Enemies & Neighbours: Re-negotiating Empire & Islam
Enemies & Neighbours

• In century following Conquest of Constantinople, Ottomans achieved greatest geographical extent of empire:
  – Empire of the seas (Mediterranean & North Africa
  – Control of Mamluk states
  – Establishment of Eastern borders with Persia
  – Defining of Battles of Islam
Empire of the Seas

Mediterranean commerce fell to *ghazi* fleet of admiral Khayr ad-Din (c. 1483–1546):
- Europe’s “Barbarossa”
- Algiers taken from Spanish (1518)
- 1533-44 control extended to other ‘Barbary’ (North African) states
  - regularly attacked Spanish, Italian, Greek coasts/fleets
- Venetian, Latin possessions in Greece
Empire of the Seas

From the Conquest Sura:
"Mohammed! Reveal good news to the believers that the conquest is soon."

[see ‘War Standard of Barbarossa’ in Resources’]
Empire of the Seas

Admiral Khayr al-Din (c. 1483–1546):
Empire of the Seas

Khayr al-Din:
- Greek Convert
- ‘warlord’ of Algiers engaged by Selim I (1519)
- Titled ‘Pasha’ by Suleiman, charged with re-organizing, re-building Ottoman Navy
- 1534: took Tunis, Corfu & other Island
- 1538 defeated fleets Charles I, Venice, Pope
- Died 1546
The Mamluks:
- Selim I defeated powerful Mamluks of Egypt and Syria 1516-17 (see ‘Safavids & Mamluks, below, a well)
- assumed succession to the Caliphate
- Who were the Mamluks?
The Mamluks (c.1400)
The Mamluks (c.1400)
The Mamluks

“Mamluk” meaning ‘owned’:
- slaves taken by rulers Middle East & North Africa
- trained as soldiers for armies, administration
- widely used
- In Egypt, Mamluks replaced Sultan (13th century)
- leader married Sultan’s wife
The Mamluks

- Baybars I brought uncle of former Sultan from Baghdad to Cairo (1260)
- established Caliphate
- Caliphate did not last long in Cairo but power in region remained in Mamluk hands
The Mamluks

- Mamluks defeated Mongols in East, Christians in ‘Holy Land’
- Capital was Cairo: centre culture, commerce
- Well situated to control prosperous trade moving through Red Sea, Damascus
- Venice major trading partner
The Mamluks

-Ties between Venetians (oligarchy, nobility, merchants) and Mamluks particularly strong
- longest reigning doge of Venice (1423–57) born in Mamluk Egypt
- relations at strongest in years just prior to Ottoman conquest in 1517

[see ‘Venice’s principal Muslim trading partners’ in Resources]
The Mamluks

- Although defeated, Mamluks left in control of administration
- Simply considered ‘province’ of Ottomans
- Continued to support administration through incorporating slaves
- Re-emerged as ‘semi-autonomous in 19th century
Enemies & Neighbours

Video Excerpt:
"The Safavids"
(from 'Islam: empire of Faith')
Enemies & Neighbours

The Safavids:
- began with rise of Shah Isma’il (c.1500)
- similar in origin to Ottomans:
  - centrality of sufi beliefs
  - originally Sunni
- by late 15th c. attracted to Shia way: ‘followers of Ali’
The Safavids

- *Ghazis* fought against Christians in Caucuses
- attracting peoples in adjacent frontier disillusioned with Ottoman new state
- adherence to Shia *tariq* linked many people of frontier to Safavids
- Growing number clans accepted Safavid authority “Kizilbash”
- The ‘religious’ became ‘political’
The Safavids

Safavid Empire 16th-17th centuries
The Safavids

- Frontier became region of conflict and competition for loyalty
- Safavids supported revolt of Kizilbash against Bayzid II 1511
- Unsuccessful but seriously weakened eastern empire
- Succession dispute between Bayzid’s sons
- Janissaries intervened on behalf Selim I
- ‘their’ candidate successful: beginning of ‘king making’ role in empire
The Safavids

Selim I: continued battle against Safavids
- 1514 conquered Tabriz: sent artists, scholars to Istanbul, major impact on culture
- battles continued through 16th-17th centuries
- Safavids looked increasingly east and south (India – establishment of Mogul Empire)
- nature of state increasingly identified with ‘being Shia and Persian’
- intensified distinction of ‘being Sunni and Turkish’ – in other words “Ottoman”
Safavids & Mamluks

Following defeat of Tabriz, Mamluks allied with Safavids
- drew attacks by Ottoman armies 1516-17, ended autonomous Mamluk Rule Syria, Egypt
- with control Syria, Egypt, Selime I conquered Hijaz (Mecca, Medina)
- recognized as first Ottoman ‘Caliph’
- relics of Prophet Mohamed sent to Istanbul
- as ‘Sultan of Islamic World’ almost tripled lands under Ottoman control
Safavids & Mamluks

The Empire
c. 1520
Safavids & Mamluks

Insights into management of Empire between Conquest of Constantinople and Suleiman I seen in Sultans’ ‘tughra’ and ‘firmans’ (Decrees):

- Mehmed II (1475)
- Prince Cem (1481)
- Bayzid II (1485)
- Selim I (1518)
Safavids & Mamluks

View into ongoing relationship between conquest and power:
- use of property to buy loyalty and ‘man’ administration of empire
- roles freed slave, ‘baba’, janissary (agha)
- Underscored intersection between evolving social structure/classes and administration
- this is what made the empire ‘Ottoman’