

# Chapter 15: The Changing Balance of World Power



# Overview

- Profound changes move history from end of Post-Classical period to Early Modern period where Europe will eventually dominate.
  - Italy, Spain, Portugal take lead but do not immediately displace Arabs or Chinese as international leaders
  - Mongol decline, first in China, then elsewhere, turned trading attention to sea trade as Asian trade routes were disrupted (goods, technology, ideas)

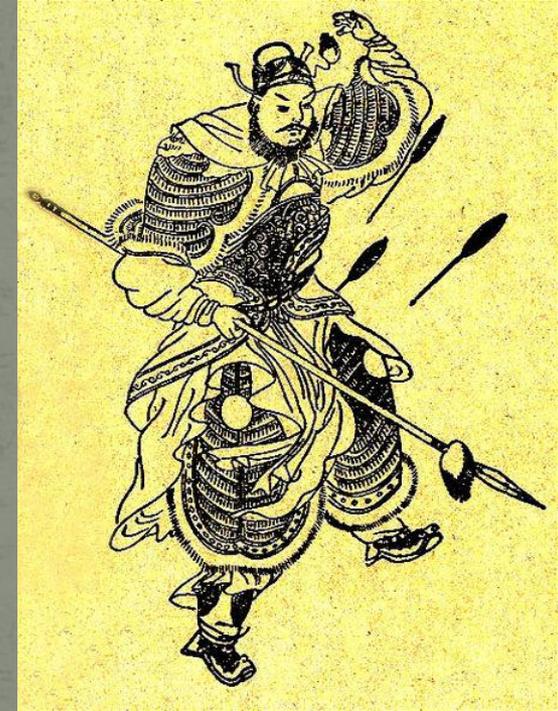


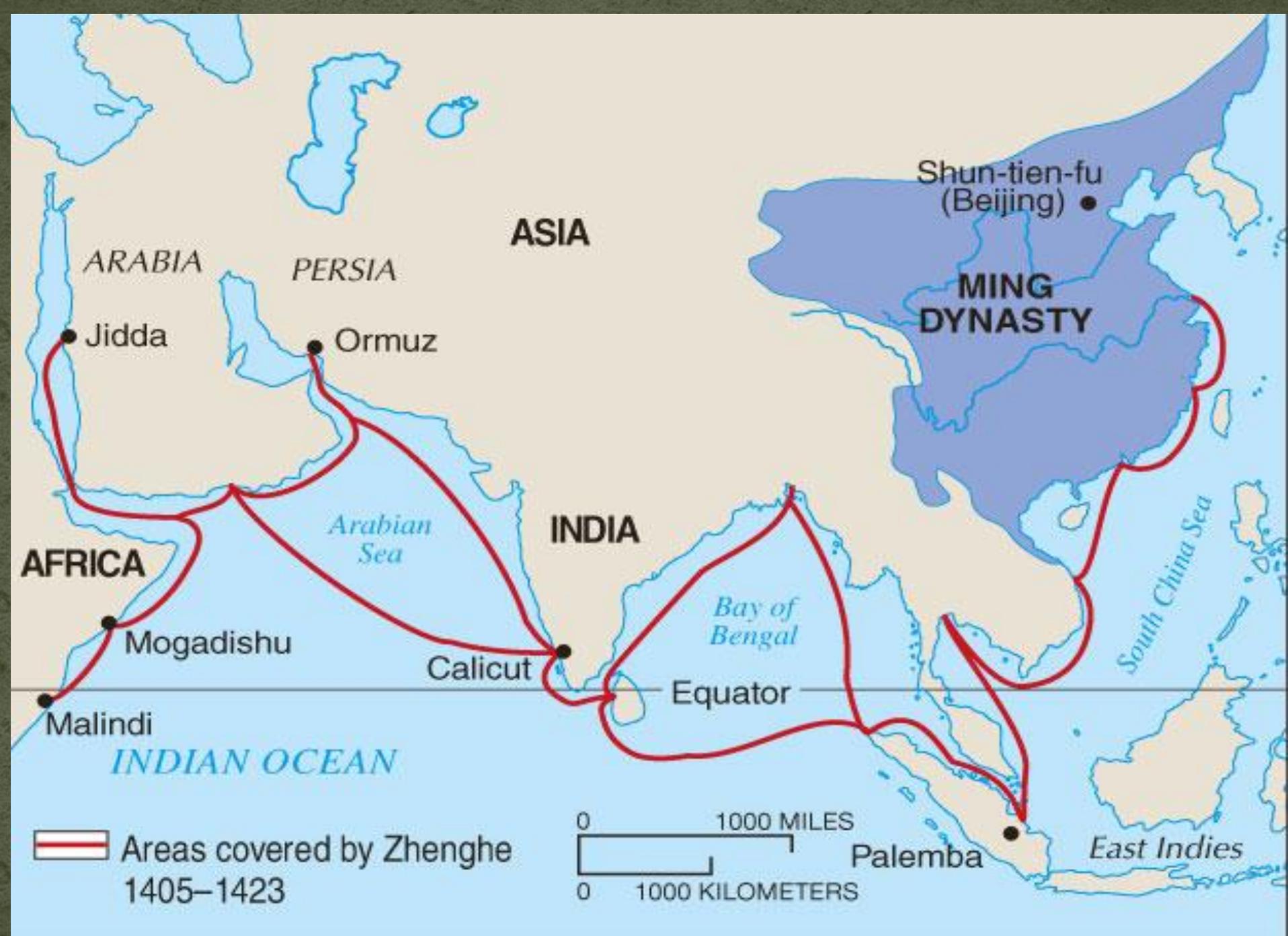
# Changes in the Middle East

- 1200 CE: Dominated by Byzantine Empire and Abbasid caliphate
- 1258: Abbasids fall to Mongols
  - As caliphate declined, landlords seized more land from peasants, and peasants became serfs on large estates.
  - Muslim landlords were not interested in technological advancements so agriculture suffers.
- 1453: Constantinople taken by Ottoman Turks and Byzantine Empire collapses
  - Ottoman Turks emerge as powerful empire
- New religious emphasis through rising Sufis

# Sea Trade in China

- 1368-1644: Ming Empire
  - Rebellions pushed Mongols north and out
  - Reestablished tributes (Korea, Vietnam, Tibet) and revive Tang structure
- 1405-1433: Burst of unusual empire-sponsored trading expeditions led by Admiral Zheng He
  - Muslim eunuch from W China; expeditions along coastline; excellent maps, improved compass; Visited Africa, Middle East
  - 2700 coastal ships, 400 armed naval ships, 400+ long-distance ships, 9 treasure ships
  - Compasses, maps, armed sailors
  - Sailed from Chinese to Middle East and eastern coast of Africa (maybe even Atlantic?)





# Chinese Xenophobia

- China cancelled all expeditions in 1433 CE; why?
  - Scholars opposed trading policies and fought with Zheng He
  - Costs seemed too much
  - New emperor wanted to differentiate his era from his predecessor's
  - Xenophobia: Shift to traditional rather than foreign involvement
  - No need to actively obtain foreign goods
- Continue to be active in E + SE Asian trade
- China loses its chance to be a world trading power; they pave the way for the West to be more powerful

# Quick Review Question

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Who leads Chinese trading expeditions?

Why are these expeditions halted?

# The Rise of the West: Era of Change

- Medieval institutions decline (knights; power of Church)
- Strengthening of feudalism → larger monarchies and regional governments
- Hundred Years' War → new military and technological advancements; strengthens power of English and French kings
- Acceptance of capitalism and interest in trade
- Silk Roads had provided increasing access to Asian knowledge and technology
  - West had become used to Asian luxury goods (cinnamon, nutmeg, silk, sugar, perfume, jewels) but only had crude items to offer (wool, tin, copper, honey, salt) which almost never equaled the value of Asian goods; they had to make up for this in gold
  - By 1400, a gold famine threatened to collapse European economy

# Italian Renaissance

- 1400: Renaissance (rebirth and revival of styles from classical Greece and Rome)
- Why Italy?
  - Medieval forms and feudalism had never permanently taken hold
  - Had more contact with Greek/Roman tradition than rest of Europe
  - Leaders in banking/trading
  - Began in Florence



# Secularism in the Renaissance

- Religious art remained dominant, but used realistic portrayals of people and nature
- Non-religious subjects emerge
- Humanism: interest in individuality and human capability
- Petrarch; Giotto
- Architecture: Gothicism to classicism
- Little impact outside of Italy at first; later, Northern Renaissance
- Spurs innovation, exploration, conquest, confidence
- High culture; not popular culture



# Quick Review Question

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What are some factors that account for growing power and confidence in Western Europe?

# Iberian Spirit

- Iberian Peninsula: contested territory between Christians and Muslims
  - Christian military leaders had been pushing back against Muslims for centuries
- After 1400, regional monarchies of Castile and Aragon were established; united in 1469 with marriage of Ferdinand (A) and Isabella (C)
- Rigorous military and religious agenda
  - Government had responsibility to promote Christianity by converting or expelling Arabs and Jews
  - Expand Christian territory

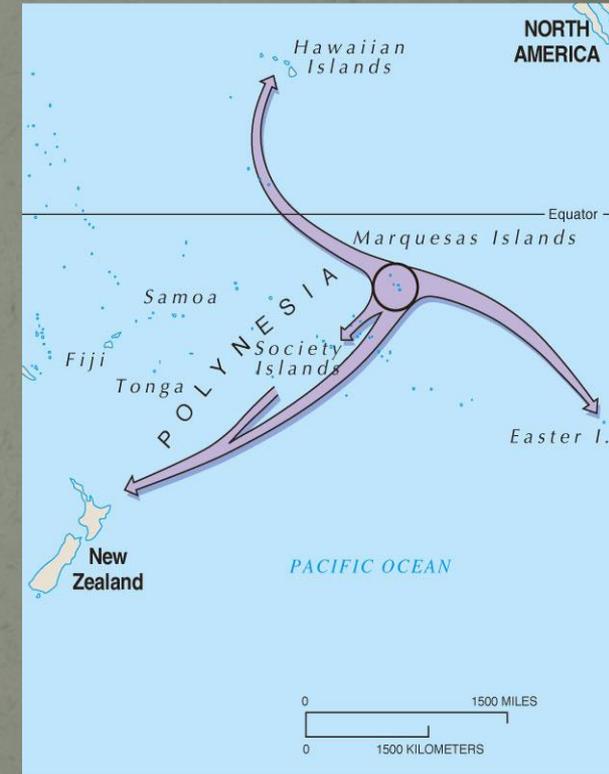
# Early Western Expansion

- Technological barriers had prevented long-distance European exploration
  - 15<sup>th</sup>: Begin to use Chinese/Arab technology (compass, astrolabe, maps)
- 1291 CE: Vivaldis sailed through Strait of Gibraltar seeking Western route to Indies
- 1498: Portuguese Vasco de Gama reached India
- Henry the Navigator sponsored Portuguese voyages
  - Goals: scientific curiosity; spread Christianity; financial interest
  - Set up colonies designed to produce cash crops (sugar, tobacco, cotton)
    - Azores Islands, Madeira Islands, and Canary Islands
  - Interest in slave labor from NW Africa



# Outside the World Network

- Not affected by new international exchanges
- Internal problems occur; resistance to Europeans will be challenging
- Americas: disunity among Aztecs and conquered peoples led to resentment
- Polynesia: expansion well beyond initial base, and migration to Hawaii and New Zealand
  - Hawaii: caste system; warlike; no written language; agriculturalists
  - Maori in New Zealand: elaborate art; tribal leaders and priests held great power; extremely isolated



# Quick Review Question

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What allows Europeans to begin large-scale overseas expansion? Who are some explorers who participate or fund this expansion?