

CHAPTER 12 QUESTIONS – The Worlds of the 15th Century

Direction: Answer the questions in their entirety . . . make sure you address all parts to each question. (you can answer these questions on your own piece of paper)

1. In what ways did the gathering and hunting people of Australia differ from those of the northwest coast of North America? (560)
2. What kinds of changes were transforming the societies of the West African Igbo and the North American Iroquois as the fifteenth century unfolded? (563)
3. What role did Central Asia and West African pastoralists play in their respective regions? (565)
4. How would you define the major achievements of Ming dynasty China? (566)
5. What political and cultural differences stand out in the histories of fifteenth-century China and Western Europe? What similarities are apparent? (569)
6. In what ways did European maritime voyaging in the fifteenth century differ from that of China? What accounts for these differences? (573)

7. What differences can you identify among four major empires in the Islamic world of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries? (576)

8. What distinguished the Aztec and Inca empires from each other? (580)

9. How did Aztec religious thinking support the empire? (583)

10. In what ways did Inca authorities seek to integrate their vast domains? (584)

11. In what different ways did the peoples of the fifteenth century interact with one another? (586)

CHAPTER 12 BIG PICTURE QUESTIONS

Direction: Answer the questions in their entirety . . . make sure you address all parts to each question. (you can answer these questions on your own piece of paper)

1. Assume for the moment that the Chinese had not ended their maritime voyages in 1433. How might the subsequent development of world history have been different? What values is there in asking this kind of “what if” or counterfactual question?
2. How does this chapter distinguish among the various kinds of societies that compromised the world of the fifteenth century? What other ways of categorizing the world's peoples might work as well or better?
3. What common patterns might you notice across the world of the fifteenth century? And what variations in the historical trajectories of various regions can you identify?
4. Looking Back: What would surprise a knowledgeable observer from 500 or 1000 C.E., were he or she to make a global tour in the fifteenth century? What features of that earlier world might still be recognizable?

WHAT'S THE SIGNIFICANCE?

Aztec Empire: Major state that developed in what is now Mexico in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; dominated by the seminomadic Mexica, who had migrated into the region from northern Mexico.

Seizure of Constantinople (1453): Constantinople, the capital and almost the only outpost left of the Byzantine Empire, fell to the army of the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II “the Conqueror” in 1453, an event that marked the end of Christian Byzantium.

European Renaissance: A “rebirth” of classical learning that is most often associated with the cultural blossoming of Italy in the period 1350–1500 and that included not just a rediscovery of Greek learning but also major developments in art, as well as growing secularism in society.

Fulbe: West Africa’s largest pastoral society, whose members gradually adopted Islam and took on a religious leadership role that led to the creation of a number of new states. (*pron.* FULL-bay)

Igbo: People whose lands were east of the Niger River in what is now southern Nigeria in West Africa; they built a complex society that rejected kingship and centralized statehood and relied on other institutions to provide social coherence. (*pron.* EE-boh)

Inca Empire: The Western Hemisphere’s largest imperial state in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries; built by a relatively small community of Quechua-speaking people (the Inca), the empire stretched some 2,500 miles along the Andes Mountains, which run nearly the entire length of the west coast of South America, and contained perhaps 10 million subjects.

Iroquois League of Five Nations: Confederation of five Iroquois peoples in what is now New York State; the loose alliance was based on the Great Law of Peace, an agreement to settle disputes peacefully through a council of clan leaders. (*pron.* IR-oh-kwoy)

Malacca: Muslim port city that came to prominence on the waterway between Sumatra and Malaya in the fifteenth century C.E.; it was the springboard for the spread of a syncretic form of Islam throughout the region. (*pron.* mah-LAH-kah)

Ming dynasty: Chinese dynasty (1368–1644) that succeeded the Yuan dynasty of the Mongols;

noted for its return to traditional Chinese ways and restoration of the land after the destructiveness of the Mongols.

Mughal Empire: One of the most successful empires of India, a state founded by an Islamized Turkic group that invaded India in 1526; the Mughals’ rule was noted for their efforts to create partnerships between Hindus and Muslims. (*pron.* MOO-guhl)

Nezahualcoyotl: A poet and king of the city-state of Texcoco, which was part of the Aztec Empire (1402–1472). (*pron.* nes-ah-wahl-koh-YOHT-l)

Ottoman Empire: Major Islamic state centered on Anatolia that came to include the Balkans, the Near East, and much of North Africa.

Paleolithic persistence: The continuance of gathering and hunting societies in substantial areas of the world despite millennia of agricultural advance.

pochteca: Professional merchants in the Aztec Empire whose wealth often elevated them to elite status. (*pron.* poch-TAY-kah)

Safavid Empire: Major Turkic empire of Persia founded in the early sixteenth century, notable for its efforts to convert its populace to Shia Islam. (*pron.* SAH-fah-vid)

Songhay Empire: Major Islamic state of West Africa that formed in the second half of the fifteenth century. (*pron.* song-GAH-ee)

Timbuktu: Great city of West Africa, noted in the fourteenth–sixteenth centuries as a center of Islamic scholarship. (*pron.* tim-buk-TOO)

Timur: Turkic warrior (1336–1405), also known as Tamerlane, whose efforts to restore the Mongol Empire devastated much of Persia, Russia, and India. (*pron.* tem-EER)

Zheng He: Great Chinese admiral (1371–1433) who commanded a fleet of more than 300 ships in a series of voyages of contact and exploration that began in 1405. (*pron.* jung huh)