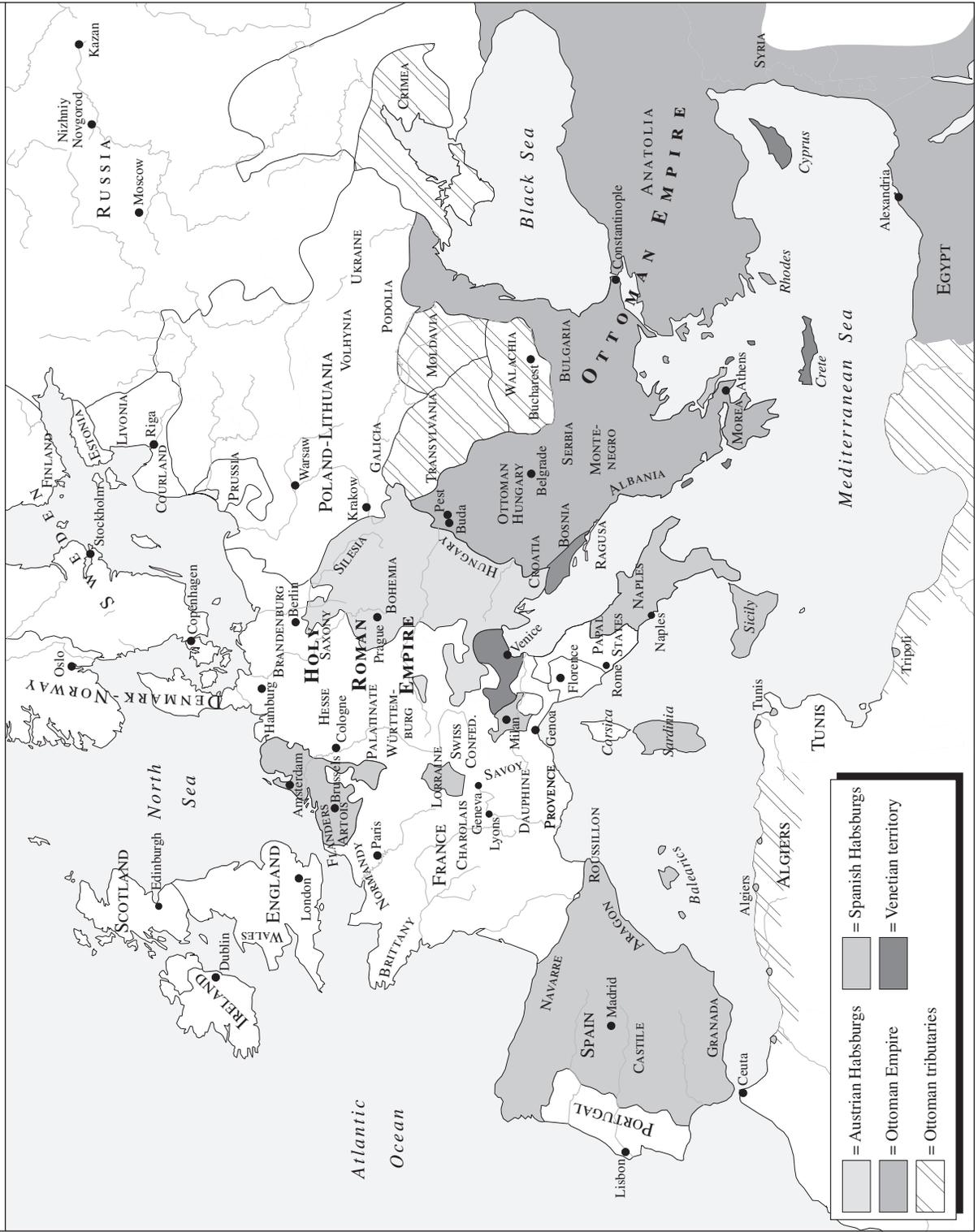


EUROPE C. 1556



Mid-15th century**FOUNDATION OF THE SAUD DYNASTY**

Saudi Arabia, the only country named after its ruling family, and one that has thrived into the twenty-first century, was founded after the establishment of the Saud Dynasty, which hails from the harsh desert heartland of the Arabian Peninsula.

LOCALE: Dir'iyah, central Najd region of the Arabian Peninsula (now Dir'iyah, Saudi Arabia)

CATEGORIES: Government and politics; religion; expansion and land acquisition

KEY FIGURE

Mani' al-Muraydi (fl. mid-fifteenth century), Anazah tribe member and founder of Dir'iyah settlement

SUMMARY OF EVENT

For the past three thousand years, the Arabian Peninsula has been inhabited by Semitic-speaking people, making the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia a relatively young nation that was not established officially until 1932. This large and diverse country covers 80 percent of the peninsula and comprises almost 1 million square miles, an area approximately one-third the size of the United States.

This vast landscape had been traversed by tribes whose cultures were largely reflective of nomadic Bedouin life and desert conditions. Occasionally, however, tribal members would settle along caravan routes and at oases (like that of Mecca) and develop villages. A tribal leader or family would sometimes establish rule over such settlements, as did the Saud clan in the oasis of Dir'iyah.

The mercantile and pilgrimage cities of Mecca and Medina, both in the eastern Hejaz region near the Red Sea, were thriving by 622, the year of the Hegira (flight) of the Prophet Muhammad (c. 570-632). Within a few years after the death of the Prophet, Islam had spread widely, and pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina increased greatly. Islamic political power, which was often accompanied by intellectual vitality, left the region, however. Under the Umayyad Dynasty (661-750), Damascus became the Islamic capital, and under the 'Abbāsīd caliphs, the capital became Baghdad. By 900, the Islamic seat would move even farther from the Arabian Peninsula and, consequently, so did intellectual vigor. Thus, for almost the next one thousand years, Arabia, specifically the core area of what is now Saudi Arabia, was a largely isolated and uncultivated terrain where the way of life changed little from the time of the Prophet Moḥammad.

It was during this time that the Saud emerged.

Little is known of the Saudis before the 1700's. Indeed, they and similar desert dwellers are sometimes referred to as a people without a history. It is known, however, that the Saud family in Arabia can be traced back to the fifteenth century, although their presence predates this. They hail from the harsh Najd Desert of central-north Arabia and have inhabited this extremely arid land, known for its Bedouin camel herders.

Some profess that the Saudis are descendants of the Bani Hanifah tribe, an oasis-dwelling people who lived in Riyadh (the current capital of Saudi Arabia), which was probably settled by the first millennium B.C.E. Many others trace Saudi genealogy to the Anazah, a large and powerful confederation of tribes known for their Arab lineage. The Anazah primarily were located in the central Najd region but also dwelled in parts of the western Hijaz, and members could be found scattered throughout the peninsula. The Anazah were subdivided into several tribes and within each were various powerful families, including the ruling families of what is now Kuwait (the al-Sabah) and what is now Bahrain (the al-Khalifah).

In 1446-1447, according to chroniclers, an ancestor of the Saudis, the Anazah tribesman Mani' al-Muraydi, founded the settlement of Dir'iyah, which was approximately nine miles north of Riyadh. He perhaps came from Qatif, the second largest oasis of the eastern province, and with his son and their respective families began farming the lands around Dir'iyah. Thus, from the fifteenth century on, it is likely that the Saudis were not Bedouins per se but instead were a sedentary group. Within the next few hundred years, apparently, they established themselves as a landholding merchant class of Najd and acquired cultivated land and wells around the Dir'iyah settlement. Artisans inhabited the settlement, too.

Palm dates were the main crop of Dir'iyah in the fifteenth century and throughout most of its history, but livestock was raised, too. Limited trading in the Najd took place usually in the northern and central regions, where routes were marked by pilgrims from Syria and Iraq traveling to Mecca and Medina. By 1300, however, many pilgrims found it easier to go around Najd's inhospitable desert landscape and difficult mountain barrier. Dir'iyah, in the southern Najd, was not located on a trade or pilgrimage route and thus remained quite isolated. There was, however, some trading between the Dir'iyah

Saudi village and settlements of eastern Arabia and Kuwait and Bahrain.

There is little doubt that the Saud clan was skilled at warfare. For centuries in Arabia, there had been ongoing tribal invasion, whereby neighboring settlements were raided for their animals and other booty. Counterraid and, at times, tribal feuds, followed. Battles were frequent, fought not only for booty but also to dispel boredom and the abject poverty of brutal desert life. Fighting was small scale, however, and since rules of Arabian chivalry were well respected, few individuals were seriously injured. Indeed, raids and battles were often viewed more as sport than malicious aggression.

As the leaders of Dir'iyah, the Saud clan certainly would have coordinated supporters and would, in turn, have served as defenders during attacks. It is also likely that the Saud Dynasty spirited their own raids on Bedouins and other settlement people. In any event, they must have been successful at warfare, for leaders of the time had to keep fighting and winning to maintain their positions, and Saudi leaders kept their stronghold for centuries.

In the fifteenth century, the clan was not called "Saud," which is actually a given, or first, name. Surnames were not used in Arabia, but one would be known as "ibn" or "bint" (son of or daughter of), followed by one's father's name. The eponym for the name "Saudi Arabia" is Saud ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥrin (d. 1725), an eighth-generation descendant of Manī' al-Muraydi, who became emir of Dir'iyah in the 1710's. Muḥrin was not a significant historical figure, but his son, Muḥammad ibn Saud, who became emir of Dir'iyah in 1726, combined his power with that of the strict Salafi/Wahhabi Muslim Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab and established the first Saudi state.

The Saud Dynasty was unable to extend its power beyond the small village of Dir'iyah, a settlement that may have had about seventy families only, beyond the fifteenth century. When joined with Wahhabi Islam in the

early 1700's, however, the Saudis began their extraordinary feat of unifying under their banner the expansive terrain and the diverse tribes of Arabia.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Saud Dynasty, made up of descendants of a powerful Arabian confederation, has survived for hundreds of years in one of the harshest environments of the Middle East, often without adequate sustenance or supplies, and certainly without luxuries. The early twenty-first century sees the Saudis, direct descendants of ancient Arab peoples and their cultures, living in Najd still.

The Saudis also were leaders of their region for generations, a remarkable amount of time in a place where, as a matter of course, loyalty was fleeting. Unlike most Middle Eastern countries, the Saudis of Najd have never been under foreign control and have experienced little, if any, outside cultural influence.

—Lisa Urkevich

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1450's-1471

CHAMPA CIVIL WARS

The Kingdom of Champa, unable to maintain a stable royal system, suffered through decades of civil wars, which fatally weakened the kingdom against the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese defeated Champa in a battle that ended Cham power in Southeast Asia.

LOCALE: Central and South Vietnam

CATEGORIES: Wars, uprisings, and civil unrest; government and politics; expansion and land acquisition

KEY FIGURES

Qui Lai (d. 1449), king of Champa, r. 1446-1449, who was installed by the Vietnamese

Qui Do (Bi Do; d. 1458), king of Champa, r. 1449-1458, and younger brother of Qui Lai

Ban La Tra Nguyet (Tra Duyet; d. 1460), king of Champa, r. 1458-1460

Ban La Tra Toan (d. 1471), king of Champa, r. 1460-1471

Le Thanh Tong (1442-1497), emperor of Vietnam, r. 1460-1497

SUMMARY OF EVENT

The Kingdom of Champa suffered from civil wars at a time that was already highly volatile for the state and the region. The Vietnamese had been pressuring Champa from the north, and wars with the Cambodians had alienated Champa from that state. Only a unified kingdom could hope to survive in these circumstances, but unity eluded Champa.

The death of Champa's successful king Jaya Sinhavarman V (r. 1401-1441) ushered in a period of civil strife. From its beginnings in the first and second century B.C.E., Champa had always been a less centrally organized and less ethnically homogeneous state than its neighbors and rivals. The people along the coast were descendants of maritime nomads from Malaysia and Indonesia, for example, while the uphill Cham consisted of mountain tribes such as the Rhade and Jarai. Once an orderly royal succession had been disrupted, the socio-political structure of Champa invited prolonged strife. By 1450, Champa was a nation populated by a mix of people whose diversity and rather loose political association worked against, rather than toward, a unified nation.

After Maija Vijaya (r. 1441-1446) won the contest to succeed his uncle, Jaya Sinhavarman, in 1441, Champa's civil unrest continued, and it did not give up its habit of

seaborne raids to the north. Cham raiders continued to pillage land contested with the Vietnamese empire, called Dai Viet. These raids had earned the Cham the enmity of the Vietnamese, who had fought each other for more than fourteen hundred years.

After King Maija Vijaya raided the Vietnamese province of Hoa Chau (near modern Quang Tri) for two consecutive years, the Vietnamese struck back in 1446. The civil unrest against Maija Vijaya's rule helped the success of the Vietnamese punitive expedition. In 1446, Vietnamese forces captured Champa's capital of Vijaya, and Vietnam intervened directly in the Champa civil war. Maija Vijaya was captured, deposed, and deported to Vietnam, together with his wives. The Vietnamese made one of his cousins, Qui Lai, the new king of Champa.

Even though Qui Lai was a son of Jaya Sinhavarman, his installment by the Vietnamese angered many Cham, who violently opposed his rule. Despite the reoccupation of the capital, Vijaya, by Champa soon after the Vietnamese departed, the nation did not regain political stability. After just three years, Qui Do succeeded his older brother, Qui Lai, as the new king.

In 1458, Ban La Tra Nguyet killed Qui Do and usurped the throne. In an effort to shore up the nation's position against the Vietnamese, King Tra Nguyet sent his younger brother Ban La Tra Toan to the Ming court in Beijing. Tra Toan's mission was to ask the Chinese emperor for the throne of Vietnam. Nominally, China still considered both the Dai Viet Empire and the Kingdom of Champa as dependent vassal states. In 1407, a Chinese invasion of Vietnam had saved Champa from a Vietnamese onslaught. While China had ruled Vietnam briefly from 1407 until 1428, Champa had been able to recover some land lost to Dai Viet. King Tra Nguyet's strategy was to look to China as a possible ally, but the Ming court declined any intervention in Vietnam, where it had suffered a military defeat and had been expelled. The Vietnamese were made alert by these events, and as civil strife troubled Champa, they launched a few raids there.

Tra Toan became king of Champa in 1460, upon the death of his brother. Yet some Cham still were opposed to his rule, which rested on his family's violent accession. Unfortunately for the fate of Champa, while the country was suffering from civil discord, Vietnam saw the coronation of a strong and energetic emperor, Le Thanh Tong.

From the Vietnamese point of view, the Cham were barbaric pirates who needed to be stopped and defeated if

Dai Viet was to enjoy peace on its southern border. The Cham considered the Vietnamese robbers of their old lands. Yet civil war weakened Champa considerably. In the years leading up to 1470, clashes between the forces and people of Champa and Dai Viet continued. While Le Thanh Tong strengthened his army, Tra Toan still had to fight with rivals to his throne. Diplomatic efforts to resolve the increasing crisis came to no avail.

Even though his hold over his kingdom was not absolute, King Tra Toan allowed another raid into Hoa Chau, in 1469. Emperor Le Thanh Tong accelerated his troop build up and intensified military training. In October of 1470, King Tra Toan invaded Hoa Chau with a huge combined land and naval force. Contemporary Vietnamese accounts show that the force had 100,000 soldiers, but this number may be inflated. Faced with this, Le Thanh Tong readied his empire for war. A Vietnamese diplomatic mission to Beijing in October and November of 1470 ensured Chinese acquiescence.

On November 28, 1470, Le Thanh Tong formally launched his attack. In a speech, he used the Champa civil war as an excuse for his invasion: The Cham people were suffering from the illegitimate rule of Tra Toan, a rule gained after his brother murdered the legitimate king Qui Do, and the Vietnamese were coming as liberators, not invaders. After naming more reasons for war, the Vietnamese army and navy of 150,000 men crossed into Champa.

The Cham of the border province of Quang Nam (a province that includes the modern city of Da Nang) surrendered quickly, enabling Le Thanh Tong to advance south in early 1471. In despair, King Tra Toan ordered his younger brother to attack with soldiers mounted on five thousand elephants. However, Le Thanh Tong learned of the attack and took effective countermeasures. Well prepared, the Vietnamese soldiers struck at the Cham on their elephants and defeated them. Tra Toan's offer for negotiations went unanswered, and Le Thanh Tong advanced on Vijaya (near what is now Qui Nhon).

On March 22, 1471, Vijaya fell to the Vietnamese. The city was completely destroyed, and at least forty thousand, if not sixty thousand, Cham were killed. Thirty thousand other Cham followed their king Tra Toan and his wives into Vietnamese captivity. The Vietnamese cut off the left ear of each of their prisoners of war and enslaved them for life. When Tra Toan died of natural causes on his way to Vietnam, Le Thanh Tong had the head of the Tra Toan's corpse decapitated and displayed on his ship beneath a white flag and a sarcastic inscription.

In April, 1471, the Champa civil wars came to an end.

All of Champa north of the Cu Mong Pass (below what is now An Nhon), including the destroyed city of Vijaya, was annexed to Dai Viet. The rest of Champa to the south was divided into three dukedoms, each too weak to resist the Vietnamese. Champa's civil wars had ended with its defeat at the hands of their enemies.

SIGNIFICANCE

The civil wars that had disrupted Champa also accelerated its fall, preventing the Cham from effectively marshaling national resources to withstand the Vietnamese invasion of 1470. Champa's unwillingness to end its raids into territories wrested from it by the Vietnamese, however, destroyed all chances for a peaceful accommodation of the two peoples.

By 1471, the loss of more than one-third of its territory to Vietnam in the north effectively destroyed Champa as an independent power in Southeast Asia. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Vietnam would finalize its conquest of the remaining Cham territory.

Since its foundation, Champa had been an Indianized nation culturally, in stark contrast to the Chinese-influenced culture of Vietnam. Champa had remained a Hindu nation well into the fifteenth century, at a time when its neighbor Cambodia had become Buddhist, and represented a cultural link to India.

After its defeat in 1471, the remainder of Champa became quickly Islamized. Historians have set the date of Champa's conversion to Islam at the 1471 defeat, rather than in the early 1400's, as previously believed. Many scholars believe that the massive defeat of the Cham at the hands of the non-Hindu Vietnamese led them to become severely disappointed with their religion, which had failed to save them. In turn, the Cham looked to Islam for salvation. Into the twenty-first century, the vast majority of the approximately sixty thousand ethnic Cham surviving in Vietnam, and their peers in Cambodia and southern China, have remained Muslim.

—R. C. Lutz

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1450's-1529 THAI WARS

The Thai kingdoms of Chiang Mai, Ayutthaya, and Sukhothai engaged in a series of rotating battles, punctuated with fluid alliances and alternating rivalries and coalitions. The disputes over kingship and a drive for domination of Siam (modern Thailand) started in the fourteenth century.

LOCALE: Thailand, Burma (now Myanmar), Cambodia

CATEGORIES: Wars, uprisings, and civil unrest; government and politics; expansion and land acquisition

KEY FIGURES

Trailok (Borommtrailokanat; 1431-1488), king of Ayutthaya, r. 1448-1488, and archrival of Tilok king Chiang Mai

Sri Sutham Tilok (1411-1487), king of Chiang Mai who engaged in constant war with Ayutthaya

Ramathibodi II (1472-1529), king of Ayutthaya, r. 1491-1529, who strengthened and centralized his kingdom

SUMMARY OF EVENT

The fifteenth century was a period of unrelenting war in the Thai kingdoms. At various times, the kingdoms of Chiang Mai (in the north), Ayutthaya (south-central), and Sukhothai (center) attempted to conquer one another. A series of fluid alliances pitted these states in a dance of alternating rivalry and coalition. The usual cause was succession—on the death of a ruler, two leading sons would dispute the kingship and seek alliances from other Thai kingdoms, which often enough were ruled by members of their extended family. While these

Thai wars are usually identified in histories one by one, in fact they represent rotating episodes in a continuing drive for domination of Siam from the fourteenth century until external threats overrode them.

Throughout this period, Ayutthaya, the strongest of the kingdoms, was also involved in attempts to control the Malay provinces. The consolidation of Islam early in the century had made that faith a rallying point for Malay identity against the Buddhist Thais. Ayutthaya was unable to make the rich trading port of Melaka, or Malacca, a vassal state (the Portuguese did that in 1511), although Ayutthaya did dominate trade in the lower peninsula. The kingdom grew wealthy by shipping grain south and receiving luxury goods and Indian cotton for the lucrative Chinese trade. Trade was a monopoly of the king, who set his own price for anything he purchased before allowing traders to sell what was left.

Ayutthaya amassed a considerable treasury, enabling Ramathibodi to build in 1503 a 50-foot statue of Buddha, encrusted with 378 pounds of gold and the largest such statue in the world at that time. The kings of Ayutthaya also used their wealth to build a strong military and acquire modern military equipment. The expanding wealth of Ayutthaya allowed for social and cultural changes as well. In the fifteenth century, the amalgam of Mon, Tai, and Khmer influences began to coalesce into what became recognized as Siamese culture, adding to tensions between Ayutthaya and the Lan culture of Chiang Mai.

The Thai War of 1387-1390 between Ayutthaya and Chiang Mai marked the start of the long series of conflicts. The Thai War of 1442-1448 started after the king of Chiang Mai was deposed by his sixth son, Sri Sutham

Tilok, who proclaimed himself king. Another son took the deposed king to a vassal town, where the local governor supported him by enlisting the aid of Ayutthaya, which was eager to extend its power northward. Tilok's army, however, met his half brother and the governor on the march, killing them both. Tilok employed Lao spies to infiltrate the Ayutthayan army, where they sabotaged the war elephants by cutting off their tails and stampeding them. In the chaos that followed, Ayutthayan forces were routed. Tilok also led small adventures against petty warlords, taking men and cattle for the impending major conflict, but he hoped also to weaken the smaller states on the fringe between the central plain (usually dominated but not controlled by Ayutthaya) and the mountainous redoubts of Chiang Mai.

Three years later, hostilities broke out again, this time in the Thai War of 1451-1456. Ayutthaya remained an expansive power, and after King Trailok succeeded to the throne in 1448, he strengthened his forces and plotted to take Chiang Mai. Tilok opened the door to invasion when he sided with a 1451 insurrection in Sukhothai, which Ayutthaya has subdued into vassalage. A Sukhothai prince asked Tilok for help in regaining Sukhothai independence. Tilok invaded but was driven back, and Trailok pressed his advantage and occupied Chiang Mai the following year. The Laotians then intervened, forcing Trailok back but also compelling the Chiang Mai to defend their territory. They counterattacked against Ayutthaya, but the indecisive Battle of Kamphaeng Phet (1456) closed the campaign.

Historians believe the next war started in 1461, but in reality, hostilities never ceased. Tilok mounted unsuccessful offensives in 1459 and 1460. The Thai War of 1461-1464 began after a governor, who was an Ayutthaya vassal, defected to Chiang Mai and was named a town headman there. Emboldened, Tilok moved south to Ayutthaya, occupied its vassal state of Sukhothai, and laid siege to Phitsanulok. With his forces drawn south, Tilok was unprepared when China unleashed a surprise attack from the north, so he had to beat a hasty retreat to defend his capital. This marked the first sign that forces outside the region could take advantage of the continuing warfare in Siam. In 1463, Trailok moved the Ayutthayan capital to Phitsanulok to centralize his authority and military control. Nevertheless, Tilok attacked Sukhothai again but was repulsed. At the Battle of Doi Ba (1463), deep in Chiang Mai territory, the Chiang Mai war elephants drove the Ayutthayan infantry into a swamp and brought the war to a close.

The two kingdoms attempted a diplomatic settlement,

but the period after the 1464 cease-fire involved conspiracies and armed clashes. In an odd turn of events, Trailok built himself a monastery and was ordained a monk. His astonished enemies came to the ordination ceremony and provided his robes, which is the highest form of merit for a Thai Buddhist. From his monastery, however, Trailok sent a sorcerer to Chiang Mai. The sorcerer spread dissension in the Chiang Mai court and caused the crown prince to be executed for treason. In 1466, Trailok returned to his throne and sent emissaries to Chiang Mai, but his duplicity was revealed, and the sorcerer-spy was clubbed to death in a sack (the method of execution for a noble or a monk, which kept the executioner's hands from touching the condemned). Trailok's diplomats were assassinated on their return trip.

The Thai War of 1474-1475 began with an Ayutthayan invasion, but Tilok negotiated a cease-fire; also, his death in 1487 brought five years of peace. Then the Thai War of 1492 erupted over the theft of a crystal Buddha statue, stolen from Chiang Mai by an Ayutthayan royal prince who spent some time as a monk. Chiang Mai king Phra Yot invaded and retrieved the statue from Ramathibodi.

Ramathibodi reorganized his army, instituted compulsory military training for all able-bodied males, and modernized the army's command and staff, who also received a new instructional manual on strategy and tactics. Ramathibodi then signed a peace pact with Portugal, which gave Portugal the right of residence in Siam and the freedom to conduct missionary activities. In return, the Portuguese provided military training, guns, and ammunition. By the middle of the next Thai war, Ayutthaya was producing its own artillery pieces and using Portuguese mercenaries in the field.

The Thai War of 1500-1529 was a protracted conflict in which Chiang Mai, threatened by the larger and more powerful Ayutthaya, often took the offensive. King Ratana of Chiang Mai invaded in 1507 and engaged the enemy at Sukhothai, where he was pushed back after an exhausting battle. Ayutthaya pressed its advantage in 1508 and met Ratana at Phrae, where an equally bloody battle forced King Ramathibodi to withdraw. Another Ayutthayan incursion took place in 1510, followed by ongoing skirmishes through the next five years. Ramathibodi took the offensive in 1515, and in the Battle of Lampang, he routed Chiang Mai and seized a sacred Buddha statue. In the battle, Ayutthaya had the advantage of Portuguese military training and artillery. The final decade of the war consisted of mopping-up exercises, and by 1529, the year Ramathibodi died, Sukhothai and Ayutthaya were firmly

under Ayutthayan control. The following year, the Chinese Empire recognized Ayutthaya as the legitimate heir of the Kingdom of Sukhothai.

Tilok died in 1487 and was replaced by his grandson; Tilok's only son and heir had been executed. The grandson was then deposed in favor of his own thirteen-year-old son. Even with a cultural and religious revival during this period, Chiang Mai went into protracted decline and engaged in a series of wars against Ayutthaya and incursions by tribal peoples on the northern frontier. After 1526, the kingdom fell into disarray, with kings deposed and murdered, and Chiang Mai slowly disintegrated.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Kingdom of Ayutthaya was consolidated but hardly unified. It declined into a confederation of petty states with self-governing principalities ruled by members of the royal family. Each state had its own army, and each army saw constant fighting with other states. Added to the self-governing states were tributary states of various degrees of loyalty. The king often attempted to maintain a balance among the feuding princes, any one of whom was capable of allying with others to topple him. Trailok tried to stabilize the succession by naming an *uparaja*, or heir, a tricky situation in a polygamous society. He did succeed in forging a tighter and more loyal administrative system, however, and it is this achievement that is his most significant legacy.

—Norbert Brockman

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1451-1526

LODI KINGS DOMINATE NORTHERN INDIA

The Lodī Dynasty was the last of several Delhi sultanates. It came to an end when its army failed to win the Battle of Panipat against Mughal emperor Bābur. The fall of the Lodīs marked the beginning of Mughal rule, which became one of India's most illustrious and long-lasting dynasties.

LOCALE: Northern India

CATEGORIES: Government and politics; wars, uprisings, and civil unrest; expansion and land acquisition

KEY FIGURES

Bahlūl Lodī (d. 1489), Delhi sultan, r. 1451-1489

Sikandar Lodī (d. 1517), Delhi sultan, r. 1489-1517

Ibrāhīm Lodī (d. 1526), Delhi sultan, r. 1517-1526

Bābur (Zahīr-ud-Dīn Muḥammad; 1483-1530), first Mughal emperor of India, r. 1526-1530

SUMMARY OF EVENT

The Lodī Dynasty was the last of the Delhi sultanates, which were originally established in 1192-1193 with the victory of military leader Muhammad of Ghor (d. 1206) over the Hindu Rājputs at the Battle of Tarain. Muhammad of Ghor was from Ghazni in modern Afghanistan, and most of the subsequent Delhi sultanate dynasties, including the Lodīs, were of Afghan origin. The sultans, or rulers, of the several sultanates were all Muslims, and conflicts were frequent between Muslim invaders and India's majority Hindu population.

Islam first gained a major presence in India in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries under the military leadership of sultan Maḥmūd of Ghazni (r. 997-1030), who plundered Indian cities and temples. Like Maḥmūd, most of the later Delhi sultanate rulers were from Afghanistan, the gateway into the Indian subcontinent long before the invasions of Alexander the Great in the 320's B.C.E. The Delhi sultans, the last of whom were the Lodīs, ruled much of northern India for more than three centuries but were unable to extend their rule south into the Deccan.

Religious differences were not always paramount, however, and alliances were often made across the sectarian divide, and through the centuries, the fiercest opponents of the Delhi sultans were frequently their fellow Muslims.

Muhammad of Ghor was assassinated in 1206. One of his Turkish generals (Aibak) subsequently established what is called the Slave Dynasty, so named because when freed and given the opportunity, slaves were often both loyal and talented. The Slave Dynasty sultans ruled until 1290, to be followed by the Khaljīs from 1290 to 1320, the Tughluqs from 1320 to 1413, and the Sayyids from 1414 until 1451.

Through the centuries, the Delhi sultanate was challenged not only by rivals from within the Indian subcontinent but also from without, notably the Mongols from Asia. In 1398, Mongol warrior Tamerlane (Timur) sacked Delhi, massacring or enslaving most of the city's Hindu population. Tamerlane abandoned northern India the following year, and the sultanate recovered, although it was smaller and more fragmented by the time the Lodīs assumed power in Delhi by deposing the last of the Sayyids in 1451.

The Lodīs were successful horse breeders, had been ennobled, and had ruled the Punjab, to the west of Delhi, under the Sayyids. The first of the Lodī sultans was Bahlūl Lodī, who reigned over Delhi and the Punjab for nearly four decades. His reputation was that of a just ruler, and during his reign, numerous Muslim herdsman-peasants from Afghan settled in North India.

Like their Delhi sultanate predecessors, the Lodī kings were Muslims, but during the years of Lodī rule several non-Muslim religious movements achieved considerable significance. From the southern part of the subcontinent, a devotional Hinduism known as bhakti spread north to the Ganges River area, giving Hinduism a new vigor. Kabīr (1440-1518), an illiterate Muslim inspired by the teachings of a Hindu sage, abandoned the sectarianism of both Hinduism and Islam and founded a religious movement focused on simply loving God, which laid the founda-

tion for Sikhism. In the Lodī-ruled Punjab, the Hindu-born Nānak (1469-1539), influenced by the more democratic theology of Islam, abandoned the Hindu concept of caste and became the first guru, or divine teacher, of Sikhism, worshipping a single universal God. By the reign of Sikandar Lodī, Bahlūl's son, India was divided and fragmented both politically and spiritually.

Sikandar Lodī ruled the Delhi sultanate from 1489 until 1517, and was praised by his contemporaries as the greatest of all Delhi sultans, a claim that should be accepted with suitable caution. Following the practice of his father, Sikandar was a patron of artistic and intellectual endeavors and was a poet. His mother was a Hindu, and a first love was a Hindu princess. Although new mystic sects blending Islam and Hindu emerged during his reign, Sikandar, perhaps because of guilt and as a reaction to the religion of his mother and his early love, was an orthodox Muslim. He also was more iconoclastic in his destruction of Hindu temples than his peers.

Sikandar also established a second capital city at Āgra, near Delhi, signifying his ambitions to expand Lodī rule farther south, and although much of Āgra was destroyed by an earthquake in 1505, he immediately ordered its rebuilding. It was during his reign that the Portuguese, led by explorer Vasco da Gama, reached India in 1498, the first Europeans to reach South Asia by sea, an event that went unrecorded in Delhi.

The last of the three Lodī sultans was Ibrāhīm, who ascended the throne with the death of his father in 1517. Ibrāhīm's reign was a troubled one. Because of his aristocratic and indolent ways, he failed to maintain the loyalty of many of those who served Sikandar, and he faced several uprisings, including one by his younger brother, whom Ibrāhīm captured and executed. A rebellion also occurred in Bihar, to the east of Delhi, and another in Lahore in the Punjab, led by his uncle. Rānā Sāngā of Mewar, the raja (chief) of the Hindu Rājput confederacy, headed another uprising against the Lodī sultan, in 1527.

The demise of the Lodī sultans and Ibrāhīm came not from within India, however, but from the Lodī homeland, from Afghanistan, where Bābur, a direct descendant of Tamerlane, had imperial ambitions. Initially, Bābur focused on reestablishing the old Mongol Empire in Central Asia, although he did lead forays into India in 1505 and 1519, but on neither occasion did he try to maintain a foothold in the subcontinent. In 1525, he launched a major invasion.

Because of their expert mastery of horses, Bābur's forces, like all Mughal armies, were both swift and mobile. That mobility gave them an advantage over larger

armies, not least in India, where the debilitating climate made it difficult to breed sufficient numbers of horses for war. In addition, Bābur, although a skilled archer, was well acquainted with cannon and matchlock guns, a characteristic similar to what was occurring in the west in the Muslim empires of the Ottomans in modern Turkey and the Ṣafavids in Persia (Iran). There is little evidence to indicate that Ibrāhīm and the Lodīs had gunpowder technology at their disposal.

During Bābur's 1525 invasion, the Hindu Rājputs were still in rebellion and the Lodī family was not united, for it was Ibrāhīm's uncle who urged Bābur to attack the Delhi sultanate. Ibrāhīm's Lodī army met Bābur at Panipat, north and west of Delhi, on April 21, 1526. Even though the Lodī forces outnumbered those of Bābur ten to one, it helped that Bābur was an experienced and successful military leader, much more so than Ibrāhīm. After a stand-off of several days, the Lodī army attacked Bābur's impregnable defensive position, and as the battle raged, the larger army became increasingly concentrated and immobilized. It is estimated that fifteen thousand Lodī warriors died at the Battle of Panipat, including Ibrāhīm. The Lodī Dynasty and the Delhi sultanate had come to an end.

SIGNIFICANCE

It is not clear if Ibrāhīm Lodī's failure at the Battle of Panipat was a result of his own inadequacies, or if the loss resulted from the superior military experience of Bābur (or Bābur's mastery of gunpowder). Nevertheless, whatever the cause, the defeat of the Lodī sultans in 1526 proved to be one of the major turning points in the history of India. Bābur established Mughal rule, and his successors, including his son Humāyūn, Akbar, Jahāngīr, Shāh Jahān, and 'Ālamgīr, made the Mughals one of India's most famous and glorious dynasties.

—Eugene Larson

FURTHER READING

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SEE ALSO: 1459: Rāo Jodha Found Jodhpur; Early 16th cent.: Devotional Bhakti Traditions Emerge; 1507: End of the Timurid Dynasty; Dec. 2, 1510: Battle of Merv Establishes the Shaybānīd Dynasty; Apr. 21, 1526: First Battle of Panipat; Mar. 17, 1527: Battle of Khānuā; Dec. 30, 1530: Humāyūn Inherits the Throne in India; 1540-1545: Shēr Shāh Sūr Becomes Emperor of Delhi; 1556-1605: Reign of Akbar; 1578: First Dalai Lama Becomes Buddhist Spiritual Leader; Feb., 1586: Annexation of Kashmir; 1598: Astrakhanid Dynasty Is Established.

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