasty, was there a Muslim majority population in any of the regions shown?
5. In 750, when the Abbasid Dynasty came to power, what percentage of Muslim conversions in Iran and Iraq had, according to Bulliet's data, taken place? How does this data line up with the idea that large numbers of non-Arab converts to Islam contributed to the Abbasid victory?
6. Why do you think the conversion process happened later in Spain than in Egypt or Syria? What percentage of conversions had probably taken place by 1085, when the city of Toledo fell to the Christian forces? What might have happened to the rate of conversion to Islam in Toledo after 1085?

# *Muslim Biographical Dictionary Entry*

Abu Taiba Isa ibn Sulaiman al Darimi al Jurjani. He was one of the religious scholars and ascetics. He recited *hadith* from Kurz ibn Wabra, Jaafar ibn Muhammad, Sulaiman al A'mash, and others. His two sons Ahmad and Abd al-Wasi recited *hadith* from him, ad did Saad ibn Said and others. His mosque was inside the walled inner city on the street named for Abd al-Wasi ibn Abi Taiba, his son. His house was beside his mosque. He had manifest benefices in the form of estates and lands. He established [charitable] trusts which are known by his name down to the present day, on behalf of his children, his grandchildren, and his relations in Juzjanan in a town known as Asburqan. . . . His grave is beside the Taifur canal at the edge of Sulaiman-abadh cemetery. . . . The story of Dinar, the grandfather of Abu Taiba, is that he was a rural landowner from Marv. He was taken prisoner during the raid on Khurasan of Said ibn Uthman ibn Affan and fell into the part of the booty that went to a man name Jafar ibn Khirfash. . . . He lived with him for a time, and then Jafar manumitted him. Jafar died without any heir other than Dinar. So Dinar took possession of Jafar's wealth. Then he married, and a son Sulaiman, the father of Abu Taiba Isa, was born to him.

Source: From the Persian biographical dictionary *Ta'rikh Jurjan* (History of Gorgan), quoted in Richard W. Bulliet, *Islam: The View from the Edge (*New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 45–47.

LESSON 3

# The Impact of Islam in Afroeurasia

## 632–1000 CE

### *Objectives*

Students will be able to

- Locate important cities in Muslim regions during the period before 1000 CE
- Evaluate the growth of cities as a factor in the expansion of Muslim rule and spread of Islam
- Assess the impact of urbanization in Muslim regions on change in Afroeurasia
- Identify social, economic, political, and cultural aspects of the impact of Islam in Afroeurasia

### *Procedure*

1. Introduce Student Handout 2.3.1 and draw students' attention to the two prominent historians' statements about the cumulative impact of the spread of Islam and its political, economic, and cultural dominance in Afroeurasia during the period from 632–1000 CE and beyond.
    a. Have students read the excerpts and make notes by folding a sheet of notebook paper in quarters, drawing lines along the folds, and using both sides to complete the resulting eight boxes. Write a heading at the top of each box that reflects a realm of activity in which Islam had some impact, and quote segments from the two excerpts in support of that type of impact.
    b. After using this organizer to read the excerpts, debrief and discuss how such influences were manifested during the period. Compare with other societies and periods in world history. Examples of such headings are:

| | |
|---|---|
| urbanization | growth of trade |
| migration | spread of knowledge |
| language | law |
| technology | governance |

2. Discuss the map in Student Handout 2.3.1, which depicts trade routes in Afroeurasia. In what ways does this map express what the historians K. N. Chaudhuri and Andrew Watson describe in their excerpts?

    a. Compare this map with the maps in Student Handout 2.3.2, which show the growth of cities in the Mediterranean region. Locate and name five major cities that existed in 528 CE. How many more cities are shown on the next map for 737 CE? Which of these cities are within Muslim-ruled territory?

    b. On the map for the year 1000 CE, how many cities are within Muslim-ruled territory and how many new ones have been added? What are some factors that might account for cities being founded, becoming much bigger, declining, or disappearing?

3. Refer to Bulliet's graph of conversion (Student Handout 2.2.4). How would you characterize the period between 737 and 1000 CE in terms of the rates of conversion for each region of the graph in terms of the towns and cities shown on the map of Mediterranean region cities?

# *The Impact of Islam in Afroeurasia*

Excerpt from K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 35–36.

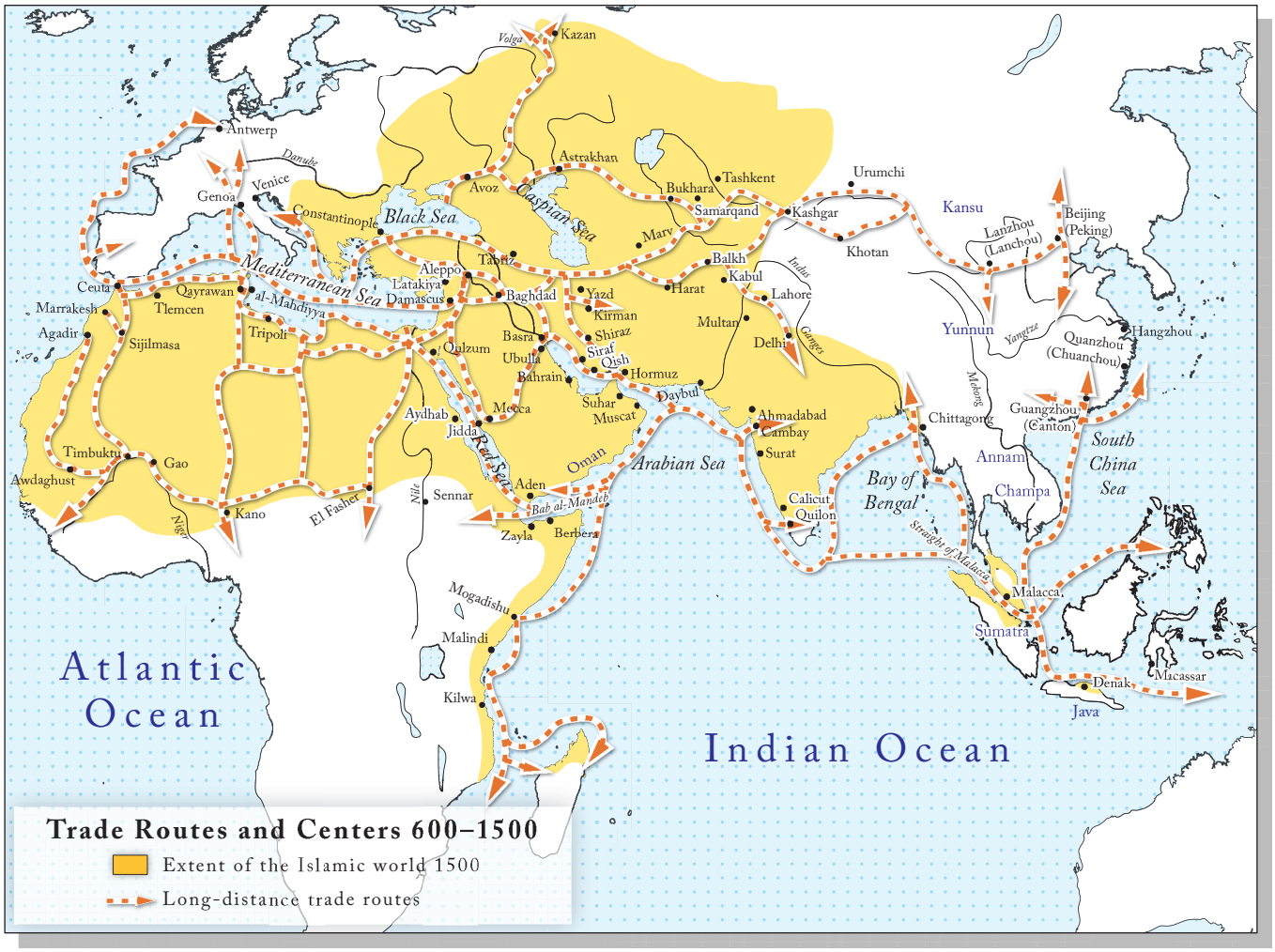
The expansion and the new activities which became faintly evident in the rhythm of both caravan and trans-oceanic trade from the seventh century onwards in northern and southern China received a great deal of their impetus from the domestic aspirations and developments of the T'ang and Sung empires. However, in the West it was joined by the second and most powerful of the historical forces of the time, the rise of Islam and its expansion across the fertile lands of the Near East and South Asia. Movements of people by definition involve the exchange of ideas, economic systems, social usage, political institutions, and artistic traditions. The spread of Islam subsumed all these things. It may be an exaggeration for lack of definite proof to state that the commerce of the Indian Ocean in the westward direction had entered a period of relative contraction during the later Roman Empire with the weakening of a Mediterranean "world economy." It is certainly true that the Arab conquests and rapid demographic diffusion and the political integration of Egypt, Syria, Iran, and North Africa created an enormously powerful zone of economic consumption. It was an expanding area that drew its commercial and fiscal strength from refashioning in the West the Mediterranean economy of antiquity and from harnessing the productive resources of the lands around the Indian Ocean in the East. Arab economic success in the early caliphate period was achieved with the aid of the skills possessed by the people of the ancient Near East. But the growth of great urban centers, a universal feature of Islam, and the new capital cities gave rise to an expanding demand for commodities of all kinds and for precious objects. This in turn quickened the pace of long-distance trade. The revival of the sea and caravan routes across the famous international boundary lines, known to merchants since Hellenistic times, owed much to the ability of the Islamic rulers to protect their property and persons against violence. The laws of commercial contracts and the principles of juridical rights, which evolved in the centuries following the foundation of Islam, took into account a cardinal fact of pre-modern trade. Merchants who traveled by land and sea into the realms of foreign princes were prone to take their business elsewhere without the guarantee of a certain amount of commercial freedom secured by reciprocal political rights and obligations.

In popular imagination, Islam was a religion of the desert which arose in the oasis towns of Syria, Iraq, and Egypt in the seventh century AD. Of course, neither Mecca nor Medina, the twin cities of the Prophet Muhammad, really belonged to the desert or the bedouin nomadic way of life. The Umayyad military victories in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Iran within a decade of Muhammad's death in 632 produced immediate and tangible results, the most notable of which was the consolidation of the two transcontinental trade routes through the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. The economic foundation of the Muslim world system created by the Umayyads and the Abbasids in the first century of Islam rested on three factors: settled agriculture, urbanization, and long-distance trade. Nomadism and its economy had provided the backdrop to the early Arab expansion and they were not entirely marginalized in the development of urbanized Islam. The bedouin of Arabia did not give up their nomadic way of life; the desert and the camel continued to signify certain aspects of Islam and certainly to signify the context of its movements. Anyone who contemplates the magnificent mihrab of the Great Mosque in Cordoba built in the eight century, with

its pure Arab geometry, must be aware that the historical roots of the Islamic world were already strong by the Umayyad and Abbasid periods. But those political leaders and their Arab followers who did migrate to the old and new towns to adopt an urban life soon revived the economic unity of the ancient world, which had been lost with the decline of Rome and Persia."

Source: K. N. Chaudhuri, "The Economy in Muslim Societies," in F. Robinson, ed., *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the Islamic World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 124.

The Great Mosque of Cordoba (Mezquita), Spain




Excerpt from Andrew Watson, *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 91–94.

> The early centuries of Islam saw the creation of a medium for diffusion of great efficiency: it was peculiarly receptive to novelties and favored their transmission. . . . The creation of this medium began with the Muslim conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries which united—or began to unite—a large part of the known world, bringing the conquered territories for a time under one rule, and more durably under one language, one religion and one legal system. Although Muhammad's State was a very loose alliance depending on allegiance to the Prophet, and although centrifugal forces at all times worked against centralizing tendencies, the relatively strong State which emerged under the Umayyads and the early Abbasids was an umbrella under which other kinds of unification took place. Gradually, Arabic displaced indigenous tongues as the language of administration, of higher culture and—to varying degrees—of common speech. In time, more and more of the conquered peoples were converted to the religion of the Prophet, so that although non-believers were at first very numerous and religious minorities remained important throughout the period of classical Islam, the State came to be an Islamic state and the people it governed came to be predominantly Muslim. The apparatus of the State was the means for other kinds of unification: of law, of coinage and of weights and measures.

It also forged, when it did not inherit them, links of communication—roads, caravan routes, ports, postal and courier services, and a far-reaching network of smoke and flame signals—which drew still more closely together the far-flung territories of the caliphates. . . . Within the area of Arab dominion, and to some extent beyond, there was much movement of men, of goods, of technology, of information and of ideas. Ibn Khaldun wrote of the Arabs that "all their customary activities lead to travel and movement," and so it was to become not only for those of Arabic stock but also for the conquered peoples. The very conquest and settlement of new areas often led to important displacements of peoples. When an area was overrun by Arabs and their allies, the conquering soldiers—mostly from distant places—were often encouraged to settle in the conquered lands. Another wave of migrations occurred when the Jews of formerly Byzantine, Sasanian and Visigothic territories, many of whom had collaborated with the invading armies, began to spread out through the early Islamic world. Further movements followed the conquests with the flight of some conquered peoples, their forcible displacement and the long-distance trade in captured slaves. . . . To the movement of peoples initiated by the conquests and their aftermath were soon added other kinds of displacement. The pilgrimages that Muslims made in great numbers, and especially the pilgrimage to Mecca, brought together people from the far corners of the earth and thus were a vehicle of prime importance for cultural transmission. . . . Many pilgrims took advantage of their displacement to indulge in further travel: to carry out business, to visit relatives, to study in foreign centers of learning and just to see sights. Trade by professional merchants also led to much movement. Very soon after the rise of Islam, Muslim and Jewish merchants were penetrating to the outer limits of the caliphate. By the middle of the eighth century they had reached far beyond these bounds and established counters in India, China and East Africa. Hand in hand with trade went missionary activity, as holy men followed in the footsteps of merchants to preach to isolated Muslim communities abroad and to convert the heathen. Thus both trade and religion linked distant outposts into a network which spanned the continents. . . . But perhaps any attempt to explain, or even to describe, the widespread movement of people across the early Islamic world is doomed to fail. All through the literary sources from the medieval Islamic world are found accounts that suggest an almost incomprehensible amount of coming and going across huge stretches of land and water. Every class of people, it seems, was prone to this restlessness; all traveled: the rich and the poor, the scholar and the illiterate, the holy and the not so holy. Poverty was no obstacle, as one could move by foot, begging along the way; relatives could be imposed upon endlessly; patrons were readily found for scholars or holy men, or those who posed as such; a place to bunk, and perhaps to eat, was available outside the main mosque in most cities. Lured on in search of money, adventure or truth, Muslims from every region and of every station left home and roamed to and fro over the continents, taking with them knowledge of the farming techniques, plant life and cookery of their homelands and seeing on their way the agricultural practices, plants and foods of new lands. In their travels the early Muslims were on the lookout for whatever could be learned or bought.

# *Islam and Urbanization*

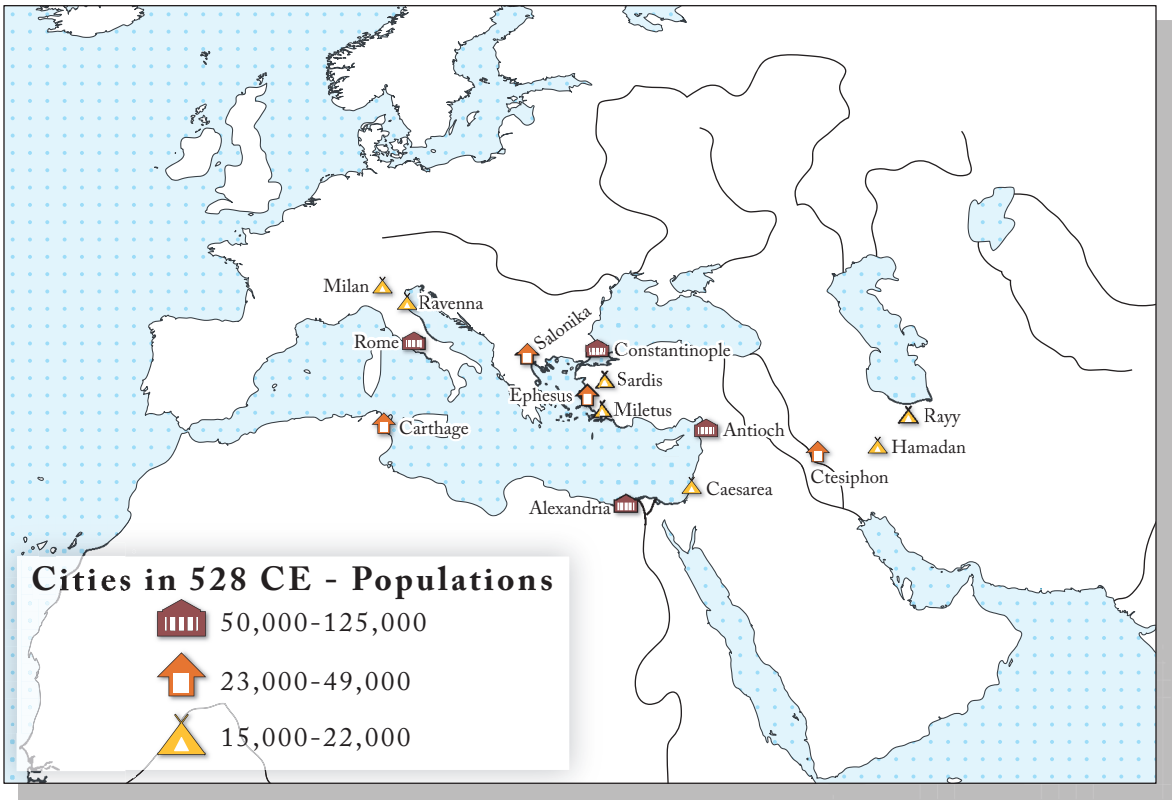
Compare the maps in this handout locating and listing those cities that

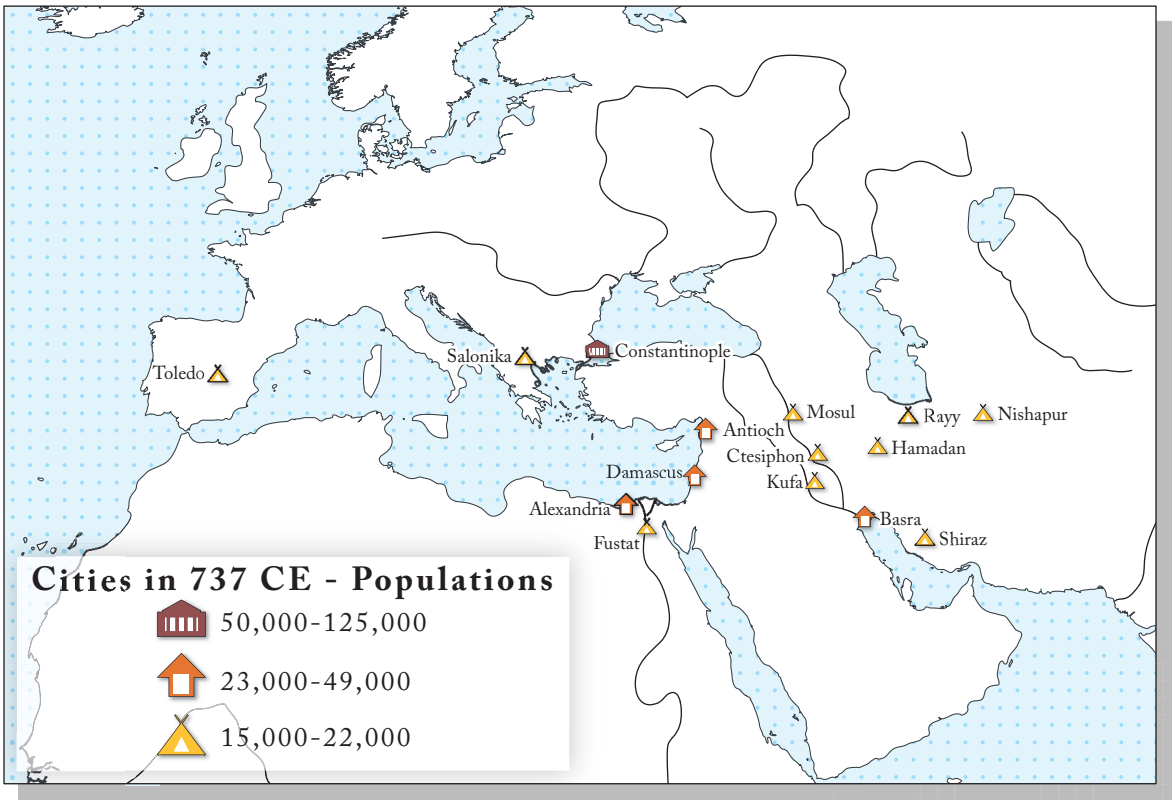
a. existed before the expansion of territory under Muslim rule.

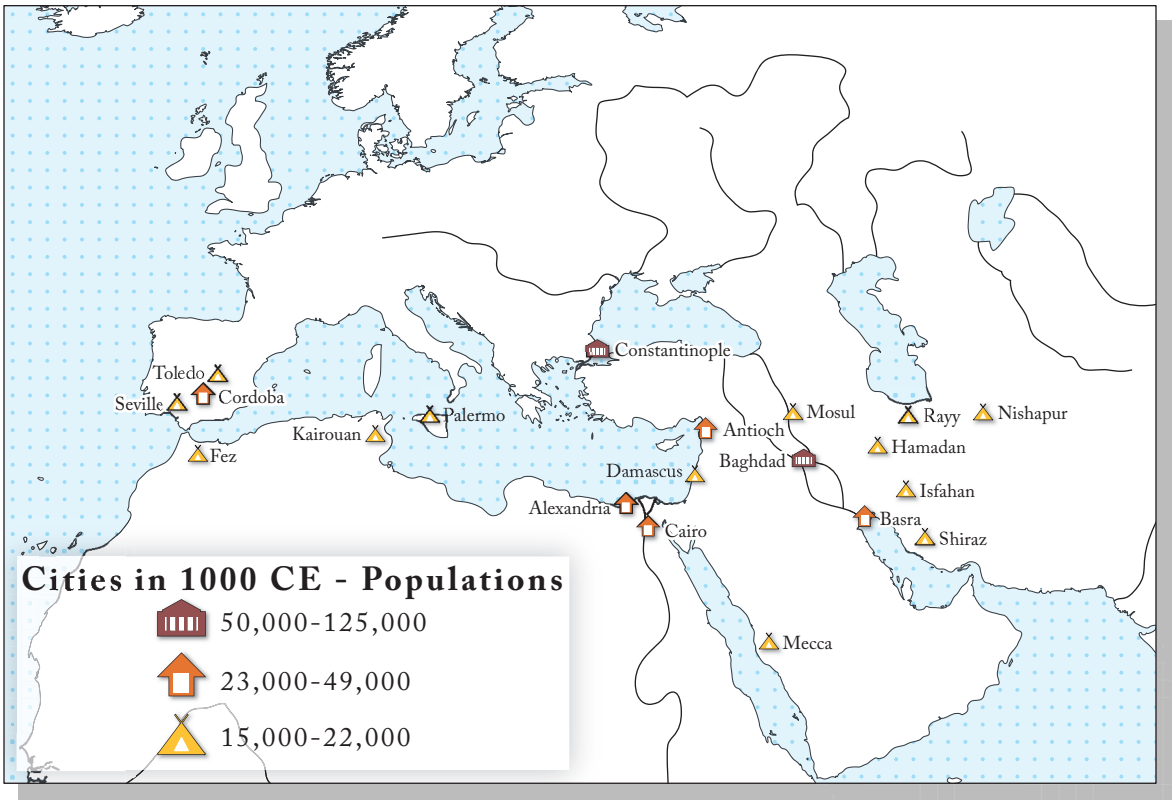
b. experienced continuity from the earliest map to the last.

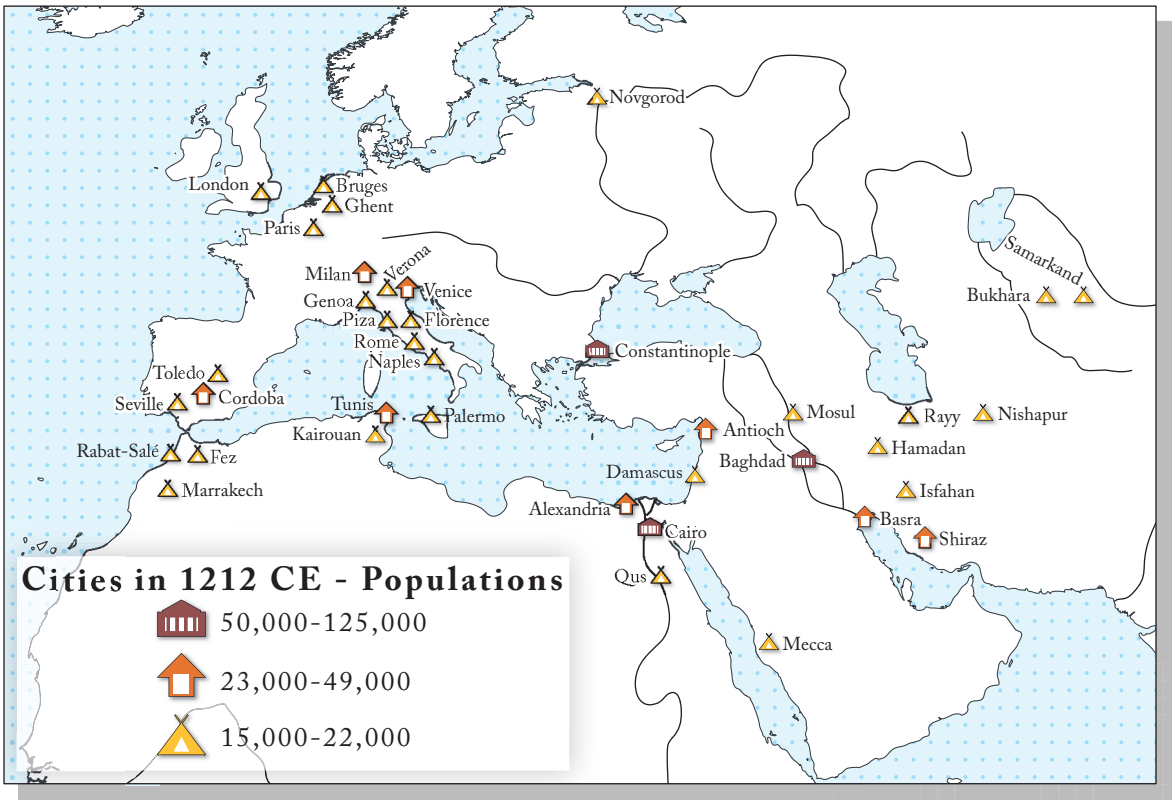
c. appeared in the period between each pair of maps.

d. appeared outside of territory under Muslim rule, or which were in territory no longer under Muslim rule at the time shown on the map. What conclusions can you draw about the causes and effects of urbanization in the Mediterranean region between 528 and 1000 CE?





LESSON 4

# Why Did Muslim Merchants Know the Rules of the Road and the Laws of the Sea?

## *Objective*

Students will be able to

- demonstrate how Muslims contributed to creating an interconnected trade network in Afroeurasia before 1500.

## *Procedure*

World trade networks seem a recent phenomenon to many people, including current secondary school students. Interconnected long-distance trade networks, however, existed before 1500. This lesson helps students discover how the spread of Islam in many merchant communities created connections between trade networks.

Most students best remember significant events or processes in history through stories. World history has many stories but no overarching narrative similar to what can be found in national histories. One narrative that teachers can point to is the effect of the spread of religions in the premodern period. Students will learn from this lesson that the spread of Islam in many merchant communities and the creation of the caliphates created growing connections between trade networks from West Africa to southern China.

1. The skits that students create in this lesson will help them develop a narrative about the advantages Muslim merchants had in the interconnected trade networks in the Eastern Hemisphere before 1500.
    - Students make a list of where their clothing, shoes, and accessories were manufactured.
    - Students mark the origin of the clothing on a world map.
    - Students draw lines from the manufacturing centers to where they bought the items.
    - Students discuss the extent of the interconnected trade network today.
    - **Extension**: Students compare import and export data for several nations. What are governments' attitudes toward import and export data? Which governments tax imports? Which governments tax exports? Why?
2. Students predict where they think Muslim merchants would have been most successful in the Eastern Hemisphere. Students should consult their world history textbook if they have one. It should have at least one map showing where Muslim governments existed and where trade routes existed before 1500.

3. Students use the following primary and secondary sources to create a skit showing at least three factors that made long-distance trade easier for Muslims: language, religion, and government protection. The skits must be placed in a specific time and place during the period 1200 to 1500 CE. Students must use at least three props in their skits. Possible examples are a toy camel, a lateen sail (or picture of one), or a trade good like incense, silk, or fur.

    a. Example: In 1200, a Muslim father decides to write a book for his young son, giving him advice on how to trade in the Indian Ocean region. The book is added to by members of each generation. They comment on the continuities and changes in the trade networks: goods traded, government support, increase in the number of merchants who converted to Islam, and transportation technology. The skit could show how each contributor asks other members of his family, his business partners, or even the audience for help in writing his part of the book.

    b. Students can use the primary and secondary sources in the student handouts to prepare their skits. Teachers might choose to remove the headings from the sources to help students work on categorization skills. As an additional step before creating and performing the skits, students might organize and label the sources based on geography, dates, and the potential advantages Muslim merchants have.

4. Coins and currency: Ask students to generate a list of elements found in paper and coin money in the world today. They should mention:

    - the currency amount
    - name of the government issuing/minting the currency
    - date of issue or minting
    - symbols related to the government and culture

    a. Tell students that the American dollar is recognized and used outside of the United States even if the people using it do not read English. Have students discuss the advantages to merchants and tax collectors when currency looks familiar. Use the website Early Islamic Coins by James N. Roberts (http://users.rcn.com/j-roberts) to find images of all of the coins listed below. Students may use copies of images of currency from 1000–1250 that show Arabic writing on them (minted by Muslim and Christian rulers):

        - Almoravids (Spain) and Fatimids (Egypt)
        - Delhi Sultanate (India)
        - Bela III of Hungary (1173–1196)
        - Seljuqs of Rum (Turkey)

- Rasulids of Yemen
- Khwarizmshahs (Iran/Afghanistan)
- Saffarids of Seistan (Iran)
- Ildegizids of Azerbaijan
- Normans of Sicily

b. Students use the above list to mark on a map of Afroeurasia the location of the places where the coins were minted.

5. **Discussion Questions**: Why did coins issued by Muslim rulers during most of the period from 1000 to 1250 only have Arabic writing on them (religious prohibition against images of people)?

   - What advantage might readers of Arabic have in the trading zone encompassed by the coins?
   - What kind of conclusions can you draw about the extent of Muslim rulers' influence on trade?

# *Evidence of Factors that Eased Trade in the Muslim World*

## *Arabic as a language common to many Muslims made trade easier.*

- The first reliable evidence of Islam as an active force in Southeast Asia comes from the Venetian merchant Marco Polo. Landing in northern Sumatra on his way back to Europe from China in 1292, he discovered Perlak, an Islamic town surrounded by non-Islamic neighbors. An inscription from a tombstone dated 1297 reveals that the first ruler of Samudra, another Sumatran state, was a Muslim. The Moroccan Muslim Muhammad ibn- 'Abdullah ibn-Battuta visited the same town in 1345–1346 and wrote about his experiences with the Muslim ruler there. By the late fourteenth century, inscriptions in Sumatra were written with Arabic letters rather than older indigenous or Indian-based scripts.
- The collection of documents from the Cairo Geniza (traditional Jewish archives) shows that Jewish merchants of the ninth to eleventh centuries prized command of Arabic to aid them in long-distance trade. Contracts and business partnerships between Jews and Muslims or Christians were common.

## *Muslims spread transportation technology.*

- Camel: Arab and Muslim conquerors of North Africa brought the one-humped camel and the efficient North Arabian saddle to expand trans-Saharan trade. The camel made it possible for people from the southern Sahara to establish contacts with the people of the northern Sahara.
- Dhow: Lateen (triangular-shaped) sail on boat of sewn (not nailed) hull used extensively by Arab/Muslim sailors throughout the Indian Ocean region.
- Cartography: Knowledge of the monsoon wind patterns and mapmaking recorded in books supported by Islamic governments (mostly the caliphates).

## *The hajj, the annual Muslim religious pilgrimage to Mecca, affected trade positively.*

- Ibn Jubayr was a Muslim from Spain who made the hajj in 1184 CE.
- From all parts produce is brought to it, and it is the most prosperous of countries in its fruits, useful requisites, commodities, and commerce. And although there is no commerce save in the pilgrim period, nevertheless, since people gather in it from east and west, there will be sold in one day, apart from those that follow, precious objects such as pearls, sapphires, and other stones, various kinds of perfume such as musk, camphor, amber and aloes, Indian drugs and other articles brought from India and Ethiopia, the products of the industries of 'Iraq and the Yemen, as well as the merchandise of Khurasan, the goods of the Maghrib, and other wares such as it is impossible to enumerate or correctly assess. Even if they were

spread over all lands, brisk markets could be set up with them and all would be filled with the useful effects of commerce. All this is within the eight days that follow the pilgrimage, and exclusive of what might suddenly arrive throughout the year from the Yemen and other countries. Not on the face of the world are there any goods or products but that some of them are in Mecca at this meeting of the pilgrims. This blessing is clear to all, and one of the miracles that God has worked in particular for this city.

Source: Excerpt from *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, trans. R. J. C. Broadhurst (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952), 105–121.



## *Muslims, Jews, Christians, Hindus, and adherents of other belief systems cooperated in trade together.*

- The *Geographical Encyclopedia* of Yaqut al-Hamawi (1179–1229) included a section about Baghdad under the Abbasids, c. 1000 CE:

  > The long wide estrades [platforms] at the different gates of the city were used by the citizens for gossip and recreation or for watching the flow of travelers and country folk into the capital. The different nationalities in the capital had each a head officer to represent their interests with the government, and to whom the stranger could appeal for counsel or hel

- An early fourteenth-century traveler described Cambay, the major port of Gujarat in the Indian subcontinent, as having beautiful houses and mosques. The majority of its inhabitants were foreign merchants.

- In 1442, a Persian Muslim diplomat, described Calicut (a port city on the west Indian coast) as a place where there were no restrictions on foreign merchants bringing goods from throughout the Indian Ocean trade network. Arab-speaking captains and merchants were treated the same as Hindu merchants by the Hindu ruler of Calicut.

- Al-Hassan ibn-Muhammad al-Wazzan al-Fasi, better known as Leo Africanus, was probably born in the 1460s in Granada, the last Muslim state in Spain, but he was raised in Fez in Morocco. Educated in Islamic law, he entered the service of the sultan of Fez, who sent him on commercial and diplomatic missions across sub-Saharan West Africa. During one such mission, he was captured by Christian pirates and brought to Rome in 1518, where Pope Leo X persuaded him to accept Christianity. In 1526, while in Rome, he completed in Italian his *History and Description of Africa*, probably based on an earlier version he had written in Arabic. About Mali, he wrote:

  > Here are many craftsmen and merchants in all places: and yet the king honorably entertains all strangers. The inhabitants are rich and have plenty of merchandise. Here is a great number of temples, clergymen, and teachers, who read their lectures in the mosques because they have no colleges at all.

The people of the region excel all other Negroes in wit, civility, and industry, and were the first that embraced the law of Muhammad. . . ." About Timbuktu, he wrote: "All its houses are . . . cottages, built of mud and covered with thatch. However, there is a most stately mosque to be seen, whose walls are made of stone and lime, and a princely palace also constructed by the highly skilled craftsmen of Granada. Here there are many shops of artisans and merchants, especially of those who weave linen and cotton, and here Barbary merchants bring European cloth. The inhabitants, and especially resident aliens, are exceedingly rich, since the present king married both of his daughters to rich merchants.

## *Coins produced by governments and having Arabic texts and standard shapes made trade easier.*

- In AD 698 the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik (685–705) radically changed the way coins looked. All pictorial designs were removed and replaced with inscriptions to meet the Muslim prohibition against graven images. His coins gave pride of place to a version of the *kalima*, or declaration of faith ("There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah"), which was written across the obverse. The inscriptions also include the date, mint, and name of the ruler. This coin style became the standard for almost all coins produced by Muslim rulers throughout the Eastern Hemisphere.
- In the Red Sea port of Aqaba, archaeologists found at the eleventh century street levels a cloth sack full of gold coins, thirty-two dinars, possibly left by a *hajj* pilgrim trying to escape an attack on the city. Three of the coins appear to have been minted in North Africa. Others were gold coins probably minted at Sijilmasa, a Moroccan town on the northern edge of the Sahara.

## *Five Pillars of Islam: Hospitality to travelers and annual hajj created regular routes.*

- A Muslim interpreter who went on several of the Ming voyages led by the Chinese Muslim admiral, Cheng He, noticed that the Muslim king of Malacca improved trade by building a bridge over a stream near the royal palace and constructing twenty booths for sale of all kinds of goods.

Source: Harry J. Benda and John A. Larkin, *The World of Southeast Asia: Selected Historical Readings* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 14–15.

- Between 1328 and 1330, Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan Muslim legal scholar and judge (*qadi*) traveled to Mogadishu, a very large East African port city dependent on trade. He wrote in his travel memoir a description of trade in Mogadishu:

  > When a boat comes in the harbor, young men sail their small dhows out to the larger trade ships and offer fresh food on platters. The Mogadishu men invite the foreign merchants to their homes and arrange to sell their imported goods. They also take charge of buying local goods for the foreign merchants to take with them.

- In the 1330s, Ibn Battuta observed the sultan in Kilwa in on the East African coast. On the Sultan Abu al-Muzaffar Hasan:

  > A man of great humility, he sits with poor brethren, and eats with them, and greatly respects men of religion and noble descent. He used to devote the fifth part of the booty made on his expeditions to pious and charitable purposes, as is prescribed in the Koran, and I have seen him give the clothes off his back to a poor religious homeless man who asked him for them.

- On the Sultan Abu Muhammad of Oman on the Arabian Peninsula, Ibn Battuta wrote:

  > Its inhabitants make a habit of eating meals in the courts of the mosques, every person bringing what he has, and all sitting down to he meal together, and travelers join in with them.

- On the Muslim ruler of Mali in Sudanic West Africa, Ibn Battuta had this to say:

  > I stood before the sultan and said to him, 'I have indeed traveled in the lands of the world. I have met their kings. I have been in your country four months and you have given me no hospitality and not given me anything. What shall I say about you before the Sultans?
  >
  > Then the Sultan ordered a house for me in which I stayed and he fixed an allowance for me . . . He was gracious to me at my departure, to the extent of giving me one hundred mitqals of gold.

## *Muslim government protected trade and property for merchants.*

- In his eleventh-century work *A Guide to the Merits of Commerce* Abu al-Fadl Ja'far bin 'Ali ad-Dimashqi wrote about Damascus:

  > There are three kinds of merchants: he who travels, he who stocks, he who exports. Their trade is carried out in three ways: cash sale with a time limit for delivery, purchase on credit with payments by installment, and *muqaradah* (in Islamic law a contract in which one individual entrusts capital to a merchant for investment in trade in order to receive a share of the profits). The investor bears all of the financial risks; the managing party risks his labor.

- *The Book of Routes and Kingdoms* by the eleventh-century Andalusian geographer Abu Ubayd al-Bakri writes on the West African kingdom of Ghana:

  > The city of Ghana consists of two towns situated on a plain. One of these towns, which is inhabited by Muslims, is large and possesses twelve mosques in one of which they assemble for the Friday prayer. There are salaried imams and muezzins, as well as jurists and scholars. The king's town is six miles distant from this one. . . . The king has a palace and a number of domed dwellings all surrounded with an enclosure like a city wall. Around the king's town are domed buildings and groves and thickets where the sorcerers of these people, men in charge of the religious cult, live. In them too are their idols and the tombs of their kings.

- Malacca, 1400–1511 CE:

  > The sultans of Malacca appointed a multilingual harbor captain with a large staff who met every ship coming from China, India, Persia, the Arabian peninsula, East Africa, or other parts of Southeast Asia. As with all trade cities, Malacca provided "guarded storehouses where goods from the interior and abroad could be stored until traders arrived. The Malaccan Muslim rulers also made alliances with outlying tribes and ports and a regional 'navy' that policed the local waters and escorted friendly vessels.

CHAPTER 3

*By Sharon Cohen and Susan Douglass*

# Consolidation of Trans-Hemispheric Networks


## WHY STUDY TRANS-HEMISPHERIC NETWORKS?

World history textbooks for middle and high schools generally lack much discussion of long-distance trade, or an overview of trade routes in the Eastern Hemisphere before the fifteenth century. Instead, trade is described as an aspect of lessons on regional civilizations, especially in chapters about the rise of towns and trade in Europe during the High Middle Ages. Students learn about the importance of European merchant classes, but the extensive merchant activity across Afroeurasia is often neglected. Textbooks from the collegiate market used for Advanced Placement World History all include hemispheric trade but few primary source selections.

This chapter provides both an overview and a close-up picture of locations, goods, and participants in trade in Afroeurasia. It allows students to compare primary source accounts of trade goods, merchants, types of markets, and effects of trade with more general secondary source information on trading societies. It also guides students in linking their understanding of how particular regions fit into the networks of Afroeurasia as a whole. Students practice differentiating among various types of historical sources and moving from one geographic and historical scale to another, that is, from local to regional to hemispheric.

This chapter is centered on the period from 1000 to 1250 CE but encompasses related developments in the preceding and subsequent centuries.

## OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Describe the impact of trade on selected societies in Africa, Asia, and Europe during the period from 800 to 1500 CE and describe how regional trade relates to long-distance trade across Afroeurasia.
- Compare primary source accounts of trade goods, customs, and socioeconomic effects of trade with secondary sources on trading societies.
- Analyze the connection between specific marketplaces and the trading zones of Afroeurasia as a whole.
- Analyze how selected technologies, ideas, and goods were disseminated among various regions of Afroeurasia.

## TIME AND MATERIALS

These three lessons take three to six class periods to complete. The only materials required are the student handouts.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

During the Big Era from 300 to 1500 CE, great change occurred across Afroeurasia. Large states such as the Roman Empire and the Chinese Han Dynasty collapsed. Large, multiethnic states formed and reformed, such as the Arab Empire and the Mongol Empire. Throughout the period, invasions, migrations, and empire-building strengthened and extended contacts among people in different parts of Afroeurasia. This stimulated the exchange of goods and ideas over long distances. By the end of Big Era Five an interconnected system of commercial and cultural interchange extended across much of Afroeurasia. This network, though moving at the pace of pack animals and sailing ships, animated a wide variety of economic, intellectual, religious, and technological exchanges.

Independent, profit-seeking merchants traded in many commodities, stimulated economic growth and technological innovation, and enriched the treasuries of rulers. Trade, the spread of religions, and continuing urbanization also stimulated the exchange of scientific and artistic ideas. The spread of food and fiber crops enhanced agriculture and contributed to trade. In the period of remarkable economic growth in Afroeurasia between 1000 and 1500 CE, China and India were the biggest manufacturing centers. The Muslim lands of Southwest Asia served as the turnstile of the hemisphere. Its cities generated finished goods and trans-shipped wares in huge quantities from one part of the hemisphere to the other. Europe emerged as a new center of growth, urbanization, and commerce as its connections to the hemispheric networks intensified.

## THREE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

### *Humans and the Environment*

How did humans overcome the difficulties of transporting goods and people across long distances? How did they intensify the use of resources such as pack and food animals, agriculture, and mineral resources in order to achieve economic and population growth?

### *Humans and Other Humans*

How did the formation of large empires, human migrations, and the spread of religions increase contacts among far-flung groups of people?

### *Humans and Ideas*

How did the growth of empires and the spread of religions such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam during this era facilitate trade and the exchange of scientific knowledge, technologies, and the arts?

## KEY THEMES

This chapter addresses the following history key themes:

**Key Theme 2:** Economic Networks and Exchange

**Key Theme 6:** Science, Technology, and the Environment.

## CORRELATIONS TO NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

**National Standards for History**

Era Five: Intensified Hemispheric Interactions, Standard 1: The maturing of an interregional system of communication, trade, and cultural exchange in an era of Chinese economic power and Islamic expansion. Standard 7: Major global trends from 1000–1500.

## INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

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LESSON 1

# Local Markets, Regional Trade, and Trans-Hemispheric Networks

## *Procedure*

**Class period 1**

1. Prepare handouts containing excerpts from travel accounts written between the eighth and fourteenth centuries CE. These primary sources contain information on marketplaces, products, and customs associated with commerce. They allow students to infer ways in which trade affects local ways of life, architecture, and organization of cities, markets, and regions.

2. In the first round, give each student or pair of students two different excerpts. Allow 10 minutes for reading each excerpt, then open discussion about the nature of the primary source documents they have just studied.

3. Allowing 10–15 minutes, have the students write on a half sheet of paper the place name and traveler, then a list of each item of trade and mode of transportation mentioned, any customs related to trade, and any facilities specifically used for trade. Read over the selection briefly and write down any observations the traveler has made that indicate how trade affects the place in general. This might include evidence of wealth, high standards of living, or patronage of learning. The same exercise can be carried out with visual clues provided in Student Handout 3.1.7. After 15 minutes, rotate two more excerpts to each student or pair of students and repeat the exercise, doing enough rounds to cover all of the primary source excerpts.

4. In a large-group discussion, compare the places described in the excerpts according to how large or small they seem, where they are in relation to cities, whether they are a seat of government, what relationship they have to pastoral-herding peoples, and other geographical factors. The activity ends with a discussion of the reliability of the documents and their usefulness in discovering significant patterns in history.

**Class period 2**

1. Using classroom world history textbooks (two well-known texts are suggested below), read about the impact of trade on specific regions (West and East Africa, China, Inner Eurasia, Europe, and Russia). Have students work in groups, picking out only the information in the books that deals with the social and cultural impact of trade on a particular region. Each small group should work on one region. Have students make lists of the impact of trade on the economy, politics, and culture of the region.

Examples of textbook material:

*World History: Continuity and Change* (Holt, Reinhart, Winston). China, 304–308 and 323–324; Russia, 237–239; Muslim regions, 262–263; West and East Africa, 186–188, 190, and 354–356; Western Europe, 294–297.

*World History: Connections to Today* (Prentice Hall). China, 309–311 and 316–318; Russia and Eastern Europe, 245–246 and 249–250; Muslim regions, 266–268; West and East Africa 289–292 and 294–297; Western Europe, 201–205.

2. Each group will prepare a brief presentation using images or other means to illustrate and summarize the impact of trade on each of the regions chosen.

3. Construct a graphic organizer on the blackboard that compares the shared aspects of trade in the regions studied. Categories may include economic, political, religious, and military effects of trade, as well as specific products (some will be duplicates) and transfers of ideas or technologies.

4. As a wrap-up, compare the kinds of information found in the textbook accounts with that in the travel accounts in Student Handouts 3.1.1–3.1.6. Explore evidence in both the primary and secondary sources that trade acts as a cultural homogenizing factor among societies, as it often does today. Also consider how people have assimilated, modified, or transformed what arrives at their doorstep.

**Class period 3**

1. Using Student Handout 3.1.9, have students locate the territory occupied by specific societies studied during in the textbook readings in class period 2. Students should shade the map with different colors and make a key to label their work. They do not need to pay too much attention to the specific boundaries that existed during particular time periods.

2. Locate the cities or places represented in the primary source readings from class period 1. Label them with colored dots. Identify on the map major cities or places mentioned in the textbook readings from class period 2.

3. Discuss which of the societies studied in the first two parts of the lesson were directly connected by trade routes and which may have had only remote and indirect connections to other centers. Building on these inferences, develop with students the idea of trading zones that were linked in various ways. Examples are the Indian Ocean rim, the Mediterranean rim, and the trans-Eurasian silk routes.

4. Use a variety of atlas maps (climate, vegetation, topography) to discuss the obstacles to travel along the various trade routes and make inferences about the various types of transportation used. This activity may be extended to include specifics, such as types of animals, ships, and wheeled vehicles used during specific historical periods.

5. Using Student Handout 3.1.8, have students locate the places listed on the merchant's catalog of products that reached Baghdad during the ninth century. Discuss what

products came from each region, and categorize them as livestock, raw materials, manufactured goods, human resources, luxury goods, or everyday commodities. Discuss how these products relate to the natural environment of the regions from which they originated.

6. Using Student Handout 3.1.10, read the introductory material on the nature of trade and transport on hemispheric routes during Big Era Five. Have students match the names of each type of transportation to the icons on the student handout. Then match each form of transportation shown in the drawings to the routes indicated on Student Handout 3.1.9. Both activities may require some additional research in encyclopedias or other sources. As a project the class may make a bulletin board trade-route map and post on it icons for types of transportation and goods from the Merchant's List.

## *Assessments*

1. Using a blank map of the Eastern Hemisphere, draw some major trade routes from memory.
2. Have students identify three major trading zones or regional trade patterns on a map and show how they were linked by routes, ports, or known travelers.
3. Identify trade goods and their origins.
4. Assign an essay question on comparing the nature and impact of trade in two or three of the regions chosen for study.

# *From Ibn Fadlan: Observations on the Vikings and Russians (Tenth Century)*

In the year 921 CE, Ibn Fadlan set out with a party on a journey from Baghdad to the north as ambassadors of the Abbasid Caliph (Khalifa) al-Muqtadir (908–932 CE) to the King of the Slavs, in the cold, forested land of long rivers that is now northern Russia. The Caliph had received a letter from that king, asking him to send someone who could teach them about Islam, along with funds to help build a *masjid* (mosque). The head of the expedition was Nadir al-Harami, a scholar. Ibn Fadlan was to be the secretary. What brought these groups, who lived about 1,500 miles apart, in contact was the network of trade routes that ran from the northern forests and arctic seacoasts down the great Dneiper and Volga rivers to the Black and Caspian Seas. Along these routes, Viking ships carried amber, furs, honey, and handicrafts, trading these goods for textiles, pottery, spices, metal, and glassware from Muslim and Byzantine lands. Owing to this trade, many Arabic coins have been found in archaeological sites in Scandinavia. Vikings traded and settled in these lands. They and their descendants intermarried with Slavic- and Turkic- speaking communities, producing the population that became known as the Rus (from which we get the word Russia). The knowledge that Ibn Fadlan gathered during his journey sheds light on those lands. Aside from his text, most of what we know about Rus society in the tenth century comes from graves or other archaeological finds.

> I saw the Rus as they arrived with their wares and camped on the banks of the River Itil [the Volga]. I had never seen people of such tall stature—they are as tall as palm trees, blond, and ruddy of complexion. They do not wear shirts or caftans[robes]. Their custom is to wear a length of coarse cloth that they wrap around their sides and throw over the shoulder so that one arm remains bare. Each of them carries with him an ax, a dagger and a sword. They are never seen without these weapons. Their swords are broad with wavy stripes on the blade, and of Frankish [European] manufacture. On one side, from the point to the handle, it is covered with figures and trees and other decorations. The women fasten to their bodice a locket of iron, copper, silver or gold, according to the wealth and position of her husband. On the locket is a ring, and on that is a knife, also fastened to the front of their bodice. They wear silver and gold chains around their necks. If the man possesses ten thousand dirhams [silver coins], he has a chain made for his wife; and if he has twenty thousand, she gets two necklaces; and so she receives one more each time he becomes ten thousand richer. In this way the Rus woman acquires a great number of necklaces. Their most valued jewelry consists of green glass beads like the kind found on the ships. They exaggerate in this, paying a dirham for one such bead and stringing them into necklaces for their women. . . .
>
> They come out of their country, anchor their ships in the Itil, which is a great river, and build great wooden houses on its banks. Ten or twenty, more or less, live in such a house together. Each of them has a bed or bench on which he and his women sit, as well as the beauties determined for sale. . . .
>
> As soon as their ships arrive at anchorage, each of them goes on land with his bread, meat, onions, milk and intoxicating drink with him, and betakes himself to a high, upright wooden post carved with the face of a human and surrounded by small statues, behind

which other posts are standing. He goes up to the highest of the wooden figures, throws himself prostrate on the ground in front of it and speaks: 'O my Lord! I am come from a faraway land, and bring with me so-and-so many maids, and of sable furs so-and-so many skins'; and when he has named in this way all of the trade goods he brought with him, he continues: 'I have brought you this offering'; and lays down at the feet of the wooden statue what he has brought and says: 'I wish that you bless me with a buyer who has plenty of gold and silver pieces, who buys all that I desire him to buy, and meets all of my demands.' Having said this, he then goes away. If his trade goes poorly and his stay drags on too long, then he returns bringing a second, and sometimes a third offering [to the statue]. If he still experiences difficulty in fulfilling his wishes [or getting what he wants], then he brings each of the small statues an offering, and asks for intercession, saying: 'These are the sons and daughters of our Lord.' And so he continues, going up to each individual statue, pleading for intercession, bowing himself humbly before it. After that, perhaps his trade goes well and easily, and he sells all of the wares he has brought. . . .

Source: Excerpted from *Mujam al Buldan, or Compendium of Countries* (10th century CE), in *Beyond a Thousand and One Nights: A Sampler of Literature from Muslim Civilization* (Fountain Valley, CA: Council on Islamic Education), 147–148. Reprinted by permission.

# *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr (Twelfth Century)*

Ibn Jubayr was a scholar and resident of al-Andalus, or Muslim Spain, during the twelfth century CE. His journey was the result of an unfortunate incident at the court of the ruler. It seems that to make a joke, the ruler forced the pious Ibn Jubayr to taste an alcoholic beverage. Ibn Jubayr was so disturbed by this that the ruler regretted his actions. To make up for the outrage, he gave Ibn Jubayr a quantity of gold. The scholar in turn determined to atone for his sin of weakness by using the money to make the *hajj*, or pilgrimage to Mecca (Makkah). He did that and also made a tour of several other places around the Mediterranean. His travel account is especially interesting because he was an excellent observer of his times.

**Baghdad**

We now return to our description of Baghdad . . . As we have said, this city has two parts, an eastern and a western, and the Tigris passes between them. Its western part is wholly overcome by ruin. It was the first part to be populated, and the eastern part was but recently inhabited. Nevertheless, despite the ruins, it contains seventeen quarters, each quarter being a separate town. Each has two or three baths, and in eight of them is a congregational mosque where the Friday prayers are said. The largest of these quarters is al-Qurayah, where we lodged in a part called al-Murabba (the Square) on the banks of the Tigris and near to the bridge. This bridge had been carried away by the river in its flood, and the people had turned to crossing by boats. These boats were beyond count; the people, men and women, who night and day continuously cross in recreation are likewise numberless. Ordinarily, and because of the many people, the river had two bridges, one near the palaces of the Caliph, and the other above it. The crossings in the boats are now ceaseless.

Then (comes the quarter of) al-Karkh, a noted city, then that of Bab al-Basrah (the Basra Gate), which also is a suburb and has in it the mosque of al-Mansur—may God hold him in His favor. It is a large mosque, anciently built, and embellished. Next is (the quarter) al-Shari, also a city. These are the four largest quarters. Between the al-Shari and Bab al-Basrah quarters is the Suq al-Maristan (the Market of the Hospital), which itself is a small city and contains the famous Baghdad Hospital. It is on the Tigris, and every Monday and Thursday physicians visit it to examine the state of the sick, and to prescribe for them what they might need. At their disposal are persons who undertake the preparation of the foods and medicines. The hospital is a large palace, with chambers and closets and all the appurtenances of a royal dwelling. Water comes into it from the Tigris. It would take long to name the other quarters, like al-Wasitah, which lies between the Tigris and a canal which branches off the Euphrates and flows into the Tigris and on which is brought all the produce of the parts watered by the Euphrates. Another canal passes by Bab al-Basrah, whose quarter we have already mentioned, and flows as well into the Tigris. . .

Another quarter is that called al-Attabiyah, where are made the clothes from which it takes its name, they being of silk and cotton in various colors. Then comes al-Harbiyyah, which is the highest (on the river bank) and beyond which is nothing but the villages outside Baghdad. Other quarters there are that it would take too long to mention. . . .

The eastern part of the city has magnificent markets, is arranged on a grand scale and enfolds a population that none could count save God Most High, who computes all things. It has three congregational mosques, in all of which the Friday prayers are said. The Caliph's mosque, which adjoins the palace, is vast and has large water containers and many and excellent conveniences—conveniences, that is, for the ritual ablutions and cleansing. The Mosque of the Sultan is outside the city, and adjoins the palaces also named after the Sultan known as the Shah-in Shah. He had been the controller of the affairs of the ancestors of this Caliph and had lived there, and the mosque had been built in front of his residence. The (third) mosque, that of al-Rusafah, is in the eastern part, and between it and the mosque of the Sultan lies about a mile. In al-Rusafah is the sepulchre of the Abbasid Caliphs—may God's mercy rest upon their souls. The full number of congregational mosques in Baghdad, where Friday prayers are said, is eleven. . . .

The baths in the city cannot be counted, but one of the town's shaykhs told us that, in the eastern and western parts together, there are about two thousand. Most of them are faced with bitumen, so that the beholder might conceive them to be of black, polished marble; and almost all the baths of these parts are of this type because of the large amount of bitumen they have. . . . The (ordinary) mosques in both the eastern and the western parts cannot be estimated, much less counted. The colleges are about thirty, and all in the eastern part; and there is not one of them that does not out-do the finest palace. The greatest and most famous of them is the Nizamiyah, which was built by Nizam al-Mulk and restored in 504 [hijri, or Islamic dating system]. These colleges have large endowments and tied properties that give sustenance to the faqihs (legal scholars) who teach in them, and are dispensed on the scholars. A great honor and an everlasting glory to the land are these colleges and hospitals. God's mercy on him who first erected them, and on those who followed in that pious path.

**Aleppo**

As for the town, it is massively built and wonderfully disposed, and of rare beauty, with large markets arranged in long adjacent rows so that you pass from a row of shops of one craft into that of another until you have gone through all the urban industries. These markets are all roofed with wood, so that their occupants enjoy an ample shade, and all hold the gaze from their beauty, and halt in wonder those who are hurrying by. Its qaysariyah (market for luxury goods) is as a walled-in garden in its freshness and beauty, flanked, as it is, by the venerated mosque. He who sits in it yearns for no other sight even were it paradisical. Most of the shops are in wooden warehouses of excellent workmanship, a row being formed of one warehouse divided by wooden railings richly carved that all open on (separate) shops. The result is most beautiful. Each row is connected with one of the gates of the venerated mosque. This is one of the finest and most beautiful of mosques. Its great court is surrounded by large and spacious porticos that are full of doors, beautiful as those of a palace, that open on to the court. Their number is more than fifty, and they hold the gaze from their fine aspect. In the court there are two wells fed by springs. The south portico has no maqsurah (private space for the ruler), so that its amplitude is manifest and most pleasing to look upon. The art of ornamental carving had exhausted itself in its endeavors on the pulpit, for never in any city have I seen a pulpit like it or of such wondrous workmanship. The woodwork stretches from it to the mihrab (prayer niche), beautifully adorning all its sides in the same marvelous fashion. It rises up, like a great crown, over

the mihrab, and then climbs until it reaches the heights of the roof. The upper part of the mosque is in the form of an arch furnished with wooden merlons, superbly carved and all inlaid with ivory and ebony. This marquetry extends from the pulpit to the mihrab and to that part of the south wall which they adjoin without any interval appearing, and the eyes consider the most beautiful sight in the world. The splendor of this venerated mosque is greater than can be described. At its west side stands a Hanafite college which resembles the mosque in beauty and perfection of work. Indeed in beauty they are like one mausoleum beside another. This school is one of the most ornamental we have seen, both in construction and in its rare workmanship. One of the most graceful things we saw was the south side, filled with chambers and upper rooms, whose windows touched each other, and having, along its length, a pergola covered with grape-bearing vines. Each window had bunches of grapes that hung before it, and each occupant could, by leaning forward, stretch forth his arm and pluck the fruit without pain or trouble.

Besides this college the city has four or five others, and a hospital. Its state of splendor is superb, and it is a city fit to be the seat of the Caliph. But its magnificence is all within, and it has nothing on the outside save a small river that flows from north to south and passes through the suburb that surrounds the city; for it has a large suburb containing numerable khans. On this river there are mills contiguous with the town, and in the middle of the suburb are gardens that stretch along its length. But whatever may be its state, inside or out, Aleppo is one of the cities of the world that have no like, and that would take long to describe. We lodged in its suburb, in a khan [hotel] called the "Khan of Abu al-Shukr", where we stayed four days.

Source: Excerpted from *Beyond A Thousand and One Nights: A Sampler of Literature from Muslim Civilization* (Fountain Valley, CA: Council on Islamic Education), 160–163. Reprinted by permission.

# *From Marco Polo, The Travels (Thirteenth Century)*

Marco Polo was born in 1254 to a Venetian merchant family. In 1271, he joined his father for a journey to China, which his father had already visited once. The two spent the next twenty years on travels in the service of Kublai Khan, the Mongol ruler of China. They returned to Italy in 1292. Imprisoned in 1298, Marco met a romance writer named Rusticello, who helped Marco write an account of his travels to China.

> On the banks of a great river in the province of Cathay there stood an ancient city of great size and splendor which was named Khan-balik, that is to say in our language "the Lord's City" [Beijing].Now the Great Khan . . . had a new city built next to the old one, with only the river in between. And he removed the inhabitants of the old city and settled them in the new one . . .
>
> Taidu is built in the form of a square with all its sides of equal length and a total circumference of twenty-four miles. . . . The city is full of fine mansions, inns and dwelling-houses. All the way down the sides of every main street there are booths and shops of every sort. . . . In this city there is such a multitude of houses and of people, both within and without, that no one could count their number. Actually, there are more people outside the walls in the suburbs than in the city itself. There is a suburb outside every gate, such that one touches the neighboring suburbs on either side. They extend in length for three or four miles. And in every suburb or ward, at about a mile's distance from the city, there are many fine hostels which provide lodging for merchants coming from different parts; a particular hostel is assigned to every nation. . . . Merchants and others come here on business in great numbers, both because it is the Khan's residence and because it affords a profitable market. And the suburbs have as fine houses and mansions as the city, except of course for the Khan's palace. . . .
>
> You may take it for a fact that more precious and costly wares are imported into Khan-balik than into any other city in the world. Let me give you particulars. All the treasures that come from India—precious stones, pearls, and other rarities—are brought here. So too are the choicest products of Cathay itself and every other province. This is on account of the Great Khan himself, who lives here, and of the lords and ladies and the enormous multitude of hotel-keepers and other residents and of visitors who attend the courts held here by the Khan. That is why the volume and value of the imports and of the internal trade exceed those of any other city in the world. It is a fact that every day more than 1,000 cart-loads of silk is woven here. So it is not surprising that it is the center of such traffic as I have described. . . .
>
> It is in this city of Khan-balik that the Great Khan has his mint; and it is so organized that you might well say he has mastered the art of alchemy. I will demonstrate this to you here and now. You must know that he has money made for him by the following process, out of the bark of trees—to be precise, from mulberry trees (the same whose leaves furnish food for silk-worms). The fine bast between the bark and the wood of the tree is stripped off. Then it is crumbled and pounded and flattened out with the aid of glue into sheets of cotton paper, which are all black. When they are made, they are cut up into rectangles of various sizes, longer than they are broad. The smallest is worth half a small tornesel (a small coin]; the next an entire such tornesel; the next half a silver groat; the next an entire silver groat, equal in value to a silver groat of Venice; and there are others equivalent to two, five, and

ten groats and one, three, and as many as ten gold bezants. And all these papers are sealed with the seal of the Great Khan. The procedure of issue is as formal and authoritative as if they were made of pure gold or silver. On each piece of money several specially appointed officials write their names, each setting his own stamp. When it is completed in due form, the chief of the officials deputed by the Khan dips in cinnabar the seal or bull assigned to him and stamps it on the top of the piece of money so that the shape of the seal in vermillion remains impressed upon it. And then the money is authentic. And if anyone were to forge it, he would suffer the extreme penalty.

Of this money the Khan has such quantity made that with it he could buy all the treasure in the world. With this currency he orders all payments to be made throughout every province and kingdom and region of his empire. And no one dares refuse it on pain of losing his life. And I assure you that all the peoples and populations who are subject to his rule are perfectly willing to accept these papers in payment, since wherever they go they pay in the same currency, whether for goods of for pearls or precious stones or gold or silver. With these pieces of paper they can buy anything and pay for anything. And I can dell you that the papers that reckon as ten bezants do not weigh one.

Several times a year parties of traders arrive with pearls and precious stones and gold and silver and other valuables, such as cloth of gold and silk, and surrender them all to the Great Khan. The Khan then summons twelve experts, who are chosen for the task and have special knowledge of it, and bids them examine the wares that the traders have brought and pay for them what they judge to be their true value. The twelve experts duly examine the wares and pay the value in paper currency of which I have spoken. The traders accept it willingly because they can spend it afterwards on the various goods they buy throughout the Great Khan's dominions. And I give you my word that the wares brought in at different times during the year mount up to a value of fully 400,000 bezants, and they are all paid for in this paper currency.

Let me tell you further that several times a year a fiat goes forth through the towns that all those who have gems and pearls and gold and silver must bring them to the Great Khan's mint. This they do, and in such abundance that it is past all reckoning; and they are all paid in paper money. . .

Here is another fact well worth relating. When these papers have been so long in circulation that they are growing torn and frayed, they are brought to the mint and changed for new and fresh ones at a discount of 3 per cent. And here again . . . if a man wants to buy gold or silver to make his service of plate or his belts or other finery, he goes to the Khan's mint with some of these papers and gives them in payment for the gold and silver which he buys from the mint-master. And all the Khan's armies are paid with this sort of money.

I have now told you how it comes about that the Great Khan must have, as indeed he has, more treasure than anyone else in the world. . .

Source: Quoted from Ronald Latham, trans. *The Travels of Marco Polo* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 128–129, 130, 147–148, 149.

# *From Chen Pu, A Record of Musings on the Eastern Capital of the Song Empire (Hanzhou) (Thirteenth Century)*

In the early twelfth century, people of the steppe overran northern China. They established a dynasty called the Jin (1115–1234), which built its capital city at Beijing. In response, the Song royal court moved south to the port city of Hangzhou near the Yangzi River. The Song ruled over what was left of their empire until the Mongols captured the city in 1276 and established another dynasty.

By the twelfth century, Hangzhou was more than just a center of government. By the thirteenth century, it had a population of more than one million people living in a city about eight square miles in size, one of the biggest and wealthiest cities in the world. The following excerpt is from the description of an anonymous traveler, who wrote it in 1235 to describe the city and its activities.

**Markets**

During the morning hours, markets extend from Tranquility Gate of the palace all the way to the north and south sides of the New Boulevard. Here we find pearl, jade, talismans, exotic plants and fruits, seasonal catches from the sea, wild game - all the rarities of the world seem to be gathered here. The food and commodity markets at the Heavenly-View Gate, River Market Place, Central Square, Ba Creek, the end of Superior Lane, Tent Place, and Universal Peace Bridge are all crowded and full of traffic.

In the evening, with the exception of the square in front of the palace, the markets are as busy as during the day. The most attractive one is at Central Square, where all sorts of exquisite artifacts, instruments, containers, and hundreds of varieties of goods are for sale. In other marketplaces, sales, auctions, and exchanges go on constantly. In the wine shops and inns business also thrives. Only after the fourth drum does the city gradually quiet down, but by the fifth drum, court officials already start preparing for audiences and merchants are getting ready for the morning market again. This cycle goes on all year round without respite. . .

On the lot in front of the wall of the city building, there are always various acting troupes performing, and this usually attracts a large crowd. The same kind of activity is seen in almost any vacant lot, including those at the meat market of the Great Common, the herb market at Charcoal Bridge, the book market at Orange Grove, the vegetable market on the east side of the city, and the rice market on the north side. There are many more interesting markets, such as the candy center at the Five Buildings, but I cannot name them all.

**Commercial Establishments**

In general, the capital attracts the greatest variety of goods and has the best craftsmen. For instance, the flower company at Superior Lane does a truly excellent job of flower arrangement, and its caps, hairpins, and collars are unsurpassed in craftsmanship. Some of the most famous specialties of the capital are the sweet-bean soup at the Miscellaneous Market, the pickled dates of the Ge family, the thick soup of the Guang family at Superior Lane, the fruit at the Great Commons marketplace, the cooked meats in front of Eternal Mercy Temple, Sister Song's fish broth at Penny Pond Gate, the juicy lungs at Flowing

Gold Gate, the "lamb rice" of the Zhi family at Central Square, the boots of the Peng family, the fine clothing of the Xuan family at Southern Commons, the sticky rice pastry of the Zhang family the flutes made by Gu the Fourth, and the Qiu family's Tatar whistles at the Great Commons.

**Wine Shops**

Among the various kinds of wine shops, the tea-and-food shops sell not only wine, but also various foods to go with it. However, to get seasonal delicacies not available in these shops, one should go to the inns, for they also have a menu from which one can make selections. The pastry-and-wine shops sell pastries with duckling and goose fillings, various fixings of pig tripe, intestines and blood, fish fat and spawn; but they are rather expensive. The mansion-style inns are either decorated in the same way as officials' mansions or are actually remodeled from such mansions. The garden-style inns are often located in the suburbs, though some are also situated in town. Their decoration is usually an imitation of a studio-garden combination. . . .

The expenses incurred on visiting an inn can vary widely. If you order food, but no drinks, it is called "having the lowly soup-and-stuff" and is quite inexpensive. If your order of wine and food falls within the range of 100–5,000 cash, it is called a small order. However, if you ask for female company, then it is most likely that the girls will order the most expensive delicacies. You are well advised to appear shrewd and experienced, so as not to be robbed. One trick, for instance, in ordering wines is to give a large order, of say, ten bottles, but open them one by one. In the end, you will probably have used only five or six bottles of the best. You can then return the rest. . . .

**Teahouses**

In large teahouses there are usually paintings and calligraphies by famous artists on display. In the old capital, only restaurants had them, to enable their patrons to while away the time as the food was being prepared, but now it is customary for teahouses as well to display paintings and the like. . . .

Often many young men gather in teahouses to practice singing or playing musical instruments. To give such amateur performances is called "getting posted." A "social teahouse" is more of a community gathering place than a mere place that sells tea. Often tea-drinking is but an excuse, and people are rather generous when it comes to the tips. . .

**Specialty Stores**

The commercial area of the capital extends from the old Qing River Market to the Southern Commons on the south and to the border on the north. It includes the Central Square, which is also called the Center of Five Flowers. From the north side of the Five Buildings to South Imperial Boulevard, there are more than one hundred gold, silver, and money exchanges. On the short walls in front of these stores, there are piles of gold, silver, and copper cash: these are called "the money that watches over the store."

Around these exchanges there are also numerous gold and silversmiths. The pearl marts are situated between the north side of Cordial Marketplace and Southtown Marketplace. Most deals made here involve over 10,000 cash. A score of pawnshops are scattered in between, all owned by very wealthy people and dealing only in the most valuable objects.

Some famous fabric stores sell exquisite brocade and fine silk which are unsurpassed elsewhere in the country. Along the river, close to the Peaceful Ford Bridge, there are numerous fabric stores, fan shops, and lacquerware and porcelain shops. Most other cities can only boast of one special product; what makes the capital unique is that it gathers goods from all places. Furthermore, because of the large population and busy commercial traffic, there is a demand for everything. There are even shops that deal exclusively in used paper or in feathers, for instance.

**Warehouses**

Today, having been the "temporary capital" for more than a hundred years, the city has over a million households. The suburbs extend to the south, west, and north; all are densely populated and prosperous in commerce as well as in agriculture. The size of the suburbs is comparable to a small county or prefecture, and it takes several days to travel through them. This again reflects the prosperity of the capital.

In the middle of the city, enclosed by the Northern Pass Dam, is White Ocean Lake. Its water spreads over several tens of *li*. Wealthy families have built scores of warehouse complexes along this waterfront. Each of these consists of several hundred to over a thousand rooms for the storage needs of the various businesses in the capital and of traveling merchants. Because these warehouses are surrounded by water, they are not endangered by fires or thieves, and therefore they offer a special convenience."

Source: From e-Source 18: Chen Pu http://www.bakeru.edu/faculty/jrichards/World%20Civ%20II/E-Sources/E19Hangzhou.htm.

# *From Ibn Battuta, The Rihlah (Travels in East Africa, Fourteenth Century CE)*

Ibn Battuta was born in 1304 CE in Tangier, Morocco, to a family of legal scholars. He entered that profession as well, but in 1325, he decided to make the hajj (Islamic pilgrimage) to Mecca (Makkah). This began a remarkable journey that lasted nearly 30 years and covered thousands of miles. His journeys, extending as far north as the Volga River, as far South as the coast of East Africa, and as far east as China, demonstrated the amazing diversity and cosmopolitan unity of the Dar al-Islam (House of Islam) during the fourteenth century. The *Rihlah*, the travel account that was prepared with the help of Ibn Juzayy in 1356, is an excellent historical and geographic source on the period.

> We sailed . . . for fifteen nights [from the horn of Africa] and came to Maqdashaw [Mogadishu], which is a town of enormous size. Its inhabitants are merchants, possessed of vast resources; they own large numbers of camel, of which they slaughter hundreds every day [for food], and also have quantities of sheep. In this place are manufactured the woven fabrics called after it, which are unequalled and exported from it to Egypt and elsewhere. It is the custom of the people of this town that, when a vessel reaches the anchorage, the sumbuqs, which are small boats, come out to it. In each sumbuq there are a number of young men of the town, each one of whom brings a covered platter containing food and presents it to one of the merchants on the ship saying 'This is my guest,' and each of the others does the same. The merchant, on disembarking, goes only to the house of his host among the young men, except those of them who have made frequent journeys to the town and have gained some acquaintance with its inhabitants; these lodge where they please. When he takes up residence with his host, the latter sells his goods for and buys for him; and if anyone buys anything from him at too low a price or sells to him in the absence of his host, that sale is held invalid by them. This practice is profitable one for them.
>
> **Account of the Sultan of Maqdashaw**
>
> The sultan of Maqdashaw is, as we have mentioned, called only by the title of 'the Shaykh'. His name is Abu Bakr, son of the shaykh Umar; he is by origin of the Barbara (Berbers) and he speaks in Maqdishi, but knows the Arabic language. One of his customs is that, when a vessel arrives, the sultan's sumbuq (patrol ship) goes out to it, and enquires are made as to the ship, whence it has come, who is its owner and its rubban (that is, its captain), what is its cargo, and who has come on it of merchants and others. When all of this information has been collected, it is presented to the sultan, and if there are any person [of such quality] that the sultan should assign a lodging to him as his guest, he does so.
>
> When I arrived with the qadi I have mentioned, who was called Ibn al-Burhan, an Egyptian by origin, at the sultan's residence, one of the serving-boys came out and saluted the qadi, who said to him "Take word to the intendant's office and inform the Shaykh that this man has come from the land of al-Hijaz." So he took the message, then returned bringing a plate on which were some leaves of betel and areca nuts. He gave me ten leaves along with a few of the nuts, the same to the qadi, and what was left on the plate to my companions and the qadi's students. He brought also a jug of rose-water of Damascus, which he poured over me and over the qadi [i.e. over our hands], and said "Our master

commands that he be lodged in the students' house," this being a building equipped for the entertainment of students of religion. The qadi took me by the hand and we went to this house, which is in the vicinity of the Shaykh's residence, and furnished with carpets and all necessary appointments.

Later on the serving boy brought food from the Shaykh's residence. With him came one of his viziers, who was responsible for the care of the guests, and who said "Our master greets you and says to you that you are heartily welcome." He then set down the food and we ate. Their food is rice cooked with ghee (clarified butter), which they put into a large wooden platter, and on top of this they set platters of kushan. This is the seasoning made of chickens, meat, fish and vegetables. They cook unripe bananas in fresh milk and put this in one dish, and in another dish they put curdled milk, on which they place pieces of pickled lemon, bunches of pickled pepper steeped in vinegar and slated, green ginger, and mangos. These resemble apples, but have a stone; when ripe they are exceedingly sweet and are eaten like other fruit, but before ripening they are acid like lemons, and they pickle them in vinegar. When they take a mouthful of rice, they eat some of these salted and vinegar conserves after it. A single person of the people of Maqdashaw eats as much as a whole company of us would eat, as a matter of habit, and they are corpulent and fat in the extreme.

On the fourth day, which was a Friday, the qadi and students and one of the Shaykh's viziers came to me, bringing a set of robes; these [official] robes of theirs consist of a silk wrapper which one ties round his waist in place of drawers (for they have no acquaintance with these), a tunic of Egyptian linen with an embroidered border, a furred mantle of Jerusalem stuff, and an Egyptian turban with an embroidered edge. They also brought robes for my companions suitable to their position. We went to the congregational mosque and made our prayers behind the maqsura [area restricted for the ruler]. When the Shaykh came out of the door of the maqsura I saluted him along with the qadi; he said a word of greeting, spoke in their tongue with the qadi, and then said in Arabic "You are heartily welcome, and you have honored our land and given us pleasure.

Source: Excerpted from *Beyond A Thousand and One Nights: A Sampler of Literature from Muslim Civilization* (Fountain Valley, CA: Council on Islamic Education), 154–155. Reprinted by permission.

# *From Ibn Battuta, The Rihlah (Travels in West Africa, Fourteenth Century CE)*

The date of my arrival at Malli was 14th Jumada I seven hundred and fifty-three [after Hijra 28 June 1352] . . . I was accompanied by a merchant called Abu Bakr ibn Ya'qub. We took the Mima road. I had a camel which I was riding because horses are expensive, and cost a hundred *mithqals* each. We came to a wide channel which flows out of the Nile [meaning the Niger River] and can only be crossed by boats. The place is infested with mosquitoes, and no one can pass that way except by night. On reaching it I saw sixteen beasts with enormous bodies . . . so I said to Abu Bakr, "What kind of animals are these?" He replied, "They are hippopotami. . . . "

We halted near this channel at a large village, which had as a governor a negro, a pilgrim, and man of fine character, named Farba Magha. He was one of the negroes who made the pilgrimage in the company of Mansa Musa. . . . We continued our journey from this village which is by the channel and came to the town of Quri Mansa. At this point the camel which I was riding died . . . I sent two lads whom I had hired for my service to buy me a camel at Zaghari, and waited at Quri Mansa for six days until they returned with it. . . . Thence we went on to Tumbuktu, which stands four miles from the river. Most of its inhabitants are of the Massufa tribe, wearers of the face- veil. . . . From Tumbuktu I sailed down the Nile [Niger] on a small boat, hollowed out of a single piece of wood. We used to go ashore every night at the villages and buy whatever we needed in the way of meat and butter in exchange for salt, spices and glass beads. . . .

I went on from there to Gawgaw [Gogo], which is a large city on the Nile [Niger], and one of the finest towns in the Negrolands. It is also one of their biggest and best provisioned towns, with rice in plenty, milk and fish, and there is a species of cucumber there called inani which has no equal. The buying and selling of its inhabitants is done with cowrie-shells, and the same is the case at Malli. I stayed there about a month, and then set out in the direction of Taghadda by land with a large caravan of merchants from Wuchin, which means "wolf" . . . I had a riding camel and a she-camel to carry my provisions.

We pushed on rapidly with our journey until we reached Taghadda. The houses at Taghadda are built of red stone, and its water runs by the copper mines, so that both its color and taste are affected. There are no grain crops there except a little wheat, which is consumed by merchants and strangers. The inhabitants of Taghadda have no occupation except trade. They travel to Egypt every year, and import quantities of all the fine fabrics to be had there and of other Egyptian wares. . . . The copper mine is in the outskirts of Taghadda. They dig the ore out of the ground, bring it to the town and cast it in their houses. This work is done by their male and female slaves. When they obtain the red copper, they make it into bars a span and a half in length, some thin and others thick. The thick bars are sold at the rate of six or seven hundred to the *mithqal*. They serve also as their medium of exchange; with the thin bars they buy meat and firewood, and with the thick, slaves male and female, millet, butter, and wheat. The copper is exported from Taghadda to the town of Kubar, in the regions of the heathens, to Zaghay, and to the country of Barnu, which is forty days' journey from Taghadda. The people of Barnu are Muslims, and have a king called Idris. . . .

Source: Excerpted from H. A. R. Gibb, trans., *Ibn Battuta: Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325–1354*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1929, 331–336.

# *Early Northern Renaissance Genre Painting of a Goldsmith's Shop*

A Goldsmith in his shop, possibly Saint Eligius

This is one of the earliest genre paintings, which showed detailed portrayals of everyday life. The artist Petrus Christus produced this oil painting on wood in 1449. The title refers to St. Eligius, the patron saint of goldsmiths. Art historians note, however, that the man in red probably represents a goldsmith of the Renaissance, rather than the saint. The two people with him are a bride and groom in their wedding finery. The goldsmith is shown weighing a gold ring that he is selling to the couple. On the table and on the shelves behind him are many items for sale.

1. Study carefully the objects pictured. With a partner or partners, identify and list as many objects as you can name. Be precise. Also be observant, looking at the fabric materials and their characteristics and small details of the items, clothing, and furnishings.

2. Categorize the items according to various criteria:

    a. Are they imported or of local origin?

    b. Were they imported from outside of Europe?

    c. Are they raw materials or finished goods?

    d. Are they luxury items or necessities?

# *A Merchant's List: Import and Export in Iraq (Ninth Century)*

The variety of items that were moved through Muslim lands can be seen by reviewing the following list, which was written in the mid-ninth century by Abu Uthman bin Bahr. This list appeared in his pamphlet "The Investigation of Commerce" and gave an inventory of items that arrived in Iraq during his time. It also lists the regions that exported the items.

| | |
|---|---|
| **India** | tigers, panthers, elephants, panther skins, rubies, ebony, coconuts |
| **China** | silk, chinaware (porcelain), paper, ink, peacocks, saddles, cinnamon, drugs, utensils of gold and silver, gold coins, engineers, agronomists, marble workers |
| **Arabia** | horses, pedigreed camels, tanned skins |
| **Maghrib and Barbary (North Africa)** | panthers, felts, hawks, salam leaves (used for tanning leather) |
| **Yemen** | incense, giraffes, gems, curcuma (used as a dye, condiment, and medicine) |
| **Egypt** | donkeys, suits of fine cloth, papyrus, balsam, topaz |
| **The land of Khazars** | slaves, coats of mail, helmets, neck guards |
| **Chorasmia (Khwarizm)** | musk, ermine, marten, fox and other furs, sugarcane |
| **Samarkand** | paper |
| **Bactria (Balkh)** | sweet grapes |
| **Merv** | zithers, zither players, carpets, suits |
| **Isfahan** | honey, pears, quinces, apples, salt, saffron, soda, syrups, white lead |
| **Kirman** | indigo, cumin |
| **Fars** | linen suits, rose water, jasmine ointment, syrups |
| **Fasa** | pistachios, rare fruit, glassware |
| **Oman and the sea coast** | pearls |
| **Mosul** | quails, curtains, striped cloth |
| **Armenia and Azerbaijan** | felts, carpets, fine mats, wool, packsaddles |

Source: Ragaei and Dorothea El Mallakh, "Trade and Commerce," in John Hayes, ed., *The Genius of Arab Civilization: Source of Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), ch. 9.

# *Map of the Hemispheric Trade during Big Era Five*

During Big Era Five, as in earlier eras, long-distance trade often involved a relay of goods along regional and transregional routes. Merchants bought, sold, and resold a mix of items—bulky staples as well as lighter, valuable luxury goods. Goods were often unloaded and reloaded among numerous different modes of transportation in the course of their journey from origin to end user. Different types of transport—pack animals, carts, barges, ships—were used on certain regional routes, either for cultural, technological, or ecological reasons. Match the names of each type of transportation to the icons on this page. Then match each form of transportation shown in the icons to the routes on the hemispheric map of trade (Student Handout 3.1.10). You may want to make smaller versions and mount them on a classroom trade map.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **dromedary** | **Bactrian camel** | **carrack** |
| **pack horse or donkey** | **cog** | **junk** |
| **wheeled cart** | **longboat** | **dhow** |

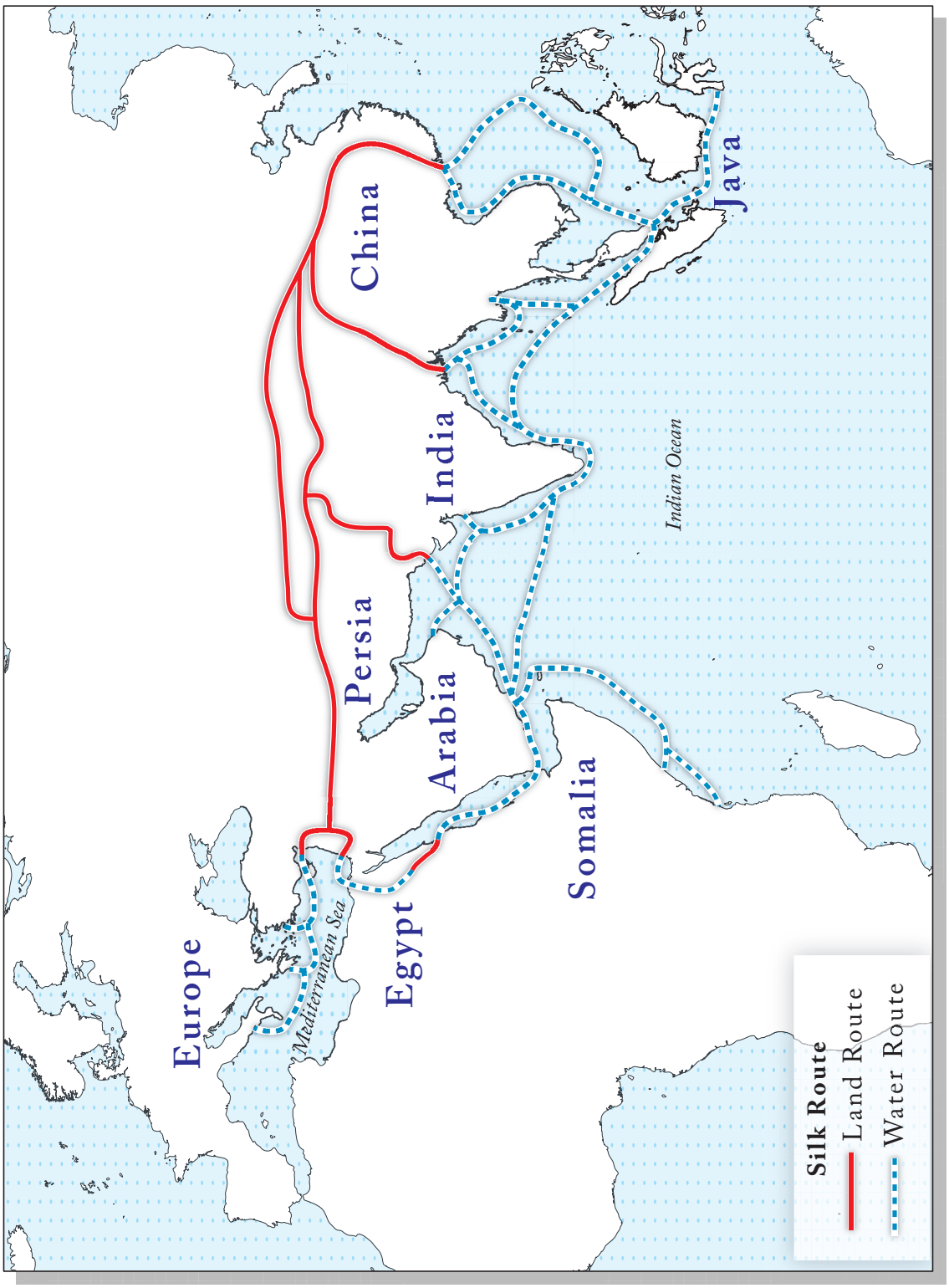








# *Map of Trade Routes*



LESSON 2

# Borrowing Styles, Consumer Goods, and Techniques in the Hemispheric Luxury Trade

### *Procedure*

1. Have students view the images on Student Handout 3.2.1, carefully read the captions, and find the places of origin of these products on Student Handout 3.1.9 or in an atlas.
2. List similarities and differences between the pairs of images, in terms of their shape, decoration, materials, use, and origin.
3. Describe the technologies or "toolkits" that were necessary to produce these goods.
4. Using Student Handout 3.1.10, have the students trace trade routes along which the technological, artistic, and other cultural influences seem to have flowed in order to produce these pairs of artifacts.
5. Infer the economic and social conditions that must have prevailed in order for these influences to pass between distant regions. What classes and occupations of people in both places must have been facilitators of these influences, in terms of producers, consumers, and middlemen?

# *Borrowing Styles, Consumer Goods, and Techniques in the Luxury Trade*

A. Canteen made as a souvenir for a pilgrim to Jerusalem, perhaps a crusader, 13th century Syria. The canteen is made of brass, silver, and black inlay, and it is decorated with Arabic writing, religious scenes with Christian and Islamic themes, and scenes of worldly life and entertainment.

B. Blue and white porcelain canteen in a highly unusual shape—a rare Ming Dynasty piece from 15th-century China. It has typical Chinese floral and wave designs, but also Islamic-influenced geometric designs. Experts think the Ming canteen may have been modeled on the Syrian canteen, or a similar one.

C. Candlestick with ducks. Hammered copper alloy with engraved and repoussé décoration, inlaid with silver and red copper. Khurasan, Iran, 12th–13th century.

D. Chinese porcelain candle holder in the form of an elephant from the blue-and-white collection; Ming Dynasty, late 16th c.; Topkapı Palace, Istanbul, Turkey

E. Silver incense burner with a gimbel (a pan mounted on two pins that kept the hot coals level), perforated to release smoke from the incense. It was hung from the ceiling to scent a room, becoming very popular in 7th to 9th century China.

F. Brass, silver and gold incense burner made during the 13th century in Syria, covered in inlaid decorations. It hung from a chain or was rolled across the floor and used as hand warmer or incense burner. Inside there is a gimbel that kept the fire pan level when it was rolled across a room.

G. “Tiraz brocade from the 13th century” to “Silk/satin brocade from the 17th century”

H. The Yakob 'Polonaise' carpet, 17th century

I. Patterned silk with design of stags and birds, early 15th century, Venice, Italy.

LESSON 3

# Transfers of Knowledge along the Trans-Hemispheric Network

## Hindi-Arabic Numerals and Paper's Journeys across Afroeurasia

### *Procedure*

1. Read and study the text and images on Student Handout 3.3.1. Read the evidence that historians give for the transfer of Hindi or Arabic numerals across Afroeurasia during Big Era Five.
2. Examine the primary source images showing the development and dissemination of Hindi-Arabic numerals. Students should describe what type of sources they are and assess the credibility of their arguments.
3. On the graphic organizer with Student Handout 3.3.1, students should briefly summarize the evidence used by the writers for the transfer of Hindi-Arabic numerals, the individuals involved in the transfer, the place where the evidence of transfer was located, and the dates of the evidence. Note the languages and religious affiliations of the participants in this transfer.
4. Use Student Handout 3.3.2 to trace the path of diffusion of this important innovation by locating the place of transfer, the date, and the type of evidence cited, and then write this information on the outline map using boxes, talk balloons, or other methods.
5. Discuss the complexity of the paths by which this technical and scientific innovation moved across the hemisphere, and the number of different societies involved. Discuss also the time factor in its transfer and make hypotheses about the rate and time periods in which the numerals' movement accelerated. What might account for this acceleration? What types of people were involved in the transfer?
6. Make copies of Student Handout 3.3.3 for individual or group work to help students understand papermaking technology, its uses, and its social and economic effects. Make additional copies of Student Handout 3.3.2 to use with Student Handout 3.3.3 to locate and date diffusion points for the spread of paper.

# *Hindi-Arabic Numerals and Their Journey across Afroeurasia*

Read the evidence the historians below give of the transfer of Hindi-Arabic numerals across Afroeurasia during Big Era Five. Note the evidence used by the writers for the transfer, the dates of the evidence, and the individuals involved in the transfer. Also notice the languages and religious affiliations of the participants in this transfer. Finally, use Student Handout 3.3.2 to trace the path of diffusion of this important innovation by locating the place of transfer, the date, and the type of evidence cited.

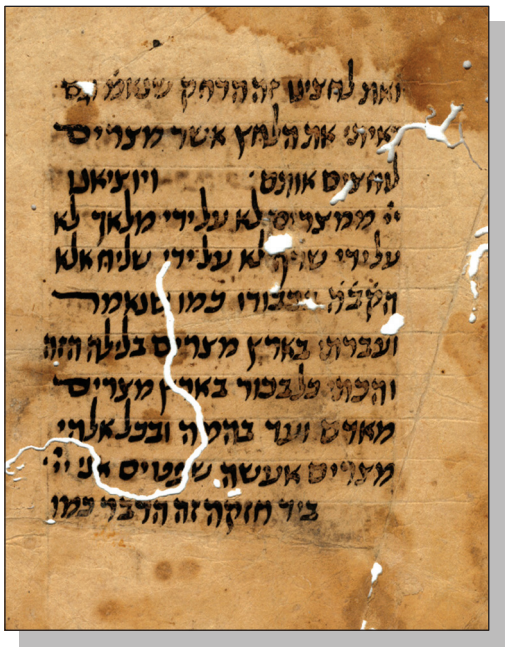
**Excerpt 1**

The major sources for Islamic mathematics were Greek, as well as Persian and Indian. . . . The Persian sources reflected mostly the Indian ones and were embedded in astronomical treatises. . . . The Muslims originally used finger computation before learning of the Indian numerals and the "dust-board" system early in the [8th century] from Indian and Persian sources. . . .It is known that the Muslims gradually developed the 'Arabic numerals' from the Indian numerals they had learned from Sanskrit sources early in the Islamic period in Persia and other eastern lands of Islam . . . . The newly developed system spread to the Maghrib [North Africa and Spain] and from there to the West.. The work in which Indian numerals were used and transmitted to the West for the first time is Addition and Subtraction in Indian Arithmetic of Muhammad ibn Musa al Khwarazmi [died 840 CE], the original of which is lost. The Toledan [Spain] translation of this work known as Algorismi de numero indorum had a profound effect on the West. . . In the 10th century Abul Hasan al-Uqlidusi wrote his Book of Chapters Concerning Indian Arithmetic, in which he applied Indian schemes of calculation to methods of finger-reckoning and tried to change dust-board methods so as to make them applicable to ink and paper. Contemporary with him Abu'l Wafa freed Indian numerals from the dust-board techniques, while in the following [11th] century Abu'l Hasan al-Nasawi wrote another important treatise on Indian numerals entitled The Satisfying Book on Indian Arithmetic, first in Persian and then in Arabic. By the 11th century, therefore, the decimal system and the two methods of reckoning connected with it had become fully established among Muslims and through them had reached the West, bringing about a transformation which influenced nearly all aspects of life and thought from pure mathematics to commerce and trade.

Source: Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Science: An Illustrated History* (London: World of Islam, 1976), 77–79.

**Excerpt 2**

The new availability of paper also encouraged new approaches to old subjects. At the same time that paper was being disseminated across the Islamic lands, the Hindu system of reckoning with decimal place-value numerals—what we call "Arabic numerals"—was spreading westward from India. Before the Hindu system was introduced, people in the Islamic lands, as elsewhere, did their calculations mentally and recorded intermediate results either on a dust-board—which could be repeatedly erased as they performed successive additions or subtractions—or by the position of their fingers ("finger-reckoning"). The first manual of Hindu reckoning in Arabic was written by Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi (ca. 825), whose name has given us our word algorithm, meaning the sequence of steps followed to solve a type of problem. According to al-Khwarizmi's treatise, the fundamental arithmetic operations are performed by placing the numbers one above the other; the process begins on the left. Numbers are erased and shifted, clearly implying that the operations were still meant to be performed on a dust-board. A century later, however, the mathematician Abu al-Hasan Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Uqlidisi ("the Euclidian") altered the Indian scheme of calculation in his mathematical treatise, composed at Damascus in 952–953, to suit the use of ink and paper. Although al-Uqlidisi's scheme allowed neither shifting nor erasure of numbers—not possible on paper—it did permit far greater flexibility in calculation.

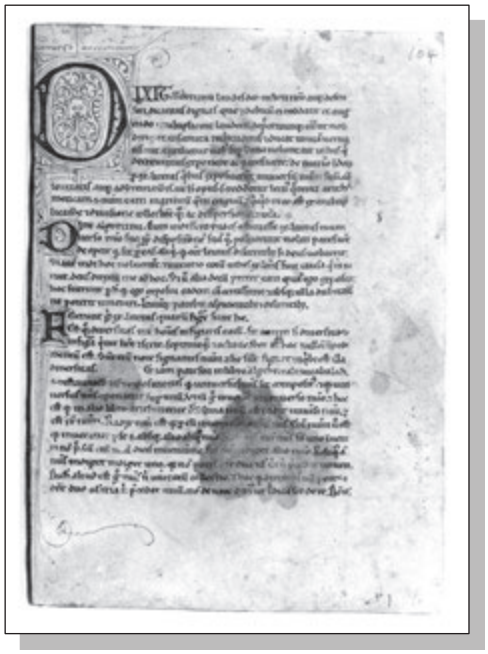


A segment of the Passover Haggadah, a fragment of a text that was stored in the Cairo Geniza

The Geniza [Cairo] documents include trousseau lists, commercial documents and personal letters relating to the Jewish community; they had been placed in the storeroom in anticipation of proper disposal, but were forgotten for centuries (Mostly in Judeo-Arabic—colloquial Arabic written in Hebrew characters—they have become an essential source for reconstructing daily and economic life in the medieval Islamic lands, as well as for the history of spoken Arabic. They also show how paper had become an indispensable medium of communication in this commercial society, where bills of exchange, orders of payment, and similar documents, most of them written on paper, were regularly sent back and forth between trading communities located as far apart as Spain and India.

Source: Jonathan M. Bloom, "Revolution by the Ream—A History of Paper," *Aramco World Magazine*, 50, no. 3 (May/June 1999), 26–39.

**Excerpt 3**



Page from Latin manuscript (Cambridge, University Library, Ii. 6.5.)

Around the year 1180, a Pisan [Italy] merchant was appointed to the post of customs official, or consul, of the Pisan community in Bougia, Muslim North Africa. After settling there, he sent for his son Leonardo Fibonacci, who was still in his boyhood, to complete his education, 'with a view to future usefulness,' a commentary on the new attitude toward Islam developing among the European business class. In his new home, Leonardo made the discovery of Hindu-Arabic numerals. Adelard of Bath's [1075–1160 CE] translation of al-Khwarizmi had expounded the Hindu notation, but only to a very limited circle even among the mathematically literate. Leonardo [Fibonacci] perceived its enormous potential value and in 1202 undertook its wider diffusion by writing what proved to be a seminal book in the history of mathematics and science the Liber Abaci (Book of the Abacus). The book began: 'The nine Indian figures are 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1. With these nine figures and the sign 0, any number may be written, as is demonstrated below.

For a time businessmen were wary of the new numerals, partly out of general conservatism, partly because it was felt that they could be more easily altered by the unscrupulous, and finally because they necessitated memorizing tables of multiplication and division. But by the late 14th century, Hindu numerals were displacing both Roman numerals and the calculating board [abacus] in European commerce.

Source: Francis and Joseph Gies, *Cathedral, Forge and Waterwheel: Technology and Invention in the Middle Ages (*New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 225–227, 246.

**Excerpt 4**

In 1473, at the age of fourteen, Jakob Fugger was sent by his father to the German business house in Venice . . . where the family held a warehouse, to learn 'Italian accounting,' commercial reckoning with Arabic numerals, and double-entry bookkeeping. Within a generation, however, the printed book had made such trips largely unnecessary—an explosion in publication of manuals of technical commercial expertise (how-to books for merchants) had made it possible for merchants to learn their trade closer to home. . . . The author of the first book of commercial arithmetic published in Portugal in 1519 advised his readers, . . . I am printing this arithmetic because it is a thing so necessary in Portugal for transactions with the merchants of India, Persia, Arabia, Ethiopia and other places discovered by us.' He had in mind the need to know how to reckon and account in Indo-Arabic numbers, rather than Roman numerals, for transactions with regions used to dealing with Muslim merchants. . . . The earliest printed commercial arithmetic, the *Libro de Abacho* [Fibonacci's *Book of the Abacus*], published in Venice in 1478, is packed with . . . the kind of commercial problems that merchants are regularly required to solve [like these]:

If one yard of crimson is worth 5 ducats, what will 85 yards be worth?

If 1000 pounds of pepper are worth 80 ducats, 16 grossi and ¼, what will 9917 pounds and ½ be worth?

Two merchants, Sebastiano and Jacomo, have invested their money for gain in a partnersh-iSebastiano put in 350 ducats on the first day of January 1472, and Jacomo 500 ducats, 14 grossi on the first day of July 1472; and on the first day of January 1474 they found they had gained 622 ducats. Required is the share of each.

Source: Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 320–323.

**Excerpt 5**

The practical role of mathematics . . . is more typically represented by the Englishman Robert Recorde. His first book, on arithmetic, was revealingly called *The Grounde of Artes*. Published in 1540 and six times reprinted by 1561, it reflected...the subjects he had taught at Oxford and Cambridge. . . . He was the first English writer to mention Copernicus. In 1557 he published the first English work on algebra, further popularizing the use of Arabic numbers for calculation and the symbols for plus, minus and equals.

Source: John Hale, *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance* (New York: Atheneum, 1994), 574–575.

Using an atlas or textbook map, locate the places mentioned in the secondary source accounts and label them. Fill in the chart below as you read, adding spaces as necessary.

| Evidence of Arabic numeral use | Person | Place | Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

# *Paper's Path across Afroeurasia*

Paper, a non-woven material made from the pressed fibers of several plants, has been used as wrapping, clothing, and especially writing material. It was originally developed in China as early as 200 BCE. Its basic technology is simple, consisting of new or recycled vegetable fiber. The fiber is soaked, pounded, and strained onto a screen, then dried into a sheet. It may be as thick as cardboard or as thin as tissue. It may be pressed and glazed to prevent absorbing too much ink, or left absorbent as a towel. Though it can be made with a minimum of tools, its manufacture and high demand helped spread the use of water power and mechanical systems for pounding pulp in large quantities.

As writing material, paper was used from about 100 CE in China, and it spread by complex geographic and cultural paths over the following fourteen centuries, until it reached most of Afroeurasia. Below is a chart showing the spread of paper use and manufacture in the eastern hemisphere before 1500 CE. Plot the dates and places on this handout. Think of as many uses for paper as you can—for wrapping, clothing, hygiene, arts, business, education, entertainment, science and government—and list them on the back of this sheet.

| Place | Date When Paper Manufacture Began | Use of Water Power for Paper Manufacture |
|---|---|---|
| **China** | 100 CE | |
| **Tibet** | 650 CE | |
| **India** | | |
| Buddhists | 670 CE | |
| Delhi Sultanate | after 1258 CE | unknown |
| Bengal | 1406 CE | unknown |
| **Central Asia** | | |
| Samarkand | 751 CE | 1041 CE |
| **Muslim Lands** | | |
| Baghdad | 794 CE | c. 950 CE |
| Cairo | 850 CE | unknown |
| Damascus | c. 1000 CE | c. 1000 CE |
| Tripoli | c. 1000 CE | unknown |
| Sicily | c. 1000 CE | unknown |
| Fez (Morocco) | 1050 CE | unknown |
| Jativa (Spain) | 1151 CE | 1151 CE |
| **Europe** | | |
| Spain | see Muslim lands above | |
| Sicily | see Muslim lands above | |
| Fabriana (Italy) | 1276 CE | 1276 CE |
| Ambert (France) | 1326 CE | 1326 CE |
| Nuremberg (Germany) | 1390 CE | 1390 CE |
| England | 1490 CE | 1490 CE |

Source: The chart information is from Arnold Pacey, *Technology in World Civilization* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 42. The illustration is a German woodcut by Jost Amman, 1568 CE.

CHAPTER 4

*By Anne Chapman*

# The Mongol Moment


## WHY STUDY INTERREGIONAL UNITY FROM 1200–1400 CE?

During the thirteenth century the Mongols built an empire from scratch by remarkable feats of organization, planning, endurance, courage, slaughter, destruction, and terror. The empire was ruled by a combination of exploiting and protecting subject peoples. The large-scale displacements of population, combined with Mongol peace-keeping and encouragement of long-distance communications, resulted in widespread exchanges of ideas, goods, and techniques, as well as in the spread of disease. Studying the Mongols' rise to power and its consequences helps students to:

- grapple with the causes, process, and results of empire-building in the context of the Eurasian steppes.
- evaluate the impact of Mongol imperial conquest on both Mongol society and the societies they conquered.
- analyze ways in which the Mongol Empire reestablished and intensified contact between various parts of Afroeurasia.
- develop some empathetic understanding for the Mongols, a people with values and customs very different from students' own.

Although the Mongol Empire's heyday ended after its first century and it definitively disintegrated at the end of its second, some of its legacy was long lasting. This legacy included:

- a firm and lasting unification of China.
- the beginnings of Russian unification and the firming up of Russian identity.
- the further expansion of Islam.

## OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Explain what features of the Mongols' pastoral nomadic way of life were favorable to their creation of an empire.
2. Analyze the impact of the imperial conquests on both Mongol society and on the societies they conquered.
3. Describe the ways that Mongol actions promoted the exchange of goods and ideas within and beyond their empire.
4. Assess the significance of particular individuals and historical processes.
5. Analyze historical documents for reliability.

## TIME AND MATERIALS

Lessons 1 and 2 can be accomplished in 180–225 minutes. Actual time taken will vary with circumstances. If time is limited, Lesson 1 can stand alone and be done in about 90 minutes. Parts of Lesson 1 can be adapted to take 45 minutes (for instance, using only the sections on leadership and social organization with their discussion questions). Student handouts can be printed out separately.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the grasslands and mountains northwest of the Gobi Desert of East Asia lived a nomadic, tribal, largely illiterate people numbering 700,000 to 1,000,000. These were the Mongols. Economically dependent on flock and herds of sheep, goats, horses, and cattle and on raiding for booty, they were in constant low-level conflict with each other. They fought over pasture, water, and potential slave captives and engaged in long, bloody feuds.

Suddenly, they exploded onto the world scene by conquering the territories of both nomadic and settled peoples, including urbanized, agrarian societies from China to Syria and Russia to Korea in about half a century. They created the world's largest empire and managed to hang on to their conquests for nearly two centuries. The founder of the empire was Chinggis Khan. The unified empire that he forged between 1206 and 1227 broke up about 1260. It did not shatter, however. Rather it divided into four large Mongol kingdoms ruled by his grandsons and later descendants. Therefore, the age of Mongol domination continued far into the fourteenth century.

During that time these Mongol rulers, called khans,

- facilitated contact between the various parts of the enormous land area from the Mediterranean to the Pacific.
- promoted interaction between peoples of many different ethnicities, religions, and cultures.
- enabled the exchange and spread of ideas, goods, technologies, and disease.

What's in a name? The name Chinggis Khan, meaning something like "universal lord," has been spelled in European languages many different ways: Genghis, Chingiz, Djingis, Djenghiz, and Jankiz; also Qan, Kaan, Qhan. Our alphabet can only approximate the sounds of Mongolian, a language in the Altaic family which also includes Turkish. (If you say these different spellings aloud, how different do they sound?) For a while, Genghis was the most popular spelling, but today Chinggis or Chingiz is preferred. Europeans also called the Mongols Tatars or Tartars. Before Chinggis demolished them, the Tatars were the most powerful Mongol tribe, but that name was later loosely applied to all Mongols. In Europe, the form "Tartar" became current, after the Latin name for Hell, "Tartarus."

Chinggis Khan

## THREE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

### *Humans and the Environment*

Did the Mongol conquests do any long-term or permanent damage to the natural or physical environment in parts of Afroeurasia? How would you set up criteria for examining this question?

### *Humans and Other Humans*

Historians have commonly referred to the century or so following the conquests of Chinggis Khan as the *Pax Mongolica*, or Mongol Peace. What historical circumstances of the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries might justify this label? Debate in class whether the term is appropriate or not. How might you compare the conditions of the *Pax Mongolica* with those of the *Pax Romana* of the second and third centuries CE or with the *Pax Americana* following World War II?

### *Humans and Ideas*

Research the political and social circumstances in which the Republic of Mongolia has in recent years "resurrected" Chinggis Khan as a national hero. Why do you think the Communist government in Mongolia from 1924 to the early 1990s had no interest in venerating Chinggis Khan? Why do Mongolians today wish to emphasize positive aspects of his conquests and rule?

## KEY THEMES

This chapter addresses the following historical themes:

**Key Theme 2:** Economic Networks and Exchange

**Key Theme 3:** Uses and Abuses of Power

## CORRELATIONS TO NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

**National Standards for World History**
Era Five: Intensified Hemispheric Interactions, 3A: The student understands the world-historical significance of the Mongol empire, 3B: The student understands the significance of Mongol rule in China, Korea, Russia, and Southwest Asia.

## INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

### *Instructional Resources for Teachers*

Abu-Lughod, Janet L. *Before European Hegemony: the World System, A.D. 1250–1350*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Allsen, Thomas T. *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

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Dunn, Ross E. *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta, a Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century.* Rev. ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

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Findley, Carter Vaughn. *The Turks in World History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

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Humble, Richard. *Marco Polo*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975.

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LESSON 1

# From Tent to Palace: A Long, Rocky Road

### *Introductory Activities*

These activities may be revisited as a wrap-up for this chapter. If used, ask students to take and save notes on the ideas and thoughts shared. They can revisit their notes in the closing activities at the end of Student Handout 4.1.6.

1. Ask the class to:
    a. Share their ideas on what kind of person would be described as "Oh, he's a real Chinggis Khan!"
    b. Write down in three minutes or so what they think of when they hear the word "Mongol," then share the results.
    c. Brainstorm the characteristics that they consider define an empire. Take a few minutes to try them out on empires they know something about. How well do the characteristics they have hypothesized fit?
2. Ask students to answer the following, individually or in groups:
    a. If you were setting out on a career of conquest, aiming to create an empire, which of the following would you be least willing to do without? Most willing to do without? Explain your reasoning.
        - A larger army than that of the people you are planning to attack
        - A better trained, more obedient army than that of your opponents
        - Charismatic (inspired, forceful) leadership
        - Ideological (religious or other) support for aggression
        - A stronger economy or more wealth than your opponents have
        - Technological superiority in military hardware
        - Safe, fast supply lines to your homeland
        - Current, detailed intelligence about your opponents
        - First-rate communications within your own army
        - Something not on this list—what?
    b. Have students share their choices and their reasons for them. Ask them to arrive at a consensus on what are the five most important factors in building a successful empire. List them on the board.

c. Ask students to save the question, their answers, and the consensus list because they will be working with them again (see closing activities at the end of Student Handout 4.1.6).

3. Tell students they will be discussing what it was about the Mongols that led to their success by considering the following, which influence the outcome of any empire-acquiring enterprise:

   - characteristics of the people
   - nature of the leadership
   - details of social organization
   - features of the environment
   - nature of the technology
   - features of the ideology

   a. To participate in the discussion, students need to bear in mind the following questions:

      i. In what ways would each of the above have promoted, or hindered, the success of Mongols as conquerors?

      ii. Which of the above do they consider to have been most important in the creation of the Mongol Empire? Why?

   b. Students also need to know the information about the Mongols contained in Student Handouts 4.1.1–4.1.6. Some ways of getting students to do this include:

      i. Divide the class into groups and assign each group one or more of the six student handouts below to read, discuss, and summarize within their group. Then report their summaries to the class.

      ii. Instead of one person from each group reporting to the class, form new groups, each of whose members have read a different student handout. Each student in the group then teaches the knowledge to the rest of the group (jigsaw method).

      iii. All students may be asked to read all the student handouts. This allows use of the detailed discussion questions based on the various individual sections.

# *What Were the Mongol People Like in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries?*

## *Depends on Who You Ask!*

According to Chinggis Khan's shaman, reported in a Mongol-written history in 1228:

> Before you were born [1167] . . . everyone was feuding. Rather than sleep they robbed each other of their possessions . . . The whole nation was in rebellion. Rather than rest they fought each other. In such a world one did not live as one wished, but rather in constant conflict. There was no respite [letup], only battle. There was no affection, only mutual slaughter (*Secret History of the Mongols*, sec. 254, qtd. in Ratchnevsky 12).

According to the Italian friar John of Plano Carpini, who spent several months in the Great Khan's court in the late 1240s:

> In the whole world there are to be found no more obedient subjects than the Tatar . . . they pay their lords more respect than any other people, and would hardly dare to lie to them . . . Their women are chaste . . . Wars, quarrels, the infliction [causing] of bodily harm, and manslaughter do not occur among them, and there are no large-scale thieves or robbers among them . . . They treat one another with due respect; they regard each other almost as members of one family, and, although they do not have a lot of food, they like to share it with one another. Moreover, they are accustomed to deprivation [doing without]; if, therefore, they have fasted for a day or two, and have not eaten anything at all, they do not easily lose their tempers . . . While riding they can endure extreme cold and at times also fierce heat.
>
> They are extremely arrogant toward other people, [and] tend to anger . . . easily . . . They are the greatest liars in the world in dealing with other people . . . They are crafty and sly . . . [and] have an admirable ability to keep their intentions secret . . . They are messy in their eating and drinking and in their whole way of life, [and] cling fiercely to what they have. They have no conscience about killing other people . . . If anyone is found in the act of plundering or stealing in the territory under their power, he is put to death without any mercy.
>
> The chiefs or princes of the army . . . take up their stand some distance away from the enemy, and they have beside them their children on horseback and their womenfolk and horses . . . to give the impression that a great crowd of fighting-men is assembled there (Qtd. in Spuler 78–79).

According to the French friar William of Rubruck, who spent several months in the Great Khan's court in the early 1250s:

> It is the duty of the women to drive the carts, get the dwelling on and off them, milk the cows, make butter and to dress and sew skins . . . They also sew the boots, the socks, and the clothing, make the felt and cover the houses.

> The men make the bows and arrows, manufacture stirrups and bits, do the carpentering on their dwellings and carts; they take care of the horses, milk the mares, churn the mares' milk, make the skins in which it is put; they also look after the camels and load them. Both sexes look after the sheep and goats.
>
> At the entrance [of the palace] Master William of Paris has made for him [the Great Khan] a large silver tree, at the foot of which are four silver lions each having a pipe and all belching forth white mares' milk . . . The whole dwelling was completely covered inside with cloth of gold, and in the middle in a little hearth was a fire of twigs and roots of wormwood . . . and also the dung of oxen (Qtd. in Spuler 96–97).

According to a letter by a Hungarian bishop who had custody of two Tartar captives taken in Russia, written to the bishop of Paris in 1257:

> I asked them about their belief; and in few words, they believe nothing. They began to tell me, that they were come from their own country to conquer the world. They make use of the Jewish [actually, Uighur; the Uighurs were a semi-sedentary, literate steppe people, and early allies of the Mongols] letters, because formerly they had none of their own... They eat frogs, dogs, serpents and all things . . . Their horses are good but stupid (Qtd. in Paris 449).

According to a description by Matthew Paris, English chronicler, in the 1270s:

> They are inhuman and beastly, rather monsters than men, thirsting for and drinking blood, tearing and devouring the flesh of dogs and men, dressed in ox-hides, armed with plates of iron . . . thickset, strong, invincible, indefatigable . . . They are without human laws, know no comforts, are more ferocious than lions or bears . . . They know no other language than their own, which no one else knows; for until now there has been no access to them. . . . so that there could be no knowledge of their customs or persons . . . They wander about with their flocks and their wives, who are taught to fight like men (Qtd. in Rockhill).

## *Discussion Questions*

1. What can you infer about the economy, ideology, and technology of the Mongols from the descriptions given?
2. Which of the Mongols' characteristics that are described would make them likely to set out on a career of conquest?
3. Which of their characteristics would be helpful to them during their career of conquest?
4. Which of the descriptions would you be most willing to accept as accurate? Which would you be least willing to accept as accurate? Why?

# *What Was the Mongol Leader, Chinggis Great Khan, Really Like?*

## *Depends on Who You Ask!*

According to a southern Chinese author who was an eyewitness of the bloody Mongol campaign in north China:

> This man is brave and decisive, he is self-controlled, and lenient [merciful] towards the population; he reveres [respects] Heaven and Earth, prizes loyalty and justice (Qtd. in Ratchnevsky 167).

The Indian historian Juzjani wrote in 1256 in the sultanate of Delhi and had been an eyewitness of Chinggis Khan's raid on India in 1221. According to him:

> A man of tall stature, of vigorous build, robust in body, the hair on his face scanty and turned white, with cat's eyes, possessed of great energy, discernment [judgment], genius and understanding, awe-inspiring, a butcher, just, resolute, an over thrower of enemies, intrepid [fearless], sanguinary [bloodthirsty] and cruel (Qtd. in Saunders 63).

Chinggis himself had a letter written to a Chinese Daoist sage whom he had invited to discuss religious topics. The Daoist's companion included the letter in the account of the trip. He said:

> I wear the same clothing and eat the same food as the cow-herds and horse-herders. We make the same sacrifices and we share our riches. I look upon the nation as my new-born child, and I care for my soldiers as if they were my brothers (Qtd. in Ratchnevsky 149).

The Muslim historian Rashid al-Din, the official court historian of the Mongol khan of Persia, wrote that some of Chinggis's sayings included the following:

> From the goodness of severity the stability of government. When the master is away hunting, or at war, the wife must keep the household in good order. Good husbands are known by their good wives. If a wife be stupid or dull, wanting in reason and orderliness, she makes obvious the badness of her husband.
>
> Only a man who feels hunger and thirst and by this estimates the feelings of others is fit to be a commander of troops. The campaign and its hardships must be in proportion with the strength of the weakest of the warriors.
>
> My bowmen and warriors loom like thick forests: their wives, sweethearts and maidens shine like red flames. My task and intention is to sweeten their mouths with gifts of sweet sugar, to decorate their breasts, backs and shoulders with garments [clothes] of brocade, to seat them on good geldings [horses], give them to drink from pure and sweet rivers, provide their beasts with good and abundant [plentiful] pastures, and to order that the great roads and highways that serve as ways for the people be cleared of garbage, tree- stumps and all bad things; and not to allow dirt and thorns in the tents.
>
> It is delightful and felicitous [good] for a man to subdue rebels and conquer and extirpate [destroy] his enemies, to take all they possess, to cause their servants to cry out, to make tears run down their faces and noses, to ride their pleasant-paced geldings [horses], to make

> the bellies and navels of their wives his bed and bedding, to admire their rosy cheeks, to kiss them and suck their red lips (Rashid al-Din, *Collected Chronicles*, qtd. in Riasanovsky 91).

According to inference from the laws that by tradition Chinggis set up:

> If it is necessary to write to rebels or send messages to them they shall not be intimidated by an excessive display of confidence on our part or by the size of our army, but they shall merely be told: if you submit you will find peace and benevolence. But if you continue to resist—what then do we know [about your future]? Only God knows what then shall become of you (Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, qtd. in Spuler 40–41).
>
> Whoever gives food or clothing to a captive without the permission of his captor is to be put to death.
>
> [Leaders are to] personally examine the troops and their armament before going to battle, even to needle and thread; to supply the troops with everything they need; and to punish those lacking any necessary equipment.
>
> Women accompanying the troops [are] to do the work and perform the duties of men, while the latter are absent fighting.
>
> All religions [are] to be respected and . . . no preference [is] to be shown to any of them (Qtd. in Riasanovsky 83–85).

According to inference from the following decisions made by Chinggis Khan:

> When fighting against hereditary enemies of his tribe, Chinggis's own son begged him to spare the life of the enemy leader's son. Chinggis replied: "How often have we fought them? They have caused us much vexation and sorrow. How can we spare his life? He will only instigate another rebellion. I have conquered these lands, armies, and tribes for you, my sons. Of what use is he? There is no better place for an enemy of our nation than the grave (Rashid al-Din, *Collected Chronicles*, qtd. in Riasanovsky 86)!
>
> At a Grand Council meeting headed by Chinggis in 1202, it was decided that "in days gone by the Tartars killed our ancestors and forefathers. [Therefore] we will sacrifice them in revenge and retribution . . . by massacring all except the youngest. . . . down to the very last male and the remainder will be shared as slaves among us all (*Secret History of the Mongols*, secs. 148, 154, qtd. in Ratchnevsky 151).

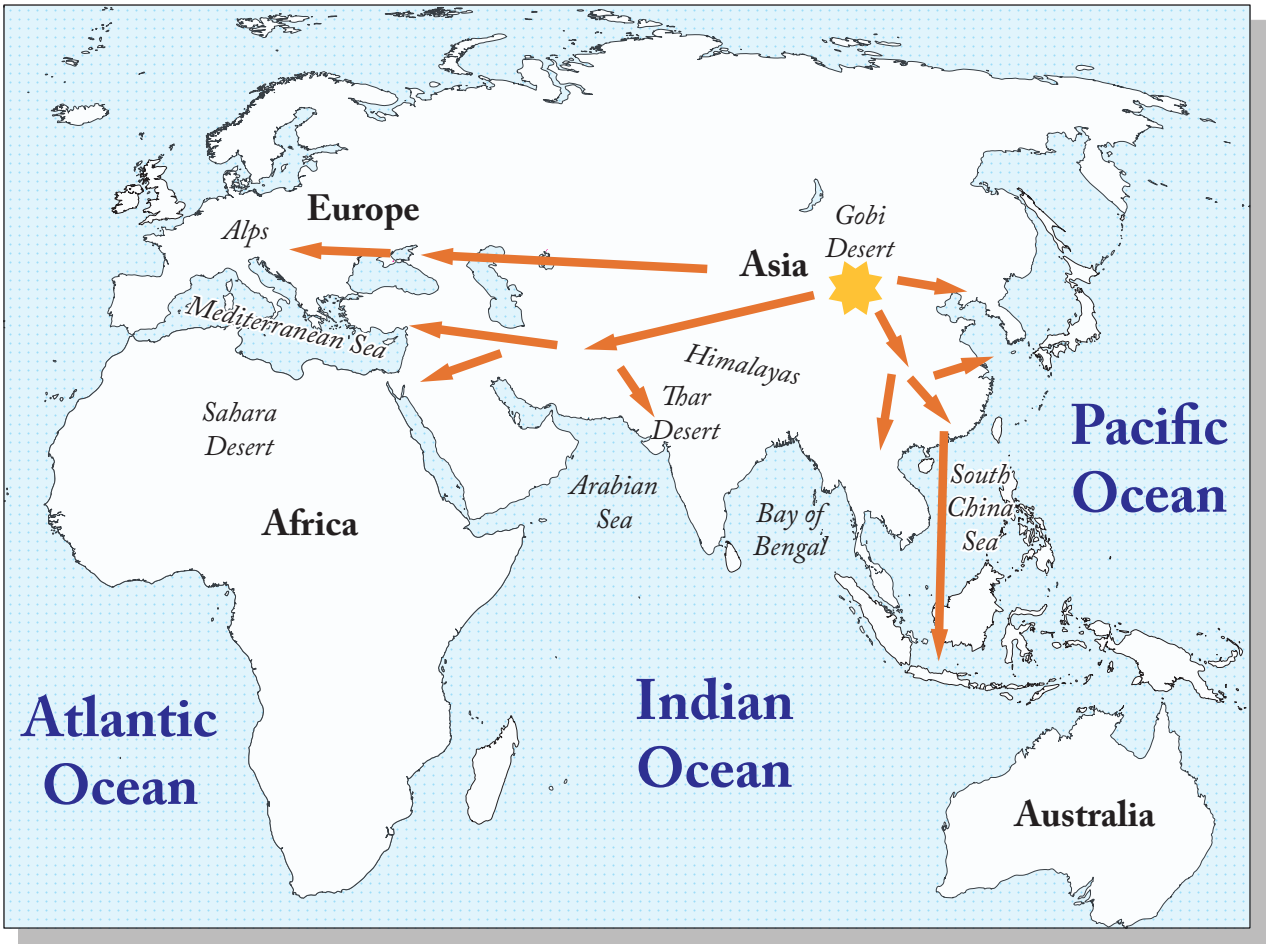
## *Discussion Questions:*

1. What characteristics of Chinggis shown by the documents would have been particularly helpful to him in his career of conquest? If you had to choose three characteristics as the most helpful, which would they be? Why?
2. What characteristics of Chinggis shown by the documents would have been particularly helpful to him in governing his empire? If you had to choose three characteristics as most helpful, which would they be? Why?
3. Which of the items of information above about Chinggis's character would you question as to accuracy, and why?
4. How would you explain variations in the descriptions of what Chinggis was like?

5. In what ways could Mongol ideas about women's position in society help the Mongols' career of conquest? To answer this question use information from all parts of this chapter so far.

6. Would you agree with Chinggis's idea that severity is good, because it leads to stable government? Why or why not? Did the idea apply more in Chinggis's time and place than today? Why or why not?

7. Which of the accounts above do you consider most reliable, and why?



# *How Did Chinggis Turn a Pastoral Nomadic Society into an Efficient War Machine?*

Before Chinggis, the Mongols were organized into tribes that fought and raided each other for plunder, for women (no marriages were allowed between members of the same tribe), and to avenge insults. Largely self-sufficient, they often raided, traded with, and extracted tribute from neighboring settled agricultural communities.

In most tribes there were no specialists other than shamans and blacksmiths. Women and men both contributed to the economy, and the division of labor by gender was not rigid. Those men who could afford it married more than one wife, each of whom had her separate household, owned property outright, and had considerable freedom of action. Women rode, shot with bow and arrow, and hunted. They gave political advice and could rise to the rank of chief, though rarely. The senior wife had special status and respect, and her children were often favored as heirs. On campaign, wives, children, and flocks often went with the army. Women and even children could be drafted to ride on the fringes of battle to simulate larger numbers. It is unclear whether they ever took an active part in combat. The tribes were divided into nobles and commoners, and only members of noble lineages could become chiefs, though class differences were not strongly marked.

All Mongols were fighters, but Chinggis made a reorganized army the core of the society and the carrier of many of his reforms. Under him and his successors the Mongol army had the following characteristics, many designed by Chinggis himself:

- All males 15–70 served in the army, all as cavalry.
- The army's 95 units of 10,000 soldiers were subdivided into units of 1,000, 100, and 10. Members of different tribes were mixed together in units of every size to ensure loyalty to the army above loyalty to the tribe. Allies and levies from conquered territories were also integrated into the fighting force, the latter usually being placed in the front ranks.
- Absolute obedience to orders from superiors was enforced.
- Officers had tight control over their troops' actions (plunder only with permission, no one allowed to transfer out of their unit).
- Officers and men were bound to each other by mutual loyalty and two-way responsibilities.
- No one in the army was paid, though all shared to varying degrees in the booty. All contributed to a fund to take care of those too old, sick, or hurt to fight.
- During three months every year, large-scale hunting expeditions served as intensive military training simulations.
- Cavalry troops had to supply their own bows and other military equipment, which had to meet officers' standards.

- Gathering intelligence had high priority. Scouts were sent out, local knowledge sought, and traveling merchants rewarded for information.
- Foreign experts and advisors were extensively used, notably Chinese and Persian engineers skilled at making and using siege weapons such as catapults and battering rams.

The highest level of government was Chinggis and his family, especially his sons by his senior wife and their descendants, known as the Golden Family. From among their members the Great Khans and after Chinggis Khan's death the khans ruling the four successor empires were selected by agreement of the Kuriltai, the council made up of Chinggis's family members and those others they invited.

Lack of clear-cut rules of succession opened the way for power struggles after the death of each ruler. Some earlier pastoral nomadic empires did not long survive the death of the leader who founded them. The Mongol state was unusual in surviving for as long as it did, even though it divided into four separate kingdoms, or khanates, after about 1260.

Chinggis Khan's administrators were picked for demonstrated high performance regardless of their wealth or social class. Among Chinggis's closest advisors were people from both allied and conquered non-Mongol backgrounds, notably literate scholars and scribes from China, Persia, and the Inner Eurasian oasis towns.

## *Discussion Questions*

1. What features of Mongol social organization and way of life favored their success in conquest. In what ways?
2. What features of Mongol social organization and ways of life would have favored successful government of conquered territories. In what ways?
3. What features of Mongol social organization and ways of life would have made for difficulties in conquest and in subsequent government of conquered territories?
4. What problems was Chinggis trying to solve by setting up his army the way he did?
5. What features of Mongol society favored the possibility of mobilizing a large proportion of the population for a war effort?
6. In what ways might the diversity and mixing that Chinggis favored have been an advantage, and in what ways a handicap in the conquests and the running of his empire?
7. **Extension Activity.** Compare the Mongol army to the feudal/mercenary armies of medieval Europe. What were the advantages and disadvantages of each for an initial conquest and for keeping hold of conquered territories afterwards?
8. **Assessment.** Discussion question might serve as assessment.

# *What Was It Like to Live in the Mongol Homeland?*

John of Plano Carpini, an Italian friar who traveled to Mongolia in the 1240s, described the Mongol homeland as follows:

> In some parts the country is extremely mountainous, in others it is flat . . . in some districts there are small woods, but otherwise it is completely bare of trees . . . Not one hundredth part of the land is fertile, nor can it bear . . . unless it be irrigated by running water, and brooks and streams are few there and rivers very rare . . . Although the land is otherwise barren, it is fit for grazing cattle; even if not very good, at least sufficiently so.
>
> The weather there is astonishingly irregular, for in the middle of the summer . . . there is fierce thunder and lightning which cause the death of many men, and at the same time there are very heavy falls of snow. There are also hurricanes of bitterly cold winds, so violent that at times men can ride on horseback only with great effort. [Sometimes one can] scarcely see owing to the great clouds of dust. Very heavy hail also often falls there. Then also in summer there is suddenly great heat, and suddenly extreme cold (Qtd. in Dawson 5–6).

Carpini was right. Winters in the Mongol homeland were long and cold, and they still are today. The average mean temperature in January is minus 34 degrees centigrade, but extremes have been recorded of minus 55 degrees. The air temperature fluctuates heavily from day to day. Even in the mountainous region of the northwest, the heat can hit 40 degrees centigrade. There is little rainfall, and 85 percent of it falls during the three summer months. There is evidence that the climate of the steppes had turned cooler and drier for a while before and during the time of the Mongol conquests. Climatological data shows that the climate of the steppes was turning cooler and drier about the time of the Mongol conquests, reducing the season when ample grazing land was available for horses, sheep, and other stock. We can only speculate, however, about a possible connection between the Mongol conquests and an ecological crisis (Christian 387).

Horses were essential to the Mongol way of life. They were pastured entirely on the open steppe, with no supplementary grain or hay even in winter. Although extremely hardy, Mongol horses could not be ridden day after day or carry heavy loads. Therefore, every mounted soldier ideally possessed not one horse but a string of remounts as well (Lattimore 2).

Long-distance travel was tough. William of Rubruck, a Flemish monk who visited Karakorum, the Mongol capital, in the 1250s, took eleven months to return from there to the island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean. The *Merchant's Handbook*, a book based mostly on information from Genoese traders of the early 1300s, suggests a nine-month journey from the Black Sea to Beijing, the capital of the Chinese Mongol state. People traveled across the steppe by ox-drawn wagon, river boat, camel caravan, donkey, and horse. The Daoist sage Ch'ang Chun took fourteen months to get from the Chinese border to Samarkand in what is today Uzbekistan, a country north of Afghanistan (Larner Appendix II).

His companion Li Chih-Ch'ang's account of the journey suggests some reasons for the length of time taken. He reported that:

The country was now so mountainous, the ascents so formidable and the valley-gorges so deep that the use of wagons became very difficult. The road here was first made for military purposes by the great Khan's third son. Our cavalry escort helped us to deal with the wagons, dragging them up hill by attaching ropes to the shafts and getting them down by tying ropes to the wheels and locking them fast . . . Our oxen were incapable of further effort and abandoning them by the roadside we harnessed six horses to our wagons. Henceforward we did not again use oxen.

We descended a deep ravine . . . Stream after stream rushes into this defile, forming a torrent that bends and twists down the pass . . . It was the Great Khan's second son who when accompanying his father on the western campaign first constructed a road through the defile, piercing the rocks and building no less than forty-eight timber bridges of such width that two carts can drive over them side by side (Li Chih-Ch'ang 76–77, 84–85).

## *Discussion Questions*

1. What problems of logistics and provisioning might a Mongol army numbering 100,000 to 120,000 mounted soldiers be likely to encounter? Note: The Persian historian Juvaini estimated that the daily food ration for a few thousand Mongols assembled for a council meeting was two thousand wagon-loads of fermented mares' milk and wine, three hundred horses or oxen, and three thousand sheep.
2. How might the Mongols have solved their provisioning problems in the various regions where they fought?
3. What was the potential environmental impact of their provisioning needs?
4. Assess the part that the natural and physical environment is likely to have played in the Mongols' success at conquest.
5. What part does the environment still play in military planning in the twenty-first century?

## *Activities*

1. Write a travel brochure addressed to merchants intending to bring goods for sale from the Black Sea to Karakorum in the 1220s.
2. Assume that you are a spy sent out by the ruler of a neighboring state at the time the Mongols were on the rise. Report on whether it is worthwhile to send an army to invade Mongolia to stop the Mongol advance. What features of the environment might be considered in deciding whether or not to invade.

# *Mongol Technology: Highly Effective Low Tech*

The Mongols' own tribal technology was similar to that of other steppe nomads. The weapons their blacksmiths made on portable anvils and forges were relatively crude. The Mongols also acquired by plunder, tribute, and trade high-quality weapons made by urban artisans.

The bow was the Mongols' most important weapon. Made from layers of horn, sinew, wood, and waterproof lacquer, it shot an arrow faster and with more power than a wooden bow could. It had a pull of up to 160 pounds and a range of up to 350 yards.

A stone thumb-ring used in the release further increased the speed and penetrating power of arrows, which were made for different purposes. There were short and long range arrows, "singing" arrows used for signaling, fire-starting arrows, and arrows tipped with tiny gunpowder grenades. The Mongols did not, however, win every battle they fought because mounted enemies usually had similar equipment.

Mongol troops also carried iron or leather helmets, a leather-covered wicker shield, a lasso, a forearm-strapped dagger, a small sword, and if they were heavily armed, a scimitar, battle-axe, and 12-foot lance. Soldiers learned from the Chinese to wear closely-woven silk undershirts. If an arrow hit a soldier's torso, it would drive the silk into the wound without breaking it. Therefore, the arrowhead might do less damage and could more easily be removed.

Mongol saddlebags, made from the waterproof stomachs of animals, could be inflated to help in river crossings. These bags held minimal field rations of millet, dried meat, fermented mares' milk in a leather bottle, and tools such as files and needles for repairing equipment. When a Mongol messenger needed to ride a long distance and had little food and no time to hunt, he sometimes opened a vein in one of his horses and drank the blood.

In military communications, the well-coordinated and efficient use of transport and signaling gave the Mongols an edge. They signaled by shooting whistling arrows tuned to make different sounds, waving flags (a forerunner of the semaphore), burning torches, and dispatching fast-riding couriers. The army set up and maintained networks of staging posts where riders could rest and exchange horses.

## *Discussion Questions*

1. What features of Mongol technology are likely to have contributed to the success of their empire-building, and how?
2. To what extent, and in what ways, was the Mongols' technology connected to their pastoral nomadic way of life?
3. What were the Mongols' most significant technological strengths? What are your reasons for considering them significant?

4. Which three of the following did the Mongols need most when fighting other pastoral nomads, and which three did they need the most when fighting against a settled, agricultural state:

    - bows and arrows
    - lance, battle-axe, and spear armor
    - communication equipment
    - catapults, battering rams, and other siege equipment
    - technical advisors

    Explain your choices.

## *Activity*

Compare the military technology of the Mongols to that of one or more of the following:

- European crusaders
- Song Chinese army
- Armies of Mayan city-states in Mesoamerica

# *Shamans, Heaven, and the Ideology of Conquest*

The Mongols' religion was shamanism. They combined this with belief in Tengri, the Eternal Sky, as the supreme supernatural power. They also believed in an Earth and fertility goddess and in nature spirits. The major religions, including Tibetan Buddhism, Daoism, Nestorian Christianity, and Islam, were seen as having access to other spiritual beings who might, if properly approached, also be helpful.

Shamans were considered go-betweens or bridges joining the human and the spirit world. They could be women or men, and they were always people of prestige and importance. They communicated with the spirits in trances, exorcised evil, blessed flocks and herds, and made prophesies by examining cracks in the burned shoulder blades of sheep. Mongols had no temples, no hierarchy of religious specialists, no regular public worship, no sacred scriptures, and no required beliefs. Their religious concerns were practical and aimed toward ensuring fertility, prosperity, health, and military success. As chiefs usually did, Chinggis Khan and his descendants climbed to high places to pray to Heaven before a decisive battle. The Mongols also regarded vengeance for insult or injury as a moral duty, approved by Heaven. And the duty to avenge was handed down from generation to generation.

It was only gradually that Chinggis and his Mongols arrived at an ideology of conquest. Eventually, he, or at least the sons and grandsons who followed him, came to believe that the Mongols had a mission from Heaven to conquer the world and establish a universal empire. In this, Mongol leaders were almost certainly influenced by contact with the Chinese ideology of the Mandate of Heaven, the belief that the emperor ruled because the Supreme Being wanted him to. Some Mongol tribes professed the form of Christianity known as Nestorian, so Christian monotheism and rituals may have influenced them too.

The Mongol view of Heaven's attitude toward their conquests developed slowly but surely. Chinggis Khan's early campaigns were clearly not part of a larger plan for universal conquest. In 1206 he was named Great Khan primarily because of his military and political successes. However, it helped that one of his followers saw a vision: "A white ox harnessing itself to a wagon and pulling it behind Chinggis, bellowing: 'Heaven and Earth agree, let [Chinggis] be the nation's master! Bearing the nation, I am bringing it to him'" (Onon 45).

His first invasion of northern China in 1211 followed the usual pattern of nomad raids. Chinggis made no attempt to occupy or to keep Chinese territory, which was then under the Jin Dynasty, a ruling family that had come originally from Manchuria far north of the Yellow River valley. The Mongols returned, however, and in 1215 took the Jin capital of Beijing. Chinese officers deserted to Chinggis in large numbers, some bringing with them tens of thousands of troops.

Determined to crush all resistance, Chinggis discussed with his generals what to do with the land once it was conquered. According to some accounts, they considered exterminating the north Chinese farming population in occupied territories and turning the country into pasture for the Mongols' horses. They were dissuaded when one of Chinggis's valued Chinese advisors pointed out that taxes from a live population were worth more to the conquerors than a depopulated land occupied by horses.

Evidence suggests that Chinggis originally had no intention of invading the Qara-Khitai and Khwarizm empires, which lay to the west of Mongolia. The populations of these empires varied from highly sophisticated urban Persians to illiterate nomads. Most were unhappy with their own rulers. Chinggis conquered the huge Inner Eurasian territory of the Qara-Khitai without much trouble. He then attacked Khwarizm, which included northern Persia, in revenge for its ruler unwisely killing some Mongol envoys. Chinggis announced that "Heaven has granted me all the Earth, from sunrise to sunset" (Juvaini, Qtd. in Ratchnevsky 159). This was a claim to universal empire. He would stick by it for the rest of his life, and his descendants would echo the claim.

From this time on, he consistently considered those opposing him not as enemies but as rebels. That made resistance to Mongol takeover treasonous, meriting wholesale executions as punishment. By the 1240s, it was reported that "The Mongols do not make peace with anyone who has not submitted to them, because of the instruction of Chinggis Khan that they should seek to bring all peoples under their yoke" (John of Plano Carpini, qtd. in Ratchnevsky 159).

There were other reasons for conquest besides religious ideology:

- Enemies and continual conquests were needed to keep the Mongol forces united and not slipping into the old ways of tribal squabbling and feuding.
- The army was financed with booty.
- Followers needed rewards in plunder, lands, and slave captives to keep them loyal.
- The Mongol elite's newly honed taste for luxuries could not be satisfied from the old nomad economy.
- Each conquest put the Mongols in touch with new enemies and new threats.
- Chinggis's ideology of ruling those he conquered was simple. His rule was intended solely to benefit the Mongols.
- Subject peoples were seen only as sources of plunder, cannon-fodder, forced labor, taxes, and experts in areas where Mongols were ignorant.

## *Discussion Questions*

1. Did ideology cause the Mongols to launch their conquests? How? In what sense are you using the word "cause"? On what evidence are you basing your answer?
2. What part did ideology play in the success of Mongol empire-building?
3. Which Mongol beliefs would be an advantage and which would be a disadvantage in governing their multiethnic empire? Explain in what ways each of the beliefs you mentioned would be an advantage or a disadvantage.
4. Based on the evidence you have, would you agree with the idea that the Mongols' success was due to their enemies' weaknesses rather than to their own strengths? Explain your answer.

## *Activities*

Ask students to:

1. Develop hypotheses (individually, in groups, or as a class) about how the Mongols would rule their empire, based on information provided so far. Ask them to save their hypotheses because they will work with them again later.
2. Compare the Mongols' career of conquest, and their ideology of conquest, with that of the European crusaders.

## *Assessment*

1. What advantages and what disadvantages did the Mongols have in their career of world conquest?
2. What contributed most to their conquering success? Explain the reasons for your answer.

LESSON 2

# Tasting the Fruits of Conquest: The Sweet and the Bitter

## Impact of Imperial Conquests on Mongol Society

### *Activities*

Ask students to do one or more of the following, based on Student Handout 4.2.1:

1. Compare Mongol society under Kublai Khan with that under his grandfather Chinggis Khan using the information in Student Handout 4.2.1 as well as in all the student handouts for Lesson 1 and Student Handout 4.3.1 in Lesson 3.
2. Explain in what ways Mongol society did, and did not, change. Develop hypotheses that explain how the changes are related to the conquest and the maintenance of the Mongol Empire, giving evidence to support your argument.
3. Determine in what ways the strategies for creating an empire differed from the strategies for ruling it.
4. Compare Kublai as a leader with Chinggis as a leader, and explain whether their differences were due to personality or circumstances.

# *Could an Empire be Ruled From Horseback?*

Some fifty years after Chinggis's death, the following situation existed. The unified Mongol Empire divided about 1260 into four successor empires, or khanates: 1) China and part of Mongolia, where the Mongol regime was called the Yuan Dynasty, 2) Inner Eurasia, a state called Chagatay after the name of one of Chinggis's sons, 3) the khanate of the Golden Horde (or the khanate of Kipchak), which included the steppes north of the Caspian and Black seas, as well as domination over Russia, and 4) the ilkhanate of Persia and Iraq. The Ilkhans had that title because they were in theory "deputies" of the Great Khan in China, though in reality they were independent.

Kublai Khan was the Great Khan and ruled China. But his relatives who ruled Chagatay, the Golden Horde, and the ilkhanate in Persia and Iraq were in reality independent, though acknowledging the Great Khan as supreme. The term "ilkhanate" means "deputy" of the Great Khan. The military under Kublai Khan consisted of an infantry and a navy, as well as cavalry. Soldiers were paid from the government treasury.

In China, Muslims, Christians, and Buddhists from central and western Eurasia were given most key positions because the Mongol rulers distrusted Chinese high officials, owing to their local interests and loyalties. Governing methods were a mixture of Chinese, Muslim, Turkish, and Mongol ideas. Finances for the empire came almost entirely from relatively low-level taxation, based on as accurate a census of the population as possible. Kublai Khan performed public Confucian rituals prescribed for Chinese emperors, while personally leaning toward Tibetan Buddhism and keeping up with shamanist rituals.

Ideology of conquest showed in Kublai's thinking of himself as a universal emperor. He made repeated, though mostly unsuccessful, attempts to conquer Japan, Vietnam, Burma, and even Java in Southeast Asia. Kublai's ideology of rule was not only to enrich Mongols but also to serve China as a Son of Heaven. Concerned to establish the legitimacy of his rule, he tried, with some success, to enlist the goodwill and support of the peoples he ruled.

Among Buddhists, his legitimacy was bolstered when monks declared him to be the reincarnation of a Bodhisattva, or Buddhist saint. He worked to keep Mongol backing by acting traditionally in at least some ways, and by protecting Mongols' privileged position in the empire. He drew his advisors from many ethnic, language, and religious backgrounds.

In line with Kublai's ideology of rule, his government had a welfare program. It paid for assistance to the old, infirm, and poor out of taxes. Villages that suffered natural disasters were sent grain, clothes, cash, and had their taxes cancelled. Kublai founded the office for stimulation of agriculture, forbade nomad animals from roaming on farmland, arranged for the teaching of advanced agricultural techniques to the population around the old Mongol capital of Karakorum, and forgave taxes for those who chose to become settled farmers.

He moved the Mongol capital to a newly built city near modern Beijing in China, its site chosen according to the Chinese idea of feng shui. The name of the dynasty was changed to Yuan—Chinese word meaning "origin." Mongols were forbidden intermarriage with Chinese.

Women's position under Mongol rule was generally higher than it had been in the agricultural societies the Mongols had conquered. A woman was named provincial governor under Kublai. Mongol women refused to adopt the Chinese custom of foot binding. Kublai took his second wife Chabi's advice on some public issues.

## *Introductory Activities*

Impact of Mongol imperial conquests on those they conquered:

1. Ask students to brainstorm, in small groups or as a class, likely Mongol impact on those they conquered. Students may be asked to consider both short- and long-range features of the impact, and to group the results of their brainstorming into positive and negative features. Then ask them to come up with a consensus on what they consider the most significant features of the impact, short-range and long-range, and to make clear on what basis they have made their judgments.

2. Ask students to consider in what ways the Mongol impact on those they conquered would have differed from or been similar to, the impact of other conquerors they know of in eras before the Mongol Empire and in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

3. Ask students to read the following statements, in Student Handout 4.2.2, made in the second half of the thirteenth century, by two different authors.

# *It Ain't Necessarily So . . .*

According to the Persian historian Juvaini:

> In the Muslim countries devastated by Chinggis Khan, not one in a thousand of the inhabitants survived (Qtd. in Nicolle 46).

According to the Muslim chronicler Ghazi:

> Under the reign of Chinggis Khan, all the countries . . . enjoyed such peace that a man might have journeyed from the land of the sunrise to the land of sunset with a golden platter upon his head without suffering the least violence from anyone (Qtd. in Martin 6).

## *Discussion Questions*

1. What evidence can you find in this chapter that would confirm, modify, extend, or contradict the statements above? (Different students or groups can be assigned to find confirming, modifying, and contradicting evidence.) What might analysis of the statements themselves tell you about their reliability as historical evidence?
2. What questions might you ask to decide on how reliable each of the statements is?
3. Before having students do the following reading, ask them to discuss this question:

   > Can the negative impact of conquest on a subject peoples be balanced by the positive impact? Why or why not? (The discussion can be referred to later in the course when introducing the study of colonialism and imperialism.)

# *Judging the Mongols*

The impact of the Mongol conquest on the conquered peoples included:

- death
- destruction
- extortion of wealth
- disease
- displacement

It also included:

- the intensification of activity on the trade routes connecting East Asia with the Mediterranean lands and Europe.
- the further spread of Islam in Asia.
- the advancement of Tibetan Buddhism in China.

**Death:** The Mongols inflicted death on a large scale. In battle, their powerful bows caused heavy enemy casualties. Moreover, mass slaughter of defeated enemy soldiers and civilians was used as a deliberate policy of terror in order to:

- decrease the enemy's will to fight.
- induce cities to surrender without fighting, thus avoiding long sieges, which the Mongol army could not afford because it needed to keep moving to find grazing land for its horses.
- avoid the risk of leaving enemies behind that might be capable of renewing resistance.
- reduce the size of the occupying detachments needing to be left behind.

The total death toll directly inflicted by the Mongols during the period of their conquests, spanning nearly two centuries, may have been several millions. This includes the deaths by hunger and disease that were by-products of Mongol military operations and rule.

**But:** More urban populations were spared than were massacred. Often spared were artisans, clerics of all religions, scribes, scholars, merchants, young women, and often officers, nobles, and administrators.

> Mass slaughter was not a Mongol monopoly either in their own time or later. In taking a little Song Chinese town in 1218, the Jin general had fifteen thousand of the inhabitants put to the sword. In 1291, King Edward of England slew nearly ten thousand people of Berwick. In 1303, thirty thousand Hindus died in a battle at Chitor.

By the time of Mongke's rule, the Great Khan insisted that destruction be limited to a minimum and civilians be left alone. To show he was serious, he had a senior Mongol commander of ten thousand publicly executed for killing a Persian civilian.

Kublai's revision of the Chinese law code reduced the number of offenses that carried the death penalty to half what it had been under the previous dynasties.

**Destruction:** The Mongols often destroyed the towns they attacked, usually as a by-product of the battle, sometimes deliberately after their conquest. Mongols traditionally had no use for towns. Destroying them was a practical measure to prevent their use for resistance.

Irrigation channels, without which agriculture in regions with fragile ecosystems was impossible, were in many areas seriously damaged or neglected. Gradually they silted up and became unusable, with serious long-term ecological consequences that resulted in a setback for agriculture over wide areas for centuries. This problem was especially acute in Persia and Iraq.

Destruction was a by-product of the Mongols' conquests, rather than a policy. They were unaware of or uninterested in the damage; while the local population, reduced by flight, massacre, famine, and disease, could not spare the labor to restore and maintain the irrigation channels.

**But:** There was a great deal of construction initiated and supported by the Mongols. Many of the towns the Mongols destroyed rose again a few years later with Mongol help.

Courier services were expanded and many additional waystations were built along trade routes, where both troops and civilian travelers could get food, drink, lodging, and a change of horses. In China under Kublai Khan, the postal relay system came to include fourteen hundred waystations 14–40 miles apart.

Roads and bridges built originally to service the Mongol military became trade and travel routes.

The extension of the Grand Canal to Beijing by the Mongols allowed cheap transport of rice from southern to northern China.

**Extortion of wealth:** After first plundering the conquered, the conquerors were for a while satisfied with tribute in the form of demand of silk, grain, precious metals, and sophisticated war machinery. Unpredictable and capricious demands were gradually replaced with regular though intermittently extortionate taxes, sometimes made worse by demands that greedy Mongol princes and officials made for extra payments.

**But:** Some of the wealth that flowed to the Mongols was redistributed. Only part made its way to Mongolia. Much went back to those conquered areas where Mongols settled as occupying troops, administrators, and governors.

From about 1250, the Mongols undertook reforms. The Great Khan Mongke commanded, "Make the agricultural population safe from unjustified harassment, and bring despoiled provinces back to a habitable condition." He introduced the very

modern graduated income tax, repaid debts of previous rulers said to be owing to merchants, and made it more difficult for princes and high officials to practice extortion.

The lot of some segments of the conquered population actually improved, owing to profits from the trade promoted and supported by the Mongols, to their enforcement of law and order within their territories, and to their opening of careers to merit, not only birth or wealth. The poorest classes received something like government welfare assistance: food, clothes, and money.

**Disease:** The association of disease and warfare is commonplace. Troops live under more unsanitary conditions than is normal. Unburied corpses often contaminated water supplies. Among the overcrowded and underfed in besieged cities and in close quartered armies, an infectious illness could spread quickly. The existing food supply must be stretched to feed the invading army, leaving little for the local population and thereby harming its immune system.

The frequent long-distance travel of military personnel, merchants, and others promoted the wider spread of diseases. Of these the Black Death (bubonic plague) was the best known and most severe. This disease may have been carried by soldiers from Inner Eurasia to the Black Sea, and from there to West Asia, North Africa, and Europe. This infection killed about one-third of the total population of Europe.

**Displacement:** During the Mongol campaigns of conquest and later, there was large-scale enslavement and forced movement of populations.

Many fled in terror when news reached them of an approaching Mongol army.

Within the army, peoples of different backgrounds were deliberately mixed in all groupings from ten men to ten thousand. They and their families, who often accompanied Mongol armies, moved long distances on campaigns and spent long periods in far-away places as occupying armies.

In conquered territories, the Mongols usually rounded up the craftspeople and assigned them to Mongol princes and commanders. These captives, who could number tens of thousands in a single city, were carried off to Mongolia or other parts of the growing empire. This gave rise to considerable population exchanges between Russia, Central Asia, Persia/Afghanistan, Mongolia, and China.

**But:** Although captive artisans and young women (destined to be slaves, concubines, prostitutes, and entertainers) often remained in their masters' hands for the rest of their lives, some gained their freedom and married locally and some eventually returned to their homelands. Moreover, artisans often gained privileges. The movement of peoples resulted in exchanges of goods, ideas, and styles, and in frequent and widespread contact between peoples of widely different cultural, ethnic, religious, and language backgrounds.

Thousands of people traveled from western and central parts of Eurasia to serve the Mongol regime in China. Marco Polo, the Venetian merchant who traveled to China with his father and uncle in 1271 and remained there for seventeen years, was just one of these foreigners seeking opportunity in Mongol administration.

Genoese merchants, who traded extensively in the Muslim lands and Inner Eurasia in

the Mongol era, sold Chinese silk and "Tatar cloth" at the fairs of northern France.

Chinese artisans designed ceramics especially to appeal to Muslim tastes.

The Chinese exported copper and iron goods, porcelain, silks, linens, books, sugar, and rice to Japan and Southeast Asia in return for spices and exotic items like rhino horns.

At the time of his death in Italy, Marco Polo had among his possessions a Mongol slave, Tartar bedding, brocades from China, and a Buddhist rosary.

Kublai Khan had Persian copies of the works of Euclid and Ptolemy translated into Chinese.

Egyptian experts were called in to improve Chinese sugar-refining techniques.

Muslim medical and astronomical sciences became known in China. Chinese medical works were translated into Persian.

Buddhist monks built Chinese-style pagodas in Persia.

Persian miniatures show Chinese-style mountains and dragons.

A Mongol version of the traditional stories about Alexander the Great was produced.

Diplomatic contact with western Europe intensified.

Columbus owned a copy of Marco Polo's book, and on his first voyage he took with him a letter from the Spanish king to the Great Khan.

**Islam's spread** among the peoples of the Mongol Empire was also helped by the movement of peoples.

Many of the Turkic groups that allied with the Mongols had earlier converted to Islam. A significant number of them were literate and employed by the Mongols as clerks, administrators, and translators as well as soldiers. They carried the Koran and their beliefs to new potential converts.

Persia and Iraq were overwhelmingly Muslim when the Mongols swept in. Persian became one of the official languages of the Mongol Empire, used even in China. And Persian culture, along with Islam, spread into Central and Eastern Asia.

The Mongol Great Khans' preferred Muslims for senior positions in China. They thought that foreign Muslims could be more impartial than local Chinese. The foreign recruits could be blamed in case of Chinese dissatisfaction. Scholars from Persia were especially admired for their scientific and cultural achievements.

Starting in the thirteenth century, the Mongol khans of the Golden Horde and of Persia converted to Islam and threw their governments' power behind the Muslim faith.

**Buddhism** advanced in China owing partly to direct support from the Great Khans, starting with Kublai. Tibetan lamas (monks), who had frequently held secular as well as religious power at home, began to move to China. Kublai, whose wife Chabi was an ardent Buddhist, found the political experience of the lamas useful to him. He put a number of them in positions of power and influence. He also made large donations to Buddhist temples, gave tax-exemption to Buddhist monks, and supported them in their arguments with Chinese Daoists.

Christianity lost out in the long run in Asia, though not through any action of the Mongols. Some members of the Mongol princely houses and senior advisors were Nestorian Christians. Christians also served in the army. Some of the steppe tribes within the Mongol Empire were Nestorian Christians. Several popes, that is, the head of the Latin, or Roman Catholic Christian, church, sent several envoys and missionaries from western Europe to Mongolia and China. European leaders had hopes of allying with Mongol leaders against the Muslim powers that challenged European political and commercial interests in the eastern Mediterranean. Neither the political overtures nor missionary labors resulted in much success for the Latin church in Asia.

Christianity suffered partly because it did not speak with a single voice: Believers in Latin Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Nestorian, and other Christian doctrines engaged in heated disputes with one another and competed for converts. Latin Christianity never caught on in any of the Mongol lands, and, with the advance of Islam, Nestorian communities in China and Inner Eurasia gradually shrank.

## *Discussion Questions*

1. Go back to the hypotheses you came up with in Student Handout 4.1.6 about how Mongols would rule their empire. In what ways does the new information you now have confirm, and in what ways disconfirm, your hypotheses? In what ways would you change your hypotheses to bring them in line with the evidence you now have?

2. Explain the differences between the short-term and the long-term consequences of Mongol conquest for subject peoples. What reasons would you give for these differences?

3. What was the advantage for the Mongol rulers of promoting the movement and exchange of goods, peoples, and ideas within and beyond their empire? How did they do the promoting?

4. During the period of their empire, what part did the Mongols play in what happened to the major religions?

5. Identify those consequences of the Mongol conquest that you consider historically significant, and explain the reasons for your choices. Which consequences do you consider most significant? Why?

## *Assessment*

1. In what ways did Mongol actions promote the exchange of goods and ideas within and beyond their empire?
2. Compare the part played by ideologies, both religious and other, in the establishment and government of the Mongol Empire.
3. Once they had been conquered, what were the advantages and disadvantages of Mongol rule for the subject peoples?
4. Assess the accuracy of this statement by one of the Mongols' Chinese advisors: "The Mongol empire has been won from the saddle [but] it [could] not be ruled from the saddle."

## LESSON 3

# Looking at the Big Picture: What Was Significant?

Ask students to read Student Handout 4.3.1. Its three sections could be assigned to different groups, who would then pool their information.

Explain to students that they will be asked to do the following, based on Student Handout 4.3.1 as well on what they have learned in the chapter so far. This will help focus their reading.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. In what ways did the Mongols' view of Europe, and Europe's view of the Mongols, change? In what ways did diplomatic contact between them change? How would you account for the timing of noticeable shifts? What evidence supports your hypotheses?
2. What features of the Mongol Empire were most significant for the Afroeurasian world at the time? Why? Give evidence for your argument.
3. What features of the Mongol Empire were most significant for the course of later world history? Why? Give evidence for your argument.

### *Activities*

1. Using information from the lessons and Student Handout 4.3.1, construct a hypothesis to account for the gradual disintegration of the Mongol Empire. What evidence supports your hypothesis? What questions would you ask that might provide additional support?
2. Based on information from the chapter so far and from the information in Student Handout 4.3.1, write an obituary of Chinggis Khan as a significant player in world history. Include specific details to support your statements, making clear why you think he was a significant player.
3. Explain to students that periodization is the historians' way to divide the flow of history into chunks that have some important things in common. The division in Student Handout 4.3.1 below uses different phases in the fate of the Mongol Empire to distinguish three chronological periods.
4. Ask students to construct a different way of periodizing the era, dividing up the chronology based on different factors. This activity lends itself to small group work.

### *Extension*

1. Compare the importance for world history of the Mongol Empire with that of one or more other empires you know about. If only one of them could be taught about in history courses, which one should it be? Why?

# *Chronological Table—Building the Mongol Empire*

## *Building the Mongol Empire*

| | |
|---|---|
| **1188–1204** | Temujin wars against, and/or allies with, neighboring tribes |
| **1206** | Temujin elected Great Khan by Kuriltai (council of allied nomad tribes and states) and takes name Chinggis (literal meaning: oceanic) |
| **1211–1216** | Mongols under Chinggis Khan war successfully against Jin Empire of North China |
| **1219–1222** | Mongols conquer Khwarizm Empire after murder of merchants and ambassadors there |
| **1221–1224** | First invasion of southern Russian steppe |
| **1229** | Election of Ogotai as Great Khan after two years of political infighting following Chinggis Khan's death |
| **1230–1234** | Definitive conquest of Jin Empire by Mongols |
| **1234–1235** | Ogotai establishes post-station system for couriers; Kuriltai decides on war against Europe, Korea, and Song empires |
| **1237** | King of Hungary and the Holy Roman emperor receive letters from Khan Batu, demanding their unconditional surrender in return for holding office under the Mongols; the demand is ignored |
| **1238** | Request by Muslims of Syria and Persia to European rulers for alliance against the Mongols |
| **1236–1242** | Campaign led by Khan Batu, a grandson of Chinggis, against Europe; Mongols invade Poland and Hungary but they withdraw in 1242, though remaining in control of Russia |
| **1241–1246** | Regency of Toregene, widow of Ogotai, as Great Khan |
| **1244** | Crusaders lose Jerusalem to Muslims for good |
| **1245** | Pope sends four friars as ambassadors to "Tartars," who return with Great Khan's orders for submission of pope |
| **1248–1251** | Regency of Gaimish, widow of Guyuk, as Great Khan |
| **1248** | Mongol proposal sent to French king for joint action against Muslims in Egypt, promising help in freeing Jerusalem; an embassy takes gift of portable chapel with fragment of True Cross, interpreted by Mongols as tribute showing formal submission of the Christian West |
| **1250** | Mamluks (Turkish Muslim slave soldiers) revolt and take over rule of Egypt |
| **1253** | Friar William of Rubruck leaves for the Mongol court at Karakorum; the Great Khan sends him back with a letter to the French king claiming universal rule |
| **1252–1279** | Conquest of Song Empire of South China by Mongols |
| **1258** | Mongols conquer Baghdad, killing last Abbasid caliph and ending the caliphate; Turkish Mamluks in Egypt now center of Muslim power |
| **1259** | Kublai, grandson of Chinggis, elected Great Khan by a Kuriltai; the same year, his brother elected Great Khan by a rival Kuriltai in the Mongol homeland, but surrenders to Kublai after four years of bitter civil war |

## *The Four Mongol Empires*

| | |
|---|---|
| **1260** | Pope's envoy to Khan Hulagu is assured that Latin Christians in Holy Land would be protected by Mongol armies |
| **1260** | Major defeat of Mongol army in Palestine by Mamluks of Egypt ends Mongol expansion in Southwest Asia |
| **1262** | Khan Hulagu sends pope and European kings' proposal for joint military action against Mamluks; response urges him to be baptized as precondition for alliance |
| **1260–1309** | Intermittent civil war among Mongol rulers descended from the four sons of Chinggis Great Khan |
| **1270** | French king leads an unsuccessful eighth crusade; Prince Edward of England plans joint attack with Mongols on Mamluks, but design fails for lack of manpower |
| **1275** | Italian merchant Marco Polo arrives at Kublai's court in China |
| **1287** | Nestorian Christian monk from China serves as Mongol envoy in Europe and returns with Latin Christians' offers of assistance against the Mamluks |
| **1291** | Egyptian Mamluk armies conquer last Christian footholds in Western Asia |

## *Decline and Fall of the Mongol Empire*

| | |
|---|---|
| **1294** | Death of Great Khan Kublai; his successor rules for thirteen years, but after this time the Mongol regime in China becomes more unstable |
| **1295** | Mongols in Persia become Muslim; ties binding them to the Mongol rulers in China weaken and gradually disappear |
| **1306–1316** | Several more attempts to coordinate joint Mongol-European military action against Mamluks |
| **1313** | Mongols of the Golden Horde become Muslims |
| **1320s to 1340s** | Genoese and other Italian merchant colonies flourish in Chinese cities |
| **1338** | Mongol ruler in China sends an embassy to the pope composed of Frenchmen and Italians living at his court; simultaneously, pope's embassy carries gifts to the Great Khan, the last western mission to the Mongols |
| **1360–1405** | Tamerlane, who claims descent from Chinggis Khan, conquers and rules what had been the western one-third or so of the Mongol Empire |
| **1368** | Han Chinese Ming Dynasty ousts the Yuan Dynasty; the last Yuan ruler dies in 1370 in Mongolia |
| **1478** | Ivan III of Russia throws off Mongol sovereignty |
| **1526** | Babur, a distant descendant of Chinggis Khan, founds Moghul Dynasty in India |
| **1696** | Chinese forces conquer Western Mongolia |
| **1911** | Inner Mongolia declares its independence from China |
| **1924** | Mongolia becomes a Communist People's Republic and a satellite of the Soviet Union |
| **1946** | China recognizes the Mongolian People's Republic |
| **1961** | Mongolia becomes a member of the United Nations |
| **1984** | Death of the last supposed descendant of Chinggis Khan, an official of the government of the People's Republic of China |
| **1990s** | Mongolia abandons rigid Communist ideology and restores Chinggis Khan from the status of "feudal oppressor" to national hero |

## *Summary Activities for the Chapter*

1. Brainstorm what might come to mind if one hears someone say, "He's a real Chinggis Khan." Compare with the outcome from the Introductory Activity in Lesson One. Also, ask again what students think of when they hear the word "Mongol." Compare to the outcome from the Introductory Activity in Lesson One
2. Go back to Student Handout 4.1.1 and its results. Having reviewed the information in this chapter, identify which of the ingredients listed there as useful for a career of conquest did the Mongols under Chinggis Khan actually have available to them. Give evidence to back up your answer.
3. Using information from this chapter, simulate telling a neighbor about the effects of Mongol rule on your people as though you were one of the following:
    - a Muslim merchant
    - a Persian peasant
    - a Persian bureaucrat at the court of the Mongol ruler
    - a northern Chinese artisan
    - a pastoral-nomadic Mongolian woman

## *Extension Activities*

1. Discuss what arguments you would use to persuade the Security Council of the United Nations to appoint an International Criminal Tribunal to try Chinggis Khan. If such a trial were held, what would you accuse Chinggis of, on what evidence, and on what basis? (Students might compare the case of Slobodan Milosevic to that of Chinggis Khan.)
2. Compare Chinggis Khan with Alexander the Great. Which of them was of greater historical significance, and why? On what basis are you judging historical significance?

## *Summary Assessments*

1. In what ways was your early hypothesis about the characteristics of empire confirmed, modified, or disproved by the information about the Mongol Empire in this chapter?
2. How did the Mongols capitalize on the features that favored their establishment and rule of empire, and how did they make up for those that were disadvantageous?
3. How did the Mongols handle the problem of getting very diverse peoples to live together and cooperate? How would you assess their success in doing so?
4. To what extent, and in what ways, would it be accurate to call the Mongols of the thirteenth and fourteenth century "culture brokers"?

5. How accurate would it be to say of the Mongols, as one Persian historian did, "They came, burnt, killed, plundered, and left"? Explain your reasoning, and give evidence for your arguments.

6. Give an account of an imaginary debate between the English chronicler Matthew Paris (see his description in Student Handout 4.1.1) who argues that the Mongols were "fiends from hell," and a Persian Muslim merchant who argues that they were "culture brokers." Draw upon all the information in the chapter for your arguments, giving evidence to back them up.

CHAPTER 5

*By Ernest O'Roark and Eileen Wood*

# Calamaties and Recoveries


## WHY STUDY INTERREGIONAL UNITY FROM 1300–1500 CE?

There have been points in history when societies faced calamities so great there seemed no hope of recovery. But time and again, humans have proven their resilience and adaptability in the face of such challenges. This chapter examines striking examples of this human capability as it focuses on a series of devastating calamities that befell large parts of Afroeurasia in the fourteenth and fifteenths centuries and the remarkable recoveries that followed.

The perceived nature of a calamity and the human response to it depend on point of view. As Ambrose Bierce said, "Calamity is of two kinds: misfortune to ourselves, and good fortune to others." Point of view is an important element of historical understanding and is therefore another focus of this chapter.

The fall of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty in China at the hands of Hung Wu, the future Ming Dynasty emperor, provides the historical context in which the concepts of calamity, recovery, and point of view are first introduced. This recovery for the Chinese (and calamity for the Mongols) is then linked with the outbreak and spread of infectious plague across Eurasia. The natural disasters associated with the Little Ice Age are also examined. This also helps set the stage for a study of differing accounts of the Black Death. A graphing activity examines the demographic patterns that mark these disasters and the beginnings of recovery.

Yet another wave of disaster descends on Eurasia as the Mongol-Turkic Timur (Tamerlane) stormed across the continent in whirlwind military campaigns. At the same time, however, the Ming recovery continued. Partially in response to Timur's threats the Chinese admiral

Zheng He led a spectacular series of naval expeditions into the Indian Ocean. Students practice their mapping skills and discover the geographic extent of these events. The Ottoman Empire, one of Timur's many victims, made a remarkable recovery from near destruction to again threaten the remnants of the once mighty Byzantine Empire. Students are challenged to interpret an emotionally charged primary source account of the fall of Constantinople and translate it into an objective record of that event. In a culminating activity, students investigate the myriad calamities and their unforeseen effects on the recovery of Europe. In a foreshadowing of later chapters, students are finally asked to speculate on the possible calamities that might result from Europe's recovery.

## OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Identify calamities and recoveries based on "point of view."
2. Describe the fall of the Yuan Dynasty and the rise of the Ming Dynasty in China.
3. Predict effects of increased contact between East Asia and Europe.
4. Assess the impact of climatic change on European agriculture and population in the early fourteenth century.
5. Identify major effects of the Black Death and draw evidence from primary source documents to infer how people across Afroeurasia responded to the Black Death.
6. Use quantitative data to construct a graph that illustrates demographic change in Afroeurasia.
7. Explain the relationship between events of the period and demographic trends.
8. Assess the impact of Timur's conquests on Asia, and create a map to illustrate the geographic extent of Timur's empire.
9. Evaluate the importance of the Bosporus and Dardanelles as both a link and a barrier between Europe and Asia.
10. Detect and evaluate bias in primary source documents.
11. Use a primary source document to construct a neutral account of the conquest/liberation of Constantinople.
12. Use historical evidence to construct a hypothesis concerning elements of Europe's recovery from the calamities of this period.

## TIME AND MATERIALS

This chapter should take 5 to 7 class periods, depending on the length of the class, the grade level/abilities of the students, and whether or not teachers choose to teach all parts of each lesson.

Materials required:

- Atlases
- Colored pencils
- Rulers and graph paper, or computers and graphing software

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The three centuries leading up to the period that this chapter explores witnessed a strengthening of interconnections among peoples across Afroeurasia. The sailing ships that crossed the wide sea basins carried a greater volume and variety of goods than ever before. Caravan traffic crossed the Inner Eurasian steppes and the Sahara Desert more frequently. As trade and travel intensified, so did cultural exchanges and encounters, presenting local societies with many new opportunities. In the 1000–1300 CE period, China, India, and, on a smaller scale, Europe achieved remarkable population and economic growth. Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam all attracted millions of new followers, and new Muslim states and towns appeared in Africa, Inner Eurasia, and Southeast Asia. In the early thirteenth century the Mongols under Chinggis Khan (Genghis Khan) created the largest land empire the world had ever seen. The Mongol conquests were terrifying, but the stabilizing of four great Mongol kingdoms, as well as other strong states in India, Egypt, West Africa, and Europe, brought about a century of fertile commercial and cultural exchange across Afroeurasia.

This era of growth and interchange came to a dramatic end in the first half of the fourteenth century, as multiple crises beset much of Afroeurasia. The greatest catastrophe was the Black Death, the great plague pandemic of the mid-century. It may well have been a consequence of improved trans-hemispheric interchange: the trade networks carried infectious disease microorganisms as well as commercial goods. The world historian Jerry H. Bentley has summarized the crisis of the Black Death as follows:

> Cross-cultural interactions not only served as a foundation for the age of nomadic empires but also helped bring it to an end. Frequent and regular trade over long distances facilitated the spread of diseases as well as commodities and religious faiths. The culprit during the age of nomadic empires was bubonic plague, which caused lethal epidemics in much of Eurasia and North Africa beginning about the mid-fourteenth century. Wherever it struck, bubonic plague disrupted economies and societies, and it wrecked the structures that supported long-distance trade, travel, and communication.…Between 1300 and 1400 C. E., the population of Europe declined about 25 percent, from an estimated 79 million to 60 million. Between 1200 and 1400, the population of China—devastated by Mongol conquests as well as bubonic plague—plunged from about 115 million to 75 million. Cross-cultural interaction did not cease altogether, but during the second half

of the fourteenth century it became less regular, intense, and systematic than during the previous 300 years (Bentley 768).

Outbreaks of infectious disease continued to recur in Europe, Southwest Asia, and perhaps other regions about every two decades in the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. These echoes of the Black Death tended to get progressively weaker, but they retarded recovery of populations. Until recently, historians widely accepted the theory that the Black Death and recurring disease outbreaks may all be attributed to the particular infection known as bubonic plague. New research has brought this theory into question. No scholar has played down the horrendous mortality of the Black Death, but some have questioned the nature of the disease. Historians continue to debate this issue. (The Resources section of this chapter includes some of the recent literature.)

Several of the other crises of the 1300–1500 period were likely linked in one way or another to the great pandemic. These crises included:

1. The Little Ice Age, a period of climatic cooling that began in the late thirteenth century and has been linked to a shrinkage of farming in Europe and Inner Eurasia and to consequent outbreaks of famine. Some historians argue that famines in Europe made sick and impoverished peasants more susceptible to infection when the Black Death hit. Other scholars, however, disagree.

2. The collapse of all four of the great Mongol states:

| Mongol State | Time of Its Fall | Note |
|---|---|---|
| Ilkhanate (Kingdom) of Persia and Iraq | 1335 | |
| Yuan Dynasty of China | 1368 | |
| Chagatay khanate of Inner Eurasia | 1405 | |
| Khanate of the Golden Horde (Kipchak) in Russia and western Inner Eurasia | Late 15th century | The empire of the Golden Horde had several small successor kingdoms, some of which endured into the 19th century. |

3. Decline or upheaval in other states that had flourished in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, notably Mali in West Africa, the Marinid kingdom in Morocco, the Mamluk sultanate in Egypt and Syria, and the Delhi sultanate in India.

4. Crises in Europe included the Hundred Years' War, troubles in the Roman Catholic papacy, and several major peasant rebellions.

5. The conquests of the Turko-Mongol leader Timur (Tamerlane, 1370–1405), which devastated large areas of Southwest Asia and India but fragmented after its founder's death.

All these crises caused suffering for millions, but they also altered the social, economic, and cultural landscape, presenting new opportunities for those who survived. In the second half of the fifteenth century, Afroeurasia's overall population began to rise again, and strong new states and empires emerged, including the Ming Dynasty in China, the Vijayanagar in India, the Ottoman Empire in Southwest Asia and Europe, and, in western Europe, Spain, Portugal, France, England, the Hapsburg Empire. Not only did trans-hemispheric trade move toward recovery, but European mariners succeeded in crossing the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, establishing permanent communication links between Afroeurasia and the Americas.

### *Assessment*

Students will answer two of the following four questions:

1. Explain the importance of understanding point of view, detecting bias, and assessing significance when interpreting historical accounts. Use examples from this chapter to support your answer.
2. Use specific examples from this chapter to explain what Ambrose Bierce meant when he said, "Calamity is of two kinds: misfortune to ourselves, and good fortune to others."
3. Describe one calamity of the fourteenth and/or fifteenth century and explain its impact on the societies affected.
4. Describe one recovery of the fourteenth and/or fifteenth century and explain how that recovery was achieved.

## THREE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

### *Humans and the Environment*

The populations of Europe, North Africa, and Southwest Asia may have declined 25 percent or more as a result of the Black Death and infectious disease outbreaks that followed. Except for the epidemics of Afroeurasian diseases that afflicted American Indians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, no pandemic that we know of ever reached the dimensions of the Black Death. Why haven't pandemics like this occurred more often? Why don't they occur all the time? How might you compare the Black Death with the AIDS pandemic in terms of causes, treatments, and social responses?

### *Humans and Other Humans*

Write a short story or script about the experience of a family in Christian Europe during a year of famine in the first half of the fourteenth century. How might the family have responded to famine, especially if family members suffered or died from it? How might famine have changed the life of this family? If a famine hit most of the United States today, what effects might it have on family life?

### *Humans and Ideas*

In the fourteenth century, both Christians and Muslims had ideas of how one might avoid getting plague. These ideas included 1) Keep up morale by reading entertaining love stories or humorous tales; 2) Do not flee, for people should await the fate God has in store; 3) Whip yourself because your pain may pay the price of sin; 4) Cover windows with waxed cloth; 5) Do not bathe, for this opens the pores to air; 6) Spend time in smoky and stinking places; 7) Break up the air inside your home by ringing bells; 8) Wash your hands and face often with vinegar and water. What do you think might be the rationales for these measures? Which ones, if any, might you use today if you were threatened by an epidemic? Why would some of the ideas make more sense to people living in the fourteenth century than today?

## KEY THEMES

This chapter addresses the following historical themes:

**Key Theme 1:** Patterns of Population

**Key Theme 3:** Uses and Abuses of Power

**Key Theme 6:** Science, Technology, and the Environment

## CORRELATIONS TO NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

**National Standards for World History**

Era Five: Intensified Hemispheric Interactions. Standard 5A: The student understands the consequences of the Black Death and the recurring plague pandemic in the 14th century; Standard 5B: The student understands transformations in Europe following the economic and demographic crises of the 14th century; Standard 5C. The student understands major political developments in Asia in the aftermath of the collapse of Mongol rule and the plague pandemic. Standard 7: The student is able to account for the growth, decline, and recovery of the overall population of Eurasia and analyze ways in which large demographic swings might have affected economic, social, and cultural life in various regions.

## INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Aberth, John. *The First Horseman: Disease in Human History*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007.

Biel, Timothy Levi. *The Black Death*. San Diego, CA: Lucent Books, 1989. Good short reading for younger students and developing readers.

Cantor, Norman F. *In the Wake of the Plague: The Black Death and the World It Made*. New York: Free Press, 2001.

Chapman, Anne. *Coping with Catastrophe: The Black Death of the Fourteenth Century*. Los Angeles: National Center for History in the Schools (UCLA), 1998. A document-based teaching unit for middle or high school students.

Cohn, Sam K. *The Black Death Transformed: Disease and Culture in Early Renaissance Europe*. London: Arnold, 2002. Questions conventional theories about the cause of the Black Death.

Dardess, John W. *Ming China, 1368-1644: A Concise History of a Resilient Empire*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012.

Dols, Michael. *The Black Death in the Middle East*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977.

Fagan, Brian M. *The Little Ice Age: How Climate Made History, 1300–1850*. New York: Basic Books. 2000.

Giblin, James Cross. *When Plague Strikes: The Black Death, Smallpox, AIDS*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995. Vivid and readable; for high school students.

Gottfried, Robert S. *The Black Death: Natural and Human Disaster in Medieval Europe*. New York: Free Press, 1983.

Herlihy, David. *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997. A brief, readable interpretation based on three lectures.

Horrox, Rosemary. *The Black Death*. Manchester Medieval Sources. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1994.

Imber, Colin. *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Jordan, William Chester. *The Great Famine: Northern Europe in the Early Fourteenth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Lamb, H. H. *Climate, History, and the Modern World*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Manz, Beatrice Forbes. *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

McNeill, William H. *Plagues and Peoples*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1976.

Orent, Wendy. *Plague: The Mysterious Past and Terrifying Future of the World's Most Dangerous Disease.* New York: Free Press, 2004.

Tuchman, Barbara. *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century.* New York: Knopf, 1978. A gripping narrative by the celebrated popular historian.

Wepman, Dennis. *Tamerlane.* World Leaders Past and Present. Langhorne, PA: Chelsea House, 1987.

Wills, Christopher. *Yellow Fever, Black Goddess: The Coevolution of People and Plagues.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1996.

LESSON 1

# A Brilliant Recovery

## *Preparation*

Duplicate Student Handouts 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3, and 5.1.4.

## *Introduction*

Tell students that the period from 1300 to 1500 was a time of many calamities, or disasters. The nature of these calamities and how people responded to them is one of the big stories of this era. In the first lesson, students will define the terms "calamity" and "recovery", then apply those definitions to the fall of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty and the rise of the Ming Dynasty in China.

1. Ask students to formulate a working definition for the term "calamity." Distribute Student Handout 5.1.1 and have students complete the activity. Allow time for students to share their pictures and stories of calamity and recovery.

2. Give students a copy of Student Handout 5.1.2. Ask them to look for examples of calamities and recoveries in this reading. (One option is to have students use two different colored highlighters, one to identify calamities and the other recoveries.) Tell students to enter the examples they found on Student Handout 5.1.3 and answer the questions that follow.

3. Discuss student answers on their graphic organizer. Discussion might include:

    a. Summaries of historical events.

    b. Evaluation of the severity of challenges that people in East Asia faced.

    c. Explanation of reasoning used to categorize events.

    d. Definition of point of view.

    e. Relevance of Bierce's quote to the situation in China in this era.

4. Explain to students that the events in China they have just discussed led to another great calamity. In the next activity, they will examine certain historical facts in order to predict what that calamity will be. Give students a copy of Student Handout 5.1.4 and have them make their predictions. Ask students to share their predictions, but do not reveal the subsequent calamity. Tell students that the answer will be revealed in the next lesson.

# *Calamity and Recovery*

In the box below, make a sketch of a calamity. Write a caption for your illustration.

Think of a situation in which someone (you or someone you have heard of) has recovered from a calamity. Below, describe the calamity. Then tell about the recovery.

# *A Brilliant Recovery*

Cheers filled the air as Zhu Yuan-zhang crossed the grand courtyard of Bejing's Forbidden City—the emperor's palace—and slowly climbed the long flight of palace steps. At the top, he paused and looked out over the city and the throng of his supporters gathered there. The reality of his hard-won victory had still not sunk in. The year was 1368 and the hated Mongols were gone. Once again China belonged to the Chinese, and Zhu Yuan-zhang was the reason why.

Zhu was born a peasant. His family had farmed for generations. But under Mongol rule, China had little use for farmers, so life was hard—very hard. When the Mongols first swept into northern China a century earlier, they wanted nothing more than to rob China of its great wealth. Because they were nomadic horsemen, the Mongols viewed China's huge network of prosperous farms as a waste of good grazing and hunting land. By the millions, farmers were driven from their lands and their farms left untended. Reservoirs and irrigation systems fell into disrepair. As farms disappeared, famine swept the land, but the Mongol rulers of the Yuan Dynasty seemed little concerned for the sufferings of the Chinese people.

During the Yuan Dynasty, high government officials were all Mongols or foreigners. Translators were needed because the Mongols refused to learn Chinese. Ethnic Chinese had little voice in their government.

Trade was important to the Mongol emperors. Skilled Chinese craftsmen were forced to produce large quantities of porcelain, silks, and other goods that could be sold along the Silk Road and the vast web of trade routes the Mongols created across Eurasia. The craftsmen were paid little, while the Mongols profited greatly from the trade.

Kublai Khan (1261–1295), a fairly enlightened Mongol ruler, tried to encourage agriculture and trade. But the series of less competent emperors that followed him did much damage to China's economy. They and their flatterers lived lavishly, all the while taxing the Chinese populace in order to pay for their extravagant lifestyles. In time, this led to inflation, and the paper money of the empire became completely worthless. By the early 1300s, conditions were so bad on the farm that young Zhu was compelled to leave his starving family and become a Buddhist monk, begging for food at the side of the road.

Then nature added to China's misery. The Huang (Yellow) River changed course, flooding huge expanses of remaining farmland. Zhu's family perished in the resulting famine. Epidemic disease, perhaps bubonic plague, also broke out, killing Chinese and Mongols alike. Along with most other Chinese, Zhu concluded that the Yuan Dynasty had lost the Mandate of Heaven, that is, the divine right to rule China.

Across China, people began to rise up against their Mongol overlords. Zhu led the rebels. A wise scholar advised him that he would succeed if he followed three rules: build strong city walls, gather as much grain in storage as possible, and be slow to assume titles. Zhu followed the wise man's advice and now, nearly twenty years later, stood victorious atop the steps of the emperor's palace.

With the Mongols gone, it was finally time for Zhu to assume a title. He proclaimed himself Ming Hung Wu, emperor of China. "Ming" meant "brilliant" or "bright" and "Hung Wu" was a traditional dynastic name meaning "Vast Army." The new emperor intended to make China

a bright light that would shine for all the world to see. He wrote to the kings and emperors of distant lands announcing his rise to power.

> Heaven, wearied of their [the Mongols] misgovernment and debauchery, thought fit to turn their fate to ruin. . . When the nation began to arouse itself, We, as a simple peasant. . . conceived the patriotic idea to save the people. . . We have established peace in the Empire, and restored the old boundaries of Zhongguo [The Middle Kingdom—China]. We were selected by Our people to occupy the Imperial throne of Zhongguo under the dynastic title of 'the Great Ming.' We cannot but let the world know Our intention to maintain peace within the four seas.

With great energy, Ming Hung Wu set out to rebuild China according to its agricultural traditions. He encouraged millions of farmers to move their families north to reclaim abandoned farmland and rebuild the irrigation systems neglected during Mongol rule. Scholarship and philosophy were revived and the civil service examination system reintroduced to ensure that government officials had good qualifications. The new emperor focused his efforts on agriculture and on trade within China. He did not value trade with other lands, which had been so important to the Mongols.

Ming Hung Wu thus took the Mandate of Heaven very seriously and worked hard to make sure his government truly served the interests of the Chinese people. China was on the road to recovery!

Sources: East Asian History Sourcebook: Chu Yuan-Chang: Manifesto of Accession as First Ming Emperor, 1372 C.E. ©2000 Paul Halsall. http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/eastasia/1372mingmanf.html.

Leon Poon History of China, The Imperial Era: III. http://www-chaos.umd.edu/history/imperial3.html.

Washington State University World Civilizations ©1996 Richard Hooker. http://content.wsulibs.wsu.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/world_civ.

China, Mongols, and the Ming Dynasty ©2000 Frank E. Smitha. http://www.fsmitha.com/h3/h12china.htm.

# *Calamity and Recovery*

## *The Mongols and the Rise of the Ming Dynasty*

Use the reading from Student Handout 5.1.2 to identify examples of both calamities and recoveries that took place in East Asia during the fourteenth century. Enter the examples you find in the graphic organizer below. Then answer the questions on the back of this paper.

| Calamities | Recoveries |
| --- | --- |
| | |

Accounts of historical events often reflect a particular point of view. The point of view is the perspective from which the account was written. Sometimes accounts of the same event written by different authors will contain significant differences because their point of view is different. For example, a description of the American Revolution found in an American textbook tends be somewhat different from a description of the same event in a British textbook.

1. What point of view is expressed in Student Handout 5.1.2?

2. For whom would the rise of the Ming Dynasty be considered a calamity?

*"Calamity is of two kinds: misfortune to ourselves, and good fortune to others."*

—Ambrose Bierce, American author

# *Dateline Fourteenth Century*

Compare the circumstances in Europe with those in the Mongol Empire and China in the fourteenth century.

| Europe | Mongol Empire and China |
|---|---|
| The Crusades, a 200-year-long series of wars between Christians and Muslims, have just ended. Muslim forces regained control of the Holy Land, but the Mongols then conquered the Abbasid-Seljuk Empire in 1258.<br><br>One result of the Crusades is that Europeans have become much more interested in products from the East.<br><br>Trade and travel between East and West increase.<br><br>European doctors have little understanding of the causes of infectious disease. | The Mongols have conquered much of Eurasia, building an empire that stretches from China to the borders of Eastern Europe.<br><br>The Mongols are dependent on trade. They encourage trade and travel throughout their empire. Roads and trade routes are maintained and protected.<br><br>Many of the most highly valued trade goods are produced in China. This includes porcelain and silks.<br><br>Bubonic plague breaks out in Central Asia and China. |

The circumstances described in the two boxes above resulted in a completely unexpected event that brought great change to Europe. Consider the circumstances carefully. Decide what this unexpected event might have been. Identify the event and explain your thinking below.

LESSON 2

# Double Trouble

## *Preparation*

Duplicate Student Handouts 5.2.1–5.2.8. Rulers and graph paper or computers and graphing software are needed for this lesson.

## *Introduction*

Explain to students that the calamities studied in the previous lesson were mostly of human origin. But the period also saw more than its share of natural disasters. This lesson begins with a modern-day example of a possible natural disaster in the making.

1. Tell students that a frequent hot topic in the media is the issue of global warming. Prepare students for the reading in Student Handout 5.2.1 by having them share their background knowledge of the topic. Distribute copies and allow time for students to read silently. Use the questions at the bottom of the reading to initiate a discussion of the issue. Use the last discussion question to make a transition to the reading in Student Handout 5.2.2.

2. Explain to students that the years 1300 to 1500 were part of an extended period of global cooling. Distribute copies of Student Handout 5.2.2 and allow time for students to read silently. Again, use the questions at the bottom of the reading to guide discussion of this natural disaster/calamity and its consequences. Before beginning the next activity, emphasize the point that the famines which resulted from the change in weather patterns may have left populations in a weakened condition and vulnerable to infectious disease. Also, remind students of the predictions they made in the previous lesson in the activity in Student Handout 5.1.4.

3. Inform students that this lesson is titled "Double Trouble" because of the conjunction of the Little Ice Age and the pandemic of the Black Death, perhaps a widespread epidemic, or pandemic, of the bubonic plague, which hit Afroeurasia in this period. In this activity, students will study four contemporary accounts of how people responded to the horrors of the plague.

4. Distributing students as evenly as possible, assign groups the four readings from Student Handouts 5.2.3, 5.2.4, 5.2.5, and 5.2.6. Also, give each student a copy of Student Handout 5.2.7. Instruct students to record effects of the plague and ways in which people across Afroeurasia responded to it.

5. Reorganize students into groups of four with each group member having information from a different reading. Each group then works cooperatively to share information so that all members are able to complete the four outside sections of the graphic organizer. Finally, review with students the concept of a generalization. Then have them compose

a generalization about the effects of the plague and people's responses to it to go in the center of their graphic organizers in Student Handout 5.2.7.

6. Explain to students that the chain of calamities studied thus far in this chapter, along with the earlier Crusades, had very real and disastrous consequences that can be seen clearly by looking at a graph of population change during this period. In this next activity, students will be asked both to create such a graph and to interpret the patterns it reveals, connecting patterns in population change to events.

7. Distribute the materials needed for students to create their graphs. The graph-making portion of this activity is designed to give students practice in reading to perform a task. If this aspect of the activity is to be retained, do not go over the directions, but instead ask students to read the directions carefully. Then provide an opportunity for students to ask questions. Once all questions have been answered, instruct students to complete their graphs.

Have students carefully read the boxed information at the top of the second page and hold a brief discussion to ensure that they clearly understand. (A review of the Crusades might be necessary here, depending on how recently students have dealt with this earlier event.) Give students the option of using the graph to answer either the five short-answer questions or the single essay question. Have students complete the assignment.

# *Global Warming*

Of all the environmental problems we face today, global warming may have the greatest power to cause catastrophic changes. In the last one hundred years, the average temperature of the earth has risen by about 1°F. And the four warmest years of the twentieth century all happened during the 1990s. Scientists are not sure what is causing this warming. An increase in heat from the sun may be one cause. The earth has gone through many natural cycles of warming and cooling in the past. But scientists are also concerned that humans are helping to make the earth warmer. Some human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, release carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. These gases trap heat energy from the sun and keep it from escaping back into space. The effect is similar to what happens to a car parked in the sun. The car will heat up because the windows let in sunlight but keep heat trapped inside.

Although a 1°F rise in temperature may not seem like much, small changes in the earth's overall temperature can result in significant climatic changes over many areas of the world. These changes can have dramatic, sometimes calamitous consequences. For example, some scientists believe that melting glaciers and sea ice have caused a 6 to 8 inch rise in sea level over the last one hundred years. If this rise continues, flooding will eventually affect many towns and cities located along the coasts. Changes in rainfall patterns may cause some land to become too dry or too wet for farming on it to continue. Some plant and animal species, unable to adapt to changes in their habitat, may die off, altering the ecology of many places. People may encounter new health problems resulting from the changing environment. Areas that become warmer and wetter, for example, will likely see an increase in tropical diseases such as malaria. Scientists also believe that in some places the added heat may produce larger and more frequent storms, including hurricanes.

The forces that determine weather and climate are extremely complex, so it is difficult to predict what changes will actually take place and where or when they might occur. But scientists all over the world are studying weather patterns to learn more so that people might be better prepared to adapt to whatever changes take place.

## *Discussion Questions*

1. What is global warming?
2. List five possible effects of global warming.
3. What do you think people or nations could do to prevent the negative effects of global warming?
4. What do you think might happen if global temperatures dropped over a prolonged period of time?

Sources: Website of the Environmental Protection Agency. http://www.epa.gov.

NASA Earth Observatory. http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Library/GlobalWarming/warming.

Atmospheric Radiation Measurement (ARM) Program, Department of Education. http://education.arm.gov/.

# *The Little Ice Age*

Sometimes the course of human history can be profoundly affected by natural changes in the environment. Such was the case when the Northern Hemisphere experienced a long cool period known today as the Little Ice Age. During most of the Middle Ages, Europe's climate was relatively mild. In spite of the frequent wars, occasional food shortages, and other hazards of the time, the population slowly grew. By 1300 there were about 79 million people in Europe. But then things changed. Even before 1300 the global climate had begun to cool. Summers became cooler and wetter, and autumn storms came earlier and were more violent. Longer, colder winters followed. With shorter growing seasons, some farmlands in northern areas had to be abandoned. Norse settlements were especially hard hit. The same was true in high elevations, where mountain glaciers began to advance toward villages and farms. Some warm-weather crops could no longer survive the increasingly harsh conditions, and harvests began to fail. Prices for food rose accordingly. In desperation, people resorted to gathering wild foods from the forests. Sometimes even that was not enough. The relatively large population combined with the shortage of food resulted in famine and starvation. Those who survived the worst years of famine nearly all weakened from malnutrition. This may have left them especially vulnerable to infectious disease. On the other hand, some scholars have argued that disease microorganisms may have had difficulty infecting badly malnourished people because those pathogens may have lacked access to enough nutrients in the human body to survive.

## *Discussion Questions*

1. List five negative effects of the Little Ice Age.
2. If there was a period of prolonged global cooling today, what might people or nations do to address negative effects?

Sources: Jerry H. Bentley and Herbert F. Ziegler, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003).

Scott A. Mandia, Suffolk County Community College. http://www2.sunysuffolk.edu/mandias/lia/little_ice_age.html.

# *Ibn Khaldun: An Altered World*

At the present time—that is, at the end of the eighth century [A.H., which is the fourteenth century C. E.]—the situation in the Maghrib [North Africa], as we can observe, has taken a turn and changed entirely. The Berbers, the original population of the Maghrib, have been replaced by an influx of Arabs (that began in) the fifth [eleventh] century. The Arabs outnumbered and overpowered the Berbers, stripped them of most of their lands, and (also) obtained a share of those that remained in their possession. This was the situation until, in the middle of the eighth [fourteenth] century, civilization both in the East and the West was visited by a destructive plague which devastated nations and caused populations to vanish. It swallowed up many of the good things of civilization and wiped them out. It overtook the dynasties at the time of their senility, when they had reached the limit of their duration. It lessened their power and curtailed their influence. It weakened their authority. Their situation approached the point of annihilation and dissolution. Civilization decreased with the decrease of mankind. Cities and buildings were laid waste, roads and way signs were obliterated, settlements and mansions became empty, dynasties and tribes grew weak. The entire inhabited world changed. The East, it seems, was similarly visited, though in accordance with and in proportion to (the East's more affluent) civilization. It was as if the voice of existence in the world had called out for oblivion and restriction, and the world had responded to its call. God inherits the earth and whomever is upon it. When there is a general change of conditions, it is as if the entire creation had changed and the whole world been altered, as if it were a new and repeated creation, a world brought into existence anew. . . .

Source: From Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, 2nd ed., 3 vols., trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 1:64–65.

# *The Catastrophe of the Fourteenth Century*

Ibn Battuta is celebrated as the greatest traveler of medieval times. A native Moroccan, he journeyed to Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Persia, Iraq, East Africa, Anatolia, Russia, India, and China. In this excerpt from *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta*, Ross E. Dunn describes Ibn Battuta's brush with the greatest catastrophe of the fourteenth century.

> While Ibn Battuta was enjoying the company of the *'ulama* [scholars] of Aleppo [in Syria] in June 1348, travelers reaching the city from the south reported that a virulent disease had been raging at Gaza on the Egyptian frontier and that more than a thousand people had been dying from it every day. Buboes, or inflamed swellings, appeared in the groin, armpits, or neck of the afflicted, and this irruption was typically accompanied by nausea, pain in the head, stomach, and limbs, insomnia, and delirium. If a victim began to spit blood and experience pneumonic symptoms, he usually died within hours.
>
> Amid rumors of this lethal darkness advancing into Syria, Ibn Battuta decided to return south. He got as far as the town of Homs when he suddenly found himself engulfed in the epidemic, 300 people dying the day he arrived there. Continuing on to Damascus, he reached the great oasis in July to find that the plague had already struck. The death toll had risen to 2,000 a day, the population was reeling in shock, and the mundane routines of the city had come to a halt.
>
> The people fasted for three successive days, the last of which was a Thursday. At the end of this period, the *amirs* [commanders], *sharifs* [descendents of the Prophet Muhammad], *qadis* [judges], doctors of the Law, and all other classes of people in their several degrees, assembled in the Great mosque, until it was filled to overflowing with them, and spent Thursday night there in prayers and liturgies and supplications. Then, after performing the dawn prayer . . . , they all went out together on foot carrying Korans in their hands—the *amirs* too barefooted. The entire population of the city joined in the exodus, male and female, small and large, the Jews went out with their book of the law and the Christians with their Gospel, their women and children with them; the whole concourse of them in tears and humble supplications, imploring the favor of God through His Books and His Prophets.
>
> At the same time Ibn Battuta had been sailing westward from China to his expectant reunion with the Islamic heartland, so the Black Death, the greatest pandemic disaster since the sixth century, was making its terrible way across the Central Asian grasslands to the shores of the Black Sea. Plague was endemic among ground-burrowing rodent populations of the Inner Asian steppe. It was transmitted from animals to humans by the bite of a common species of flea. Hatching and living in the fur of plague-afflicted rats, infected fleas found their way to sacks of grain and other foodstuffs or to clothing. The plague appears to have started among pastoral folk of East Central Asia, spreading outward from there along the trade routes both southwest and west, beginning about 1331. Lurking among the merchandise in commercial wagon trains or the storerooms of caravansaries, fleas carried the bacillus *Yersinia pestis* to the blood streams of humans. . . . As the pestilence broke out in one oasis or *khan* after another, survivors hurried onto the next place along the trail, thereby unwittingly carrying the disease throughout the commercial network of the steppe. The same Mongol law and order that made possible a century of intense human interchange between China and the Atlantic coast now quickened the progress of the plague bacillus across Eurasia.

In the calamitous year of 1348 ships of death coursed westward throughout the Mediterranean basin, inflicting their grim lading on one port after another. From the ports, mule trains and camel caravans transmitted the disease to the interior regions of Europe, northern Africa, and the Middle East. . . . By the end of 1350, when the first assault of the disease was playing itself out, Europe may have lost as much as one-third of its population. Mortality rates in the Islamic lands were probably comparable.

Source: From Ross E. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

# *The Florentine Chronicle*

Marchione di Coppo Stefani was born in Florence in 1336. He wrote the *Florentine Chronicle* in the 1370s and 1380s. It includes a section titled "Concerning a Mortality in the City of Florence in Which Many People Died."

> In the year of the Lord 1348 there was a very great pestilence in the city and district of Florence. It was of such a fury and so tempestuous that in houses in which it took hold previously healthy servants who took care of the ill died of the same illness. Almost none of the ill survived past the fourth day. Neither physicians nor medicines were effective. Whether because these illnesses were previously unknown or because physicians had not previously studied them, there seemed to be no cure. There was such a fear that no one seemed to know what to do. When it took hold in a house it often happened that no one remained who had not died. And it was not just that men and women died, but even sentient animals died. Dogs, cats, chickens, oxen, donkeys sheep showed the same symptoms and died of the same disease. And almost none, or very few, who showed these symptoms, were cured. The symptoms were the following: a bubo in the groin, where the thigh meets the trunk; or a small swelling under the armpit; sudden fever; spitting blood and saliva (and no one who spit blood survived it). It was such a frightful thing that when it got into a house, as was said, no one remained. Frightened people abandoned the house and fled to another. Those in town fled to villages. Physicians could not be found because they had died like the others. And those who could be found wanted vast sums in hand before they entered the house. And when they did enter, they checked the pulse with face turned away. They inspected the urine from a distance and with something odoriferous under their nose. Child abandoned the father, husband the wife, wife the husband, one brother the other, one sister the other. In all the city there was nothing to do but to carry the dead to a burial. And those who died had neither confessor nor other sacraments. And many died with no one looking after them. And many died of hunger because when someone took to bed sick, another in the house, terrified, said to him: "I'm going for the doctor." Calmly walking out the door, the other left and did not return again. Abandoned by people, without food, but accompanied by fever, they weakened. There were many who pleaded with their relatives not to abandon them when night fell. But [the relatives] said to the sick person, "So that during the night you did not have to awaken those who serve you and who work hard day and night, take some sweetmeats, wine or water. They are here on the bedstead by your head; here are some blankets." And when the sick person had fallen asleep, they left and did not return. If it happened that he was strengthened by the food during the night he might be alive and strong enough to get to the window. If the street was not a major one, he might stand there a half hour before anyone came by. And if someone did pass by, and if he was strong enough that he could be heard when he called out to them, sometimes there might be a response and sometimes not, but there was no help. No one, or few, wished to enter a house where anyone was sick, nor did they even want to deal with those healthy people who came out of a sick person's house. And they said to them: "He is stupefied, do not speak to him!" saying further: "He has it because there is a bubo in his house." They call the swelling a bubo. Many died unseen. So they remained in their beds until they stank. And the neighbors, if there were any, having smelled the stench, placed them in a shroud and sent them for burial. The house remained open and yet there was no one daring enough to touch anything because it seemed that things remained poisoned and that whoever used them picked up the illness.

At every church, or at most of them, they dug deep trenches, down to the waterline, wide and deep, depending on how large the parish was. And those who were responsible for the dead carried them on their backs in the night in which they died and threw them into the ditch, or else they paid a high price to those who would do it for them. The next morning, if there were many [bodies] in the trench, they covered them over with dirt. And then more bodies were put on top of them, with a little more dirt over those; they put layer on layer just like one puts layers of cheese in a lasagna.

The beccamorti [literally vultures] who provided their service, were paid such a high price that many were enriched by it. Many died from [carrying away the dead] , some rich, some after earning just a little, but high prices continued. Servants, or those who took care of the ill, charged from one to three florins per day and the cost of things grew. The things that the sick ate, sweetmeats and sugar, seemed priceless. . . . Finding wax was miraculous. A pound of wax would have gone up more than a florin if there had not been a stop put [by the communal government] to the vain ostentation that the Florentines always make [over funerals]. Thus it was ordered that no more than two large candles could be carried [in any funeral]. Churches had no more than a single bier which usually was not sufficient. Spice dealers and beccamorti sold biers, burial palls, and cushions at very high prices. Dressing in expensive woolen cloth as is customary in [mourning] the dead, that is in a long cloak, with mantle and veil that used to cost women three florins climbed in price to thirty florins and would have climbed to 100 florins had the custom of dressing in expensive cloth not been changed. The rich dressed in modest woolens, those not rich sewed [clothes] in linen. Benches on which the dead were placed cost like the heavens and still the benches were only a hundredth of those needed. Priests were not able to ring bells as they would have liked. Concerning that [the government] issued ordinances discouraging the sounding of bells, sale of burial benches, and limiting expenses. They could not sound bells, sell benches, nor cry out announcements because the sick hated to hear of this and it discouraged the healthy as well. Priests and friars went [to serve] the rich in great multitudes and they were paid such high prices that they all got rich. And therefore [the authorities] ordered that one could not have more than a prescribed number [of clerics] of the local parish church. And the prescribed number of friars was six. . . . This [pestilence] was a matter of such great discouragement and fear that men gathered together in order to take some comfort in dining together. And each evening one of them provided dinner to ten companions and the next evening they planned to eat with one of the others. And sometimes if they planned to eat with a certain one he had no meal prepared because he was sick. Or if the host had made dinner for the ten, two or three were missing. Some fled to villas, others to villages in order to get a change of air.

Where there had been no [pestilence], there they carried it; if it was already there, they caused it to increase. None of the guilds in Florence was working. All the shops were shut, taverns closed; only the apothecaries and the churches remained open. If you went outside, you found almost no one... This mortality enriched apothecaries, doctors, poultry vendors, beccamorti, and greengrocers who sold of poultices of mallow, nettles, mercury and other herbs necessary to draw off the infirmity. And it was those who made these poultices who made a lot of money. . . .

This pestilence began in March, as was said, and ended in September 1348. And people began to return to look after their houses and possessions. And there were so many houses full of goods without a master that it was stupefying. Then those who would inherit these

goods began to appear. And such it was that those who had nothing found themselves rich with what did not seem to be theirs and they were unseemly because of it. Women and men began to dress ostentatiously.

Source: From Marchione di Coppo Stefani. *Cronaca fiorentina. Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, Vol. 30, Niccolo Rodolico, ed. *Citta di Castello: 1903–13.* Quoted in Duane Osheim, "Plagues and Public Health in Renaissance Europe," the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, University of Virginia. http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/osheim/marchione.html

# *The Decameron*

The Italian writer Giovanni Boccaccio lived through the plague as it ravaged the city of Florence in 1348. The experience inspired him to write *The Decameron*, a story of three women and seven men who escaped the disease by fleeing to a villa outside the city. In his introduction to the fictional portion of his book, Boccaccio gives a graphic description of the effects of the epidemic on his city.

**The Signs of Impending Death**

The symptoms were not the same as in the East, where a gush of blood from the nose was the plain sign of inevitable death; but it began both in men and women with certain swellings in the groin or under the armpit. They grew to the size of a small apple or an egg, more or less, and were vulgarly called tumors. In a short space of time these tumors spread from the two parts named all over the body. Soon after this the symptoms changed and black or purple spots appeared on the arms or thighs or any other part of the body, sometimes a few large ones, sometimes many little ones. These spots were a certain sign of death, just as the original tumor had been and still remained.

No doctor's advice, no medicine could overcome or alleviate this disease, An enormous number of ignorant men and women set up as doctors in addition to those who were trained. Either the disease was such that no treatment was possible or the doctors were so ignorant that they did not know what caused it, and consequently could not administer the proper remedy. In any case very few recovered; most people died within about three days of the appearance of the tumors described above, most of them without any fever or other symptoms.

The violence of this disease was such that the sick communicated it to the healthy who came near them, just as a fire catches anything dry or oily near it. And it even went further. To speak to or go near the sick brought infection and a common death to the living; and moreover, to touch the clothes or anything else the sick had touched or worn gave the disease to the person touching."

**Varying Reactions to Disaster**

Such fear and fanciful notions took possession of the living that almost all of them adopted the same cruel policy, which was entirely to avoid the sick and everything belonging to them. By so doing, each one thought he would secure his own safety.

Some thought that moderate living and the avoidance of all superfluity would preserve them from the epidemic. They formed small communities, living entirely separate from everybody else. They shut themselves up in houses where there were no sick, eating the finest food and drinking the best wine very temperately, avoiding all excess, allowing no news or discussion of death and sickness, and passing the time in music and suchlike pleasures. Others thought just the opposite. They thought the sure cure for the plague was to drink and be merry, to go about singing and amusing themselves, satisfying every appetite they could, laughing and jesting at what happened. They put their words into practice, spent day and night going from tavern to tavern, drinking immoderately, or went into other people's houses, doing only those things which pleased them. This they could easily do because everyone felt doomed and had abandoned his property, so that most houses became common property

and any stranger who went in made use of them as if he had owned them. And with all this bestial behavior, they avoided the sick as much as possible.

In this suffering and misery of our city, the authority of human and divine laws almost disappeared, for, like other men, the ministers and the executors of the laws were all dead or sick or shut up with their families, so that no duties were carried out. Every man was therefore able to do as he pleased.

Many others adopted a course of life midway between the two just described. They did not restrict their victuals so much as the former, nor allow themselves to be drunken and dissolute like the latter, but satisfied their appetites moderately. They did not shut themselves up, but went about, carrying flowers or scented herbs or perfumes in their hands, in the belief that it was an excellent thing to comfort the brain with such odors; for the whole air was infected with the smell of dead bodies, Of sick persons and medicines.

Others again held a still more cruel opinion, which they thought would keep them safe. They said that the only medicine against the plague-stricken was to go right away from them. Men and women, convinced of this and caring about nothing but themselves, abandoned their own city, their own houses, their dwellings, their relatives, their property, and went abroad or at least to the country round Florence, as if God's wrath in punishing men's wickedness with this plague would not follow them but strike only those who remained within the walls of the city, or as if they thought nobody in the city would remain alive and that its last hour had come."

**The Breakdown of Social Order**

One citizen avoided another, hardly any neighbor troubled about others, relatives never or hardly ever visited each other. Moreover, such terror was struck into the hearts of men and women by this calamity, that brother abandoned brother, and the uncle his nephew, and the sister her brother, and very often the wife her husband. What is even worse and nearly incredible is that fathers and mothers refused to see and tend their children, as if they had not been theirs.

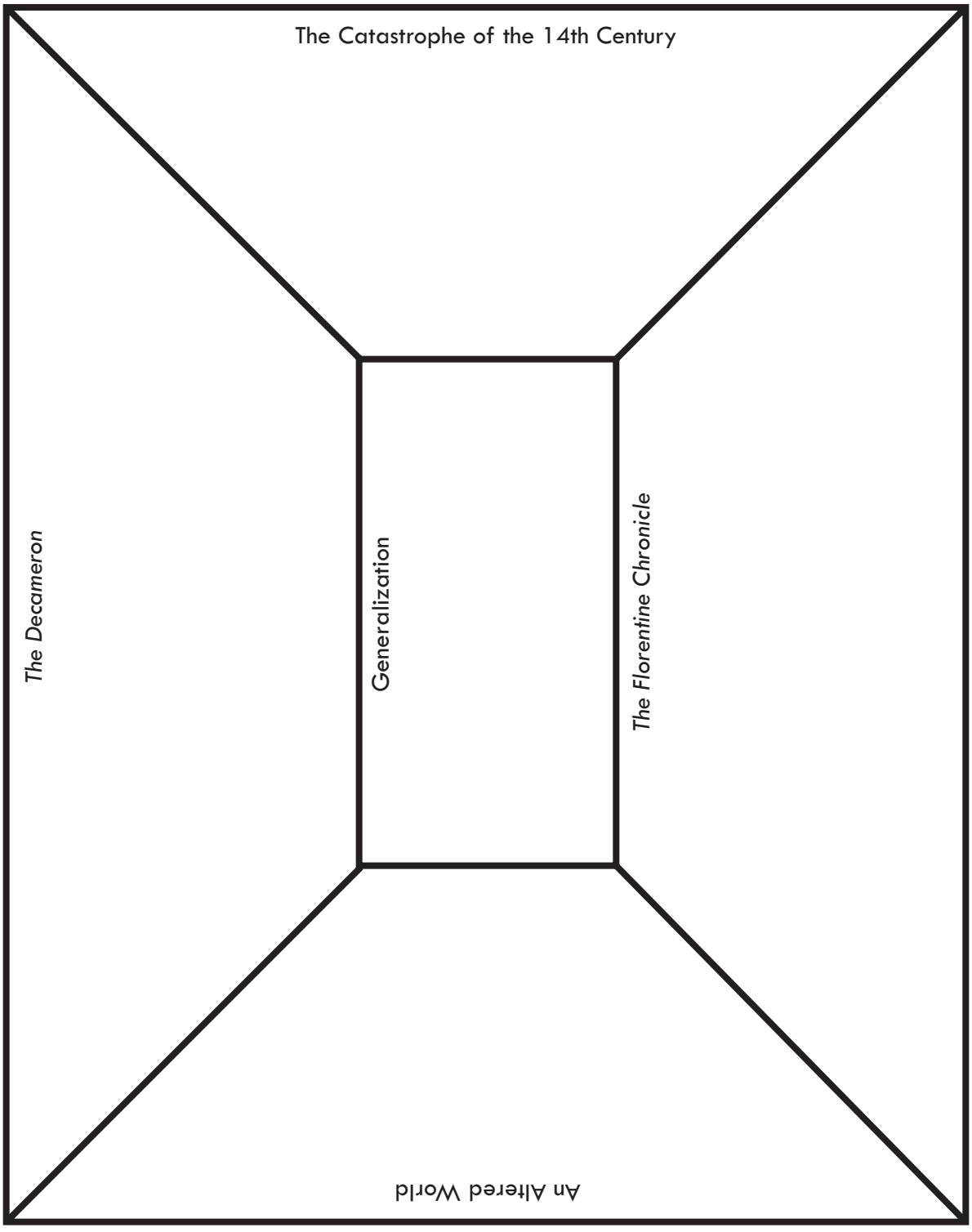
Thus, a multitude of sick men and women were left without any care, except from the charity of friends (but these were few), or the greed, of servants, though not many of these could be had even for high wages, Moreover, most of them were coarse-minded men and women, who did little more than bring the sick what they asked for or watch over them when they were dying. And very often these servants lost their lives and their earnings.

**Mass Burials**

The plight of the lower and most of the middle classes was even more pitiful to behold. Most of them remained in their houses, either through poverty or in hopes of safety, and fell sick by thousands. Since they received no care and attention, almost all of them died. Many ended their lives in the streets both at night and during the day; and many others who died in their houses were only known to be dead because the neighbors smelled their decaying bodies. Dead bodies filled every corner. Most of them were treated in the same manner by the survivors, who were more concerned to get rid of their rotting bodies than moved by charity towards the dead. With the aid of porters, if they could get them, they carried the bodies out of the houses and laid them at the door; where every morning quantities of the dead might be seen. They then were laid on biers or, as these were often lacking, on tables.

Such was the multitude of corpses brought to the churches every day and almost every hour that there was not enough consecrated ground to give them burial, especially since they wanted to bury each person in the family grave, according to the old custom. Although the cemeteries were full they were forced to dig huge trenches, where they buried the bodies by hundreds. Here they stowed them away like bales in the hold of a ship and covered them with a little earth, until the whole trench was full."

Source: From Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, vol. 1, trans. Richard Aldington (New York: Book League of America, 1930), quoted in "The Black Death, 1348," EyeWitness to History. http://www.ibiscom.com.



# *Graphing Calamities and Recoveries*

A line graph is a useful tool for understanding change over time. Follow the directions below to construct a graph that illustrates population changes from 1000 to 1500 in Europe, China, North Africa, and Southwest Asia (the Middle East).

1. Draw the graph:
    a. Measure and mark six evenly spaced points along the X-axis to display the years. Along the bottom of the X-axis, label each point with its year.
    b. Measure and mark thirteen evenly spaced points along the Y-axis to display the population from 0 to 130 (million) in intervals of ten. Label each point or every other point.
2. Label the graph:
    a. Label the X-axis "Years."
    b. Label the Y-axis "Estimated Population in Millions."
3. Make a key for the data:
    a. Select a different color to represent each of the four regions.
    b. Below the X-axis, draw a sample colored line for each region and label the line with the name of the region.
4. Graph the data:
    a. Use the table below to plot the data on your graph.
    b. Connect each region's data points to finish the graph.
    c. Title your finished graph.

## Estimated Population in Millions

| | Europe | China | SW Asia | N. Africa |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1000 | 30 | 56 | 33 | 9 |
| 1100 | 35 | 83 | 28 | 8 |
| 1200 | 49 | 124 | 27 | 8 |
| 1300 | 70 | 83 | 21 | 8 |
| 1400 | 52 | 70 | 19 | 8 |
| 1500 | 67 | 84 | 23 | 9 |

Source: David Christian, *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 344–345.

5. Keep in mind that the following events took place between 1000 and 1500:

   - The Crusades
   - The Rise of the Mongol Empire
   - The Rise of the Ming Dynasty
   - The Little Ice Age
   - The Black Death

   Also keep in mind the fact that human populations naturally tend to grow. This is because the number of births in a population normally exceeds the number of deaths. The graph clearly shows that there were times during this period of history when population declined rather than grew.

6. Now use your completed graph and what you have learned about calamities and recoveries in Afroeurasia to answer these questions.

   a. Where did the plague strike first, Europe or China? Support your answer with evidence from the graph as well as evidence from earlier activities in this chapter.
   b. What historical events would explain the population trend shown for Southwest Asia? Explain the connections.
   c. When did Europe's population begin to recover?
   d. When did China's population begin to recover?
   e. What might explain the fact that the graph for North Africa appears almost flat?

7. Alternately, think about the events you have studied in this chapter and when those events occurred. Use what you have learned to match the population trends in the graph to the events that explain those trends. Use specific evidence from the chapter and from the graph to support your explanation.

## LESSON 3

# Whirlwind

### *Preparation*

Duplicate copies of Student Handout 5.3.1, 5.3.2, and 5.3.3. Option: The map will be easier for students to complete if it is enlarged and copied on large-format paper. Students will also need atlases and colored pencils to complete the map.

### *Introduction*

Explain to students that the "double trouble" of the Little Ice Age and the Black Death were not the last of this era's crises. A disaster at the end of the century was the work of one man, a conqueror whose exploits caused historians to describe him as a "whirlwind."

1. Begin by asking students questions such as:
    - What is a whirlwind?
    - What are the effects of a whirlwind?
    - What do you think a human whirlwind might be like?
    - What might lead historians to refer to someone as a whirlwind?
2. Distribute Student Handout 5.3.1. Have students read it either silently or together as a class with discussion. Ask students, "What impact did Timur's conquests have on Asia?
3. Hand out the map and Student Handout 5.3.2. Have students read and follow the directions to complete the map. Note to teacher: Like the graphing activity in Lesson Two, this activity is intended to give students practice in reading to perform a task. Therefore, do not explain the directions further. Instead, when students have questions, refer them back to the reading and the directions as much as possible.
4. Option: Make a bulletin board display of some of the finished maps and use this display to discuss the far-reaching extent of Timur's whirlwind conquests.

# *Whirlwind*

## *Timur, the Lame Conqueror, Lord of all Asia, Scourge of God and Terror of the World!*

Although he has been dead for nearly six hundred years and his empire long since gone, the name Timur continues to evoke feelings of both fear and respect in the hearts of people throughout Eurasia. The word Timur is Turkic for "iron," an appropriate name for one who in his lifetime rose from being the chieftain of a small Turko-Mongol tribe to ruling an empire rivaling that of Alexander the Great.

During his long military career, Timur and his armies crossed Eurasia from Delhi to Moscow, from the Tien Shan Mountains of Central Asia to the Taurus Mountains of Anatolia. From 1370 until his death in 1405, Timur-the-Lame, or Tamerlane, as Europeans called him, engaged in almost constant warfare in order to extend his borders and maintain his vast territory.

Born in 1336 near Samarkand in the Mongol Chagatay Khanate, Timur was said to be tall, strongly built, and well-proportioned in spite of an injury in his twenties that left him with a slight paralysis in his right leg and arm. He always made light of his disability. Ahmad ibn Arabshah, Timur's biographer, described the conqueror in his sixties as:

> Steadfast in mind and robust in body, brave and fearless, firm as rock. He did not care for jesting or lying; wit and trifling pleased him not; truth, even were it painful, delighted him. . . . He loved bold and valiant soldiers, by whose aid he opened the locks of terror, tore men to pieces like lions, and overturned mountains. He was faultless in strategy, constant in fortune, firm of purpose and truthful in business.

According to the fourteenth century historian Ibn-Khaldun, who met him,

> This king Timur is one of the greatest and mightiest kings . . . he is highly intelligent and very perspicacious [shrewd], addicted to debate and argument about what he knows and also about what he does not know!

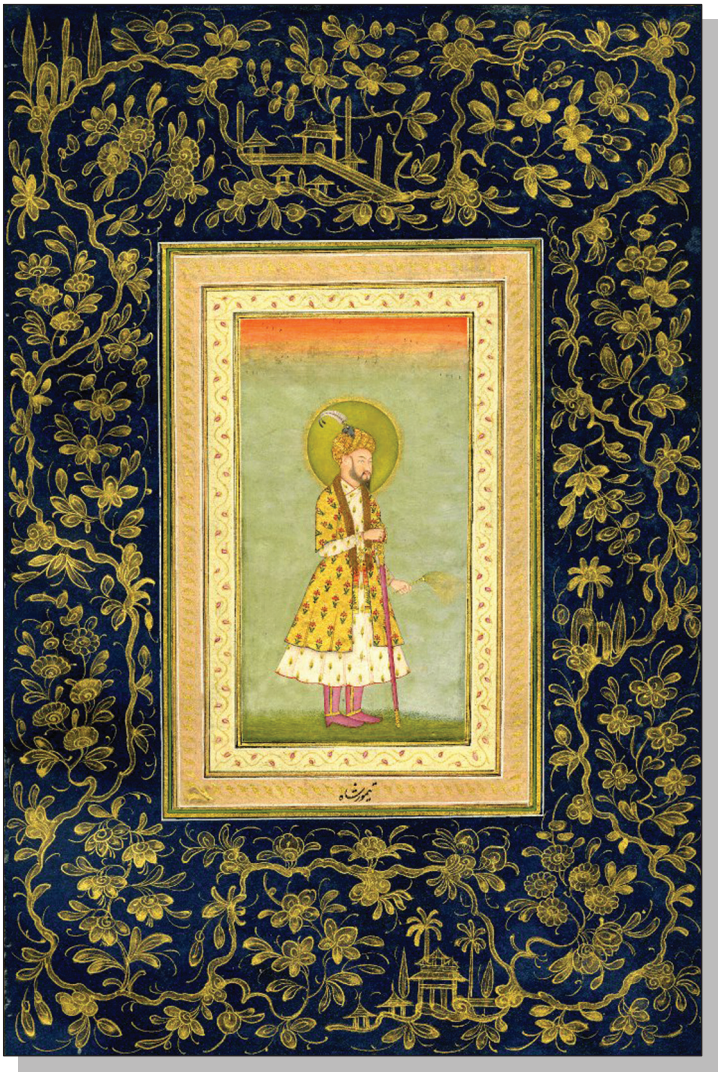
Timur was a man of curious contradictions. He spoke two or three languages, enjoyed having histories read to him, and supported the arts. While he sacked cities across Eurasia, he took great care to protect teachers and artisans from the carnage and to relocate them to Samarkand, where they might add to the refinement of his capital.

First and foremost, Timur was a ruthless and ambitious warrior who commanded a devoted following. Those who saw his army described it as a huge conglomeration of different peoples. Mongol nomads, settled peoples, Muslims, Christians, Turks, Arabs, and Indians all fought at the conqueror's side.

Around 1371, Timur proclaimed himself ruler of the Chagatay Khanate. Between 1381 and 1405, he and his army swept with whirlwind speed through the Hindu Kush and the Caucasus Mountains, the Persian deserts, the southern Russian steppes, Anatolia, and Syria, sacking cities along the way and slaying their inhabitants. By 1395, Timur had defeated the rival Mongol Empire of the Golden Horde. After entering Afghanistan in 1398, his army descended into

India, razing and ransacking Delhi, the capital of the Islamic Delhi sultanate, and annihilating most of its residents.

In 1400, using war elephants acquired in India, Timur and his troops stormed through the Syrian cities of Aleppo and Damascus, burned down Baghdad, and destroyed the port city of Smyrna in Turkey. In 1402 he succeeded in defeating the Ottoman army and capturing the Ottoman sultan. In the process, Timur unwittingly saved Byzantium temporarily from Ottoman conquest. Next, Timur made preparations for what was to be his greatest exploit, the conquest of China. In 1368, as he was beginning his rise to power, the Mongol Yuan Dynasty was overthrown and the Ming Dynasty established. Timur was determined to prove that he, not the Ming emperor, was the greatest power in Asia. The Ming government was well aware of the threat and poured resources into the defense of China's western frontiers. Nearing seventy years of age, however, Timur had become infirm and had to be carried on a litter when his army advanced toward China. In 1405 he fell ill and died.



Timur's empire collapsed quickly after his death, and the invasion of China never took place. Nevertheless, his exploits had a lasting impact on interregional networks of interaction and exchange from the Mediterranean to China. Southwest Asia, which bore the brunt of Timur's aggression, was slow to recover from the political, social, and economic upheavals brought about by his whirlwind invasions. At the heart of all his conquests was his driving ambition to restore the silk roads to their earlier glory as highways of thriving trade that would enrich his empire as it had the Mongol khans. Ironically, Timur's brutal hegemony shifted the focus of trans-hemispheric commercial interaction from the traditional caravan roads of the Asian heartland to the relatively safe waters of the Indian Ocean.

# *Mapping the Whirlwind*

**Directions:** Use the reading "Whirlwind" (Student Handout 5.3.1) and an atlas to complete this map activity.

Timur's capital was the city of _____. This city still exists today. Use an atlas to locate the city and plot and label its location on your map. In which modern country is this city located? _____

Although he raided deep into neighboring lands, Timur's empire was located in southwestern Asia between the Mediterranean Sea and India. Which modern countries are included within Timur's territory? _____

Shade in Timur's empire in light red (pink).

One of Timur's greatest foes was the _____ , located along his northern borders. Timur defeated their armies in a series of raids that reached as far as Moscow. Locate and label Moscow on your map. Shade the territory of this enemy in light yellow.

India was Timur's next target. After entering Afghanistan, Timur descended on the Delhi sultanate and destroyed its capital city, _____ . Plot and label this city. Also label India.

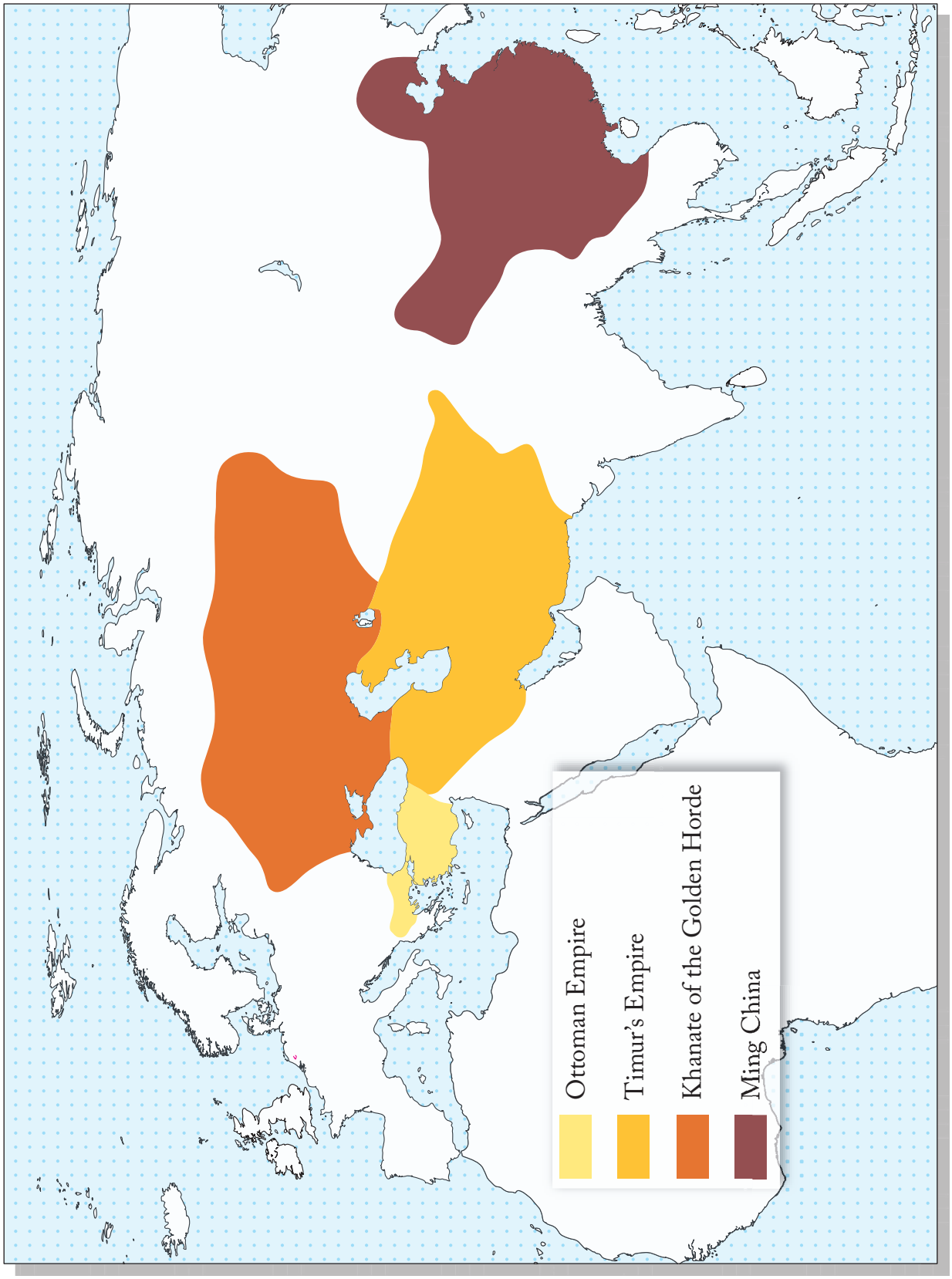
In the process of building his empire, Timur captured the important city of Damascus and burned the city of Baghdad to the ground. Plot and label these two cities on your map.

Timur also struck his neighbors to the west. In 1402 he defeated the _____ Empire and captured its ruler, Bajazet I. By doing this Timur unintentionally saved the Byzantine Empire, which had been besieged by the Ottoman Turks. Shade in the territory of this enemy in orange. Plot and label the Byzantine capital, Constantinople.

The conquest of _____ was Timur's final goal. Timur was on his way to invade this rich empire when he fell ill and died. Shade this land in light green.

Shade in the key and add an appropriate title to complete your map.

# *Map of Asian Empires*



LESSON 4

# Historical Bias: The Fall of Constantinople

## *Preparation*

Duplicate the primary source document in Student Handout 5.4.1.

## *Introduction*

Remind students that one of Timur's victims was the growing Ottoman Turkish empire in Anatolia. In fact, Timur's defeat of the Ottoman army and capture of its sultan very nearly crushed the fledgling empire. But following Timur's death, his empire quickly crumbled and the Ottomans made a remarkably swift recovery. They soon reclaimed their lost territories and resumed their conquest of what remained of Byzantium, which by then was a poor fragment of a once mighty empire. The last important stronghold of the Byzantines was Constantinople, their fortress capital. In this lesson students will learn of Constantinople's final days through a contemporary account of its fall.

1. Ask students to explain their understanding of the word "bias." Through discussion, link the concept of bias to earlier discussions concerning point of view. Explain that bias is the result of point of view and must be taken into consideration when dealing with both primary and secondary sources. Tell students that historians must often separate fact from opinion to construct an objective account of an event.
2. Distribute Student Handout 5.4.1. Instruct students to read the document carefully and determine if the account is notably biased, and if so, which side of the conflict does the author favor?
3. After students have completed a first reading of the document, discuss the question of bias. Students should be able to state that the account is heavily biased in favor of the Byzantines. Ask students to identify examples of language that reveal this bias.
4. Explain to students that another aspect of a historian's job is to interpret primary source accounts to decide which parts are significant enough to be included in a new retelling of the story. Tell students that in this next part of the lesson they will take on the role of a historian and create a new and more neutral interpretation of the fall of Constantinople.
5. Direct students to read Student Handout 5.4.1 again. This time, have them use a highlighter to mark passages they would include or paraphrase in their account of the battle for Constantinople. Remind students that the highlighted facts should be free of bias and also meet the student's test of significance. They should only highlight what they consider the important elements of the story needed to understand the event.
6. Optional: Have students study a second account of the fall of Constantinople, such as Kritovoulos's version of the Ottoman attack. This will give students more practice in detecting bias and will stress the importance of using multiple sources.

# *The Fall of Constantinople, 1453*

In his book the *Historia Turco-Byzantina*: *Or History of the Byzantines and the Turks*, the Greek historian Doukas wrote an account of the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks:

> Just as the sun set, the call to battle rang out. The battle array was most formidable indeed! The tyrant [Sultan Mehmed] himself was on horseback on Monday evening. Exactly opposite the fallen walls he gave battle with his faithful slaves, young and all-powerful, fighting like lions, more than ten thousand of them. To the rear and on both flanks there were more than one hundred thousand fighting cavalrymen. To the south of these and as far as the harbor of the Golden Gate there were another hundred thousand troops and more. From the spot where the ruler was standing to the extremities of the palace there were another fifty thousand soldiers. The troops on the ships and at the bridge were beyond number.
>
> The City's defenders were deployed in the following manner: The emperor and [his general] were stationed at the fallen walls, outside the stockade in the enclosure, with about three thousand [soldiers]. The grand duke was posted at the Imperial Gate with about five hundred troops. At the sea walls and along the battlements from the Xyloporta Gate to the Horaia Gate, more than five hundred crossbowmen and archers were arrayed. Making the complete circuit from the Horaia Gate to the Golden Gate there was stationed in each bastion a single archer, crossbowman, or gunner. They spent the entire night on watch with no sleep at all.
>
> The Turks with Mehmed rushed to the walls, carrying a great number of scaling ladders which had been constructed beforehand. Behind the lines, the tyrant, brandishing an iron mace, forced his archers to the walls by using both flattery and threats. The City's defenders fought back bravely with all the strength they could muster.
>
> But just as Fortune's feats of arms were about to snatch victory from Turkish hands, from the very middle of the embattled Roman [Byzantine] troops, God removed their general, a mighty warrior of gigantic stature. He was wounded just before dawn by lead shot which went through the back of his arm, penetrating his iron breastplate. . . . Unable to relieve the pain of the wound, he cried out to the emperor, "Stand your ground bravely, and I will retire to the ship to attend to my wound. Then I will quickly return. . . ."
>
> When the emperor beheld [his general] in retreat, he lost heart and so did his companions. Yet they continued the fight with all their strength.
>
> The Turks gradually made their way to the walls, and, using their shields for cover, threw up their scaling ladders. Thwarted, however, by stone-throwers from above, they achieved nothing.
>
> Their assault, therefore, was repulsed. All the Romans with the emperor held their ground against the enemy, and all their strength and purpose were exerted to prevent the Turks from entering through the fallen walls. Unbeknown to them, however, God willed that the Turks would be brought in by another way. When they saw the sallyport, to which we referred above, open, some fifty of the tyrant's renowned slaves leaped inside. They climbed to the top of the walls and zealously slew anyone they met and struck down the sentinels who discharged missiles from above. It was a sight filled with horror!
>
> Some of the Romans and Latins who were preventing the Turks from attaching scaling ladders to the walls were cut to pieces, while others, closing their eyes, jumped from

the wall and ended their lives horribly by smashing their bodies. Unimpeded, the Turks threw up the scaling ladders and ascended like soaring eagles.

The fierce Turkish warriors outnumbered the Romans twenty to one. The Romans, moreover, were not as experienced in warfare as the ordinary Turks. . . . When they looked up and saw the Turks, they fled behind the walls. . . . When the tyrant's troops witnessed the rout of the Romans, they shouted with one voice and pursued them inside, trampling upon the wretches and slaughtering them. When they reached the gate, they were unable to get through because it was blocked by the bodies of the dead and the dying. The majority entered through the breaches in the walls and they cut down all those they met.

The [Byzantine] emperor, despairing and hopeless, stood with sword and shield in hand and poignantly cried out, "Is there no one among the Christians who will take my head from me?" He was abandoned and alone. Then one of the Turks wounded him by striking him flush, and he, in turn, gave the Turk a blow. A second Turk delivered a mortal blow from behind and the emperor fell to the earth . . .

Some of the Azabs, that is, the tyrant's retinue who are also called Janissaries, overran the palace. Others swarmed over the Monastery of the Great Forerunner called Petra and the Monastery of Chora in which was found the icon of my Immaculate Mother of God. . . . After they seized the monastery's precious vessels, they rode off.

Then a great horde of mounted infidels charged down the street leading to the Great Church. The actions of both Turks and Romans made quite a spectacle! In the early dawn, as the Turks poured into the City and the citizens took flight, some of the fleeing Romans managed to reach their homes and rescue their children and wives. As they moved, bloodstained, across the Forum of the Bull and passed the Column of the Cross, their wives asked, "What is to become of us?" When they heard the fearful cry, "The Turks are slaughtering Romans within the City's walls," they did not believe it at first. They cursed and reviled the ill-omened messenger instead. But behind him came a second, and then a third, and all were covered with blood, and they knew that the cup of the Lord's wrath had touched their lips. Monks and nuns, therefore, and men and women, carrying their infants in their arms and abandoning their homes to anyone who wished to break in, ran to the Great Church. The thoroughfare, overflowing with people, was a sight to behold!

. . . In one hour's time that enormous temple was filled with men and women. There was a throng too many to count, above and below, in the courtyards and everywhere. They bolted the doors and waited, hoping to be rescued.

Pillaging, slaughtering, and taking captives on the way, the Turks reached the temple before the termination of the first hour. The gates were barred, but they broke them with axes. They entered with swords flashing and, beholding the myriad populace, each Turk caught and bound his own captive.

There was no one who resisted or who did not surrender himself like a sheeWho can recount the calamity of that time and place? Who can describe the wailing and the cries of the babes, the mothers' tearful screams and the fathers' lamentations? . . . The abductors, the avengers of God, were in a great hurry. Within one hour they had bound everyone, the male captives with cords and the women with their own veils. The infinite chains of captives who like herds of kine [cattle] and flocks of sheep poured out of the temple and the temple sanctuary made an extraordinary spectacle! They wept and wailed and there was none to show them mercy.

What became of the temple treasures? What shall I say and how shall I say it? My tongue is stuck fast in my larynx. I am unable to draw breath through my sealed mouth. In that same hour the dogs hacked the holy icons to pieces, removing the ornaments. As for the chains, candelabra, holy altar coverings, and lamps, some they destroyed and the rest they seized. All the precious and sacred vessels of the holy sacristy, fashioned from gold and silver and other valuable materials, they collected in an instant, leaving the temple desolate and naked; absolutely nothing was left behind.

When the Romans saw that the Turks were already inside the City, they emitted the anguished cry of woe and threw themselves off the wall. The strength and might of the Romans were exhausted.

When the Turks in the ships saw their comrades inside the City, they knew that the City had fallen. They quickly threw up scaling ladders and climbed over the wall; then they broke down the gates and all rushed inside.

All the Romans had dispersed. Some were captured before they could reach their homes. Others, on reaching their homes, found them robbed of children, wife, and belongings. Before they had time to groan and wail, their hands were bound behind them. Still others, on reaching their homes and finding their wives and children already abducted, were themselves bound and fettered with their closest friends and their wives. The old men and women who were unable to leave their houses, either because of infirmity or old age, were slaughtered mercilessly. The newborn infants were flung into the squares.

All these events took place between the first hour of the day and the eighth hour [6 a.m. to 2 p.m.]. Setting aside his suspicions and fears, the tyrant made his entry into the City. . .

Proceeding to the Great Church [Hagia Sophia], he dismounted from his horse and went inside. He marveled at the sight.

Alas, the calamity! Alack, the horrendous deed! Woe is me! What has befallen us? Oh! Oh! What have we witnessed? An infidel Turk, standing on the holy altar in whose foundation the relics of Apostles and Martyrs have been deposited! . . . Because of our sins the temple [Hagia Sophia] . . . has been renamed and has become the House of Muhammad. Just is Thy judgment, 0 Lord.

Source: From Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks*, trans. Harry J. Magoulias (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1975), 231–235.

LESSON 5

# Europe Recovers

## *Preparation*

Duplicate Student Handouts 5.5.1–5.5.4.

## *Introduction*

Tell students that in spite of the multiple calamities suffered by Europeans during this period, a timely conjunction of circumstances and events fueled a dramatic recovery toward the end of the era. In this lesson, students will use graphic organizers to investigate how many factors combined to make this remarkable recovery possible.

1. Divide students into groups of three. Distribute Student Handout 5.5.1 to all students. Give each group one set of the three graphic organizers.
2. Explain to students that each member of the group will complete one of the three graphic organizers. Have them carefully read the directions that explain the graphic organizer they have been assigned. Answer any general questions and then have students complete their organizers.
3. As groups of students complete their organizers, direct them to begin working together to complete the "Putting It All Together" portion of the assignment. This will require them to share and compare what they have learned and concluded so far and then to combine their information to make further inferences and predictions.
4. When all groups have completed their tasks, discuss the graphic organizers and the first two "Putting It All Together" questions. You may want to highlight key points of the discussion by recording them on the board.
5. Conclude the lesson by discussing the final question. Since this question asks students to make predictions about later eras, discuss student ideas without revealing the answers.

# *Europe Recovers*

## *Graphic Organizer 1:*

The pace of change in Europe accelerated greatly from 1300 to 1500. Some of the events and facts associated with this acceleration are listed in Student Handout 5.5.2. Consider these facts and events carefully and then fill in the center of the graphic organizer with your ideas about how life in Europe might have changed as a result.

## *Graphic Organizer 2:*

As you know, feudalism was the political system that organized life during most of the Middle Ages. The facts and events described in Student Handout 5.5.3 resulted in important changes to this system, which altered the way of life for many people. Read carefully and think about the facts and events listed. Fill in the center of the graphic organizer with your ideas about the possible results of these new changes in political systems and ways of life.

## *Graphic Organizer 3:*

The facts and events described in Student Handout 5.5.4 motivated Europeans to begin trying to do some new things that were never considered by Europeans of the Middle Ages. Read carefully and think about the facts and events listed. Fill in the center of the graphic organizer with your ideas about what these circumstances might have motivated Europeans to do.

## *Putting it all together:*

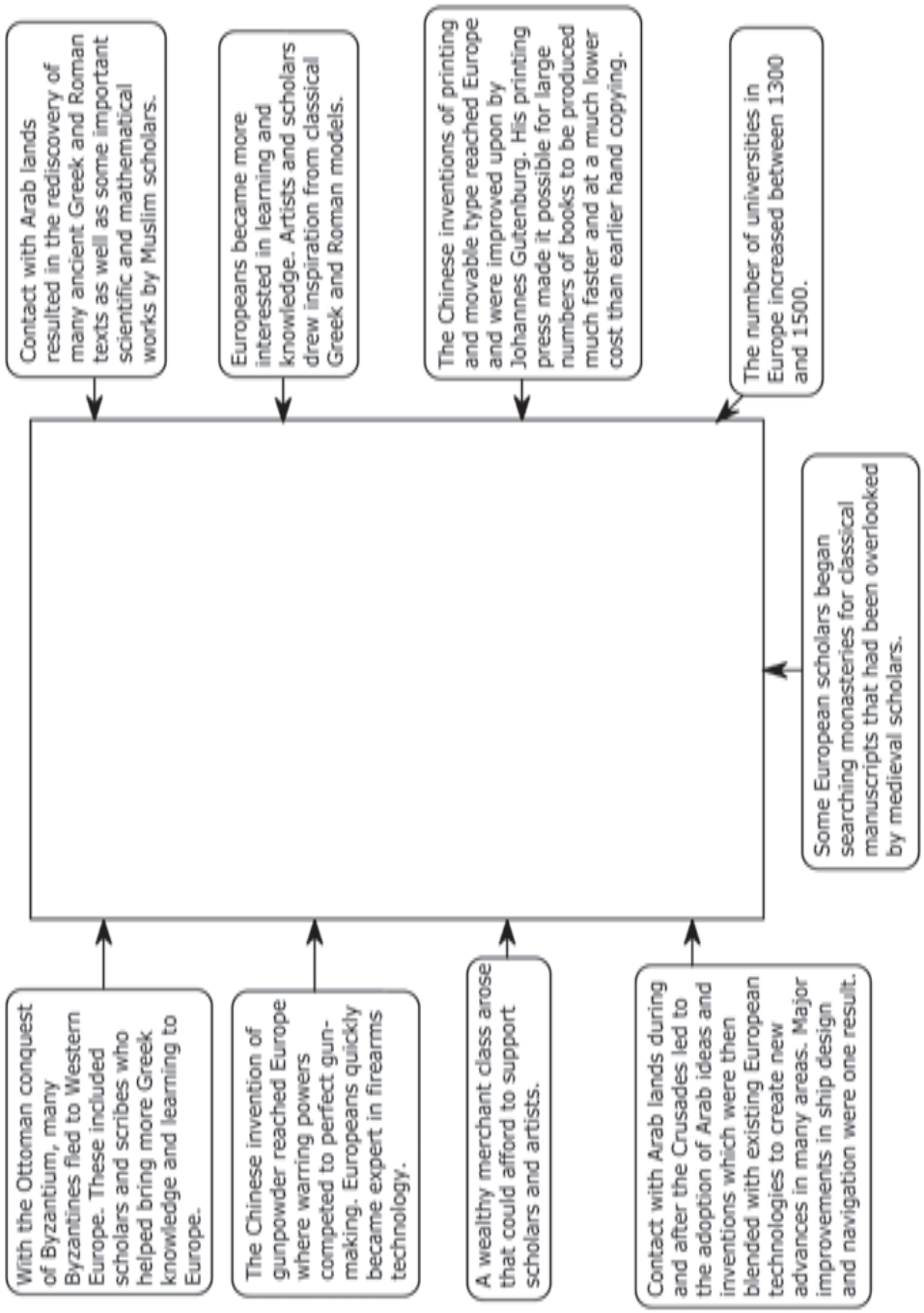
Look carefully at the three completed graphic organizers. Use them to answer these questions:

1. What events or facts do two or more of the three graphic organizers have in common? Summarize these commonalities below:

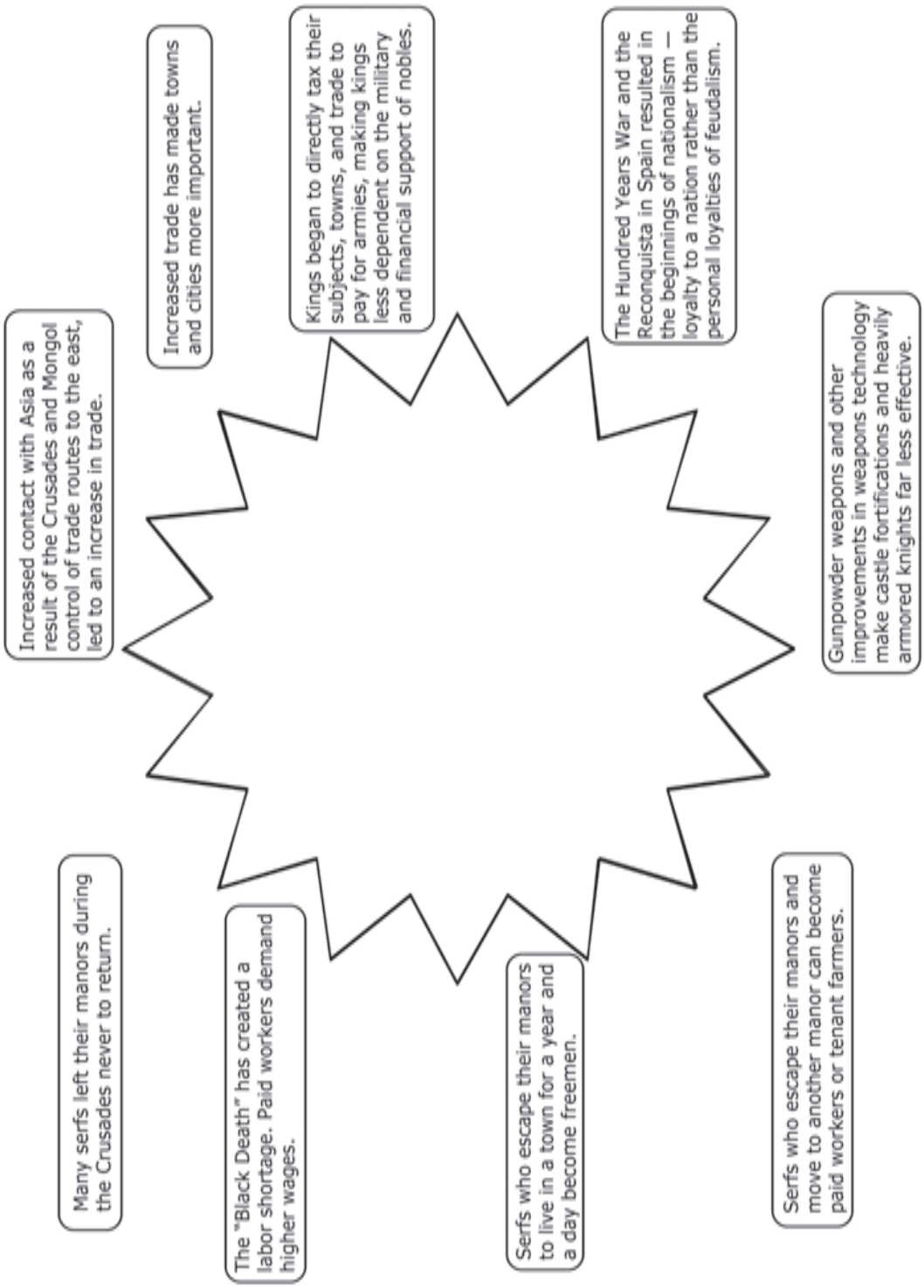
2. The three graphic organizers combined tell the story of Europe's recovery after the many calamities of the fourteenth century. What do you think were the main reasons Europe was able to recover?

3. Use the three graphic organizers and their shared elements to think about what might have happened after 1500. What predictions can you make about possible changes and events that might take place as a result of Europe's recovery?

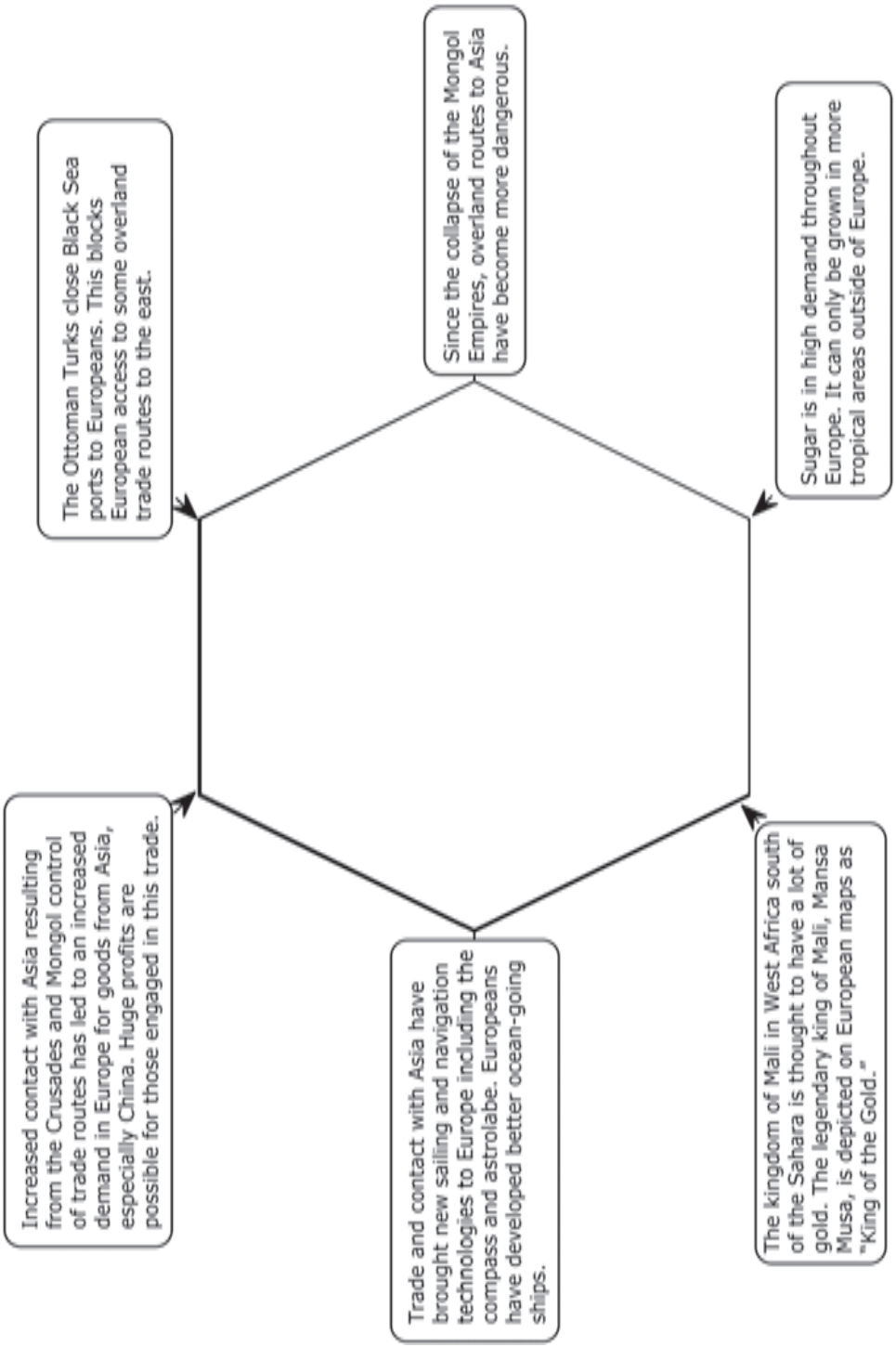
# *Change in Europe 1*



# *Change in Europe 2*



# *Change in Europe 3*



CHAPTER 6

*By Felicia Eppley and Ellen Leader Pike*

# Spheres of Interaction in the Americas


## WHY STUDY SPHERES OF INTERACTION IN THE AMERICAS?

Networks of trade and exchange have been an important feature of world history. This was true both in Afroeurasia and in the Americas. People not only acquired goods they needed and wanted from outside their immediate region but also received technological, religious, and other ideas from the people with whom they had contact. In this chapter, students will learn that by Big Era Five (300–1500 CE) indigenous peoples of the Americas had developed extensive networks of trade and exchange. Students will also learn that indigenous peoples accomplished this even though they had no pack animals (except for llamas in the Andes), no wheels, and no carts.

We tend to think of our contemporary world as unique with regard to the web of connections we share with others around the globe. It is important for us to remember that connections between different human societies have always been a feature of world history. What is different today is only the complexity and speed of our interconnections.

## OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Identify and locate spheres of interregional exchange in the Americas.
2. List examples of goods exchanged within spheres.
3. Explain how goods were exchanged and transported over a wide geographic area.
4. Describe theories about which spheres might have been linked through trade.

## TIME AND MATERIALS

This lesson takes approximately 30–45 minutes. Materials needed include an atlas, map, and the student handouts.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Implicit in the presentation of the arrival of Europeans in the Americas in most history texts is the idea that this encounter marked the first time that people of different societies came in contact in this world region. In fact, between 300 and 1500 CE, indigenous peoples of the Americas established complex networks of trade and exchange. Within North America, Mesoamerica, and the Andean regions, trade routes developed that carried food, minerals, manufactured goods, and ideas over long distances either by foot or water.

In North America, many zones of interconnection and interaction existed: the Northern and Eastern Woodlands, the Southeast and the Southwest, and the Pacific Northwest are examples. In Mesoamerica, peoples of the valley of central Mexico had trade contacts with peoples to the north of them and beyond to the desert regions of northern Mexico and the American southwest. They traded to the south, the Yucatan Peninsula, into Central America. In the Andean region of South America, peoples whose communities were strung along the mountain cordillera established networks of exchange with those to the north and south of them and with those in lower or higher elevations. In addition, there is some speculation that peoples of the Ecuadorian region were intermediaries in systems of exchange between Mesoamericans and northern Andeans.

## THREE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

### *Humans and the Environment*

Why do you think population in South America in Big Era Five was so heavily concentrated in the Andean region in contrast to relatively low populations in other parts of the continent, especially the great Amazon River basin?

### *Humans and Other Humans*

Why might peoples of the Americas have lacked incentives to invent the wheel, which we think of today as such a basic tool? How did American peoples compensate for the absence of wheels (except, it appears, as toys)? Did many different peoples in Afroeurasia invent the wheel, or did it happen independently only in one or a few places?

### *Humans and Ideas*

The jaguar was a supernatural being in many Mesoamerican societies. What qualities and powers did the jaguar typically have? What was the range in time and space of the jaguar deity in Mesoamerican religion? What might the appearance of the jaguar deity in different societies tell us about human exchange networks in Mesoamerica?

## KEY THEMES

This chapter addresses the following historical themes:

**Key Theme 2:** Economic Networks and Exchange

**Key Theme 6:** Science, Technology, and the Environment.

## CORRELATIONS TO NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

**National Standards for World History**

Era Five: Intensified Hemispheric Interactions, 6A: The student understands the development of complex societies and states in North America and Mesoamerica.

## INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

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LESSON 1

# Spheres of Interaction

Archaeological research and analysis have yielded most of the information we have about networks of trade and exchange in pre-Columbian America. By examining changes in styles of art and architecture, materials used in manufacturing objects, and fossilized natural materials, archaeologists are able to speculate about likely networks of interactions.

## *Trade vs. economic networks and systems of exchange*

Since the word "trade" seems to conjure up contemporary images of buying and selling through specialized merchants on a one-to-one basis, it does not exactly describe what these early traders were doing. Goods often traveled over great distances and changed hands so many times that it would be difficult to trace the exact route of a particular item. Complex webs of exchange often meant that goods followed circuitous routes and passed through many hands from their point of origin to their final destination. Also, exchange might take the form of political tribute to rulers or gift-giving as an aspect of diplomacy.

## *Local vs. long distance trade*

The basis of local exchanges was the household needs of ordinary people, while long distance trade tended to satisfy the desires of elites and rulers. Since local environments determined which plants, animals, and mineral resources were available, people began to exchange their local surpluses with people nearby for goods they wanted.

## *Local trade*

Local trade favored bulky and heavy items such as pottery, baskets, minerals, and wood, as well as farm products such as maize, beans, or fruits. It was feasible to transport bulky items over short distances but not over long ones. In local trade there tended to be a reciprocal exchange of goods of equal value, so one type of food might be bartered for another. Over longer distances there was usually a local medium of value, for example, cacao shells or gold dust in quill containers in Mesoamerica, coca or maize in the Andes, and seashells or beaver pelts in parts of North America.

## *Long distance trade*

Long distance trade was mainly in luxuries and exotics for elites and rulers. Artisans working for them needed a wide range of raw materials that many times were not available in their local areas. For example, those in lowland regions had no local sources of minerals to be made into tools or weapons. Foods were specific to particular climates, so if people wanted to have a balanced diet or satisfy a taste they desired, they would have to acquire food from external areas outside of their region. Long distance trade items tended to be light in weight and valuable (such as feathers, jewels, or ornaments). Possessing exotic and valuable goods sanctioned elites' rule by showing evidence of their status and worldliness.

### *Transportation*

Goods were most often transported overland. In Mesoamerica, for example, porters might carry up to 50 pounds and cover 15 miles a day through jungles, across steep ravines, and up rugged mountains. The Andean region was the only one in the Americas that had a pack animal, the llama, which could carry only a moderate weight of up to about 100 pounds. In addition, coastal and river-dwelling peoples had various types of floats, boats, canoes, and rafts. In some cases specialized merchants employed caravans of porters to carry goods. In other cases individual traders made long trips.

### *Chocolate*

In Mesoamerica, cacao was highly valued because it was considered to be a stimulant, an intoxicant, a hallucinogen, and an aphrodisiac. The caffeine in chocolate certainly was a stimulant, and warriors used it for strength before a battle. When fermented it could be intoxicating. During religious festivals, hallucinations could be induced with fermented chocolate teamed with certain mushrooms. Rulers, like Montezuma, drank chocolate before making love to one of his many wives. Raw chocolate is quite bitter. Mesoamericans mixed it with combinations of spices, peppery flowers, bitter almond-tasting seeds, and limewater. Maize was used to thicken chocolate. Chocolate was rare. It grew in tropical lowlands and production was limited. It was therefore used as money throughout Mesoamerica. Records exist of counterfeit cacao beans. Individuals would empty cacao bean shells and then fill them with clay to pass them off as the real thing.

### *Procedure*

1. Display Student Handout 6.1.1 and ask students to identify the three major regions of intercommunication: Eastern North America, Mesoamerica, and the Andes.

    a. Note to teachers: Point out to students that the Mesoamerican sphere included a chunk of the southwestern United States. The Eastern North American sphere extended from the Rockies to the Appalachians and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. The Andean sphere included the mountains and coastal plains of western South America, so that trade in this region was not only horizontal, but also "vertical."

2. Put students into small groups.

    a. Give each group a list of trade items for one of the three spheres (Eastern North American, Mesoamerican, or Andean). Ask students to organize the items into these categories: Food, Raw Materials, and Manufactured Items.

    b. Have groups report and write a categorized list for each sphere on the board.

    c. Ask students to suggest how an archeologist might determine which of the items were likely to be locally produced and which would have come from some distance. List these suggestions on the board and discuss their validity. Possibilities might include:

i. Foods and animal products that could not be locally produced because the environment was too hot, too cold, too dry, too wet, or too high.

ii. Pottery and textiles that have designs on them do not always match the local designs. Such designs tend to be very localized due to the types of clays and coloring agents used on them (i.e., pigments and dyes).

iii. Marine shells found inland.

iv. Metals and stones were found far from their sources. Mesoamericans acquired turquoise from the area that is now known as New Mexico. Andeans obtained emeralds from the area that is now known as Ecuador.

3. Have each group examine its sphere in an atlas.

   a. Make a list of the positive features of the area the group chose in terms of transport routes (e.g., navigable rivers) and obstacles (e.g., mountain ranges). Hypothesize about what obstacles, other than climate and topography, might pose problems to traders (e.g., local wars, diseases).

   b. Hypothesize how goods could be moved from one place to another within the trade area. Have students report their answers by region.

4. Display Student Handout 6.1.1 again. Give each group copies of the information on the two spheres they did not work on. Each group should now have copies of items from all three spheres. Ask students to compare the items and consider the following questions:

   a. Are there any items that might indicate trade between the spheres?

   b. How would the items be transported from one place to another?

   c. Would the exchange have been direct or might there have been an intermediary?

   d. Note to teachers: One obvious interconnection among these three spheres is maize. Scientists have shown from genetic evidence that maize originated in Mesoamerica and from there spread to upper North America and to South America. Other connections are not as well documented, but there are a number of theories about them:

      i. Ecuador, located at the northern edge of the Andean sphere, acted as an intermediary between that region and the southern edge of the Mesoamerican sphere. Evidence includes the *Spondylus princeps* shell. (Go to an Internet search engine to find pictures of *Spondylus princeps* to show students what it looks like.) These were used in both Ecuador and western Mexico for religious purposes, and were traded from Ecuador south to people in the Andes. Shaft tombs of the same unusual design and figurines of people wearing similar clothing are found both in western Mexico and Ecuador.

ii. A connection is thought to exist between Mesoamerica and the North Eastern American sphere because of suggestive evidence from architecture. The temples of the Mississippian peoples were built on large earthen temple-mounds shaped like the stone temple-mounds of Mesoamerica. Students can look at the map and hypothesize the possible routes these exchanges might have taken.

## *Assessment*

Students should locate on a map the three major spheres of interaction in the Western Hemisphere. They should be able to define local and long distance trade, provide examples of both, and explain how items would have been transported. Finally, students should cite an example of a possible regional exchange.

## *Extension Activities*

1. Ask students to measure the dimension of their region. How far would an item have to travel to get from one end of the region to the other? Note: These measurements might be saved for a later comparison of trade routes in Afroeurasia. Were these zones longer or shorter than those in Afroeurasia? Were the conditions similar or different? What kind of transportation was used and what items were traded?

2. We know about the economic benefits of systems of exchange. Ask students to discuss the political, social, and cultural aspects as well.

# *Map: Spheres of Interaction in the Americas 300–1500 CE*

# *Andean Items of Exchange*

- Monkeys
- Maize
- Silver ornaments
- Potato
- Quinoa
- Pottery
- Coca
- Manioc
- Tools (obsidian points, knives, and scrapers)
- Peppers
- Dried meat
- Gold ornaments
- Sweet potatoes
- Yams
- Tropical fruits
- Beans
- Peanuts
- Feathers
- Tomatoes
- Dried fish
- Guinea pigs
- Shell beads
- Avocados
- Salt
- Textiles (wool, cotton)
- *Spondylus princeps* sea shells

# *Mesoamerican Items of Exchange*

- Fish
- Pottery
- Bird feathers (quetzal and macaw)
- Animal skins
- Stones (jade, jadeite, turquoise, crystalline, yellow topaz, obsidian)
- Flint
- Metals (gold and copper)
- *Spondylus princeps* sea shells
- Honey
- Combs
- Feathered head gear and shields
- Nose and ear rings
- Textiles
- Bells
- Needles
- Cochineal (insects that are used for red dye)
- Red ochre
- Herbs
- Slaves
- Copal (used for incense)
- Rubber
- Jaguar pelts
- Flint
- Ear plugs
- Salt
- Fish
- Pottery
- Canoes
- Game
- Wooden statues of gods
- Maize

# *Eastern North American Items of Exchange*

- Maize
- Beans (kidney, navy, pinto, pole, snap)
- Chert hoes and spades
- Marine shell spoons, dippers, and vessels
- Copper ornaments
- Freshwater pearls
- Obsidian tools
- Mica
- Pottery
- Baskets
- Shell beads and pendants
- Furs
- Bone needles, awls
- Game
- Dried fish
- Tobacco
- Stone pipes
- Leather garments
- Pigments
- Flint knives, scrapers, and drills

# Glossary

**Afroeurasia:** The land masses of Africa and Eurasia, together with adjacent islands, as a single spatial entity. The concept of Afroeurasia is useful in the study of both historical and contemporary social phenomena whose full geographical contexts overlap in one way or another the conventionally defined continents of Africa, Asia, and Europe. See also Afro-Eurasia.

**agrarian society:** A society where agriculture, including both crop production and animal breeding, is the foundation of both subsistence and surplus wealth. To be distinguished from hunter-forager and pastoral nomadic societies.

**agriculture:** The intentional cultivation of domesticated plants and animals. Beginning about 12,000 years ago, the development of agriculture permitted unprecedented growth of human population and the emergence of towns, cities, and the centralized state. Scholars generally agree that agricultural economies developed in several parts of Afroeurasia and the Americas independently of one another.

**Amerindian:** A member of any of the native populations of the Americas; an American Indian or Native American.

**animism:** A doctrine that the vital principle of organic development is immaterial spirit.

**archaeologist:** A professional scholar in a branch of anthropology that documents similarities, differences and change among various human societies of the past. Archaeologists work with the material (physical) remains of societies. Their work provides the major source of information available on societies that did not have writing systems. Archaeologists also provide evidence that supplements written sources.

**aristocracy:** A privileged or ruling class, usually a small social minority. Often the hereditary nobility or major landowning class in a society. An "aristocrat" is a member of this upper class. Also "aristocratic," as in "aristocratic government." "Aristo" is from the Greek, meaning the "best."

**autarky:** A state of economic self-sufficiency. A country's policy of establishing economic self-sufficiency and independence.

**barter:** The mutual transfer of goods or services not involving the exchange of money. Used as the common form of exchange before the invention of currency. The practice of bartering continues to one degree or another in all modern societies.

**belief system:** A combination of ideas, values, and practices that serve a society's cultural needs. Belief systems include all religions, as well as philosophical, ethical, and moral systems.

**caliph:** In Arabic, khalifa. In Sunni Muslim teaching, the successor to the Prophet Muhammad as rightful leader of the Muslim community chosen by a concensus of that community. In the Umayyad (661–750) and Abbasid (751–1258) dynasties, the Caliphs were also the heads of state and transmitted their authority to their descendants.

**cartographer:** A person who designs or constructs maps or charts.

**cash crops:** Crops grown for sale on the market rather than exclusively for local consumption and subsistence.

**civilization:** See complex society.

**clan:** A form of social and political organization in which the fundamental principle of solidarity is kinship. Clans typically constitute two or more kinship groups within a tribe. Clan organization is common among pastoral nomadic and stateless societies.

**collective learning:** The view that the human species has a unique capacity to accumulate and share complex knowledge and to transmit this knowledge from one generation to the next.

**colonialism:** The systematic exercise of political and military authority of an intrusive group of foreign origin over the population of a given territory. Often involves the colonizer asserting social and cultural domination of the indigenous population.

**Columbian Exchange:** The trans-oceanic transmission of plants, animals, microorganisms, and people that followed the establishment of regular contact between Afroeurasia and the Americas in the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. Because life forms evolved separately in the Eastern and Western Hemispheres for millions of years, these transmissions had far-reaching biological, economic, cultural, and social effects on both American and Afroeurasian societies.

**commercial diaspora:** A network of merchants of common origin and shared cultural identity who lived as aliens in foreign towns to serve as agents and cross-cultural brokers for fellow merchants who moved along the trade routes connecting these towns. Examples are the ancient commercial diaspora of the Phoenicians and the medieval diaspora of Jewish merchants in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean. Also trade diaspora. See diaspora.

**complex society:** A type of society characterized by all or most of the following features: dense population, agricultural economy, cities, complex social hierarchy, complex occupational specialization, centralized state, monumental building, a writing system, and a dominant belief system. To be distinguished generally from hunter-forager, pastoral nomadic, and small-scale agricultural societies. Civilization.

**constitution:** The fundamental laws, either written or unwritten, of a political body or state.

**creation myths:** A type of myth that explains how the universe, the earth, life, and humankind came into being. Most societies in history have had creation myths.

**demography:** The study of the size, growth, density, growth and other characteristics of human populations.

**diaspora:** The scattering of a people of distinct regional, ethnic, or religious identity from the original homeland to other parts of the world. A diaspora may result from either voluntary or forced migration. Examples include the Jewish diaspora and the dispersion of people of African descent to the Americas and other regions as a result of slave trade. See Commercial Diaspora.

**divine right:** The theory that the legitimacy of a monarch or other head of state derives from God or other supernatural power. Contrasts with the modern theory that political sovereignty is determined by the will of the people.

**domestication:** The process whereby humans changed the genetic makeup of plants and animals by influencing the way they reproduced, thereby making them more appealing in taste, size, and nutrition, as well as easier to grow, process, and cook. Humans could not invent new plant species, but they could select plants that possessed certain observable mutations, that is, characteristics that made them desirable. Farmers could tend these mutants in ways that ensured their survival. The domestication of animals through selective breeding followed a similar process.

**ecological niche:** The environment within which an organism is adapted to live.

**ecology:** The aspect of biology concerned with the relations between organisms and their environment.

**El Niño (El Niño Southern Oscillation):** The term describes both warming of the Pacific Ocean off Peru and Ecuador and the much more extensive interactions between sea and air that occur across the equatorial Pacific. An El Niño event involves warm changes in sea surface temperature combined with changes in sea level pressure across the tropical ocean. El Niño events typically last a year to eighteen months and may occur every few years. These events may bring torrential rains and floods to some regions of the world and prolonged droughts to others.

**endemic:** Prevalent in or peculiar to a certain area, region, or people, as an infectious disease.

**entrepôt:** A city whose commercial activity includes the transshipment or distribution of trade goods.

**entrepreneur:** An individual who organizes, runs, and takes responsibility of a business or other enterprise; a business person; an employer; from the French verb entreprendre, meaning "to undertake" some task.

**epidemic:** An outbreak of contagious disease affecting a significant portion of the population of a locality. See also Pandemic.

**extensification:** "An increase in the range of humans without any parallel increase in the average size or density of human communities, and consequently with little increase in the complexity of human societies. It involves the gradual movement of small groups into

new lands, usually adjacent to and similar to those they have left." (David Christian, Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004], 190). Processes of extensification were characteristic of the paleolithic era in world history. See also Intensification.

**farming:** The process of growing and harvesting domesticated plants and animals for food, fiber, and other commodities. Farming is characteristic of agrarian societies.

**fascism:** A political philosophy, movement, or government that exalts the nation, and often a socially defined race, above the individual and that advocates centralized autocratic government, strict economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition. Derived from the Italian fascismo and referring to a "bundle," "fasces," or "group," specifically to a bundle of birch or elm sticks used in ancient Rome as a symbol of penal authority.

**globalization:** The process by which peoples around the world have become increasingly interconnected through rapid communication and transport. Globalization involves the intensification of economic, social, cultural, political, and biological interchange worldwide, resulting on the one hand in a general acceleration of change and on the other in efforts to strengthen the bonds of identity and community on the local and regional levels.

**global warming:** An increase in the earth's surface temperature caused by a rise in atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide.

**government:** An organization having the power to make and enforce laws and to maintain social order over a territory or a group of people. A government may regulate society through a consensus of leaders, through democratic elections and decision-making, or through authoritarian force. In a state, the government is the central decision-making authority.

**Great Arid Zone:** The belt of arid and semi-arid land that extends generally northeastward across Afroeurasia from the Sahara Desert in the west to Manchuria (northern China) in the east. The Great Arid Zone has been home to both pastoral nomadic communities and to farming societies where water from rivers, wells, and periodic rainfall is available. In addition to the Sahara, the large deserts of the Great Arid Zone include the Arabian Desert, the Great Indian Desert, the Takla Makan Desert, and the Gobi Desert.

**Great Dying:**

1. An extinction event that occurred about 250 million years ago and that wiped out many marine and land species.

2. The massive die-off of American Indian peoples that followed contact with humans from Afroeurasia beginning in the late fifteenth century. This mortality, which in some areas may have reduced populations by 90 per cent, followed the introduction from Afroeurasia of infectious disease microorganism for which American Indians lacked immunities. Warfare, enslavement, and social disorder associated with European conquests in the Americas also contributed to high mortality. Only in the seventeenth century did indigenous populations began partly to recover.

**Hajj:** The Arabic term for the formal pilgrimage to the city of Mecca undertaken by Muslims as a religious duty. Islamic teaching enjoins Muslims to make the hajj at least once in their lifetime if they are physically and financially able.

**hegemony:** The dominance or preponderant influence of one state or group over others. Hegemony may take military, political, economic, or cultural forms. Also "hegemonic," as in "hegemonic power."

**industrialization:** Also the Industrial Revolution. The process beginning in the eighteenth century CE whereby humans exploited fossil fuels and related technologies to mass produce goods with machines on an unprecedented scale and to distribute those goods worldwide. Industrialization is also associated with an accelerating global population growth rate , large-scale urbanization, complex technological advances, and great intensification of human intercommunication and interchange.

**Inner Eurasia:** The huge interior land mass of Eurasia, whose dominant features are flat, semi-arid regions of steppe and forest. Inner Eurasia generally corresponds to the territories ruled by the Soviet Union before its collapse, together with Mongolia and parts of western China. Poland and Hungary to the west and Manchuria (northeastern China) to the east may be thought of as Inner Eurasia's borderlands. The northern margins are boreal forest and Arctic tundra. To the south are the Black and Caspian seas and the Himalayas and other mountain ranges. A mountain-free corridor connects Inner Eurasia to Iran.

**intensification:** "New technologies and lifeways that enabled humans to extract more resources from a given land area." (David Christian, Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004], 207). Intensification is associated with the emergence of agriculture about 12,000 years ago and with the subsequent unprecedented increase in the size and density of human populations in some regions. See also Extensification.

**khan:** The title of a Turkic or Mongol tribal leader; a common title of sovereigns in Inner Eurasia. The feminine form is khatun, a typically carried by wives and daughters of khans.

**liberalism:** A political and social philosophy rooted in eighteenth-century Europe that champions civil liberties, property rights, self-determination, and the reduction of the state's political and economic power over the individual. In the twentieth century, however, liberalism became associated in the United States and to some extent in Europe with advocacy of the use of government power to achieve more equitable distribution of wealth and to further the political rights and economic status of both the poor and disadvantaged minorities.

**life expectancy:** The probable life span, or the expected age at death, of an individual; a statistical determination of the probable life span of an individual or category of persons.

**lineage:** A form of social and political organization in which the fundamental principle of solidarity is kinship. A lineage is typically a local kinship group of several generations, both living and deceased individuals. Several lineages may constitute a clan.

**logographic writing system:** A system of writing in which signs, or characters represent meanings rather than the sounds of speech as in an alphabetic writing. In logographic systems a single character may represent an entire word or phrase. Chinese is the most widely used logograhic system today.

**manumission:** The formal or informal emancipation or freeing of a slave. Historically, manumission was often accomplished by legal action.

**Mecca:** A city in the western Arabian Peninsula and birthplace of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, in the seventh century CE. Although Mecca never became a large city, it is Islam's holiest center and the principal destination of Muslim pilgrims making the Hajj.

**mercantilism:** An economic philosophy and set of state policies that encouraged government action to build the country's wealth by increasing its reserves of precious metals. Mercantilism promoted state intervention to increase exports and limit imports in order to accumulate surpluses of gold. Mercantilist ideas guided European states in the early modern era up to the early nineteenth century, when the liberal ideology of free trade and limited government interference in commerce superseded it.

**Mesoamerica:** The part of North America that includes modern Mexico and the states of Central America. Mesoamerican civilizations included the Olmec, Oaxacan, Teotihuancan, Maya, Toltec, and Aztec. The combining word "meso," meaning "middle," is from the Greek.

**mestizo:** A person of mixed Spanish and Native American ancestry.

**monopoly:** Exclusive control of a product or service in a market; an exclusive privilege to undertake production or trade that is granted by a sovereign state; a firm or corporation that possesses exclusive control of a production process or commercial market, especially involving the ability to manipulate prices.

**monotheism:** The doctrine or belief that there is one God.

**monsoon:** A rainy season that endures for several months in a particular region. The term also typically refers to the seasonal winds that dominate the Indian Ocean basin. These winds blow generally from southwest to northeast in the summer months (April to October) and from the northeast to the southwest in the winter months (November to March). For thousands of years, knowledge of the monsoon wind cycle has allowed mariners to sail from one part of the Indian Ocean to another with fair speed and predictability.

**nation:** A community of people who believe they share a common culture, history, and future destiny. The members of the nation typically believe that they share rights, including the right to occupy a territory and to constitute a sovereign government to rule that territory.

**nation-state:** A sovereign state that generally coincides with, or aspires to coincide with, a single national community or nation. A state, on the other hand, may also be multinational, for example, an empire.

**non-aligned state:** A state that is not politically allied with any other state or bloc of states; politically neutral.

**pagoda:** A typically multi-storied memorial structure built in connection with a temple or monastery, usually Buddhist. .

**pandemic:** An outbreak of contagious disease that is not confined to a single locality but spreads from one locality to the next, possibly over a great distance. The Black Death of the mid-fourteenth century was a pandemic that reached across Afroeurasia. The influenza pandemic of 1918 was worldwide. See also Epidemic.

**pastoral nomadism:** An economy and way of life centered on the raising of domesticated animals such as cattle, horses, sheep, or camels. This economy is an adaption to arid or semi-arid land, such as the steppes of Inner Eurasia, where farming is either limited or impossible. Pastoral nomadic communities typically move their herds or flocks seasonally in search of pasture and water. Pastoral nomadic societies probably emerged in the third millennium BCE.

**patriarchy:** A society in which males are socially and politically dominant over women. All complex societies have been more or less patriarchal, though in the past two centuries women have in many parts of the world gained legal and civil rights that have helped to constrain patriarchal attitudes and behavior.

**Pax Mongolica:** Mongol Peace; the period from approximately 1260 to 1350 CE when Mongol states maintained order in a large part of Eurasia and when commercial and cultural exchange across Afroeurasia intensified.

**periodization:** In the study of history, periodization is the dividing or categorizing of time into separate sections. Historians periodize the past for a number of reasons. "One is simply to identify and isolate chunks of time in order to study them one by one, since all periods cannot be studied simultaneously. A second is to distinguish one cluster of interrelated historical events from another in order to discover patterns of change. A third is to identify significant shifts in those patterns in terms of discontinuities or turning points, which serve as the start and end of periods. A four is to highlight trends or events that appear dominant or important during a particular span of time." (Ross E. Dunn, ed., The New World History: A Teacher's Companion [Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2000], 359.)

**Plantation Complex:** "An economic and political order centering on slave plantations in the New World tropics." Philip D. Curtin, The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), ix.

**plate tectonics:** The science dealing with the forces or conditions within the earth that cause movements in the earth's crust, notably the study of when and how large plates, or sections of the earth's crust moved, separated, and came together to form large land masses, or continents; the study of continental drift; because large land masses have in geologic time been joined or separated (sometimes by wide oceans) over spans of millions of years, the history of continental drift is closely related to evolutionary biology.

**populism:** A political or social ideology emphasizing advancement of the rights and interests of common people. From the Latin word populus, the people.

**Pre-Columbian America:** The period of North and South American history before Christopher Columbus initiated sustained intercommunication between the Americas and Afroeurasia; history of the Western Hemisphere up to 1492; sometimes labeled the Pre-Contact Period.

**primary and secondary sources:** Primary sources are items of historical evidence, including both written documents (legal contracts, government papers, personal letters, bills of sale, biographies) and artifacts (material objects, works of art, elements of language) that were generated during or relatively close to the historical period being studied. Secondary sources are documents, mainly books, articles, and illustrations, based on primary sources and generated some time after the historical event which they describe or interpret.

**revolution:** A drastic change in a political system, institution, condition, or idea. A revolution may be political, social, economic, or cultural.

**secularism:** Pertaining to worldly, as opposed to supernatural or religious, beliefs, values and behavior. Any movement that questions or rejects religious faith or the social influence of religious organizations and hierarchies. Secularization is any social process that strives to imbue society with secular values. In the Christian tradition, the term "secular" is also used to refer to members of the clergy who live "in the world," that is, who have not taken monastic vows or live in a monastery.

**sedentary:** The practice of residing in a specific locality, as opposed to a mobile way of life centered on hunting and gathering or on pastoral nomadism. Farming societies are necessarily sedentary.

**shaman:** An individual believed to have power to communicate with supernatural forces and through these interventions to heal, bring blessings, or foretell the future. Belief in the power of shamans, or shamanism, has been a mark of traditional religion among pastoral nomadic peoples of Inner Eurasia, though the term has been applied throughout the world to local healers, doctors, diviners, and others believed to have the ability to communicate with the world beyond.

**Silk Roads:** A 4,000-mile-long complex of trade routes that ran generally east and west across Inner Eurasia and that carried goods, people, technologies, and religious ideas between major centers of complex society. The term refers to the silk textiles that constituted an important item in overland trade from China to India, Persia, and the Mediterranean lands.

**slavery:** The state of an individual held in servitude as the property, or chattel, of another individual, a household, or the state; the practice of owning slaves. The legal, economic, moral, and personal condition of slaves have varied widely in history from one society to another.

**Southwest Asia:** The region of Afroeurasia extending from the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea to Afghanistan, including Turkey and the Arabian Peninsula. The common term for this region has conventionally been the Middle East or Near East. Many scholars, however, now regard these expressions as obsolete, except in the context of the history

of the past century or so, because these terms evoke a specifically European perspective on the world, that is, that all of Afroeurasia may be thought of as constituting two primal zones, the West (Europe) and the East (all lands east of Europe).

**sovereignty:** A state's authority, claimed to be absolute in matters of law within its own borders. Members of the United Nations, for example, are sovereign states. A monarch is also sometimes referred to as the "sovereign."

**standard of living:** The level of subsistence or comfort that a group or individual is able to maintain in daily life; an economy's ability to produce the material goods and services that individuals want or need; a society's average per capita gross domestic product.

**state:** A population and territory over which a central government holds authority.

**steppe:** Flat or rolling grassland characterized by semi-aridity. Equivalent to what Americans call "prairie" and Argentineans call "pampas."

**sultan:** A title designating rulership of a Muslim state, usually implying administrative and military authority as opposed to religious leadershiA sultanate is a state headed by a sultan.

**syncretism:** A blend or combination of different beliefs and practices, usually religious; the adoption of one group's religious or other cultural beliefs and practices by another group.

**totalitarian:** A form of authoritarian government in which the political and military leaders attempt to intervene in and control both the public and private lives of citizens, typically through coercion and violence. The Soviet Union under Stalin and Nazi Germany under Hitler are the prime examples of totalitarian government in the twentieth century.

**tribe:** A form of social and political organization in which the fundamental principle of solidarity is kinshiThe members of a tribe claim to be descended from a common ancestor. A tribe is typically the largest group in a region claiming shared descent. Tribal organization is common among pastoral nomadic and stateless societies. In tribal societies, individuals identify primarily with kinship groups rather than with a specific geographical territory.

**urbanization:** The growth of urban areas, or cities; the movement of people from rural communities to cities.

**world religion:** A belief systems that embraces people of diverse languages and cultural traditions and that has had significant influence on the course of human history. The major world religions are Buddhism, Christianity, Daoism, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. Confucianism is a major belief system, though some scholars reject classifying it as a religion because it addresses mainly moral and ethical issues rather than the spiritual or supernatural realm.

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# About the Authors

## DR. ANNE CHAPMAN

Dr. Anne Chapman served for many years as a history teacher and academic dean of Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio. She has been a history education consultant to the College Board, the Educational Testing Service, and the National Center for History in the Schools. She also edited *World History: Primary Source Readings*.

## SHARON COHEN

Sharon Cohen has taught high school world history in Maryland. She has been a member of the Advanced Placement World History Test Development Committee and a founding member of the editorial board for World History Connected.

## SUSAN DOUGLASS

Susan Douglass has been a principal researcher and analyst for the Institute on Religion and Civil Values and an author of numerous teaching units and books on Islam and world history. She joined the World History for Us All development team in 2001.

## FELICIA EPPLEY

Felicia Eppley taught history at Lamar High School in Houston, Texas. She received a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship for summer study in India, and she has traveled widely in Europe, Africa, and Asia. Felicia joined the World History for Us All team in 2001.

## ERNEST O'ROARK AND EILEEN WOOD

Ernest O'Roark and Eileen Wood have taught middle school in Maryland. They have collaborated for a number of years on curriculum and literary projects. Their historical fiction appears in *Kongo: A Kingdom Divided*, a teaching unit published by the NCHS. Both teachers joined the World History for Us All Development team in 2001.

## ELLEN LEADER PIKE

Ellen Leader Pike has taught history in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She was a Klingenstein Fellow at Teachers College, Columbia University, and she authored "Bringing the World History Standards into the Classroom," *Social Studies Record* 35 (1998).