



Topic 1.2: Introduction to Developments in Dar al-Islam from c. 1200 to c. 1450

Unit 1: Global Tapestry



Learning Objectives:

- Explain how systems of belief and their practices affected society in the period from c. 1200 to c. 1450.
- Explain the causes and effects of the rise of Islamic states over time.
- Explain the effects of intellectual innovation in Dar al-Islam.

Historical Developments

- Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and the core beliefs and practices of these religions continued to shape societies in Africa and Asia.
- As the Abbasid Caliphate fragmented, new Islamic political entities emerged, most of which were dominated by Turkic people. These states demonstrated continuity, innovation, and diversity.
- **New political entities:**
 - Seljuk Empire
 - Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt
 - Delhi Sultanates
- Muslim rule continued to expand to many parts of Afro-Eurasia due to military expansion, and Islam, subsequently expanded through the activities of merchants, missionaries, and Sufis.

Historical Developments

Muslim states and empires encouraged significant intellectual innovations and transfers.

Innovations:

- Advances in mathematics (Nasir al-Din al-Tusi)
- Advances in literature (A'ishah al-Bu'uniyyah)
- Advances in medicine

Transfers:

- Preservation and commentaries on Greek moral and natural philosophy
- **House of Wisdom** in Abbasid Baghdad
- Scholarly and cultural transfers in Muslim and Christian Spain

Want to study Arabic terms?

Check out my Quizlet set of terms [HERE!](#)

This can help you on essays and SAQs and possibly with interpreting primary sources.



ISLAM

The Pre-Islamic Arabian World



- Arabian peninsula covered by **inhospitable desert**
- Populated by **Bedouin or nomadic cultures who subsisted on camel and goat herding**
- Most cities developed along the coast of the Red Sea – the rest was mostly Bedouin organized in tribes and clans
- Prone to war, feuding, and violence (because of the various tribes competing for scarce resources)

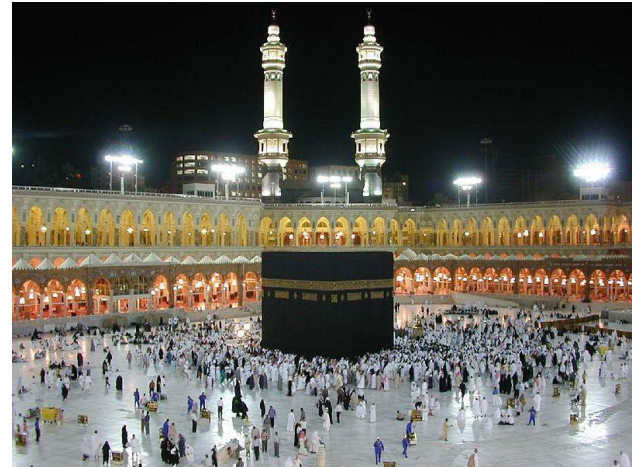
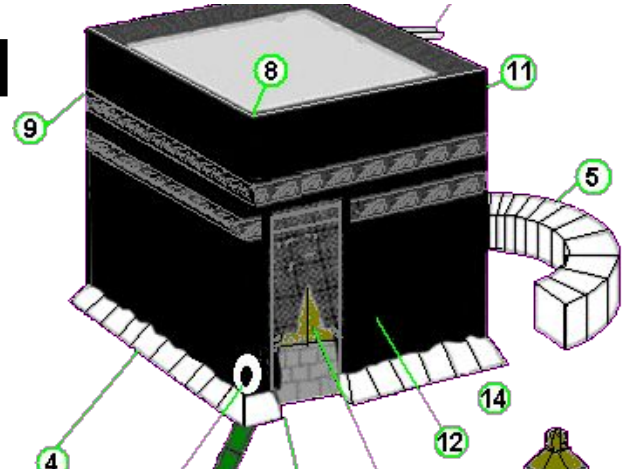


Homeland of Islam

- Arabia was on the periphery of two established and rival civilizations: **Byzantines** (heir to the Roman Empire) and **Sassanid Empire** (heir to Persia)
- This location along with long-distance trade kept Arabia connected to the larger world
- Jews, Christians, and some Zoroastrians lived among the Arabs
- The city of **Mecca** was important even before Islam as the site of the Kaaba and many people made pilgrimages there

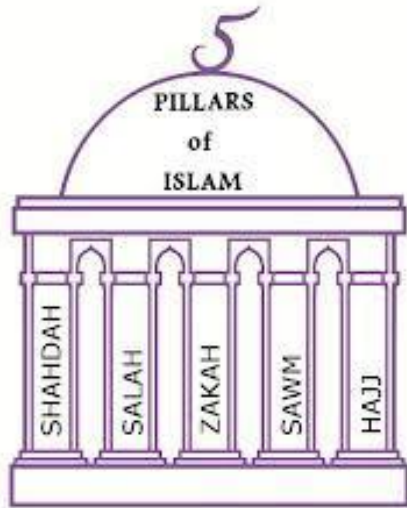
The Pre-Islamic Arabian World

- Mecca housed the **Kaaba** – religious shrine which housed representations of 360 deities and was destination for pilgrims even before Islam
- Allah was just one god in the Arab pantheon
- Increasingly associated Allah with Yahweh (Jewish High God) and regarded themselves as “children of Abraham”
- Around 600 it might have seemed that they were moving towards Christianity or Judaism. . . But along came Muhammad!





Five Pillars of Islam



- 1) **Shahdah:** There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of God
- 2) **Salah:** Prayer is performed five times a day while facing in the direction of Mecca
- 3) **Zakah:** Almsgiving to poor and needy – providing social justice
- 4) **Samm:** Month of fasting during Ramadan (from sunup to sundown)
- 5) **Hajj** - Pilgrimage to Mecca
- 6) *Jihad – the struggle (controversial)*
 - I. *Struggle with greed and selfishness*
 - II. *“jihad of the sword” – authorized armed struggle against the forces of unbelief and evil as a means of establishing Muslim rule and defending the **umma** against outside aggressors*

Muhammad

- **Muhammad Ibn Abdullah** (570-632 C.E.) – born in **Mecca**, successful trader, had powerful religious experience that left him convinced that he was Allah’s messenger to the Arabs
- Revelations became the sacred recordings of Islam – **the Qur’an** – seen as the very words of God
- **Monotheistic** – rejecting the many gods housed in the Kaaba and rejected Christian notion of the Trinity (Father, Son, & Holy Spirit)
- Considered himself the “seal of the prophets” the last to bear God’s final revelation to humankind (following Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others)

Muhammad will not be appearing in this presentation.



Qur'an – Sacred Text of Islam

- After Muhammad's sudden death in 632, Caliph **Abu Bakr** ordered one of the Prophet's companions (Zayd ibn Thabit) to collect both oral and written sources of all of Muhammad's inspired speeches
- They were collected and all other versions were destroyed
- The sacred text that resulted was the **Qu'ran** (the Recitations) which Muslims believe contain word for word, absolutely everything that God revealed to Muhammad and nothing else
- Written in verses, each poetically perfect
- [Listen to a recitation of the Qu'ran – you will hear the poetic nature of this text.](#)
- Because of the centrality of the Qur'an, Arabic literacy became the hallmark of Muslims from sub-Saharan West Africa to Southeast Asia
- Divided into *surahs* (chapters)



Snapchat
footage of
Muslims
making their
Hajj to Mecca

Teachings of the Quran

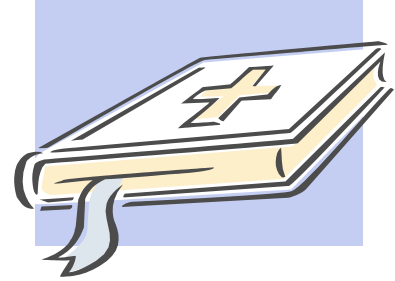
Quran denounced prevailing social practices:

- Hoarding of wealth
- Exploitation of the poor
- Charging of high interest rates on loans
- Corrupt business deals
- Abuse of women
- Neglect of widows and orphans

Bible & Quran

Bible:

- written by many authors over many centuries
- edited & translated



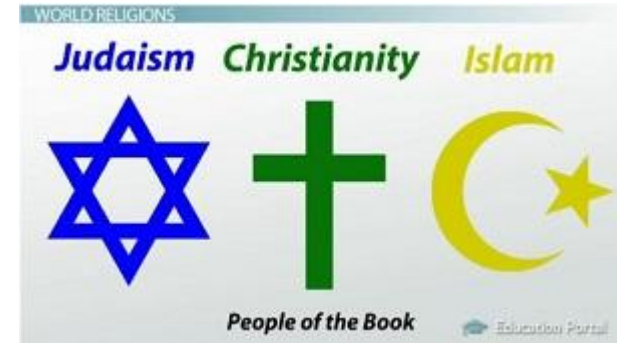
Quran:

- organized after Muhammad's death by caliphate Abu Bakr
- regarded not as words of Muhammad, but the words of God



People of the Book – How Muslims Viewed Outside Religions

- ***Dhimmi*** – “people of the book” – originally applied to Christians and Jews but as the Islamic conquests spread it also applied to Zoroastrians (Persia) and Hindus (India) as well.
- Often had to pay a ***jizya*** – head tax levied on **non-believers**
- Even through military conquest, people were not forced to convert to Islam:
 - That would mean they would not be taxed
 - Also meant the booty of war would have to be shared with those who converted



People of the Book – The Qur'an 3rd Surah

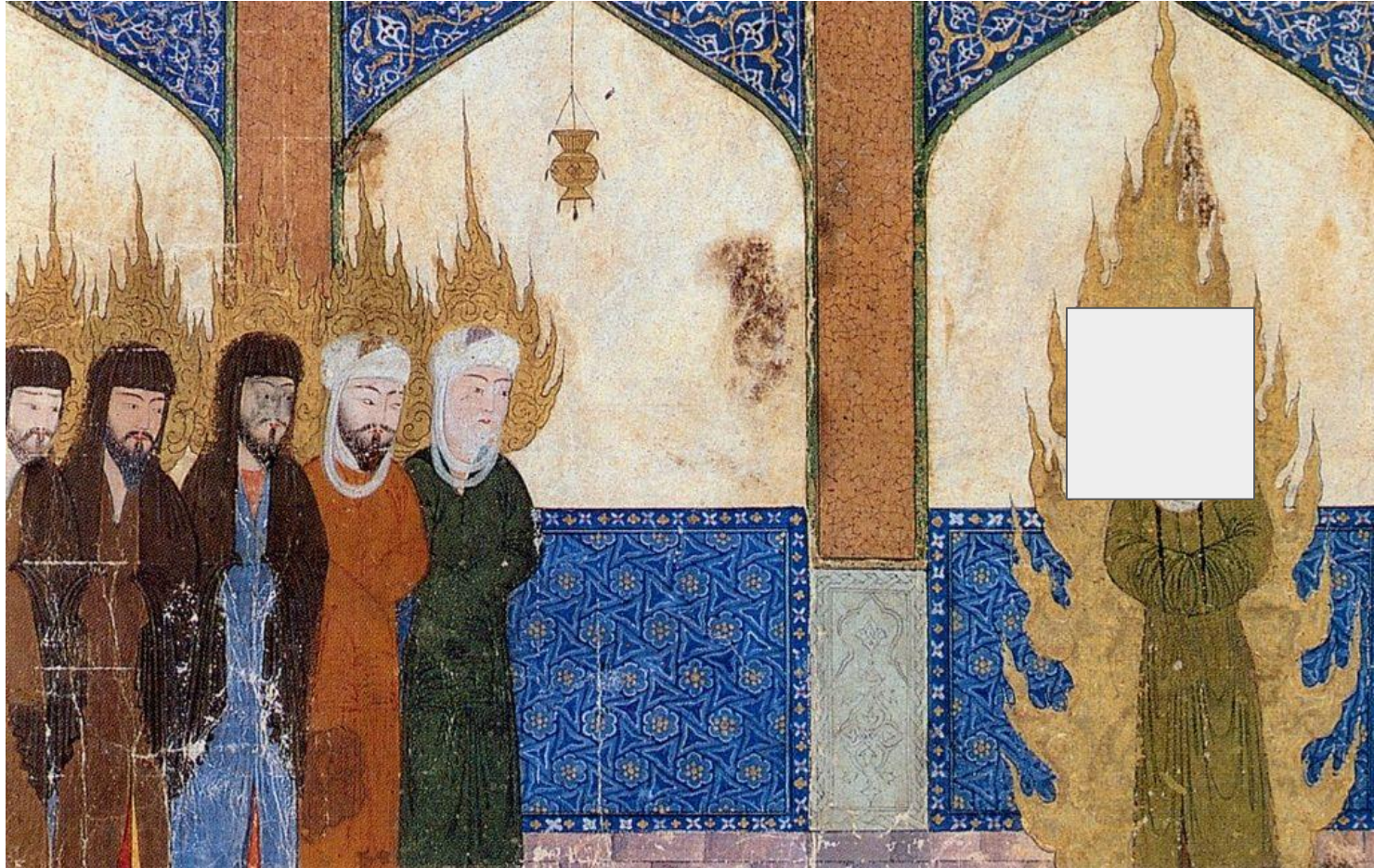
The House of Imran

There is a party of the People of the Book yearn to make you go astray; yet none they make to stray, except themselves, but they are not aware. People of the Book! Why do you disbelieve in God's signs, which you yourselves witness? People of the Book! Why do you confound the truth with vanity, and conceal the truth and that wittingly?

Say: 'We believe in God, and that which has been sent down on us, and sent down on Abraham and Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob and the Tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and the Prophets, of their Lord; we make no division between any of them, and to Him we surrender.'

Whoso desires another religion than Islam, it shall not be accepted of him; in the next world he shall be among the losers.

Medieval
Persian
manuscript
depicting
Muhammad
leading
Abraham,
Moses and
Jesus in
prayer.



Sunni vs. Shia Muslims

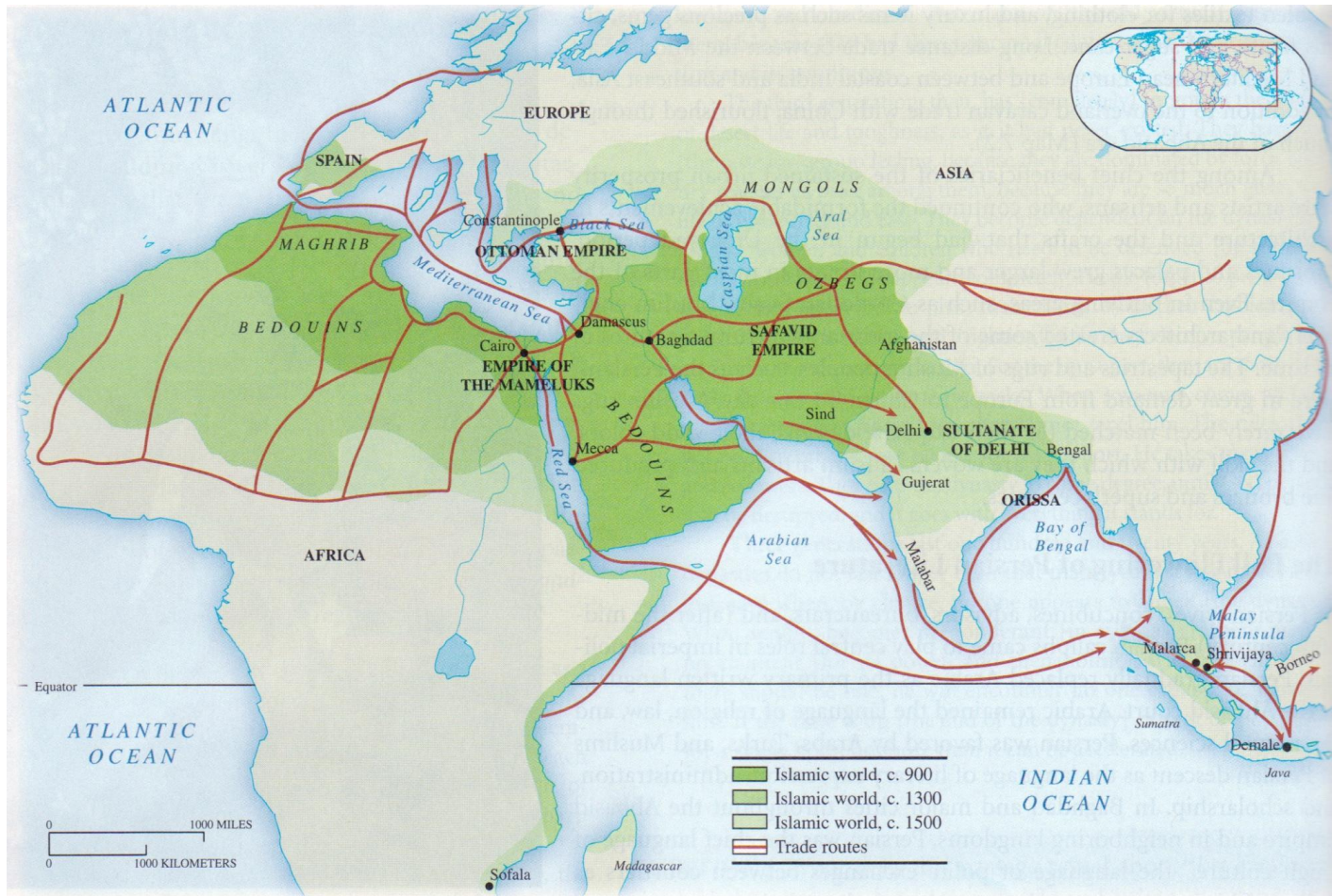
The historic background of the Sunni–Shia split lies in the **schism** that occurred when the Islamic prophet Muhammad died in the year 632, leading to a dispute over succession to Muhammad as a caliph of the Islamic community spread across various parts of the world

- **Sunni:** Caliphs were rightful religious/political leaders – selected by the community (75-90% of the world's population of Muslims) – originally supported the Umayyads
- **Shi'a:** Leadership should descend from Muhammad's ancestors (10-20% of the world's Muslim population) – originally supported Ali



Sunni vs. Shiite Modern Distribution







Arabic language spread as the Caliphates and Islam spread. The light beige area illustrate Arabic language predominance today.



Arabic language area

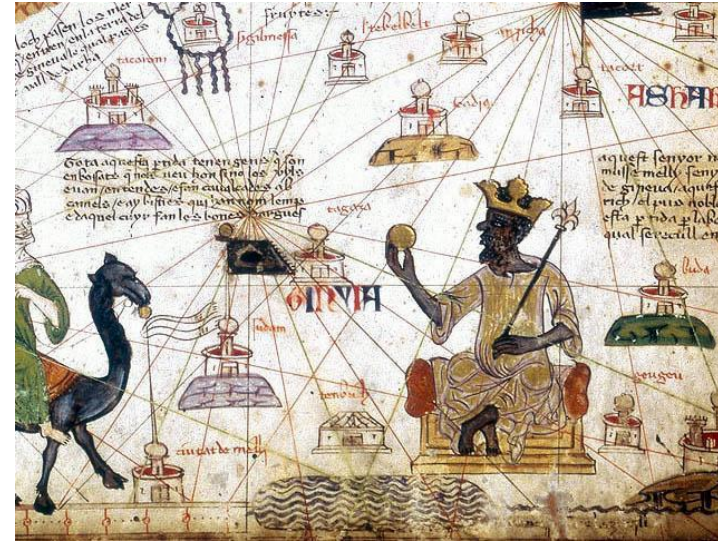
Arab country boundary

0

1,000 Miles

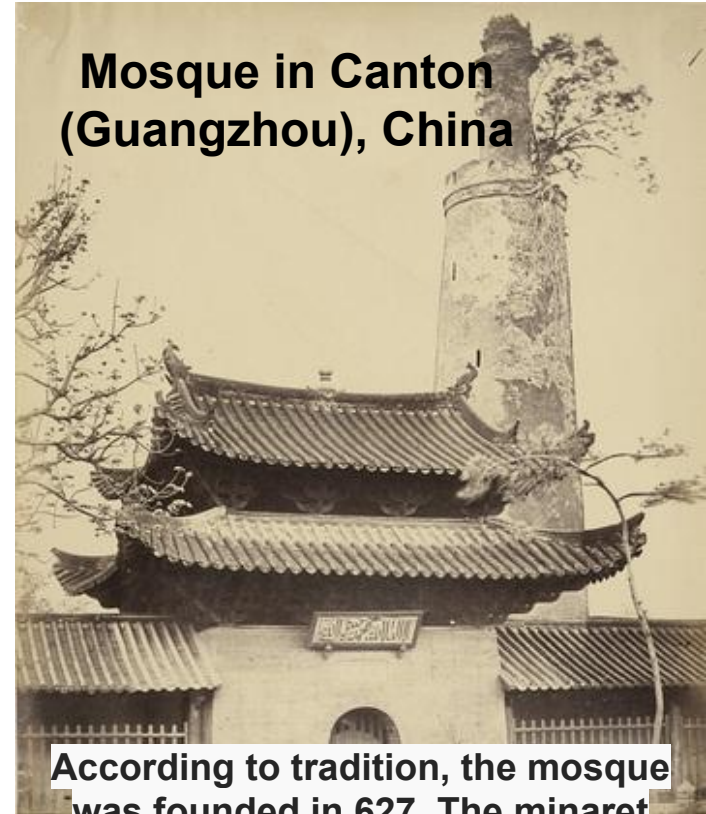
Islamic Networks of Exchange

- world of Islamic civilization was an **immense arena of exchange**
- goods, technologies, food products, and ideas circulated widely
- due to its central location in the Afro-Eurasian world and break down of political barriers between the Byzantine and Persian empires
- **Commerce was valued positively** within Islamic teaching because Muhammad himself had been a trader



Islamic Networks of Exchange

- Muslim merchants, Arabs and Persians in particular, became prominent or sometimes dominant players in all of major Afro-Eurasian trade routes of the third-wave era
 - in Mediterranean Sea
 - along the revived Silk Roads
 - across the Sahara
 - throughout the Indian Ocean basin
- By 8th century CE, had established a colony at Canton in southern China, linking Islam with Asia



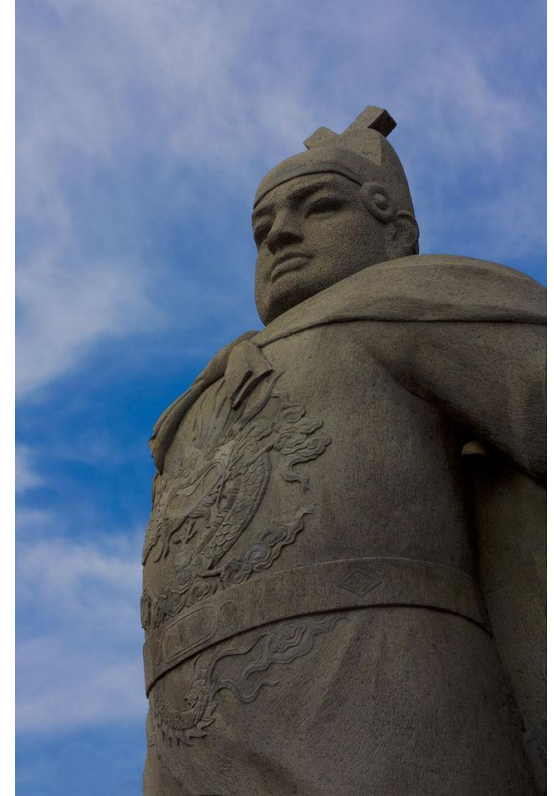
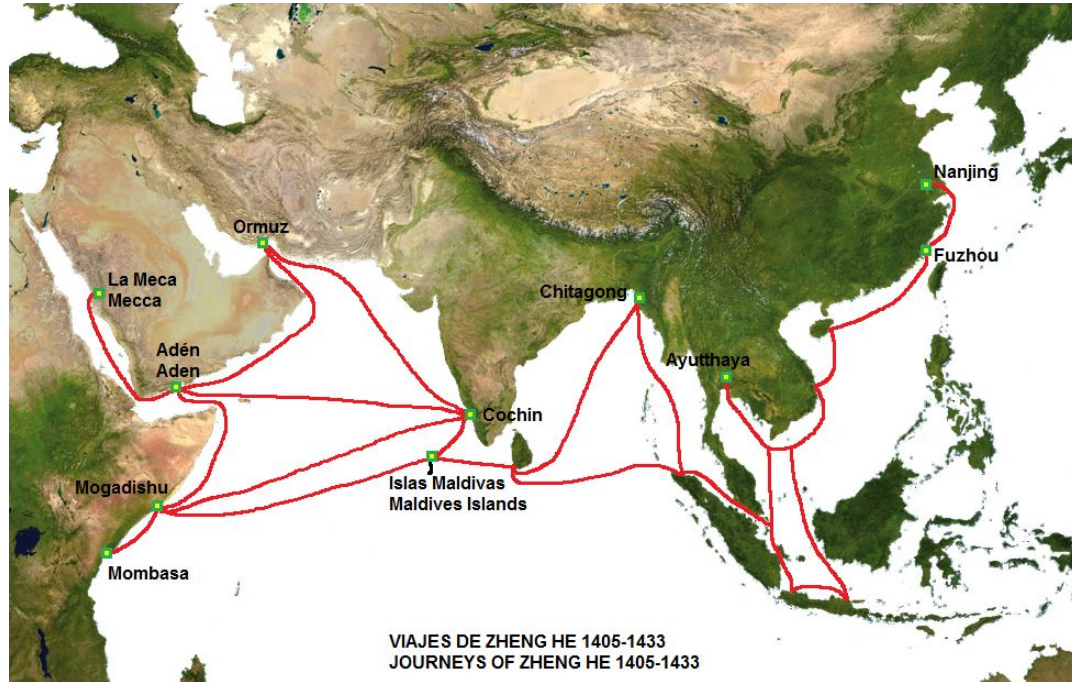
**Mosque in Canton
(Guangzhou), China**

According to tradition, the mosque was founded in 627. The minaret was built in the 10th century.



Chinese Explorer Zheng He

He was a Muslim!



Islamic Networks of Exchange

- Islamic civilization contributed to ecological change and agricultural products and practices which spread from region to region
- **Rice, sugarcane, sorghum, hard wheat, bananas, lemons, limes, watermelons, coconut palms, spinach, artichokes, and cotton spread from South and Southeast Asia into the Middle East**
- New crops created an “**Islamic Green Revolution**” of increased food production, population growth, urbanization, and industrial development

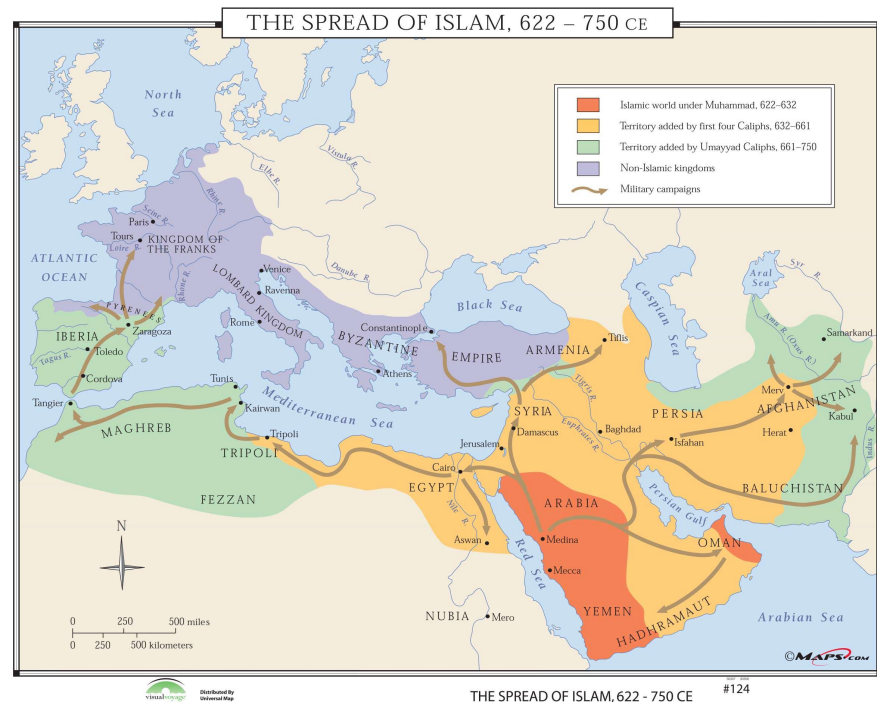


How Did Islam Spread?

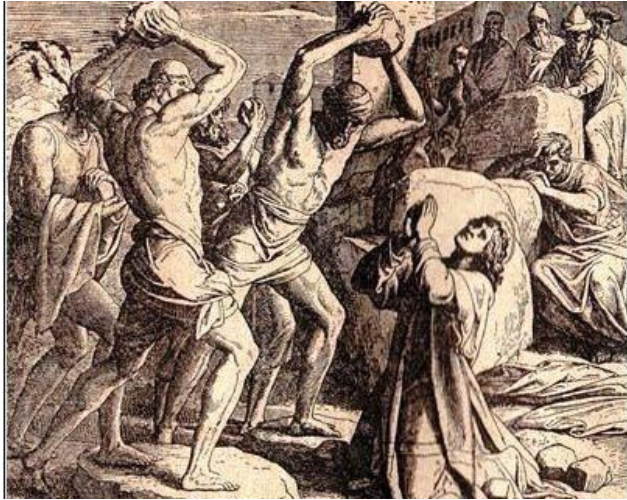
- What do we already know about the spread of Islam?
- How do you think that the spread of Islam is related to warfare?
- How do you think that the spread of Islam is related to trade?

Spread of Islam

- Spread quickly from its base in Medina
- Early military success against Muhammad's Meccan opponents convinced other Arab tribes that Muslims and their God were on the rise and sought alliances with them
- Spread quickly due to:
 - Religious appeal of the new faith
 - Promise of material gain
 - End of incessant tribal warfare
 - Periodic military actions led by Muhammad
 - Muhammad's willingness to enter into marriage alliances with leading tribes



Spread of Islam vs. Christianity



- Jews had a minority, subordinate place in the Roman Empire
- Early Christians were persecuted by the Romans, dealing with a hostile state
- In response, Christianity developed a separate church hierarchy
 - Concept of two coexisting political authorities, one religious, one political
 - This persisted even after Christianity was accepted after 300 CE
- Islam was both a religion and a political state from the very beginning
- Muhammad was both a religious leader and political/military leader unlike Jesus and the Buddha
- No distinction between religious and political law

Sharia Law

- Sharia law (shah-REE-ah)
regulated every aspect of life
- Literally means “a path to water”
- Combined religious and political laws

Sufis



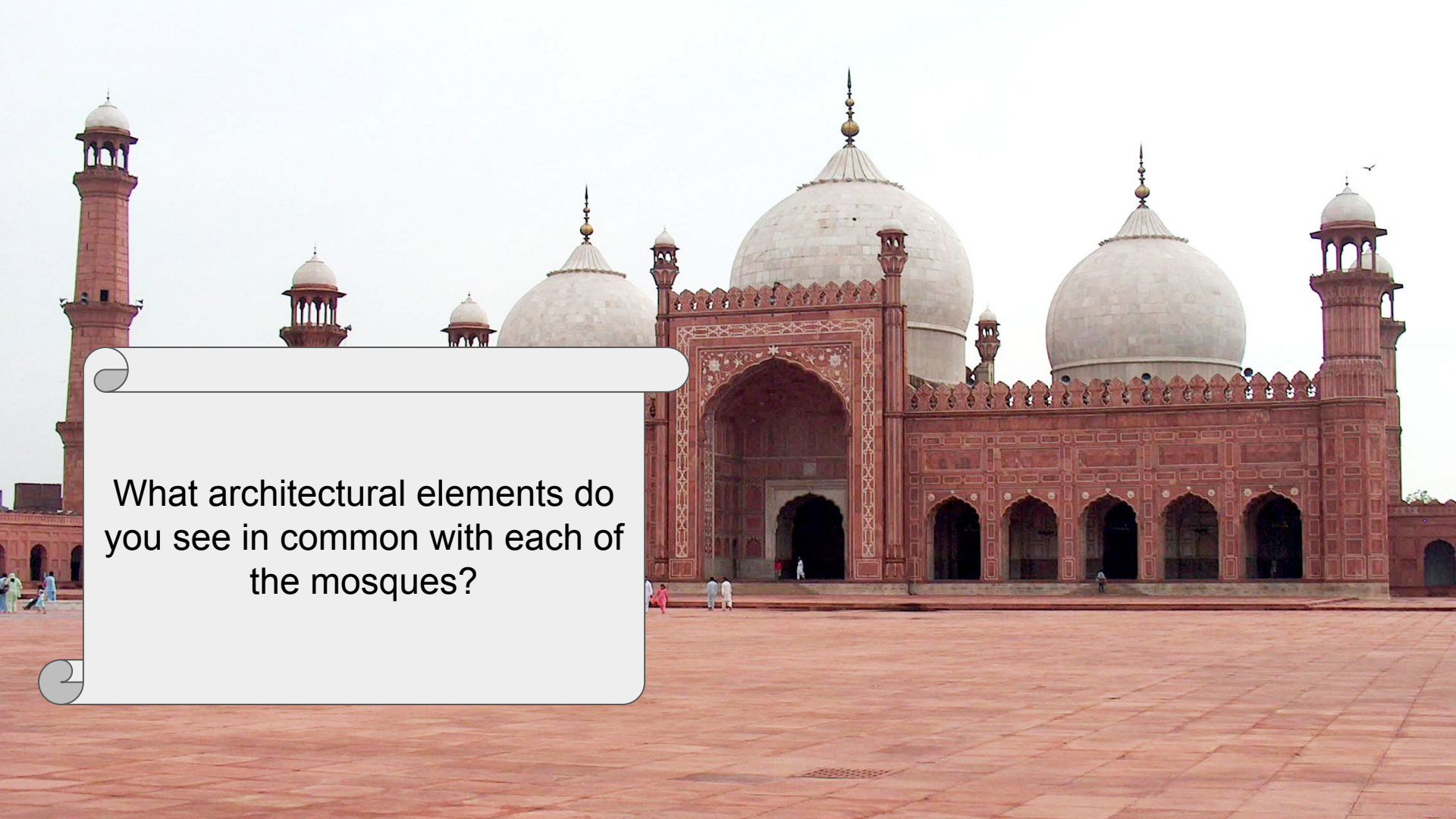


Islam and the Iberian Peninsula: Al-Andalus

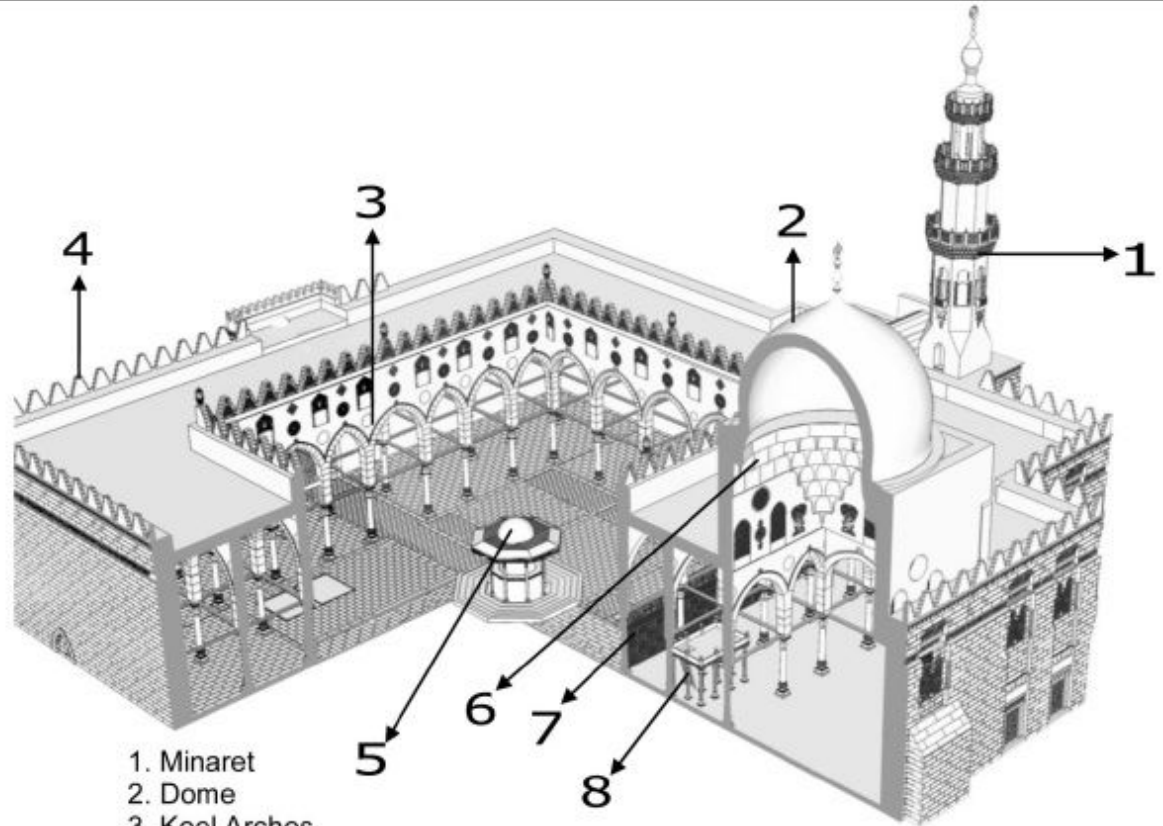
- Spread from North Africa in early 8th century
- Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived in better harmony than anywhere in the world
- fine arts and sciences flourished
 - medicine, astronomy, architecture, literature, art
- By 1000 Spain was 75% Islamic
- By late 10th century, toleration began to fade
- Christians began to invade from the north in an effort to reclaim Spain for Christianity
- **Reconquista**, the reconquest of Muslim Spain by the Christian monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, was completed in 1492.







What architectural elements do you see in common with each of the mosques?

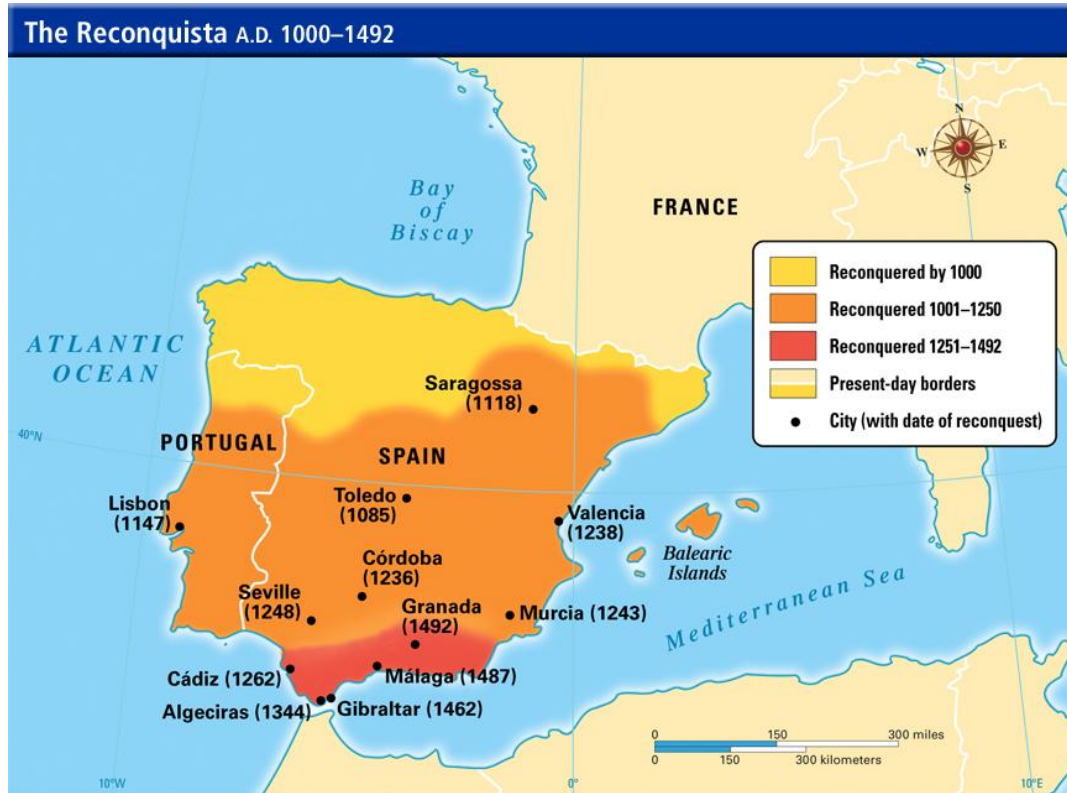


1. Minaret
2. Dome
3. Keel Arches
4. Stair Step Crenellation
5. Sahn (ablution)
6. Muqarnas
7. Mashrabiya
8. Dikka

Mosques in Spain



Reconquista



Spain's Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand

Islam in West Africa

- Traders instead of warriors carried Islam across the Sahara into Ghana, Mali, and Songhai
- Earliest converts were ruling elites of these kingdoms
 - Islam provided source of literate officials to assist with administration and bureaucracy
- Offered African merchants important trade ties
- Cities became centers of government administration and trade as well as centers of Islamic religious and intellectual life
- Islam did not spread to rural areas which clung to the ancient African religions and traditions

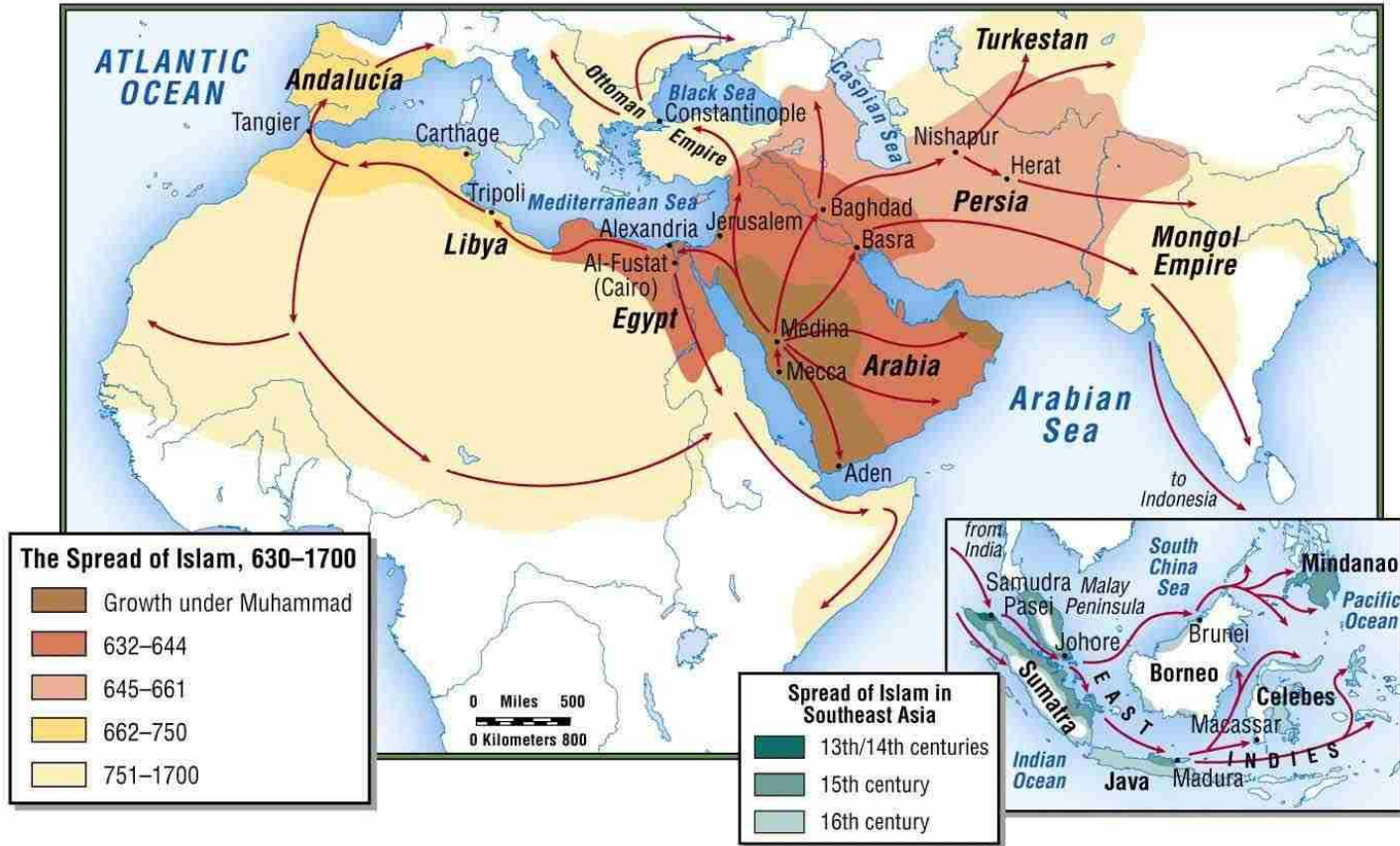


The Djingyereber Mosque in Timbuktu, Mali illustrates the spread of Islam into West Africa along with syncretism (blend) of West African architecture with Islamic beliefs.

Islam in India

- Could not be absorbed by Hinduism
- Brought by Turkic-speaking warrior groups from Central Asia who converted to Islam
- Began around 1000 CE
- Early centuries were violent: invaders smashed Hindu and Buddhist temples
- Establishment of Sultanate of Delhi (1206), Turkic rule became more systematic - very modest penetration of Indian society
- In following centuries, substantial Muslim communities emerged in India where Hinduism was less integrated with culture

Islam in India



Muslims Invade Byzantine Empire

- Byzantine Empire had trouble deflecting Muslim invasions because of the defection of their own frontier Arabs and the support the invaders received from Christians of Syria and Egypt
- Christian sects (**Copts** and **Nestorians**) resented rule of Orthodox Byzantines who taxed them and persecuted them as heretics.
- Under Muslim rule they would be tolerated and taxed less heavily
- Therefore, Christians rallied to the Arabs' cause
- Syria, Western Iraq, and Palestine were quickly taken by Arab invaders



Spread of Islam

- By the 8th century the Muslim Empire & the religion of Islam spread through conquest, trade, & missionaries
 - By Conquest:
 - East to India
 - West to the Iberian Peninsula (Spain)
 - By Trade:
 - Sub-Saharan Africa
 - East Africa
 - By *Sufi* missionaries:
 - Through India
 - Southeast Asia

Notes

- Islam rapidly spreads
- Spain, North Africa, India
- Spread by conquest, trade, and missionaries



The Spread of Islam

- c. 570 CE – Birth of **Muhammad**
- 610 CE – Muhammad’s call to be the Seal of the Prophet on **Mount Hira**, the beginning of Revelation of the **Qur’an**
- 622 CE -- Prophet’s **Hijrah** from **Makkah** (Mecca) to **Madina** (Medina), marks foundation of **Umma**, whose importance is commemorated by the Islamic calendar, which counts years from this point
- 630 CE – Muhammad’s conquest of Makkah and rededication of the **Ka’ba** to monotheistic worship
- 632 CE – Death of Muhammad
- 632-661 CE – **Period of the “Rightly Guided Caliphs” (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman Ali)**, when the Umma was lead by **Companions of the Prophets**. This period marked by the writing down of the revelations of the **Qur’an** (c. 632-50 CE) and the beginning of the collection of reminiscences about the Prophet into the **Hadith** literature, as the basis for following his **Sunna** (life-example). This period also saw the Islamic consolidation of power in Arabia and the conquests of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, and Persia—all of which together would thereafter be the heart of the Islamic Empire
- 661 CE – Assassination of **Ali** and the rise of the **Umayyad Dynasty**, which ruled from Damascus
- 680 CE – **Husayn** (son of Ali) and his Shi’ite followers killed at Karbala (Iraq), but the son of Husayn is captured and survives to beget sons to continue the line of **Shi’i Imams**
- 750 CE – Fall of the Umayyads and rise of the **Abbasid Dynasty**, which conquered the Umayyads and ruled from Baghdad until the Mongol conquest; Umayyads, however, continued to rule in Muslim Spain (al-Andalus) until 1492 CE. The period of Abbasid rule marked the continuation and culminations of the great flowering of classical Islamic civilization, e.g., the development of the Islamic “religious sciences” of jurisprudence and theology, the compilation of Hadith into canonical collections, and the developments of many mystical movements (i.e. **Sufism**).
- 765 CE – Due to the death of his eldest son Ishma’il, the sixth Shi’i Imam (Ja’far) appoints a younger son (Musa al-Kazim) to be his successor as Imam. Some Shi’is saw this as a breach of the proper line of succession from Ali through Husayn, proclaiming the son of Ishma’il (Ahmad) as the next Imam. This group came to be one of two main groups of Shi’is, called Ismai’li or “Sevener” Shi’is, in contrast to those who accepted the line through Musa al-Kazim, who are called “Twelver” or Imami Shi’is.
- 1099 CE – Crusaders take Jerusalem
- 1258 CE – The Mongol conquest causes the fall of the Abbasid Dynasty
- 492 CE – End of the Period of Umayyad rule of Spain. Spain conquered by Christians, who promptly expel the Jews (who had flourished there living alongside Muslims under Umayyad rule)

Some states synthesized local and borrowed traditions. (*Examples: Persian traditions that influenced Islamic states, Chinese traditions that influenced states in Japan*)

Women in Islam

But in social terms (especially within a marriage) the Quran viewed women as inferior and subordinate:



Men have authority over women because Allah has made the one superior to the other, and because they spend their wealth to maintain them. Good women are obedient. They guard their unseen parts because Allah has guarded them. As for those from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them and send them to beds apart and beat them. Then if they obey you, take no further action against them.

Women in Islam

At the spiritual level, the Quran was quite clear and explicit on the role of women:



Those who surrender themselves to Allah and accept the true faith; who are devout, sincere, patient, humble, charitable, and chaste; who fast and are ever mindful of Allah—on these, both men and women, Allah will bestow forgiveness and rich reward.

Women in Islam – Primary Sources

All excerpts from *The Hadith* (8th – 9th centuries)

- “Said the Prophet. . . ‘I had a look into Paradise and I saw that the poor made up most of its inhabitants, and I had a look into Hell and saw that most of its inhabitants were women. . .’”
- Treat women-folk kindly for woman was created of a rib. The crookedest part of a rib is its upper part. If you go to straighten it out you will break it, and if you leave it alone it will continue crooked. So treat women in a kindly fashion

Women in Islam

Case Study: Khadijah

- Muhammad's first wife
- When Muhammad met her she was a wealthy widow in charge of a thriving trading enterprise
- Evidence that women were allowed to marry while owning and inheriting their own property
- Also evidence that women could pursue careers even after their husbands died
- *She asked him to marry her!*

The Changing Role of Women

- Influences of the cultures into which the Arabs had expanded began to take hold.
- **Practices of veiling and female seclusion that were long followed by non-Arab dwellers in Syria and Persia were adopted by or imposed upon Muslim women**
- Women saw their occupational options decrease
- Especially pronounced among those who lived in the cities
- Upper-class women in particular felt growing restrictions on their movement and activities
- Never got as bad as the treatment of women in China and India as women still needed to be literate to read the Qur'an.

Women & Centralized Society

The position of women has also been strong in other cultural areas where authority is decentralized and social organization is not highly stratified (like in West)

Women in Islam – Post-classical Age

During the time of Muhammad	200 years later. . .
Quran provided mix of rights, restrictions, and protection	during the “golden age” (as in Athens and China) – women (and specifically upper class women) experienced growing restrictions
Female infanticide (killing of babies - usually to have more male children) was forbidden	Women were only allowed in public completely veiled
Women had control over their own property	Women were secluded - usually only enforced on upper-class women as poor women lacked the money or resources necessary and HAD to leave for work and shopping
Divorce was possible for both parties	Women could no longer pray in public
Granted rights of inheritance	As empire grew, women’s rights shrunk
Muslim women led public lives, prayed at mosques with men	

