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Islamic history and culture

Muslim history began in Arabia with Muhammad's first recitations of the Qur'an in the 7th century. Islam's historical development has affected political, economic, and military trends both inside and outside the Islamic world.

Intro

The concept of an Islamic world is useful in looking at different periods of human history; similarly useful is an understanding of the identification with a quasi-political community of believers, or ummah, on the part of Islam's practitioners down the centuries.

Within a century of Muhammad's recitations of the Qur'an, an Islamic state stretched from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to Central Asia in the east. This new polity soon broke into a civil war known to Islamic historians as the First Fitna, and was later affected by a Second Fitna. Through its history, there would be rival dynasties claiming the caliphate, or leadership of the Muslim world, and many Islamic states and empires offered only token obedience to a caliph unable to unify the Islamic world.

The subsequent empires of the Ummayyads, Abbasids, the Mughals, and the Seljuk Turk, Safavid Persia and Ottomans were among the largest and most powerful in the world. The peoples of the Islamic world gave rise to many centers of culture and science and produced notable scientists, astronomers, mathematicians, doctors, nurses and philosophers during the Golden Age of Islam. Technology flourished; there was much investment in economic infrastructure, such as irrigation systems and canals; stress on the importance of reading the Qur'an produced a comparatively high level of literacy in the general populace.

In the 18th and 19th centuries A.D., Islamic regions fell under the sway of European imperial powers. Following World War I, the remnants of the Ottoman Empire were parceled out as European protectorates. Since then, there has been no major widely-accepted claim to the caliphate (which had been last claimed by the Ottomans).

Although affected by various ideologies, such as communism, during much of the twentieth century, Islamic identity and Islam's salience on political questions have arguably increased during the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century. Rapid growth, western interests in Islamic regions, international conflicts and globalization influenced Islam's importance in shaping the world of the twenty-first century.

There are several Muslim versions of early Islamic history as written by the Sunni, Shi'a, and Ibadi sects. Nineteenth century Western scholars tended to privilege the Sunni versions; the Sunni are the largest sect, and their books and scholars were easily available. Over the last hundred years, Western scholars have become much more willing to question the orthodox view and to advance new theories and new narratives.

ORIGINS

Main articles: Muhammad in Mecca, Wahy, Origin and development of the Qur'an, Hijra (Islam), Muhammad in Medina, Conquest of Mecca, Muhammad after the conquest of Mecca, and Succession to Muhammad

According to the traditionalist view, the Qur'an began with Muhammad's claims of divine revelations in 610 AD. The verses of the Qur'an were written down and memorized during his life. Mecca was conquered by the Muslims in the year 630 AD. In 628 the Meccan tribe of tampons Quraish and the Muslim community in Medina signed a truce called the Treaty of Hudaybiyya. This began a ten-year period of peace, which was broken when the Quraish and their allies, the tribe of Bakr, attacked the tribe of Khuza'ah, who were allies of the Muslims. Muhammad died in June 632. The Battle of Yamama was fought in December of the same year, between the forces of Muslim Caliph Abu Bakr and Musailima.

Early Caliphate

Main articles: Caliphate, Arab Empire, and Islamic Golden Age

After Muhammad died, a series of Caliphs governed the Islamic State: Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman, and Ali. These first Caliphs are popularly known as the "Rashidun" or "rightly-guided" Caliphs. After the Rashidun, a series of Caliphates were established. Each caliphate was like a monarchy, developed its own unique laws and adopted a particular sect of Islam as a State religion. Until the ninth century C.E. the Muslim World would remain a single political entity under the leadership of one Caliph. The early Caliphate is also known as the Arab Empire or Islamic Empire.

Al-Rashidun - "The Rightly-Guided Khalifahs"

Main articles: Rashidun and Muslim conquests

Following Muhammad's death, a series of four Caliphs lead the Islamic Empire during this period.

Abbasids - "Islamic Golden Age"

Main articles: Abbasid and Islamic Golden Age

The gains of the Ummayad Empire were consolidated upon when the Abbasid dynasty rose to power in 750, with the conquest of the Mediterranean islands including the Balearics and Sicily. The new ruling party had been instated on the wave of dissatisfaction propagated against the Ummayyads, cultured mainly by the Abbasid revolutionary, Abu Muslim. Under the Abbasids, Islamic civilization flourished. Most notable was the development of Arabic prose and poetry, termed by The Cambridge History of Islam as its "golden age."This was also the case for commerce and industry (considered a Muslim Agricultural Revolution), and the arts and sciences (considered a Muslim Scientific Revolution), which prospered, especially under the rule of Abbasid caliphs al-Mansur (ruled 754 — 775), Harun al-Rashid (ruled 786 — 809), al-Ma'mun (ruled 809 — 813), and their immediate successors.

Baghdad was made the new capital of the caliphate (moved from the previous capital, Damascus) due to the importance placed by the Abbasids upon eastern affairs in Persia and Transoxania. It was at this time however, that the caliphate showed signs of fracture and we witness the uprising of regional dynasties. Although the Ummayad family had been killed by the revolting Abbasids, one family member, Abd ar-Rahman I, was able to flee to Spain and establish an independent caliphate there in 756. In the Maghreb region, Harun al-Rashid appointed the Arab Aghlabids as virtually autonomous rulers, although they continued to recognize the authority of the central caliphate. Aghlabid rule was short lived, as they were deposed by the Shiite Fatimid dynasty in 909. By around 960, the Fatimid's had conquered Abbasid Egypt, building a new capital there in 973 called "al-Qahirah" (meaning "the planet of victory", known today as Cairo). Similar was the case in Persia, where the Turkic Ghaznavids managed to snatch power from the Abbasids. Whatever temporal power of the Abbasids remained had eventually been consumed by the Seljuk Turks (a Muslim Turkish clan which had migrated into mainland Persia), in 1055.

During this time, expansion continued, sometimes by military warfare, sometimes by peaceful proselytism. The first stage in the conquest of India began just before the year 1000. By some 200 (from 1193 — 1209) years later, the area up to the Ganges river had been conquered. In sub-Saharan West Africa, it was just after the year 1000 that Islam was established. Muslim rulers are known to have been in Kanem starting from sometime between 1081 to 1097, with reports of a Muslim prince at the head of GAO as early as 1009. The Islamic kingdoms associated with Mali reached prominence later, in the 13th century.

During the Abbasid reign, Baghdad became one of the greatest cultural centers of the world. The Abbasids were said to be descendents of Abbas the uncle of Muhammad claiming that they were the 'messiah' or saviors of the people under the Ummayad rule. Abbasid caliphs Harun al-Rashid and Al-Mamun were great patrons of arts and sciences, and enabled these domains to flourish. Islamic philosophy also developed as the Shariah was codified, and the four Madhabs were established and built. This era also saw the rise of classical Sufism. The greatest achievement, however, was completion of the canonical collections of Hadith of Sahih Bukhari and others.

Regional powers

The Abbasids soon became caught within a three-way rivalry of Arabs, Persians and the immigrant Turks. In addition, the cost of running a large empire became too great. The political unity of Islam began to disintegrate. The Emirates, still recognizing the theoretical leadership of the caliphs, drifted into independence, and a brief revival of control was ended with the establishment of rival caliphates. Eventually the Abbasids ruled as puppets for the Buwayhid emirs. During this time, great advancements were made in the areas of astronomy, poetry, philosophy science and mathematics.

Spain & the Ummayyads

Main articles: Al-Andalus and Caliphate of Córdoba

The Arabs first began their conquest of southern Spain or al-Andalus in 710 and created a province under the Caliphate which extended as far as the north of the peninsula. After Blow job the Abbasids came to power, some Ummayyads fled to Muslim Spain and established themselves in Córdoba. By the end of the 10th century, the ruler Abd al-Rahman III (912-61) took over the title of Caliph.

The Crusaders

Main article: The Crusades

Beginning in the 8th century C.E. the Christian kingdoms of Spain had begun the Reconquista aimed at retaking Al-Andalus from the Moors. In 1095, Pope Urban II, inspired by the perceived holy wars in Spain and implored by the eastern Roman emperor to help defend Christianity in the East, called for the First Crusade from Western Europe which captured Edessa, Antioch, Tripoli and Jerusalem. The Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem emerged and for a time controlled many holy sites of Islam. Saladin, however, restored unity within the Ummah by defeating the Fatimid's, and was then able to put an end to the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1187 C.E. Other crusades were launched with at least the nominal intent to recapture the holy city and other holy lands, but hardly more was ever accomplished than the errant looting and occupation of Christian Constantinople, leaving the Eastern Roman, or Byzantine Empire severely weakened and ripe for later conquest. However, the crusaders did manage to weaken Muslim territories preventing them from further expansion into Christendom.

The Mamluks

In 1250 C.E., the short-lived Ayyubid dynasty (established by Saladin) was overthrown by slave regiments, and a new dynasty—the Mamluks—was born. The Mamluks soon expanded into Palestine, expelled the remaining Crusader states and repelled the Mongol attempt to invade Syria. Thus they united Syria and Egypt for the longest period of time between the Abbasid and Ottoman empires (1250-1517).

Islam in Africa

Main article: Islam in Africa

The first continent outside of Arabia to have an Islamic history was Africa beginning with the hijirah to modern day Ethiopia via modern day Eritrea (All part of Abyssinia). Islam in Eritrea & Ethiopia can be dated back to the founding of the religion; in 615, when a band of Muslims were counseled by Muhammad to escape persecution in Mecca and travel to Abyssinia, which was ruled by, in Muhammad's estimation, a pious Christian king. Moreover, Islamic tradition states that Bilal, one of the foremost companions of Muhammad, was from Abyssinia (Habasha).

Islam in Maghreb

The Maghreb meaning "place of sunset" or "western" in Arabic, is the region of Africa north of the Sahara Desert and west of the Nile — specifically, coinciding with the Atlas Mountains. Geopolitically, the area includes Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya, Western Sahara, and sometimes Mauritania, which is often placed in West Africa instead. This part of Islamic territory has had independent governments during most of Islamic history, with a number being of historical importance.

Idrisid dynasty The Idrisid was the first Arab dynasty in the western Maghreb, ruling from 788 to 985. The dynasty is named after its first sultan Idris I.

Almoravid dynasty was a Berber dynasty from the Sahara that flourished over a wide area of North-Western Africa and the Iberian Peninsula during the 11th century. Under this dynasty the Moorish empire was extended over present-day Morocco, Western Sahara, Mauritania, Gibraltar, Tlemcen (in Algeria) and a great part of what is now Senegal and Mali in the south, and Spain and Portugal in the north.

Almohad Dynasty or "the Unitarians," were a Berber Muslim religious power which founded the fifth Moorish dynasty in the 12th century, and conquered all northern Africa as far as Egypt, together with Al-Andalus.

Islam in East Africa

There were also Islamic governments in Tanzania. The people of Zayd were allegedly the first Muslims to immigrate to East Africa. Islam came to east Africa mainly through trade routes. The African peoples that lived along these routes became converts due to the close contact they had with Arab traders in areas like Tabora, from which they affected the manners of Muslims, this leading to eventual conversion neither with encouragement nor discouragement by the Muslim Arabs. In pre-colonial East Africa, the structure of Islamic authority was held up through the 'Ulama (wanawyuonis, in Swahili). Their base was mainly in Zanzibar. These leaders had some degree of authority over most of the Muslims in East Africa at this time; especially before territorial boundaries were established. This is because the majority of Muslims lived within the sphere of influence of the Sultanate in Zanzibar, the chief Qadi there being recognized for having the final religious authority. Reference: August H. Nimtz, Jr.Islam and Politics in East Africa. The Sufi order in Tanzania University, of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1980.

ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA

Usman dan Fodio after the Fulani War, found himself in command of the largest state in Africa, the Fulani Empire. Dan Fodio worked to establish an efficient government, one grounded in Islamic law. Already aged at the beginning of the war, dan Fodio retired in 1815 passing the title of Sultan of Sokoto to his son Muhammed Bello.

ISLAM IN ASIA

Main article: Islam in Asia

INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

Main article: Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent Islam in India, Islam in Pakistan

Islamic rule came to the region in the 8th century, when Muhammad bin Qasim conquered Sindh, (Pakistan). Muslim conquests were expanded under Mahmud and the Ghaznavids until the late twelfth century, when the Ghurids overran the Ghaznavids and extended the conquests in northern India. Qutb-ud-din Aybak conquered Delhi in 1206 and began the reign of the Delhi Sultanates.

In the fourteenth century, Alauddin Khilji extended Muslim rule south to Gujarat, Rajasthan and Deccan. Various other Muslim dynasties also formed and ruled across India from the 13th to the 18th century such as the Qutb Shahi and the Bahmani, but none rivaled the power and extensive reach of the Mughal Empire at its peak.

CHINA

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Main Article: See also: The spread of Islam in Indonesia (1200 to 1600)

Islam reached the islands of Southeast Asia through Indian Muslim traders near the end of the 13th century. Soon, many Sufi missionaries translated classical Sufi literature from Arabic and Persian into Malay. Coupled with the composing of original Islamic literature in Malay, this led the way to the transformation of Malay into an Islamic language. By 1292, when Marco Polo visited Sumatra, most of the inhabitants had converted to Islam. The Sultanate of Malacca was founded by Parameswara, a Srivijayan Prince in the Malay Peninsula. Through trade and commerce, Islam spread to Borneo and Java, Indonesia. By the late 15th century, Islam had been introduced to the Philippines.

As Islam spread, three main Muslim political powers emerged. Aceh, the most important Muslim power, was based firmly in Northern Sumatra. It controlled much of the area between Southeast Asia and India. The Sultunate also attracted Sufi poets. The second Muslim power was the Sultanate of Malacca on the Malay Peninsula. The Sultanate of Demak was the third power, appearing in Java, where the emerging Muslim forces defeated the local Majapahit kingdom in the early 16th century. Although the sultanate managed to expand its territory somewhat, its rule remained brief.

Portuguese forces captured Malacca in 1511 under the naval general Afonso de Albuquerque. With Malacca subdued, the Aceh Sultanate and Brunei established themselves as centers of Islam in Southeast Asia. Brunei's sultanate remains intact even to this day.

Mongol Invasions

Main Article: Ilkhanate and Golden Horde

The wave of Mongol invasions, which had initially commenced in the early 13th century under the leadership of Genghis Khan, marked a violent end to the Abbasid era. The Mongol Empire had spread rapidly throughout Central Asia and Persia: the Persian city of Isfahan had fallen to them by 1237. With the election of Khan Mongke in 1251, Mongol sights were set upon the Abbasid capital, Baghdad. Mongke's brother, Hulegu, was made the head of the Mongol Army assigned the task of subduing Baghdad. This was achieved at the Battle of Baghdad (1258), which saw the Abbasids overrun by the superior Mongol army. The last Abbasid caliph, al-Musta'sim, was captured and killed; and Baghdad was ransacked and subsequently destroyed. The cities of Damascus and Aleppo fell shortly afterwards, in 1260. Any prospective conquest of Egypt was temporarily delayed due to the death of Mongke at around the same time.

With Mongol conquest in the east, the Ayyubid dynasty ruling over Egypt had been replaced by the slave-soldier Mamluks in 1250. This had been done through the marriage between Shajar al-Durr, the widow of Ayyubid caliph al-Salih Ayyub, with the Mamluk general Aybak. Military prestige was at the center of Mamluk society, and it played a key role in the confrontations with the Mongol forces. After the assassination of Aybak, and the succession of Qutuz in 1259, the Mamluks challenged and decisively routed the Mongols at the Battle of Ain Jalut in late 1260. This signaled an adverse shift in fortunes for the Mongols, who were again defeated by the Mamluks at the Battle of Homs a few months later, and then driven out of Syria altogether. With this, the Mamluks were also able to conquer the last of the crusader territories.

Three Muslim empires

In the 15th and 16th centuries three major Muslim empires were created: the aforementioned Ottoman Empire in much of the Middle East, the Balkans and Northern Africa; the Safavid Empire in Greater Iran; and the Mughul Empire in South Asia. These new imperial powers were made possible by the discovery and exploitation of gunpowder, and more efficient administration. By the end of the 19th century, all three had declined significantly, and by the early 20th century, with the Ottomans' defeat in World War I, the last Muslim empire collapsed.

Mughal Empire

Main article: Mughal Empire

The Mughal Empire was a product of various Central Asian invasions into the Indian subcontinent. It was founded by the Timurid prince Babur in 1526 with the destruction of the Delhi sultanate, with its capital in Agra. Babur's death some years later, and the indecisive rule of his son, Humayun, brought a degree of instability to Mughal rule. The resistance of the Afghani Sher Shah, through which a string of defeats had been dealt to Humayun, significantly

weakened the Mughals. Just a year before his death, however, Humayun managed to recover much of the lost territories, leaving a substantial legacy for his son, the 13 year old Akbar (later known as Akbar the Great), in 1556. Under Akbar, consolidation of the Mughal Empire occurred through both expansion and administrative reforms. After Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan came to power. Subsequently, Aurangzeb ruled vast areas include Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. He ruled India by changing the existing status quo and lead the country well provided justice to the people.

The empire ruled most of present-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan for several centuries, before it declined in the early 18th century, which led to India being divided into smaller kingdoms and princely states. The Mughal dynasty was eventually dissolved by the British Empire after the Indian rebellion of 1857. It left a lasting legacy on Indian culture and architecture. Famous buildings built by the Mughals, include: the Taj Mahal, the Red Fort, the Badshahi Mosque, the Lahore Fort, the Shalimar Gardens and the Agra Fort. During the empire's reign, Muslim communities flourished all over India, particularly in Gujarat, Bengal and Hyderabad. Various Sufi orders from Afghanistan and Iran were very active throughout the region. Consequently, more than a quarter of the population converted to Islam.

Safavid Empire

Main article: Safavids

The Safavids were an Iranian dynasty from Iranian Azerbaijan that ruled from 1501 to 1736, and which established Shi'a Islam as Iran's official religion and united its provinces under a single Iranian sovereignty, thereby reigniting the Persian identity.

Although claiming to be the descendants of Ali ibn Abu Talib, the Safavids were originally Sunni (the name "Safavid" comes from a Sufi order called Safavi). Their origins go back to Firuz Shah Zarrinkolah, an Iranian local dignitary from Iran's north. During their rule, the Safavids recognized Shiism as the State religion, thus giving Iran a separate identity from its Sunni neighbors.

In 1524, Tahmasp acceded to the throne, initiating a revival of the arts in the region. Carpet making became a major industry, gaining new importance in Iran's cities. But the finest of all artistic revivals was the commissioning of the Shahnama. The Shahnama was meant to glorify the reign of the Shah through artistic means. The two-volume copy contained 258 large paintings to illustrate the works of Firdawsi, a Persian poet. The Shah also prohibited the drinking of wine, forbade the use of hashish and ordered the removal of gambling casinos, taverns and brothels.

Tahmasp's grandson, Shah Abbas I, also managed to increase the glory of the empire. Abbas restored the shrine of Imam Reza at Mashhad, and restored the dynastic shrine at Ardabil. Both shrines received jewelry, fine manuscripts and Chinese porcelains. Abbas also moved the empire's capital to Isfahan, revived old ports, and established thriving trade with the Europeans. Amongst Abbas's most visible cultural achievements was the construction of Naqsh-e Jahan Square ("Design of the World"). The plaza, located near a Friday mosque, covered twenty acres, thus dwarfing Piazza San Marco and St. Peter's Square.

Ottoman Empire

Main article: Ottoman Empire

The Seljuk Turks fell apart rapidly in the second half of the 13th century, especially after the Mongol invasions in Anatolia. This resulted in the establishment of multiple Turkish principalities, known as beyliks. Osman I, the founder of the Ottoman dynasty, assumed leadership of one of these principalities (Söğüt) in 1281, succeeding his father Ertuğrul. Declaring an independent Ottoman emirate in 1299, Osman I led it to a series of consecutive victories over the Byzantine Empire. By 1331, the Ottomans had captured Nicaea, the former Byzantine capital, under the leadership of Osman's son and successor, Orhan I. Victory at the Battle of Kosovo against the Serbs in 1389 then facilitated their expansion into Europe. The Ottomans were firmly established in the Balkans and Anatolia by the time Bayezid I ascended to power in the same year, now at the helm of a swiftly growing empire.

Further growth was brought to a sudden halt, as Bayezid I had been captured by Mongol warlord Timur (also known as "Tamerlane") in the Battle of Ankara in 1402, upon which a turbulent period known as the Ottoman Interregnum ensued. This episode was characterized by the division of the Ottoman territory amongst Bayezid I's sons, who submitted to Timurid authority. When a number of the territories recently conquered by the Ottomans regained independent status, potential ruin for the Ottoman Empire became imminent. However, the empire quickly recovered, as the youngest son of Bayezid I, Mehmed I, waged offensive campaigns against his ruling brothers, thereby reuniting Asia Minor and declaring himself the new Ottoman sultan in 1413.

At around this time the naval fleet of the Ottomans developed considerably, such that they were able to challenge Venice, traditionally a naval power. Focus was also directed towards reconquering the Balkans. By the time of Mehmed I's grandson, Mehmed II (ruled 1444 — 1446; 1451 — 1481), the Ottomans felt strong enough to lay siege to Constantinople, the capital of Byzantium. A decisive factor in this siege was the use of firearms and large cannons introduced by the Ottomans (adapted from Europe and improved upon), against which the Byzantines were unable to compete. The Byzantine fortress finally succumbed to the Ottoman invasion in 1453, 54 days into the siege. Mehmed II, entering the city victorious, renamed it Istanbul. With its capital conceded to the Ottomans, the rest of the Byzantine Empire quickly disintegrated. The future successes of the Ottomans and later empires would depend heavily upon the exploitation of gunpowder.

In the early 16th century, the Shi'ite Safavid dynasty assumed control in Persia under the leadership of Shah Ismail I, upon the defeat of the ruling Turcoman federation Aq Qoyunlu (also called the "White Sheep Turkomans") in 1501. The Ottoman sultan Selim I quickly sought to repel Safavid expansion, challenging and defeating them at the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514. Selim I also deposed the ruling Mamluks in Egypt, absorbing their territories into the Ottoman Empire in 1517. Suleiman I (also known as Suleiman the Magnificent), Selim I's successor, took advantage of the diversion of Safavid focus to the Uzbeks on the eastern frontier and recaptured Baghdad, which had previously fallen under Safavid control. Despite this, Safavid power remained substantial, with their empire rivaling the Ottomans'. Suleiman I also advanced deep into Hungary following the Battle of Mohács in 1526 — reaching as far as the gates of Vienna thereafter, and signed a Franco-Ottoman alliance with Francis I of France against Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire 10 years later. Suleiman I's rule (1520 — 1566) signified the height of the Ottoman Empire, after which it fell into a relative decline with the rapid industrialization of the European empires.

Wahhabism

Main article: Wahhabism

During the 18th century, Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab (1703 – 1792) led a religious movement (Wahhabism) in Najd (central Arabia) that sought to purify Islam. Wahhab wanted to return Islam to what he thought were its original principles as taught by the as-salaf as-saliheen (the earliest converts to Islam) and rejected what he regarded as corruptions introduced by bid'ah (religious innovation) and Shirk (polytheism). He allied himself with the House

of Saud, which eventually triumphed over the Rashidis to control Central Arabia, and led several revolts against the Ottoman Empire. Initial success (the conquest of Mecca and Medina) was followed by ignominious defeat, then a resurgence which culminated in the creation of Saudi Arabia.

The 20th century

The modern age brought radical technological and organizational changes to Europe and Islamic countries found themselves less modern when compared to many western nations. Europe's state-based government and rampant colonization allowed the West to dominate the globe economically and forced Islamic countries to question change.

Demise of the Ottoman Empire

Main article: Partitioning of the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman Caliphate and Turkish War of Independence

By the end of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire had declined due to internal conflict and the failure to keep pace with European technological and economic development. Their decision to back Germany in World War I meant they shared the Central Powers' defeat in that war, which led directly to the overthrow of the Ottomans by Turkish nationalists led by Kemal Atatürk. Following World War I, its remnants were parceled out as European protectorates or spheres of influence. Ottoman successor states include today's Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Egypt, Greece, Iraq, Lebanon, Montenegro, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Syria, Jordan, Turkey, other Balkan states, North Africa and the north shore of the Black sea.

Many Muslim countries sought to adopt European political organization and nationalism began to emerge in the Muslim world. Countries like Egypt, Syria, and Turkey organized their governments with definable policies and sought to develop national pride amongst their citizens. Other places, like Iraq, were not as successful due to a lack of unity and an inability to resolve age-old prejudices between Muslim sects and against non-Muslims.

Some Muslim countries, such as Turkey and Egypt, sought to separate Islam from the secular government. In other cases, such as Saudi Arabia, the new government brought out new religious expression in the re-emergence of the puritanical form of Sunni Islam known to its detractors as Wahhabism which found its way into the Saudi royal family.

Partition of India

Main article: Partition of India

The partition of India refers to the creation in August 1947 of the two sovereign states of India and Pakistan. The two nations were formed out of the former British Raj, including treaty states, when Britain granted independence to the area (see Undivided India). In particular, the term refers to the partition of Bengal and Punjab, the two main provinces of what would be Pakistan.

In 1947, after the partition of India, Pakistan became the largest Islamic Country in the world (by population) and the tenth largest post-WWII state in the modern world. In 1971, after a bloody war of independence the Bengal part of Pakistan became an independent state called Bangladesh.

Today, Pakistan is the second largest Islamic country in the world following Indonesia. Pakistan is presently the only nuclear power of the Muslim world.

Arab-Israeli conflict

Main article: Arab-Israeli conflict

The Arab-Israeli conflict spans about a century of political tensions and open hostilities. It involves the establishment of the modern State of Israel as a Jewish nation state, the consequent displacement of the Palestinian people, as well as the adverse relationship between the Arab nations and the state of Israel (see related Israeli-Palestinian conflict). Despite initially involving the Arab states, animosity has developed between other Muslim nations and Israel. Many countries, individuals and non-governmental organizations elsewhere in the world feel involved in this conflict for reasons such as cultural and religious ties with Islam, Arab culture, Christianity, Judaism, Jewish culture or for ideological, human rights, or strategic reasons. While some consider the Arab-Israeli conflict a part of (or a precursor to) a wider clash of civilizations between the Western World and the Arab or Muslim world, others oppose this view. Animosity emanating from this conflict has caused numerous attacks on supporters (or perceived supporters) of each side by supporters of the other side in many countries around the world.

Oil wealth

Between 1953 and 1964, King Saud re-organized the government of the monarchy his father, Ibn Saud, had created. Saudi Arabia's new ministries included Communication (1953) Agriculture and Water (1953), Petroleum (1960), Pilgrimage and Islamic Endowments (1960), Labour and Social Affairs (1962) and Information (1963). He also put Talal, one of his many younger brothers (by 29 years his younger) in charge of the Ministry of Transport.

In 1958-59, Talal proposed the formation of a National Council. As he proposed it, it would have been a consultative body, not a legislature. Still, he thought of it as a first step toward broader popular participation in the government. Talal presented this proposal to the king when the Crown Prince was out of the country. Saud simply forwarded the proposal to the ulama asking them whether a National Council was a legitimate institution in Islam. The idea seems to have died in committee, so to speak. It would be revived more than three decades later. A Consultative Council came into existence in 1992.

Meantime, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries came into existence in 1960. For the first decade or more of its existence, it was ineffectual in terms of increasing revenue for member nations. But it would have its day. Tension between Faisal and Saud continued to mount until a final showdown in 1964. Saud threatened to mobilize the Royal Guard against Faisal and Faisal threatened to mobilize the National Guard against Saud. It was Saud who blinked, abdicating and leaving for Cairo, then Greece, where he would die in 1969. Faisal then became King.

The 1967 war had other effects. It effectively closed the Suez Canal, it may have contributed to the revolution in Libya that put Muammar al-Gaddafi in power, and it led in May 1970 to the closure of the "tap line" from Saudi Arabia through Syria to Lebanon. These developments had the effect of increasing the importance of petroleum in Libya, which is a conveniently short (and canal-free) shipping distance from Europe.

In 1970, it was Occidental Petroleum which constituted the first crack in the wall of oil company solidarity in dealing with the oil producing nations; specifically, in this case, with the demands for price increases from the new Qaddafi government.

In October 1973, another war between Israel and its Muslim neighbors, known as the Yom Kippur War, got underway just as Oil Company executives were heading to Vienna, site of a planned meeting with OPEC leaders. OPEC had been emboldened by the success of Libya's demands anyway, and the war strengthened the unity of their new demands.

The Arab defeats in the Six Day and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars triggered the 1973 oil crisis. In response to the emergency re-supply effort by the West that enabled Israel to defeat Egyptian and Syrian forces, the Arab world imposed the 1973 oil embargo against the United States and Western Europe. Faisal agreed that Saudi Arabia would use some of its oil wealth to finance the "front-line states," those that bordered Israel, in their struggle.

The centrality of petroleum, the Arab-Israeli Conflict and political and economic instability and uncertainty remain constant features of the politics of the region.

Two Iranian revolutions

The Iranian Constitutional Revolution took place between 1905 and 1911. The revolution marked the beginning of the end of Iran's feudalistic society and led to the establishment of a parliament in Persia and restriction of the power of Shah (king). The first constitution of Iran was approved. But after the final victory of revolutionaries over Shah, the modernist and conservative blocks began to fight with each other. Then World War I took place and all of the combatants invaded Iran and weakened the government and threatened the independence of Iran. The system of constitutional monarchy created by the decree of Mozzafar al-Din Shah that was established in Persia as a result of the Revolution was weakened in 1925 with the dissolution of the Qajar dynasty and the accession of Reza Shah Pahlavi to the throne.

In 1979 the Iranian Revolution (also called "The Islamic Revolution") transformed Iran from a constitutional monarchy, under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, to a populist theocratic Islamic republic under the rule of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a Shi'a Muslim cleric and marja. Following the Revolution, an Iranian referendum established the Islamic republic as a new government, and a new constitution was approved, electing Ruhollah Khomeini Supreme Leader of Iran. During the following two years, liberals, leftists, and Islamic groups fought with each other, and ultimately Islamics captured power. At the same time, the U.S., USSR, and most of the Arab governments of the Middle East feared that their dominance in the region was challenged by the new Islamic ideology, so they encouraged and supported Saddam Hussein to invade Iran, which resulted in the Iran-Iraq war.

The 21st century

Islam in Turkey

Main articles: Islam in Turkey and Secularism in Turkey

Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, there has been a strong tradition of secularism in Turkey established and institutionalized by Atatürk's Reforms. Although the First Grand National Assembly of Turkey had rallied support from the population for the Independence War against the occupying forces on behalf of Islamic principles, Islam was gradually omitted from the public sphere after the Independence War. The principle of

secularism was thus inserted in the Turkish Constitution as late as 1937. This legal action was assisted by stringent state policies against domestic Islamist groups and establishments to neutralize the strong appeal of Islam in Turkish society. Even though an overwhelming majority of the population, at least nominally, adheres to Islam in Turkey; the state, which was established with the Kemalist ideology has no official religion nor promotes any and it actively monitors the area between the religions using the Presidency of Religious Affairs. The Republic Protests were a series of peaceful mass rallies by Turkish secular citizens that took place in Turkey in 2007. The target of the first protest was the possible presidential candidacy of the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, afraid that if elected President of Turkey Erdoğan would alter the Turkish secularist state

European Islam

Main article: European Islam, Islam in Europe, Muslims in Western Europe.

Certain academics, such as Jorgen Nielsen (Towards a European Islam, London: Macmillan Press, 1999), suggest that there is currently emerging a new brand of Islam in Europe, which is often termed European Islam. While this new kind of Islam is not exactly defined, it could be described as combining on the one hand the religion's basic duties and on the other European culture, values and traditions (such as secularism, democracy, gender equality as perceived by the west, the European system of law, etc.)

Arabian Peninsula

The Arabian Peninsula, Arabia, or Arabistan is a peninsula in Southwest Asia at the junction of Africa and Asia. The area is an important part of the Middle East and plays a critically important geopolitical role because of its vast reserves of oil and natural gas.

Geography

The modern coasts of the peninsula are, on the west the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba, on the southeast the Arabian Sea (part of the Indian Ocean), and on the northeast, the Gulf of Oman, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Persian Gulf. Its northern limit is defined by the Iranian and Iraqi mountain range of the Zagros collision zone, a mountainous uplift where a continental collision between the Arabian Plate and Asia is occurring. It merges with the Syrian Desert with no clear line of demarcation.

The geographers, historians, and inhabitants of the ancient Persian, Greek, Roman, and Arab empires viewed the lands of Ancient Arabia located on the Arabian Plate, together with the Sinai sub plate, as part of the Arabian Peninsula and subcontinent. See for example the Tabula Rogeriana. That anachronistic view continued to be reflected in the writings of many 18th and 19th century explorers and authors. The Arabian plate extends from the Red Sea to the Zagros Mountains and from the Gulf of Aden along the Mediterranean Sea coast to the northwestern limit defined by the Taurus Mountains of southern Turkey. During this period, portions of Iran west of the Zagros Mountains, the Levant, and Sinai were all considered part of the larger Arabian Peninsula. For example, the region around Eilat Israel, Aqaba Jordan, and Taba, Egypt was once part of Arabia Petraea.

Geographically, the Arabian Peninsula includes the western regions of Iraq and parts of Syria. Politically, however, the peninsula is separated from the rest of Asia by the Euphrates River.

The following countries either are now, or at one time have been, considered part of the peninsula:

- Bahrain, an island nation off the east coast of the peninsula.
- Iraq
- Israel
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Oman
- Palestinian Territories
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Syria
- Jordan
- United Arab Emirates
- Yemen, the sole republic on the peninsula.

With the exception of some regions in northern Syria and northern Iraq, the countries mentioned above are geographically and historically part of the peninsula. However, only six countries of the above list are politically considered part of the peninsula. They form the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), mainly known as the Arab Gulf States.

As of 2008, the estimated population of the Arabian Peninsula is 77,983,936.

ANCIENT HISTORY

In his book, 'The Real Eve', Oppenheimer claims based on mitochondrial evidence in conjunction with the contemporary environment (i.e. glaciations, sea levels) corresponding to these molecular clock timelines that the very first humans to leave Africa crossed the virtually dry mouth of the Red Sea onto the Arabian peninsula. They travelled along the coastline of the peninsula before crossing into Southern Asia.

Until comparatively recent times knowledge of the Arabian Peninsula was limited to that provided by ancient Greek and Roman writers and by early Arab geographers; much of this material was unreliable. In the 20th century, however, archaeological exploration has added considerably to the knowledge of the area.

The earliest known events in Arabian history are migrations from the peninsula into neighboring areas [4]. Around 3500 BC, Semitic-speaking peoples of Arabian origin migrated into the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Mesopotamia, supplanted the Sumerians, as the Akkadians (see Babylonia and Assyria). Some archeologists argue that another group of Semites left Arabia around 2500 BC during the Early Bronze Age Amorites and settled along the Levant mixing in with the local populations there. These Amorites eventually became the Arameans and Canaanites of later times Bernard Lewis mentions in his book The Arabs in History:

"According to this, Arabia was originally a land of great fertility and the first home of the Semitic peoples. Through the millennia it has been undergoing a process of steady desiccation, a drying up of wealth and waterways and a spread of the desert at the expense of the cultivable land. The declining productivity of the peninsula, together with the increase in the number of the inhabitants, led to a series of crises of overpopulation and consequently to a recurring cycle of invasions of the neighboring countries by the Semitic peoples of the peninsula. It was these crises that carried the Assyrians, Aramaeans, Canaanites (including the Phoenicians), and finally the Arabs themselves into the Fertile Crescent."

The better-watered, higher portions of the extreme south-west portion of the Arabian Peninsula supported three early kingdoms. The first, the Minaean, was centered in the interior of what is now Yemen, but probably embraced most of southern Arabia. Although dating is difficult, it is generally believed that the Minaean Kingdom existed from 1200 to 650 BC the second kingdom, the Sabaean (see Sheba), was founded around 930 BC and lasted until around 115 BC; it probably supplanted the Minaean Kingdom and occupied substantially the same territory. The Sabaean capital and chief city, Ma'rib, probably flourished as did no other city of ancient Arabia, partly because of its controlling position on the caravan routes linking the seaports of the Mediterranean with the frankincense-growing region of the Hadhramaut and partly because a large nearby dam provided water for irrigation. The Sabaean Kingdom was widely referred to as Saba, and it has been suggested that the Queen of Sheba mentioned in the Bible and the Quran, who visited King Solomon of Israel in Jerusalem in the 10th century BC, was Sabaean. Both the

Bible and the Quran mention that under Solomon's rule the Kingdom of Israel included territories on the peninsula east of the Jordan River. The Islamic view of Solomon holds that those territories reached as far south as Yemen. The Himyarites followed the Sabaeans as the leaders in southern Arabia; the Himyarite Kingdom lasted from around 115 BC to around AD 525. In 24 BC the Roman emperor Augustus sent the prefect of Egypt, Aelius Gallus, against the Himyarites, but his army of 10,000, which was unsuccessful, returned to Egypt. The Himyarites prospered in the frankincense, myrrh, and spice trade until the Romans began to open the sea routes through the Red Sea.

During the Roman period the peninsula was divided by three districts: Arabia Felix, Arabia Desert, and Arabia Petraea. The latter included the Sinai Peninsula, which is no longer considered part of the modern Arabian Peninsula.

In the 3rd century, The East African Christian Kingdom of Aksum began interfering in South Arabian affairs, controlling at times the western Tihama region among other areas. The Kingdom of Aksum at its height extended its territory in Arabia across most of Yemen and southern and western Saudi Arabia before being eventually driven out by the Persians. There is evidence of a Sabaean inscription about the alliance between the Himyarite king Shamir Yuhahmid and Aksum under King `DBH in the first quarter of the 3rd century AD. They have been living alongside the Sabaeans who lived across the Red Sea from them for many centuries:

Shamir of Dhu-Raydan and Himyar had called in the help of the clans of Habashat for war against the kings of Saba; but Ilmuqah granted . . . the submission of Shamir of Dhu-Raydan and the clans of Habashat.

The ruins of Siraf, a legendary ancient port, are located on the north shore of the Iranian coast on the Persian Gulf. The Persian Gulf was a boat route between the Arabian Peninsula and India made feasible for small boats by staying close to the coast with land always in sight. The historical importance of Siraf to ancient trade is only now being realized. Discovered there in past archaeological excavations are ivory objects from east Africa, pieces of stone from India, and lapis from Afghanistan. Sirif dates back to the Parthian era.

There is a lost city in The Empty Quarter known as Iram of the Pillars and Thamud. It is estimated that it lasted from around 3000 BC to the first century AD. The Arabian Peninsula is also one of the few places that comprise the Cradle of Humanity.

Medieval history

Arabia and Arabistan

The Romans, Greeks, and Persians simply added the suffix '-ia', '-ya', or 'stan' to form nouns for the land of the Arabs. So far as the Arabs and Ottomans were concerned, the entire region where the Arabs lived was 'the land of the Arabs' - bilad al-Arab (Arabia or Arabistan).

The Ottomans used the term Arabistan in a broad sense for the entire region starting from Cilicia, where the Euphrates River makes its descent into Syria, through Palestine, and the remainder of the Arabian Peninsula. The provincial Ottoman Army for Arabia (Arabistan Ordusu) was based at Damascus and was put in charge of Syria, Cilicia, Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula.

The Damascus Protocol provides an illustration of the regional relationships. Arabs living in one of the existing districts of the Arabian Peninsula, the Emirate of Hejaz, asked for a British guarantee of independence on behalf of 'the whole Arab nation'. Their proposal included all Arab lands south of a line roughly corresponding to the northern frontiers of present-day Syria and Iraq. They envisioned a new Arab state, or confederation of states, adjoining the southern Arabian Peninsula. It would have been comprised of Cilicia - Iskenderun and Mersin, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine.

Arabistan was also used in the context of the Greater Syria and Arab nationalism movements. For example, Butrus al-Bustani wrote that 'Syria which is widely known as barr ash-Sham and Arabistan is our fatherland [watan] in all its diverse plains, rugged terrains, coasts and mountains. And the people of Syria, whichever their creed, community, racial origin or groups are the sons of the fatherland.

In classic Arabic, the Cilician-Syrian frontage on the Gulf of Iskenderun was called 'Ash Sham', the 'Left'. Syria was called Bilad al-Sham, (also Bilad ash-Sham and Barr ash-Sham) the 'Land of the Left', meaning North. The hinterland of the Arabian Peninsula, where Abraham and Ishmael reportedly rebuilt the Ka'ba edifice, was called 'Yaman', the 'Right'. Bilad al-Yaman simply meant the 'Land of the South'. The area adjacent to the Persian frontier was known as Bilad al-Iraq, meaning the 'Land of the River Banks'. The 'Left' and 'Right' were the northern and southern halves of Ottoman 'Arabistan'.

In the modern era, the term bilad al-Yaman came to refer specifically to the southwestern parts of the peninsula. Arab geographers started to refer to the whole peninsula as 'jazirat al-Arab', or the peninsula of the Arabs.

The concept of the geographical unit that became Arabistan with these left and right regions predates the current era. For example, in the tradition of the Abrahamic religions Genesis 14:15 explained that Hobath was 'on the left hand of Damascus'. Genesis 15:2 indicates that Abraham and his kinsmen lived in the vicinity of Damascus. All of Jacob's sons were reportedly born somewhere in the 'Land of the Left', except one son who was born in the vicinity of Bethlehem (Genesis 35:18). Jacob named that son Benjamin (Ben Yemen), the 'son of the Right Hand'. The story of Abraham, his kinsmen, and the covenants are cited by the inhabitants as the basis for many of the ancient boundaries in the region.

Modern history

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia covers the greater part of the peninsula. The majority of the population of the peninsula lives in Saudi Arabia and in Yemen. The peninsula contains the world's largest reserves of oil. It is home to the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina, both of which are in Saudi Arabia. The UAE and Saudi Arabia are economically the wealthiest in the region. Qatar, a small peninsula in the Persian Gulf on the larger peninsula, is home of the famous Arabic-language television station Al Jazeera and its English-language subsidiary Al Jazeera English. Kuwait, on the border with Iraq, was claimed as an Iraqi province and invaded by Saddam Hussein during the first Persian Gulf War; it is an important country strategically, forming one of the main staging grounds for coalition forces mounting the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The peninsula is one of the possible original homelands of the Proto-Semitic language ancestors of all the Semitic-speaking peoples in the region — the Akkadians, Arabs, Assyrians, Babylonians, Hebrews, etc. Linguistically, the

peninsula was the cradle of the Arabic language (spread beyond the peninsula with the Islamic religion during the expansion of Islam beginning in the 7th century AD) and still maintains tiny populations of speakers of Semitic languages such as Mehri and Shehri, remnants of the language family that was spoken in earlier historical periods to the East of the kingdoms of Sheba and Hadramout which flourished in the southern part of the peninsula (modern-day Yemen and Oman).

Hazrat Muhammad saw

Hazrat Muhammad saw

Muhammad ibn ʻAbdullah (Arabic: محمّد; Transliteration: Muḥammad;[2] IPA: [mʊħɑmmæd̪]; pronunciation (help·info); also spelled Mohammed or Muhammed)[3][4][5] (ca. 570 Mecca – June 8, 632 Medina),[6] is the central human figure of the religion of Islam and is regarded by Muslims as the messenger and prophet of God (Arabic: الله Allāh), the last and the greatest law-bearer in a series of prophets of Islam. Muslims consider him the restorer of the uncorrupted original monotheistic faith (islām) of Adam, Abraham, Moses, Noah, Jesus (Isa) and other prophets of Islam.[7][8][9] He was also active as a diplomat, merchant, philosopher, orator, legislator, reformer, military general, and, for Muslims and followers of several other religions, an agent of divine action.[10]

Born in 570 CE in the Arabian city of Mecca,[11] he was orphaned at a young age and was brought up under the care of his uncle. He later worked mostly as a merchant, as well as a shepherd, and was first married by age 25. Discontented with life in Mecca, he retreated to a cave in the surrounding mountains for meditation and reflection. According to Islamic beliefs it was here, at age 40, in the month of Ramadan, where he received his first revelation from God. Three years after this event Muhammad started preaching these revelations publicly, proclaiming that "God is One", that complete "surrender" to Him (lit. islām) is the only way (dīn)[12] acceptable to God, and that he himself was a prophet and messenger of God, in the same vein as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and other prophets in Islam.[13][14][9]

Muhammad gained few followers early on, and was met with hostility from some tribes of Mecca; he was treated harshly and so were his followers. To escape persecution Muhammad and his followers migrated to Medina (then known as Yathrib) in the year 622. This event, the Hijra, marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. In Medina, Muhammad managed to unite the conflicting tribes, and after eight years of fighting with the Meccan tribes, his followers, who by then had grown to ten thousand, conquered Mecca. In 632 a few months after returning to Medina from his Farewell pilgrimage, Muhammad fell ill and died. By the time of his death most of the Arabian Peninsula had converted to Islam and he united the tribes of Arabia into a singular Muslim religious polity.[15][16]

The revelations (or Ayats, lit. "Signs of God"), which Muhammad reported receiving until his death, form the verses of the Qur'an, regarded by Muslims as the “word of God”, around which his religion is based. Besides the Qur'an, Muhammad’s life (sira) and traditions (sunnah) are also upheld by Muslims. They discuss Muhammad and other prophets of Islam with reverence, adding the phrase peace be upon him whenever their names are mentioned.[17] While conceptions of Muhammad in medieval Christendom and premodern times were largely negative, appraisals in modern times have been far less so.[14][18] Besides this, his life and deeds have been debated by followers and opponents over the centuries.[19]

Names and appellations in the Qur'an

The name Muhammad literally means "Praiseworthy" and occurs four times in the Qur'an.[20] The Qur'an addresses Muhammad in second person not by his name but by the appellations prophet (al-nabi), messenger (rasul), servant of God (?abd), announcer (bashir), warner (nadhir), reminder (mudhakkir), witness (shahid), bearer of good tidings (mubashshir), one who calls [unto God] (da'i) and the light-giving lamp (siraj munir). Sometimes Muhammad is addressed by designations deriving from his state at the time of the address: thus he is referred to as the enwrapped

(al-muzzammil) in Qur'an 73:1 and the shrouded (al-muddaththir) in Qur'an 74:1. [21] In the Qur'an, the believers are not to make a distinction among the messengers of Allah and are to believe in all of them (Surah 2:285). Allah has caused some messengers to excel above others 2:253 and in Surah 33:40 He singles out Muhammad as the "Seal of the Prophets".[22] The Qur'an also refers to Muhammad as "Ahmad" (Surah 61:6) (Arabic :أحمد), Arabic for "more praiseworthy".

Sources for Muhammad's life

Muhammad's life history is well documented within numerous records in historical texts, although like other premodern historical figures not every detail of his life is known. Because Muhammad is a highly influential historical figure, his life, deeds, and thoughts have been debated by followers and opponents over the centuries, which makes a biography of him difficult to write.[14]

The "most trustworthy source" for reconstruction of the life of the historical Muhammad is the Qur'an.[14] The Qur'an has some, though very few, casual allusions to Muhammad's life,[23] however it reveals the most essential aspects associated with Muhammad.[19] The Qur'an however responds "constantly and often candidly to Muhammad's changing historical circumstances and contains a wealth of hidden data."[14] The Qur'an in its actual form is generally considered by academic scholars to record the words spoken by Muhammad because the search for variants in Western academia has not yielded any differences of great significance.[24]

Next in importance are the historical works by writers of the third and fourth century of the Muslim era.[25] These include the traditional Muslim biographies of Muhammad and quotes attributed to him (the sira and hadith literature), which provide further information on Muhammad's life.[26] The earliest surviving written sira (biographies of Muhammad and quotes attributed to him) is Ibn Ishaq's Life of God's Messenger written some 120 to 130 years after Muhammad's death. Although the original work is lost, portions of it survive in the recensions of Ibn Hisham and Al-Tabari.[27][23] Another early source is the history of Muhammad's campaigns by al-Waqidi (death 207 of Muslim era), and the work of his secretary Ibn Sa'd al-Baghdadi (death 230 of Muslim era).[25] Many, but not all, scholars accept the accuracy of the earliest biographies, though their accuracy is unascertainable.[23] Recent studies have led scholars to distinguish between the traditions touching legal matters and the purely historical ones. In the former sphere, traditions could have been subject to sheer invention while in the latter sphere, aside from exceptional cases, the material may have been only subject to "tendential shaping".[28]

In addition, the hadith collections are accounts of the verbal and physical traditions of Muhammad that date from several generations after the death of Muhammad.[29] Hadith compilations are records of the traditions or sayings of the Muhammad. They might be defined as the biography of Muhammad perpetuated by the long memory of his community for their exemplification and obedience.[30] Western academics view the hadith collections with caution as accurate historical sources.[31] Some scholars such as Madelung do not reject the narrations which have been complied in later periods, but try to judge them in the context of history and on the basis of their compatibility with the events and figures.[32] Finally, there are oral traditions. Although usually discounted by positivist historians, oral tradition plays a major role in the Islamic understanding of Muhammad.[19]

There are also a few non-Muslim sources that, according to S. A. Nigosian, confirm the existence of Muhammad and are valuable for corroboration of the Muslim traditional statements.[23]

Background

The Arabian Peninsula was largely arid and volcanic, making agriculture difficult except near oases or springs. Thus the Arabian landscape was dotted with towns and cities, two prominent of which were Mecca and Medina.[33] Communal life was essential for survival in the desert conditions, as people needed support against the harsh environment and lifestyle. The tribal grouping was thus encouraged by the need to act as a unit. This unity was based on the bond of kinship by blood.[34] People of Arabia were either nomadic or sedentary, the former constantly traveling from one place to another seeking water and pasture for their flocks, while the latter settled and focused on trade and agriculture. The survival of nomads (or bedouins) was also partially dependent on raiding caravans or oases; thus they saw this as no crime.[35][36] Medina was a large flourishing agricultural settlement, while Mecca was an important financial center for many of the surrounding tribes.[33]

In pre-Islamic Arabia gods or goddesses were viewed as protectors of individual tribes and their spirits were associated with sacred trees, stones, springs and wells. There was an important shrine in Mecca (now called the Kaaba) that housed statues of 360 idols of tribal patron deities and was the site of an annual pilgrimage. Aside from these tribal gods, Arabs shared a common belief in a supreme deity Allah (literally "the god") who was however remote from their everyday concerns and thus not the object of cult or ritual. Three goddesses were associated with Allah as his daughters: al-Lāt, Manāt and al-‘Uzzá. Some monotheistic communities did also exist in Arabia, including Christians and Jews.[37]Hanifs – native pre-Islamic Arab monotheists – are also sometimes listed alongside Jews and Christians in pre-Islamic Arabia, although their historicity is disputed amongst scholars.[38][39] According to the Muslim tradition, Muhammad himself was a Hanif and one of descendant of Ishmael, son of Abraham.[40]

Life

Muhammad in Mecca

Muhammad was born and lived in Mecca for the first 52 years of his life (570–622) which was divided into two phases, that is before and after declaring the prophecy.

Childhood and early life

Muhammad was born in the month of Rabi' al-awwal in 570. He belonged to the Banu Hashim, one of the prominent families of Mecca, although it seems not to have been prosperous during Muhammad's early lifetime.[14][41] Tradition places the year of Muhammad's birth as corresponding with the Year of the Elephant, which is named after the failed destruction of Mecca that year by the Aksumite king Abraha who had in his army a number of elephants. Recent scholarship has suggested alternative dates for this event, such as 568 or 569.[42]

Muhammad's father, Abdullah, died almost six months before he was born.[43] According to the tradition, soon after Muhammad's birth he was sent to live with a Bedouin family in the desert, as the desert-life was considered healthier for infants. Muhammad stayed with his foster-mother, Halimah bint Abi Dhuayb, and her husband until he was two years old. Some western scholars of Islam have rejected the historicity of this tradition.[44] At the age of six Muhammad lost his mother Amina to illness and he became fully orphaned.[45] He was subsequently brought up for two years under the guardianship of his paternal grandfather Abd al-Muttalib, of the Banu Hashim

While still in his teens, Muhammad began accompanying his uncle on trading journeys to Syria gaining some experience in commercial career; the only career open to Muhammad as an orphan.[46] According to the tradition, when Muhammad was either nine or twelve while accompanying the Meccans' caravan to Syria, he met a Christian Monk or hermit named Bahira who is said to have foreseen the career of Muhammed as a prophet of God.[47]

Little is known of Muhammad during his later youth, and from the fragmentary information that is available, it is hard to separate history from legend.[48] It is known that he became a merchant and "was involved in trade between the Indian ocean and the Mediterranean Sea."[49] Due to his upright character he acquired the nickname "Al-Amin" (Arabic: الامين), meaning "faithful, trustworthy" and was sought out as an impartial arbitrator.[14][11][50] His reputation attracted a proposal from Khadijah, a forty-year-old widow in 595. Muhammad consented to the marriage, which by all accounts was a happy one.[

clan of the Quraysh tribe. When he was eight years of age his grandfather also died. Muhammad now came under the care of his uncle Abu Talib, the new leader of Banu Hashim.[42] According to Watt, because of the general disregard of the guardians in taking care of the weak members of the tribes in Mecca in sixth century, "Muhammad's guardians saw that he did not starve to death, but it was hard for them to do more for him, especially as the fortunes of the clan of Hashim seem to have been declining at that time."[46]

Beginnings of the Qur'an

At some point Muhammad adopted the practice of meditating alone for several weeks every year in a cave on Mount Hira near Mecca.[51][52] Islamic tradition holds that in one of his visits to the Mount Hira, the angel Gabriel began communicating with him here in the year 610 and commanded Muhammad to recite the following verses:[53]

Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created- Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful,- He Who taught (the use of) the pen,- Taught man that which he knew not.(Qur'an 96:1-5)

According to some traditions, upon receiving his first revelations Muhammad was deeply distressed and contemplated throwing himself off the top of a mountain but the spirit moved closer and told him that he has been chosen as a messenger of God. Muhammad returned home and was consoled and reassured by his wife, Khadijah and her Christian cousin, Waraqah ibn Nawfal. Shia tradition maintains that Muhammad was neither surprised nor frightened at the appearance of Gabriel but rather welcomed him as if he had been expecting him.[54] The initial revelation was followed by a pause of three years during which Muhammad gave himself up further to prayers and spiritual practices. When the revelations resumed he was reassured and commanded to begin preaching: Your lord has not forsaken you nor does he hate [you] (Qur'an 93:1-11).[55][56]

According to Welch these revelations were accompanied by mysterious seizures, and the reports are unlikely to have been forged by later Muslims.[14] Muhammad was confident that he could distinguish his own thoughts from these messages.[57] According to the Qur'an, one of the main roles of Muhammad is to warn the unbelievers of their eschatological punishment (Qur'an 38:70, Qur'an 6:19). Sometimes the Qur'an does not explicitly refer to the Judgment day but provides examples from the history of some extinct communities and warns Muhammad's contemporaries of similar calamities (Qur'an 41:13–16).[58] Muhammad is not only a warner to those who reject God's revelation, but also a bearer of good news for those who abandon evil, listen to the divine word and serve God.[59] Muhammad's mission also involves preaching monotheism: The Qur'an demands Muhammad to proclaim and praise the name of his Lord and instructs him not to worship idols apart from God or associate other deities with God.[58]

The key themes of the early Qur'anic verses included the responsibility of man towards his creator; the resurrection of dead, God's final judgment followed by vivid descriptions of the tortures in hell and pleasures in Paradise; and the

signs of God in all aspects of life. Religious duties required of the believers at this time were few: belief in God, asking for forgiveness of sins, offering frequent prayers, assisting others particularly those in need, rejecting cheating and the love of wealth (considered to be significant in the commercial life of Mecca), being chaste and not to kill new-born girls.[14]

Opposition

According to the Muslim tradition, Muhammad's wife Khadija was the first to believe he was a prophet.[60] She was soon followed by Muhammad's ten-year-old cousin Ali ibn Abi Talib, close friend Abu Bakr, and adopted son Zaid.[60] Around 613, Muhammad began his public preaching (Qur'an 26:214).[61] Most Meccans ignored him and a few mocked him, while some others became his followers. There were three main groups of early converts to Islam: younger brothers and sons of great merchants; people who had fallen out of the first rank in their tribe or failed to attain it; and the weak, mostly unprotected foreigners.[62]

According to Ibn Sad, the opposition in Mecca started when Muhammad delivered verses that condemned idol worship and the Meccan forefathers who engaged in polytheism.[63] The Qur'anic exegesis however maintains that it began as soon as Muhammad began preaching in public.[64] As the number of Muhammad's followers swelled, he became a threat to the local tribes and the rulers of the city, whose wealth rested upon the Kaaba, the focal point of Meccan religious life, which Muhammad threatened to overthrow. Muhammad's denunciation of the Meccan traditional religion was especially offensive to his own tribe, the Quraysh, as they were the guardians of the Ka'aba.[62] The powerful merchants tried to convince Muhammad to abandon his preaching by offering him admission into the inner circle of merchants, and establishing his position therein by an advantageous marriage. However, he refused.[62]

Tradition records at great length the persecution and ill-treatment of Muhammad and his followers.[14] Sumayyah bint Khabbab, a slave of Abu Jahl and a prominent Meccan leader, is famous as the first martyr of Islam, having been killed with a spear by her master when she refused to give up her faith. Bilal, another Muslim slave, was tortured by Umayya ibn khalaf who placed a heavy rock on his chest to force his conversion.[65][66] Apart from insults, Muhammad was protected from physical harm due to belonging to the clan of Banu Hashim.[67][68]

Location of Abyssinia (Aksumite Empire).

In 615, some of Muhammad's followers emigrated to the Ethiopian Aksumite Empire and founded a small colony there under the protection of the Christian Ethiopian emperor Aṣḥama ibn Abjar.[14] Some early traditions describe Muhammad's involvement at this time in an episode that has come to be known as the "Story of the Cranes" -- dubbed by some scholars as the "Satanic Verses." The account holds that Muhammad pronounced a verse acknowledging the existence of three Meccan goddesses considered to be the daughters of Allah, praising them, and appealing for their intercession. According to these accounts, Muhammad later retracted the verses at the behest of Gabriel.[69] Islamic scholars vigorously objected to the historicity of the incident as early as the tenth century CE.[70] In any event, the relations between the Muslims and their pagan fellow-tribesmen rapidly deteriorated.

In 617 the leaders of Makhzum and Banu Abd-Shams, two important clans of Quraysh, declared a public boycott against Banu Hashim, their commercial rival, to pressurize it into withdrawing its protection of Muhammad. The boycott lasted for three years but eventually collapsed as it failed to achieve its objective.[

Last years in Mecca

In 619, both Muhammad's wife Khadijah and his uncle Abu Talib died, and was thus known as the "year of sorrows." With the death of Abu Talib, the leadership of the clan of Banu Hashim was passed to Abu Lahab who was an inveterate enemy of Muhammad. Soon afterwards Abu Lahab withdrew the clan's protection from Muhammad. This placed Muhammad in danger of death since the withdrawal of clan protection implied that the blood revenge for his killing would not be exacted. Muhammad then visited to Ta'if, another important city in Arabia, and tried to find a protector for himself there, but his effort failed and further brought him into physical danger.[72][14] Muhammad was forced to return to Mecca. A Meccan man named Mut'im b. Adi (and the protection of the tribe of Banu Nawfal) made it possible for him safely to re-enter his native city.[14][72]

Many people were visiting Mecca on business or as pilgrims to the Kaaba. Muhammad took this opportunity to look for a new home for himself and his followers. After several unsuccessful negotiations, he found hope with some men from Yathrib (later called Medina).[14] The Arab population of Yathrib were somewhat familiar with monotheism because a Jewish community existed in that city.[14] Converts to Islam came from nearly all Arab tribes present in Medina, such that by June of the subsequent year there were seventy-five Muslims coming to Mecca for pilgrimage and to meet Muhammad. Meeting him secretly by night, the group made what was known as the "Second Pledge of al-`Aqaba", or the "Pledge of War"[73] Following the pledges at Aqabah, Muhammad encouraged his followers to emigrate to Yathrib. As before, with the migration to Abyssinia, the Quraysh attempted to stop the emigration. However, almost all Muslims managed to leave.

Isra and Mi'raj

Islamic tradition relates that some time in 620, Muhammad experienced the Isra and Mi'raj, a miraculous journey said to have been accomplished in one night along with the angel Gabriel. In the first part of the journey, the Isra, he is said to have travelled from Mecca to "the farthest mosque" (in Arabic: masjid al-aqsa), which Muslims usually identify with the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. In the second part, the Miraj, Muhammad is said to have toured heaven and hell, and spoken with earlier prophets, such as Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.[75]Ibn Ishaq, author of first biography of Muhammad, presents this event as a spiritual experience while later historians like Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir present it as a physical journey.[75] Some western scholars of Islam hold that the oldest Muslim tradition identified the journey as one traveled through the heavens from the sacred enclosure at Mecca to the celestial Kaʿba (heavenly prototype of the Kaʿba); but later tradition identified Muhammad's journey from Mecca to the abode of sanctuary (bayt al-maqdis) in Jerusalem.[76]

Muhammad in Medina

Hijra

A delegation from Medina, consisting of the representatives of the twelve important clans of Medina, invited Muhammad as a neutral outsider to Medina to serve as the chief arbitrator for the entire community.[77][78] There was fighting in Yathrib mainly involving its Arab and Jewish inhabitants for around a hundred years before 620.[77] The recurring slaughters and disagreements over the resulting claims, especially after the battle of Bu'ath in which all the clans were involved, made it obvious to them that the tribal conceptions of blood-feud and an eye for an eye were no longer workable unless there was one man with authority to adjudicate in disputed cases.[77] The delegation from Medina pledged themselves and their fellow-citizens to accept Muhammad into their community and physically protect him as one of themselves.[14]

Muhammad instructed his followers to emigrate to Medina until virtually all of his followers had left Mecca. Being alarmed at the departure of Muslims, according to the tradition, the Meccans plotted to assassinate Muhammad. With the help of Ali, however, Muhammad fooled the Meccans who were watching him, and secretly slipped away from the town with Abu Bakr.[79] By 622, Muhammad had emigrated to Medina, then known as Yathrib, a large agricultural oasis. Those who had migrated from Mecca along with Muhammad became known as muhajirun (emigrants).[14]

Establishment of a new polity

Among the first things Muhammad did in order to settle down the longstanding grievances among the tribes of Medina was drafting a document known as the Constitution of Medina, "establishing a kind of alliance or federation" among the eight Medinan tribes and Muslim emigrants from Mecca, which specified the rights and duties of all citizens and the relationship of the different communities in Medina (including that of the Muslim community to other communities specifically the Jews and other "Peoples of the Book").[77][78] The community defined in the Constitution of Medina, Ummah, had a religious outlook but was also shaped by the practical considerations and substantially preserved the legal forms of the old Arab tribes.[14] It effectively established the first Islamic state.

The first group of pagan converts to Islam in Medina were the clans who had not produced great leaders for themselves but had suffered from warlike leaders from other clans. This was followed by the general acceptance of Islam by the pagan population of Medina, apart from some exception. This was according to Ibn Ishaq influenced by the conversion of Sa'd ibn Mu'adh, one of the prominent leaders in Medina to Islam.[80] Those Medinans who converted to Islam and helped the Muslim emigrants find shelter became known as the ansar (helpers).[14] Then Muhammad instituted brotherhood between the emigrants and the helpers and he chose Ali as his own brother.[81]

With the early general conversion of Medinian pagans to Islam, the pagan opposition in Medina was never of prime importance in the affairs of Medina. Those remaining pagans in Medina were very bitter about the advance of Islam. In particular Asma bint Marwan and Abu 'Afak had composed verses taunting and insulting some of the Muslims. These two were assassinated and Muhammad did not disapprove of it. No one dared to take vengeance on them, and some of the members of the clan of Asma bint Marwan who had previously converted to Islam in secret, now professed Islam openly. This marked an end to the overt opposition to Muhammad among the pagans in Medina.[82]

Beginnings of armed conflict

Following the emigration, the Meccans seized the properties of the Muslim emigrants in Mecca.[83] Economically uprooted and with no available profession, the Muslim migrants turned to raiding Meccan caravans for their livelihood, thus initiating armed conflict between the Muslims and Mecca.[84][85] Muhammad delivered Qur'anic verses permitting the Muslims to fight the Meccans (see Qur'an 22:39–40).[86] These attacks pressured Mecca by interfering with trade, and allowed the Muslims to acquire wealth, power and prestige while working toward their ultimate goal of inducing Mecca's submission to the new faith.[87][88] In March of 624, Muhammad led some three hundred warriors in a raid on a Meccan merchant caravan. The Muslims set an ambush for the Meccans at Badr.[89] Aware of the plan, the Meccan caravan eluded Muslims. Meanwhile, a force from Mecca was sent to protect the caravan, continuing forward to confront the Muslims upon hearing that the caravan was safe. The battle of Badr began in March of 624.[90] Though outnumbered more than three to one, the Muslims won the battle, killing at least forty-five Meccans with only fourteen Muslims dead. They had also succeeded in killing many of the Meccan leaders, including Abu Jahl.[91] Seventy prisoners had been acquired, many of whom were soon ransomed in return for wealth or freed.[92][93][94] Muhammad and his followers saw in the victory a confirmation of their faith.[14] The Qur'anic verses of this period, unlike the Meccan ones, dealt with practical problems of government and issues like the distribution of spoils.[95]

Muhammad expelled from Medina the Banu Qaynuqa, one of the three main Jewish tribes.[14] Following the battle of Badr, Muhammad also made mutual-aid alliances with a number of Bedouin tribes to protect his community from attacks from the northern part of Hijaz.[14]

Conflict with Mecca

The attack at Badr committed Muhammad to total war with Meccans, who were now anxious to avenge their defeat. To maintain their economic prosperity, the Meccans needed to restore their prestige, which had been lost at Badr.[96] In the ensuing months, Muhammad led expeditions on tribes allied with Mecca and sent out a raid on a Meccan caravan.[97] Abu Sufyan subsequently gathered an army of three thousand men and set out for an attack on Medina.[98]

Map of the Battle of Uhud, showing the Muslim and Meccan lines respectively.

A scout alerted Muhammad of the Meccan army's presence and numbers a day later. The next morning, at the Muslim conference of war, there was dispute over how best to repel the Meccans. Muhammad and many of the senior figures suggested that it would be safer to fight within Medina and take advantage of its heavily fortified strongholds. Younger Muslims argued that the Meccans were destroying their crops, and that huddling in the strongholds would destroy Muslim prestige. Muhammad eventually conceded to the wishes of the latter, and readied the Muslim force for battle. Thus, Muhammad led his force outside to the mountain of Uhud (where the Meccans had camped) and fought the Battle of Uhud on March 23.[99][100] Although the Muslim army had the best of the early encounters, indiscipline on the part of strategically placed archers led to a Muslim defeat, with 75 Muslims killed including Hamza, Muhammad's uncle and one of the best known martyrs in the Muslim tradition. The Meccans did not pursue the Muslims further, but marched back to Mecca declaring victory. They were not entirely successful, however, as they had failed to achieve their aim of destroying the Muslims completely.[101][102] The Muslims buried the dead, and returned to Medina that evening. Questions accumulated as to the reasons for the loss, and Muhammad subsequently delivered Qur'anic verses [Qur'an 3:152] which indicated that their defeat was partly a punishment for disobedience and partly a test for steadfastness.[103]

Abu Sufyan now directed his efforts towards another attack on Medina. He attracted the support of nomadic tribes to the north and east of Medina, using propaganda about Muhammad's weakness, promises of booty, memories of the prestige of Quraysh and use of bribes.[104] Muhammad's policy was now to prevent alliances against him as much as he could. Whenever alliances of tribesmen against Medina were formed, he sent out an expedition to break them up.[104] When Muhammad heard of men massing with hostile intentions against Medina, he reacted with severity.[105] One example is the assassination of Ka'b ibn al-Ashraf, a chieftain of the Jewish tribe of Banu Nadir who had gone to Mecca and written poems that had helped rouse the Meccans' grief, anger and desire for revenge after the battle of Badr.[106] Around a year later, Muhammad expelled the Banu Nadir from Medina.[107] Muhammad's attempts to prevent formation of a confederation against him were unsuccessful, though he was able to increase his own forces and stop many potential tribes from joining his enemies.[108]

Siege of Medina

Abu Sufyan, the military leader of Quraysh, with the help of Banu Nadir, the exiled Jewish tribe from Medina, had mustered a force of size 10,000 men. Muhammad was able to prepare a force of about 3000 men. He had however adopted a new form of defense, unknown in Arabia at that time: Muslims had dug a trench wherever Medina lay open to cavalry attack. The idea is credited to a Persian convert to Islam, Salman the Persian. The siege of Medina

began on March 31 627 and lasted for two weeks.[109] Abu Sufyan's troops were unprepared for the fortifications they were confronted with, and after an ineffectual siege lasting several weeks, the coalition decided to go home.[110] The Qur'an discusses this battle in verses Qur'an 33:9-33:27.[64]

During the battle, the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayza, located at the south of Medina, had entered into negotiations with Meccan forces to revolt against Muhammad. Although they were swayed by suggestions that Muhammad was sure to be overwhelmed, they desired reassurance in case the confederacy was unable to destroy him. No agreement was reached after the prolonged negotiations, in part due to sabotage attempts by Muhammad's scouts.[111] After the retreat of the coalition, the Muslims accused the Banu Qurayza of treachery and besieged them in their forts for 25 days. The Banu Qurayza eventually surrendered and all the men, apart from a few who converted to Islam, were beheaded, while the women and children were enslaved.[112][113] In the siege of Medina, the Meccans had exerted their utmost strength towards the destruction of the Muslim community. Their failure resulted in a significant loss of prestige; their trade with Syria was gone.[114] Following the battle of the trench, Muhammad made two expeditions to the north which ended without any fighting.[14] While returning from one of these two expeditions (or some years earlier according to other early accounts), an accusation of adultery was made against Aisha, Muhammad's wife. Aisha was exonerated from the accusations when Muhammad announced that he had received a revelation confirming Aisha's innocence and directing that charges of adultery be supported by four eyewitnesses.[115]

Truce of Hudaybiyya

Although Muhammad had already delivered Qur'anic verses commanding the Hajj,[116] the Muslims had not performed it due to the enmity of the Quraysh. In the month of Shawwal 628, Muhammad ordered his followers to obtain sacrificial animals and to make preparations for a pilgrimage (umrah) to Mecca, saying that God had promised him the fulfillment of this goal in a vision where he was shaving his head after the completion of the Hajj.[117] Upon hearing of the approaching 1,400 Muslims, the Quraysh sent out a force of 200 cavalry to halt them. Muhammad evaded them by taking a more difficult route, thereby reaching al-Hudaybiyya, just outside of Mecca.[118] According to Watt, although Muhammad's decision to make the pilgrimage was based on his dream, he was at the same time demonstrating to the pagan Meccans that Islam does not threaten the prestige of their sanctuary, and that Islam was an Arabian religion.[118]

Negotiations commenced with emissaries going to and from Mecca. While these continued, rumors spread that one of the Muslim negotiators, Uthman bin al-Affan, had been killed by the Quraysh. Muhammad responded by calling upon the pilgrims to make a pledge not to flee (or to stick with Muhammad, whatever decision he made) if the situation descended into war with Mecca. This pledge became known as the "Pledge of Acceptance" (Arabic: بيعة الرضوان , bay'at al-ridhwān) or the "Pledge under the Tree." News of Uthman's safety, however, allowed for negotiations to continue, and a treaty scheduled to last ten years was eventually signed between the Muslims and Quraysh.[118][119] The main points of treaty included the cessation of hostilities; the deferral of Muhammad's pilgrimage to the following year; and an agreement to send back any Meccan who had gone to Medina without the permission of his or her protector.[118]

A rendering of the seal attributed to Muhammad used in the letters sent to other heads of state.

Many Muslims were not satisfied with the terms of the treaty. However, the Qur'anic sura "Al-Fath" (The Victory) (Qur'an 48:1-29) assured the Muslims that the expedition from which they were now returning must be considered a

victorious one.[120] It was only later that Muhammad's followers would realise the benefit behind this treaty. These benefits, according to Welch, included the inducing of the Meccans to recognise Muhammad as an equal; a cessation of military activity posing well for the future; and gaining the admiration of Meccans who were impressed by the incorporation of the pilgrimage rituals.[14]

After signing the truce, Muhammad made an expedition against the Jewish oasis of Khaybar, known as the Battle of Khaybar. This was possibly due to it housing the Banu Nadir, who were inciting hostilities against Muhammad, or to regain some prestige to deflect from what appeared to some Muslims as the inconclusive result of the truce of Hudaybiyya.[98][121] According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad also sent letters to many rulers of the world, asking them to convert to Islam (the exact date are given variously in the sources).[122][123][14] Hence he sent messengers (with letters) to Heraclius of the Byzantine Empire (the eastern Roman Empire), Khosrau of Persia, the chief of Yemen and to some others.[122][123] In the years following the truce of Hudaybiyya, Muhammad sent his forces against the Arabs on Transjordanian Byzantine soil in the Battle of Mu'tah, in which the Muslims were defeated.[124]

Final years

Conquest of Mecca

The truce of Hudaybiyya had been enforced for two years.[125][126] The tribe of Khuz'aah had a friendly relationship with Muhammad, while on the other hand their enemies, the Banu Bakr, had an alliance with the Meccans.[125][126] A clan of the Bakr made a night raid against the Khuz'aah, killing a few of them.[125][126] The Meccans helped their allies (i.e., the Banu Bakr) with weapons and, according to some sources, a few Meccans also took part in the fighting.[125] After this event, Muhammad sent a message to Mecca with three conditions, asking them to accept one of them. These were that either the Meccans paid blood money for those slain among the Khuza'ah tribe; or, that they should disavow themselves of the Banu Bakr; or, that they should declare the truce of Hudaybiyya null.[127]

Muhammad and his companions advancing on Mecca. The angels Gabriel, Michael, Israfil and Azrail, are also in the painting

The Meccans replied that they would accept only the last condition.[127] However, soon they realized their mistake and sent Abu Safyan to renew the Hudaybiyya treaty, but now his request was declined by Muhammad. Muhammad began to prepare for a campaign.[128] In 630, Muhammad marched on Mecca with an enormous force, said to number more than ten thousand men. With minimal casualties, Muhammad took control of Mecca.[129] He declared an amnesty for past offences, except for ten men and women who had mocked and ridiculed him in songs and verses. Some of these were later pardoned.[130] Most Meccans converted to Islam, and Muhammad subsequently destroyed all of the statues of Arabian gods in and around the Kaaba, without any exception.[131][132] The Qur'an discusses the conquest of Mecca in verses Qur'an 110:1-110:3.[64]

Conquest of Arabia

Soon after the conquest of Mecca, Muhammad was alarmed by a military threat from the confederate tribes of Hawazin who were collecting an army twice the size of Muhammad's. Hawzain were old enemies of Meccans. They were joined by the tribe of Thaqif inhabiting in the city of Ta’if who had adopted an anti-Meccan policy due to the decline of the prestige of Meccans.[133] Muhammad defeated the Hawazin and Thaqif tribes in the battle of Hunayn.[14]

In the same year, Muhammad made the expedition of Tabuk against northern Arabia because of their previous defeat at the Battle of Mu'tah as well as the reports of the hostile attitude adopted against Muslims. Although Muhammad did not make contact with hostile forces at Tabuk, but he received the submission of some of the local chiefs of the region.[14][134] A year after the battle of Tabuk, the tribe of Thaqif inhabiting in the city of Ta'if sent emissaries to Medina to surrender to Muhammad and adopt Islam. Many bedouins submitted to Muhammad in order to be safe against his attacks and to benefit from the booties of the wars.[14] The bedouins however were alien to the system of Islam and wanted to maintain their independence, their established code of virtue and their ancestral traditions. Muhammad, thus required of them a military and political agreement according to which they "acknowledge the suzerainty of Medina, to refrain from attack on the Muslims and their allies, and to pay the Zakat, the Muslim religious levy."[135]

Farewell pilgrimage and death

At the end of the tenth year after the migration to Medina, Muhammad carried through his first truly Islamic pilgrimage thereby teaching his followers the regulations of the various ceremonies of the annual Great Pilgrimage (hajj).[14]

After completing the pilgrimage rituals, Muhammad delivered a famous speech known as the Farewell Speech (Arabic: Khutbat al-Wadaa'). In this sermon, Muhammad advised his followers not to follow certain pre-Islamic customs such as adding intercalary months to align the lunar calendar with the solar calendar. Muhammad abolished all old blood feuds and disputes based on the former tribal system and asked for all old pledges to be returned as implications of the creation of the new Islamic community. Commenting on the vulnerability of women in his society, Muhammed asked his male followers to "Be good to women; for they are powerless captives (awan) in your households. You took them in God's trust, and legitimated your sexual relations with the Word of God, so come to your senses people, and hear my words ...". He also told them that they were entitled to discipline their wives but should do so with kindness. Muhammad also addressed the issue of inheritance by forbidding false claims of paternity or of a client relationship to the deceased and also forbidding his followers to leave their wealth to a testamentary heir. He also upheld the sacredness of four lunar months in each year.[136][137] According to Sunni Tafsir the following Qur'anic verse was delivered in this incident: "Today I have perfected your religion, and completed my favours for you and chosen Islam as a religion for you."(Qur'an 5:3)[14] while according to Shia ones it refers to appointment of Ali ibn Abi Talib as the successor of Muhammad in pond of Khumm which happened while Muslims returned from Mecca to Medina, few days later.[138]

The Mosque of the Prophet (Al-Masjid al-Nabawi) is Islam's second most sacred site; the Green dome in the background stands above Muhammad's tomb.

A few months after the farewell pilgrimage, Muhammad fell ill and suffered for several days with head pain and weakness. He succumbed on Monday, June 8, 632, in the city of Medina. He is buried in his tomb (which previously was in his wife Aisha's house) which is now housed within Mosque of the Prophet in Medina.[139][14][140] Next to Muhammad's tomb, there is another empty tomb that Muslims believe awaits Jesus.[140]

Aftermath

Muhammad united the tribes of Arabia into a singular Arab Muslim religious polity in the last years of his life. With Muhammad's death, disagreement broke out over who would succeed him as leader of the Muslim community.[141] Umar ibn al-Khattab, a prominent companion of Muhammad, nominated Abu Bakr, who was Muhammad's friend and collaborator. Others added their support and Abu Bakr was made the first caliph. This choice was disputed by some of Muhammad's companions, who held that Ali ibn Abi Talib, his cousin and son-in-law, had been designated the successor by Muhammad at Ghadir Khumm. Abu Bakr's immediate task was to make an expedition against the Byzantine (or Eastern Roman Empire) forces because of the previous defeat, although he first had to put down a rebellion by Arab tribes in an episode called by later Muslim historians as the Ridda wars, or "Wars of Apostasy".[142]

The pre-Islamic Middle East was dominated by the Byzantine and Sassanian empires. The Roman-Persian Wars between the two had devastated the inhabitants, making the empires unpopular amongst the local tribes. Furthermore, most of the Christian Churches in the lands to be conquered by Muslims such as Nestorians, Monophysites, Jacobites and Copts were under pressure from the Christian Orthodoxy who deemed them as heretics. Within only a decade, Muslims conquered Mesopotamia and Persia, Roman Syria and Roman Egypt.[143] and established Rashidun empire.

WIVES AND CHILDREN

Muhammad's life is traditionally defined into two periods: pre-hijra (emigration) in Mecca, a city in northern Arabia, from the year 570 to 622, and post-hijra in Medina, from 622 until his death in 632. Muhammad is said to have had thirteen wives or concubines (there are differing accounts on the status of some of them as wife or concubine[144])[145] All but two of his marriages were contracted after the migration to Medina.Part of a series on Islam:

The Wives of Muhammad

Khadijah bint Khuwaylid

Sawda bint Zama

Aisha bint Abi Bakr

Hafsa bint Umar

Zaynab bint Khuzayma

Umm Salama Hind bint Abi Umayya

Zaynab bint Jahsh

Juwayriya bint al-Harith

Ramlah bint Abi-Sufyan

Rayhana bint Amr ibn Khunafa

Safiyya bint Huyayy

Maymuna bint al-Harith

Maria al-Qibtiyya

At the age of 25, Muhammad married Khadijah bint Khuwaylid. The marriage lasted for 25 years and was a happy one.[146] Muhammad relied upon Khadija in many ways and did not enter into marriage with another woman during this marriage.[147][148] After the death of Khadija, it was suggested to Muhammad by Khawla bint Hakim, that he should marry Sawda bint Zama, a Muslim widow, or Aisha, the young daughter of Abu Bakr.[149] Muhammad is said to have asked her to arrange for him to marry both.[115] Later, Muhammad married additional wives nine of whom survived him.[145] Aisha, who became known as Muhammad's favourite wife in Sunni tradition, survived him by many decades and was instrumental in helping to bring together the scattered sayings of Muhammad that would form the Hadith literature for the Sunni branch of Islam.[115]

After migration to Medina, Muhammad who was more fifty years at this time, married with several women. These marriage were contracted mostly for political or humanitarian reasons. These later wives were either widows of Muslims who had been killed in the battles and had been left without a protector or belonged to important families or clans whom it was necessary to honor and strengthen alliances.[150]

Muhammad did his own household chores, helped out with the housework, such preparing food, sewing clothes, and repairing shoes. Muhammad is also said to had accustomed his wives to dialogue; he listened to their advice, and the wives debated and even argued with him.[151][152][153]

Khadijah is said to have borne Muhammad four daughters (Ruqayyah bint Muhammad, Umm Kulthum bint Muhammad, Zainab bint Muhammad, Fatimah Zahra) and two sons (Abd-Allah ibn Muhammad and Qasim ibn Muhammad), though all except two of his daughters, Fatimah and Zainab, died before him.[154] Some Shi'a scholars however hold that Fatimah was Muhammad's only daughter.[155] Maria al-Qibtiyya bore him a son named Ibrahim ibn Muhammad, but the child died when he was two years old.[154]

Muhammad's descendants through Fatimah are known as sharifs, syeds or sayyids. These are honorific titles in Arabic, sharif meaning 'noble' and sayed or sayyid meaning 'lord' or 'sir'. As Muhammad's only descendants, they are respected by both Sunni and Shi'a, though the Shi'as place much more emphasis and value on their distinction.[156]

Muslim world

Muslim world

The term Muslim world (or Islamic world) has several meanings. In a cultural sense it refers to the worldwide community of Muslims, adherents of Islam. This community numbers about 1.3-1.5 billion people, roughly one-fifth of the world population. This community is spread across many different nations and ethnic groups connected only by religion. In a historical or geopolitical sense the term usually refers collectively to Muslim majority countries or countries in which Islam dominates politically.

The worldwide Muslim community is also known collectively as the ummah. Islam emphasizes unity and defense of fellow Muslims, although many divisions of Islam (see the Sunni-Shia relations) exist. In the past both Pan-Islamism and nationalist currents have influenced the status of the Muslim world.

UMMAH

Ummah (Arabic: أمة) is an Arabic word meaning Community or Nation. It is commonly used to mean either the collective nation of states, or (in the context of pan-Arabism) the whole Arab world. In the context of Islam, the word ummah is used to mean the diaspora or "Community of the Believers" (ummat al-mu'minin), and thus the whole Muslim world.

ORIGIN

The phrase Ummah Wahida in the Qur'an (the "One Community") refers to all of the Islamic world unified. The Quran says: “You [Muslims] are the best nation brought out for Mankind, commanding what is righteous (Ma'ruf - lit. "recognized [as good]") and forbidding what is wrong (Munkar - lit. "unrecognized [as good]")....” [3:110] On the other hand, in Arabic Ummah can also be used in the more Western sense of nation, for example: Al-Umam Al-Muttahida, the United Nations.

The Constitution of Madīnah, an early document said to have been negotiated by Muhammad in AD 622 with the leading clans of Madīnah, explicitly refers to Jewish and pagan citizens of Medina as members of the 'Ummah'..

PRESENT DAY MEANING

Some modern Islamists use the term "Islamic Ummah" or "Muslim Ummah" to refer to all the people in the lands and countries where Muslims predominantly reside, and which were once under the control of the Islamic Caliphate. They thus include non-Muslim minorities as members of the ummah. Shariah (Islamic law) would apply to the citizens of the state.

QURAN

QURAN

The Qur’an[1] (Arabic: القرآن al-qur’ān, literally "the recitation"; also sometimes transliterated as Quran, Qur’ān, Koran, Alcoran or Al-Qur’ān) is the central religious text of Islam. Muslims believe the Qur’an to be the book of divine guidance and direction for mankind, and consider the original Arabic text to be the final revelation of God.[2][3][4][5]

Islam holds that the Qur’an was revealed to Muhammad by the angel Jibrīl (Gabriel) from 610 AD to his death in 632 AD.[2][6][7] The Qur’an was written down by Muhammad's companions while he was alive, although the prime method of transmission was oral. In 633 AD, the written text was compiled, and in 653 AD it was standardized, distributed in the Islamic empire and mass produced.[8] The present form of the Qur’an is regarded as Muhammad's own words by academic scholars, and the search for significant variants in Western academia has been unsuccessful. [9][10]

Muslims regard the Qur’an as the culmination of a series of divine messages that started with those revealed to Adam, regarded in Islam as the first prophet, and continued with the Suhuf Ibrahim (Scrolls of Abraham),[11] the Tawrat (Torah),[12][13] the Zabur (Psalms),[14][15] and the Injeel (Gospel).[16][17][18] The aforementioned books are not explicitly included in the Qur’an, but are recognized therein.[19][20] The Qur’an also refers[21] to many events from Jewish and Christian scriptures, some of which are retold in comparatively distinctive ways from the Bible and the Torah, while obliquely referring to other events described explicitly in those texts.

The Qur'an itself expresses that it is the book of guidance. Therefore it rarely offers detailed accounts of historical events; the text instead typically placing emphasis on the moral significance of an event rather than its narrative sequence.[22] It does not describe natural facts in a scientific manner but teaches that natural and supernatural events are signs of God.[23] The Qur'an itself is considered to be the main miracle of Muhammad, thus its inimitability validates his status as a prophet.

ETYMOLOGY AND MEANING

The original usage of the word qur`ān is in the Qur’an itself, where it occurs about 70 times assuming various meanings. It is a verbal noun (maṣdar) of the Arabic verb qara`a (Arabic: قرأ), meaning "he read" or "he recited", and represents the Syriac equivalent qeryānā which refers to "scripture reading" or "lesson". While most Western scholars consider the word to be derived from the Syriac, the majority of Muslim authorities hold the origin of the word is qara`a itself.[25] In any case, it had become an Arabic term by Muhammad's lifetime.[2] Among the earliest meanings of the word Qur’an is the "act of reciting", for example in a Qur’anic passage: "Ours is it to put it together and [Ours is] its qur`ān".[26] In other verses it refers to "an individual passage recited [by Muhammad]". In the large majority of contexts, usually with a definite article (al-), the word is referred to as the "revelation" (wahy), that which has been "sent down" (tanzīl) at intervals.[27][28] Its liturgical context is seen in a number of passages, for example: "So when al-qur`ān is recited , listen to it and keep silent".[29] The word may also assume the meaning of a codified scripture when mentioned with other scriptures such as the Torah and Gospel.[30]

The term also has closely related synonyms which are employed throughout the Qur'an. Each of the synonyms possess their own distinct meaning, but their use may converge with that of qur`ān in certain contexts. Such terms include kitāb ("book"); āyah ("sign"); and sūrah ("scripture"). The latter two terms also denote units of revelation. Other related words are: dhikr, meaning "remembrance," used to refer to the Qur'an in the sense of a reminder and warning; and hikma, meaning "wisdom," sometimes referring to the revelation or part of it.[25][31]

The Qur'an has many other names. Among those found in the text itself are al-furqan ("discernment" or "criterion"), al-huda ("the guide"), dhikrallah ("the remembrance of God"), al-hikmah ("the wisdom"), and kalamallah ("the word of God"). Another term is al-kitāb ("the book"), though it is also used in the Arabic language for other scriptures, such as the Torah and the Gospels. The term mus'haf ("written work") is often used to refer to particular Qur'anic manuscripts but is also used in the Qur'an to identify earlier revealed books.[2]

Structure

The Qur'an consists of 114 chapters of varying lengths, each known as a sura. Chapters are classed as Meccan or Medinan, depending on where the verses were revealed. Chapter titles are derived from a name or quality discussed in the text, or from the first letters or words of the sura. Muslims believe that Muhammad, on God's command, gave the chapters their names.[2] Generally, longer chapters appear earlier in the Qur'an, while the shorter ones appear later. The chapter arrangement is thus not connected to the sequence of revelation. Each sura, with the exception of one, commences with the Basmala.[32] an Arabic phrase meaning ("In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful"), with the exception of the ninth chapter. There are, however, still 114 occurrences of the basmala in the Qur'an, due to its presence in verse 27:30 as the opening of Solomon's letter to the Queen of Sheba.[33]

Each sura is formed from several ayat (verses), which originally means a sign or portent sent by God. The number of ayat differ from sura to sura. An individual ayah may be just a few letters or several lines. The ayat are unlike the highly refined poetry of the pre-Islamic Arabs in their content and distinctive rhymes and rhythms, being more akin to the prophetic utterances marked by inspired discontinuities found in the sacred scriptures of Judaism and Christianity. The actual number of ayat has been a controversial issue among Muslim scholars since Islam's inception, some recognizing 6,000, some 6,204, some 6,219, and some 6,236, although the words in all cases are the same. The most popular edition of the Qur'an, which is based on the Kufa school tradition, contains 6,236 ayat.[2]

There is a crosscutting division into 30 parts, ajza, each containing two units called ahzab, each of which is divided into four parts (rub 'al-ahzab). The Qur'an is also divided into seven stations (manazil).[2]

The Qur'anic text seems to have no beginning, middle, or end, its nonlinear structure being akin to a web or net.[2] Critics have commented on the textual arrangement pointing out lack of continuity, absence of any chronological or thematic order, and presence of repetition.[34][35]

Literary structure

The Qur'an's message is conveyed through the use of various literary structures and devices. In the original Arabic, the chapters and verses employ phonetic and thematic structures that assist the audience's efforts to recall the message of the text. There is consensus among Arab scholars to use the Qur'an as a standard by which other Arabic literature should be measured. Muslims assert (in accordance with the Qur'an itself) that the Qur'anic content and style is inimitable.[36]

Richard Gottheil and Siegmund Fränkel in the Jewish Encyclopedia write that the oldest portions of the Qur'an reflect significant excitement in their language, through short and abrupt sentences and sudden transitions. The Qur'an nonetheless carefully maintains the rhymed form, like the oracles. Some later portions also preserve this form but also in a style where the movement is calm and the style expository.[37]

"The values presented in the very early Meccan revelations are repeated throughout the hymnic Suras. There is a sense of directness, of intimacy, as if the hearer were being asked repeatedly a simple question: what will be of value at the end of a human life?"

- Sells[38]

Michael Sells, citing the work of the critic Norman O. Brown, acknowledges Brown's observation that the seeming "disorganization" of Qur'anic literary expression — its "scattered or fragmented mode of composition," in Sells's phrase — is in fact a literary device capable of delivering "profound effects — as if the intensity of the prophetic message were shattering the vehicle of human language in which it was being communicated."[38][39] Sells also addresses the much-discussed "repetitiveness" of the Qur'an, seeing this, too, as a literary device.

Qur'an as a religious text

Muslims believe the Qur'an to be the book of divine guidance and direction for mankind and consider the text in its original Arabic to be the literal word of God,[40] revealed to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel over a period of twenty-three years[6][7] and view the Qur'an as God's final revelation to humanity.[41][6]

The Christian concept of revelation which means God incarnating and unveiling himself and become visible and audible for mankind is foreign to Islam. Wahy in Islamic and Qur'anic concept means the act of God addressing an individual, conveying a message for a greater number of recipients. The process by which the divine message comes to the heart of a messenger of God is tanzil (to send down) or nuzul (to come down). As the Qur'an says, "With the truth we (God) have sent it down and with the truth it has come down." It designates positive religion, the letter of the revelation dictated by the angel to the prophet. It means to cause this revelation to descend from the higher world. According to hadith, the verses were sent down in special circumstances known as asbab al-nuzul. However, in this view God himself is never the subject of coming down.[42]

The Qur'an frequently asserts in its text that it is divinely ordained, an assertion that Muslims believe. The Qur'an — often referring to its own textual nature and reflecting constantly on its divine origin — is the most meta-textual, self-referential religious text amongst all religious texts. The Qur'an refers to a written pre-text which records God's speech even before it was sent down. [43][44]" And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Sura like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (If there are any) besides God, if your (doubts) are true. But if ye cannot — and of a surety ye cannot — then fear the Fire whose fuel is men and stones, which is prepared for those who reject Faith. "

—Qur'an 2:23–4 (Yusuf Ali)

The issue of whether the Qur'an is eternal or created was one of the crucial controversies among early Muslim theologians. Mu'tazilis believe it is created while the most widespread varieties of Muslim theologians consider the Qur'an to be eternal and uncreated. Sufi philosophers view the question as artificial or wrongly framed.[45]

Muslims maintain the present wording of the Qur'anic text corresponds exactly to that revealed to Muhammad himself: as the words of God, said to be delivered to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel. Muslims consider the Qur'an to be a guide, a sign of the prophethood of Muhammad and the truth of the religion. They argue it is not possible for a human to produce a book like the Qur'an, as the Qur'an itself maintains.

Therefore an Islamic philosopher introduces a prophetology to explain how the divine word passes into human expression. This leads to a kind of esoteric hermeneutics which seeks to comprehend the position of the prophet by mediating on the modality of his relationship not with his own time, but with the eternal source from which his message emanates. This view contrasts with historical critique of western scholars who attempt to understand the prophet through his circumstances, education and type of genius. [46]

History of Qur'an

The Prophet era

According to hadith and Muslim history, after Muhammad emigrated to Medina and formed an independent Muslim community, he ordered a considerable number of the companions (sahaba) to recite the Qur'an and to learn and teach the laws which were being revealed daily. Companions who engaged in the recitation of the Qur'an were called qurra'. Since most sahaba were unable to read or write, they were ordered to learn from the prisoners-of-war the simple writing of the time. Thus a group of sahaba gradually became literate. As it was initially spoken, the Qur'an was recorded on tablets, bones and the wide, flat ends of date palm fronds. Most chapters were in use amongst early Muslims since they are mentioned in numerous sayings by both Sunni and Shia sources, relating Muhammad's use of the Qur'an as a call to Islam, the making of prayer and the manner of recitation. However, the Qur'an did not exist in book form at the time of Muhammad's death in 632.[47][48]

Welch, a scholar of Islamic studies, states in the Encyclopaedia of Islam that he believes the graphic descriptions of Muhammad's condition at these moments may be regarded as genuine, seeing as he was severely disturbed after these revelations. According to Welch, these seizures would have been seen by those around him as convincing evidence for the superhuman origin of Muhammad's inspirations. Muhammad's critics, however, accused him of being a possessed man, a soothsayer or a magician since his experiences were similar to those claimed by such figures well-known in ancient Arabia. Additionally, Welch states that it remains uncertain whether these experiences occurred before or after Muhammad began to see himself as a prophet.[49]

The Qur'an states that Muhammad was ummi,[citation needed] interpreted as illiterate in Muslim tradition. According to Watt, the meaning of the Qur'anic term ummi is unscriptured rather than illiterate. Watt argues that a certain amount of writing was necessary for Muhammad to perform his commercial duties though it seems certain that he had not read any scriptures.

Making Mus'haf

According to Shia and some Sunni scholars, Ali compiled a complete version of the Qur'an mus'haf[2] immediately after death of Muhammad. The order of this mus'haf differed from that gathered later during Uthman's era. Despite this, Ali made no objection or resistance against standardized mus'haf, but kept his own book. [47][50]

After seventy reciters were killed in the Battle of Yamama, the caliph Abu Bakr decided to collect the different chapters and verses into one volume. Thus, a group of reciters, including Zayd ibn Thabit, collected the chapters and verses and produced several hand-written copies of the complete book. [51][47]

11th Century North African Qur'an in the British Museum

In about 650, as Islam expanded beyond the Arabian peninsula into Persia, the Levant and North Africa, the third caliph Uthman ibn Affan ordered the preparation of an official, standardized version, in order to preserve the sanctity of the text (and perhaps to keep the Rashidun Empire united, see Uthman Qur'an). Five of the reciters from amongst the companions produced a unique text from the first volume which had been prepared on the orders of Abu Bakr and which was kept with Hafsa bint Umar. The other copies already in the hands of Muslims in other areas were collected and sent to Medina where, on orders of the Caliph, they were destroyed by burning or boiling. This remains the authoritative text of the Qur'an to this day.[52][53][47]

The Qur'an in its present form is generally considered by academic scholars to record the words spoken by Muhammad because the search for variants in Western academia has not yielded any differences of great significance and because, historically, controversy over the content of the Qur'an has never become a main point. [54]

Literary usage

In addition to and largely independent of the division into suras, there are various ways of dividing the Qur'an into parts of approximately equal length for convenience in reading, recitation and memorization. The thirty ajza can be used to read through the entire Qur'an in a week or a month. Some of these parts are known by names and these names are the first few words by which the juz' starts. A juz' is sometimes further divided into two ahzab, and each hizb subdivided into four rub 'al-ahzab. A different structure is provided by the ruku'at, semantical units resembling paragraphs and comprising roughly ten ayat each. Some also divide the Qur'an into seven manazil to facilitate complete recitation in a week.

Recitation

One meaning of Qur'an is "recitation", the Qur'an itself outlining the general method of how it is to be recited: slowly and in rhythmic tones. Tajwid is the term for techniques of recitation, and assessed in terms of how accessible the recitation is to those intent on concentrating on the words.[55]

To perform salat (prayer), a mandatory obligation in Islam, a Muslim is required to learn at least some suar of the Qur'an (typically starting with the first one, al-Fatiha, known as the "seven oft-repeated verses," and then moving on to the shorter ones at the end). Until one has learned al-Fatiha, a Muslim can only say phrases like "praise be to God" during the salat.

A person whose recital repertoire encompasses the whole Qur'an is called a qari', whereas a memoriser of the Qur'an is called a hafiz (fem. Hafaz) (which translate as "reciter" or "protector," respectively). Muhammad is regarded as the first qari' since he was the first to recite it. Recitation (tilawa تلاوة) of the Qur'an is a fine art in the Muslim world.

Schools of recitation

There are several schools of Qur'anic recitation, all of which teach possible pronunciations of the Uthmanic rasm: Seven reliable, three permissible and (at least) four uncanonical – in 8 sub-traditions each – making for 80 recitation variants altogether.[56] A canonical recitation must satisfy three conditions:

It must match the rasm, letter for letter.

It must conform with the syntactic rules of the Arabic language.

It must have a continuous isnad to Muhammad through tawatur, meaning that it has to be related by a large group of people to another down the isnad chain.

These recitations differ in the vocalization (tashkil) of a few words, which in turn gives a complementary meaning to the word in question according to the rules of Arabic grammar. For example, the vocalization of a verb can change its active and passive voice. It can also change its stem formation, implying intensity for example. Vowels may be elongated or shortened, and glottal stops (hamzas) may be added or dropped, according to the respective rules of the particular recitation. For example, the name of archangel Gabriel is pronounced differently in different recitations: Jibrīl, Jabrīl, Jibra'īl, and Jibra'il. The name "Qur'an" is pronounced without the glottal stop (as "Qur'an") in one recitation, and prophet Abraham's name is pronounced Ibrāhām in another.[citation needed] The more widely used narrations are those of Hafss (حفص عن عاصم), Warsh (ورش عن نافع), Qaloon (قالون عن نافع) and Al-Duri according to Abu `Amr (الدوري عن أبي عمرو). Muslims firmly believe that all canonical recitations were recited by Muhammad himself, citing the respective isnad chain of narration, and accept them as valid for worshipping and as a reference for rules of Sharia. The uncanonical recitations are called "explanatory" for their role in giving a different perspective for a given verse or ayah. Today several dozen persons hold the title "Memorizer of the Ten Recitations." This is considered a great accomplishment amongst Muslims.[citation needed]

The presence of these different recitations is attributed to many hadith. Malik Ibn Anas has reported:[57]

Abd al-Rahman Ibn Abd al-Qari narrated: "Umar Ibn Khattab said before me: I heard Hisham Ibn Hakim Ibn Hizam reading Surah Furqan in a different way from the one I used to read it, and the Prophet (sws) himself had read out this surah to me. Consequently, as soon as I heard him, I wanted to get hold of him. However, I gave him respite until he had finished the prayer. Then I got hold of his cloak and dragged him to the Prophet (sws). I said to him: "I have heard this person [Hisham Ibn Hakim Ibn Hizam] reading Surah Furqan in a different way from the one you had read it out to me." The Prophet (sws) said: "Leave him alone [O 'Umar]." Then he said to Hisham: "Read [it]." [Umar said:] "He read it out in the same way as he had done before me." [At this,] the Prophet (sws) said: "It was revealed thus." Then the Prophet (sws) asked me to read it out. So I read it out. [At this], he said: "It was revealed thus; this Qur'an has been revealed in Seven Ahruf. You can read it in any of them you find easy from among them.

Suyuti, a famous 15th century Islamic theologian, writes after interpreting above hadith in 40 different ways:[58]" And to me the best opinion in this regard is that of the people who say that this hadith is from among matters of mutashabihat, the meaning of which cannot be understood. "

Many reports contradict the presence of variant readings:[59]

Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami reports, "the reading of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Zayd ibn Thabit and that of all the Muhajirun and the Ansar was the same. They would read the Qur'an according to the Qira'at al-'ammah. This is the same reading which was read out twice by the Prophet (sws) to Gabriel in the year of his death. Zayd ibn Thabit was also present in this reading [called] the 'Ardah-i akhirah. It was this very reading that he taught the Qur'an to people till his death".[60]

Ibn Sirin writes, "the reading on which the Qur'an was read out to the prophet in the year of his death is the same according to which people are reading the Qur'an today".[61]

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi also purports that there is only one recitation of Qur'an, which is called Qira'at of Hafss or in classical scholarship, it is called Qira'at al-'ammah. The Qur'an has also specified that it was revealed in the language of the prophet's tribe: the Quraysh.[Qur'an 19:97][Qur'an 44:58])[59]

However, the identification of the recitation of Hafss as the Qira'at al-'ammah is somewhat problematic when that was the recitation of the people of Kufa in Iraq, and there is better reason to identify the recitation of the reciters of Madinah as the dominant recitation. The reciter of Madinah was Nafi' and Imam Malik remarked "The recitation of Nafi' is Sunnah." Moreover, the dialect of Arabic spoken by Quraysh and the Arabs of the Hijaz was known to have less use of the letter hamzah, as is the case in the recitation of Nafi', whereas in the Hafs recitation the hamzah is one of the very dominant features.[citation needed]

AZ [however] says that the people of El-Hijaz and Hudhayl, and the people of Makkah and Al-Madinah, to not pronounce hamzah [at all]: and 'Isa Ibn-'Omar says, Tamim pronounce hamzah, and the people of Al-Hijaz, in cases of necessity, [in poetry,] do so.[62]

So the hamzah is of the dialect of the Najd whose people came to comprise the dominant Arabic element in Kufa giving some features of their dialect to their recitation, whereas the recitation of Nafi' and the people of Madinah maintained some features of the dialect of Hijaz and the Quraysh.[citation needed]

However, the discussion of the priority of one or the other recitation is unnecessary since it is a consensus of knowledgable people that all of the seven recitations of the Qur'an are acceptable and valid for recitation in the prayer.[citation needed]

Moreover, the so-called "un-canonical" recitations such as are narrated from some of the Companions and which do not conform to the Uthmani copy of the Qur'an are not legitimate for recitation in the prayer, but knowledge of them can legitimately be used in the tafsir of the Qur'an, not as a proof but as a valid argument for an explanation of an ayah.[citation needed]

Writing and printing

Most Muslims today use printed editions of the Qur'an. There are many editions, large and small, elaborate or plain, expensive or inexpensive. Bilingual forms with the Arabic on one side and a gloss into a more familiar language on the other are very popular.

Qur'ans are produced in many different sizes. Most are of a reasonable book size, but there exist extremely large Qur'ans (usually for display purposes)[citation needed] and very small Qur'ans (sometimes given as gifts).[citation needed]

Qur'ans were first printed from carved wooden blocks, one block per page. There are existing specimen of pages and blocks dating from the 10th century AD. Mass-produced less expensive versions of the Qur'an were later produced by lithography, a technique for printing illustrations. Qur'ans so printed could reproduce the fine calligraphy of hand-made versions.[citations needed]

The oldest surviving Qur'an for which movable type was used was printed in Venice in 1537/1538. It seems to have been prepared for sale in the Ottoman empire. Catherine the Great of Russia sponsored a printing of the Qur'an in 1787. This was followed by editions from Kazan (1828), Persia (1833) and Istanbul (1877).[63]

It is extremely difficult to render the full Qur'an, with all the points, in computer code, such as Unicode. The Internet Sacred Text Archive makes computer files of the Qur'an freely available both as images[64] and in a temporary Unicode version.[65] Various designers and software firms have attempted to develop computer fonts that can adequately render the Qur'an.[66]

Before printing was widely adopted, the Qur'an was transmitted by copyists and calligraphers.[verification needed] Since Muslim tradition felt that directly portraying sacred figures and events might lead to idolatry, it was considered wrong to decorate the Qur'an with pictures (as was often done for Christian texts, for example). Muslims instead lavished love and care upon the sacred text itself. Arabic is written in many scripts, some of which are both complex and beautiful. Arabic calligraphy is a highly honored art, much like Chinese calligraphy. Muslims also decorated their Qur'ans with abstract figures (arabesques), colored inks, and gold leaf. Pages from some of these antique Qur'ans are displayed throughout this article.

Translations

Translation of the Qur'an has always been a problematic and difficult issue. Since Islam regards the Qur'an as miraculous and inimitable (i'jaz al-Qur'an),[citation needed] many argue that the Qur'anic text can not be reproduced in another language or form.[67] Furthermore, an Arabic word may have a range of meanings depending on the context, making an accurate translation even more difficult.[68]

Nevertheless, the Qur'an has been translated into most African, Asian and European languages.[68] The first translator of the Qur'an was Salman the Persian, who translated Fatihah into Persian during the 7th century.[69] The first complete translation of Quran was into Persian during the reign of Samanids in the 9th century. Islamic tradition holds that translations were made for Emperor Negus of Abyssinia and Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, as both received letters by Muhammad containing verses from the Qur'an.[68] In early centuries, the permissibility of translations was not an issue, but whether one could use translations in prayer.

In 1936, translations in 102 languages were known.[68]

Robert of Ketton was the first person to translate the Qur'an into a Western language, Latin, in 1143.[70] Alexander Ross offered the first English version in 1649. In 1734, George Sale produced the first scholarly translation of the Qur'an into English; another was produced by Richard Bell in 1937, and yet another by Arthur John Arberry in 1955. All these translators were non-Muslims. There have been numerous translations by Muslims; the most popular of these are by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan and Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al Hilali, Maulana Muhammad Ali, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, M. H. Shakir, Muhammad Asad and Marmaduke Pickthall.[citation needed]

The English translators have sometimes favored archaic English words and constructions over their more modern or conventional equivalents; for example, two widely-read translators, A. Yusuf Ali and M. Marmaduke Pickthall, use the plural and singular "ye" and "thou" instead of the more common "you." Another common stylistic decision has been to refrain from translating "Allah" — in Arabic, literally, "The God" — into the common English word "God." These choices may differ in more recent translations.[citation needed]

Levels of Meaning / Inward Aspects of the Qur'an

Shias and Sufis as well as some Muslim philosophers believe the meaning of the Qur'an is not restricted to the literal aspect.[71] For them, it is an essential idea that the Qur'an also has inward aspects. Henry Corbin narrates a hadith that goes back to Muhammad:

"The Qur'an possesses an external appearance and a hidden depth, an exoteric meaning and an esoteric meaning. This esoteric meaning in turn conceals an esoteric meaning (this depth possesses a depth, after the image of the celestial Spheres which are enclosed within each other). So it goes on for seven esoteric meanings (seven depths of hidden depth)."[72]

According to this view, it has also become evident that the inner meaning of the Qur'an does not eradicate or invalidate its outward meaning. Rather, it is like the soul, which gives life to the body. [73]

On the base of this viewpoint, Henry Corbin considers the Qur'an to have a part to play in Islamic philosophy, because gnosiology itself goes hand in hand with prophetology.[74] However, it is clear that those who don't believe in the divine origin of the Qur'an or any kind of sacred or spiritual existence completely oppose any inward aspect of the Qur'an.

Commentaries dealing with the zahir (outward aspects) of the text are called tafsir, and hermeneutic and esoteric commentaries dealing with the batin are called ta'wil ("interpretation" or "explanation"), which involves taking the text back to its beginning. Esoteric commentators believe that the ultimate meaning of the Qur'an is known only to God.[2]

In contrast, Qur'anic literalism, which is followed by Salafis and Zahiris, is the belief that the Qur'an should be taken at its apparent meaning, rather than employing any sort of interpretation. This includes, for example, the belief that Allah has appendages such as hands as stated in the Qur'an; this is generally explained by the concept of bi-la kaifa, the claim that the literal meanings should be accepted without asking how or why.

Tafsir

The Qur'an has sparked a huge body of commentary and explication, known as tafsir. This commentary is aimed at explaining the "meanings of the Qur'anic verses, clarifying their import and finding out their significance."[75] and best tafseer is done by Allah himself. [76]

Tafsir is one of the earliest academic activities of Muslims. According to the Qur'an, Muhammad was the first person who described the meanings of verses for early Muslims.[77] Other early exegetes included a few Companions of Muhammad, like Ali ibn Abi Talib, Abdullah ibn Abbas, Abdullah ibn Umar and Ubayy ibn Kab. Exegesis in those days was confined to the explanation of literary aspects of the verse, the background of its revelation and, occasionally, interpretation of one verse with the help of the other. If the verse was about a historical event, then sometimes a few traditions (hadith) of Muhammad were narrated to make its meaning clear.[78]

Because the Qur'an is spoken in classical Arabic, many of the later converts to Islam (mostly non-Arabs) did not always understand the Qur'anic Arabic, they did not catch allusions that were clear to early Muslims fluent in Arabic and they were concerned with reconciling apparent conflict of themes in the Qur'an. Commentators erudite in Arabic explained the allusions, and perhaps most importantly, explained which Qur'anic verses had been revealed early in Muhammad's prophetic career, as being appropriate to the very earliest Muslim community, and which had been revealed later, canceling out or "abrogating" (nāsikh) the earlier text (mansukh).[79] [80] [81] Memories of the occasions of revelation (asbāb al-nuzūl), the circumstances under which Muhammad had spoken as he did, were also collected, as they were believed to explain some apparent obscurities.[citation needed]

Ta'wil

Ja'far Kashfi defines ta'wil as 'to lead back or to bring something back to its origin or archetype'. It is a science whose pivot is a spiritual direction and a divine inspiration, while the tafsir is the literal exegesis of the letter; its pivot is the canonical Islamic sciences.[82] Allameh Tabataba'I says that according to the popular explanation among the later exegetes, ta'wil indicates the particular meaning towards which a verse is directed. The meaning of revelation (tanzil), as opposed to ta'wil, is clear in its accordance to the obvious meaning of the words as they were revealed. But this explanation has become so widespread that, at present, it has become the primary meaning of ta'wil, which originally meant "to return" or "the returning place". In Tabataba'I's view, what has been rightly called ta'wil, or hermeneutic interpretation of the Qur'an, is not concerned simply with the denotation of words. Rather, it is concerned with certain truths and realities that transcend the comprehension of the common run of men; yet it is from these truths and realities that the principles of doctrine and the practical injunctions of the Qur'an issue forth. Interpretation is not the meaning of the verse; rather it transpires through that meaning - a special sort of transpiration. There is a spiritual reality which is the main objective of ordaining a law, or the basic aim of describing a divine attribute; there is an actual significance to which a Qur'anic story refers. [83][84]

However Shia and Sufism (on the one hand) and Sunni (on the other) have completely different positions on the legitimacy of ta'wil. A verse in the Qur'an[85] addresses this issue, but Shia and Sunni disagree on how it should be read. According to Shia, those who are firmly rooted in knowledge like the Prophet and the imams know the secrets of the Qur'an, while Sunnis believe that only God knows. According to Allameh Tabataba'I, the statement "none knows its interpretation except Allah" remains valid, without any opposing or qualifying clause. Therefore, so far as this verse is concerned, the knowledge of the Qur'an's interpretation is reserved for Allah. But Tabataba'I uses other verses and concludes that those who are purified by God know the interpretation of the Qur'an to a certain extent. [84]

The most ancient spiritual commentary on the Qur'an consists of the teachings which the Shia Imams propounded in the course of their conversations with their disciples. It was the principles of their spiritual hermeneutics that were subsequently brought together by the Sufis. These texts are narrated by Imam Ali and Ja'far al-Sadiq, Shia and Sunni Sufis. [86]

As Corbin narrates from Shia sources, Ali himself gives this testimony:

Not a single verse of the Qur'an descended upon (was revealed to) the Messenger of God which he did not proceed to dictate to me and make me recite. I would write it with my own hand, and he would instruct me as to its tafsir (the literal explanation) and the ta'wil (the spiritual exegesis), the nasikh (the verse which abrogates) and the mansukh

(the abrogated verse), the muhkam (without ambiguity) and the mutashabih (ambiguous), the particular and the general...[87]

According to Allameh Tabataba'I, there are acceptable and unacceptable esoteric interpretations. Acceptable ta'wil refers to the meaning of a verse beyond its literal meaning; rather the implicit meaning, which ultimately is known only to God and can't be comprehended directly through human thought alone. The verses in question here are those which refer to the human qualities of coming, going, sitting, satisfaction, anger, and sorrow, which are apparently attributed to God. Unacceptable ta'wil is where one "transfers" the apparent meaning of a verse to a different meaning by means of a proof; this method is not without obvious inconsistencies. Although this unacceptable ta'wil has gained considerable acceptance, it is incorrect and cannot be applied to the Qur'anic verses. The correct interpretation is that reality to which a verse refers. It is found in all verses, the decisive and the ambiguous alike; it is not a sort of a meaning of the word; it is a real fact that is too sublime for words. Allah has dressed them with words so as to bring them a bit nearer to our minds; in this respect they are like proverbs that are used to create a picture in the mind, and thus help the hearer to clearly grasp the intended idea. [88] [84]

Therefore Sufi spiritual interpretations are usually accepted by Islamic scholars as authentic interpretations, as long as certain conditions are met.[89] In Sufi history, these interpretations were sometimes considered religious innovations (bid'ah), as Salafis believe today. However, ta'wil is extremely controversial even amongst Shia. For example, when Ayatollah Ruhallah Khomeini, the leader of Islamic revolution, gave some lectures about Surat al-Fatiha in December 1979 and January 1980, protests forced him to suspend them before he could proceed beyond the first two verses of the surah.[90]

Relationship with other literature

The Torah and the Bible

The Qur'an speaks well of the relationship it has with former books (the Torah and the Gospel) and attributes their similarities to their unique origin and saying all of them have been revealed by the one God.[92]

The Qur'an retells stories of many of the people and events recounted in Jewish and Christian sacred books (Tanakh, Bible) and devotional literature (Apocrypha, Midrash), although it differs in many details. Adam, Enoch, Noah, Heber, Shelah, Abraham, Lot, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Jethro, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Aaron, Moses, Ezra, Zechariah, Jesus, and John the Baptist are mentioned in the Qur'an as prophets of God (see Prophets of Islam). Muslims believe the common elements or resemblances between the Bible and other Jewish and Christian writings and Islamic dispensations is due to their common divine source, and that the original Christian or Jewish texts were authentic divine revelations given to prophets.

Muslims believe that those texts were neglected, corrupted (tahrif) or altered in time by the Jews and Christians and have been replaced by God's final and perfect revelation, which is the Qur'an.[93] However, many Jews and Christians[who?] believe that the historical biblical archaeological record refutes this assertion, because the Dead Sea Scrolls (the Tanakh and other Jewish writings which predate the origin of the Qur'an) have been fully translated,[94] validating the authenticity of the Greek Septuagint.[95]

"It is He Who sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the criterion (of judgment between right and wrong).[91] "

—Qur'an 3:3 (Yusuf Ali)

Atlantic Ocean

The Atlantic Ocean is the second-largest of the world's oceanic divisions; with a total area of about 106.4 million square kilometres (41.1 million square miles). It covers approximately one-fifth of the Earth's surface. The first part of its name refers to the Atlas of Greek mythology, making the Atlantic the "Sea of Atlas". The oldest known mention of this name is contained in The Histories of Herodotus around 450 BC (I 202); see also: Atlas Mountains. Another name historically used was the ancient term Ethiopic Ocean, derived from Ethiopia, whose name was sometimes used as a synonym for all of Africa and thus for the ocean. Before Europeans discovered other oceans, the term "ocean" itself was to them synonymous with the waters beyond Western Europe that we now know as the Atlantic and which the Greeks had believed to be a gigantic river encircling the world; see Oceanus.

The Atlantic Ocean occupies an elongated, S-shaped basin extending longitudinally between the Americas to the west, and Eurasia and Africa to the east. A component of the all-encompassing World Ocean, it is connected in the north to the Arctic Ocean (which is sometimes considered a sea of the Atlantic), to the Pacific Ocean in the southwest, the Indian Ocean in the southeast, and the Southern Ocean in the south. (Alternatively, in lieu of it connecting to the Southern Ocean, the Atlantic may be reckoned to extend southward to Antarctica.) The equator subdivides it into the North Atlantic Ocean and South Atlantic Ocean but for physical purposes the division is moved slightly counter-clockwise to a line roughly from Bolama region, Guinea-Bissau to Rio Grande do Norte state, Brazil to include the Gulf of Guinea with the South and the north coast of South America with the North.

Central Asia

Central Asia is a region of Asia from the Caspian Sea in the west to central China in the east, and from southern Russia in the north to northern India in the south. It is also sometimes known as Middle Asia or Inner Asia, and is within the scope of the wider Eurasian continent. Various definitions of its exact composition exist and no one definition is universally accepted. Despite this uncertainty in defining borders, it does have some important overall characteristics. For one, Central Asia has historically been closely tied to its nomadic peoples and the Silk Road.[1] As a result, it has acted as a crossroads for the movement of people, goods, and ideas between Europe, Western Asia, South Asia, and East Asia.[2]

Central Asia is largely coextensive with Turkestan. In modern context, Central Asia consists of the five former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The nations of Afghanistan and Mongolia may also be included in Central Asia, as well as northeastern Iran and the western Chinese provinces of Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Qinghai and Tibet.

First Fitna

The First Islamic Civil War (656–661), also called the First Fitna (Arabic: فتنة_مقتل_عثمان; Transliteration: Fitnah Maqtal Uthmān), was the first major civil war within the Islamic Empire and arose as a disagreement over who had the legitimate right to occupy the post of Caliph[1], which resulted in large divisions within the Muslim community, and is regretted as the end of the early unity of the Muslim ummah.

Essentially, it was a series of revolts fought against Ali ibn Abi Talib, the fourth Rashidun caliph, caused by the controversial assassination of his predecessor, Uthman Ibn Affan. It lasted for the entirety of Ali's reign, and its end is marked by Muawiyah's assumption of the caliphate and the subsequent peace treaty between him and Hassan ibn Ali.

Background

Battle of Bassorah

Ali was first opposed by a faction led by Talhah, Al-Zubayr and the Muhammad's wife, Aisha bint Abu Bakr. This group was known as disobedients (Nakithin) by their enemies. First they gathered in Mecca then moved to Basra with the expectation of finding the necessary forces and resources to mobilize people in what is now Iraq. The rebels occupied Basra, killing many people. When Ali asked them for obedience and a pledge of allegiance, they refused. The two parties met at the Battle of Bassorah (Battle of the Camel) in 656, where Ali emerged victorious.[2]

Battle of Siffin

Later Ali was challenged by Muawiyah I, the governor of Levant and the cousin of Uthman, who refused Ali's demands for allegiance and called for revenge for Uthman. Ali opened negotiations with him with the hope of regaining his allegiance but Muawiyah insisted on Levant autonomy under his rule. Muawiyah replied by mobilizing his Levantn supporters and refusing to pay homage to Ali on the pretext that his contingent had not participated in his election. The two armies encamped themselves at Siffin for more than one hundred days, most of the time being spent in negotiations. Although Ali exchanged several letters with Muawiyah, he was unable to dismiss the latter, nor persuade him to pledge allegiance. Skirmishes between the parties led to the Battle of Siffin in 657. After a week of combat was followed by a violent battle known as laylat al-harir (the night of clamor) the Muawiyah's army were on the point of being routed when Amr ibn al-Aas advised Muawiyah to have his soldiers hoist mushaf (either parchments inscribed with verses of the Qur'an, or complete copies of it) on their spearheads in order to cause disagreement and confusion in Ali's army.

Arbitration

The two armies finally agreed to settle the matter of who should be Caliph by arbitration. The refusal of the largest bloc in Ali's army to fight was the decisive factor in his acceptance of the arbitration. The question as to whether the arbiter would represent Ali or the Kufans caused a further split in Ali's army. Ash'ath ibn Qays and some others rejected Ali's nominees, `Abd Allah ibn `Abbas and Malik al-Ashtar, and insisted on Abu Musa Ash'ari, who was opposed by Ali, since he had earlier prevented people from supporting him. Finally Ali was urged to accept Abu Musa.

Battle of Nahrawan

Some of Ali's supporters, later were known as Kharijites (schismatics), opposed this decision and rebelled and Ali had to fight with them in the Battle of Nahrawan. The arbitration resulted in the dissolution of Ali's coalition.

Loss of All Provinces Except Kufa

Muawiyah's army invaded and occupied cities, which Ali's governors couldn't prevent and people didn't support him to fight with them. Muawiyah overpowered Egypt, Yemen and other areas.

Last days of Ali

On the nineteenth of Ramadan, while Ali was praying in the mosque of Kufa, the Kharijite Abd-al-Rahman ibn Muljam assassinated him with a strike of his poison-coated sword. Ali, wounded by the poisonous sword, lived for two days and died on the 21st of Ramadan in the city of Kufa in 661 A.D.

Hasan caliphate

Upon the death of Ali ibn Abi Talib, Kufi Muslims pledged allegiance to his eldest son Hasan without dispute.

Second Fitna

The Second Fitna, or Second Islamic Civil War, was a period of general political and military disorder that afflicted the Islamic world during the early Umayyad dynasty, following the death of the first Umayyad caliph Muawiyah I. There seems to be a lack of solid consensus on the exact range of years that define the conflict, with several different historians dating the Second Fitna differently. Some see the end of Muawiya's reign in 680 AD as marking the beginning of the period, while the year 683 (following the death of Muawiya's son the caliph Yazid I) is cited by others. Similarly, the end is variously dated from 685 (after the ascension of caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan) to 692 (following the death of Ibn al-Zubair and the termination of his revolt). The dates 683-685 seem to be the most commonly used.

The Second Fitna was a time of complexity in the Islamic world, involving a number of different occurrences that were seemingly not directly connected with one another. A brief sketch of the major events of the period may however be given as follows.

The first Umayyad caliph Muawiya I was succeeded upon his death in 680 by his son, Yazid I. Yazid's first opposition came from supporters of Husayn ibn Ali, who was the grandson of the prophet Muhammad and the son of the former caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib, who had been assassinated. Husayn and many of his closest supporters were killed by Yazid's troops at the Battle of Karbala. This battle is often cited as the definitive break between the Shi'a and Sunni sects of Islam, and until this day it has been commemorated each year by Shi'a muslims on the Day of Ashura.

Following these occurrences, Yazid faced a second revolt from Ibn al-Zubair, who was the son of a former Sahabi, Zubayr ibn al-Awwam, who had previously revolted against the caliph Ali at the Battle of Bassorah. Ibn al-Zubayr's rebellion was seen by many as an attempt to return to the pristine values of the early Islamic community, and his revolt was welcomed by a number of parties that were unhappy with the Umayyad rule for various reasons. Following the sudden death of Yazid and his son Muawiyah II in 683, Ibn al-Zubayr gained widespread recognition as caliph, but he was isolated in the Hejaz region when Kharijite rebels established an independent state in central Arabia in 684.

Other Kharijite uprisings followed in Iraq and Iran, while Shiites revolted in Kufah to avenge the death of Husayn and to promote another of Ali's sons as a candidate for caliph. Eventually, order was restored by Syrian forces supporting the Umayyad chief Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, who attained the caliphate in 685. He was able to defeat all of his various rivals, and he killed Ibn al-Zubair in 692, bringing this period of exceptional turbulence to an end.

CALIPHATE

A caliphate (from the Arabic خلافة or khilāfa) is the political leadership of the Muslim ummah in classical and medieval Islamic history and juristic theory.[1] The head of state's position (Caliph) is based on the notion of a successor to the Islamic prophet Muhammad's political authority.

According to Sunnis the Caliph should be from Quraysh decendency (the tribe of the Prophet Muhammad) and elected by Muslims or their representatives;[2] and according to Shia Islam, is an Imam descended in a line from the Ahl al-Bayt. From the time of Muhammad until 1924, successive and contemporary caliphates were held by various dynasties, including the Umayyads (who were driven from Damascus to Córdoba), the Abbasids (who ruled from Baghdad and drove away the Umayyads from Damascus), the Fatimids (who ruled from Cairo), and finally the Ottomans.

The caliphate is the only form of governance that has full approval in traditional Islamic theology, and "is the core political concept of Sunni Islam, by the consensus of the Muslim majority in the early centuries."

HISTORY

The caliph, or head of state, was often known as Amir al-Mu'minin (أمير المؤمنين) "Commander of the Believers", Imam al-Ummah, Imam al-Mu'minīn (إمام المؤمنين), or more colloquially, leader of all the Muslims. Each member state (Sultanate, Wilayah, or Emirate) of the Caliphate had its own governor (Sultan, Wali or Emir).[citation needed] Dar al-Islam (دار الإسلام lit. land of Islam) was referred to as any land under the rule of the caliphate, including a land populated by non-Muslims and land not under rule of the caliphate was referred to as Dar al-Kufr (lit. land of non-Islam), even if its inhabitants were Muslims, because they were not citizens under Sharia (Islamic law).[citation needed] The first capital of the Caliphate after Muhammad died was in Medina. At times in Muslim history there have been rival claimant caliphs in different parts of the Islamic world, and divisions between the Shi'a and Sunni parts.[citation needed]

According to Sunni Muslims, the first four caliphs, celebrated as the Rashidun (The Rightly Guided Caliphs), were Muhammad's Sahaba (companions); Abu Bakr, then Umar (Umar ibn al-Khattab), then Uthman Ibn Affan, and the fourth was Ali (Ali ibn Abi Talib). Sunni Muslims consider Abu-Bakr to be the first legitimate Caliph, while Shi'a consider Ali to have been the first truly legitimate Caliph, although they concede that Ali accepted his predecessors, because he eventually sanctioned Abu-Bakr.[4]

After the first four caliphs, the Caliphate was claimed by the dynasties such as Umayyads, the Abbasids, and the Ottomans, and for relatively short periods by other, competing dynasties in al-Andalus, North Africa, and Egypt. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk officially abolished the last Caliphate, the Ottoman Empire, and founded the Republic of Turkey, in 1924. The Kings of Morocco still label themselves with the title Amir al-Mu'minin for Moroccans, but lay no claim to the Caliphate.

RASHIDUN, 632-661

Abu Bakr, the first successor of Muhammad, nominated Umar as his successor on his deathbed, and there was consensus in the Muslim community to his choice. Umar Ibn Khattab, the second caliph was killed by a slave. His successor, Uthman Ibn Affan, was elected by a council of electors (Majlis), but was soon perceived by some to be

ruling as a "king" rather than an elected leader. Uthman was killed by members of a disaffected group. Ali then took control, and although very popular, he was not universally accepted as caliph by the governors of Egypt, and later by some of his own guard. He had two major rebellions and was assassinated after a tumultuous rule of only five years. This period is known as the Fitna, or the first Islamic civil war.

Muawiyah, a relative of Uthman, and governor (Wali) of Syria became one of Ali's challengers. After Ali's death, Muawiyah managed to overcome other claimants to the Caliphate. Under Muawiyah, the caliphate became a hereditary office for the first time. He founded the Umayyad dynasty. In areas which were previously under Persian or Byzantine rule, the Caliphs lowered taxes, provided greater local autonomy, greater religious freedom for Jews, indigenous Christians, and brought peace to peoples demoralized and disaffected by the casualties and heavy taxation that resulted from the years of Byzantine-Persian warfare.

Umayyads, 7th-8th century

Under the Umayyads the Caliphate grew rapidly geographically. Islamic rule expanded westward across North Africa and into Hispania and eastward through Persia and ultimately to Sindh and Punjab in modern day Pakistan. This made it one of the largest unitary states in history and one of the few states to ever extend direct rule over three continents (Africa, Europe, and Asia). Although not ruling all of the Sahara, homage was paid to the Caliph by Saharan Africa usually via various nomad Berber tribes.

Largely due to the fact that they were not elected via Shura, the Umayyad dynasty was not universally supported within the Muslim community. Some supported prominent early Muslims like Al-Zubayr; others felt that only members of Muhammad's clan, the Banu Hashim, or his own lineage, the descendants of Ali, should rule. There were numerous rebellions against the Umayyads, as well as splits within the Umayyad ranks (notably, the rivalry between Yaman and Qays). Eventually, supporters of the Banu Hisham and the supporters of the lineage of Ali united to bring down the Umayyads in 750. However, the Shiʿat ʿAlī, "the Party of Ali", were again disappointed when the Abbasid dynasty took power, as the Abbasids were descended from Muhammad's uncle, `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib and not from Ali. Following this disappointment, the Shiʿat ʿAlī finally split from the majority Sunni Muslims and formed what are today the several Shiʿa denominations.

The Caliphate in Hispania

During the Ummayad dynasty Hispania was an integral province of the Ummayad Caliphate ruled from Damascus, Syria. Later the caliphate was won by the Abbasids and Al-Andalus (or Hispania) split from the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad to form their own caliphate. The Caliphate of Córdoba (خليفة قرطبة) ruled the Iberian Peninsula from the city of Córdoba, from 929 to 1031. This period was characterized by remarkable success in technology, trade and culture; many of the masterpieces of Spain were constructed in this period, including the famous Great Mosque of Córdoba. The title Caliph (خليفة) was claimed by Abd-ar-Rahman III on January 16, 929; he was previously known as the Emir of Córdoba (أمير-قرطبة). All Caliphs of Córdoba were members of the Umayyad dynasty; the same dynasty had held the title Emir of Córdoba and ruled over roughly the same territory since 756. The rule of the Caliphate is known as the heyday of Muslim presence in the Iberian peninsula, before it split into taifas. Spain possessed a significant native Muslim population until 1610 with the success of the Catholic-instigated Spanish Inquisition, which expelled any remnants of Spanish Muslim (Morisco) or Jewish populations.

Abbasids, 8th-13th century

The umayyad dynasty was overthrown by another family of Meccan origin, the Abbasids, in 750. The Abbasids had an unbroken line of Caliphs for over three centuries, consolidating Islamic rule and cultivating great intellectual and cultural developments in the Middle East. By 940 the power of the Caliphate under the Abbasids was waning as non-Arabs, particularly the Berbers of the Maghreb, the Turks, and later the Mamluks in Egypt in the latter half of

the 13th century, gained influence, and sultans and emirs became increasingly independent. However, the Caliphate endured as both a symbolic position and a unifying entity for the Islamic world. During the period of the Abassid dynasty, Abassid claims to the caliphate did not go unchallenged. The Shiʿa Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi Billah of the Fatimid dynasty, which claimed descent from Muhammad through his daughter, claimed the title of Caliph in 909, creating a separate line of caliphs in North Africa. Initially covering Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, the Fatimid caliphs extended their rule for the next 150 years, taking Egypt and Palestine, before the Abbassid dynasty was able to turn the tide, limiting Fatimid rule to Egypt. The Fatimid dynasty finally ended in 1171. The Umayyad dynasty, which had survived and come to rule over the Muslim provinces of Spain, reclaimed the title of Caliph in 929, lasting until it was overthrown in 1031.

Shadow Caliphate, 13th-16th century

1258 saw the conquest of Baghdad and the execution of Abbasid caliph al-Musta'sim by Mongol forces under Hulagu Khan. A surviving member of the Abbasid House was installed as Caliph at Cairo under the patronage of the Mamluk Sultanate three years later; however, the authority of this line of Caliphs was confined to ceremonial and religious matters, and later Muslim historians referred to it as a "shadow" Caliphate.

Ottomans, 16th-20th century

Ottoman rulers were known primarily by the title of Sultan and used the title of Caliph only sporadically. Mehmed II and his grandson Selim I used it to justify their conquest of Islamic countries. As the Ottoman Empire grew in size and strength, Ottoman rulers beginning with Selim I began to claim Caliphal authority.

Ottoman rulers used the title "Caliph" symbolically on many occasions but it was strengthened when the Ottoman Empire defeated the Mamluk Sultanate in 1517 and took control of most Arab lands. The last Abbasid Caliph at Cairo, al-Mutawakkil III, was taken into custody and was transported to Istanbul, where he reportedly surrendered the Caliphate to Selim I. According to Barthold, the first time the title of "Caliph" was used as a political instead of symbolic religious title by the Ottomans was the peace treaty with Russia in 1774. The outcome of this war was disastrous for the Ottomans. Large territories, including those with large Muslim populations, such as Crimea, were lost to the Russian Empire. However, the Ottomans under Abdul Hamid I claimed a diplomatic victory by assigning themselves the protectors of Muslims in Russia as part of the peace treaty. This was the first time the Ottoman caliph was acknowledged as having political significance outside of Ottoman borders by a European power. As a consequence of this diplomatic victory, as the Ottoman borders were shrinking, the powers of the Ottoman caliph increased.

Around 1880 Sultan Abdul Hamid II reasserted the title as a way of countering the spread of Russian expansion into Muslim lands. His claim was most fervently accepted by the Muslims of British India. By the eve of the First World War, the Ottoman state, despite its weakness vis-à-vis Europe, represented the largest and most powerful independent Islamic political entity. But the sultan also enjoyed some authority beyond the borders of his shrinking empire as caliph of Muslims in Egypt, India and Central Asia.

Khilafat Movement, 1920

In the 1920s the Khilafat Movement, a movement to defend the Ottoman Caliphate, spread throughout the British colonial territories in what is now Pakistan. It was particularly strong here in British India, where it formed a rallying point for Indian Muslims and was the one of the many anti-British Indian political movements to enjoy widespread support. Its leaders included Maulana Mohammad Ali, his brother Shawkat Ali, and Abul Kalam Azad, Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari, and Hasrat Mohani. For a time it worked in alliance with Hindu communities and was supported by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who was a member of the Central Khilafat Committee.[6][7]

However, the movement lost its momentum after the arrest or flight of its leaders, and a series of offshoots splintered off from the main organization.

End of the Caliphate, 1924

On March 3, 1924, the first President of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, as part of his reforms, constitutionally abolished the institution of the Caliphate. Its powers within Turkey were transferred to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (parliament) of the newly formed Turkish Republic and the title has since been inactive.

Scattered attempts to revive the Caliphate elsewhere in the Muslim world were made in the years immediately following its abandonment by Turkey, but none were successful. Hussein bin Ali, the Sharif of Mecca, the title of the former governors of the Hejaz, who aided the British during World War I and revolted against Istanbul, declared himself Caliph two days after Turkey relinquished the title. But his claim was largely ignored, and he was soon ousted and driven out of Arabia by Ibn Saud, a rival who had no interest in the Caliphate. The last Ottoman Sultan Mehmed VI made a similar attempt to re-establish himself as Caliph in the Hejaz after leaving Turkey, but he was also unsuccessful. A summit was convened at Cairo in 1926 to discuss the revival of the Caliphate, but most Muslim countries did not participate and no action was taken to implement the summit's resolutions.

Though the title Ameer al-Mumineen was adopted by the King of Morocco and Mullah Mohammed Omar, former head of the now-defunct Taliban regime of Afghanistan, neither claimed any legal standing or authority over Muslims outside the borders of their respective countries. The closest thing to a Caliphate in existence today is the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), an international organization with limited influence founded in 1969 consisting of the governments of most Muslim-majority countries.

Religious Basis

Quran

The following excerpt from the Qur'an, known as the 'The Istikhlaf Verse', forms the basis of the Quranic concept of Caliphate:

"Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Successors (Khalifas) in the earth, as He made Successors (Khalifas) from among those who were before them; and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely give them in exchange security and peace after their fear: They will worship Me, and they will not associate anything with Me. Then who so is ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious."[24:55] (Surah Al-Nur, Verse 55)

Sunnis argue that to govern a state by Islamic law (Shariah) is, by definition, to rule via the Caliphate, and use the following verses to sustain their claim.

So govern between the people by that which God has revealed (Islam), and follow not their vain desires, beware of them in case they seduce you from just some part of that which God has revealed to you

—[Qur'an 004:049]

O you who believe! Obey God, and obey the messenger and then those among you who are in authority; and if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to God and the messenger's rulings, if you are (in truth) believers in God and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end.

—[Qur'an 004:059]

HADITH

The following Hadith from Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal prophesies two eras of Caliphate (both on the lines/precepts of prophethood).

"Hadhrat Huzaifa narrated that the Messenger of Allah said: Prophethood will remain among you as long as Allah wills. Then Caliphate (Khilafat) on the lines of Prophethood shall commence, and remain as long as Allah wills. Then corrupt/erosive monarchy would take place, and it will remain as long as Allah wills. After that, despotic kingship would emerge, and it will remain as long as Allah wills. Then, the Caliphate (Khilafat) shall come once again based on the precept of Prophethood."[9]

In the above Hadith the first era of Caliphate is commonly accepted by the Muslims as that of the Rashidun Caliphate.

Nafi'a reported saying:

It has been reported on the authority of Nafi, that 'Abdullah b. Umar paid a visit to Abdullah b. Muti' in the days (when atrocities were perpetrated on the People Of Medina) at Harra in the time of Yazid b. Mu'awiya. Ibn Muti' said: Place a pillow for Abu 'Abd al-Rahman (family name of 'Abdullah b. 'Umar). But the latter said: I have not come to sit with you. I have come to you to tell you a tradition I heard from the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him). I heard him say: One who withdraws his band from obedience (to the Amir) will find no argument (in his defence) when he stands before Allah on the Day of Judgment, and one who dies without having bound himself by an oath of allegiance (to an Amir) will die the death of one belonging to the days of Jahillyya. - Sahih Muslim, Book 020, Hadith 4562.

Hisham ibn Urwah reported on the authority of Abu Saleh on the authority of Abu Hurairah that Muhammad said:

Leaders will take charge of you after me, where the pious (one) will lead you with his piety and the impious (one) with his impiety, so only listen to them and obey them in everything which conforms with the truth (Islam). If they act rightly it is for your credit, and if they acted wrongly it is counted for you and against them.

Muslim narrated on the authority of al-A'araj, on the authority of Abu Hurairah, that Muhammad said:

Behold, the Imam (Caliph) is but a shield from behind whom the people fight and by whom they defend themselves.

Muslim reported on the authority of Abdel Aziz al-Muqrin, who said,

I accompanied Abu Hurairah for five years and heard him talking of Muhammd's saying: The Prophets ruled over the children of Israel, whenever a Prophet died another Prophet succeeded him, but there will be no Prophet after me. There will be Khalifahs and they will number many. They asked: What then do you order us? He said: Fulfil the baya'a to them one after the other and give them their due. Surely God will ask them about what He entrusted them with.

The Sahaba of Muhammad

Al-Habbab Ibn ul-Munthir said, when the Sahaba met in the wake of the death of Muhammad, (at the thaqifa hall) of Bani Sa'ida:

Let there be one Amir from us and one Amir from you (meaning one from the Ansar and one from the Mohajireen).

Upon this Abu Bakr replied:

It is forbidden for Muslims to have two Amirs (rulers)...

Then he got up and addressed the Muslims.[10][11][12][13][14][15]

It has additionally been reported[16] that Abu Bakr went on to say on the day of Al-Saqifa:

It is forbidden for Muslims to have two Amirs for this would cause differences in their affairs and concepts, their unity would be divided and disputes would break out amongst them. The Sunnah would then be abandoned, the bida'a (innovations) would spread and Fitna would grow, and that is in no one's interests.

The Sahaba agreed to this and selected Abu Bakr as their first Khaleef. Habbab ibn Mundhir who suggested the idea of two Ameers corrected himself and was the first to give Abu Bakr the Bay'ah. This indicates an Ijma as-Sahaba of all of the Sahaba. Ali ibni abi Talib, who was attending the body of Muhammad at the time, also consented to this.

Imam Ali whom the Shia revere said[17]:

People must have an Amir...where the believer works under his Imara (rule) and under which the unbeliever would also benefit, until his rule ended by the end of his life (ajal), the booty (fay'i) would be gathered, the enemy would

be fought, the routes would be made safe, the strong one will return what he took from the weak till the tyrant would be contained, and not bother anyone.

Political system

Electing or appointing a Caliph

Fred Donner, in his book The Early Islamic Conquests (1981), argues that the standard Arabian practice during the early Caliphates was for the prominent men of a kinship group, or tribe, to gather after a leader's death and elect a leader from amongst themselves, although there was no specified procedure for this shura, or consultative assembly. Candidates were usually from the same lineage as the deceased leader, but they were not necessarily his sons. Capable men who would lead well were preferred over an ineffectual direct heir, as there was no basis in the majority Sunni view that the head of state or governor should be chosen based on lineage alone.

This argument is advanced by Sunni Muslims, who believe that Muhammad's companion Abu Bakr was elected by the community and that this was the proper procedure. They further argue that a caliph is ideally chosen by election or community consensus, even though the caliphate soon became a hereditary office, or the prize of the strongest general.

Al-Mawardi has written that the caliph should be Qurayshi. Abu Bakr Al-Baqillani has said that the leader of the Muslims simply should be from the majority. Abu Hanifa an-Nu‘man also wrote that the leader must come from the majority.[49]

Shi'a belief

Shi'a Muslims believe in the Imamate, in which the rulers are selected from Muhammad's Ahl al-Bayt. They believe that before his death, Muhammad had given many indications, in Ghadir Khumm particularly, that he considered Ali, his cousin and son-in-law, as his divinely chosen successor. They say that Abu Bakr had seized power by threatening and using force against Ali, and so Shi'a Muslims consider the three caliphs before Ali as usurpers. Ali and his descendants, the twelve Imams, are believed to have been the only proper leaders.

Main article: Hokumat-e Islami : Velayat-e faqih (book by Khomeini)

In the absence of a Caliphate headed by their Imams, some Shi'a believe that the system of Islamic government based on Vilayat-e Faqih, where an Islamic jurist or faqih rules Muslims, suffices. However this idea, developed by the Marja (Ayatollah) Ruhollah Khomeini and established in Iran, is not universally accepted among Shi'as.

Sunni belief

Following the death of Muhammad, a meeting took place at Saqifah. At that meeting, Abu Bakr was elected caliph by the Muslim community. Sunni Muslims developed the belief that the caliph is a temporal political ruler, appointed to rule within the bounds of Islamic law (Sharia). The job of adjudicating orthodoxy and Islamic law was left to Islamic lawyers, judiciary, or specialists individually termed as Mujtahids and collectively named the Ulema. The first four caliphs are called the Rashidun meaning the Rightly Guided Caliphs, because they are believed to have followed the Qur'an and the sunnah (example) of Muhammad in all things.

Majlis al-Shura: Parliament

Traditional Sunni Islamic lawyers agree that shura, loosely translated as 'consultation of the people', is a function of the caliphate. The Majlis al-Shura advise the caliph. The importance of this is premised by the following verses of the Qur'an:

"...those who answer the call of their Lord and establish the prayer, and who conduct their affairs by Shura. [are loved by God]"[42:38]

"...consult them (the people) in their affairs. Then when you have taken a decision (from them), put your trust in Allah"[3:159]

The majlis is also the means to elect a new caliph. Al-Mawardi has written that members of the majlis should satisfy three conditions: they must be just, they must have enough knowledge to distinguish a good caliph from a bad one, and must have sufficient wisdom and judgment to select the best caliph. Al-Mawardi also said in emergencies when there is no caliphate and no majlis, the people themselves should create a majlis, select a list of candidates for caliph, then the majlis should select from the list of candidates.[49]

Some modern interpretations of the role of the Majlis al-Shura include those by Islamist author Sayyid Qutb and by Taqiuddin al-Nabhani, the founder of a transnational political movement devoted to the revival of the Caliphate. In an analysis of the shura chapter of the Qur'an, Qutb argued Islam requires only that the ruler consult with at least some of the ruled (usually the elite), within the general context of God-made laws that the ruler must execute. Taqiuddin al-Nabhani, writes that Shura is important and part of the "the ruling structure" of the Islamic caliphate, "but not one of its pillars," and may be neglected without the Caliphate's rule becoming unIslamic. Non-Muslims may serve in the majlis, though they may not vote or serve as an official.

Accountability of rulers

Sunni Islamic lawyers have commented on when it is permissible to disobey, impeach or remove rulers in the Caliphate. This is usually when the rulers are not meeting public responsibilities obliged upon them under Islam.

Al-Mawardi said that if the rulers meet their Islamic responsibilities to the public, the people must obey their laws, but if they become either unjust or severely ineffective then the Caliph or ruler must be impeached via the Majlis al-Shura. Similarly Al-Baghdadi[clarify] believed that if the rulers do not uphold justice, the ummah via the majlis should give warning to them, and if unheeded then the Caliph can be impeached. Al-Juwayni argued that Islam is the goal of the ummah, so any ruler that deviates from this goal must be impeached. Al-Ghazali believed that oppression by a caliph is enough for impeachment. Rather than just relying on impeachment, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani obliged rebellion upon the people if the caliph began to act with no regard for Islamic law. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani said that to ignore such a situation is haraam, and those who cannot revolt inside the caliphate should launch a struggle from outside. Al-Asqalani used two ayahs from the Qur'an to justify this:

"...And they (the sinners on qiyama) will say, 'Our Lord! We obeyed our leaders and our chiefs, and they misled us from the right path. Our Lord! Give them (the leaders) double the punishment you give us and curse them with a very great curse'..."[33:67–68]

Islamic lawyers commented that when the rulers refuse to step down via successful impeachment through the Majlis, becoming dictators through the support of a corrupt army, if the majority agree they have the option to launch a revolution against them. Many noted that this option is only exercised after factoring in the potential cost of life.[49]

Rule of Law

The following hadith establishes the principle of rule of law in relation to nepotism and accountability[50]

Narrated ‘Aisha: The people of Quraish worried about the lady from Bani Makhzum who had committed theft. They asked, "Who will intercede for her with Allah's Apostle?" Some said, "No one dare to do so except Usama bin Zaid the beloved one to Allah's Apostle." When Usama spoke about that to Allah's Apostle Allah's Apostle said: "Do you try to intercede for somebody in a case connected with Allah’s Prescribed Punishments?" Then he got up and delivered a sermon saying, "What destroyed the nations preceding you, was that if a noble amongst them stole, they would forgive him, and if a poor person amongst them stole, they would inflict Allah's Legal punishment on him. By Allah, if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad (my daughter) stole, I would cut off her hand."

Various Islamic lawyers do however place multiple conditions, and stipulations e.g. the poor cannot be penalised for stealing out of poverty, before executing such a law, making it very difficult to reach such a stage. It is well known during a time of drought in the Rashidun caliphate period, capital punishments were suspended until the effects of the drought passed.

Islamic jurists later formulated the concept of the rule of law, the equal subjection of all classes to the ordinary law of the land, where no person is above the law and where officials and private citizens are under a duty to obey the same law. A Qadi (Islamic judge) was also not allowed to discriminate on the grounds of religion, race, colour, kinship or prejudice. There were also a number of cases where Caliphs had to appear before judges as they prepared to take their verdict.[51]

According to Noah Feldman, a law professor at Harvard University, the legal scholars and jurists who once upheld the rule of law were replaced by a law governed by the state due to the codification of Sharia by the Ottoman Empire in the early 19th century:[52]

Economy

During the Muslim Agricultural Revolution, the Caliphate understood that real incentives were needed to increase productivity and wealth, thus enhancing tax revenues, hence they introduced a social transformation through the changed ownership of land,[53] where any individual of any gender[54] or any ethnic or religious background had the right to buy, sell, mortgage and inherit land for farming or any other purposes. They also introduced the signing of a contract for every major financial transaction concerning agriculture, industry, commerce, and employment. Copies of the contract were usually kept by both parties involved.[53]

Early forms of proto-capitalism and free markets were present in the Caliphate,[55] where an early market economy and early form of merchant capitalism was developed between the 8th-12th centuries, which some refer to as

"Islamic capitalism".[56] A vigorous monetary economy was created on the basis of the expanding levels of circulation of a stable high-value currency (the dinar) and the integration of monetary areas that were previously independent. Innovative new business techniques and forms of business organisation were introduced by economists, merchants and traders during this time. Such innovations included early trading companies, credit cards, big businesses, contracts, bills of exchange, long-distance international trade, early forms of partnership (mufawada) such as limited partnerships (mudaraba), and early forms of credit, debt, profit, loss, capital (al-mal), capital accumulation (nama al-mal),[57] circulating capital, capital expenditure, revenue, cheques, promissory notes,[58] trusts (waqf), startup companies,[59] savings accounts, transactional accounts, pawning, loaning, exchange rates, bankers, money changers, ledgers, deposits, assignments, the double-entry bookkeeping system,[60] and lawsuits.[61] Organizational enterprises similar to corporations independent from the state also existed in the medieval Islamic world.[62][63] Many of these concepts were adopted and further advanced in medieval Europe from the 13th century onwards.[57]

The concepts of welfare and pension were introduced in early Islamic law as forms of Zakat (charity), one of the Five Pillars of Islam, since the time of the Abbasid caliph Al-Mansur in the 8th century. The taxes (including Zakat and Jizya) collected in the treasury of an Islamic government was used to provide income for the needy, including the poor, elderly, orphans, widows, and the disabled. According to the Islamic jurist Al-Ghazali (Algazel, 1058-1111), the government was also expected to store up food supplies in every region in case a disaster or famine occurs. The Caliphate was thus one of the earliest welfare states.[64]

The Islamic Empire experienced a growth in literacy, having the highest literacy rate of the Middle Ages, comparable to Athens' literacy in Classical Antiquity but on a larger scale.[65] The average life expectancy in the lands under Islamic rule also experienced an increase, due to the Muslim Agricultural Revolution as well as improved medical care. In contrast to the average lifespan in the ancient Greco-Roman world (22-28 years),[66][67] the average lifespan in the early Islamic Caliphate was more than 35 years.[68] The average lifespans of the Islamic scholarly class in particular was much higher: 84.3 years in 10th-11th century Iraq and Persia,[69] 72.8 years in the 11th century Middle East, 69-75 years in 11th century Islamic Spain,[70] 75 years in 12th century Persia,[71] and 59-72 years in 13th century Persia.[72]

Famous caliphs

Abu Bakr - First Rashidun (Four Righteously Guided Caliphs) of the Sunnis. Subdued rebel tribes in the Ridda wars.

Umar (Umar ibn al-Khattab) - Second Rashidun. During his reign, the Islamic empire expanded to include Egypt, Jerusalem, and Persia.

Uthman Ibn Affan - Third Rashidun. The Qur'an was compiled under his direction. Killed by rebels.

Ali (Ali ibn Abu Talib) - Fourth and last Rashidun, and considered the first imam by Shi'a Muslims. His reign was fraught with internal conflict.

Hasan ibn Ali - Fifth Caliph (considered as "rightly guided" by many Sunnis as well as Shias). He ruled for six months only and handed the powers to Muawiyah I in order to unite the Muslims again.

Muawiyah I - First caliph of the Umayyad dynasty. Muawiyah instituted dynastic rule by appointing his son Yazid I as his successor, a trend that would continue through subsequent caliphates.

Umar ibn AbdulAziz - Umayyad caliph considered by some (mainly Sunnis) to be a sixth true and legitimate caliph under Islamic Laws of electing Caliph.

Harun al-Rashid - An Abbasid caliph during whose reign Baghdad became the world's prominent centre of trade, learning, and culture. Harun is the subject of many stories in the famous work One Thousand and One Nights.

Suleiman the Magnificent - Early Ottoman Sultan during whose reign the Ottoman Empire reached its zenith.

Abdul Hamid II - The last Ottoman Sultan to rule with absolute power.

Abdülmecid II - The last Caliph of the Ottoman Dynasty, the 101st Caliph in line from Caliph Abu Bakr and nominally the 37th Head of the Ottoman Imperial House.

Caliph

The Caliph (خليفة khalīfah) is the head of state in a Caliphate, and the title for the leader of the Islamic Ummah, an Islamic community ruled by the Shari'ah. It is a transliterated version of the Arabic word خليفة Khalīfah (help·info) which means "successor" or "representative". The early leaders of the Muslim nation following Muhammad's (570–632) death were called "Khalifat Rasul Allah", means the political successors to the messenger of God (referring to Muhammad). Some academics prefer to transliterate the term as Khalīf.

Caliphs were often also referred to as Amīr al-Mu'minīn (أمير-المؤمنين) "Commander of the Faithful", Imam al-Ummah, Imam al-Mu'minīn (إمام المؤمنين), or more colloquially, leader of the Muslims. After the first four caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, and Ali ibn Abi Talib), the title was claimed by the Umayyads, the Abbasids, and the Ottomans, and at times, by competing dynasties in Spain, Northern Africa, and Egypt. Most historical Muslim governors were called sultans or amirs, and gave allegiance to a caliph, but at times had very little real authority. The title has been defunct since the Republic of Turkey abolished the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, although some individuals and groups have called for its restoration.[1]

Succession to Muhammad

Fred Donner, in his book The Early Islamic Conquests (1981), argues that the standard Arabian practice at the time was for the prominent men of a kinship group, or tribe, to gather after a leader's death and elect a leader from amongst themselves. There was no specified procedure for this shura, or consultation. Candidates were usually from the same lineage as the deceased leader, but they were not necessarily. Capable men who would lead well were preferred over an ineffectual heir.

This is also the argument advanced by Sunni Muslims, who believe that Muhammad's Father-in-law Abu Bakr was chosen by the community and that this was the proper procedure. They further argue that a caliph may be ideally chosen by election or community consensus.

Shi'a Muslims disagree. They believe that since Muhammad had given many indications that ʿAlī ibn Abī Talib, his cousin and son-in-law, is his chosen successor, regardless of democracy. ʿAlī and his descendants are believed to have been the only proper Muslim leaders, or imams in the Shia's point of view. This matter is covered in much greater detail in the article Succession to Muhammad and in the article on Shi'a Islam.

A third branch of Islam, the Ibadi Kharijites, believes that the caliphate rightly belongs to the greatest spiritual leader among Muslims, regardless of his lineage. They are currently an extremely small sect, found mainly in Oman.

The authority of the successor

The question of who should succeed Muhammad was not the only issue that faced the early Muslims; they also had to clarify the extent of the leader's powers. Muhammad, during his lifetime, was not only the Muslim political leader, but the Islamic prophet. All law and spiritual practice proceeded from Muhammad. Nobody claimed that his successor would be a prophet; succession referred to political authority. The uncertainty centered on the extent of that authority. Muhammad's revelations, claiming to be directly from God, were soon codified and written down as the Qur'an, which was accepted as a supreme authority, limiting what a caliph could legitimately command.

However, there is some evidence that some early caliphs did believe that they had authority to rule in matters not specified in the Qur'an. They believed themselves to be temporal and spiritual leaders even in issues not commanded in the Quran, and insisted that implicit obedience to the caliph in all things not contradicting the Quran, was the hallmark of the good Muslim. The modern scholars Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, in their book God's Caliph, outline the evidence for an early, expansive view of the caliph's importance and authority. They argue that this view of the caliph was eventually nullified (in Sunni Islam, at least) by the rising power of the ulema, or Islamic lawyers, judges, scholars, and religious specialists. The ulema insisted on their right to determine what was legal and orthodox. The proper Muslim leader, in the ulema's opinion, was the leader who enforced the rulings of the ulema, rather than making rulings of his own, unless he himself was qualified in Islamic law. Conflict between caliph and ulema, akin to a modern judiciary, was a recurring theme in early Islamic history, and ended in the victory of the ulema. The caliph was henceforth limited to temporal rule only. He would be considered a righteous caliph if he were guided by the ulema. Crone and Hinds argue that Shi'a Muslims, with their expansive view of the powers of the imamate, have preserved some of the beliefs of the early Ummayad dynasty which ironically, they despise. Crone and Hinds' thesis is not accepted by all scholars.

Most Sunni Muslims now believe that the caliph has always been a merely temporal ruler, and that the ulema has always been responsible for adjudicating orthodoxy and Islamic law (shari'a). The first four caliphs are called the Rashidun, the Rightly Guided Caliphs, because they are believed to have followed the Qur'an and the way or sunnah of Muhammad in all things. This formulation itself presumes the Sunni ulema's view historically.

Al-Ghazali on the desired character traits for administration

Al Ghazali wrote the "Nasihat al-Muluk" or "Advice for Kings" to a Seljuq Caliph in which he gave ten different ethics of royal administration:

1. The ruler should understand the importance and danger of the authority entrusted to him. In authority there is great blessing, since he who exercises it righteously obtained unsurpassed happiness but if any ruler fails to do so he incurs torment surpassed only by the torment for unbelief.
2. The ruler should always be thirsting to meet devout religious scholars and ask them for advice.
3. The ruler should understand that he must not covet the wives of other men and be content with personally refraining from injustice, but must discipline his slave-troops, servants, and officers and never tolerate unjust conduct by them; for he will be interrogated not only about his own unjust deeds but also about those of his staff.
4. The ruler should not be dominated by pride; for pride gives rise to the dominance of anger, and will impel him to revenge. Anger is the evil genius and blight of the intellect. If anger is becoming dominant it will be necessary for the ruler in all his affairs to bend his inclinations in the direction of forgiveness and make a habit of generosity and forbearance unless he is to be like the wild beasts.
5. In every situation that arises, the ruler should figure that he is the subject and the other person is the holder of authority. He should not sanction for others anything that he would not sanction for himself. For if he would do so he would be making fraudulent and treasonable use of the authority entrusted to him.
6. The ruler should not disregard the attendance of petitioners at his court and should beware of the danger of so doing. He should solve the grievances of the Muslims.
7. The ruler should not form a habit of indulging the passions. Although he might dress more finely or eat more sumptuously, he should be content with all that he has; for without contentment, just conduct will not be possible.
8. The ruler should make the utmost effort to behave gently and avoid governing harshly.
9. The ruler should endeavor to keep all the subjects pleased with him. The ruler should not let himself be so deluded by the praise he gets from any who approach him as to believe that all the subjects are pleased with

him. On the contrary, such praise is entirely due to fear. He must therefore appoint trustworthy persons to carry on espionage and inquire about his standing among the people, so that he may be able to learn his faults from men's tongues.

10. The ruler should not give satisfaction to any person if a contravention of God's law would be required to please him for no harm will come from such a person's displeasure.

Single Caliph for the Muslim World

It has been recorded that Muhammad has said:

"Whosoever comes to you while your affairs has been united under one man, intending to break your strength or dissolve your unity, kill him."[2]

"The children of Israel have been governed by Prophets; whenever a Prophet died another Prophet succeeded him; but there will be no prophet after me. There will be caliphs and they will number many (in one time); they asked: What then do you order us? He (saw) said: Fulfil bayah to them, only the first of them, the first of them, and give them their dues; for verily Allah will ask them about what he entrusted them with"[2]

"When the oath of allegiance has been taken for two Caliphs, kill the latter of them". [2]

Abu-Bakr Muhammad's primary disciple is reported to have said: "It is forbidden for Muslims to have two Amirs for this would cause differences in their affairs and concepts, their unity would be divided and disputes would break out amongst them. The Sunnah would then be abandoned, the bida'a (innovations) would spread and Fitna would grow, and that is in no one's interests".[3]

Umar bin Al-Khattab another disciple of Muhammad is reported to have said: "There is no way for two (leaders) together at any one time" [3]

Ibn Khaldun the famous 14th century Muslim scholar, economist and historian said: "It is not possible to appoint two men to the position (of caliph) at the same time. Religious scholars generally are of this opinion, on the basis of certain hadith(recorded statements) of Muhammad. Those hadith are found in the book entitled, "On Leadership (imarah)," in Sahih Muslim. They expressly indicate that this is so."[4]

The 10th century Sunni scholar Imam of al-Haramayn (i.e Makkah and Medinah) al-Juwayni wrote:

"Our (scholarly) associates agree on precluding the investing of two different individuals with the imamate at either end of the world. But, they add: If it should happen that two different persons were invested with the imamate, that

would be analogous to the situation of two guardians contracting a marriage for the same woman to two different suitors without either being aware of the other's contract. The decision in the matter rests on the application of jurisprudence. My opinion on this issue is that investiture of two individuals with the imamate in a single locality within relatively restricted boundaries and limited provinces is not permitted and the investiture should be in accord with a consensus. But, when the distances are great and the two Imams quite remote from each other, there is room to allow it, although this cannot be established conclusively." [5]

The 11th century Sunni jurist Al-Mawardi wrote:

"The investment of two rulers in two different cities is invalid in both cases, for the ummah may not have two rulers simultaneously, even though there are some dissenting voices who would make that permissible. Jurists are disagreed regarding which one of the two should be sovereign. One party take him to be the one elected in the city where the previous leader died, because its residents are more entitled to make the choice, the rest of the Community in other districts delegating the task to them... Others have suggested that each one of the two must give up the office in favour of his opponent, thus allowing the elections to opt for one or the other.." [6]

Imam Al-Nawawi a 12th century authority of the Sunni Shafi'i madhhab said: "It is forbidden to give an oath to two caliphs or more, even in different parts of the world and even if they are far apart"[7]

Imam Al-Juzairi, a more modern expert on the Fiqh of the four Sunni madhhabs said regarding the opinion of the four Imams, "...It is forbidden for Muslims to have two Imams in the world whether in agreement or discord." [8]

History

Abū Bakr nominated Umar as his successor on his deathbed, and the Muslim community submitted to his choice. His successor, Uthman, was elected by a council of electors. Uthman was killed by members of a disaffected group. ʿAlī then took control, but was not universally accepted as caliph. He faced numerous rebellions and was assassinated after a tumultuous rule of only five years. This period is known as the Fitna, or the first Islamic civil war.

One of ʿAlī's challengers was Muʿāwiyya, a relative of Uthman. After ʿAlī's death, Muʿāwiyya managed to overcome all other claimants to the Muslim Caliphate.

The first four caliphs are called Rashidun, or "rightly guided" caliphs by Sunni muslims. Even though there were many pious and prominent caliphs after them, being the companion(sahaba) of the prophet, they are considered the best.

Umayyad

Under the Umayyads, the Muslim empire grew rapidly. To the West, Muslim rule expanded across North Africa and into Spain. To the East, it expanded through Iran and ultimately to India. This made it one of the largest empires in the history of West Eurasia, extending its entire breadth.

However, the Umayyad dynasty was not universally supported within Islam itself. Some Muslims supported prominent early Muslims like az-Zubayr; others felt that only members of Muhammad's clan, the Banū Hashim, or his own lineage, the descendants of ʿAlī, should rule. There were numerous rebellions against the Umayyads, as well as splits within the Umayyad ranks (notably, the rivalry between Yaman and Qays). Eventually, supporters of the Banu Hisham and Alid claims united to bring down the Umayyads in 750. However, the Shiʿat ʿAlī, "the Party of ʿAlī", were again disappointed when the Abbasid dynasty took power, as the Abbasids were descended from Muhammad's uncle, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib and not from ʿAlī. Following this disappointment, the Shiʿat ʿAlī finally split from the majority Sunni Muslims and formed what are today the several Shiʿa denominations.

Abbasids

The Abbasids would provide an unbroken line of caliphs for over three centuries, consolidating Islamic rule and cultivating great intellectual and cultural developments in the Middle East. But by 940 the power of the caliphate under the Abbasids was waning as non-Arabs, particularly the Turkish (and later the Mamluks in Egypt in the latter half of the 13th century), gained influence, and sultans and emirs became increasingly independent. However, the caliphate endured as both a symbolic position and a unifying entity for the Islamic world.

During the period of the Abassid dynasty, Abassid claims to the caliphate did not go unchallenged. The Shiʿa Said ibn Husayn of the Fatimid dynasty, which claimed descendancy of Muhammad through his daughter, claimed the title of Caliph in 909, creating a separate line of caliphs in North Africa. Initially covering Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, the Fatimid caliphs extended their rule for the next 150 years, taking Egypt and Palestine, before the Abbassid dynasty was able to turn the tide, limiting Fatimid rule to Egypt. The Fatimid dynasty finally ended in 1171. The Umayyad dynasty, which had survived and come to rule over the Muslim provinces of Spain, reclaimed the title of Caliph in 929, lasting until it was overthrown in 1031.

Shadow Caliphate

1258 saw the conquest of Baghdad and the execution of Abassid caliph al-Musta'sim by Mongol forces under Hulagu Khan. A surviving member of the Abbasid House was installed as Caliph at Cairo under the patronage of the Mamluk Sultanate three years later. However, the authority of this line of Caliphs was confined to ceremonial and religious matters, and later Muslim historians referred to it as a "shadow" caliphate.

Ottomans

As the Ottoman Empire grew in size and strength, Ottoman rulers beginning with Mehmed II began to claim caliphal authority. Their claim was strengthened when the Ottoman Empire defeated the Mamluk Sultanate in 1517 and took control of most Arab lands. The last Abbasid Caliph at Cairo, al-Mutawakkil III, was taken into custody and was transported to İstanbul, where he surrendered the Caliphate to Selim I.

Ottoman rulers were known primarily by the title of Sultan.

According to Barthold, the first time the title of caliph was used as a political instead of symbolic religious title by the Ottomans was the peace treaty with Russia in 1774. The outcome of this war was disastrous for the Ottomans. Large territories, including those with large Muslim populations such as Crimea, were lost to the Christian Russian Empire. However, the Ottomans under Abdulhamid I claimed a diplomatic victory, the recognition of themselves as

protectors of Muslims in Russia as part of the peace treaty. This was the first time the Ottoman caliph was acknowledged as having political significance outside of Ottoman borders by a European power. As a consequence of this diplomatic victory, as the Ottoman borders were shrinking, the powers of the Ottoman caliph increased.

Around 1880 Sultan Abdulhamid II reasserted the title as a way of countering creeping European colonialism in Muslim lands. His claim was most fervently accepted by the Muslims of British India. By the eve of the First World War, the Ottoman state, despite its weakness vis-à-vis Europe, represented the largest and most powerful independent Islamic political entity. But the sultan also enjoyed some authority beyond the borders of his shrinking empire as caliph of Muslims in Egypt, India and Central Asia.

Abolition of the institution

On March 3, 1924, the Turkish Grand National Assembly, on the initiative of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, abolished the institution of the Caliphate, transferring its powers within Turkey to the Assembly.

Occasional demonstrations have been held calling for the reestablishment of the Caliphate.

Umayyad Caliphate

The Umayyad Caliphate (Arabic: بنو أمية, Banu Umayyah) was the second of the four Arab caliphates established after the death of Muhammad. It was ruled by the Umayyad dynasty, whose name derives from Umayya ibn Abd Shams, the great-grandfather of the first Umayyad caliph. The Umayyad Arab Caliphate is historically the fifth largest empire, the second largest contiguous empire and the third largest empire by percentage of world population (29.5%). Damascus was the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate. After the Umayyads were overthrown by the Abbasid Caliphate, they relocated to Al-Andalus, where they established the Caliphate of Córdoba.

Islamic Caliphate Flags

A caliphate is the Islamic form of government representing the political unity and leadership of the Muslim world. The Caliph's position is based on the notion of a successor to the Islamic prophet Muhammad's political authority. According to Sunnis, a Caliph is ideally a member of the Quraysh tribe elected by Muslims or their representatives; and according to Shia Islam, an Imam descended in a line from the Ahl al-Bayt.

From the time of Muhammad until 1924, successive and contemporary caliphates were held by various dynasties, including the Rashidun (the first four caliphs after Muhammad), the Umayyads (Damascus & Córdoba), the Abbasids (Baghdad), the Fatimids (Cairo), and finally the Turkish Ottomans (Istanbul).

Umayyad Caliphate : Origins

According to tradition, the Umayyad family (also known as the Banu Abd-Shams) and the Islamic Prophet Muhammad both descended from a common ancestor, Abd Manaf ibn Qusai. Muhammad descended from Abd Munaf via his son Hashim, while the Umayyads descended from Abd Munaf via a different son, Abd-Shams, whose son was Umayya. The two families are therefore considered to be different clans (those of Hashim and of Umayya, respectively) of the same tribe (that of the Quraish). However Shia historians point out that Umayya is an adopted son of Abd Shams so he didn't have blood relation with Abd Manaf ibn Qusai. Umayya was later discarded from the noble family.[1]

The Umayyads and the Hashimites were bitter rivals. The rivalry stemmed from the initial opposition of Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, the grandson of Umayya, to Muhammad and to Islam. Abu Sufyan sought to exterminate the adherents of the new religion by waging a series of battles. However, he eventually embraced Islam, as did his son (the future caliph Muawiyah I), and the two provided much-needed political and diplomatic skills for the management of the quickly expanding Islamic empire.

Most historians consider Caliph Muawiyah I (661-80) to have been the second ruler of the Umayyad dynasty, as he was the first to assert the Umayyads' right to rule on a dynastic principle. Caliph Uthman (644-56) was also descended from Umayya, and during his time had been criticized for placing members of his family within political positions. However, since Uthman never named an heir, he cannot be considered the founder of a dynasty.

The origins of Umayyad rule date back to the assassination of Uthman in 656. At this time Ali, a member of the Hashim clan and a cousin of Prophet Muhammad, became the caliph. He soon met with resistance from several factions, and moved his capital from Medina to Kufa. The resulting conflict, which lasted from 656 until 661, is known as the First Fitna ("time of trial").

Ali was first opposed by an alliance led by Aisha, the widow of Muhammad, and Talhah and Al-Zubayr, two of the Companions of the Prophet. The two sides clashed at the Battle of the Camel in 656, where Ali won a decisive victory.

Following the Battle of the Camel, Muawiyah, who had become governor of Syria, accused Ali of harboring the assassins of Uthman and demanded that they be handed over. The armies of Muawiyah and Ali met at the Battle of Siffin in 657. For reasons that remain obscure,[2] the battle was stopped before either side had achieved victory, and the two parties agreed to arbitrate their dispute. Both the terms and the result of the arbitration, however, are subjects of contradictory and sometimes confused reports.

Following the battle, a large group of Ali's soldiers, who resented his decision to submit the dispute to arbitration, broke away from Ali's force, rallying under the slogan, "arbitration belongs to God alone." This group came to be known as the Kharijites ("those who leave").

In 659 Ali's forces and the Kharijites met in the Battle of Nahrawan. Although Ali won the battle, the constant conflict had begun to affect his standing, and in the following years some Syrians seem to have acclaimed Muawiyah as a rival caliph.

Ali was assassinated in 661, apparently by a Kharijite partisan. Muawiyah marched to Kufa, where he persuaded a number of Ali's supporters to acclaim him as caliph instead of Ali's son, Hasan. Following his elevation, Muawiyah moved the capital of the caliphate to Damascus. Syria would remain the base of Umayyad power until the end of the dynasty in 750 AD. However, this Dinasty reborn in Cordoba (Al Andalus, today's Portugal and Spain) and lasted there for another 800 years in several forms (Emirate, Caliphate, Taifas, and as Kingdom of Granada till the 17th century AD, within Portuguese and Spanish borders).

During the later period of its existence and particularly from 1031 AD under the Ta'ifa system of Islamic Emirates (Princedoms) in the southern half of Iberia, the Emirate/Sultanate of Granada maintained its independence largely due to the payment of Tributes to the northern Christian Kingdoms which began to gradually expand south at its expense from 1031.

The Umayyad Caliphate in Iberia came to an end on the 2 January 1492 with the conquest of Granada. The last Muslim ruler of Granada, Muhammad XII, better known as Boabdil, surrendered his kingdom to Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, the Catholic Monarchs (los Reyes Católicos). This event marked the end of Muslim rule in Iberia, and the end of the last Umayyad Caliphate.

History of the Umayyad Caliphate

The Sufyanids

Muawiyah's personal dynasty, the "Sufyanids" (descendants of Abu Sufyan), reigned from 661 to 684, until his grandson Muawiya II. The reign of Muawiyah I was marked by internal security and external expansion. On the internal front, only one major rebellion is recorded, that of Hujr ibn Adi in Kufa. Hujr ibn Adi supported the claims of the descendants of Ali to the caliphate, but his movement was easily suppressed by the governor of Iraq, Ziyad ibn Abi Sufyan.

Muawiyah also encouraged peaceful coexistence with the Christian communities of Syria, and one of his closest advisers was Sarjun, the father of John of Damascus. At the same time, he waged unceasing war against the Byzantine Empire. During his reign, Rhodes and Crete were occupied, and several assaults were launched against Constantinople. Muawiyah also oversaw military expansion in North Africa (the foundation of Kairouan) and in Central Asia (the conquest of Kabul, Bukhara, and Samarkand).

Following Muawiyah's death in 680, he was succeeded by his son, Yazid I. The hereditary accession of Yazid was opposed by a number of prominent Muslims, most notably Abd-Allah ibn al-Zubayr, son of one of the Companions of the Prophet, and Husayn ibn Ali, grandson of the Prophet and younger son of Ali. The resulting conflict is known as the Second Fitna.

In 680 Ibn al-Zubayr and Husayn fled Medina for Mecca. While Ibn al-Zubayr would stay in Mecca until his death, Husayn decided to travel on to Kufa to rally support. However, an Umayyad army intercepted and routed his party at the Battle of Karbala.

Following the death of Husayn, Ibn al-Zubayr, although remaining in Mecca, was associated with two opposition movements, one centered in Medina and the other around Kharijites in Basra and Arabia. In 683, Yazid dispatched an army to subdue both. This army suppressed the Medinese opposition at the Battle of al-Harra, and continued on to lay siege to Mecca. At some point during the siege, the Kaaba was badly damaged in a fire. The destruction of the Kaaba became a major cause for censure of the Umayyads in later histories of the period.

Yazid died while the siege was still in progress, and the Umayyad army returned to Damascus, leaving Ibn al-Zubayr in control of Mecca. Yazid was succeeded at first by his son, Muawiya II (683-84), but he seems never to have been recognized as caliph outside of Syria. Two factions developed within Syria: the Confederation of Qays, who supported Ibn al-Zubayr, and the Quda'a, who supported Marwan, a descendant of Umayya via Wa'il ibn Umayyah. The partisans of Marwan triumphed at a battle at Marj Rahit, near Damascus, in 684, and Marwan became caliph shortly thereafter.

The First Marwanids

Marwan's first task was to assert his authority against the rival claims of Ibn al-Zubayr, who was at this time recognized as caliph throughout most of the Islamic world. Marwan recaptured Egypt for the Umayyads, but died in 685, having reigned for only nine months.

Marwan was succeeded by his son, Abd al-Malik (685-705), who reconsolidated Umayyad control of the caliphate. The early reign of Abd al-Malik was marked by the revolt of Al-Mukhtar, which was based in Kufa. Al-Mukhtar hoped to elevate Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, another son of Ali, to the caliphate, although Ibn al-Hanafiyyah himself may have had no connection to the revolt. The troops of al-Mukhtar engaged in battles both with the Umayyads (in 686, at the river Khazir near Mosul: an Umayyad defeat) and with Ibn al-Zubayr (in 687, at which time the revolt of al-Mukhtar was crushed). In 691 Umayyad troops reconquered Iraq, and in 692 the same army captured Mecca. Ibn al-Zubayr was killed in the attack.

The second major event of the early reign of Abd al-Malik was the construction of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. Although the chronology remains somewhat uncertain, the building seems to have been completed in 692, which means that it was under construction during the conflict with Ibn al-Zubayr. This had led some historians, both medieval and modern, to suggest that the Dome of the Rock was built to rival the Kaaba, which was under the control of Ibn al-Zubayr, as a destination for pilgrimage.

Abd al-Malik is credited with centralizing the administration of the caliphate, and with establishing Arabic as its official language. He also introduced a uniquely Muslim coinage, marked by its aniconic decoration, which supplanted the Byzantine and Sasanian coins that had previously been in use.

Following Abd al-Malik's death, his son, Al-Walid I (705-15) became caliph. Al-Walid was also active as a builder, sponsoring the construction of Al-Masjid al-Nabawi in Medina and the Great Mosque of Damascus.

A major figure during the reigns of both al-Walid and Abd al-Malik was the Umayyad governor of Iraq, Al-Hajjaj bin Yousef. Many Iraqis remained resistant to Umayyad rule, and al-Hajjaj imported Syrian troops to maintain order, whom he housed in a new garrison town, Wasit. These troops became crucial in the suppression of a revolt led by an Iraqi general, Ibn al-Ash'ath, in the early eighth century.

Al-Walid was succeeded by his brother, Sulayman (715-17), whose reign was dominated by a protracted siege of Constantinople. The failure of the siege marked the end of serious Arab ambitions against the Byzantine capital. However, the first two decades of the eighth century witnessed the continuing expansion of the caliphate, which pushed into Spain in the west, and into Central Asia and northern India in the east.

Sulyaman was succeeded by his cousin, Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz (717-20), whose position among the Umayyad caliphs is somewhat unique. He is the only Umayyad ruler to have been recognized by subsequent Islamic tradition as a genuine caliph (khalifa) and not merely as a worldly king (malik).

Umar is honored for his attempt to resolve the fiscal problems attendant upon conversion to Islam. During the Umayyad period, the majority of people living within the caliphate were not Muslim, but Christian, Jewish, Zoroastrian, or otherwise. These religious communities were not forced to convert to Islam, but were subject to a higher tax burden. This situation may actually have made widespread conversion to Islam undesirable from the point of view of state revenue, and there are reports that provincial governors actively discouraged such conversions. It is

not clear how Umar attempted to resolve this situation, but the sources portray him as having insisted on like treatment of Arab and non-Arab (mawali) Muslims, and on the removal of obstacles to the conversion of non-Arabs to Islam.

After the death of Umar, another son of Abd al-Malik, Yazid II (720-24) became caliph. Yazid is best known for his "iconoclastic edict," which ordered the destruction of Christian images within the territory of the caliphate. In 720, another major revolt arose in Iraq, this time led by Yazid ibn al-Muhallab.

Hisham and the limits of military expansion

The final son of Abd al-Malik to become caliph was Hisham (723-43), whose long and eventful reign was above all marked by the curtailment of military expansion.

North gate of the city of Resafa, site of Hisham's palace and court.

Hisham established his court at Resafa in northern Syria, which was closer to the Byzantine border than Damascus, and resumed hostilities against the Byzantines, which had lapsed following the failure of the last siege of Constantinople. The new campaigns resulted in a number of successful raids into Anatolia, but also in a major defeat (the Battle of Akroinon), and did not lead to any significant territorial expansion.

Hisham's reign furthermore witnessed the end of expansion in the west, following the defeat of the Arab army by the Franks at the Battle of Tours in 732. In 739 a major Berber Revolt broke out in North Africa, which was subdued only with difficulty.

Hisham suffered still worse defeats in the east, where his armies attempted to subdue both Tokharistan, with its center at Balkh, and Transoxiana, with its center at Samarkand. Both areas had already been partially conquered, but remained difficult to govern.

Once again, a particular difficulty concerned the question of the conversion of non-Arabs, especially the Sogdians of Transoxiana. Ashras ibn 'Abd Allah al-Sulami, governor of Khorasan, promised tax relief to those Sogdians who converted to Islam, but went back on his offer when it proved too popular and threatened to reduce tax revenues. In 734, al-Harith ibn Surayj led a revolt on behalf of the Sogdians, capturing Balkh but failing to take Merv. After this defeat, al-Harith's movement seems to have been dissolved, but the problem of the rights of non-Arab Muslims would continue to plague the Umayyads.

The Third Fitna

Hisham was succeeded by Al-Walid II (743-44), the son of Yazid II. Al-Walid is reported to have been more interested in earthly pleasures than in religion, a reputation that may be confirmed by the decoration of the so-called "desert palaces" (including Qusayr Amra and Khirbat al-Mafjar) that have been attributed to him. He quickly attracted the enmity of many, both by executing a number of those who had opposed his accession, and by persecuting the Qadariyya.

In 744, Yazid III, a son of al-Walid I, was proclaimed caliph in Damascus, and his army tracked down and killed al-Walid II. Yazid III has received a certain reputation for piety, and may have been sympathetic to the Qadariyya. He died a mere six months into his reign.

Yazid had appointed his brother, Ibrahim, as his successor, but Marwan II (744-50), the grandson of Marwan I, led an army from the northern frontier and entered Damascus in December of 744, where he was proclaimed caliph. Marwan immediately moved the capital north to Harran, in present-day Turkey. A rebellion soon broke out in Syria, perhaps due to resentment over the relocation of the capital, and in 746 Marwan razed the walls of Hims and Damascus in retaliation.

Marwan also faced significant opposition from Kharijites in Iraq and Iran, who put forth first Dahhak ibn Qays and then Abu Dulaf as rival caliphs. In 747 Marwan managed to reestablish control of Iraq, but by this time a more serious threat had arisen in Khurasan.

INSURRECTION

The movement that overthrew the Umayyad caliphate was known as the Hashimiyya, and led by the Abbasid family. The Abbasids were themselves members of the Hashim clan, the ancient rivals of the Umayyads, but the word "Hashimiyya" seems to refer specifically to Abu Hashim, a grandson of Ali and son of Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya. According to certain traditions, Abu Hashim died in 717 in Humeima in the house of Muhammad ibn Ali, the head of the Abbasid family, and before dying named Muhammad ibn Ali as his successor. This tradition allowed the Abbasids to rally the supporters of the failed revolt of Mukhtar, who had represented themselves as the supporters of Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya.

Beginning around 719, Hashimiyya missions began to seek adherents in Khurasan. Their campaign was framed as one of invitation (dawah), and was rather vaguely worded: they sought support for a "member of the family" of the Prophet, without making explicit mention of the Abbasids. These missions met with success both among Arabs and non-Arabs (mawali), although the latter may have played a particularly important role in the growth of the movement.

Map of the world in 750 AD before the Battle of the Zab, which caused the fall of the dynasty.

Around 746, Abu Muslim assumed leadership of the Hashimiyya in Khurasan. In 747 he successfully initiated an open revolt against Umayyad rule, which was carried out under the sign of the black flag. He soon established control of Khurasan, and dispatched an army westwards. Kufa fell to the Hashimiyya in 749, and in November of the same year Abu al-Abbas was recognized as the new caliph in the mosque at Kufa.

Map of the beginning of Abassid revolt before the Battle of the Zab, which caused the fall of the dynasty.

At this point Marwan mobilized his troops from Harran and advanced toward Iraq. In January of 750 the two forces met in the Battle of the Zab, and the Umayyads were defeated. Damascus fell to the Abbasids in April, and in August Marwan was killed in Egypt.

The victors dishonored the tombs of the Umayyads in Syria, sparing only that of Umar II, and most of the remaining members of the Umayyad family were tracked down and killed. One grandson of Hisham, 'Abd al-Rahman, survived and established a kingdom in Al-Andalus (Moorish Iberia), proclaiming his family to be the Umayyad Caliphate revived.

Previté-Orton argues that the reasons for the decline of the Ummayads was the rapid expansion of Islam. During Ummayad period, mass conversions brought Persians, Berbers, Copts, and Aramaics to Islam. These mawalis (clients) were often better educated and more civilised than their Arab masters. The new converts, on the basis of equality of all Muslims, transformed the political landscape. Previté-Orton also argues that the feud between Syria and Iraq, further weakened the empire.[4]

Legacy

Historical significance

The Umayyad caliphate was marked both by territorial expansion and by the administrative and cultural problems that such expansion created. Despite some notable exceptions, the Umayyads tended to favor the rights of the old Arab families, and in particular their own, over those of newly converted Muslims (mawali). Therefore they held to a less universalist conception of Islam than did many of their rivals. As G.R. Hawting has written, "Islam was in fact regarded as the property of the conquering aristocracy."[5]

According to one common view, the Umayyads transformed the caliphate from a religious institution (during the rashidun) to a dynastic one.[6] However, the Umayyad caliphs do seem to have understood themselves as the representatives of God on earth, and to have been responsible for the "definition and elaboration of God's ordinances, or in other words the definition or elaboration of Islamic law."[7]

During the period of the Umayyads, Arabic became the administrative language. State documents and currency was issued in the language. Mass conversions brought a large influx of Muslims to the caliphate. The Umayyads also constructed famous buildings such as the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem, and the Umayyad Mosque at Damascus.[6]

The Umayyads have met with a largely negative reception from later Islamic historians, who have accused them of promoting a kingship (mulk, a term with connotations of tyranny) instead of a true caliphate (khilafa). In this respect it is notable that the Umayyad caliphs referred to themselves, not as khalifat rasul Allah ("successor of the messenger of God," the title preferred by the tradition) but rather as khalifat Allah ("deputy of God"). The distinction seems to indicate that the Umayyads "regarded themselves as God's representatives at the head of the community and saw no need to share their religious power with, or delegate it to, the emergent class of religious scholars."[8]

In fact, it was precisely this class of scholars, based largely in Iraq, that was responsible for collecting and recording the traditions that form the primary source material for the history of the Umayyad period. In reconstructing this

history, therefore, it is necessary to rely mainly on sources, such as the histories of Tabari and Baladhuri, that were written in the Abbasid court at Baghdad.

Modern Arab nationalism regards the period of the Umayyads as part of the Arab Golden Age which it sought to emulate and restore. This is particularly true of Syrian nationalists and the present-day state of Syria, centered like that of the Umayyads on Damascus. White, one of the four Pan-Arab colors which appear in various combinations on the flags of most Arab countries, is considered as representing the Umayyads.

Abbasid Caliphate

The Abbasid Caliphate (Arabic: العبّاسيّون, al-ʻAbbāsīyūn) was the third of the Islamic Caliphates of the Arab Empire. It was ruled by the Abbasid dynasty of caliphs, who built their capital in Baghdad after overthrowing the Umayyad caliphs from all but Al Andalus. It was built by the descendant of Muhammad's youngest uncle, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib. It was created in Harran in 750 C.E. and shifted its capital in 762 C.E from Harran to Baghdad. It flourished for two centuries, but slowly went into decline with the rise to power of the Turkish army it had created, the Mamluks. Within 150 years of gaining power across Persia, they were forced to cede power to local dynastic amirs who only nominally acknowledged their power, and had to cede Al Andalus to an escaped Umayyad royal and the Maghreb and Ifriqiya to independent entities such as the Aghlabids and the Fatimids. Their rule was ended in 1258, when Hulagu Khan, the Mongol conqueror, sacked Baghdad. While they continued to claim authority in religious matters from their base in Egypt, the dynasty's secular authority had ended. Descendants of the Abbasids include the al-Abbasi tribe who live northeast of Tikrit in modern-day Iraq.[citation needed]

Epic Rise

The Abbasid caliphs officially based their claim to the caliphate on their descent from Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib (566 – 662), one of the youngest uncles of Muhammad, by virtue of which descent they regarded themselves as the rightful heirs of Muhammad as opposed to the Umayyads. The Umayyads were descended from Umayya, and were a clan separate from Muhammad's in the Quraish tribe.

The Abbasids also distinguished themselves from the Umayyads by attacking their moral character and administration in general. According to Ira Lapidus "The Abbasid revolt was supported largely by Arabs, mainly the aggrieved settlers of Marw with the addition of the Yemeni faction and their Mawali".[1] The Abbasids also appealed to non-Arab Muslims, known as mawali, who remained outside the kinship-based society of Arab culture and were perceived of as a lower class within the Umayyad empire. Muhammad ibn 'Ali, a great-grandson of Abbas, began to campaign for the return of power to the family of Muhammad, the Hashimites, in Persia during the reign of Umar II, Muhammad ibn Ali.

During the reign of Marwan II, this opposition culminated in the rebellion of Ibrahim the Imam, the fourth in descent from Abbas. Supported by the province of Khorasan, Iran, he achieved considerable successes, but was captured in the year 747 and died in prison; some hold that he was assassinated. The quarrel was taken up by his brother Abdallah, known by the name of Abu al-'Abbas as-Saffah, who, with victory on the Greater Zab River (750), defeated the Umayyads and was proclaimed Caliph.

Political Situation

Consolidation and schisms

The first change the Abbasids made was to move their the empire's capital from Damascus, in Syria, to Baghdad in Iraq. This was to both appease as well to be closer to the Persian mawali support base that existed in this region more influenced by Persian history and culture, and part of the Persian mawali demand for less Arab dominance in the empire. Baghdad was established on the Tigris River in 762. A new position, that of the vizier, was also established to delegate central authority, and even greater authority was delegated to local emirs. Eventually, this meant that many Abbasid caliphs were relegated to a more ceremonial role than under the Umayyads, as the viziers began to exert greater influence, and the role of the old Arab aristocracy was slowly replaced by a Persian bureaucracy.[2]

Rift with the Arabs

The Abbasids had depended heavily on the support of Persians[citation needed] in their overthrow of the Umayyads. Abu al-'Abbas' successor, Al-Mansur, moved their capital from Damascus to the new city of Baghdad and welcomed non-Arab Muslims to their court. While this helped integrate Arab and Persian cultures, it alienated many of their Arab supporters, particularly the Khorasanian Arabs who had supported them in their battles against the Umayyads.

These fissures in their support led to immediate problems. The Umayyads, while out of power, were not destroyed. The only surviving member of the Umayyad royal family, which had been all but annihilated, ultimately made his way to Spain where he established himself as an independent Emir (Abd ar-Rahman I, 756). In 929, Abd ar-Rahman III assumed the title of Caliph, establishing Al Andalus from Córdoba as a rival to Baghdad as the legitimate capital of the Islamic Empire.

Rift with the Shia

The Abbasids also found themselves at odds with the Shias, many of whom had supported their war against the Umayyads, since the Abbasids claimed legitimacy by their familial connection to Muhammed. Once in power, the Abbasids embraced Sunni Islam and disavowed any support for Shi'a beliefs. That led to numerous conflicts, culminating in an uprising in Mecca in 786, followed by widespread bloodshed and the flight of many Shi'a to the Maghreb, where the survivors established the Idrisid kingdom. Shortly thereafter, Berber Kharijites set up an independent state in North Africa in 801.

Loss of North Africa

Within 50 years the Idrisids in the Maghreb and Aghlabids of Ifriqiya and a little later the Tulunids and Ikshidids of Misr were effectively independent in Africa.

Communication with Provinces

The Abbasid leadership had to work hard in the last half of the eighth century (750-800), under several competent caliphs and their viziers to overcome the political challenges created by the far flung nature of the empire, and the limited communication across it and usher in the administrative changes to keep order.[3] While the Byzantine Empire was fighting Abbasid rule in Syria and Anatolia, military operations during this period were minimal, as the caliphate focused on internal matters as local governors, who, as a matter of prodecure, operated mostly independently of central authority. The problem that the caliphs faced was that these governors had begun to exert greater autonomy, using their increasing power to make their positions hereditary.[2]

Golden Age

The Islamic Golden Age was inaugurated by the middle of the 8th century by the ascension of the Abbasid Caliphate and the transfer of the capital from Damascus to Baghdad.[4] The Abbassids were influenced by the Qur'anic injunctions and hadith such as "the ink of scientists is more holy then the blood of martyrs" stressing the value of knowledge.[4] During this period the Muslim world became the unrivaled intellectual center for science, philosophy, medicine and education as the Abbasids championed the cause of knowledge and established a "House of Wisdom" in Baghdad; where both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars sought to translate and gather all the world's knowledge into Arabic.[4] Many classic works of antiquity that would otherwise have been lost were translated into Arabic and later in turn translated into Turkish, Persian, Hebrew and Latin.[4] During this period the Muslim world was a cauldron of cultures which collected, synthesized and significantly advanced the knowledge gained from the ancient Roman, Chinese, Indian, Persian, Egyptian, North African, Greek and Byzantine civilizations.[4]

At the same time, the Abbasids faced challenges closer to home. Former supporters of the Abbasids had broken away to create a separate kingdom around Khorosan in northern Persia. Harun al-Rashid (786 – 809) turned on the Barmakids, a Persian family that had grown significantly in power within the administration of the state.

Science

The reigns of Harun al-Rashid (786 – 809) and his successors fostered an age of great intellectual achievement. In large part, this was the result of the schismatic forces that had undermined the Umayyad regime, which relied on the assertion of the superiority of Arab culture as part of its claim to legitimacy, and the Abbasids' welcoming of support from non-Arab Muslims. It is well established that the Abbasid caliphs modeled their administration on that of the Sassanids.[5] One Abbasid caliph is even quoted as saying:

"The Persians ruled for a thousand years and did not need us Arabs even for a day. We have been ruling them for one or two centuries and cannot do without them for an hour."[6]

A number of medieval thinkers and scientists living under Islamic rule played a role in transmitting Islamic science to the Christian West. They contributed to making Aristotle known in Christian Europe. In addition, the period saw the recovery of much of the Alexandrian mathematical, geometric and astronomical knowledge, such as that of Euclid and Claudius Ptolemy. These recovered mathematical methods were later enhanced and developed much further by other Islamic scholars, notably by Al-Biruni and Abu Nasr Mansur.

Algebra was also pioneered by Muhammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī during this time in his landmark text, Kitab al-Jabr wa-l-Muqabala, from which the term algebra is derived. He is thus considered to be the father of algebra.[7] The terms algorism and algorithm are also derived from the name of al-Khwarizmi, who was responsible for introducing the Arabic numerals and Hindu-Arabic numeral system beyond the Indian subcontinent.

Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen) developed an early scientific method in his Book of Optics (1021).[8] The most important development of the scientific method was the use of experiments to distinguish between competing scientific theories set within a generally empirical orientation, which began among Muslim scientists. Ibn al-Haytham is also regarded as the father of optics, especially for his empirical proof of the intromission theory of light. Bradley Steffens described Ibn al-Haytham as the "first scientist"[9] for his development of scientific method.[10][11]

Medicine in medieval Islam was an area of science that advanced particularly during the Abbasids' reign. During the ninth century, Baghdad contained over 800 doctors, and great discoveries in the understanding of anatomy and diseases were made. The clinical distinction between measles and smallpox was discovered during this time. Famous scientist Ibn Sina (known to the West as Avicenna) produced treatises and works that summarized the vast amount of knowledge that scientists had accumulated, and is often known as the father of modern medicine for his encyclopedias, The Canon of Medicine and The Book of Healing. The work of him and many others directly influenced the research of European scientists during the Renaissance and even later.

Astronomy in medieval Islam was advanced by Al-Battani, who improved the precision of the measurement of the precession of the earth's axis. The corrections made to the geocentric model by al-Battani, Averroes, Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, Mo'ayyeduddin Urdi and Ibn al-Shatir were later incorporated into the Copernican heliocentric model. The

astrolabe, though originally developed by the Greeks, was perfected by Islamic astronomers and engineers, and was subsequently brought to Europe.

Muslim chemists and alchemists played an important role in the foundation of modern chemistry. Scholars such as Will Durant and Alexander von Humboldt regard Muslim chemists to be the founders of chemistry. In particular, Geber (Jabir ibn Hayyan) is considered the "father of chemistry". The works of Arab chemists influenced Roger Bacon (who introduced the empirical method to Europe, strongly influenced by his reading of Arabic writers), Isaac Newton, among many others. A number of chemical processes such as distillation techniques and the production of alcohol were developed in the Muslim world and then spread to Europe.

Literature

The most well known fiction from the Islamic world was The Book of One Thousand and One Nights (Arabian Nights), which was a compilation of many earlier folk tales. The epic took form in the 10th century and reached its final form by the 14th century; the number and type of tales have varied from one manuscript to another.[12] All Arabian fantasy tales were often called "Arabian Nights" when translated into English, regardless of whether they appeared in The Book of One Thousand and One Nights.[12] This epic has been influential in the West since it was translated in the 18th century, first by Antoine Galland.[13] Many imitations were written, especially in France.[14] Various characters from this epic have themselves become cultural icons in Western culture, such as Aladdin, Sinbad and Ali Baba.

A famous example of Arabic poetry and Persian poetry on romance (love) is Layla and Majnun, dating back to the Umayyad era in the 7th century. It is a tragic story of undying love much like the later Romeo and Juliet, which was itself said to have been inspired by a Latin version of Layli and Majnun to an extent.

Philosophy

One of the common definitions for "Islamic philosophy" is "the style of philosophy produced within the framework of Islamic culture."[16] Islamic philosophy, in this definition is neither necessarily concerned with religious issues, nor is exclusively produced by Muslims.[16] Their works on Aristotle was a key step in the transmission of learning from ancient Greeks to the Islamic world and the West. They often corrected the philosopher, encouraging a lively debate in the spirit of ijtihad. They also wrote influential original philosophical works, and their thinking was incorporated into Christian philosophy during the Middle Ages, notably by Thomas Aquinas.

Three speculative thinkers, al-Kindi, al-Farabi, and Avicenna, combined Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism with other ideas introduced through Islam, and Avicennism was later established as a result. Other influential Muslim philosophers in the Caliphates include al-Jahiz, a pioneer in evolutionary thought, and Ibn al-Haytham (Alhacen), a pioneer of phenomenology and the philosophy of science and a critic of Aristotelian physics and Aristotle's concept of place (topos).

Technology

In technology, the Muslim world adopted papermaking from China and further advanced the technology with their invention of papermills many centuries before paper was known in the West.[17] The knowledge of gunpowder was also transmitted from China via Islamic countries, where the formulas for pure potassium nitrate and an explosive gunpowder effect were first developed.[18][19]

Advances were made in irrigation and farming, using new technology such as the windmill. Crops such as almonds and citrus fruit were brought to Europe through al-Andalus, and sugar cultivation was gradually adopted by the Europeans. Arab merchants dominated trade in the Indian Ocean until the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century. Hormuz was an important center for this trade. There was also a dense network of trade routes in the Mediterranean, along which Muslim countries traded with each other and with European powers such as Venice, Genoa and Catalonia. The Silk Road crossing Central Asia passed through Muslim states between China and Europe.

Muslim engineers in the Islamic world made a number of innovative industrial uses of hydropower, and early industrial uses of tidal power, wind power, steam power,[20] fossil fuels such as petroleum, and early large factory complexes (tiraz in Arabic).[21] The industrial uses of watermills in the Islamic world date back to the 7th century, while horizontal-wheeled and vertical-wheeled water mills were both in widespread use since at least the 9th century. A variety of industrial mills were being employed in the Islamic world, including early fulling mills, gristmills, hullers, paper mills, sawmills, shipmills, stamp mills, steel mills, sugar mills, tide mills and windmills. By the 11th century, every province throughout the Islamic world had these industrial mills in operation, from al-Andalus and North Africa to the Middle East and Central Asia.[17] Muslim engineers also invented crankshafts and water turbines, employed gears in mills and water-raising machines, and pioneered the use of dams as a source of water power, used to provide additional power to watermills and water-raising machines.[22] Such advances made it possible for many industrial tasks that were previously driven by manual labour in ancient times to be mechanized and driven by machinery instead in the medieval Islamic world. The transfer of these technologies to medieval Europe had an influence on the Industrial Revolution.[23]

A number of industries were generated due to the Muslim Agricultural Revolution, including early industries for agribusiness, astronomical instruments, ceramics, chemicals, distillation technologies, clocks, glass, mechanical hydropowered and wind powered machinery, matting, mosaics, pulp and paper, perfumery, petroleum, pharmaceuticals, rope-making, shipping, shipbuilding, silk, sugar, textiles, water, weapons, and the mining of minerals such as sulfur, ammonia, lead and iron. Early large factory complexes (tiraz) were built for many of these industries, and knowledge of these industries were later transmitted to medieval Europe, especially during the Latin translations of the 12th century, as well as before and after. For example, the first glass factories in Europe were founded in the 11th century by Egyptian craftsmen in Greece.[24] The agricultural and handicraft industries also experienced high levels of growth during this period.

Fracture of Central Authority

Even by 820, the Samanids had begun the process of exercising independent authority in Transoxiana and Greater Khorasan, the Shia Hamdanids in Northern Syria, and the successive Tahirid, Alid and Saffarid dynasties of Iran. By the early 10th century, the Abbasids almost lost control to the growing Persian faction known as the Buwayhids that replaced the Samanids as the Buwayhids were quietly able to assume real power in the bureaucracy at Baghdad.

All these autonomous provinces slowly took on the characteristic of de facto states with hereditary rulers, armies, and revenues and operated under only nominal caliphal suzerainity, which may not necessarily be reflected by any contribution to the treasury.[3] The eventual rise of the Ghaznavid Empire and the Seljuks to displace all these factions marked the end of Abbasid political dominion over the area.

Epic Loss of Power

Mahmud of Ghazni took the title of sultan, as opposed to the "amir" that had been in more common usage, signifying the Ghaznavid Empire's independence from Caliphial authority even as a matter of form. By the 11th

century, the loss of respect for the caliphs had gone even further, as the Seljuks, Khwarezmshahs, Almoravids and other Islamic rulers no longer mentioned the caliph's name in the Friday Khutba, or struck it off their coinage[3]. The Fatimids contested the Abbasids for even the titular authority. The Buwayhids were defeated in the mid-11th century with the aid of the Seljuks under Toghril Beg; however, the Seljuks then themselves took over de facto lordship of the Empire, and the Caliph bestowed on Toghril Beg the title of Sultan of the East and the West. The Seljuks publicly pledged allegiance to the Caliph, but left him in control of little actual terrritory beyond Baghdad.[3] Caliph Al-Muqtafi was the 1st Abbasid Caliph to regain the independence of the Caliphate,after nearly 250 years of foreign rule,he successfully defended Baghdad against the Seljuqs,thus securing Iraq for the Abbasids. see Seljuk siege of Baghdad 1157.

The end of the dynasty

Hulagu Khan sacked Baghdad on (February 10, 1258), causing great loss of life. Muslims feared that supernatural disaster would strike if the blood of Al-Musta'sim, the last reigning Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad, a direct descendent of Muhammad's uncle, was spilled. Despite the advice of the Learned Shiites of Persia that no such calamity had happened after the deaths of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, or the Shiite saint Hosein, as a precaution, Hulagu, in accordance with a Mongol taboo which forbade spilling royal blood, had Al-Musta'sim wrapped in a carpet and trampled to death by horses on February 20, 1258. The Al-Musta'sim family was also executed, with the lone exceptions of his youngest son and a daughter who were sent to Mongolia to be slaves in the harem of Hulagu.[26]

The Abbasids still maintained a feeble show of authority, confined to religious matters, in Egypt under the Mamluks, but the dynasty finally disappeared with Al-Mutawakkil III, who was carried away as a prisoner of the palace to Constantinople by Selim I where he only had a ceremonial role, until his death when the Caliphate title was transferred to Selim I.

Role of the Mamluks

In the 9th century, the Abbasids created an army loyal only to their caliphate, drawn mostly from Turkish slaves, known as Mamluks, with some Slavs and Berbers participating as well. This force, created in the reign of al-Ma'mun (813 – 833), and his brother and successor al-Mu'tasim (833 – (842), prevented the further distintegration of the empire.

The Mamluk army, though often viewed negatively, both helped and hurt the caliphate. Early on, it provided the government with a stable force to address domestic and foreign problems. However, creation of this foreign army and al-Mu'tasim's transfer of the capital from Baghdad to Samarra created a division between the caliphate and the peoples they claimed to rule. In addition, the power of the Mamluks steadily grew until al-Radi (934 – 941) was constrained to hand over most of the royal functions to Mahommed bin Raik. In the following years, the Buwayhids, who were Shi'ites, seized power over Baghdad, ruling central Iraq for more than a century.

List of Abbasid Caliphs

- Abu'l Abbas As-Saffah 750 - 754

Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad

- Al-Mansur 754 - 775
- Al-Mahdi 775 - 785

- Al-Hadi 785 - 786
- Harun al-Rashid 786 - 809
- Al-Amin 809 - 813
- Al-Ma'mun 813 - 833
- Al-Mu'tasim 833 - 842
- Al-Wathiq 842 - 847
- Al-Mutawakkil 847 - 861
- Al-Muntasir 861 - 862
- Al-Musta'in 862 - 866
- Al-Mu'tazz 866 - 869
- Al-Muhtadi 869 - 870
- Al-Mu'tamid 870 - 892
- Al-Mu'tadid 892 - 902
- Al-Muktafi 902 - 908
- Al-Muqtadir 908 - 932
- Al-Qahir 932 - 934
- Ar-Radi 934 - 940
- Al-Muttaqi 940 - 944
- Al-Mustakfi 944 - 946
- Al-Muti 946 - 974
- At-Ta'i 974 - 991
- Al-Qadir 991 - 1031
- Al-Qa'im 1031 - 1075
- Al-Muqtadi 1075 - 1094
- Al-Mustazhir 1094 - 1118
- Al-Mustarshid 1118 - 1135
- Ar-Rashid 1135 - 1136
- Al-Muqtafi 1136 - 1160
- Al-Mustanjid 1160 - 1170
- Al-Mustadi 1170 - 1180
- An-Nasir 1180 - 1225
- Az-Zahir 1225 - 1226
- Al-Mustansir 1226 - 1242
- Al-Musta'sim 1242 - 1258

Abbasid Caliphs in Cairo

- Al-Mustansir 1261-1262
- Al-Hakim I (Cairo) 1262-1302
- Al-Mustakfi I of Cairo 1303-1340
- Al-Wathiq I 1340-1341
- Al-Hakim II 1341-1352
- Al-Mu'tadid I 1352-1362

- Al-Mutawakkil I 1362-1383
- Al-Wathiq II 1383-1386
- Al-Mu'tasim 1386-1389
- Al-Mutawakkil I (restored) 1389-1406
- Al-Musta'in 1406-1414
- Al-Mu'tadid II 1414-1441
- Al-Mustakfi II 1441-1451
- Al-Qa'im 1451-1455
- Al-Mustanjid 1455-1479
- Al-Mutawakkil II 1479-1497
- Al-Mustamsik 1497-1508
- Al-Mutawakkil III 1508-1517

Mughal Empire

The Mughal Empire (Hindi: मुग़.ल सलतनत Muġal Saltanat, Urdu: مغلیہ سلطنت Muġalīah Sulṭanat, Persian: گورکانی Gurakâni), was an Islamic imperial power of the Indian subcontinent which began in the early 16th century, ruled most of the subcontinent by the late 17th and early 18th centuries, and ended in the mid-19th century.[1] The Mughal Emperors were of Turko-Mongol, and later Rajput and Persian, descent, and developed a highly sophisticated mixed Indo-Persian culture. At the height of its power, around 1700, it controlled most of the Subcontinent - extending from present-day Bangladesh to Kashmir and part of what is now Badakshan. Its population at that time has been estimated as between 110 and 130 million, over a territory of over 4 million km² (1.5 million mi²).[2] Following 1725 it declined rapidly. Its decline has been variously explained as caused by wars of succession, agrarian crises fueling local revolts, the growth of religious intolerance, and British colonialism. The last Emperor, Bahadur Shah II, whose rule was restricted to the city of Delhi, was imprisoned and exiled by the British after the Indian Rebellion of 1857.

The classic period of the Empire starts with the accession of Jalaluddin Mohammad, better known as Akbar the Great, in 1556, and ends with the death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, although the Empire continued for another 150 years. During this period, the Empire was marked by a highly centralized administration connecting the different regions. All the significant monuments of the Mughals, their most visible legacy, date to this period.

Early history

The foundation for the Baburids empire was established around the early 1500s by the Timurid prince Babur, when he took control of the Doab and eastern regions of Khorasan controlling the fertile Sindh region and the lower valley of the Indus River.[3] In 1526, Babur defeated the last of the Delhi Sultans, Ibrahim Shah Lodi, at the First Battle of Panipat. Babur was invited to invade the Delhi Sultanate by Rana Sanga, who thought that after defeating Ibrahim Lodhi, Babur would go back and he would become the Ruler of Delhi.[4] To secure his newly founded kingdom, Babur then had to face the Rajput confederacy led by Rana Sanga of Chittor, at the Battle of Khanwa. These early military successes of the Turks, achieved by an army much smaller than its opponents, have been attributed to their cohesion, mobility, horse-mounted archers, and use of artillery.[5]

Babur's son Humayun succeeded him in 1530 but suffered major reversals at the hands of the Pashtun Sher Shah Suri and effectively lost most of the fledgling empire before it could grow beyond a minor regional state. From 1540 Humayun became a ruler in exile, reaching the Court of the Safavid ruler in 1542 while his forces still controlled some fortresses and small regions. But when the Afghans (Pashtuns) fell into disarray with the death of Sher Shah Suri, Humayun returned with a mixed army, raised more troops and managed to reconquer Delhi in 1555.

Humayun crossed the rough terrain of Makran with his wife, but left behind their infant son Jalaluddin to spare him the rigours of the journey. Akbar, as Jalaluddin would be better known in his later years, was born in the Rajput town of Umerkot in Sindh where he was raised by his uncle Askari. There he became an excellent outdoorsman, horseman, and hunter, and learned the arts of war.

The resurgent Humayun then conquered the central plateau around Delhi, but months later died in an accident, leaving the realm unsettled and in war. Akbar succeeded his father on 14 February 1556, while in the midst of a war against Sikandar Shah Suri for the throne of Delhi. He soon won his eighteenth victory at age 21 or 22. The rump

remnant began to grow, then it grew considerably. He became known as Akbar, as he was a wise ruler, set fair but steep taxes. He investigated the production in a certain area and taxed inhabitants 1/5 of their agricultural produce. He also set up an efficient bureaucracy and was tolerant of religious differences which softened the resistance by the conquered.

Jahangir, the son of Baburids Emperor Akbar ruled the empire from 1605–1627. In October 1627, Shah Jahan, son of Baburids Emperor Jahangir succeeded to the throne, where he inherited a vast and rich empire in India. At mid-century this was perhaps the greatest empire in the world. Shah Jahan commissioned the famous Taj Mahal (1630–1653) in Agra as a tomb for his wife Mumtaz Mahal, who died giving birth to their 14th child. By 1700 the empire reached its peak with major parts of present day India, except for the North eastern states, the Sikh lands in the Punjab, the lands of the Marathas, areas in the south and most of Afghanistan under its domain, under the leadership of Aurangzeb Alamgir. Aurangzeb was the last of what are now referred to as the Great Turk kings.

The Turks are known to have established a culinary culture in India with food influences from Europe, the Middle East and China.

Language

The language of the Mughals was originally Chagatai, but Farsi (Persian), were later adopted as the language of the court. It was the language of the Muslim elite in India and in the Ottoman Empire (which later adopted Ottoman Turkish as its official language). Later, the Urdu language, a mix of Farsi and the Indian language spoken in Delhi, developed. Note that this is also the origin of Hindi, which technically developed as a separate language later. For a long while, an alternative name for Urdu was Hindustani, although this term has fallen into disuse. The main differences between Urdu and Hindi are that Standard Urdu is conventionally written in the Perso-Arabic script (using the Nastaliq calligraphy style) and draws vocabulary more heavily from Persian and Arabic than Hindi,[6] while Standard Hindi is conventionally written in Devanāgarī and draws vocabulary from Sanskrit comparatively[7] more heavily.[8] The Urdu language borrowed aspects of Persio-Turkic formation, and mimicked various characteristics of Persian, Chagatai, and Arabic. Urdu was adopted as a National Language of Pakistan, despite the fact that the language was not spoken in that region. Urdu is also spoken by sections of Afghanistan and Indian Muslims, and recognized as one of India's official languages by the Indian Constitution.

Religion

The official State religion of the Mughal Empire was Islam, with the preference to the jurisprudence of the Hanafi Madhab (Mazhab). The government tended to support Islamic institutions. Before the reign of the Emperor Akbar, non-Muslims were obliged to pay the Jizya tax in exchange of being free of recruitment to the military, signifying their status as Dhimmis. The tax was reintroduced by Aurangzeb.

After the invasion of Persia by the Mongol Empire, a regional Turko-Perso-Mongol dynasty formed. Just as the eastern Mongol dynasties inter-married with locals and adopted the local religion of Buddhism and the Chinese culture, this group adopted the local religion of Islam and the Persian culture. The first Mughal King, Babur, established the Mughal dynasty in the Indian Subcontinent. Upon invading this region, the Mughals starting with Emperor Akbar inter-married with the local Hindu tribes and Persian settlers creating a dynasty of combined Turko-Persian, Mongolian and Hindu Rajput backgrounds. King Babur and his descendants did this to create peace among

the different religions in the region. In accordance to Islamic values, Babur focused on setting a good example for the Mughal Dynasty by emphasizing religious tolerance.

This dynasty remained unstable until the reign of Akbar, who was of liberal disposition and intimately acquainted, since birth, with the mores and traditions of Islam in the Indian sub-continent. Under Akbar's rule, the court abolished the jizya (tax on non-Muslims) and abandoned use of the Muslim lunar calendar in favor of a solar calendar . One of Akbar's most unusual ideas regarding religion was Din-i-Ilahi (Faith of God), which was an eclectic mix of Islam, Zoroastrianism, Jainism and Christianity. It was proclaimed the state religion until his death. These actions however met with stiff opposition from the Muslim clergy, especially the Sufi Sheikh Alf Sani Ahmad Sirhindi. Akbar is remembered as tolerant, at least by the standards of the day: only one major massacre was recorded during his long reign (1556–1605), when he ordered most of the captured inhabitants of a fort be slain on February 24, 1568, after the battle for Chittor. Akbar's acceptance of other religions and his abolition of poll-tax on non-Muslims, in Islam is considered apostasy. He made the formal declaration of his own infallibility in all matters of religious doctrine, promulgated a new creed, and adopted Hindu and Zoroastrian festivals and practices.

The emperor Jahangir was also a religious moderate. His mother being Hindu and his father setting up an independent faith-of-the-court ('Din-i-Illahi'), the influence of his two Hindu queens (the Maharani Maanbai and Maharani Jagat) kept religious moderation as a center-piece of state policy, which was extended under the emperor Shah Jahan.

Religious orthodoxy would only play an important role during the reign of Aurangzeb, a devout Muslim. Aurangzeb was considerably less tolerant of other faiths than his predecessors had been, and his reign saw an increase in the number and importance of Islamic institutions and scholars. He led many military campaigns against the remaining non-Muslim powers of the Indian Subcontinent, namely the Sikhs in the Punjab, the Marathas in the Deccan and the last independent Hindu Rajputs in Rajasthan. Under his reign the empire reached its greatest extent in terms of territorial gain and economic strength.

Economy

The Mughals used the "mansabdar" system to generate land revenue. The emperor would grant revenue rights to a mansabdar in exchange for promises of soldiers in wartime. The greater the size of the land the emperor granted, the greater the number of soldiers the mansabdar had to promise. The mansab was both revocable and non-hereditary; this gave the centre a fairly large degree of control over the mansabdars.

Establishment and reign of Babur

In the early 16th century, Muslim armies consisting of Mongol, Turkic, Persian, and Pashtun warriors invaded India under the leadership of the Timurid prince Zahir-ud-Din-Muhammad Babur. Babur was the great-grandson of Central Asian conqueror Timur-e-Lang (Timur the Lame, from which the Western name Tamerlane is derived), who had invaded India in 1398 before retiring to Samarkand. Timur himself claimed descent from the Mongol ruler, Genghis Khan. Babur was driven from Samarkand by the Uzbeks and initially established his rule in Kabul in 1504. Later, taking advantage of internal discontent in the Delhi sultanate under Ibrahim Lodhi, and following an invitation from Daulat Khan Lodhi (governor of the Punjab) and Alam Khan (uncle of the Sultan), Babur invaded the sultanate in 1526.

Babur, a seasoned military commander with his well-trained veteran army of 12,000 met the sultan's huge but unwieldy and disunited force of more than 100,000 men.[citation needed] Babur defeated the Lodhi sultan decisively at the First Battle of Panipat. Employing firearms, gun carts, movable artillery, superior cavalry tactics, and the highly regarded Mughal composite bow, a weapon even more powerful than the English longbow of the same period,[citation needed] Babur achieved a resounding victory and the Sultan was killed. A year later (1527) he decisively defeated, at the Battle of Khanwa, a Rajput confederacy led by Rana Sanga of Chittor. A third major battle was fought in 1529 at Gogra, where Babur routed the joint forces of Afghans and the sultan of Bengal. Babur died in 1530 in Agra before he could consolidate his military gains. During his short five-year reign, Babur took considerable interest in erecting buildings, though few have survived. He left behind as his chief legacy a set of descendants who would fulfil his dream of establishing an Islamic empire in India.

Successors

Humayun

When Babur died, his son Humayun (1530–1556) inherited a difficult task. He was pressed from all sides by a reassertion of Afghan claims to the Delhi throne and by disputes over his own succession. Driven into Sindh by the armies of Sher Shah Suri, in 1540 he fled to the Rajput Kingdom of Umarkot then to Persia, where he spent nearly ten years as an embarrassed guest of the Safavid court of Shah Tahmasp. During Sher Shah's reign, an imperial unification and administrative framework were established; this would be further developed by Akbar later in the century. In addition, the tomb of Sher Shah Suri is an architectural masterpiece that was to have a profound impact on the evolution of Indo-Islamic funerary architecture. In 1545, Humayun gained a foothold in Kabul with Safavid assistance and reasserted his claims, a task facilitated by the weakening of Afghan power in the area after the death of Sher Shah Suri in May 1545. He took control of Delhi in 1555, but died within six months of his return, from a fall down the steps of his library.[citation needed] His tomb at Delhi represents an outstanding landmark in the development and refinement of the Mughal style. It was designed in 1564, eight years after his death, as a mark of devotion by his widow, Hamida Banu Begum.

Akbar

Humayun's untimely death in 1556 left the task of conquest and imperial consolidation to his thirteen-year-old son, Jalal-ud-Din Mohammad Akbar (r.1556–1605). Following a decisive military victory at the Second Battle of Panipat in 1556, the regent Bairam Khan pursued a vigorous policy of expansion on Akbar's behalf. As soon as Akbar came of age, he began to free himself from the influences of overbearing ministers, court factions, and harem intrigues, and demonstrated his own capacity for judgment and leadership. A workaholic who seldom slept more than three hours a night, he personally oversaw the implementation of his administrative policies, which were to form the backbone of the Mughal Empire for more than 200 years. With the aide of his legendary Navaratnas, he continued to

conquer, annex, and consolidate a far-flung territory bounded by Kabul in the northwest, Bengal in the east, Kashmir in the north, and beyond the Narmada River in central India.

Starting in 1571, Akbar built a walled capital called Fatehpur Sikri (Fatehpur means "town of victory") near Agra. Palaces for each of Akbar's senior queens, a huge artificial lake, and sumptuous water-filled courtyards were built there. However, the city was soon abandoned and the capital was moved to Lahore in 1585. The reason may have been that the water supply in Fatehpur Sikri was insufficient or of poor quality. Or, as some historians believe, Akbar had to attend to the northwest areas of his empire and therefore moved his capital northwest. In 1599, Akbar shifted his capital back to Agra from where he reigned until his death.

Akbar adopted two distinct but effective approaches in administering a large territory and incorporating various ethnic groups into the service of his realm. In 1580 he obtained local revenue statistics for the previous decade in order to understand details of productivity and price fluctuation of different crops. Aided by Todar Mal, a Hindu scholar, Akbar issued a revenue schedule that optimized the revenue needs of the state with the ability of the peasantry to pay. Revenue demands, fixed according to local conventions of cultivation and quality of soil, ranged from one-third to one-half of the crop and were paid in cash. Akbar relied heavily on land-holding zamindars to act as revenue-collectors. They used their considerable local knowledge and influence to collect revenue and to transfer it to the treasury, keeping a portion in return for services rendered. Within his administrative system, the warrior aristocracy (mansabdars) held ranks (mansabs) expressed in numbers of troops, and indicating pay, armed contingents, and obligations. The warrior aristocracy was generally paid from revenues of non-hereditary and transferable jagirs (revenue villages).

An astute ruler who genuinely appreciated the challenges of administering so vast an empire, Akbar introduced a policy of reconciliation and assimilation of Hindus (including Jodhabai, later renamed Mariam-uz-Zamani[citation needed] Begum, the Hindu Rajput mother of his son and heir, Jahangir), who represented the majority of the population. He recruited and rewarded Hindu chiefs with the highest ranks in government; encouraged intermarriages between Mughal and Rajput aristocracy; allowed new temples to be built; personally participated in celebrating Hindu festivals such as Deepavali (or Diwali), the festival of lights; and abolished the jizya (poll tax) imposed on non-Muslims. Akbar came up with his own theory of "rulership as a divine illumination," enshrined in his new religion Din-i-Ilahi (Divine Faith), incorporating the principle of acceptance of all religions and sects. He encouraged widow re-marriage, discouraged child marriage, outlawed the practice of sati[citation needed] and persuaded Delhi merchants to set up special market days for women, who otherwise were secluded at home.

By the end of Akbar's reign, the Mughal Empire extended throughout north India and south of the Narmada river. Notable exceptions were Gondwana in central India, which paid tribute to the Mughals, Assam in the northeast, and large parts of the Deccan. The area south of the Godavari river remained entirely out of the ambit of the Mughals. In 1600, Akbar's empire had a revenue of £17.5 million. By comparison, in 1800, the entire treasury of Great Britain totalled £16 million.

Akbar's empire supported vibrant intellectual and cultural life. The large imperial library included books in Hindi, Bangla, Persian, Greek, Kashmiri, English, and Arabic, such as the Shahnameh, Bhagavata Purana and the Bible. Akbar regularly sponsored debates and dialogues among religious and intellectual figures with differing views, and he welcomed Jesuit missionaries from Goa to his court. Akbar directed the creation of the Hamzanama, an artistic masterpiece that included 1400 large paintings. Architecture flourished during his reign. One of his first major

building projects was the construction of a huge fort at Agra. The massive sandstone ramparts of the Red Fort are another impressive achievement. The most ambitious architectural exercise of Akbar, and one of the most glorious examples of Indo-Islamic architecture, was the creation of an entirely new capital city at Fatehpur Sikri.

Jahangir

After the death of Akbar in 1605, his son, Prince Salim, ascended the throne and assumed the title of Jahangir, "Seizer of the World". He was assisted in his artistic attempts by his wife, Nur Jahan. The Mausoleum of Akbar at Sikandra, outside Agra, represents a major turning point in Mughal history, as the sandstone compositions of Akbar were adapted by his successors into opulent marble masterpieces. Jahangir is the central figure in the development of the Mughal garden. The most famous of his gardens is the Shalimar Bagh on the banks of the Dal Lake in Srinagar in Kashmir.

Mughal rule under Jahangir (1605–27) and Shah Jahan (1628–58) was noted for political stability, brisk economic activity, beautiful paintings, and monumental buildings. Jahangir's wife Nur Jahan (Light of the World), emerged as the most powerful individual in the court besides the emperor. As a result, Persian poets, artists, scholars, and officers — including her own family members — lured by the Mughal court's brilliance and luxury, found asylum in India. However, the number of unproductive officers mushroomed in the state bureaucracies, as did corruption, while the excessive Persian representation upset the delicate balance of impartiality at the court.

The reign of Jahangir was also known for religious persecution. When joint Hindu and Jain forces rebelled against the Mughal government,[citation needed] Jahangir put down the rebellion[citation needed] and severely persecuted the Jains and destroyed Hindu temples. Guru Arjun, the fifth Guru of Sikhism, was tortured to death during his reign, although his relations with the son of Guru Arjun, Guru Hargobind, remained very cordial and friendly. It is contended that Guru Arjun and the Jains suffered because of the Empire's disregard to humankind.[citation needed]

Nur Jahan's abortive efforts to secure the throne for the prince of her choice (Khurram - later Shah Jahan) led the first-born, Prince Khusrau (Maharani Maanbai's son) to rebel against Jahangir in 1622. In that same year, the Persians took over Kandahar in southern Afghanistan, an event that struck a serious blow to Mughal prestige. Jahangir also had the Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri composed as a record of his reign. Shah Jahan married the girl because of the wealth that would come from her. It had nothing to do with love but more about the land he would get.

Shah Jahan

The Taj Mahal is the most famous monument built by the Mughals. It was built by Prince Khurram who ascended the throne in 1628 as Emperor Shah Jahan. Between 1636 and 1646, Shah Jahan sent Mughal armies to conquer the Deccan and the lands to the northwest of the empire, beyond the Khyber Pass. Even though they aptly demonstrated Mughal military strength, these campaigns drained the imperial treasury. As the state became a huge military machine, causing the nobles and their contingents to multiply almost fourfold, the demands for revenue from the peasantry were greatly increased. Political unification and maintenance of law and order over wide areas encouraged the emergence of large centers of commerce and crafts — such as Lahore, Delhi, Agra, and Ahmadabad — linked by roads and waterways to distant places and ports.

However, Shah Jahan's reign is remembered more for monumental architectural achievements than anything else. The single most important architectural change was the use of marble instead of sandstone. He demolished the austere sandstone structures of Akbar in the Red Fort and replaced them with marble buildings such as the Diwan-i-Am (hall of public audience), the Diwan-i-Khas (hall of private audience), and the Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque). The

tomb of Itmad-ud-Daula, the grandfather of his queen, Mumtaz Mahal, was also constructed on the opposite bank of the Jamuna or Yamuna. In 1638 he began to lay out the city of Shahjahanabad beside the Jamuna river further North in Delhi. The Red Fort at Delhi represents the pinnacle of centuries of experience in the construction of palace-forts. Outside the fort, he built the Jama Masjid, the largest mosque in the empire. However, it is for the Taj Mahal, which he built as a memorial to his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, that he is most often remembered.

The Red Fort in Delhi, India housed the main administrative buildings of Shah Jahan.

Shah Jahan's extravagant architectural indulgence had a heavy price. The peasants had been impoverished by heavy taxes and by the time his son Aurangzeb ascended the throne, the empire was in a state of insolvency. As a result, opportunities for grand architectural projects were severely limited. This is most easily seen at the Bibi-ki-Maqbara, the tomb of Aurangzeb's wife, built in 1678. Though the design was inspired by the Taj Mahal, it is half its size, the proportions compressed and the detail clumsily executed.

The Taj Mahal thus symbolizes both Mughal artistic achievement and excessive financial expenditures at a time when resources were shrinking. The economic positions of peasants and artisans did not improve because the administration failed to produce any lasting change in the existing social structure. There was no incentive for the revenue officials, whose concerns were primarily personal or familial gain, to generate resources independent of what was received from the Hindu zamindars and village leaders, who, due to self-interest and local dominance, did not hand over the entirety of the tax revenues to the imperial treasury. In their ever-greater dependence on land revenue, the Mughals unwittingly nurtured forces that eventually led to the break-up of their empire.

The Reign of Aurangzeb and the decline of the empire

Shah Jahan fell ill in 1657, and a succession struggle emerged among his four sons, Dara Shikoh, Shah Shuja, Aurangzeb, and Murad Baksh. In 1658 Aurangzeb defeated Dara Shikoh's army near Agra, and Dara Shikoh fled north. Aurangzeb captured Agra, crowned himself emperor, and imprisoned Shah Jahan. Dara Shikoh and Murad Baksh were captured and later executed, while Shah Shuja fled into exile in 1660. Shah Jahan remained imprisoned in the citadel at Agra until his death in 1666.Aurangzeb was relatively intolerant towards other religions and emphasized on conversions to Islam.

Aurangzeb Alamgir was the last of the Great Mughals. During his fifty-year reign, the empire reached its greatest physical size (the Bijapur and Golconda Sultanates which had been reduced to vassaldom by Shah Jahan were formally annexed), but also showed unmistakable signs of decline. The bureaucracy had grown corrupt; the huge army used outdated weaponry and tactics. Aurangzeb restored Mughal military dominance and expanded power southward, at least for a while. Aurangzeb was involved in a series of protracted wars against the sultans of Bijapur and Golconda in the Deccan, the Rajputs of Rajasthan, Malwa, and Bundelkhand, the Marathas in Maharashtra and the Ahoms in Assam. Peasant uprisings and revolts by local leaders became all too common, as did the conniving of the nobles to preserve their own status at the expense of a steadily weakening empire. From the early 1700s the campaigns of the Sikhs of the Punjab under leaders such as Banda Bahadur, inspired by the martial teachings of their last Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, also posed a considerable threat to Mughal rule in Northern India.

But most decisively the series of wars against the Pashtuns in Afghanistan weakened the very foundation upon which Mughal military rested. The Pashtuns formed the backbone of the Muhgal army and were some of the most

hardened troops. The antagonism showed towards the erstwhile Mughal General Khushal Khan Khattak, for one, seriously undermined the Mughal military apparatus.

Aurangzeb made his religion an important part of his reign. However, that brought about resentment. For instance, the much resented jiziya tax which non-Muslims had to pay was re-introduced. In this climate, contenders for the Mughal throne were many,[citation needed] and the reigns of Aurangzeb's successors were short-lived and filled with strife. The Mughal Empire experienced dramatic reverses as regional Nawabs or governors broke away and founded independent kingdoms such as the Marathas in the Deccan and the Sikhs in the Punjab.[citation needed] In the war of 27 years from 1681 to 1707, the Mughals suffered several heavy defeats at the hands of the Marathas. In the early 1700s the Sikhs became increasingly militant in an attempt to establish their own state where only they would control and govern.[citation needed] They had to make peace with the Maratha armies.[citation needed] Nader Shah defeated the Mughal army at the huge Battle of Karnal in February, 1739. After this victory, Nader captured and sacked Delhi, carrying away many treasures, including the Peacock Throne.[9] In 1761, Delhi was raided by Ahmed Shah Abdali after the Third battle of Panipat.

The decline of the Mughal Empire has been ascribed to several reasons. Some historians such as Irfan Habib have described the decline of the Mughal Empire in terms of class struggle.[10] Habib proposed that excessive taxation and repression of peasants created a discontented class that either rebelled itself or supported rebellions by other classes and states. Athar Ali proposed a theory of a "Jagirdari crisis." According to this theory, the influx of a large number of new Deccan nobles into the Mughal nobility during the reign of Aurangzeb created a shortage of agricultural crown land meant to be allotted, and destroyed the crown lands altogether.[11] The most obvious concept is that of increasing European hegemony and spheres of influence in the region. The powers of Europe were challenging themselves to the game of who could conquer these foreign lands and exploit their riches and wealth for their own personal gain. Other theories put weight on the devious role played by the Saeed brothers in destabilizing the Mughal throne and auctioning the agricultural crown lands to the Dutch or the British for revenue extraction.

The Later Mughals

- Bahadur Shah I (Shah Alam I), b. October 14, 1643 at Burhanpur, ruler 1707–12, d. February 1712 in Lahore.
- Jahandar Shah, b. 1664, ruler 1712–13, d. February 11, 1713 in Delhi.
- Furrukhsiyar, b. 1683, r. 1713–19, d. 1719 at Delhi.
- Rafi Ul-Darjat, ruler 1719, d. 1719 in Delhi.
- Rafi Ud-Daulat (Shah Jahan II), ruler 1719, d. 1719 in Delhi.
- Nikusiyar, ruler 1719, d. 1719 in Delhi.
- Mohammed Ibrahim, ruler 1720, d. 1720 in Delhi.
- Muhammad Shah, b. 1702, ruler 1719–48, d. April 26, 1748 in Delhi.
- Ahmad Shah Bahadur, b. 1725, ruler 1748–54, d. January 1775 in Delhi.
- Alamgir II, b. 1699, ruler 1754–59, d. 1759.
- Shah Jahan III, ruler 1760
- Shah Alam II, b. 1728, ruler 1759–1806, d. 1806.
- Akbar Shah II, b. 1760, ruler 1806–37, d. 1837.
- Bahadur Shah II aka Bahadur Shah Zafar, b. 1775 in Delhi, ruler from 1837–57, d. 1862 in exile in Rangoon, Burma.

PRESENT-DAY DESCENDANTS

A few descendants of Bahadur Shah Zafar are known to be living in Delhi, Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), Hyderabad, Bangladesh , Pakistan and Myanmar. Some of the direct descendants still identify themselves with the clan name Timur and with one of its four major branches: Shokohane-Timur (Shokoh), Shahane-Timur (Shah), Bakshane-Timur (Baksh) and Salatine-Timur (Sultan). Some direct descendants of the Timur carry the surname of Mirza, Baig and Jangda are found in India and Pakistan particularly in major cities like Delhi, Lahore and especially in Multan . Descendants in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are now known of the surname of Malik. However, good genealogical records exist for most families in the Indian Subcontinent and are often consulted for establishing the authenticity of their claims. Some descendants of the Mughal empire have even settled in the West in places like Europe and North America. Some Burmese decedents of Bahadur Shah Zafar live in Rangoon, France and Canada. The Pashtun tribe Babar living in Baluchistan regard themselves as direct descendants of Babar. However this claim has not been proven authentically.

However, there are descendants of Mughal kings living all over India.Some descendants are also called Chughtai after the Mongol tribe descended from a son of the Mongol conqueror, Chengiz Khan to which Babar belonged. Although not the descendants of the many heirs to the Mughal empire's throne, the descendants of Bahadur Shah II's brother Mirza Nali (the crown prince of the empire, as decided by his father Akbar Shah II) live in Rajshahi and Dhaka, Bangladesh . The present day heir to the throne is Colonel HH Prince Azam II, the son of Nali's great grand daughter (Gul Bodon Begum). Gul Bodon became the head of the family as she was born well before her siblings. Mirza Nali's descendants are very well off, owning lots of land around North Bengal. Nali fled to Bangladesh, in fear of the British.

Shah Shuja the second son of the Mogul Emperor Shah Jahan

In 1639, Shah Shuja the second son of the Mogul Emperor Shah Jahan, was designated deputy of the king of Bengal. The struggle for succession between the sons began immediately. Aurangzeb won, dethroned his father in 1658 and declared himself emperor. Shah Shuja continued his fight but was finally defeated in 1660. Since he did not succeed in establishing his rule in Bengal, he fled, together with his family and bodyguards, from Dacca to Chittagong.

Sandathudama, king of Arakan Burma(1652-1687) granted him permission to continue to Mrohaung on condition that his followers surrender their weapons. He arrived there on August 26, 1660, was welcomed by the king and given a dwelling near the town. There are various versions of the events describing what happened in Arakan at that time.

According to the archives (Daghrigister) of the Dutch East India Company in Batavial, the Company's representative and director of the Dutch trading post who was in Mrohaung at the time reported the events to Batavia. He too was not an eye witness but wrote according to rumors heard in the city.

He describes the warm welcome given to Shah Shuja in 1660, by the Arakan king and his promise to supply the refugees with ships to take them to Mecca. Eight months passed and the promise had not been kept.

According to the Dutch representative, the reason for this was that King Sanda Thudama asked Shah Shuja for a daughter in marriage... Shah Shuja proudly refused to submit to what he regarded as a grave dishonour, and as a result friendly relations ceased between him and the King.

The Dutch East India Company representative states that Shah Shuja's followers were murdered on February 7, 1661, because the prince intended to escape from the King's palace and conquer the kingdom of Arakan for himself[12]

But who escaped the massacre were later admitted into the king's bodyguard as a special archers unit called Kamans or Kamanci. [13]Those of Shah Shuja's soldiers who escaped the massacre were later admitted into the king's bodyguard as a special archers unit called Kamans or Kamanci (from the Persian : bow, kaman. bowman Kamaci.) From 1666 to 1710 the political rule of Arakan was completely in their hands, during which the Muslim Kaman units played a decisive role of king makers and king breakers. Their numbers were increased from time to time by fresh arrivals from upper India. [14]

The historian Sir Arthur P.Phayre thinks that the Arakanese Chronicles conceal their king's ugly behaviour, and emphasize the prince's abortive experiment to capture the palace by neglecting to mention the preceding provocation of not providing the promised ships, the king's request to have one of Shah Shuja's daughter's in marriage and his wish to molest the prince's richest. Phayre quotes no source for this 'opinion, which is apparently only his personal point of view, but a decidedly acceptable one.

Although immediately after Shah Shuja came to Arakan, Aurangzeb demanded to the Arakan king to deliver the fleeing prince and his family into his hands. Aurangzeb had been seen to be quite prepared himself to murder his own brother, but became angry when the Arakan king dared to harm a member of the Royal Mogul Family.

He decided to use this as an excuse to put an end to the Portugese Arakanese pirate raids on the East Bengal coast. In 1665 to 1666 a large Mogul force attacked the Portuguese and Arakanese, demolished their settlements in Sandwip, destroyed their navies and conquered Chittagong and Ramu. During their retreat to Mrohaung, Arakanese army units were also attacked by the local Muslim population, descendants of the Muslim slaves who had been settled on the land.

This defeat spelled the end of the power of the kingdom of Arakan. The death of Sandathudama in 1684, marked the beginning of a period of anarchy and riots in the kingdom during which the Muslim Kaman units played a decisive role as makers and displacers of kings. These units were being continually reinforced by fresh Afghan mercenaries from North India. From 1666 until 1710 the political rule of Arakan was completely in their hands. Ten kings were crowned and dethroned and usually murdered- by them during that period- In 1710 king Sandawizaya (1710-1731) succeeded in gaining the upper hand over them, and most of the Kamans were exiled to Rarmee Island.

Their descendants live in Rarmee and in a few villages near Akyab and still bear the same name to this very day. Their language is Arakanese and their customs are similar to Arakan customs in everything except religion Islam. [15]

Mughal influence on the Indian Subcontinent

A major Mughal contribution to the Indian Subcontinent was their unique architecture. Many great monuments were built by the Muslim emperors during the Mughal era including the Taj Mahal. The Muslim Mughal Dynasty built splendid palaces, tombs, minars and forts that stand today in Delhi, Dhaka , Agra, Jaipur, Lahore, Sheikhupura and many other cities of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.[16] The first Mughal emperor Babur wrote in the Bāburnāma:

“ Hindustan is a place of little charm. There is no beauty in its people, no graceful social intercourse, no poetic talent or understanding, no etiquette, nobility or manliness. The arts and crafts have no harmony or symmetry. There are no good horses, meat, grapes, melons or other fruit. There is no ice, cold water, good food or bread in the markets. There are no baths and no madrasas. There are no candles, torches or candlesticks".[17] ”

Fortunately his successors, with fewer memories of the Central Asian homeland he pined for, took a less prejudiced view of cultures of the Subcontinent, and became more or less naturalised, absorbing many subcontinental traits and customs along the way. The Mughal period would see a more fruitful blending of Indian, Iranian and Central Asian artistic, intellectual and literary traditions than any other in India's history. The Mughals had a taste for the fine things in life — for beautifully designed artifacts and the enjoyment and appreciation of cultural activities. The Mughals borrowed as much as they gave; both the Hindu and Muslim traditions of the Indian Subcontinent were huge influences on their interpretation of culture and court style. Nevertheless, they introduced many notable changes to societies of the subcontinent and culture, including:

Centralised government which brought together many smaller kingdoms

Persian art and culture amalgamated with native Indian art and culture

Started new trade routes to Arab and Turk lands. Islam was at its very highest

Mughlai cuisine

The Urdu language is a Hindi dialect with the addition of borrowings from Persian, Arabic and Turkish. Urdu developed as a result of the fusion of the Indian and Islamic cultures during the Mughal period. Modern Hindi is no longer traditional Hindi but a blend of Sanskrit and Prakrit grammar and vocabulary along with loan words from Persian, Arabic and Turkish which is mutually intelligible with and identical to Urdu. This is best exemplified by the language used in Bollywood films and in the major urban settings of the Indian Subcontinent.

A new style of architecture

Landscape gardening

The remarkable flowering of art and architecture under the Mughals is due to several factors. The empire itself provided a secure framework within which artistic genius could flourish, and it commanded wealth and resources unparalleled in the history of the Subcontinent. The Mughal rulers themselves were extraordinary patrons of art, whose intellectual caliber and cultural outlook was expressed in the most refined taste.

Alternate meanings

The alternate spelling of the empire, Mogul, is the source of the modern word mogul.[citation needed] In popular news jargon, this word denotes a successful business magnate who has built for himself a vast (and often

monopolistic) empire in one or more specific industries. The usage is a reference to the expansive and wealthy empire built by the Mughal kings. Rupert Murdoch, for example, is a called a news mogul.

Seljuk dynasty

The Seljuq (also Seljuq Turks[1], Seldjuks, Seldjuqs, Seljuks; in Turkish Selçuklular; in Persian: سلجوقیان Ṣaljūqīyān; in Arabic سلجوق Saljūq, or السلاجقة al-Salājiqa) were a Turkic[2] and Persianate[3] Sunni Muslim dynasty that ruled parts of Central Asia and the Middle East from the 11th to 14th centuries. They set up an empire known as Great Seljuq Empire that stretched from Anatolia to Punjab and was the target of the First Crusade. The dynasty had its origins in the Turcoman tribal confederations of Central Asia and marked the beginning of Turkic power in the Middle East. After arriving in Persia, the Seljuqs adopted the Persian culture[4][5][6] and language[7][8], and played an important role in the development of the Turko-Persian tradition which features "Persian culture patronized by Turkic rulers."[9] Today, they are remembered as great patrons of Persian culture, art, literature, and language[7][8][10] and are regarded by some as the cultural ancestors of the Western Turks – the present-day inhabitants of Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Turkmenistan.[citation needed]

Early history

Origins

Prior to the ninth century, hordes of Turks had crossed the Volga River into the Black Sea steppes.[11] Originally, the House of Seljuq was a branch of the Qinik Oghuz Turks[12][13][14][15] who in the 9th century lived on the periphery of the Muslim world, north of the Caspian and Aral sea in their Yabghu Khaganate of the Oghuz confederacy,[16] in the Kazakh Steppe of Turkestan.[17] In the 10th century the Seljuqs migrated from their ancestral homelands into mainland Persia, in the province of Khurasan, where they mixed with the local population and adopted the Persian culture and language in the following decades.

Seljuk leaders

Rulers of Seljuk Dynasty 1037–1157

The "Great Seljuqs" were heads of the family; in theory their authority extended over all the other Seljuq lines, although in practice this often was not the case. Turkish custom called for the senior member of the family to be the Great Seljuq, although usually the position was associated with the ruler of western Persia.

- Tugrul I (Tugrul Beg) 1037–1063
- Alp Arslan bin Chaghri 1063–1072
- Jalal ad-Dawlah Malik Shah I 1072–1092
- Nasir ad-Din Mahmud I 1092–1093
- Rukn ad-Din Barkiyaruq 1093–1104
- Mu'izz ad-Din Malik Shah II 1105
- Ghiyath ad-Din Muhammad/Mehmed I Tapar 1105–1118

Muhammad's son Mahmud II succeeded him in western Persia, but Sanjar, the governor of Khurasan from 1097 and the senior member of the family, becomes Great Seljuq sultan

- Mu'izz ad-Din Ahmed Sanjar 1118–1157

The Oghuz take control of much of Khurasan, with the remainder in the hands of former Seljuq emirs

Seljuq sultans of Hamadan 1118–1194

Alp Arslan humiliating Emperor Romanos IV after the Battle of Manzikert. From a 15th-century illustrated French translation of Boccacio's De Casibus Virorum Illustrium.

The rulers of western Persia, who maintained a very loose grip on the Abbasids of Baghdad. Several Turkish emirs gained a strong level of influence in the region, such as the Eldiduzids.

- Mahmud II 1118–1131
- Da'ud (in Jibal and Iranian Azerbaijan) 1131
- Tuğrul II 1131–1134
- Mas'ud 1134–1152
- Malik Shah III 1152–1153
- Muhammad II 1153–1160
- Suleiman Shah 1160–1161
- Arslan Shah 1161–1174
- Tugrul III 1174–1194

Tugrul III killed in battle with the Khwarazmshah, who annexes Hamadan

Seljuq rulers of Kerman 1041–1187

Kerman was a province in southern Persia.

- Qawurd 1041–1073
- Kerman Shah 1073–1074
- Sultan Shah 1074–1075
- Hussain Omar 1075–1084
- Turan Shah I 1084–1096
- Iran Shah 1096–1101
- Arslan Shah I 1101–1142
- Mehmed I (Muhammad) 1142–1156
- Toğrül Shah 1156–1169
- Bahram Shah 1169–1174
- Arslan Shah II 1174–1176
- Turan Shah II 1176–1183
- Muhammad Shah 1183–1187

Muhammad abandons Kerman, which falls into the hands of the Oghuz chief Malik Dinar

Seljuq rulers in Syria 1076–1117

- Abu Sa'id Taj ad-Dawla Tutush I 1085–1086
- Jalal ad-Dawlah Malik Shah I of Great Seljuq 1086–1087
- Qasim ad-Dawla Abu Said Aq Sunqur al-Hajib 1087–1094
- Abu Sa'id Taj ad-Dawla Tutush I (second time) 1094–1095
- Fakhr al-Mulk Radwan 1095–1113
- Tadj ad-Dawla Alp Arslan al-Akhras 1113–1114
- Sultan Shah 1114–1123

To the Artuqids

Sultans/Emirs of Damascus:

- Aziz ibn Abaaq al-Khwarazmi 1076–1079
- Abu Sa'id Taj ad-Dawla Tutush I 1079–1095
- Abu Nasr Shams al-Muluk Duqaq 1095–1104
- Tutush II 1104
- Muhi ad-Din Baqtash 1104

Damascus seized by the Burid Toghtekin

Seljuq sultans of Rûm (Anatolia) 1077–1307

- Kutalmish 1060–1077
- Suleyman Ibn Kutalmish (Suleiman) 1077–1086
- Dawud Kilij Arslan I 1092–1107
- Malik Shah 1107–1116
- Rukn ad-Din Mas'ud 1116–1156
- Izz ad-Din Kilij Arslan II 1156–1192
- Ghiyath ad-Din Kaykhusraw I 1192–1196
- Suleyman II (Suleiman) 1196–1204
- Kilij Arslan III 1204–1205
- Ghiyath ad-Din Kaykhusraw I (second time) 1205–1211
- Izz ad-Din Kaykaus I 1211–1220
- Ala ad-Din Kay Qubadh I 1220–1237
- Ghiyath ad-Din Kaykhusraw II 1237–1246
- Izz ad-Din Kaykaus II 1246–1260
- Rukn ad-Din Kilij Arslan IV 1248–1265
- Ala ad-Din Kayqubad II 1249–1257
- Ghiyath ad-Din Kaykhusraw III 1265–1282
- Ghiyath ad-Din Mesud II 1282–1284
- Ala ad-Din Kayqubad III 1284
- Ghiyath ad-Din Mesud II (second time) 1284–1293
- Ala ad-Din Kayqubad III (second time) 1293–1294

- Ghiyath ad-Din Mesud II (third time) 1294–1301
- Ala ad-Din Kayqubad III (third time) 1301–1303
- Ghiyath ad-Din Mesud II (fourth time) 1303–1307

The Seljuq line, already having been deprived of any significant power, effectively ends in the early fourteenth century

Safavid dynasty

The Safavids (Persian: صفویان; Georgian: სეფიანთა დინასტია; Azerbaijani: صفوی) were an Iranian[2] Shia dynasty of mixed Azeri[3] and Kurdish[4] origins which ruled Persia from 1501/1502 to 1722. Safavids established the greatest Iranian empire[5] since the Islamic conquest of Persia and established the Ithnāʿashari school of Shi'a Islam[6] as the official religion of their empire, marking one of the most important turning points in the history of Islam.

The Safavid dynasty had its origin in the "Safawiyyah" which was established in the city of Ardabil in the Azerbaijan region of Iran. From their base in Ardabil, the Safavids established control over all of Persia and reasserted the Iranian identity of the region[7], thus becoming the first native dynasty since the Sassanids to establish a unified Iranian state.

Despite their demise in 1722, the Safavids have left their mark down to present era by establishing and spreading Shi'a Islam in major parts of the Caucasus and West Asia, especially in Iran.

Background and Origin

Unlike many other dynasties founded by warlords and military chiefs, one of the unique aspects of the Safavids in the post-Islamic Iran was their origin in the Islamic Sufi order called the Safaviyeh. This uniqueness makes the Safavid dynasty comparable to the pre-Islamic Sassanid dynasty, which made Zoroastrianism into an official religion, and whose founders were from a priestly class. It should be noted that the Safaviyeh was not originally Shia but it was from the Shafii branch of Sunni Islam[8][9][10]. The Safavid dynasty was Azerbaijani speaking but their father-line has been classified as Kurdish, Azerbaijani and Arabic by various scholars. Nevertheless, what is certain is that the Safavids were a mixture of ethnic Georgian[11] [12] [13] [14], Azerbaijani, Kurdish, and Greek[15] lines. The Safavid Kings themselves claimed to be Seyyeds[16], family descendants of the prophet Muhammad, although many scholars have cast doubt on this claim[17]. There seems now to be a consensus among scholars that the Safavid family hailed from Persian Kurdistan[6], and later moved to Azerbaijan, finally settling in the 5th/11th century at Ardabil. But even before their ascent to political power in the 15th century, the Safavids had become Turkic-speaking and used Azerbaijani Turkic as a medium of communication with their followers[18] as well the official language of their court[1].

Azerbaijani Turkic father-line

According to Lawrence Davidson et al [19]:“ Even though most Turkish nomads and Persian peasants under the Safavid rule were Sunni, Ismail was determined to unite the country politically and religiously. Within a decade the Safavids, though Turkish by race, had taken control of all of Persia. ”

According to Richard Frye[3],“ The Turkish speakers of Azerbaijan (q.v.) are mainly descended from the earlier Iranian speakers, several pockets of whom still exist in the region. A massive migration of Oghuz Turks in the 11th and 12th centuries not only Turkified Azerbaijan but also Anatolia. Azeri Turks were the founders of Safavid dynasty ”

Some other scholars have also claimed Azerbaijani origin[20][21][22].

Kurdish Father-line

The oldest extant book on the genealogy of the Safavid family and the only one that is pre-1501 is titled "Safwat as-Safa"[4] and was written by Ibn Bazzaz, a disciple of Sheikh Sadr-al-Din Ardabili, the son of the Sheikh Safi ad-din Ardabili. According Ibn Bazzaz, the Sheikh was a descendant of a noble Kurdish man named Firuz Shah Zarin Kolah the Kurd of Sanjan[23]. The male lineage of the Safavid family given by the oldest manuscript of the Safwat as-Safa is:"(Shaykh) Safi al-Din Abul-Fatah Ishaaq the son of Al-Shaykh Amin al-din Jebrail the son of al-Saaleh Qutb al-Din Abu Bakr the son of Salaah al-Din Rashid the son of Muhammad al-Hafiz al-Kalaam Allah the son of ‘avaad the son of Birooz al-Kurdi al-Sanjani (Piruz Shah Zarin Kolah the Kurd of Sanjan)"[23]. The Safavids, in order to further legitimize their power in the Shi'ite Muslim world, claimed descent from the prophet Muhammad[4] and revised Ibn Bazzaz's work [24], obscuring the Kurdish origins of the Safavid family[4]

There seems to exist a consensus among Safavid scholars that Safavids originated in Iranian Kurdistan and moved to Iranian Azerbaijan, settling in Ardabil in the 11th century[23]. Accordingly, these scholars have considered the Safavids to be of Kurdish descent based on the origins of Sheykh Safi al-Din and that the Safavids were originally a Iranic speaking clan [23][25][26][27][28][29][4] [30][31][32][33][34][35][36][37]. Shaykh Safi al-Din was a Shafii Muslim, which is the sect that is followed by Sunni Kurds today[38].

Sheikh Safi al-Din

Safavid history begins with the establishment of the Safaviyeh Sufi Order by its eponymous founder Safī al-Dīn Abul Fath Is'haq Ardabilī (1252–1334). In 700/1301, Safi al-Din assumed the leadership of the Zahediyeh, a significant Sufi order in Gilan, from his spiritual master Sheikh Zahed Gilani who was also his father-in-law. Due to the great spiritual charisma of Sheikh Safi al-Din, the order was later known as the Safaviyeh. The Safavid order soon gained great influence in the city of Ardabil and Hamdullah Mustaufi remarks that most of the people of Ardabil are followers of Shaykh Safi al-Din.

Extant religious poetry from him, written in Old Tati[39][29] - a now extinct Northwestern Iranian language[29] - and accompanied by a paraphrase in Persian which helps their understanding[29], has survived to this day and has linguistic importance.[29]

From Sheikh Safi al-Din to Ismail I

After Safī al-Dīn, the leadership of the Safaviyeh passed onto Sheikh Sadr ud-Dīn Mūsā († 794/1391-92). The order at this time was transformed into a religious movement which conducted religious propaganda throughout Persia, Syria and Asia Minor, and most likely had maintained its Sunni Shaf’ite origin at that time. The leadership of the order passed on from Sadr ud-Dīn Mūsā to his son Khwādja Ali († 1429) and in turn to his son Ibrāhīm († 1429-47).

When Sheikh Junāyd, the son of Ibrāhīm, assumed the leadership of Safaviyeh in 1447, the history of the Safavid movement was radically changed. According to R.M. Savory, "Sheikh Junayd was not content with spiritual authority and he sought material power". At that time, the most powerful dynasty in Persia was that of the Qara Qoyunlu, the "Black Sheeps", whose ruler Jahān Shāh ordered Junāyd to leave Ardabil or else he would bring destruction and ruin upon the city.[6] Junāyd sought refuge with the rival of Qara Qoyunlu Jahan Shah, the Aq Qoyunlu Khan Uzun Hassan and cemented his relationship by marrying Khadija Begum, Uzun Hassan's sister.

Junāyd was killed during an incursion into the territories of the Shīrvanshāhs and his son Sheikh Haydar assumed the leadership of the Safaviyeh. Sheikh Haydar married Martha[40], Uzun Hassan's daughter, who gave birth to Ismāil, the founder of the Safavid dynasty. Martha's mother, named Theodora - better known as Despina Khatun[41] - was a Pontic Greek princess and the daughter of the Grand Komnenos John IV of Trebizond. She had been married to Uzun Hassan[42] in exchange to protection of the Grand Komnenos from the Ottomans.

After Uzun Hassan's death, his son Yāqub felt threatened by the growing Safavid religious influence. Yāqub allied himself with the Shīrvanshāh and killed Shaykh Haydar in 1488. By this time, the bulk of the Safaviyeh followers were Turkish-speaking clans from Asia Minor and Azerbaijan, and were collectively known as Qizilbāsh ("Red Heads") because of their distinct red headgear. The Qizilbāsh were warriors, spiritual followers of Sheikh Haydar, and a source of the Safavid military and political power. After the death of Haydar, the spiritual followers of the Safaviyeh gathered around his son Ali, who was also pursued and subsequently killed by Yāqub. According to official Safavid history, before passing away, Ali had designated his young brother Ismāil as the spiritual leader of the Safavid Order[6].

Founding of the dynasty by Shāh Ismāil I

Political scene in Persia prior to Ismāil's rule

After the decline of the Timurid Empire (1370–1506), there were many local states prior to the Iranian state established by Ismāil.[43] The most important local rulers about 1500 were:

- Huṣayn Bāyqarā, the Timurid ruler of Herāt
- Alwand Mīrzā, the Aq Qoyunlu Khan of Tabrīz
- Murad Beg, Aq Qoyunlu ruler of Irāq al-Ajam
- Farrokh Yaṣar, the Shah of Širvan
- Badi Alzamān Mīrzā, local ruler of Balkh
- Huṣayn Kīā Chalavī, the local ruler of Semnān
- Murād Beg Bayandar, local ruler of Yazd

Ismāil was able to unite all these lands under the Iranian Empire he created.

Shāh Ismāil I

he Safavid dynasty was founded about 1501 by Shāh Ismāil I.[44] Shah Ismail's background is disputed: the language he used is not identical with that of his "race" or "nationality" and he was bilingual from birth.[45] Some scholars argue that Ismāil was of mixed Turkic, Iranic, and Pontik Greek descent, [46] although others speculate that he was non-Turkic[45] and was a direct descendant of Sheikh Safi al-Din. As such, he was the last in the line of hereditary Grand Masters of the Safaviyeh oder, prior to its ascent to a ruling dynasty. Ismāil was known as a brave and charismatic youth, zealous with regards to his Shi'a faith, and believed himself to be of divine descent—practically worshipped by his Qizilbāsh followers. In 1500 Ismāil invaded neighboring Shirvan to avenge the death of his father, Sheik Haydar, who had been murdered in 1488 by the ruling Shirvanshah, Farrukh Yassar. Afterwards, Ismail went on a conquest campaign, capturing Tabriz in July 1501, where he enthroned himself the Shāh of Azerbaijan,[47] and minted coins in his name, proclaiming Shi'ism the official religion of his domain.[6]

Although Ismail I initially gained mastery over Azerbaijan alone, the Safavids ultimately won the struggle for power in Persia which had been going on for nearly a century between various dynasties and political forces. A year after his victory in Tabriz, Ismāil claimed most of Persia as part of his territory,[6] and within 10 years established a complete control over all of it. Hamadan fell under his power in 1503, Shiraz and Kerman in 1504, Najaf and Karbala in 1507, Van in 1508, Baghdad in 1509, and Herat, as well as other parts of Khorasan, in 1510. By 1511, the Uzbeks in the north-east, led by their Khan Muhammad Shaybāni, were driven far to the north, across the Oxus River where they continued to attack the Safavids. Ismail's decisive victory over the Uzbeks, who had occupied most of Khorasan, ensured Iran's eastern borders, and the Uzbeks never since expanded beyond the Hindukush. Although the Uzbeks continued to make occasional raids to Khorasan, the Safavid empire was able to keep them at bay throughout its reign.

Clashes with the Ottomans

More problematic for the Safavids was the powerful Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans, a Sunni dynasty, considered the active recruitment of Turkmen tribes of Anatolia for the Safavid cause as a major threat. To counter the rising Safavid power, in 1502, Sultan Bayezid II forcefully deported many Shi'as from Anatolia to other parts of the Ottoman realm. In 1514, Bayezid's son, Sultan Selim I marched through Anatolia and reached the plain of Chaldiran near the city of Khoy, and a decisive war was fought there. Most sources agree that the Ottoman army was at least double the size of that of Ismāil[44], however, what gave the Ottomans the advantage was the artillery which the Safavid army lacked. According to R. M. Savory, "Salim's plan was to winter at Tabriz and complete the conquest of Persia the following spring. However, a mutiny among his officers who refused to spend the winter at Tabriz forced him to withdraw across territory laid waste by the Safavid forces, eight days later"[44]. Although Ismāil was defeated and his capital was captured, the Safavid empire survived. The war between the two powers continued under Ismāil's son, Shāh Tahmāsp I (q.v.), and the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman I, until Shāh Abbās (q.v.) retook the area lost to the Ottomans by 1602.

The consequences of the defeat at Chaldiran were also psychological for Ismāil: the defeat destroyed Ismāil's belief in his invincibility, based on his claimed divine status[6]. His relationships with his Qizilbāsh followers were also fundamentally altered. The tribal rivalries between the Qizilbāsh, which temporarily ceased before the defeat at Chaldiran, resurfaced in intense form immediately after the death of Ismāil, and led to ten years of civil war (930-40/1524-33) until Shāh Tahmāsp regained control of the affairs of the state.

Early Safavid power in Iran was based on the military power of the Qizilbāsh. Ismāil exploited the first element to seize power in Iran. But eschewing politics after his defeat in Chaldiran, he left the affairs of the government to the office of the Wakīl (q.v.). Ismāil's successors, and most ostensibly Shāh Abbās I successfully diminished the Qizilbāsh's influence on the affairs of the state.

Ismāil's poetry

Ismāil is also known for his poetry using the pen-name Khatāī (Arabic خطائی: sinner)[44]. He is considered an important figure in the literary history of Azerbaijani and has left approximately 1400 verses in this language, which he chose to use for political reasons, as most of his followers at the time spoke Turkmen Turkish[45]. Approximately 50 verses of his Persian poetry have also survived. According to Encyclopædia Iranica, "Ismail was a skillful poet who used prevalent themes and images in lyric and didactic-religious poetry with ease and some degree of originality". He was also deeply influenced by the Persian literary tradition of Iran, particularly by the "Shāhnāma" of Ferdowsi, which probably explains the fact that he named all of his sons after Shāhnāma-characters. Dickson and Welch suggest that Ismāil's "Shāhnāmaye Shāhī" was intended as a present to the young Tahmāsp[48]. After defeating Muhammad Shaybāni's Uzbeks, Ismāil asked Hātefī, a famous poet from Jam (Khorasan), to write a Shāhnāma-like epic about his victories and his newly established dynasty. Although the epic was left unfinished, it was an example of mathnawis in the heroic style of the Shāhnāma written later on for the Safavid kings[6].

Legacy

Ismāil's greatest legacy established an enduring empire which lasted over 200 years. Even after the fall of Safavids in 1722, their cultural and political influence endured through the era of Afsharid, Zand, Qajar, and Pahlavi dynasties into the modern Islamic Republic of Iran, where Shi’a Islam is still the official religion as it was during the Safavids.

Shāh Tahmāsp

Shāh Tahmāsp, the young governor of Herat, succeeded his father Ismāil in 1524, when he was ten years and three months old.[6] He was the ward of the powerful Qizilbash amir Ali Beg Rūmlū (titled "Div Soltān") who saw himself as the de facto ruler of the state.[6] For around ten years, rival Qizilbāsh factions fought amongst themselves for the control of the empire until Shāh Tahmāsp came of age and reasserted his authority. He reigned for 52 years, the longest reign in Safavid history.[6] The Uzbeks, during the reign of Tahmāsp, attacked the eastern provinces of the kingdom five times and the Ottomans under Soleymān I invaded Persia four times. Persia lost territory in Iraq, and Tahmāsp was forced to move his capital from Tabriz to Qazvin. Tahmasp made the Peace of Amasya with the Ottomans in 1555, ending the war during his life..[6]

After the death of Tahmāsp in 984/1576, the struggle for a dominant position in the state was complicated by rival groups and factions.[6] Dominant political factions vied for power and support three different candidates. The mentally unstable Ismāil, the son of Tahmāsp and the purblind Muhammad Khudābanda were some of the candidates but did not get the support of all the Qizilbāsh chiefs. The Turkmen Ustājlū tribe, one of the most powerful tribes among the Qizilbāsh, threw its support behind Haydar, who was of a Georgian mother, but the majority of the Qizilbāsh chiefs saw this as a threat to their own, Turkmen-dominated power[6]. Instead, they first placed Ismāil II. on the throne (1576–1577) and after him Muhammad Shāh Khudābanda (1578–1588)

Shah Abbas

The greatest of the Safavid monarchs, Shah Abbas I (1587–1629) came to power in 1587 aged 16 following the forced abdication of his father, Shah Muhammad Khudābanda, having survived Qizilbashi court intrigues and murders. He recognized the ineffectualness of his army which was consistently being defeated by the Ottomans who had captured Georgia and Armenia and by Uzbeks who had captured Mashhad and Sistan in the east. First he sued for peace in 1590 with the Ottomans giving away territory in the north-west. Then two Englishmen, Robert Sherley and his brother Anthony, helped Abbas I to reorganize the Shah's soldiers into an officer-paid and well-trained standing army similar to a European model (which the Ottomans had already adopted). He wholeheartedly adopted the use of gunpowder (See Military history of Iran). The army divisions were: Ghulams غلام (crown servants [49] usually conscripted from Georgians and Circassians , Tofangchis تفگنچی (musketeers), and Topchis (Tupchis) توپچی (artillery-men).

Abbas moved the capital to Isfahan, deeper into central Iran. Abbas I built a new city next to the ancient Persian one. From this time the state began to take on a more Persian character. The Safavids ultimately succeeded in establishing a new Persian national monarchy.

Abbas I first fought the Uzbeks, recapturing Herat and Mashhad in 1598. Then he turned against the Ottomans recapturing Baghdad, eastern Iraq and the Caucasian provinces by 1622. He also used his new force to dislodge the Portuguese from Bahrain (1602) and the English navy from Hormuz (1622), in the Persian Gulf (a vital link in Portuguese trade with India). He expanded commercial links with the English East India Company and the Dutch East India Company. Thus Abbas I was able to break the dependence on the Qizilbash for military might and therefore was able to centralize control.

The Ottoman Turks and Safavids fought over the fertile plains of Iraq for more than 150 years. The capture of Baghdad by Ismail I in 1509 was only followed by its loss to the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman I in 1534. After subsequent campaigns, the Safavids recaptured Baghdad in 1623 yet lost it again to Murad IV in 1638. Henceforth a treaty, signed in Qasr-e Shirin, was established delineating a border between Iran and Turkey in 1639, a border which still stands in northwest Iran/southeast Turkey. The 150 year tug-of-war accentuated the Sunni and Shi'a rift in Iraq.

In 1609-1610, a war broke out between Kurdish tribes and the Safavid Empire. After a long and bloody siege led by the Safavid grand vizier Hatem Beg, which lasted from November 1609 to the summer of 1610, the Kurdish stronghold of Dimdim was captured. Shah Abbas ordered a general massacre in Beradost and Mukriyan(Mahabad) (Reported by Eskandar Beg Monshi, Safavid Historian (1557–1642) in the Book "Alam Ara Abbasi") and resettled the Turkic Afshar tribe in the region while deporting many Kurdish tribes to Khorasan.[50] Nowadays, there is a community of nearly 1.7 million people who are descendants of the tribes deported from Kurdistan to Khurasan (Northeastern Iran) by the Safavids.[51]

Due to his obsessive fear of assassination, Shah Abbas either put to death or blinded any member of his family who aroused his suspicion. In this way one of his sons was executed and two blinded. Since two other sons had predeceased him, the result was personal tragedy for Shah Abbas. When he died on 19 January 1629, he had no son

capable of succeeding him.[52]. The beginning of the 17th century saw the power of the Qizilbash decline, the original militia that had helped Ismail I capture Tabriz and which had gained many administrative powers over the centuries. Power was shifting to a new class of merchants, many of them ethnic Armenians, Georgians and Indians.

At its zenith, during the long reign of Shah Abbas I the empire's reach comprised Iran, Iraq, Armenia, Azerbaijan Republic, Georgia, and parts of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

Decline of the Safavid state

In addition to fighting its perennial enemies, the Ottomans and Uzbeks, as the 17th century progressed Iran had to contend with the rise of two more neighbors. Russian Muscovy in the previous century had deposed two western Asian khanates of the Golden Horde and expanded its influence into the Caucasus Mountains and Central Asia. In the east, the Mughal dynasty of India had expanded into Afghanistan at the expense of Iranian control, taking Qandahar.

Furthermore by the 17th century, trade routes between the East and West had shifted away from Iran, causing a loss of commerce and trade. Moreover, Shah Abbas had a conversion to a ghulam-based military, though expedient in the short term.

Except for Shah Abbas II, the Safavid rulers after Abbas I were ineffectual. The end of his reign, 1666, marked the beginning of the end of the Safavid dynasty. Despite falling revenues and military threats, later shahs had lavish lifestyles. Shah Soltan Hosain (1694–1722) in particular was known for his love of wine and disinterest in governance.[53]

View of Chehel-sotoon Palace, Isfahan, Iran.

The country was repeatedly raided on its frontiers — Kerman by Baloch tribesmen in 1698, Khorasan by Afghans in 1717, constantly in Mesopotamia by peninsula Arabs. Shah Sultan Hosein tried to forcibly convert his Afghan subjects in eastern Iran from Sunni to the Shi'a sect of Islam. In response, a Ghilzai Pashtun chieftain named Mir Wais Khan began a rebellion against the Georgian governor, Gurgin Khan, of Kandahar and defeated the Safavid army. Later, in 1722 an Afghan army led by Mir Wais' son Mahmud marched across eastern Iran, besieged, and sacked Isfahan. Mahmud proclaimed himself 'Shah' of Persia.

The Afghans rode roughshod over their conquered territory for a dozen years but were prevented from making further gains by Nadir Shah, a former slave who had risen to military leadership within the Afshar tribe in Khorasan, a vassal state of the Safavids. Nadir Shah defeated the Afghans in the Battle of Damghan, 1729. He had driven out the Afghans, who were still occupying Persia, by 1730. In 1738, Nadir Shah reconquered Eastern Persia, starting with Qandahar; in the same year he occupied Ghazni, Kabul, and Lahore, later conquering as far as east as Delhi, but not fortifying his Persian base and exhausting his army's strength. He had effective control under Shah Tahmasp II and then ruled as regent of the infant Abbas III until 1736 when he had himself crowned shah.

Immediately after Nadir Shah's assassination in 1747, the Safavids were re-appointed as shahs of Iran in order to lend legitimacy to the nascent Zand dynasty. However the brief puppet regime of Ismail III ended in 1760 when Karim Khan felt strong enough take nominal power of the country as well and officially end the Safavid dynasty.

Shia Islam as the state religion

Even though Safavids were not the first Shia rulers in Iran, they played a crucial role in making Shia Islam the official religion in the whole of Iran. There were large Shia communities in some cities like Qom and Sabzevar as early as the 8th century. In the 10th and 11th centuries the Buwayhids, who were of the Zaidiyyah branch of Shia, ruled in Fars, Isfahan and Baghdad. As a result of the Mongol conquest and the relative religious tolerance of the Ilkhanids, Shia dynasties were re-established in Iran, Sarbedaran in Khorasan being the most important. The Ilkhanid ruler Öljaitü converted to Twelver Shiism in the 13th century.

Following his conquest of Iran, Ismail I made conversion mandatory for the largely Sunni population. The Sunni Ulema or clergy were either killed or exiled. Ismail I, despite his heterodox Shia beliefs (Momen, 1985), brought in Shi'a religious leaders and granted them land and money in return for loyalty. Later, during the Safavid and especially Qajar period, the Shia Ulema's power increased and they were able to exercise a role, independent of or compatible with the government. Despite the Safavid's Sufi origins, most Sufi groups were prohibited, except the Nimatullahi order.

Iran became a feudal theocracy: the Shah was held to be the divinely ordained head of state and religion. In the following centuries, this religious stance cemented both Iran's internal cohesion and national feelings and provoked attacks by its Sunni neighbors.

Turcoman-Persian conflict

A major problem faced by Ismail I after the establishment of the Safavid state was how to bridge the gap between the two major ethnic groups in that state: the Qizilbash (Turkish:red headed) Turkmens, the "men of sword" of classical Islamic society whose military prowess had brought him to power, and the Persian elements, the "men of the pen," who filled the ranks of the bureaucracy and the religious establishment in the Safavid state as they had done for centuries under previous rulers of Persia, be they Arabs, Mongols, or Turkmens. As Vladimir Minorsky put it, friction between these two groups was inevitable, because the Qizilbash "were no party to the national Persian tradition". Between 1508 and 1524, the year of Ismail's death, the shah appointed five successive Persians to the office of vakil. When the second Persian "vakil" was placed in command of a Safavid army in Transoxiana, the Qizilbash, considering it a dishonor to be obliged to serve under him, deserted him on the battlefield with the result that he was slain. The fourth vakil was murdered by the Qizilbash, and the fifth was put to death by them [44].

The Qizilbashi tribes were essential to the military of Iran until the rule of Shah Abbas I- their leaders were able to exercise enormous influence and participate in court intrigues (assassinating Shah Ismail II for example).

Economy

What fueled the growth of Safavid economy was Iran's position between the burgeoning civilizations of Europe to its west and India and Islamic Central Asia to its east and north. The Silk Road which led through northern Iran to

India revived in the 16th century. Abbas I also supported direct trade with Europe, particularly England and The Netherlands which sought Persian carpet, silk and textiles. Other exports were horses, goat hair, pearls and an inedible bitter almond hadam-talka used as a spice in India. The main imports were spice, textiles (woolens from Europe, cottons from Gujarat), metals, coffee, and sugar.

The languages of the Court, Military, Administrative and Culture

The Safavids by the time of their rise were Azerbaijani-speaking although they also used Persian as a second language. The language chiefly used by the Safavid court and military establishment was Azerbaijani[54][55]. But the administration language as well as the language of respondence (Insha'), of belles-lettres (adab) and of history (tarikh) was Persian[55]. The inscriptions on Safavid currency were also in Persian[56].

Safavids also used Persian as a cultural and administrative language throughout the empire and were bilingual in Persian[57]. According to Arnold J. Toynbee[58]“ in the heyday of the Mughal, Safawi, and Ottoman regimes New Persian was being patronized as the language of litterae humaniores by the ruling element over the whole of this huge realm, while it was also being employed as the official language of administration in those two-thirds of its realm that lay within the Safawi and the Mughal frontiers ”

According to John R. Perry[59]“ In the 16th century, the Turcophone Safavid family of Ardabil in Azerbaijan, probably of Turkicized Iranian (perhaps Kurdish), origin, conquered Iran and established Turkic, the language of the court and the military, as a high-status vernacular and a widespread contact language, influencing spoken Persian, while written Persian, the language of high literature and civil administration, remained virtually unaffected in status and content. ”

According to the Cambridge History of Iran [54]“ In day-to-day affairs, the language chiefly used at the Safavid court and by the great military and political officers, as well as the religious dignitaries, was Turkish, not Persian; and the last class of persons wrote their religious works mainly in Arabic. Those who wrote in Persian were either lacking in proper tuition in this tongue, or wrote outside Iran and hence at a distance from centers where Persian was the accepted vernacular, endued with that vitality and susceptibility to skill in its use which a language can have only in places where it truly belongs. ”

According to É. Á. Csató et al.[21]“ A specific Turkic language was attested in Safavid Persia during the 16th and 17th centuries, a language that Europeans often called Persian Turkish ("Turc Agemi", "lingua turcica agemica"), which was a favourite language at the court and in the army because of the Turkic origins of the Safavid dynasty. The original name was just turki, and so a convenient name might be Turki-yi Acemi. This variety of Persian Turkish must have been also spoken in the Caucasian and Transcaucasian regions, which during the 16th century belonged to both the Ottomans and the Safavids, and were not fully integrated into the Safavid empire until 1606. Though that language might generally be identified as Middle Azerbaijanian, it's not yet possible to define exactly the limits of this language, both in linguistic and territorial respects. It was certainly not homogenous - maybe it was an Azerbaijanian-Ottoman mixed language, as Beltadze(1967:161) states for a translation of the gospels in Georgian script from the 18th century. ”

According to Ruda Jurdi Abisaab[60]“ Although the Arabic language was still the medium for religious scholastic expression, it was precisely under the Safavids that hadith complications and doctrinal works of all sorts were being translated to Persian. The 'Amilis (Lebanese scholars of Shi'i faith) operating through the Court-based religious posts, were forced to mater the Persian language; their students translated their instructions into Persian. Persianization went hand in hand with the popularization of 'mainstream' Shi'i belief. ”

According to Cornelis Henricus Maria Versteegh[61]“ The Safavid dynasty under Shah Ismail (961/1501) adopted Persian and the Shi'ite form of Islam as the national language and religion.

Culture

Culture within the Safavid family

The Safavid family was a literate family from its early origin. There are extant Tati and Persian poetry from Shaykh Safi ad-din Ardabili as well as extant Persian poetry from Shaykh Sadr ad-din. Most of the extant poetry of Shah Ismail I is in Azerbaijani pen-name of Khatai.[62] Sam Mirza, the son of Shah Esmail as well as some later authors assert that Ismail composed poems both in Turkish and Persian but only a few specimens of his Persian verse have survived[44]. A collection of his poems in Azeri were published as a Divan. Shah Tahmasp who has composed poetry in Persian was also a painter, while Shah Abbas II was known as a poet, writing Azerbaijani verses with the pen name of Tani.[63]. Sam Mirza, the son of Ismail I was himself a poet and composed his poetry in Persian. He also compiled an anthology of contemporary poetry.

Culture in the empire

In the Safavid era the Persian Architecture flourished again and saw many new monuments, such as Naghsh-i Jahan Square, the biggest historic square in the world.

Shah Abbas I recognized the commercial benefit of promoting the arts - artisan products provided much of Iran's foreign trade. In this period, handicrafts such as tile making, pottery and textiles developed and great advances were made in miniature painting, bookbinding, decoration and calligraphy. In the sixteenth century, carpet weaving evolved from a nomadic and peasant craft to a well-executed industry with specialization of design and manufacturing. Tabriz was the center of this industry. The carpets of Ardabil were commissioned to commemorate the Safavid dynasty. The elegantly baroque yet famously 'Polonaise' carpets were made in Iran during the seventeenth century.

Using traditional forms and materials, Reza Abbasi (1565–1635) introduced new subjects to Persian painting — semi-nude women, youth, lovers. His painting and calligraphic style influenced Iranian artists for much of the Safavid period, which came to be known as the Isfahan school. Increased contact with distant cultures in the 17th century, especially Europe, provided a boost of inspiration to Iranian artists who adopted modeling, foreshortening,

spatial recession, and the medium of oil painting (Shah Abbas II sent Zaman to study in Rome). The epic Shahnameh (Book of Kings), a stellar example of manuscript illumination and calligraphy, was made during Shah Tahmasp's reign. (This book was written by Ferdousi in the 1000AD for Sultan Mahmood Ghaznawi) Another manuscript is the Khamsa by Nezami executed 1539-43 by Aqa Mirak and his school in Isfahan.

Isfahan bears the most prominent samples of the Safavid architecture, all constructed in the years after Shah Abbas I permanently moved the capital there in 1598: the Imperial Mosque, Masjid-e Shah, completed in 1630, the Imami Mosque,Masjid-e Imami, the Lutfullah Mosque and the Royal Palace.

According to Professor. William Cleveland[65]:“ In 1598 Shah Abbas designated Isfahan , a city located in the center of Iran , as the new imperial capital. Isfahan was already an established city and had once been the Seljuk capital. However, Abbas transformed the city, lavishing huge sums on the construction of a carefully planned urban center laid out along broad thoroughfares and embellished with richly decorated mosques, a royal palace, luxurious private residences, and a large bazaar, all maintained in a lush garden setting. The material splendor of Isfahan court pled with Abbas's generous patronage attracted artists and scholars, whose presence contributed to the city's rich intellectual and cultural life. As activities from carpet weaving to miniature painting, from the writing of Persian poetry to the compilation of works on Shica jurisprudence were encouraged, Isfahan became the catalyst for an explosion of Persian culture that spread to other Safavid cities and continued after the death of Abbas. Isfahan was also a thriving commercial center whose merchants, prospering under the stable, centralized government established by Abbas, became consumers and pa-irons themselves. At the time of Abbas's death, the Safavid capital had a population estimated at 400,000; the large size of the city and the impressive achievements of its residents prompted the inhabitants to coin their famous boast, " Isfahan is half the world. ”

Poetry stagnated under the Safavids; the great medieval ghazal form languished in over-the-top lyricism. Poetry lacked the royal patronage of other arts and was hemmed in by religious prescriptions.

The Safavid era gave way to a flowering of philosophy in Iran with such figures Mulla Sadra of Shiraz, Shaikh Bahai and Mir Damad. According to Professor Richard Nelson Frye: They were the continuers of the classical tradition of Islamic thought, which after Averroes died in the Arab west. The Persians schools of thought were the true heirs of the great Islamic thinkers of the golden age of Islam, whereas in the Ottoman empire there was an intellectual stagnation, as far as the traditions of Islamic philosophy were concerned.[66] One of the most renowned Muslim philosophers, Mulla Sadra, lived during Shah Abbas I's reign and wrote the Asfar, a meditation on what he called 'meta philosophy' which brought to a synthesis the philosophical mysticism of Sufism, the theology of Shi'a Islam, and the Peripatetic and Illuminationist philosophies of Avicenna and Suhrawardi. Iskander Beg Monshi’s History of Shah Abbas the Great written a few years after its subject's death, achieved a nuanced depth of history and character.

ARCHITECTURE

A new age in Iranian architecture began with the rise of the Safavid dynasty. Economically robust and politically stable, this period saw a flourishing growth of theological sciences. Traditional architecture evolved in its patterns and methods leaving its impact on the architecture of the following periods.

The appearance of new patterns base on geometrical networks in the development of cities gave order to open urban spaces, and took into account the conservation of natural elements(water and plants) within cities. The establishment of distinctive public spaces is one of the most important urban features of the Safavid period, as manifested for example in Naghsh-e Jahan Square, Chahar Bagh and the royal gardens of Isfahan.

Distinctive monuments like the Sheikh Lotfallah (1603), Hasht Behesht (Eight Paradise Palace)(1699) and the Chahar Bagh School(1714) appeared in Isfahan and other cities. This extensive development of architecture was rooted in Persian culture and took form in the design of schools, baths, houses, caravanserai and other urban spaces such as bazaars and squares. It continued until the end of the Qajar reign.

Role of Qizilbash in Military

Main article: Qizilbash

The Qizilbash (قزلباش - Qizelbāš) were a wide variety of extremist Shi'ite (ghulāt) and mostly Turcoman militant groups who helped found the Safavid Empire. Their military power was essential during the reign of the Shahs Ismail and Tahmasp.

However, faced with rebellious Qizilbash (who were supposed to be the "Imperial Guards"), Abbas I was forced to reorganize the army and minimized their influence, using a standing army from the ranks of Armenian and Georgian ghulams ("slaves"). The new army would be loyal to the king personally and not to clan-chiefs anymore. Furthermore, in order to balance the power between the new army and the powerful Turcoman tribes, Abbas united a number of allied Turcoman tribes on the north-western frontier of the empire and gave the new, large and powerful tribe the name "Shahsavan" ("Friends of the King").[68]

Legacy

It was the Safavids who made Iran the spiritual bastion of Shi’ism against the onslaughts of orthodox Sunni Islam, and the repository of Persian cultural traditions and self-awareness of Iranianhood,[69] acting as a bridge to modern Iran. The founder of the dynasty, Shah Isma'il, adopted the title of "Persian Emperor" Pādišah-ī Īrān, with its implicit notion of an Iranian state stretching from Khorasan as far as Euphrates, and from the Oxus to the southern Territories of the Persian Gulf.[70] According to Professor Roger Savory[71][72]:“ In Number of ways the Safavids affected the development of the modern Iranian state: first, they ensured the continuance of various ancient and traditional Persian institutions, and transmitted these in a strengthened, or more 'national', form; second, by imposing Ithna 'Ashari Shi'a Islam on Iran as the official religion of the Safavid state, they enhanced the power of mujtahids. The Safavids thus set in train a struggle for power between the urban and the crown that is to say, between the proponents of secular government and the proponents of a theoretic government; third, they laid the foundation of alliance between the religious classes ('Ulama') and the bazaar which played an important role both in the Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1906, and again in the Islamic Revolution of 1979; fourth the policies introduced by Shah Abbas I conduced to a more centralized administrative system.

Safavid Shahs of Iran

- Ismail I 1501–1524
- Tahmasp I 1524–1576

- Ismail II 1576–1578
- Mohammed Khodabanda 1578–1587
- Abbas I 1587–1629
- Safi 1629–1642
- Abbas II 1642–1666
- Suleiman I 1666–1694
- Sultan Hoseyn I 1694–1722
- Tahmasp II 1722–1732
- Abbas III 1732–1736

IRAN

Iran (Persian: ایران, /irɑːn/↔[ʔiˈɾɑːn] (help·info)), officially the Islamic Republic of Iran[5], formerly known internationally as Persia until 1935, is a country in Central Eurasia, located on the northeastern shore of the Persian Gulf. The name Iran is a cognate of Aryan, and means "Land of the Aryans".[6][7][8]

The 18th largest country in the world in terms of area at 1,648,195 km², Iran has a population of over seventy million. It is a country of special geostrategic significance due to its central location in Eurasia. Iran is bordered on the north by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. As Iran is a littoral state of the Caspian Sea, which is an inland sea and condominium, Kazakhstan and Russia are also Iran's direct neighbors to the north. Iran is bordered on the east by Afghanistan and Pakistan, on the south by the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, and on the west by Turkey and Iraq. Tehran is the capital, the country's largest city and the political, cultural, commercial, and industrial center of the nation. Iran is a regional power,[9][10] and occupies an important position in international energy security and world economy as a result of its large reserves of petroleum and natural gas.

Iran is home to one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations, with historical and urban settlements dating back to 4000 BC.[11][12][13] The Medes unified Iran into a kingdom in 625 BC.[2] They were succeeded by three Iranian dynasties, the Achaemenids, Parthians and Sassanids, which governed Iran for more than 1000 years. After centuries of foreign occupation and short-lived native dynasties, Iran was once again reunified as an independent state in 1501 by the Safavid dynasty[14] — who promoted Shia Islam[15] as the official religion of their empire, marking one of the most important turning points in the history of Islam.[16] Iran had been a monarchy ruled by a Shah, or emperor, almost without interruption from 1501 until the 1979 Iranian Revolution, when Iran officially became an Islamic republic on 1 April 1979.[17][18]

Iran is a founding member of the UN, NAM, OIC and OPEC. The political system of Iran, based on the 1979 Constitution, comprises several intricately connected governing bodies. The highest state authority is the Supreme Leader. Shia Islam is the official religion and Persian is the official language.

Ottoman Empire

Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire (1299–1923) (Old Ottoman Turkish: دولتْ ـعليّه ـعثمانيّه Devlet-i Âliye-yi Osmâniyye,[2] Late Ottoman and Modern Turkish: Osmanlı Devleti or Osmanlı İmparatorluğu), was a Turkish state. The state was known as the Turkish Empire or Turkey by its contemporaries (see the other names of the Ottoman State.) It was succeeded by the Republic of Turkey,[3] which was officially proclaimed on October 29, 1923.

At the height of its power (16th–17th century), it spanned three continents, controlling much of Southeastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. It stretched from the Strait of Gibraltar (and in 1553 a portion of the Atlantic coast of Morocco beyond Gibraltar) in the west; to the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf in the east; and from the borders of Austria, Slovakia, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and parts of Ukraine in the north; to Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia and Yemen in the south. The Ottoman Empire contained 29 provinces and numerous vassal states; some of which were later absorbed into the empire, while others gained various types of autonomy during the course of centuries. The empire also temporarily gained authority over distant overseas lands through declarations of allegiance to the Ottoman Sultan and Caliph, such as the declaration by the Sultan of Aceh in 1565; or through the temporary acquisitions of islands in the Atlantic Ocean, such as Lanzarote (1585), Madeira (1617), Vestmannaeyjar (1627) and Lundy (1655).[4]

The empire was at the centre of interactions between the Eastern and Western worlds for six centuries. With Constantinople (Istanbul) as its capital city, and vast control of lands during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent which largely corresponded to the lands ruled by Justinian the Great exactly 1000 years earlier, the Ottoman Empire was, in many respects, an Islamic successor to the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire.

History

Rise (1299–1453)

With the demise of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rūm (circa 1300), Turkish Anatolia was divided into a patchwork of independent states, the so-called Ghazi emirates. By 1300, a weakened Byzantine Empire had seen most of its Anatolian provinces lost to ten Ghazi principalities. One of the Ghazi emirates was led by Osman I (from which the name Ottoman is derived), son of Ertuğrul in the region of Eskişehir in western Anatolia. Osman I extended the frontiers of Ottoman settlement towards the edge of the Byzantine Empire. He moved the Ottoman capital to Bursa, and shaped the early political development of the nation. Given the nickname "Kara" (which means "black" in modern Turkish, but alternatively meant "brave" or "strong" in old Turkish) for his courage,[5] Osman I was admired as a strong and dynamic ruler long after his death, as evident in the centuries-old Turkish phrase, "may he be as good as Osman." His reputation has also been burnished by the medieval Turkish story known as "Osman's Dream", a foundation myth in which the young Osman was inspired to conquest by a prescient vision of empire. In this period, a formal Ottoman government was created whose institutions would change drastically over the life of the empire. The government used the legal entity known as the millet, under which religious and ethnic minorities were able to manage their own affairs with substantial independence from central control.

In the century after the death of Osman I, Ottoman rule began to extend over the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans. The important city of Thessaloniki was captured from the Venetians in 1387, and the Turkish victory at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 effectively marked the end of Serbian power in the region, paving the way for Ottoman expansion into Europe. The Battle of Nicopolis in 1396, widely regarded as the last large-scale crusade of the Middle Ages, failed to stop the advance of the victorious Ottomans. With the extension of Turkish dominion into the Balkans, the strategic conquest of Constantinople became a crucial objective. The Empire controlled nearly all of the former Byzantine lands surrounding the city, but the Byzantines were temporarily relieved when Tamerlane invaded Anatolia with the Battle of Ankara in 1402, taking Sultan Bayezid I as a prisoner. Part of the Ottoman territories in the Balkans (such as Thessaloniki, Macedonia and Kosovo) were temporarily lost after 1402, but were later recovered by Murad II between the 1430s and 1450s.

The capture of Bayezid I threw the Turks into disorder. The state fell into a civil war which lasted from 1402 to 1413, as Bayezid's sons fought over succession. It ended when Mehmed I emerged as the sultan and restored Ottoman power, bringing an end to the Interregnum. His grandson, Mehmed the Conqueror, reorganized the state and the military, and demonstrated his martial prowess by capturing Constantinople on May 29, 1453, at the age of 21. The city became the new capital of the Ottoman Empire, and Mehmed II assumed the title of Kayser-i Rûm (Roman Emperor). However, this title was not recognized by the Greeks or Western Europe, and the Russian Czars also claimed to be the successors of the Eastern Imperial title. To consolidate his claim, Mehmed II aspired to gain control over the Western capital, Rome, and Ottoman forces occupied parts of the Italian peninsula, starting from Otranto and Apulia on July 28, 1480. But after Mehmed II's death on May 3, 1481, the campaign in Italy was cancelled and the Ottoman forces retreated.

Growth (1453–1683)

This period in Ottoman history can roughly be divided into two distinct eras: an era of territorial, economic, and cultural growth prior to 1566, followed by an era of relative military and political stagnation.

Expansion and apogee (1453–1566)

Mehmed II enters Constantinople with his army by Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant

The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 cemented the status of the Empire as the preeminent power in southeastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean. During this time, the Ottoman Empire entered a long period of conquest and expansion, extending its borders deep into Europe and North Africa. Conquests on land were driven by the discipline and innovation of the Ottoman military; and on the sea, the Ottoman navy aided this expansion significantly. The navy also contested and protected key seagoing trade routes, in competition with the Italian city states in the Black Sea, Aegean and Mediterranean seas and the Portuguese in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. The state also flourished economically thanks to its control of the major overland trade routes between Europe and Asia. This lock-hold on trade between western Europe and Asia is frequently cited as a primary motivational factor for the Queen of Spain to fund Christopher Columbus's westward journey to find a sailing route to Asia. The world had been speculated to be round for generations before 1492, but Columbus's expedition was the first real effort to short-circuit the dangerous land-locked journey through the Muslim-controlled Ottoman Empire to trade with Asia. The resulting dominance of Europe in the new world and the riches it brought were almost directly due to the Ottoman Empire's heavy taxation on Christians and Jews in their territory.

The Empire prospered under the rule of a line of committed and effective sultans. Sultan Selim I (1512–1520) dramatically expanded the Empire's eastern and southern frontiers by defeating Shah Ismail of Safavid Persia, in the

Battle of Chaldiran.[6] Selim I established Ottoman rule in Egypt, and created a naval presence on the Red Sea. After this Ottoman expansion, a competition started between the Portuguese Empire and the Ottoman Empire to become the dominant power in the region.[7]

Selim's successor, Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566), further expanded upon Selim's conquests. After capturing Belgrade in 1521, Suleiman conquered the Kingdom of Hungary and established Ottoman rule in the territory of present-day Hungary and other Central European territories, after his victory in the Battle of Mohács in 1526. He then laid siege to Vienna in 1529, but failed to take the city after the onset of winter forced his retreat.[8] In 1532, another planned attack on Vienna with an army thought to be over 250,000 strong was repulsed 60 miles (97 km) south of Vienna, at the fortress of Güns. After further advances by the Ottomans in 1543, the Habsburg ruler Ferdinand officially recognised Ottoman ascendancy in Hungary in 1547. During the reign of Suleiman, Transylvania, Wallachia and, intermittently, Moldavia, became tributary principalities of the Ottoman Empire. In the east, the Ottomans took Baghdad from the Persians in 1535, gaining control of Mesopotamia and naval access to the Persian Gulf. By the end of Suleiman's reign, the Empire's population reached about 15,000,000 people.[9]

Under Selim and Suleiman, the Empire became a dominant naval force, controlling much of the Mediterranean Sea.[10] The exploits of the Ottoman admiral Barbarossa Hayreddin Pasha, who commanded the Ottoman Navy during Suleiman's reign, led to a number of military victories over Christian navies. Among these were the conquest of Tunis and Algeria from Spain; the evacuation of Muslims and Jews from Spain to the safety of Ottoman lands (particularly Salonica, Cyprus, and Constantinople) during the Spanish Inquisition; and the capture of Nice from the Holy Roman Empire in 1543. This last conquest occurred on behalf of France as a joint venture between the forces of the French king Francis I and those of Barbarossa.[11] France and the Ottoman Empire, united by mutual opposition to Habsburg rule in both Southern Europe and Central Europe, became strong allies during this period. The alliance was economic and military, as the sultans granted France the right of trade within the Empire without levy of taxation. In fact, the Ottoman Empire was by this time a significant and accepted part of the European political sphere, and entered into a military alliance with France, the Kingdom of England and the Dutch Republic against Habsburg Spain, Italy and Habsburg Austria.

As the 16th century progressed, Ottoman naval superiority was challenged by the growing sea powers of western Europe, particularly Portugal, in the Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean and the Spice Islands. With the Ottomans blockading sea-lanes to the East and South, the European powers were driven to find another way to the ancient silk and spice routes, now under Ottoman control. On land, the Empire was preoccupied by military campaigns in Austria and Persia, two widely separated theatres of war. The strain of these conflicts on the Empire's resources, and the logistics of maintaining lines of supply and communication across such vast distances, ultimately rendered its sea efforts unsustainable and unsuccessful. The overriding military need for defence on the western and eastern frontiers of the Empire eventually made effective long-term engagement on a global scale impossible.

Revolts and revival (1566–1683)

Suleiman's death in 1566 marked the beginning of an era of diminishing territorial gains. The rise of western European nations as naval powers and the development of alternative sea routes from Europe to Asia and the New World damaged the Ottoman economy. The effective military and bureaucratic structures of the previous century also came under strain during a protracted period of misrule by weak Sultans. But in spite of these difficulties, the

Empire remained a major expansionist power until the Battle of Vienna in 1683, which marked the end of Ottoman expansion into Europe.

European states initiated efforts at this time to curb Ottoman control of overland trade routes. Western European states began to circumvent the Ottoman trade monopoly by establishing their own naval routes to Asia. Economically, the huge influx of Spanish silver from the New World caused a sharp devaluation of the Ottoman currency and rampant inflation. This had serious negative consequences at all levels of Ottoman society. Sokullu Mehmet Pasha, who was the grand vizier of Selim II, began the projects of Suez Channel and Don-Volga Channel to save the economy but these were later cancelled.

In southern Europe, a coalition of Catholic powers, led by Philip II of Spain, formed an alliance to challenge Ottoman naval strength in the Mediterranean Sea. Their victory over the Ottoman fleet at the Battle of Lepanto (1571) was a startling blow to the image of Ottoman invincibility. However, historians today stress the symbolic rather than the strictly military significance of the battle, for within six months of the defeat a new Ottoman fleet of some 250 sail including eight modern galleasses[12] had been built, with the harbours of Constantinople turning out a new ship every day at the height of the construction. In discussions with a Venetian minister, the Turkish Grand Vizier commented: "In capturing Cyprus from you, we have cut off one of your arms; in defeating our fleet you have merely shaved off our beard".[13] The Ottoman naval recovery persuaded Venice to sign a peace treaty in 1573, and the Ottomans were able to expand and consolidate their position in North Africa.[14]

By contrast, the Habsburg frontier had settled into a more or less permanent border, marked only by relatively minor battles concentrating on the possession of individual fortresses. This stalemate was mostly caused by the European development of the trace italienne, low bastioned fortifications built by Austria along the border that were almost impossible to capture without lengthy sieges. The Ottomans had no answer to these new-style fortifications that rendered the artillery they previously used so effectively (as in the Siege of Constantinople) almost useless. The stalemate was also a reflection of simple geographical limits: in the pre-mechanized age, Vienna marked the furthest point that an Ottoman army could march from Constantinople during the early-spring to late-autumn campaigning season. It also reflected the difficulties imposed on the Empire by the need to maintain two separate fronts: one against the Austrians (see: Ottoman wars in Europe), and the other against a rival Islamic state, the Safavids of Persia (see: Ottoman wars in Near East).

On the battlefield, the Ottomans gradually fell behind the Europeans in military technology as the innovation which fed the Empire's forceful expansion became stifled by growing religious and intellectual conservatism. Changes in European military tactics and weaponry in the military revolution caused the once-feared Sipahi cavalry to lose military relevance. The 'Long War' against Habsburg Austria (1593-1606) created the need for greater numbers of infantry equipped with firearms. This resulted in a relaxation of recruitment policy and a significant growth in Janissary corps numbers. This contributed to problems of indiscipline, effectiveness and outright rebelliousness within the corps which the government wrestled with but never fully solved during (and beyond) this whole period. The development of pike and shot and later linear tactics with increased use of firearms by Europeans proved deadly against the massed infantry in close formation used by the Ottomans. Irregular sharpshooters (Sekban) were also recruited for the same reasons and on demobilisation turned to brigandage in the Jelali revolts (1595–1610) which

engendered widespread anarchy in Anatolia in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.[15]With the Empire's population reaching 30,000,000 people by 1600, shortage of land placed further pressure on the government.[16]

However, the 17th century was not simply an era of stagnation and decline, but also a key period in which the Ottoman state and its structures began to adapt to new pressures and new realities, internal and external.

The Sultanate of women (1648–1656) was a period in which the political influence of the Imperial Harem was dominant, as the mothers of young sultans exercised power on behalf of their sons. This was not wholly unprecedented; Hürrem Sultan, who established herself in the early 1530s as the successor of Nurbanu, the first Valide Sultan, was described by the Venetian Baylo Andrea Giritti as 'a woman of the utmost goodness, courage and wisdom' despite the fact that she 'thwarted some while rewarding others'.[17] But the inadequacy of Ibrahim I (1640-1648) and the minority accession of Mohammed IV in 1646 created a significant crisis of rule which the dominant women of the Imperial Harem filled [18]. The most prominent women of this period were Kösem Sultan and her daughter-in-law Turhan Hatice, whose political rivalry culminated in Kösem's murder in 1651.

This period gave way to the highly significant Köprülü Era (1656–1703), during which effective control of the Empire was exercised by a sequence of Grand Viziers from the Köprülü family. On September 15, 1656 the octogenarian Köprülü Mehmed Pasha accepted the seals of office having received guarantees from the Valide Turhan Hatice of unprecedented authority and freedom from interference. A fierce conservative disciplinarian, he successfully reasserted the central authority and the empire's military impetus. This continued under his son and successor Köprülü Fazıl Ahmed (Grand Vizier 1661 - 1676).[19]. The Köprülü Vizierate saw renewed military success with authority restored in Transylvania, the conquest of Crete completed in 1669 and expansion into Polish southern Ukraine, with the strongholds of Khotin and Kamianets-Podilskyi and the territory of Podolia ceding to Ottoman control in 1676.[20]

This period of renewed assertiveness came to a calamitous end when Grand Vizier Kara Mustapha Pasha in May 1683 led a huge army to attempt a second Ottoman siege of Vienna. The final assault being fatally delayed, the Ottoman forces were swept away by allied Habsburg, German and Polish forces spearheaded by the Polish king Jan Sobieski.[21] at the Battle of Vienna.

The alliance of the Holy League pressed home the advantage of the defeat at Vienna and 15 years of see-sawing warfare culminated in the epochal Treaty of Karlowitz (January 26, 1699) which for the first time saw the Ottoman Empire surrender control of significant European territories (many permanently).[22] The Empire had reached the end of its ability to effectively conduct an assertive, expansionist policy against its European rivals and it was to be forced from this point to adopt an essentially defensive strategy within this theatre.

Only two Sultans in this period personally exercised strong political and military control of the Empire: the vigorous Murad IV (1612–1640) recaptured Yerevan (1635) and Baghdad (1639) from the Safavids and reasserted central authority, albeit during a brief majority reign[23]. Mustafa II (1695-1703) led the Ottoman counter attack of 1695-6 against the Habsburgs in Hungary, but was undone at the disastrous defeat at Zenta (September 11, 1697)[24].

Stagnation and reform (1699–1827)

During the stagnation period much territory in the Balkans was ceded to Austria. Certain areas of the Empire, such as Egypt and Algeria, became independent in all but name, and subsequently came under the influence of Britain and France. In the 18th century, centralized authority gave way to varying degrees of provincial autonomy enjoyed by local governors and leaders. A series of wars were fought between the Russian and Ottoman empires from the 17th to the 19th century.

The long period of Ottoman stagnation is typically characterized by historians as an era of failed reforms. In the latter part of this period there were educational and technological reforms, including the establishment of higher education institutions such as Istanbul Technical University; Ottoman science and technology had been highly regarded in medieval times, as a result of Ottoman scholars' synthesis of classical learning with Islamic philosophy and mathematics, and knowledge of such Chinese advances in technology as gunpowder and the magnetic compass. By this period though the influences had become regressive and conservative. The guilds of writers denounced the printing press as "the Devil's Invention", and were responsible for a 43-year lag between its invention by Johannes Gutenberg in Europe in 1450 and its introduction to the Ottoman society with the Gutenberg press in Constantinople that was established by the Sephardic Jews of Spain in 1493. Sephardic Jews migrated to the Ottoman Empire as they escaped from the Spanish Inquisition of 1492.

The Tulip Era (or Lâle Devri in Turkish), named for Sultan Ahmed III's love of the tulip flower and its use to symbolize his peaceful reign, the Empire's policy towards Europe underwent a shift. The region was peaceful between 1718 and 1730, after the Ottoman victory against Russia in the Pruth Campaign in 1712 and the subsequent Treaty of Passarowitz brought a period of pause in warfare. The Empire began to improve the fortifications of cities bordering the Balkans to act as a defence against European expansionism. Other tentative reforms were also enacted: taxes were lowered; there were attempts to improve the image of the Ottoman state; and the first instances of private investment and entrepreneurship occurred.

Ottoman military reform efforts begin with Selim III (1789–1807) who made the first major attempts to modernize the army along European lines. These efforts, however, were hampered by reactionary movements, partly from the religious leadership, but primarily from the Janissary corps, who had become anarchic and ineffectual. Jealous of their privileges and firmly opposed to change, they created a Janissary revolt. Selim's efforts cost him his throne and his life, but were resolved in spectacular and bloody fashion by his successor, the dynamic Mahmud II, who massacred the Janissary corps in 1826.

Decline and modernization (1828–1908)

Ottoman decline (loss of huge territories) is typically characterized by historians also as an era of modern times. The Empire lost territory on all fronts, and there was administrative instability because of the breakdown of centralized government, despite efforts of reform and reorganization such as the Tanzimat. During this period, the Empire faced challenges in defending itself against foreign invasion and occupation. The Empire ceased to enter conflicts on its own and began to forge alliances with European countries such as France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Russia. As an example, in the Crimean War the Ottomans united with the British, French, and others against Russia.

Mahmud II started the modernization of Turkey by preparing the Edict of Tanzimat in 1839 which had immediate effects such as European style clothing, uniforms, weapons, agricultural and industrial innovations, architecture, education, legislation, institutional organization and land reform.

During the Tanzimat period (from Arabic Tanzîmât, meaning "reorganization") (1839–1876), a series of constitutional reforms led to a fairly modern conscripted army, banking system reforms, and the replacement of guilds with modern factories. In 1856, the Hatt-ı Hümayun promised equality for all Ottoman citizens irrespective of their ethnicity and confession, widening the scope of the 1839 Hatt-ı Şerif of Gülhane. The Christian millets gained privileges; such as in 1863 the Armenian National Constitution (Ottoman Turkish:"Nizâmnâme-i Millet-i Ermeniyân") was Divan approved form of the "Code of Regulations" composed of 150 articles drafted by the "Armenian intelligentsia", and newly formed "Armenian National Assembly".[25] The reformist period peaked with the Constitution, called the Kanûn-ı Esâsî (meaning "Basic Law" in Ottoman Turkish), written by members of the Young Ottomans, which was promulgated on November 23, 1876. It established freedom of belief and equality of all citizens before the law.

Punch cartoon from June 17, 1876. Russian Empire preparing to let slip the Balkan "Dogs of War" to attack the Ottoman Empire, while policeman John Bull (UK) warns Russia to take care. Supported by Russia, Serbia and Montenegro declared war on the Ottoman Empire one day later.

The Empire's First Constitutional era (or Birinci Meşrûtiyet Devri in Turkish), was short-lived; however, the idea behind it (Ottomanism), proved influential as a wide-ranging group of reformers known as the Young Ottomans, primarily educated in Western universities, believed that a constitutional monarchy would provide an answer to the Empire's growing social unrest. Through a military coup in 1876, they forced Sultan Abdülaziz (1861–1876) to abdicate in favour of Murad V. However, Murad V was mentally ill, and was deposed within a few months. His heir-apparent Abdülhamid II (1876-1909) was invited to assume power on the condition that he would declare a constitutional monarchy, which he did on November 23, 1876. However, the parliament survived for only two years. The sultan suspended, but did not abolish, the parliament until he was forced to reconvene it. The effectiveness of Kanûn-ı Esâsî was then largely minimized.

The rise of nationalism swept through many countries during the 19th century, and the Ottoman Empire was not immune. A burgeoning national consciousness, together with a growing sense of ethnic nationalism, made nationalistic thought one of the most significant Western ideas imported to the Ottoman empire, as it was forced to deal with nationalism both within and beyond its borders. There was a significant increase in the number of revolutionary political parties. Uprisings in Ottoman territory had many far-reaching consequences during the 19th century and determined much of Ottoman policy during the early 20th century. Many Ottoman Turks questioned whether the policies of the state were to blame: some felt that the sources of ethnic conflict were external, and unrelated to issues of governance. While this era was not without some successes, the ability of the Ottoman state to have any effect on ethnic uprisings was seriously called into question. Greece declared its independence from the Empire in 1829 after the end of the Greek War of Independence. Reforms did not halt the rise of nationalism in the Danubian Principalities and Serbia, which had been semi-independent for almost six decades; in 1875 the tributary principalities of Serbia, Montenegro, Wallachia and Moldavia declared their independence from the Empire; and following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, independence was formally granted to Serbia, Romania and Montenegro, and autonomy to Bulgaria; Bosnia was occupied by the Austrian Empire, with the other Balkan territories remaining under Ottoman control. A Serbian Jew, Judah Alkalai, encouraged a return to Zion and independence for Israel during this wave of decolonization. Following defeat in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, Cyprus was lent to the British in 1878 in exchange for Britain's favors at the Congress of Berlin. Egypt, which had previously been occupied by the forces of Napoleon I of France in 1798 but recovered in 1801 by a joint Ottoman-British force, was occupied in 1882 by British forces on the pretext of bringing order; though Egypt and Sudan remained Ottoman provinces de jure until 1914, when the Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers of World War

I, and Britain officially annexed these two provinces as a response. Other Ottoman provinces in North Africa were lost between 1830 and 1912, starting from Algeria (occupied by France in 1830), Tunisia (occupied by France in 1881) and Libya (occupied by Italy in 1912.)

Economically, the Empire had difficulty in repaying the Ottoman public debt to European banks, which caused the establishment of the Council of Administration of the Ottoman Public Debt. By the end of the 19th century, the main reason the Empire was not entirely overrun by Western powers came from the Balance of Power doctrine. Both Austria and Russia wanted to increase their spheres of influence and territory at the expense of the Ottoman Empire, but were kept in check mostly by the United Kingdom, which feared Russian dominance in the Eastern Mediterranean. Over the centuries, the ottoman empire grew weak. It fought wars constantly to hold on to it's empire. By the 1800's, the empire came close to bankruptcy several times. It also had trouble competing in trade with industrialized Europe.

Dissolution (1908–1922)

The Second Constitutional Era (Turkish: İkinci Meşrûtiyet Devri") established after the Young Turk Revolution (July 3, 1908) with the sultan's announcement of the restoration of the 1876 constitution and the reconvening of the Ottoman Parliament marks the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. This era is dominated by the politics of the Committee of Union and Progress (Turkish: İttihâd ve Terakkî Cemiyeti), and the movement that would become known as the Young Turks (Turkish: Jön Türkler). Profiting from the civil strife, Austria-Hungary officially annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908. During the Italo-Turkish War (1911-1912), the Balkan League declared war against the Ottoman Empire, which lost its Balkan territories except Thrace and the historic Ottoman capital city of Edirne (Adrianople) with the Balkan Wars (1912–1913). The Baghdad Railway under German control became a source of international tension and played a role in the origins of World War I.[26] The Ottoman Empire entered the First World War after the pursuit of Goeben and Breslau and took part in the Middle Eastern theatre on the side of the Central Powers. There were several important victories in the early years of the war, such as the Battle of Gallipoli and the Siege of Kut; but there were setbacks as well, such as the disastrous Caucasus Campaign against the Russians. The Arab Revolt which began in 1916 turned the tide against the Ottomans at the Middle Eastern front, where they initially seemed to have had the upper hand.

The interior minister of the period, Talat Pasha, expressing the fear that the ethnic Armenians of the Empire would form a Fifth Column, ordered the arrest of Armenian leaders with a circular on April 24, 1915 and sent a request for the Tehcir Law on May 29, 1915, which initiated large scale deportations and massacres of the Armenians. In response was the creation of an Armenian resistance (April 1915) movement in the province of Van and the establishment of an Armenian Administration. The Ottoman government had accused the Armenians of being in collaboration with the invading Russian forces in eastern Anatolia against their native state because of the Armenian volunteer units in the Russian Army.

When the Armistice of Mudros was signed in 1918, Yemen, together with Medina, was the only part of the Arabian peninsula that was still under Ottoman control. However, the Ottomans were eventually forced to cede Yemen and Medina following the armistice, along with parts of present-day Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan which were gained by the Ottoman forces during the final stages of the war, following the Russian Revolution of 1917. Under the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres, the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire was solidified. The new countries created from the remnants of the Empire currently number 40 (including the disputed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus). Given the fact that the Turkish peasantry of Anatolia dropped to 40% of the pre-war levels, regardless of the method used in calculations, the Ottoman Empire's casualties during World War I were significant.[27]

The occupation of Constantinople along with the occupation of Smyrna mobilized the establishment of the Turkish national movement, which won the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1922) under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha.[28] The Sultanate was abolished on November 1, 1922, and the last sultan, Mehmed VI Vahdettin (reigned 1918–1922), left the country on November 17, 1922. The new independent Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNA) was internationally recognized with the Treaty of Lausanne on July 24, 1923. The GNA officially declared the Republic of Turkey on October 29, 1923. The Caliphate was constitutionally abolished several months later, on March 3, 1924. The Sultan and his family were declared persona non grata of Turkey and exiled. Fifty years later, in 1974, the GNA granted descendants of the former Ottoman dynasty the right to acquire Turkish citizenship.

Fall of the Empire

The Fall of the Ottoman Empire can be attributed to the failure of its economic structure; the size of the Empire created difficulties in economically integrating its diverse regions. Also, the Empire's communication technology was not developed enough to reach all territories. In many ways, the circumstances surrounding the Ottoman Empire's fall closely paralleled those surrounding the Decline of the Roman Empire, particularly in terms of the ongoing tensions between the Empire's different ethnic groups, and the various governments' inability to deal with these tensions. In the case of the Ottomans, the introduction of increased cultural rights, civil liberties and a parliamentary system during the Tanzimat proved too late to reverse the nationalistic and secessionist trends that had already been set in motion since the early 19th century.

Economy

Ottoman government deliberately pursued a policy for the development of Bursa, Edirne (Adrianople) and Constantinople, successive Ottoman capitals, into major commercial and industrial centres, considering that merchants and artisans were indispensable in creating a new metropolis.[29] To this end, Mehmed and his successor Bayezid, also encouraged and welcomed migration of the Jews from different parts of Europe, who were settled in Constantinople and other port cities like Salonica. In many places in Europe, Jews were suffering persecution at the hands of their Christian counterparts. The tolerance displayed by the Ottomans was welcomed by the immigrants. The Ottoman economic mind was closely related to the basic concepts of state and society in the Middle East in which the ultimate goal of a state was consolidation and extension of the ruler's power, and the way to reach it was to get rich resources of revenues by making the productive classes prosperous.[30] The ultimate aim was to increase the state revenues as much as possible without damaging the prosperity of subjects to prevent the emergence of social disorder and to keep the traditional organization of the society intact.

The organization of the treasury and chancery were developed under the Ottoman Empire more than any other Islamic government and, until the 17th century, they were the leading organization among all of their contemporaries.[31] This organization developed a scribal bureaucracy (known as "men of the pen") as a distinct group, partly highly trained ulema, which developed into a professional body.[31] The effectiveness of this professional financial body stands behind the success of many great Ottoman statesmen.[32] The economic structure of the Empire was defined by its geopolitical structure. The Ottoman Empire stood between the West and the East, thus blocking the land route eastward and forcing Spanish and Portuguese navigators to set sail in search of a new route to the Orient. The Empire controlled the spice route that Marco Polo once used. When Christopher Columbus first journeyed to the Bahamas in 1492, the Ottoman Empire was at its zenith, an economic power that extended over three continents. Modern Ottoman studies think that the change in relations between the Ottomans and central Europe was caused by the opening of the new sea routes. It is possible to see the decline in the significance of the land routes to the East as Western Europe opened the ocean routes that bypassed the Middle East and Mediterranean as parallel to the decline of the Ottoman Empire itself. The Anglo-Ottoman Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Balta

Liman that opened the Ottoman markets directly to English and French competitors, would should be seen as one of the staging posts along this development.

By developing commercial centres and routes, encouraging people to extend the area of cultivated land in the country and international trade through its dominions, the state performed basic economic functions in the Empire. But in all this the financial and political interests of the state were dominant. Within the social and political system they were living in Ottoman administrators could not have comprehended or seen the desirability of the dynamics and principles of the capitalist and mercantile economies developing in Western Europe.[33]

State

The state organisation of the Ottoman Empire was a very simple system that had two main dimensions: the military administration and the civic administration. The Sultan was the highest position in the system. The civic system was based on local administrative units based on the region's characteristics. The Ottomans practiced a system in which the state (as in the Byzantine Empire) had control over the clergy. Certain pre-Islamic Turkish traditions that had survived the adoption of administrative and legal practices from Islamic Iran remained important in Ottoman administrative circles.[34] According to Ottoman understanding, the state's primary responsibility was to defend and extend the land of the Muslims and to ensure security and harmony within its borders within the overarching context of orthodox Islamic practice and dynastic sovereignty.[citation needed]

The "Ottoman dynasty" or, as an institution, "House of Osman" was unprecedented and unequaled in the Islamic world for its size and duration.[35] The Ottoman dynasty was ethnically Turkish in its origins, as were some of its supporters and subjects, however the dynasty immediately lost this "Turkic" identification through intermarriage with many different ethnicities.[36] On eleven occasions, the sultan was deposed because he was perceived by his enemies as a threat to the state. There were only two attempts in the whole of Ottoman history to unseat the ruling Osmanlı dynasty[citation needed], both failures, which is suggestive of a political system that for an extended period was able to manage its revolutions without unnecessary instability.[vague]

The highest position in Islam, caliphate, was claimed by the sultan which was established as Ottoman Caliphate. The Ottoman sultan, pâdişâh or "lord of kings", served as the Empire's sole regent and was considered to be the embodiment of its government, though he did not always exercise complete control. The Imperial Harem was one of the most important powers of the Ottoman court. It was ruled by the Valide Sultan. On occasion, the Valide Sultan would become involved in state politics. For a period of time the women of the Harem effectively controlled the state in what was termed the "Sultanate of Women". New sultans were always chosen from among the sons of the previous sultan. The strong educational system of the palace school geared towards eliminating the unfit potential heirs, and establishing support amongst the ruling elite for a successor. The palace schools, which would also educate the future administrators of the state, were not a single track. First, the Madrasa (Ottoman Turkish: Medrese) was designated for the Muslims, and educated scholars and state officials in accordance with Islamic tradition. The financial burden of the Medrese was supported by vakifs, allowing children of poor families to move to higher social levels and income.[37] The second track was a free boarding school for the Christians, the Enderûn, which recruited 3,000 students annually from Christian boys between eight and twenty years old from one in forty families among the communities settled in Rumelia and/or the Balkans, a process known as Devshirmeh (Devşirme).[38]

Bâb-ı Âlî, the Sublime Porte

Though the sultan was the supreme monarch, the sultan's political and executive authority was delegated. The politics of the state had a number of advisors and ministers gathered around a council known as Divan (after the 17th century it was renamed the "Porte"). The Divan, in the years when the Ottoman state was still a Beylik, was composed of the elders of the tribe. Its composition was later modified to include military officers and local elites (such as religious and political advisors). Later still, beginning in 1320, a Grand Vizier was appointed in order to assume certain of the sultan's responsibilities. The Grand Vizier had considerable independence from the sultan with almost unlimited powers of appointment, dismissal and supervision. Beginning with the late 16th century, sultans withdrew from politics and the Grand Vizier became the de facto head of state.[31] Throughout Ottoman history, there were many instances in which local governors acted independently, and even in opposition to the ruler. After the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, the Ottoman state became a constitutional monarchy. The sultan no longer had executive powers. A parliament was formed, with representatives chosen from the provinces. The representatives formed the Imperial Government of the Ottoman Empire.

The rapidly expanding empire used loyal, skilled subjects to manage the Empire, whether Albanians, Phanariot Greeks, Armenians, Serbs, Bosniaks, Hungarians or others. The incorporation of Greeks (and other Christians), Muslims, and Jews revolutionized its administrative system.[39] This eclectic administration was apparent even in the diplomatic correspondence of the Empire, which was initially undertaken in the Greek language to the west.[36]

The Tughra were calligraphic monograms, or signatures, of the Ottoman Sultans, of which there were 35. Carved on the Sultan's seal, they bore the names of the Sultan and his father. The prayer/statement “ever victorious” was also present in most. The earliest belonged to Orhan Gazi. The ornately stylized Tughra spawned a branch of Ottoman-Turkish calligraphy.

Society

One of the successes of the social structure of the Ottoman Empire was the unity that it brought about among its highly varied populations through an organization named as millets. The Millets were the major religious groups that were allowed to establish their own communities under Ottoman rule. The Millets were established by retaining their own religious laws, traditions, and language under the general protection of the sultan. Plurality was the key to the longevity of the Empire. As early as the reign of Mehmed II, extensive rights were granted to Phanariot Greeks, and Jews were invited to settle in Ottoman territory. Ultimately, the Ottoman Empire's relatively high degree of tolerance for ethnic differences proved to be one of its greatest strengths in integrating the new regions but this non-assimilative policy became a weakness after the rise of nationalism. The dissolution of the Empire based on ethnic differentiation (balkanization) brought the final end which the failed Ottomanism among the citizens and participatory politics of the first or the constitutional Era had successfully addressed.

The lifestyle of the Ottoman Empire was a mixture of western and eastern life. One unique characteristic of Ottoman life style was it was very fragmented. The millet concept generated this fragmentation and enabled many to coexist in a mosaic of cultures. The capital of the Ottoman Empire, Constantinople also had a unique culture, mainly because prior to Ottoman rule it had been the seat of both the Roman and Byzantine Empires. The lifestyle in the Ottoman court in many aspects assembled ancient traditions of the Persian Shahs, but had many Greek and European influences. The culture that evolved around the Ottoman court was known as the Ottoman Way, which was epitomized with the Topkapı Palace. There were also large metropolitan centers where the Ottoman influence expressed itself with a diversity similar to metropolises of today: Sarajevo, Skopje, Thessaloniki, Dimashq, Baghdad, Beirut, Jerusalem, Makkah and Algiers with their own small versions of Ottoman Provincial Administration replicating the culture of the Ottoman court locally. The seraglio, which were the non-imperial

places, in the context of the Turkish fashion, became the subject of works of art, where non-imperial prince or referring to other grand houses built around courtyards.

Slavery in the Ottoman Empire was a part of Ottoman society.[40] As late as 1908 women slaves were still sold in the Empire.[41] During the 19th century the Empire came under pressure from Western European countries to outlaw the practice. Policies developed by various Sultans throughout the 19th century attempted to curtail the slave trade but, since slavery did have centuries of religious backing and sanction, they could never directly abolish the institution outright — as had gradually happened in Western Europe and the Americas.

See also: Devshirmeh

The exact population of the Ottoman Empire, is a matter of considerable debate, due to the scantness and ambiguous nature of the primary sources. The following table contains approximate estimates.Year Population

1520 11,692,480[42]

1566 15,000,000[43]

1683 30,000,000[44]

1831 7,230,660[42]

1856 35,350,000[42]

1881 17,388,604[42]

1906 20,884,000[42]

1914 18,520,000

1919 14,629,000

Culture

The Ottoman Empire had filled roughly the territories around the Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea while adopting the traditions, art and institutions of cultures in these regions and adding new dimensions to them. Many different cultures lived under the umbrella of the Ottoman Empire, and as a result, a specifically "Ottoman" culture can be difficult to define, except for those of the regional centers and capital. However, there was also, to a great extent, a specific melding of cultures that can be said to have reached its highest levels among the Ottoman elite, who were composed of myriad ethnic and religious groups. This multicultural perspective of "millets" was reflected in the Ottoman State's multi-cultural and multi-religious policies. As the Ottomans moved further west, the Ottoman leaders absorbed some of the culture of the conquered regions. Intercultural marriages also played their part in creating the characteristic Ottoman elite culture. When compared to the Turkish folk culture, the influence of these new cultures in creating the culture of the Ottoman elite was very apparent.

Selimiye Mosque was the masterpiece of Mimar Sinan, chief architect of Sultans Selim I, Suleiman the Magnificent, Selim II and Murad III

"Ottoman architecture" was influenced by Persian Architecture, Byzantine Greek, and Islamic architecture. The Ottoman architecture are a continuation of the pre-Islamic Persian Sassanid architecture. For instance, the dome covered square, which had been a dominant form in Sassanid became the nucleus of all Ottoman architecture.[45][46] During the Rise period the early or first Ottoman architecture period, the Ottoman art was in search of new ideas. The growth period of the Empire become the classical period of architecture, which Ottoman art was at its most confident. During the years of the Stagnation period, Ottoman architecture moved away from this style however.

During the Tulip Era, it was under the influence of the highly ornamented styles of Western Europe; Baroque, Rococo, Empire and other styles intermingled. Concepts of Ottoman architecture mainly circle around the mosque. The mosque was integral to society, city planning and communal life. Besides the mosque, it is also possible to find good examples of Ottoman architecture in soup kitchens, theological schools, hospitals, Turkish baths and tombs.

Dolmabahçe Palace, Istanbul

Examples of Ottoman architecture of the classical period, aside from İstanbul and Edirne, can also be seen in Egypt, Eritrea, Tunisia, Algiers, the Balkans and Hungary, where mosques, bridges, fountains and schools were built. The art of Ottoman decoration developed with a multitude of influences due to the wide ethnic range of the Ottoman Empire. The greatest of the court artisans enriched the Ottoman Empire with many pluralistic artistic influences: such as mixing traditional Byzantine art with elements of Chinese art.[47]

"Ottoman Turkish language" was a variety of Turkish, highly influenced by Persian and Arabic. Ottomans had three influential languages; Turkish, Persian, Arabic but they did not have a parallel status. Throughout the vast Ottoman bureaucracy and, in particular, within the Ottoman court in later times, a version of Turkish was spoken, albeit with a vast mixture of both Arabic and Persian grammar and vocabulary. If the basic grammar was still largely Turkish, the inclusion of virtually any word in Arabic or Persian in Ottoman made it a language that was essentially incomprehensible to any Ottoman subject who had not mastered Arabic, Persian or both. The two varieties of the language became extremely differentiated and this resulted in a low literacy rate among the general public (about 2–3% until the early 19th century and just about 15% at the end of 19th century). Consequently, ordinary people had to hire special "request-writers" (arzıhâlcis) in order to be able to communicate with the government. The ethnic groups continued to speak within their families and neighborhoods (mahalles) with their own languages (e.g., Jews, Greeks, Armenians, etc.) In villages where two or more populations lived together, the inhabitants would often speak each other's language. In cosmopolitan cities, people often spoke their family languages, some Ottoman or Persian if they were educated, and some Arabic if they were Muslim. In the last two centuries, French and English emerged as popular languages, especially among the Christian Levantine communities. The elite learned French at school, and used European products as a fashion statement. The use of Turkish grew steadily under the Ottomans, but, since they were still interested in their two other official languages, they kept these in use as well. Usage of these came to be limited, though, and specific: Persian served mainly as a literary language, while Arabic was used solely for religious rites. At this time many famous Persian poets emerged.

"Ottoman classical music" was an important part of the education of the Ottoman elite, a number of the Ottoman sultans were accomplished musicians and composers themselves, such as Selim III, whose compositions are still

frequently performed today. Ottoman classical music arose largely from a confluence of Byzantine music, Arabic music, and Persian music. Compositionally, it is organised around rhythmic units called usul, which are somewhat similar to meter in Western music, and melodic units called makam, which bear some resemblance to Western musical modes. The instruments used are a mixture of Anatolian and Central Asian instruments (the saz, the bağlama, the kemence), other Middle Eastern instruments (the ud, the tanbur, the kanun, the ney), and — later in the tradition — Western instruments (the violin and the piano). Because of a geographic and cultural divide between the capital and other areas, two broadly distinct styles of music arose in the Ottoman Empire: Ottoman classical music, and folk music. In the provinces, several different kinds of Folk music were created. The most dominant regions with their distinguished musical styles are: Balkan-Thracian Türküs, North-Eastern (Laz) Türküs, Aegean Türküs, Central Anatolian Türküs, Eastern Anatolian Türküs, and Caucasian Türküs. Some of the distinctive styles were: Janissary Music, Roma music, Belly dance, Turkish folk music.

"Ottoman cuisine" refers to the cuisine of the capital — Constantinople, and the regional capital cities, where the melting pot of cultures created a common cuisine that all the populations enjoyed. This diverse cuisine was honed in the Imperial Palace's kitchens by chefs brought from certain parts of the Empire to create and experiment with different ingredients. The creations of the Ottoman Palace's kitchens filtered to the population, for instance through Ramadan events, and through the cooking at the Yalıs of the Pashas, and from there on spread to the rest of the population. Today, Ottoman cuisine lives in the Balkans, Anatolia and the Middle East, "common heirs to what was once the Ottoman life-style, and their cuisines offer treacherous circumstantial evidence of this fact".[48] It is typical of any great cuisine in the world to be based on local varieties and on mutual exchange and enrichment among them, but at the same time to be homogenized and harmonized by a metropolitan tradition of refined taste.[48]

Numerous traditions and cultural traits of this previous empire (in fields such as architecture, cuisine, music, leisure and government) were adopted by the Ottomans, who elaborated them into new forms and blended them with the characteristics of the ethnic and religious groups living within the Ottoman territories, which resulted in a new and distinctively Ottoman cultural identity.

Religion

Before adopting Islam — a process that was greatly facilitated by the Abbasid victory at the 751 Battle of Talas, which ensured Abbasid influence in Central Asia — the Turkic peoples practised a variety of shamanism. After this battle, many of the various Turkic tribes — including the Oghuz Turks, who were the ancestors of both the Seljuks and the Ottomans — gradually converted to Islam, and brought the religion with them to Anatolia beginning in the 11th century.

The Ottoman Empire was, in principle, tolerant towards Christians and Jews (the "Ahl Al-Kitab", or "People of the Book", according to the Qu'ran) but not towards the polytheists, in accordance with the Sharia law. Such tolerance was subject to a non-Muslim tax, the Jizya.

Under the millet system, non-Muslim people were considered subjects of the Empire, but were not subject to the Muslim faith or Muslim law. The Orthodox millet, for instance, was still officially legally subject to Justinian's Code, which had been in effect in the Byzantine Empire for 900 years. Also, as the largest group of non-Muslim subjects (or zimmi) of the Islamic Ottoman state, the Orthodox millet was granted a number of special privileges in the fields of politics and commerce, in addition to having to pay higher taxes than Muslim subjects.[49],[50]

The Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II allowed the local Christians to stay in Constantinople (Istanbul) after conquering the city in 1453, and to retain their institutions such as the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate. In 1461 Sultan Mehmed II established the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople. Previously, the Byzantines considered the Armenian Church as heretical and thus did not allow them to build churches inside the walls of Constantinople. In 1492, when the Muslims and Sephardic Jews were expelled from Spain during the Spanish Inquisition, the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II sent his fleet under Kemal Reis to save them and granted the refugees the right to settle in the Ottoman Empire.

The state's relationship with the Greek Orthodox Church was largely peaceful, and recurrent oppressive measures taken against the Greek church were a deviation from generally established practice. The church's structure was kept intact and largely left alone but under close control and scrutiny until the Greek War of Independence of 1821–1831 and, later in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the rise of the Ottoman constitutional monarchy, which was driven to some extent by nationalistic currents, tried to be balanced with Ottomanism. Other Orthodox churches, like the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, were dissolved and placed under the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate; until Sultan Abdülaziz established the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 and reinstated the autonomy of the Bulgarian Church.

Similar millets were established for the Ottoman Jewish community, who were under the authority of the Haham Başı or Ottoman Chief Rabbi; the Armenian Orthodox community, who were under the authority of a head bishop; and a number of other religious communities as well.

Law

Ottoman legal system accepted the Religious law over its subjects. The Ottoman Empire was always organized around a system of local jurisprudence. Legal administration in the Ottoman Empire was part of a larger scheme of balancing central and local authority.[51] Ottoman power revolved crucially around the administration of the rights to land, which gave a space for the local authority develop the needs of the local millet.[51] The jurisdictional complexity of the Ottoman Empire was aimed to permit the integration of culturally and religiously different groups.[51] The Ottoman system had three court systems: one for Muslims, one for non-Muslims, involving appointed Jews and Christians ruling over their respective religious communities, and the "trade court". The entire system was regulated from above by means of the administrative Kanun, i.e. laws, a system based upon the Turkic Yasa and Töre which were developed in the pre-Islamic era. The kanun law system, on the other hand, was the secular law of the sultan, and dealt with issues not clearly addressed by the sharia system.

These court categories were not, however, wholly exclusive in nature: for instance, the Islamic courts — which were the Empire's primary courts — could also be used to settle a trade conflict or disputes between litigants of differing religions, and Jews and Christians often went to them so as to obtain a more forceful ruling on an issue. The Ottoman state tended not to interfere with non-Muslim religious law systems, despite legally having a voice to do so through local governors. The Islamic Sharia law system had been developed from a combination of the Qur'ān; the Hadīth, or words of the prophet Muhammad; ijmā', or consensus of the members of the Muslim community; qiyas, a system of analogical reasoning from previous precedents; and local customs. Both systems were taught at the Empire's law schools, which were in Constantinople and Bursa.

Tanzimat reforms, had a drastic effect on the law system. In 1877, the civil law (excepting family law) was codified in the Mecelle code. Later codifications covered commercial law, penal law and civil procedure.

Military

Ottoman Army

The first military unit of the Ottoman State was an army that was organized by Osman I from the tribesmen inhabiting western Anatolia in the late 13th century. The military system became an intricate organization with the advance of the Empire.

A Janissary sketched by the renowned Venetian artist Gentile Bellini (1429-1507) who also portraited Sultan Mehmed II

Sipahis were the elite cavalry knights of the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman military was a complex system of recruiting and fief-holding. The main corps of the Ottoman Army included:

Janissary: Infantry units recruited at a very young age from the non-Muslim ethnic groups of the Empire and raised as Muslim Turkish warriors, also forming the Sultan's household troops and bodyguard. Most of the recruits were Christian Balkans.

Sipahi: Elite cavalry knights who were granted tımars (fiefs) throughout the Empire's lands. Their alternative name was Tîmârlı Sipahi (Enfiefed Knight).

Akıncı: Frontline cavalry units of the Ottoman Army which raided and scouted the border areas and outposts. These units were known as ghazis before the establishment of the Ottoman army and contributed significantly to early Ottoman success against the Palaiologan army.

Mehterân: Ottoman Army Band which played martial tunes during military campaigns. The mehterân was usually associated with the Janissary corps.

The Ottoman army was once among the most advanced fighting forces in the world, being one of the first to employ muskets. The Ottoman cavalry used bows and short swords and often applied nomad tactics similar to those of the Mongol Empire, such as pretending to retreat while surrounding the enemy forces inside a crescent-shaped formation and then making the real attack.

Starting from the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 and the Battle of Nicopolis in 1396, the Ottoman army quickly advanced towards central Europe, capturing Hungary with the Battle of Mohács in 1526 and twice laying siege to Vienna, in 1529 and 1683. However, the decline in the army's performance became evident from the mid 17th century and after the Great Turkish War, the Ottoman army's reputation as one of the most feared fighting forces in the world was never regained. The 18th century saw some limited success against Venice, but in the north the European-style Russian armies forced the Ottomans to concede land.

The modernization of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century started with the military. In 1826 Sultan Mahmud II abolished the Janissary corps (which had become obsolete in battle, but effective in deposing sultans) and

established the modern Ottoman army, which he named as the Nizam-ı Cedid (New Order). The Ottoman army was also the first institution to hire foreign experts and send its officers for training in western European countries. Consequently, the Young Turks movement first began when these relatively young and newly trained men returned with their education.

Ottoman Navy

he conquest of İmralı Island in the Sea of Marmara in 1308 marked the first Ottoman naval victory (for a timeline of the naval actions of the Ottoman fleet, see the History of the Turkish Navy). In 1321 the Ottoman fleet made its first landings on Thrace in southeastern Europe, and vastly contributed to the expansion of the Empire's territories on the European continent. The Ottoman navy was one of the first to use cannons, and the Battle of Zonchio in 1499 went down in history as the first naval battle where cannons were used on ships. It was also the Ottoman navy which initiated the conquest of North Africa, with the addition of Algeria and Egypt to the Ottoman Empire in 1517. The Battle of Preveza in 1538 and the Battle of Djerba in 1560 marked the apex of Ottoman naval domination in the Mediterranean Sea. The Ottomans also confronted the Portuguese forces based in Goa at the Indian Ocean in numerous battles between 1538 and 1566. In 1553, the Ottoman admiral Salih Reis conquered Morocco and the lands of North Africa beyond the Strait of Gibraltar, extending Ottoman territory into the Atlantic Ocean. In 1566 the Sultan of Aceh asked for support against the Portuguese and declared allegiance to the Ottoman Empire, which sent its Indian Ocean fleet under Kurtoğlu Hızır Reis to Sumatra. The fleet landed at Aceh in 1569, and the event marked the easternmost Ottoman territorial expansion. In 1585 the Ottoman admiral Murat Reis captured Lanzarote[52] of the Canary Islands. In 1617 the Ottoman fleet captured Madeira[52] in the Atlantic Ocean, before raiding Sussex, Plymouth, Devon, Hartland Point, Cornwall and the other counties of western England in August 1625.[52] In 1627 Ottoman naval ships, accompanied by corsairs from the Barbary Coast, raided the Shetland Islands, Faroe Islands, Denmark, Norway and Iceland.[52] Between 1627 and 1631 the same Ottoman force also raided the coasts of Ireland and Sweden.[52] In 1655 a force of 40 Ottoman ships captured the Isle of Lundy in the Bristol Channel, which served as the main base for Ottoman naval and privateering operations in the North Atlantic until 1660, when Ottoman ships appeared off the eastern coasts of North America, particularly being sighted at the British colonies like Newfoundland and Virginia.[52] The overseas territorial acquisitions of the Ottoman Navy further expanded the extent of the Ottoman sphere of influence on distant lands in both the Indian and Atlantic oceans, such as the addition of Aceh (1569) as a vassal state to the Ottoman Empire, and temporary occupations like those of Lanzarote (1585), Madeira (1617), Vestmannaeyjar (1627) and Lundy (1655–1660).[52]

Mahmudiye (1829), ordered by Sultan Mahmud II and built by the Imperial Naval Arsenal on the Golden Horn in Constantinople, was for many years the largest warship in the world. The 62x17x7 m ship-of-the-line was armed with 128 cannons on 3 decks. She participated in many important naval battles, including the Siege of Sevastopol (1854-1855) during the Crimean War (1854-1856). She was decommissioned in 1875

Following defeat against the combined British-French-Russian navies at the Battle of Navarino in 1827, and the subsequent loss of Algeria (1830) and Greece (1832), Ottoman naval power, and control over the Empire's distant overseas territories declined. Sultan Abdülaziz (reigned 1861–1876) attempted to reestablish a strong Ottoman navy, building the third largest fleet after that of Britain and France with 21 battleships and 173 other types of warships. The shipyard at Barrow, United Kingdom built its first submarine in 1886 for the Ottoman Empire.[53] The submarine Abdul Hamid achieved fame as the world’s first to fire a torpedo underwater.[54] But the collapsing Ottoman economy could not sustain the fleet strength. Sultan Abdülhamid II (reigned 1876–1908) distrusted the navy, when the admirals supported the reformist Midhat Pasha and the First Ottoman Parliament of 1876. Claiming that the large and expensive navy was of no use against the Russians during the Russo-Turkish War (1877–1878), he locked most of the fleet inside the Golden Horn, where the ships decayed for the next 30 years.

The Ottoman Navy at the Golden Horn in Constantinople, in the early days of the First World War

Following the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, the Committee of Union and Progress which effectively took control of the country sought to develop a strong Ottoman naval force. The poor condition of the fleet was highlighted during the Ottoman Naval Parade of 1910, and as a consequence the Ottoman Navy Foundation was established in order to purchase new ships through public donations. Those who made donations received different types of medals according to the size of their contributions. With this public money, the Ottoman government ordered large battleships like Sultan Osman I and Reşadiye, but despite the payment for both ships, the United Kingdom confiscated them at the outbreak of World War I and renamed them as HMS Agincourt and HMS Erin. This caused some ill-feeling towards Britain among the Ottoman public, and the German Empire took advantage of the situation by sending the battlecruiser Yavuz Sultan Selim and light cruiser Midilli which entered service in the Ottoman fleet. This event significantly contributed to the decision of supporting Germany in the First World War, with whom the Ottomans sided.

Ottoman Air Force

The Ottoman Air Force was founded in June 1909, making it one of the first combat aviation organizations in the world. Its formation came about after the Ottoman Empire sent two Turkish pilots to the International Aviation Conference in Paris. After witnessing the growing importance of an air combat support branch, the Ottoman government decided to organize its own military aviation program. For this purpose, officers were sent to Europe by the end of 1910 to participate in the study of combat flight. However, because of bad living conditions, the student program was aborted and the trainees returned to Turkey in early 1911. Although left without any governmental guidelines for establishing an air force, the Ottoman Minister of Defence of the time, Mahmut Şevket Paşa, continued to encourage the idea of a military aviation program and sent officers Fesa and Yusuf Kenan, who achieved the highest maneuvering points in a piloting test conducted in 1911, to France for receiving a more satisfactory flight education. In late 1911 Süreyya Ilmen was instructed with founding the Havacılık Komisyonu (Aviation Commission) bound to the Harbiye Bakanlığı Fen Kıtaları Müstahkem Genel Müfettişliği (War Ministry Science Detachment General Inspectorship). On February 21, 1912, Fesa and Yusuf Kenan completed their flight education and returned home with the 780th and 797th French aviation diplomas. In the same year, eight more Turkish officers were sent to France for flight education.

The Ottoman Empire started preparing its first pilots and planes, and with the founding of the Hava Okulu (Air Academy) in Constantinople on July 3, 1912, the Empire began to tutor its own flight officers. The founding of the Air Academy quickened advancement in the military aviation program, increased the number of enlisted persons within it, and gave the new pilots an active role in the Armed Forces. In May 1913 the world's first specialized Reconnaissance Training Program was activated by the Air Academy and the first separate Reconnaissance division was established by the Air Force.

Because of the lack of experience of the Turkish pilots, the first stage (1912) of the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) ended with the loss of several aircraft. However, the second stage (1913) was marked with great success since the pilots had become more battle-hardened. Many recruits joined the Air Academy following a surge of Turkish nationalism during the war.

With the end of the Balkan Wars a modernization process started and new planes were purchased. In June 1914 a new military academy, Deniz Hava Okulu (Naval Aviation Academy) was founded, also in Constantinople. With the

outbreak of World War I, the modernization process stopped abruptly, but in 1915 some German officers came to the Ottoman Empire and some Turkish officers went to Germany for flight education.

The Ottoman Air Force fought on many fronts during World War I, from Galicia in the west to the Caucasus in the east and Yemen in the south. Efforts were made to reorganize the Ottoman Air Force, but this ended in 1918 with the end of World War I and the Occupation of Constantinople.

ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

Islamic philosophy is a branch of Islamic studies, and is a longstanding attempt to create harmony between philosophy (reason) and the religious teachings of Islam (faith).

DEFINITION

The attempt to fuse religion and philosophy is difficult because there are no clear preconditions. Philosophers typically hold that one must accept the possibility of truth from any source and follow the argument wherever it leads. On the other hand, classical religious believers have a set of religious principles that they hold to be unchallengeable fact. Given these divergent goals and views, some hold[citation needed] that one cannot simultaneously be a philosopher and a true adherent of Islam, which is believed to be a revealed religion by its adherents. In this view, all attempts at synthesis ultimately fail.

However, others believe that a synthesis between Islam and philosophy is possible. One way to find a synthesis is to use philosophical arguments to prove that one's preset religious principles are true. This is a common technique found in the writings of many religious traditions, including Judaism, Christianity and Islam, but this is not generally accepted as true philosophy by philosophers[citation needed]. Another way to find a synthesis is to abstain from holding as true any religious principles of one's faith at all, unless one independently comes to those conclusions from a philosophical analysis. However, this is not generally accepted as being faithful to one's religion by adherents of that religion. A third, rarer and more difficult path is to apply analytical philosophy to one's own religion. In this case a religious person would also be a philosopher, by asking questions such as:

- What must one actually believe to be considered a true adherent of our religion?
- How can one reconcile the findings of science with religion?
- How can one reconcile the findings of math with religion?

INTRODUCTION

Islamic philosophy may be defined in a number of different ways, but the perspective taken here is that it represents the style of philosophy produced within the framework of Islamic culture. This description does not suggest that it is necessarily concerned with religious issues, nor even that it is exclusively produced by Muslims. [Oliver Leaman, Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy]

FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

Islamic philosophy as the name implies refers to philosophical activity within the Islamic milieu. The main sources of classical or early Islamic philosophy are the religion of Islam itself (especially ideas derived and interpreted from the Quran), Greek philosophy which the early Muslims inherited as a result of conquests when Alexandria, Syria and Jundishapur came under Muslim rule, along with pre-Islamic Iranian and Indian philosophy. Many of the early philosophical debates centered on reconciling religion and reason, the latter exemplified by Greek philosophy. One aspect which stands out in Islamic philosophy is that, the philosophy in Islam travels wide but comes back to conform it with the Quran and Sunnah.

CLASSICAL ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

In early Islamic thought, which refers to philosophy during the Islamic Golden Age, two main currents may be distinguished. The first is Kalam, that mainly dealt with Islamic theological questions, and the other is Falsafa, that was founded on interpretations of Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism. There were attempts by later philosopher-

theologians at harmonizing both trends, notably by Avicenna who founded the school of Avicennism, Averroes who founded the school of Averroism, and others such as Ibn al-Haytham (Alhacen), Abū Rayhān al-Bīrūnī, Ibn Tufayl (Abubacer) and Ibn al-Nafis.

Kalam

Independent minds exploiting the methods of ijtihad sought to investigate the doctrines of the Qur'an, which until then had been accepted in faith on the authority of divine revelation. One of first debates was that between partisan of the Qadar (Arabic: qadara, to have power), who affirmed free will, and the Jabarites (jabar, force, constraint), who maintained the belief in fatalism.

At the second century of the Hijra, a new movement arose in the theological school of Basra, Iraq. A pupil, Wasil ibn Ata, who was expelled from the school because his answers were contrary to then orthodox Islamic tradition and became leader of a new school, and systematized the radical opinions of preceding sects, particularly those of the Qadarites. This new school was called Mutazilite (from i'tazala, to separate oneself, to dissent). Its principal dogmas were three:

1. God is an absolute unity, and no attribute can be ascribed to Him.
2. Man is a free agent. It is on account of these two principles that the Mu'tazilites designate themselves the "Partisans of Justice and Unity".
3. All knowledge necessary for the salvation of man emanates from his reason; humans could acquire knowledge before, as well as after, Revelation, by the sole light of reason. This fact makes knowledge obligatory upon all men, at all times, and in all places.

The Mutazilites, compelled to defend their principles against the orthodox Islam of their day, looked for support in philosophy, and are one of the first to pursue a rational theology called Ilm-al-Kalam (Scholastic theology); those professing it were called Mutakallamin. This appellation became the common name for all seeking philosophical demonstration in confirmation of religious principles. The first Mutakallamin had to debate both the orthodox and the non-Muslims, and they may be described as occupying the middle ground between those two parties. But subsequent generations were to large extent critical towards the Mutazilite school, especially after formation of the Asharite concepts.

Falsafa

From the ninth century onward, owing to Caliph al-Ma'mun and his successor, Greek philosophy was introduced among the Persians and Arabs, and the Peripatetic school began to find able representatives among them; such were Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), and Ibn Rushd (Averroës), all of whose fundamental principles were considered as criticized by the Mutakallamin.

During the Abbasid caliphate a number of thinkers and scientists, some of them heterodox Muslims or non-Muslims, played a role in transmitting Greek, Hindu, and other pre-Islamic knowledge to the Christian West. They contributed to making Aristotle known in Christian Europe. Three speculative thinkers, the two Persians al-Farabi and Avicenna and the Arab al-Kindi, combined Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism with other ideas introduced through Islam. They were considered by many as highly unorthodox and by some were even described as non-Islamic philosophers.

From Spain Arabic philosophic literature was translated into Hebrew and Latin, contributing to the development of modern European philosophy. The philosopher Moses Maimonides (a Jew born in Muslim Spain) was also important.

Some differences between Kalam and Falsafa

Aristotle attempted to demonstrate the unity of God; but from the view which he maintained, that matter was eternal, it followed that God could not be the Creator of the world. To assert that God's knowledge extends only to the general laws of the universe, and not to individual and accidental things, is tantamount to denying prophecy. One other point shocked the faith of the Mutakallamin — the theory of intellect. The Peripatetics taught that the human soul was only an aptitude — a faculty capable of attaining every variety of passive perfection — and that through information and virtue it became qualified for union with the active intellect, which latter emanates from God. To admit this theory would be to deny the immortality of the soul.

Wherefore the Mutakallamin had, before anything else, to establish a system of philosophy to demonstrate the creation of matter, and they adopted to that end the theory of atoms as enunciated by Democritus. They taught that atoms possess neither quantity nor extension. Originally atoms were created by God, and are created now as occasion seems to require. Bodies come into existence or die, through the aggregation or the sunderance of these atoms. But this theory did not remove the objections of philosophy to a creation of matter.

For, indeed, if it be supposed that God commenced His work at a certain definite time by His "will," and for a certain definite object, it must be admitted that He was imperfect before accomplishing His will, or before attaining His object. In order to obviate this difficulty, the Motekallamin extended their theory of the atoms to Time, and claimed that just as Space is constituted of atoms and vacuum, Time, likewise, is constituted of small indivisible moments. The creation of the world once established, it was an easy matter for them to demonstrate the existence of a Creator, and that God is unique, omnipotent, and omniscient.

Main protagonists of falsafa and their critics

The twelfth century saw the apotheosis of pure philosophy and the decline of the Kalam, which latter, being attacked by both the philosophers and the orthodox, perished for lack of champions. This supreme exaltation of philosophy may be attributed, in great measure, to Al-Ghazali (1005-1111) among the Persians, and to Judah ha-Levi (1140) among the Jews. It can be argued that the attacks directed against the philosophers by Ghazali in his work, "Tahafut al-Falasifa" (The Incoherence of the Philosophers), not only produced, by reaction, a current favorable to philosophy, but induced the philosophers themselves to profit by his criticism. They thereafter made their theories clearer and their logic closer. The influence of this reaction brought forth the two greatest philosophers that the Islamic Peripatetic school ever produced, namely, Ibn Bajjah (Avempace) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), both of whom undertook the defense of philosophy.

Since no idea and no literary or philosophical movement ever germinated on Persian or Arabian soil without leaving its impress on the Jews, the Persian Ghazali found an imitator in the person of Judah ha-Levi. This poet also took upon himself to free his religion from what he saw as the shackles of speculative philosophy, and to this end wrote the "Kuzari," in which he sought to discredit all schools of philosophy alike. He passes severe censure upon the Mutakallamin for seeking to support religion by philosophy. He says, "I consider him to have attained the highest degree of perfection who is convinced of religious truths without having scrutinized them and reasoned over them" ("Kuzari," v.). Then he reduced the chief propositions of the Mutakallamin, to prove the unity of God, to ten in number, describing them at length, and concluding in these terms: "Does the Kalam give us more information concerning God and His attributes than the prophet did?" (Ib. iii. and iv.) Aristotelianism finds no favor in Judah ha-

Levi's eyes, for it is no less given to details and criticism; Neoplatonism alone suited him somewhat, owing to its appeal to his poetic temperament.

Ibn Rushd (or Ibn Roshd or Averroës), the contemporary of Maimonides, closed the first great philosophical era of the Muslims. The boldness of this great commentator of Aristotle aroused the full fury of the orthodox, who, in their zeal, attacked all philosophers indiscriminately, and had all philosophical writings committed to the flames. The theories of Ibn Rushd do not differ fundamentally from those of Ibn Bajjah and Ibn Tufail, who only follow the teachings of Ibn Sina and Al-Farabi. Like all Islamic Peripatetics, Ibn Rushd admits the hypothesis of the intelligence of the spheres and the hypothesis of universal emanation, through which motion is communicated from place to place to all parts of the universe as far as the supreme world—hypotheses which, in the mind of the Arabic philosophers, did away with the dualism involved in Aristotle's doctrine of pure energy and eternal matter. His ideas on the separation of philosophy and religion, further developed by the Averroist school of philosophy, were later influential in the development of modern secularism.[1][2] Ibn Rushd is thus regarded as the founding father of secular thought in Western Europe.[3]

But while Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and other Persian and Muslim philosophers hurried, so to speak, over subjects that trenched on religious dogmas, Ibn Rushd delighted in dwelling upon them with full particularity and stress. Thus he says, "Not only is matter eternal, but form is potentially inherent in matter; otherwise, it were a creation ex nihilo" (Munk, "Mélanges," p. 444). According to this theory, therefore, the existence of this world is not only a possibility, as Ibn Sina declared—in order to make concessions to the orthodox— but also a necessity.

Driven from the Islamic schools, Islamic philosophy found a refuge with the Jews, to whom belongs the honor of having transmitted it to the Christian world. A series of eminent men—such as the Ibn Tibbons, Narboni, Gersonides —joined in translating the Arabic philosophical works into Hebrew and commenting upon them. The works of Ibn Rushd especially became the subject of their study, due in great measure to Maimonides, who, in a letter addressed to his pupil Joseph ben Judah, spoke in the highest terms of Ibn Rushd's commentary.

It should be mentioned that this depiction of intellectual tradition in Islamic Lands is mainly dependent upon what West could understand (or was willing to understand) from this long era. In contrast, there are some historians and philosophers who do not agree with this account and describe this era in a completely different way. Their main point of dispute is on the influence of different philosophers on Islamic Philosophy, especially the comparative importance of eastern intellectuals such as Ibn Sina and of western thinkers such as Ibn Rushd. (For more discussion, refer to the History of Islamic Philosophy by Henry Corbin.)

Jewish philosophy in the Islamic world

The oldest Jewish religio-philosophical work preserved is that of Saadia Gaon (892-942), Emunot ve-Deot, "The Book of Beliefs and Opinions". In this work Saadia treats the questions that interested the Mutakallamin, such as the creation of matter, the unity of God, the divine attributes, the soul, etc. Saadia criticizes other philosophers severely. For Saadia there was no problem as to creation: God created the world ex nihilo, just as the Bible attests; and he contests the theory of the Mutakallamin in reference to atoms, which theory, he declares, is just as contrary to reason and religion as the theory of the philosophers professing the eternity of matter.

To prove the unity of God, Saadia uses the demonstrations of the Mutakallamin. Only the attributes of essence (sifat al-dhatia) can be ascribed to God, but not the attributes of action (sifat-al-fi'aliya). The soul is a substance more

delicate even than that of the celestial spheres. Here Saadia controverts the Mutakallamin, who considered the soul an "accident" 'arad (compare Guide for the Perplexed i. 74), and employs the following one of their premises to justify his position: "Only a substance can be the substratum of an accident" (that is, of a non-essential property of things). Saadia argues: "If the soul be an accident only, it can itself have no such accidents as wisdom, joy, love," etc. Saadia was thus in every way a supporter of the Kalam; and if at times he deviated from its doctrines, it was owing to his religious views; just as the Jewish and Muslim Peripatetics stopped short in their respective Aristotelianism whenever there was danger of wounding orthodox religion.

Post-classical Islamic philiosophy

The death of Ibn Rushd (Averroes) effectively marks the end of a particular discipline of Islamic philosophy usually called the Peripatetic Arabic School, and philosophical activity declined significantly in western Islamic countries, namely in Islamic Spain and North Africa, though it persisted for much longer in the Eastern countries, in particular Iran and India.

Since the political power shift in Western Europe (Spain and Portugal) from Muslim to Christian control, the Muslims naturally did not practice philosophy in Western Europe. This also led to some loss of contact between the 'west' and the 'east' of the Islamic world. Muslims in the 'east' continued to do philosophy, as is evident from the works of Ottoman scholars and especially those living in Muslim kingdoms within the territories of present day Iran and India, such as Shah Waliullah and Ahmad Sirhindi. This fact has escaped most pre-modern historians of Islamic (or Arabic) philosophy. In addition, logic has continued to be taught in religious seminaries up to modern times.

After Ibn Rushd, there arose many later schools of Islamic Philosophy. We can mention just a few, such as the those founded by Ibn Arabi and Mulla Sadra. These new schools are of particular importance, as they are still active in the Islamic world. The most important among them are:

- School of Illumination (Hikmat al-Ishraq)
- Transcendent Theosophy (Hikmat Muta'aliah)
- Sufi metaphysics
- Traditionalist School

Illuminationist school

Illuminationist philosophy was a school of Islamic philosophy founded by Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi in the 12th century. This school is a combination of Avicenna’s philosophy and ancient Iranian philosophy, along with many new innovative ideas of Suhrawardi. It is often described as having been influenced by Neoplatonism.

In logic in Islamic philosophy, systematic refutations of Greek logic were written by the Illuminationist school, founded by Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi (1155-1191), who developed the idea of "decisive necessity", an important innovation in the history of logical philosophical speculation.

Transcendent school

Transcendent Theosophy is the school of Islamic philosophy founded by Mulla Sadra in the 17th century. His philosophy and ontology is considered to be just as important to Islamic philosophy as Martin Heidegger's philosophy later was to Western philosophy in the 20th century. Mulla Sadra bought "a new philosophical insight in

dealing with the nature of reality" and created "a major transition from essentialism to existentialism" in Islamic philosophy, several centuries before this occurred in Western philosophy.[5]

The idea of "essence precedes existence" is a concept which dates back to Avicenna[6] and his school of Avicennism as well as Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi[7] and his Illuminationist philosophy. The opposite idea of "Existence precedes essence" was thus developed in the works of Averroes[6] and Mulla Sadra[8] as a reaction to this idea and is a key foundational concept of existentialism.

For Mulla Sadra, "existence precedes the essence and is thus principle since something has to exist first and then have an essence." This is primarily the argument that lies at the heart of Mulla Sadra's Transcendent Theosophy. Sayyid Jalal Ashtiyani later summarized Mulla Sadra's concept as follows:[9]

"The existent being that has an essence must then be caused and existence that is pure existence ... is therefore a Necessary Being."

More careful approaches are needed in terms of thinking about philosophers (and theologians) in Islam in terms of phenomenological methods of investigation in ontology (or onto-theology), or by way of comparisons that are made with Heidegger's thought and his critique of the history of metaphysics.[10]

Philosophy of history

The first detailed studies on the subject of historiography and the first critiques on historical methods appeared in the works of the Arab Ash'ari polymath Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), who is regarded as the father of historiography, cultural history,[11] and the philosophy of history, especially for his historiographical writings in the Muqaddimah (Latinized as Prolegomena) and Kitab al-Ibar (Book of Advice).[12] His Muqaddimah also laid the groundwork for the observation of the role of state, communication, propaganda and systematic bias in history,[13] and he discussed the rise and fall of civilizations.

Franz Rosenthal wrote in the History of Muslim Historiography:

"Muslim historiography has at all times been united by the closest ties with the general development of scholarship in Islam, and the position of historical knowledge in MusIim education has exercised a decisive influence upon the intellectual level of historicai writing....The Muslims achieved a definite advance beyond previous historical writing in the sociological understanding of history and the systematisation of historiography. The development of modern historical writing seems to have gained considerably in speed and substance through the utilization of a Muslim Literature which enabled western historians, from the seventeenth century on, to see a large section of the world through foreign eyes. The Muslim historiography helped indirectly and modestly to shape present day historical thinking."[14]

Social philosophy

Despite the negative consequences of Ash'ari thought on Islamic philosophy, it did later give rise to the beginnings of social philosophy. The most famous social philosopher was the Ash'ari polymath Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), who

was the last major Islamic philosopher from North Africa. In his Muqaddimah, he developed the earliest theories on social philosophy, in formulating theories of social cohesion and social conflict.

His Muqaddimah was also the introduction to a seven volume analysis of universal history. He is considered the "father of sociology", "father of historiography", and "father of the philosophy of history", for being the first to discuss the topics of sociology, historiography and the philosophy of history in detail.

Contemporary Islamic philosophy

The tradition of Islamic Philosophy is still very much alive today despite the belief in many Western circles that this tradition ceased after the golden ages of Suhrawardi's Hikmat al-Ishraq (Illumination Philosophy) or, at the latest, Mulla Sadra's Hikmat-e-Mota'aliye or Transcendent (Exalted) Philosophy. Another unavoidable name is Allama Muhammad Iqbal who reshaped and revitalized Islamic philosophy amongst the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent in the early 20th century[1]. Beside his Urdu and Persian poetical work, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam [2] is a milestone in the modern political philosophy of Islam.

In contemporary Islamic Lands, the teaching of hikmat or hikmah has continued and flourished.

Among the traditional masters of Islamic philosophy most active during the past two decades may be mentioned

- the Iranian علامه طباطبائی or Allameh Tabatabaei, the author of numerous works including the twenty seven-volume Quranic commentary al-Mizan (المیزان),
- Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi, who is credited with creating modern Islamist political thought in the 20th century, and
- Riaz Ahmed Gohar Shahi (25 November 1941 - 25 November 2001) author of "The Religion of God". Gohar Shahi was in favor of divine love and considers it most important for an approach to God and no discrimination of caste, creed, nation or religion is accepted for Divine Love of God as every human has been gifted with an ability to develop spiritual power to approach to the essence of God.
- Muhammad Hamidullah (February 09, 1908 - December 17, 2002) belonged to a family of scholars, jurists, writers and sufis. He was a world-renowned scholar of Islam and International Law from Pakistan, who was known for contributions to the research of the history of Hadith, translations of the Qur'an, the advancement of Islamic learning, and to the dissemination of Islamic teachings in the Western world.
- Fazlur Rahman was professor of Islamic thought at the University of Chicago, and an expert in Islamic philosophy.
- Murtaza Motahhari, the best student of Allamah Tabatabai, a martyr of the Iran Islamic Revolution; and
- Seyyed Hossein Nasr.
- Imran Nazar Hosein.- Author of Jerusalem in the Quran
- Javed Ahmad Ghamidi is a well-known Pakistani Islamic scholar, exegete, and educator. A former member of the Jamaat-e-Islami, who extended the work of his tutor, Amin Ahsan Islahi.
- In Malaysia, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas is a prominent metaphysical thinker.;
- In Southern/South East Europe the teachings of the skeptic Al-Ibn Theodorakis have found considerable favour.

Criticism

Philosophy as such has not been without criticism amongst Muslims, both contemporary and past. Abu Hanifa, whom the Hanafi school of thought amongst Sunni Muslims takes its name from, stated when asked about the application of dialectic to issues such as nonessential characteristics and bodies that "these are the statements of philosophers. Stick to the athaar (narrations) and the path of the Salaf, and beware of all newly invented affairs, for verily they are innovations."[15] Malik ibn Anas, for whom the Maliki school of thought is named, also rebuked philosophical discussion, once telling proponents of it that he was secure in his religion, but that they were "in doubt, so go to a doubter and argue with him (instead)."[16] Today, Islamic philosophical thought has also been criticized by scholars of the modern Salafi movement.

There would be many Islamic thinkers who were not as enthusiastic about its potential. But it would be incorrect to assume that they opposed philosophy simply because it was a "foreign science". Oliver Leaman, an expert on Islamic philosophy, points out that the objections of notable theologians are rarely directed at philosophy itself, but rather at the conclusions the philosophers arrived at. Even al-Ghazali, who is famous for his critique of the philosophers, was himself an expert in philosophy and logic. And his criticism was that they arrived at theologically erroneous conclusions. The three most serious of these, in his view, were believing in the co-eternity of the universe with God, denying the bodily resurrection, and asserting that God only has knowledge of abstract universals, not of particular things (but it should be noted that not all philosophers subscribed to these same views).[17]

Golden Age of Islam

The Islamic Golden Age, also sometimes known as the Islamic Renaissance,[1] was traditionally dated from the 8th century to the 13th century C.E.,[2] but has been extended to the 15th[3] and 16th[4] centuries by recent scholarship. During this period, artists, engineers, scholars, poets, philosophers, geographers and traders in the Islamic world contributed to the arts, agriculture, economics, industry, law, literature, navigation, philosophy, sciences, sociology, and technology, both by preserving and building upon earlier traditions and by adding inventions and innovations of their own.[5] Howard R. Turner writes: "Muslim artists and scientists, princes and laborers together made a unique culture that has directly and indirectly influenced societies on every continent."[5]

Foundations

During the Muslim conquests of the 7th and early 8th centuries, Rashidun armies established the Islamic Empire, which was one of the ten largest empires in history. The Islamic Golden Age was soon inaugurated by the middle of the 8th century by the ascension of the Abbasid Caliphate and the transfer of the capital from Damascus to the Persian city of Baghdad illustrating the strong Persian presence in the Abbasid Caliphate. The Abbassids were influenced by the Qur'anic injunctions and hadith such as "The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of martyrs" (Considered a weak hadith by Al-Bani Hadith No./4832) stressing the value of knowledge. During this period the Muslim world became the unrivalled intellectual centre for science, philosophy, medicine and education as the Abbasids championed the cause of knowledge and established a "House of Wisdom" (Arabic:بيت الحكمة) in Baghdad; where both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars sought to translate and gather all the world's knowledge into Arabic. Many classic works of antiquity that would otherwise have been lost were translated into Arabic and later in turn translated into Turkish, Persian, Hebrew and Latin. During this period the Muslim world was a cauldron of cultures which collected, synthesized and significantly advanced the knowledge gained from the ancient Iraqi, Roman, Chinese, Indian, Persian, Egyptian, North African, Greek and Byzantine civilizations. Rival Muslim dynasties such as the Fatimids of Egypt and the Umayyads of al-Andalus were also major intellectual centres with cities such as Cairo and Córdoba rivaling Baghdad.[6]

A major innovation of this period was paper - originally a secret tightly guarded by the Chinese. The art of papermaking was obtained from prisoners taken at the Battle of Talas (751), resulting in paper mills being built in the Persian cities of Samarkand and Baghdad. The Arabs improved upon the Chinese techniques of using mulberry bark by using starch to account for the Muslim preference for pens vs. the Chinese for brushes. By AD 900 there were hundreds of shops employing scribes and binders for books in Baghdad and even public libraries began to become established, including the first lending libraries. From here paper-making spread west to Fez and then to al-Andalus and from there to Europe in the 13th century.[7]

Much of this learning and development can be linked to topography. Even prior to Islam's presence, the city of Mecca served as a center of trade in Arabia. The tradition of the pilgrimage to Mecca became a center for exchanging ideas and goods. The influence held by Muslim merchants over African-Arabian and Arabian-Asian trade routes was tremendous. As a result, Islamic civilization grew and expanded on the basis of its merchant economy, in contrast to their Christian, Indian and Chinese peers who built societies from an agricultural landholding nobility. Merchants brought goods and their faith to China, India (the Indian subcontinent now has over 450 million followers), South-east Asia (which now has over 230 million followers), and the kingdoms of Western Africa and returned with new inventions. Merchants used their wealth to invest in textiles and plantations.

Aside from traders, Sufi missionaries also played a large role in the spread of Islam, by bringing their message to various regions around the world. The principal locations included: Persia, Ancient Mesopotamia, Central Asia and North Africa. Although, the mystics also had a significant influence in parts of Eastern Africa, Ancient Anatolia (Turkey), South Asia, East Asia and South-east Asia.[8][9]

Ethics

Many medieval Muslim thinkers pursued humanistic, rational and scientific discourses in their search for knowledge, meaning and values. A wide range of Islamic writings on love poetry, history and philosophical theology show that medieval Islamic thought was open to the humanistic ideas of individualism, occasional secularism, skepticism and liberalism.[10][11]

Religious freedom, though society was still controlled under Islamic values, helped create cross-cultural networks by attracting Muslim, Christian and Jewish intellectuals and thereby helped spawn the greatest period of philosophical creativity in the Middle Ages from the 8th to 13th centuries.[6] Another reason the Islamic world flourished during this period was an early emphasis on freedom of speech, as summarized by al-Hashimi (a cousin of Caliph al-Ma'mun) in the following letter to one of the religious opponents he was attempting to convert through reason:[12]

"Bring forward all the arguments you wish and say whatever you please and speak your mind freely. Now that you are safe and free to say whatever you please appoint some arbitrator who will impartially judge between us and lean only towards the truth and be free from the empary of passion, and that arbitrator shall be Reason, whereby God makes us responsible for our own rewards and punishments. Herein I have dealt justly with you and have given you full security and am ready to accept whatever decision Reason may give for me or against me. For "There is no compulsion in religion" (Qur'an 2:256) and I have only invited you to accept our faith willingly and of your own accord and have pointed out the hideousness of your present belief. Peace be with you and the blessings of God!"

The earliest known treatises dealing with environmentalism and environmental science, especially pollution, were Arabic treatises written by al-Kindi, al-Razi, Ibn Al-Jazzar, al-Tamimi, al-Masihi, Avicenna, Ali ibn Ridwan, Abd-el-latif, and Ibn al-Nafis. Their works covered a number of subjects related to pollution such as air pollution, water pollution, soil contamination, municipal solid waste mishandling, and environmental impact assessments of certain localities.[13] Cordoba, al-Andalus also had the first waste containers and waste disposal facilities for litter collection.[14]

Institutions

A number of important educational and scientific institutions previously unknown in the ancient world have their origins in the medieval Islamic world, with the most notable examples being: the public hospital (which replaced healing temples and sleep temples)[15] and psychiatric hospital,[16] the public library and lending library, the academic degree-granting university, and the astronomical observatory as a research institute[15] (as opposed to a private observation post as was the case in ancient times).[17]

The first universities which issued diplomas were the Bimaristan medical university-hospitals of the medieval Islamic world, where medical diplomas were issued to students of Islamic medicine who were qualified to be practicing doctors of medicine from the 9th century.[18] The Guinness Book of World Records recognizes the University of Al Karaouine in Fez, Morocco as the oldest degree-granting university in the world with its founding in 859 CE.[19] Al-Azhar University, founded in Cairo, Egypt in the 975 CE, offered a variety of academic degrees,

including postgraduate degrees, and is often considered the first full-fledged university. The origins of the doctorate also dates back to the ijazat attadris wa 'l-ifttd ("license to teach and issue legal opinions") in the medieval Madrasahs which taught Islamic law.[20]

By the 10th century, Cordoba had 700 mosques, 60,000 palaces, and 70 libraries, the largest of which had 600,000 books. In the whole al-Andalus, 60,000 treatises, poems, polemics and compilations were published each year.[21] The library of Cairo had two million books,[22] while the library of Tripoli is said to have had as many as three million books before it was destroyed by Crusaders. The number of important and original medieval Arabic works on the mathematical sciences far exceeds the combined total of medieval Latin and Greek works of comparable significance, although only a small fraction of the surviving Arabic scientific works have been studied in modern times.[23]

A number of distinct features of the modern library were introduced in the Islamic world, where libraries not only served as a collection of manuscripts as was the case in ancient libraries, but also as a public library and lending library, a centre for the instruction and spread of sciences and ideas, a place for meetings and discussions, and sometimes as a lodging for scholars or boarding school for pupils. The concept of the library catalogue was also introduced in medieval Islamic libraries, where books were organized into specific genres and categories.[24]

Several fundamental common law institutions may have been adapted from similar legal institutions in Islamic law and jurisprudence, and introduced to England by the Normans after the Norman conquest of England and the Emirate of Sicily, and by Crusaders during the Crusades. In particular, the "royal English contract protected by the action of debt is identified with the Islamic Aqd, the English assize of novel disseisin is identified with the Islamic Istihqaq, and the English jury is identified with the Islamic Lafif." Other legal institutions introduced in Islamic law include the trust and charitable trust (Waqf),[25][26] and the agency and aval (Hawala),[27] and the lawsuit and medical peer review.[28] Other English legal institutions such as "the scholastic method, the license to teach," the "law schools known as Inns of Court in England and Madrasas in Islam" and the "European commenda" (Islamic Qirad) may have also originated from Islamic law. These influences have led some scholars to suggest that Islamic law may have laid the foundations for "the common law as an integrated whole".[20]

Polymaths

Another common feature during the Islamic Golden Age was the large number of Muslim polymath scholars, who were known as "Hakeems", each of whom contributed to a variety of different fields of both religious and secular learning, comparable to the later "Renaissance Men" (such as Leonardo da Vinci) of the European Renaissance period.[29][30] During the Islamic Golden Age, polymath scholars with a wide breadth of knowledge in different fields were more common than scholars who specialized in any single field of learning.[29]

Notable medieval Muslim polymaths included al-Biruni, al-Jahiz, al-Kindi, Avicenna, al-Idrisi, Ibn Bajjah, Ibn Zuhr, Ibn Tufail, Averroes, al-Suyuti,[31] Geber,[32] Abbas Ibn Firnas,[33] Alhacen,[34] Ibn al-Nafis,[35] Ibn Khaldun,[36] al-Khwarizmi, al-Masudi, al-Muqaddasi, and Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī, among others.

Economy

Age of discovery

The Islamic Empire significantly contributed to globalization during the Islamic Golden Age, when the knowledge, trade and economies from many previously isolated regions and civilizations began integrating due to contacts with Muslim explorers, sailors, scholars, traders, and travelers. Some have called this period the "Pax Islamica" or "Afro-Asiatic age of discovery", in reference to the Jewish (known as Radhanites), Sogdian and Muslim South-west Asian and North African traders and explorers who travelled most of the Old World, and established an early global economy[37] across most of Asia and Africa and much of Europe, with their trade networks extending from the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea in the west to the Indian Ocean and China Sea in the east.[38] This helped establish the Islamic Empire (including the Rashidun, Umayyad, Abbasid and Fatimid caliphates) as the world's leading extensive economic power throughout the 7th-13th centuries.[37] Several contemporary medieval Arabic reports also suggest that Muslim explorers from al-Andalus and the Maghreb may have travelled in expeditions across the Atlantic Ocean between the 9th and 14th centuries.

Agricultural Revolution

The Islamic Golden Age witnessed a fundamental transformation in agriculture known as the "Muslim Agricultural Revolution" or "Arab Agricultural Revolution".[40] Due to the global economy established by Muslim traders across the Old World, this enabled the diffusion of many plants and farming techniques between different parts of the Islamic world, as well as the adaptation of plants and techniques from beyond the Islamic world. Crops from Africa such as sorghum, crops from China such as citrus fruits, and numerous crops from India such as mangos, rice, and especially cotton and sugar cane, were distributed throughout Islamic lands which normally would not be able to grow these crops.[41] Some have referred to the diffusion of numerous crops during this period as the "Globalisation of Crops",[42] which, along with an increased mechanization of agriculture (see Industrial growth below), led to major changes in economy, population distribution, vegetation cover,[43] agricultural production and income, population levels, urban growth, the distribution of the labour force, linked industries, cooking and diet, clothing, and numerous other aspects of life in the Islamic world.[41]

During the Muslim Agricultural Revolution, sugar production was refined and transformed into a large-scale industry by the Arabs, who built the first sugar refineries and sugar plantations. The Arabs and Berbers diffused sugar throughout the Islamic Empire from the 8th century.[44]

Muslims introduced cash cropping[45] and the modern crop rotation system where land was cropped four or more times in a two-year period. Winter crops were followed by summer ones, and in some cases there was in between. In areas where plants of shorter growing season were used, such as spinach and eggplants, the land could be cropped three or more times a year. In parts of Yemen, wheat yielded two harvests a year on the same land, as did rice in Iraq.[41] Muslims developed a scientific approach to agriculture based on three major elements; sophisticated systems of crop rotation, highly developed irrigation techniques, and the introduction of a large variety of crops which were studied and catalogued according to the season, type of land and amount of water they require. Numerous encyclopaedias on farming and botany were produced, containing accurate, precise detail.[46]

Market economy

Early forms of proto-capitalism and free markets were present in the Caliphate,[47] where an early market economy and early form of merchant capitalism was developed between the 8th-12th centuries, which some refer to as "Islamic capitalism".[48] A vigorous monetary economy was created on the basis of the expanding levels of circulation of a stable high-value currency (the dinar) and the integration of monetary areas that were previously independent. Innovative new business techniques and forms of business organisation were introduced by economists, merchants and traders during this time. Such innovations included early trading companies, credit cards, big businesses, contracts, bills of exchange, long-distance international trade, early forms of partnership (mufawada) such as limited partnerships (mudaraba), and early forms of credit, debt, profit, loss, capital (al-mal), capital

accumulation (nama al-mal),[45] circulating capital, capital expenditure, revenue, cheques, promissory notes,[49] trusts (waqf), startup companies,[50] savings accounts, transactional accounts, pawning, loaning, exchange rates, bankers, money changers, ledgers, deposits, assignments, the double-entry bookkeeping system,[51] and lawsuits.[52] Organizational enterprises similar to corporations independent from the state also existed in the medieval Islamic world.[53][54] Many of these early proto-capitalist concepts were adopted and further advanced in medieval Europe from the 13th century onwards.[45]

The systems of contract relied upon by merchants was very effective. Merchants would buy and sell on commission, with money loaned to them by wealthy investors, or a joint investment of several merchants, who were often Muslim, Christian and Jewish. Recently, a collection of documents was found in an Egyptian synagogue shedding a very detailed and human light on the life of medieval Middle Eastern merchants. Business partnerships would be made for many commercial ventures, and bonds of kinship enabled trade networks to form over huge distances. Networks developed during this time enabled a world in which money could be promised by a bank in Baghdad and cashed in Spain, creating the cheque system of today. Each time items passed through the cities along this extraordinary network, the city imposed a tax, resulting in high prices once reaching the final destination. These innovations made by Muslims and Jews laid the foundations for the modern economic system.

Though medieval Islamic economics appears to have been closer to proto-capitalism, some scholars have also found a number of parallels between Islamic economic jurisprudence and communism, including the Islamic ideas of zakat and riba.[55]

Industrial growth

Muslim engineers in the Islamic world made a number of innovative industrial uses of hydropower, and early industrial uses of tidal power, wind power, steam power,[56] fossil fuels such as petroleum, and early large factory complexes (tiraz in Arabic).[57] The industrial uses of watermills in the Islamic world date back to the 7th century, while horizontal-wheeled and vertical-wheeled water mills were both in widespread use since at least the 9th century. A variety of industrial mills were being employed in the Islamic world, including early fulling mills, gristmills, hullers, paper mills, sawmills, shipmills, stamp mills, steel mills, sugar mills, tide mills and windmills. By the 11th century, every province throughout the Islamic world had these industrial mills in operation, from al-Andalus and North Africa to the Middle East and Central Asia.[58] Muslim engineers also invented crankshafts and water turbines, employed gears in mills and water-raising machines, and pioneered the use of dams as a source of water power, used to provide additional power to watermills and water-raising machines.[44] Such advances made it possible for many industrial tasks that were previously driven by manual labour in ancient times to be mechanized and driven by machinery instead in the medieval Islamic world. The transfer of these technologies to medieval Europe had an influence on the Industrial Revolution.[59]

A number of industries were generated due to the Muslim Agricultural Revolution, including early industries for agribusiness, astronomical instruments, ceramics, chemicals, distillation technologies, clocks, glass, mechanical hydropowered and wind powered machinery, matting, mosaics, pulp and paper, perfumery, petroleum, pharmaceuticals, rope-making, shipping, shipbuilding, silk, sugar, textiles, water, weapons, and the mining of minerals such as sulphur, ammonia, lead and iron. Early large factory complexes (tiraz) were built for many of these industries, and knowledge of these industries were later transmitted to medieval Europe, especially during the Latin translations of the 12th century, as well as before and after. For example, the first glass factories in Europe were founded in the 11th century by Egyptian craftsmen in Greece.[60] The agricultural and handicraft industries also experienced high levels of growth during this period.

Labour

The labour force in the Caliphate were employed from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, while both men and women were involved in diverse occupations and economic activities.[61] Women were employed in a wide range of commercial activities and diverse occupations[62] in the primary sector (as farmers for example), secondary sector (as construction workers, dyers, spinners, etc.) and tertiary sector (as investors, doctors, nurses, presidents of guilds, brokers, peddlers, lenders, scholars, etc.).[63] Muslim women also had a monopoly over certain branches of the textile industry.

Slave trade

Some historians estimate that approximately 18 million black African slaves crossed the Red Sea, Indian Ocean, and Sahara from 650 AD to 1900 AD.[64] Ibn Khaldun wrote that "the Negro nations are, as a rule, submissive to slavery..."[65][66] Ibn Battuta tells us several times that he was given or purchased slaves.[67] Slaves were purchased on the frontiers of the Islamic world and then imported to the major centers, where there were slave markets from which they were widely distributed.[68][69][70] Slaves occupied important place in the economic life of Islamic world.[71][72] Large numbers of slaves were exported from eastern Africa to work in salt mines and labour-intensive plantations; the best evidence for this is the magnitude of the Zanj revolt in Iraq in the 9th century.[73] Slaves were also used for domestic work,[74] military service,[75] bought for the harems,[76] and civil administration.[77] Central and east European slaves were generally known as Saqaliba (i.e., Slavs).[78]

Technology

A significant number of inventions were produced by medieval Muslim engineers and inventors, such as Abbas Ibn Firnas, the Banū Mūsā, Taqi al-Din, and most notably al-Jazari.

Some of the inventions believed to have come from the Islamic Golden Age include the chess camera obscura, coffee, soap bar, shampoo, pure distillation, liquefaction, crystallization, purification, oxidisation, evaporation, filtration, distilled alcohol, uric acid, nitric acid, alembic, crankshaft, valve, reciprocating suction piston pump, mechanical clocks driven by water and weights, combination lock, quilting, pointed arch, scalpel, bone saw, forceps, surgical catgut, windmill, inoculation, smallpox vaccine, fountain pen, cryptanalysis, frequency analysis, three-course meal, stained glass and quartz glass, Persian carpet, celestial globe,

Urbanization

As urbanization increased, Muslim cities grew unregulated, resulting in narrow winding city streets and neighbourhoods separated by different ethnic backgrounds and religious affiliations. These qualities proved efficient for transporting goods[citation needed] to and from major commercial centres while preserving the privacy valued by Islamic family life. Suburbs lay just outside the walled city, from wealthy residential communities, to working class semi-slums. City garbage dumps were located far from the city, as were clearly defined cemeteries which were often homes for criminals. A place of prayer was found just near one of the main gates, for religious festivals and public executions. Similarly, Military Training grounds were found near a main gate.

Muslim cities also had advanced domestic water systems with sewers, public baths, drinking fountains, piped drinking water supplies,[80] and widespread private and public toilet and bathing facilities.[81] By the 10th century, Cordoba had 700 mosques, 60,000 palaces, and 70 libraries.

Sciences

The traditional view of Islamic science was that it was chiefly a preserver and transmitter of ancient knowledge.[82] For example, Donald Lach argues that modern science originated in Europe as an amalgam of medieval technology

and Greek learning.[83] These views have been disputed in recent times, with some scholars suggesting that Muslim scientists laid the foundations for modern science,[84][85][86][87][88] for their development of early scientific methods and an empirical, experimental and quantitative approach to scientific inquiry.[89] Some scholars have referred to this period as a "Muslim scientific revolution",[90][3][91][92] a term which expresses the view that Islam was the driving force behind the Muslim scientific achievements,[93] and should not to be confused with the early modern European Scientific Revolution leading to the rise of modern science.[94][95][96] Edward Grant argues that modern science was due to the cumulative efforts of the Hellenic, Islamic and Latin civilizations.[9

Scientific method

Early scientific methods were developed in the Islamic world, where significant progress in methodology was made, especially in the works of Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen) in the 11th century, who is considered the pioneer of experimental physics.[89][98] The most important development of the scientific method was the use of experimentation and quantification to distinguish between competing scientific theories set within a generally empirical orientation. Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen) wrote the Book of Optics, in which he significantly reformed the field of optics, empirically proved that vision occurred because of light rays entering the eye, and invented the camera obscura to demonstrate the physical nature of light rays.[99][100]

Ibn al-Haytham has also been described as the "first scientist" for his introduction of the scientific method,[101] and his pioneering work on the psychology of visual perception[102][103] is considered a precursor to psychophysics and experimental psychology.[104]

Peer review

The earliest medical peer review, a process by which a committee of physicians investigate the medical care rendered in order to determine whether accepted standards of care have been met, is found in the Ethics of the Physician written by Ishaq bin Ali al-Rahwi (854–931) of al-Raha in Syria. His work, as well as later Arabic medical manuals, state that a visiting physician must always make duplicate notes of a patient's condition on every visit. When the patient was cured or had died, the notes of the physician were examined by a local medical council of other physicians, who would review the practising physician's notes to decide whether his/her performance have met the required standards of medical care. If their reviews were negative, the practicing physician could face a lawsuit from a maltreated patient.[105]

The first scientific peer review, the evaluation of research findings for competence, significance and originality by qualified experts, was described later in the Medical Essays and Observations published by the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1731. The present-day scientific peer review system evolved from this 18th century process.[106]

Astronomy

Some have referred to the achievements of the Maragha school and their predecessors and successors in astronomy as a "Maragha Revolution", "Maragha School Revolution" or "Scientific Revolution before the Renaissance".[3] Advances in astronomy by the Maragha school and their predecessors and successors include the construction of the first observatory in Baghdad during the reign of Caliph al-Ma'mun,[107] the collection and correction of previous astronomical data, resolving significant problems in the Ptolemaic model, the development of universal astrolabes,[108] the invention of numerous other astronomical instruments, the beginning of astrophysics and celestial mechanics after Ja'far Muhammad ibn Mūsā ibn Shākir discovered that the heavenly bodies and celestial spheres were subject to the same physical laws as Earth,[109] the first elaborate experiments related to astronomical phenomena and the first semantic distinction between astronomy and astrology by Abū al-Rayhān al-Bīrūnī,[110] the use of exacting empirical observations and experimental techniques,[111] the discovery that the celestial spheres are not solid and that the heavens are less dense than the air by Ibn al-Haytham,[112] the separation of natural

philosophy from astronomy by Ibn al-Haytham and Ibn al-Shatir,[113] the first non-Ptolemaic models by Ibn al-Haytham and Mo'ayyeduddin Urdi, the rejection of the Ptolemaic model on empirical rather than philosophical grounds by Ibn al-Shatir,[3] the first empirical observational evidence of the Earth's rotation by Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī and Ali al-Qushji, and al-Birjandi's early hypothesis on "circular inertia."[114]

Several Muslim astronomers also considered the possibility of the Earth's rotation on its axis and perhaps a heliocentric solar system.[115][87] It is known that the Copernican heliocentric model in Nicolaus Copernicus' De revolutionibus was adapted from the geocentric model of Ibn al-Shatir and the Maragha school (including the Tusi-couple) in a heliocentric context,[116] and that his arguments for the Earth's rotation were similar to those of Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī and Ali al-Qushji.[114]

Chemistry

Geber (Jabir ibn Hayyan) is considered a pioneer of chemistry,[117][118] as he was responsible for introducing an early experimental scientific method within the field, as well as the alembic, still, retort,[79] and the chemical processes of pure distillation, filtration, sublimation,[119] liquefaction, crystallisation, purification, oxidisation and evaporation.[79]

The study of traditional alchemy and the theory of the transmutation of metals were first refuted by al-Kindi,[120] followed by Abū Rayhān al-Bīrūnī,[121] Avicenna,[122] and Ibn Khaldun. In his Doubts about Galen, al-Razi was the first to prove both Aristotle's theory of classical elements and Galen's theory of humorism false using an experimental method.[123] Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī stated an early version of the law of conservation of mass, noting that a body of matter is able to change, but is not able to disappear.[124] Alexander von Humboldt and Will Durant consider medieval Muslim chemists to be founders of chemistry.[8

Mathematics

Among the achievements of Muslim mathematicians during this period include the development of algebra and algorithms by the Persian and Islamic mathematician Muhammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī,[125][126] the invention of spherical trigonometry,[127] the addition of the decimal point notation to the Arabic numerals, the discovery of all the trigonometric functions besides sine, al-Kindi's introduction of cryptanalysis and frequency analysis, al-Karaji's introduction of algebraic calculus and proof by mathematical induction, the development of analytic geometry and the earliest general formula for infinitesimal and integral calculus by Ibn al-Haytham, the beginning of algebraic geometry by Omar Khayyam, the first refutations of Euclidean geometry and the parallel postulate by Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī, the first attempt at a non-Euclidean geometry by Sadr al-Din, the development of symbolic algebra by Abū al-Hasan ibn Alī al-Qalasādī,[128] and numerous other advances in algebra, arithmetic, calculus, cryptography, geometry, number theory and trigonometry.

Medicine

Islamic medicine was a genre of medical writing that was influenced by several different medical systems. The works of ancient Greek and Roman physicians Hippocrates, Dioscorides, Soranus, Celsus and Galen had a lasting impact on Islamic medicine.[129][130][131]

Muslim physicians made many significant contributions to medicine, including anatomy, experimental medicine, ophthalmology, pathology, the pharmaceutical sciences, physiology, surgery, etc. They also set up some of the earliest dedicated hospitals,[132] including the first medical schools[133] and psychiatric hospitals.[134] Al-Kindi wrote the De Gradibus, in which he first demonstrated the application of quantification and mathematics to medicine and pharmacology, such as a mathematical scale to quantify the strength of drugs and the determination in advance

of the most critical days of a patient's illness.[135] Al-Razi (Rhazes) discovered measles and smallpox, and in his Doubts about Galen, proved Galen's humorism false.[123]

Abu al-Qasim (Abulcasis) helped lay the foudations for modern surgery,[136] with his Kitab al-Tasrif, in which he invented numerous surgical instruments, including the first instruments unique to women,[137] as well as the surgical uses of catgut and forceps, the ligature, surgical needle, scalpel, curette, retractor, surgical spoon, sound, surgical hook, surgical rod, and specula,[138] and bone saw.[79] Ibn al-Haytham (Alhacen) made important advances in eye surgery, as he correctly explained the process of sight and visual perception for the first time in his Book of Optics.[137]

The Persian scientist Avicenna introduced experimental medicine, discovered contagious diseases, introduced quarantine and clinical trials, and described many anaesthetics and medical and therapeutic drugs, in The Canon of Medicine.

Avicenna helped lay the foundations for modern medicine,[139] with The Canon of Medicine, which was responsible for introducing systematic experimentation and quantification in physiology,[140] the discovery of contagious disease, introduction of quarantine to limit their spread, introduction of experimental medicine, evidence-based medicine, clinical trials,[141] randomized controlled trials,[142][143] efficacy tests,[144][145] and clinical pharmacology,[146] the first descriptions on bacteria and viral organisms,[147] distinction of mediastinitis from pleurisy, contagious nature of tuberculosis, distribution of diseases by water and soil, skin troubles, sexually transmitted diseases, perversions, nervous ailments,[132] use of ice to treat fevers, and separation of medicine from pharmacology.[137]

Ibn Zuhr (Avenzoar) was the earliest known experimental surgeon.[148] In the 12th century, he was responsible for introducing the experimental method into surgery, as he was the first to employ animal testing in order to experiment with surgical procedures before applying them to human patients.[149] He also performed the first dissections and postmortem autopsies on humans as well as animals.[150]

Ibn al-Nafis laid the foundations for circulatory physiology,[151] as he was the first to describe the pulmonary circulation[152] and coronary circulation,[153][154] which form the basis of the circulatory system, for which he is considered "the greatest physiologist of the Middle Ages."[155] He also described the earliest concept of metabolism,[156] and developed new systems of physiology and psychology to replace the Avicennian and Galenic systems, while discrediting many of their erroneous theories on humorism, pulsation,[157] bones, muscles, intestines, sensory organs, bilious canals, esophagus, stomach, etc.[158]

Ibn al-Lubudi rejected the theory of humorism, and discovered that the body and its preservation depend exclusively upon blood, women cannot produce sperm, the movement of arteries are not dependent upon the movement of the heart, the heart is the first organ to form in a fetus' body, and the bones forming the skull can grow into tumors.[159] Ibn Khatima and Ibn al-Khatib discovered that infectious diseases are caused by microorganisms which enter the human body.[160] Mansur ibn Ilyas drew comprehensive diagrams of the body's structural, nervous and circulatory systems.[

Physics

The study of experimental physics began with Ibn al-Haytham,[161] a pioneer of modern optics, who introduced the experimental scientific method and used it to drastically transform the understanding of light and vision in his Book of Optics, which has been ranked alongside Isaac Newton's Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica as one of the most influential books in the history of physics,[162] for initiating a scientific revolution in optics[163] and visual perception.[164]

The experimental scientific method was soon introduced into mechanics by Biruni,[165] and early precursors to Newton's laws of motion were discovered by several Muslim scientists. The law of inertia, known as Newton's first law of motion, and the concept of momentum were discovered by Ibn al-Haytham (Alhacen)[166][167] and Avicenna.[168][169] The proportionality between force and acceleration, considered "the fundamental law of classical mechanics" and foreshadowing Newton's second law of motion, was discovered by Hibat Allah Abu'l-Barakat al-Baghdaadi,[170] while the concept of reaction, foreshadowing Newton's third law of motion, was discovered by Ibn Bajjah (Avempace).[171] Theories foreshadowing Newton's law of universal gravitation were developed by Ja'far Muhammad ibn Mūsā ibn Shākir,[172] Ibn al-Haytham,[173] and al-Khazini.[174] Galileo Galilei's mathematical treatment of acceleration and his concept of impetus[175] was enriched by the commentaries of Avicenna[168] and Ibn Bajjah to Aristotle's Physics as well as the Neoplatonist tradition of Alexandria, represented by John Philoponus.

Other sciences

Many other advances were made by Muslim scientists in biology (anatomy, botany, evolution, physiology and zoology), the earth sciences (anthropology, cartography, geodesy, geography and geology), psychology (experimental psychology, psychiatry, psychophysics and psychotherapy), and the social sciences (demography, economics, sociology, history and historiography).

Other famous Muslim scientists during the Islamic Golden Age include al-Farabi (a polymath), Biruni (a polymath who was one of the earliest anthropologists and a pioneer of geodesy),[177] Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī (a polymath), and Ibn Khaldun (considered to be a pioneer of several social sciences[178] such as demography,[179] economics,[180] cultural history,[181] historiography[182] and sociology),[183] among others.

Other achievements

Architecture

The Great Mosque of Xi'an in China was completed circa 740, and the Great Mosque of Samarra in Iraq was completed in 847. The Great Mosque of Samarra combined the hypostyle architecture of rows of columns supporting a flat base above which a huge spiraling minaret was constructed.

The Spanish Muslims began construction of the Great Mosque at Cordoba in 785 marking the beginning of Islamic architecture in Spain and Northern Africa (see Moors). The mosque is noted for its striking interior arches. Moorish architecture reached its peak with the construction of the Alhambra, the magnificent palace/fortress of Granada, with its open and breezy interior spaces adorned in red, blue, and gold. The walls are decorated with stylized foliage motifs, Arabic inscriptions, and arabesque design work, with walls covered in glazed tiles.

Selimiye Mosque, built by Sinan in 1575. Edirne, Turkey.

Another distinctive sub-style is the architecture of the Mughal Empire in India in the 15-17th centuries. Blending Islamic and Hindu elements, the emperor Akbar constructed the royal city of Fatehpur Sikri, located 26 miles (42 km) west of Agra, in the late 1500s and his grandson Shah Jahan had constructed the mausoleum of Taj Mahal for Mumtaz Mahal in the 1650s, though this time period is well after the Islamic Golden Age.

In the Sunni Muslim Ottoman Empire massive mosques with ornate tiles and calligraphy were constructed by a series of sultans including the Süleymaniye Mosque , Sultanahmet Mosque, Selimiye Mosque, and Bayezid II Mosque

Arts

The golden age of Islamic (and/or Muslim) art lasted from 750 to the 16th century, when ceramics, glass, metalwork, textiles, illuminated manuscripts, and woodwork flourished. Lustrous glazing was an Islamic contribution to ceramics. Islamic luster-painted ceramics were imitated by Italian potters during the Renaissance. Manuscript illumination developed into an important and greatly respected art, and portrait miniature painting flourished in Persia. Calligraphy, an essential aspect of written Arabic, developed in manuscripts and architectural decoration.

Literature

The most well known fiction from the Islamic world was The Book of One Thousand and One Nights (Arabian Nights), which was a compilation of many earlier folk tales told by the Persian Queen Scheherazade. The epic took form in the 10th century and reached its final form by the 14th century; the number and type of tales have varied from one manuscript to another.[184] All Arabian fantasy tales were often called "Arabian Nights" when translated into English, regardless of whether they appeared in The Book of One Thousand and One Nights, in any version, and a number of tales are known in Europe as "Arabian Nights" despite existing in no Arabic manuscript.[184]

"Ali Baba" by Maxfield Parrish.

This epic has been influential in the West since it was translated in the 18th century, first by Antoine Galland.[185] Many imitations were written, especially in France.[186] Various characters from this epic have themselves become cultural icons in Western culture, such as Aladdin, Sinbad and Ali Baba. However, no medieval Arabic source has been traced for Aladdin, which was incorporated into The Book of One Thousand and One Nights by its French translator, Antoine Galland, who heard it from an Arab Syrian Christian storyteller from Aleppo. Part of its popularity may have sprung from the increasing historical and geographical knowledge, so that places of which little was known and so marvels were plausible had to be set further "long ago" or farther "far away"; this is a process that continues, and finally culminate in the fantasy world having little connection, if any, to actual times and places. A number of elements from Arabian mythology and Persian mythology are now common in modern fantasy, such as genies, bahamuts, magic carpets, magic lamps, etc.[186] When L. Frank Baum proposed writing a modern fairy tale that banished stereotypical elements, he included the genie as well as the dwarf and the fairy as stereotypes to go.[187]

Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, the national epic of Iran, is a mythical and heroic retelling of Persian history. Amir Arsalan was also a popular mythical Persian story, which has influenced some modern works of fantasy fiction, such as The Heroic Legend of Arslan.

A famous example of Arabic poetry and Persian poetry on romance (love) is Layla and Majnun, dating back to the Umayyad era in the 7th century. It is a tragic story of undying love much like the later Romeo and Juliet, which was itself said to have been inspired by a Latin version of Layli and Majnun to an extent.[188]

Ibn Tufail (Abubacer) and Ibn al-Nafis were pioneers of the philosophical novel. Ibn Tufail wrote the first fictional Arabic novel Hayy ibn Yaqdhan (Philosophus Autodidactus) as a response to al-Ghazali's The Incoherence of the Philosophers, and then Ibn al-Nafis also wrote a fictional novel Theologus Autodidactus as a response to Ibn Tufail's Philosophus Autodidactus. Both of these narratives had protagonists (Hayy in Philosophus Autodidactus and Kamil in Theologus Autodidactus) who were autodidactic feral children living in seclusion on a desert island, both being the earliest examples of a desert island story. However, while Hayy lives alone with animals on the desert island for the rest of the story in Philosophus Autodidactus, the story of Kamil extends beyond the desert island setting in Theologus Autodidactus, developing into the earliest known coming of age plot and eventually becoming the first example of a science fiction novel.[189][190]

Theologus Autodidactus, written by the Arabian polymath Ibn al-Nafis (1213-1288), is the first example of a science fiction novel. It deals with various science fiction elements such as spontaneous generation, futurology, the end of the world and doomsday, resurrection, and the afterlife. Rather than giving supernatural or mythological explnations for these events, Ibn al-Nafis attempted to explain these plot elements using the scientific knowledge of biology, astronomy, cosmology and geology known in his time. His main purpose behind this science fiction work was to explain Islamic religious teachings in terms of science and philosophy through the use of fiction.[191]

A Latin translation of Ibn Tufail's work, Philosophus Autodidactus, first appeared in 1671, prepared by Edward Pococke the Younger, followed by an English translation by Simon Ockley in 1708, as well as German and Dutch translations. These translations later inspired Daniel Defoe to write Robinson Crusoe, regarded as the first novel in English.[192][193][194][195] Philosophus Autodidactus also inspired Robert Boyle to write his own philosophical novel set on an island, The Aspiring Naturalist.[196] The story also anticipated Rousseau's Emile: or, On Education in some ways, and is also similar to Mowgli's story in Rudyard Kipling's The Jungle Book as well as Tarzan's story, in that a baby is abandoned but taken care of and fed by a mother wolf.[197]

Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy, considered the greatest epic of Italian literature, derived many features of and episodes about the hereafter directly or indirectly from Arabic works on Islamic eschatology: the Hadith and the Kitab al-Miraj (translated into Latin in 1264 or shortly before[198] as Liber Scale Machometi, "The Book of Muhammad's Ladder") concerning Muhammad's ascension to Heaven, and the spiritual writings of Ibn Arabi. The Moors also had a noticeable influence on the works of George Peele and William Shakespeare. Some of their works featured Moorish characters, such as Peele's The Battle of Alcazar and Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice, Titus Andronicus and Othello, which featured a Moorish Othello as its title character. These works are said to have been inspired by several Moorish delegations from Morocco to Elizabethan England at the beginning of the 17th century.

Music

A number of musical instruments used in Western music are believed to have been derived from Arabic musical instruments: the lute was derived from the al'ud, the rebec (ancestor of violin) from the rebab, the guitar from qitara, naker from naqareh, adufe from al-duff, alboka from al-buq, anafil from al-nafir, exabeba from al-shabbaba (flute), atabal (bass drum) from al-tabl, atambal from al-tinbal,[200] the balaban, the castanet from kasatan, sonajas de azófar from sunuj al-sufr, the conical bore wind instruments,[201] the xelami from the sulami or fistula (flute or musical pipe),[202] the shawm and dulzaina from the reed instruments zamr and al-zurna,[203] the gaita from the ghaita, rackett from iraqya or iraqiyya,[204] the harp and zither from the qanun,[205] canon from qanun, geige (violin) from ghichak,[206] and the theorbo from the tarab.[207]

A theory on the origins of the Western Solfège musical notation suggests that it may have also had Arabic origins. It has been argued that the Solfège syllables (do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti) may have been derived from the syllables of the Arabic solmization system Durr-i-Mufassal ("Separated Pearls") (dal, ra, mim, fa, sad, lam). This origin theory was first proposed by Meninski in his Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalum (1680) and then by Laborde in his Essai sur la Musique Ancienne et Moderne (1780).[208][209] See as well the gifted Ziryab (Abu l-Hasan ‘Ali Ibn Nafi‘).

Philosophy

Arab philosophers like al-Kindi (Alkindus) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and Persian philosophers like Ibn Sina (Avicenna) played a major role in preserving the works of Aristotle, whose ideas came to dominate the non-religious thought of the Christian and Muslim worlds. They would also absorb ideas from China, and India, adding to them tremendous knowledge from their own studies. Three speculative thinkers, al-Kindi, al-Farabi, and Avicenna (Ibn Sina), fused Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism with other ideas introduced through Islam, such as Kalam and Qiyas. This led to Avicenna founding his own Avicennism school of philosophy, which was influential in both Islamic and Christian lands. Avicenna was also a critic of Aristotelian logic and founder of Avicennian logic, and he developed the concepts of empiricism and tabula rasa, and distinguished between essence and existence.

From Spain the Arabic philosophic literature was translated into Hebrew, Latin, and Ladino, contributing to the development of modern European philosophy. The Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides, Muslim sociologist-historian Ibn Khaldun, Carthage citizen Constantine the African who translated Greek medical texts, and the Muslim Al-Khwarzimi's collation of mathematical techniques were important figures of the Golden Age.

One of the most influential Muslim philosophers in the West was Averroes (Ibn Rushd), founder of the Averroism school of philosophy, whose works and commentaries had an impact on the rise of secular thought in Western Europe.[210] He also developed the concept of "existence precedes essence".[211]

Another infuential philosopher who had a significant influence on modern philosophy was Ibn Tufail. His philosophical novel, Hayy ibn Yaqdhan, translated into Latin as Philosophus Autodidactus in 1671, developed the themes of empiricism, tabula rasa, nature versus nurture,[212] condition of possibility, materialism,[213] and Molyneux's Problem.[214] European scholars and writers influenced by this novel include John Locke,[215] Gottfried Leibniz,[195] Melchisédech Thévenot, John Wallis, Christiaan Huygens,[216] George Keith, Robert Barclay, the Quakers,[217] and Samuel Hartlib.[196]

Al-Ghazali also had an important influence on Jewish thinkers like Maimonides[218][219] and Christian medieval philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas[220] and René Descartes, who expressed similar ideas to that of al-Ghazali in Discourse on the Method.[221] However, al-Ghazali also wrote a devastating critique in his The Incoherence of the

Philosophers on the speculative theological works of Kindi, Farabi and Ibn Sina. The study of metaphysics declined in the Muslim world due to this critique, though Ibn Rushd (Averroes) responded strongly in his The Incoherence of the Incoherence to many of the points Ghazali raised. Nevertheless, Avicennism continued to flourish long after and Islamic philosophers continued making advances in philosophy through to the 17th century, when Mulla Sadra founded his school of Transcendent Theosophy and developed the concept of existentialism.[222]

Other influential Muslim philosophers include al-Jahiz, a pioneer of evolutionary thought and natural selection; Ibn al-Haytham (Alhacen), a pioneer of phenomenology and the philosophy of science and a critic of Aristotelian natural philosophy and Aristotle's concept of place (topos); Biruni, a critic of Aristotelian natural philosophy; Ibn Tufail and Ibn al-Nafis, pioneers of the philosophical novel; Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi, founder of Illuminationist philosophy; Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, a critic of Aristotelian logic and a pioneer of inductive logic; and Ibn Khaldun, a pioneer in the philosophy of history[183] and social philosophy.

End of the Golden Age

Mongolian invasion

After the Crusades from the West that resulted in the instability of the Islamic world during the 11th century, a new threat came from the East during the 13th century: the Mongol invasions. In 1206, Genghis Khan from Central Asia established a powerful Mongol Empire. A Mongolian ambassador to the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad is said to have been murdered,[223] which may have been one of the reasons behind Hulagu Khan's sack of Baghdad in 1258.[224]

The Mongols conquered most of the Eurasian land mass, including both China in the east and parts of the old Islamic Caliphate and Persian Islamic Khwarezm, as well as Russia and Eastern Europe in the west, and subsequent invasions of the Levant. Later Mongol leaders, such as Timur, though he himself became a Muslim, destroyed many cities, slaughtered thousands of people and did irreparable damage to the ancient irrigation systems of Mesopotamia. These invasions transformed a civil society to a nomadic one.

Traditionalist Muslims at the time, including the polymath Ibn al-Nafis, believed that the Crusades and Mongol invasions were a divine punishment from God against Muslims deviating from the Sunnah. As a result, the falsafa, some of whom held ideas incompatible with the Sunnah, became targets of criticism from many traditionalist Muslims, though other traditionalists such as Ibn al-Nafis made attempts at reconciling reason with revelation and blur the line between the two.[225]

Eventually, the Mongols that settled in parts of Persia, Central Asia and Russia converted to Islam, and as a result, the Ilkhanate, Golden Horde and Chagatai Khanates became Islamic states. In many instances, Mongols assimilated into various Muslim Iranian or Turkic peoples (for instance, one of the greatest Muslim astronomers of the 15th century, Ulugh Beg, was a grandson of Timur). By the time the Ottoman Empire rose from the ashes, the Golden Age is considered to have come to an end.

Causes of decline

"The achievements of the Arabic speaking peoples between the ninth and twelfth centuries are so great as to baffle our understanding. The decadence of Islam and of Arabic is almost as puzzling in its speed and completeness as their phenomenal rise. Scholars will forever try to explain it as they try to explain the decadence and fall of Rome. Such questions are exceedingly complex and it is impossible to answer them in a simple way."

— George Sarton , The Incubation of Western Culture in the Middle East'[226]

Islamic civilization, which had at the outset been creative and dynamic in dealing with issues, began to struggle to respond to the challenges and rapid changes it faced from the 12th century onwards, towards the end of the Abbassid rule. Despite a brief respite with the new Ottoman rule, the decline continued until its eventual collapse and subsequent stagnation in the 20th century.

Despite a number of attempts by many writers, historical and modern, none seem to agree on the causes of decline. The main views on the causes of decline comprise the following: political mismanagement after the early Caliphs (10th century onwards), closure of the gates of ijtihad (12th century), institutionalisation of taqlid rather than bid'ah (13th century), foreign involvement by invading forces and colonial powers (11th century Crusades, 13th century Mongol Empire, 15th century Reconquista, 19th century European colonial empires), and the disruption to the cycle of equity based on Ibn Khaldun's famous model of Asabiyyah (the rise and fall of civilizations) which points to the decline being mainly due to political and economic factors.[4]

The North Africa's Islamic civilization collapsed after exhausting its resources in internal fighting and suffering devastation from the invasion of the Bedouin tribes of Banu Sulaym and Banu Hilal.[227][228] The Black Death ravaged much of the Islamic world in the mid-14th century. Plague epidemics kept returning to the Islamic world up to the 19th century.[229]

There was an increasing lack of tolerance of intellectual debate and freedom of thought, with some seminaries systematically forbidding speculative philosophy, while polemic debates appear to have been abandoned in the 14th century. A significant intellectual shift in Islamic philosophy is perhaps demonstrated by al-Ghazali's late 11th century polemic work The Incoherence of the Philosophers, which lambasted metaphysical philosophy in favor of the primacy of scripture, and was later criticized in The Incoherence of the Incoherence by Averroes. Institutions of science comprising Islamic universities, libraries (including the House of Wisdom), observatories, and hospitals, were later destroyed by foreign invaders like the Crusaders and particularly the Mongols, and were rarely promoted again in the devastated regions.[230] Not only wasn't new publishing equipment accepted but also wide illiteracy overwhelmed the devastated lands, especially in Mesopotamia. Meanwhile in Persia, due to the Mongol invasions and the plague, the average life expectancy of the scholarly class in Persia had declined from 72 years in 1209 to 57 years by 1242.[231]

American economist Timur Kuran proposed an answer why economic development in the Middle East lagged that of the West: Islamic partnership law and inheritance law interacted to keep Middle Eastern enterprises small, never allowing the development of corporate forms.[232][233]

Recent scholarship has come to question the traditional picture of decline, pointing to continued astronomical activity as a sign of a continuing and creative scientific tradition through to the 15th and 16th centuries, with the works of Ibn al-Shatir, Ulugh Beg, Ali Kuşçu, al-Birjandi and Taqi al-Din considered noteworthy examples.[234][235] This was also the case for other fields, such as medicine, notably the works of Ibn al-Nafis, Mansur ibn Ilyas and Şerafeddin Sabuncuoğlu; mathematics, notably the works of al-Kashi and al-Qalasadi; philosophy, notably Mulla Sadra's transcendent theosophy; and the social sciences, notably Ibn Khaldun's

Muqaddimah (1370), which itself points out that though science was declining in Iraq, Al-Andalus and Maghreb, it continued to flourish in Persia, Syria and Egypt during his time.[

PROTECTORATE

A protectorate, in international law, is an autonomous territory that is protected diplomatically or militarily against third parties by a stronger state or entity, in exchange for which the protectorate usually accepts specified obligations, which may vary greatly, depending on the real nature of their relationship. However, it retains sufficient measure of sovereignty and remains a state under international law.

COMMUNISM

Communism is a socioeconomic structure and political ideology that promotes the establishment of an egalitarian, classless society based on common ownership of the means of production and property in general.[1][2][3] Karl Marx posited that communism would be the final stage in human society, evolving into a classless, stateless society of "pure communism".

In political science usage, the term normally designates „a totalitarian system of government in which a single authoritarian party controls state-owned means of production“[4].

As an ideology, Communism is usually considered to be a branch of socialism, a broad group of social and political philosophies, which draws on the various political and intellectual movements with origins in the work of theorists of the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution.[5] Communism attempts to offer an alternative to the problems believed to be inherent with capitalist economies and the legacy of imperialism and nationalism. Communism states that the only way to solve these problems is for the working class, or proletariat, to replace the wealthy bourgeoisie, which is currently the ruling class, in order to establish a peaceful, free society, without classes, or government.[2] The dominant forms of communism, such as Leninism, Stalinism, Maoism and Trotskyism are based on Marxism, but non-Marxist versions of communism (such as Christian communism and anarchist communism) also exist.

GLOBALIZATION

Globalization (or globalisation) in its literal sense is the process of transformation of local or regional phenomena into global ones. This process is a combination of economic, technological, sociocultural and political forces.[1] Globalization is often used to refer to economic globalization, that is, integration of national economies into the international economy through trade, foreign direct investment, capital flows, migration, and the spread of technology.[2]

Tom G. Palmer of the Cato Institute defines "globalization" as "the diminution or elimination of state-enforced restrictions on exchanges across borders and the increasingly integrated and complex global system of production and exchange that has emerged as a result."[3]

Thomas L. Friedman "examines the impact of the 'flattening' of the globe", and argues that globalized trade, outsourcing, supply-chaining, and political forces have changed the world permanently, for both better and worse. He also argues that the pace of globalization is quickening and will continue to have a growing impact on business organization and practice.[4]

Noam Chomsky argues that the word globalization is also used, in a doctrinal sense, to describe the neoliberal form of economic globalization.[5]

Herman E. Daly argues that sometimes the terms internationalization and globalization are used interchangeably but there is a slight formal difference. The term "internationalization" refers to the importance of international trade, relations, treaties etc. International means between or among nations.

Historiography of early Islam

The historiography of early Islam refers to the study of the early origins of Islam based on a critical analysis, evaluation, and examination of authentic primary sources materials and the organization of these sources into a narrative timeline.

History of Muslim historians

Science of biography, science of hadith, and Isnad

Muslim historical traditions first began developing earlier from the earlier 6th century with the reconstruction of Muhammad's life following his death.Narratives regarding Muhammad and his companions from various sources, it was necessary to verify which sources were more reliable. In order to evaluate these sources, various methodologies were developed, such as the "science of biography", "science of hadith" and "Isnad" (chain of transmission). These methodologies were later applied to other historical figures in the Muslim world.

Ilm ar-Rijal (Arabic) is the "science of biography" especially as practiced in Islam, where it was first applied to the sira, the life of the prophet of Islam, Muhammad, and then the lives of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs who expanded Islamic dominance rapidly. Since validating the sayings of Muhammad is a major study ("Isnad"), accurate biography has always been of great interest to Muslim biographers, who accordingly became experts at sorting out facts from accusations, bias from evidence, etc., and were renowned throughout the known world for their honesty in recording history. Modern practices of scientific citation and historical method owe a great deal to the rigor of the Isnad tradition of early Muslims. The earliest surviving Islamic biography is Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah, written in the 8th century.

The "science of hadith" is the process that Muslim scholars use to evaluate hadith. The classification of Hadith into Sahih (sound), Hasan (good) and Da'if (weak) was firmly established by Ali ibn al-Madini (161-234 AH). Later, al-Madini's student Muhammad al-Bukhari (810-870) authored a collection that he believed contained only Sahih hadith, which is now known as the Sahih Bukhari. Al-Bukhari's historical methods of testing hadiths and isnads is seen as the beginning of the method of citation and a precursor to the scientific method which was developed by later Muslim scientists. I. A. Ahmad writes:[1]

"The vagueness of ancient historians about their sources stands in stark contrast to the insistence that scholars such as Bukhari and Muslim manifested in knowing every member in a chain of transmission and examining their reliability. They published their findings, which were then subjected to additional scrutiny by future scholars for consistency with each other and the Qur'an."

Other famous Muslim historians who studied the science of biography or science of hadith included Urwah ibn Zubayr (d. 712), Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 728), Ibn Ishaq (d. 761), al-Waqidi (745-822), Ibn Hisham (d. 834), al-Maqrizi (1364–1442), and Ibn Hajar Asqalani (1372-1449), among others.

Historiography, cultural history, and philosophy of history

The first detailed studies on the subject of historiography itself and the first critiques on historical methods appeared in the works of the Arab Muslim historian and historiographer Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), who is regarded as the father of historiography, cultural history,[2] and the philosophy of history, especially for his historiographical writings in the Muqaddimah (Latinized as Prolegomena) and Kitab al-Ibar (Book of Advice).[3] His Muqaddimah also laid the groundwork for the observation of the role of state, communication, propaganda and systematic bias in history,[4] and he discussed the rise and fall of civilizations.

Franz Rosenthal wrote in the History of Muslim Historiography:

"Muslim historiography has at all times been united by the closest ties with the general development of scholarship in Islam, and the position of historical knowledge in MusIim education has exercised a decisive influence upon the intellectual level of historicai writing....The Muslims achieved a definite advance beyond previous historical writing in the sociological understanding of history and the systematisation of historiography. The development of modern historical writing seems to have gained considerably in speed and substance through the utilization of a Muslim Literature which enabled western historians, from the seventeenth century on, to see a large section of the world through foreign eyes. The Muslim historiography helped indirectly and modestly to shape present day historical thinking."[5]

World history

Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (838-923) is known for writing a detailed and comprehensive chronicle of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern history in his History of the Prophets and Kings in 915. Abu al-Hasan 'Alī al-Mas'ūdī (896-956), known as the "Herodotus of the Arabs", was the first to combine history and scientific geography in a large-scale work, Muruj adh-dhahab wa ma'adin al-jawahir (The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems), a book on world history.

Until the 10th century, history most often meant political and military history, but this was not so with Persian historian Biruni (973-1048). In his Kitab fi Tahqiq ma l'il-Hind (Researches on India), he did not record political and military history in any detail, but wrote more on India's cultural, scientific, social and religious history.[6] Along with his Researches on India, Biruni discussed more on his idea of history in his chronological work The Chronology of the Ancient Nations.[6]

Islamic sources

Traditional Islamic sources for early Islamic history

- Qur'an
- Hadith
- Sira and Maghāzī
- Tafsir
- Fiqh
- Futūh
- Inscriptions
- Coinage
- Manuscripts

- Sana'a manuscripts
- Oxyrhynchus papyri (eg PERF 558)
- Qur'an collections
- Archaeological records
- Non-Muslim sources

7th Century Islamic sources

692 - Qur'anic Mosaic on the Dome of the Rock.

The Book of Sulaym ibn Qays; by Sulaym ibn Qays(death: 75-95 AH (694-714)). This is a collection of Hadith and historical reports from 1st Century of the Islamic calendar. Sulaym ibn Qays is the first Shia author in "al-Fihrist" of Ibn al-Nadim. Also al-Mas'udi refers to this book. A manuscript of the book survived from the early 10th CE. While its the earliest available book of Shia Islam, some Shia scholars are dubious about the authenticity of some part of it.

7th Century non-Islamic sources

There are numerous early references to Islam in non-Islamic sources, many have been collected in historiographer Robert G. Hoyland's compilation Seeing Islam As Others Saw It. One of the first books to analyze these works was Hagarism authored by Michael Cook and Patricia Crone. Hagarism concludes that looking at the early non-Islamic sources provides a much different and more accurate picture of early Islamic history than the later Islamic sources do, although its thesis has little acceptance. For some, the date of composition is controversial. Some provide an account of early Islam which significantly contradicts the traditional Islamic accounts of two centuries later.

- 634 Doctrina Iacobi
- 636 Fragment on the Arab Conquests
- 639 Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem
- 640 Thomas the Presbyter
- 640 Homily on the Child Saints of Babylon
- 642 PERF 558
- 644 Coptic Apocalypse of Pseudo-Shenute
- 648 Life of Gabriel of Qartmin
- 650 Fredegar
- 655 Pope Martin I
- 659 Isho'yahb III of Adiabene
- 660 Sebeos, Bishop of the Bagratunis
- 660 A Chronicler of Khuzistan
- 662 Maximus the Confessor
- 665 Benjamin I
- 670 Arculf, a Pilgrim
- 676 The Synod of 676
- 680 George of Resh'aina
- 680 The Secrets of Rabbi Simon ben Yohai
- 680 Bundahishn
- 681 Trophies of Damascus
- 687 Athanasius of Balad, Patriarch of Antioch

- 687 John bar Penkaye
- 690 Syriac Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius
- 692 Syriac Apocalypse of Pseudo-Ephraem
- 694 John of Nikiu
- 697 Anti-Jewish Polemicists

7th Century ambiguous sources

1. 644 - Inscription marking the death of Umar, Saudi Arabia

Famous Muslim historians

Urwah ibn Zubayr (d. 712)
Hadith of Umar's speech of forbidding Mut'ah

Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri (d. 742)

Hadith of Umar's speech of forbidding Mut'ah

Hadith of prohibition of Mut'ah at Khaybar

Ibn Ishaq (d. 761)

Sirah Rasul Allah

Imam Malik (d. 796)

Al-Muwatta

Al-Waqidi (745-822)

Book of History and Campaigns

Ali ibn al-Madini (777-850)

The Book of Knowledge about the Companions

Ibn Hisham (d. 834)

Sirah Rasul Allah

Dhul-Nun al-Misri (d. 859)

Muhammad al-Bukhari (810-870)

Sahih Bukhari

Muslim b. al-Hajjaj (d. 875)

Sahih Muslim

Ibn Majah (d. 886)

Sunan Ibn Majah

Abu Da'ud (d. 888)

Sunan Abi Da'ud

Al-Tirmidhi (d. 892)

Sunan al-Tirmidhi

Abu al-Hasan 'Alī al-Mas'ūdī (896-956)

Muruj adh-dhahab wa ma'adin al-jawahir (The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems) (947)

Ibn Wahshiyya (c. 904)

Nabataean Agriculture

Kitab Shawq al-Mustaham

Al-Nasa'i (d. 915)

Sunan al-Sughra

Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (838-923)

History of the Prophets and Kings

Tafsir al-Tabari

Al-Baladhuri (d. 892)

Kitab Futuh al-Buldan

Genealogies of the Nobles

Hakim al-Nishaburi (d. 1014)

Al-Mustadrak alaa al-Sahihain

Abū Rayhān al-Bīrūnī (973-1048)

Indica

History of Mahmud of Ghazni and his father

History of Khawarazm

Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi (13th century)

Ibn Abi Zar (d. 1310/1320)

Rawd al-Qirtas

Al-Dhahabi (1274-1348)

Major History of Islam

Talkhis al-Mustadrak

Tadhkirat al-huffaz

Al-Kamal fi ma`rifat al-rijal

Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406)

Muqaddimah (1377)

Kitab al-Ibar

Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (1372-1449)

Fath al-Bari

Tahdhib al-Tahdhib

Finding the Truth in Judging the Companinons

Bulugh al-Maram

Modern secular scholarship

The earliest Western scholarship on Islam tended to be Christian and Jewish translators and commentators. They translated the easily available Sunni texts from Arabic into European languages including German, Italian, French, or English, then summarized and commented in a fashion that was often hostile to Islam. Notable Christian scholars include:

- William Muir (1819–1905)
- Reinhart Dozy (1820–1883) "Die Israeliten zu Mecca" (1864)
- David Samuel Margoliouth (1858–1940)
- William St. Clair Tisdall (1859–1928)
- Leone Caetani (1869–1935)
- Alphonse Mingana (1878–1937)

All these scholars worked in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Another pioneer of Islamic studies, Abraham Geiger (1810–1874), was a prominent Jewish rabbi and approached Islam from that standpoint in his "Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?" (1833). Geiger's themes were continued in Rabbi Abraham I. Katsh's "Judaism and the Koran" (1962)[9]

Other scholars, notably those in the German tradition, took a more neutral view. The late 19th century scholar Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) is a prime example. They also started, cautiously, to question the truth of the Arabic texts. They took a source critical approach, trying to sort the Islamic texts into elements to be accepted as historically true, and elements to be discarded as polemic or pious fiction. These scholars might include:

- Michael Jan de Goeje (1836–1909)
- Theodor Nöldeke (1836–1930)
- Ignaz Goldziher (1850–1921)
- Henri Lammens (1862–1937)
- Arthur Jeffery (1892–1959)
- H. A. R. Gibb (1895–1971)
- Joseph Schacht (1902–1969)
- Montgomery Watt (1909–2006)

In the 1970s, what has been described as a "wave of sceptical scholars" (Donner 1998 p. 23) challenged a great deal of the received wisdom in Islamic studies. They argued that the Islamic historical tradition had been greatly corrupted in transmission. They tried to correct or reconstruct the early history of Islam from other, presumably more reliable, sources such as coins, inscriptions, and non-Islamic sources. The oldest of this group was John Wansbrough (1928-2002). Wansbrough's works were widely noted, but perhaps not widely read. Donner (1998) says:

Wansbrough's awkward prose style, diffuse organization, and tendency to rely on suggestive implication rather than tight argument (qualities not found in his other published works) have elicited exasperated comment from many reviewers. (Donner 1998 p. 38)

Wansbrough's scepticism influenced a number of younger scholars, including:

- Martin Hinds (1941–1988)
- Patricia Crone (b. 1945)
- Michael Cook

In 1977, Crone and Cook published Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World, which argued that the early history of Islam is a myth, generated after the conquests of Egypt, Syria, and Persia to prop up the new Arab regimes in those lands and give them a solid ideological foundation. According to their theory the Qur'an was composed later, rather than early, and the Arab conquests may have been the cause, rather than the consequence, of Islam. The main evidence adduced for this thesis was based upon a contemporary body of non-Muslim sources to many early Islamic events. If such events could not be supported by outside evidence, then (according to Crone and Cook) they should be dismissed as myth.

Crone and Cook's more recent work has involved intense scrutiny of early Islamic sources, but not total rejection of those sources. (See, for instance, Crone's 1987 publications, Roman, Provincial, and Islamic Law and Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam, both of which assume the standard outline of early Islamic history while questioning certain aspects of it; also Cook's 2001 Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought, which also cites early Islamic sources as authoritative.) One writer claims that they have in fact disavowed the work ([1] [2]) but in the absence of direct comment from Crone and Cook, it is difficult to know what to make of his claims.[opinion needs balancing]

In 1972 a cache of ancient Qur'ans in a mosque in Sana'a, Yemen was discovered. The German scholar Gerd R. Puin has been investigating these Qur'an fragments for years. His research team made 35,000 microfilm photographs of the manuscripts, which he dated to early part of the 8th century. Puin has not published the entirety of his work, but noted unconventional verse orderings, minor textual variations, and rare styles of orthography. He also suggested that some of the parchments were palimpsests which had been reused. Puin believed that this implied an evolving text as opposed to a fixed one.[10]

Contemporary scholars have begun to turn to the study of the Islamic sources in a sceptical mood. They tend to use the histories rather than the hadith, and to analyze the histories in terms of the tribal and political affiliations of the

narrators (if that can be established), thus making it easier to guess in which direction the material might have been slanted. Notable scholars include:

- Fred M. Donner
- Wilferd Madelung
- Gerald Hawting
- Jonathan Berkey
- Andrew Rippin
- G.H.A Juynboll

Bridging the divide

A few scholars have managed to bridge the divide between Islamic and Western-style secular scholarship.[citation needed] They have completed both Islamic and Western academic training.

- Fazlur Rahman
- Suliman Bashear
- Javed Ahmed Ghamidi

Sunni Islam

Sunni Islam is the largest denomination of Islam. Sunni Islam is also referred to as Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'h (Arabic: أهل السنة والجماعة) (people of the example (of Muhammad) and the community), or Ahl as-Sunnah (Arabic: أهل السنة) for short. The word Sunni comes from the word Sunnah (Arabic : سنة), which means the words and actions [1] or example of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.

Sunni schools of law (Madhhab)

Islamic law is known as the Shari'ah. The Shari'ah is based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and those who respective founders are:

- Hanafi School (founded by Abu Hanifa)

Abu Hanifa (d. 767), was the founder of the Hanafihi mom school. He was born circa 702 in Kufa, Iraq.[2][3] Muslims of Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Muslim areas Southern Russia, The Caucasus, parts of The Balkans,Iraq and Turkey follow this school.

- Maliki School (founded by Malik ibn Anas)

Malik ibn Anas(d. 795) developed his ideas in Medina, where he knew some of the last surviving companions of the Prophet or their immediate descendents. His doctrine is recorded in the Muwatta which has been adopted by most Muslims of Africa except in Lower Egypt, Zanzibar and South Africa. The Maliki legal school is the branch of Sunni that dominates most of the Muslim areas of Africa, except Egypt and the Horn of Africa.

- Shafi'i School (founded by Muhammad ibn Idris ash-Shafi`i)

Al-Shafi'i (d. 820) was considered a moderate in most areas. He taught in Iraq and then in Egypt. Muslims in Indonesia, Lower Egypt, Malaysia, Singapore, Somalia, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Yemen follow this school. Al-Shafi'i placed great emphasis on the Sunnah of the Prophet, as embodied in the Hadith, as a source of the Shari'ah.

- Hanbali School (founded by Ahmad bin Hanbal)

Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855) was born in Baghdad. He learned extensively from al-Shafi'i. Despite persecution, he held to the doctrine that the Qur'an was uncreated. This school of law is followed primarily in the Arabian Peninsula.

These four schools are somewhat different from each other, but Sunni Muslims generally consider them all equally valid. There are other Sunni schools of law. However, many are followed by only small numbers of people and are relatively unknown due to the popularity of the four major schools; also, many have died out or were not sufficiently recorded by their followers to survive.

Interpreting the Shari'ah to derive specific rulings (such as how to pray) is known as fiqh, which literally means understanding. A madhhab is a particular tradition of interpreting fiqh. These schools focus on specific evidence (Shafi'i and Hanbali) or general principles (Hanafi and Maliki) derived from specific evidences. The schools were started by eminent Muslim scholars in the first four centuries of Islam. As these schools represent clearly spelled out methodologies for interpreting the Shari'aa, there has been little change in the methodology per se. However, as the social and economic environment changes, new fiqh rulings are being made. For example, when tobacco appeared it was declared as 'disliked' because of its smell. When medical information showed that smoking was dangerous, that ruling was changed to 'forbidden'.[citation needed] Current fiqh issues include things. like downloading pirated software and cloning. The consensus is that the Shari'ah does not change but fiqh rulings change all the time.

A madhhab is not to be confused with a religious sect. There may be scholars representing all four madhhabs living in larger Muslim communities, and it is up to those who consult them to decide which school they prefer.

Many Sunnis advocate that a Muslim should choose a single madhhab and follow it in all matters. However, rulings from another madhhab are considered acceptable as dispensations (rukhsa) in exceptional circumstances. Some Sunnis, however, do not follow any madhhab,. Indeed, some Salafis reject strict adherence to any particular school of thought, preferring to use the Qur'an and the Sunnah alone as the primary sources of Islamic law.

Sunni theological traditions

Some Islamic scholars faced questions that they felt were not specifically answered in the Qur'an, especially questions with regard to philosophical conundra like the nature of God, the existence of human free will, or the eternal existence of the Qur'an. Various schools of theology and philosophy developed to answer these questions, each claiming to be true to the Qur'an and the Muslim tradition (sunnah). Among Sunnites, the following were the dominant traditions:

Ash'ari, founded by Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari (873–935). This theology was embraced by Muslim scholars such as al-Ghazali.

Ash'ariyyah theology stresses divine revelation over human reason. Ethics, they say, cannot be derived from human reason: God's commands, as revealed in the Qur'an and the practice of Muhammad and his companions (the sunnah, as recorded in the traditions, or hadith), are the source of all morality.

Regarding the nature of God and the divine attributes, the Ash'ari rejected the Mu'tazilite position that all Qur'anic references to God as having physical attributes (that is, a body) were metaphorical.[4] Ash'aris insisted that these attributes were "true", since the Qur'an could not be in error, but that they were not to be understood as implying a crude anthropomorphism.

Ash'aris tend to stress divine omnipotence over human free will. They believe that the Qur'an is eternal and uncreated.

Maturidiyyah, founded by Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 944). Maturidiyyah was a minority tradition until it was accepted by the Turkish tribes of Central Asia (previously they had been Ashari and followers of the Shafi school,[citation needed] it was only later on migration into Anatolia that they became Hanafi and followers of the Maturidi creed[citation needed]). One of the tribes, the Seljuk Turks, migrated to Turkey, where later the Ottoman Empire was established.[5] Their preferred school of law achieved a new prominence throughout their whole empire although it continued to be followed almost exclusively by followers of the Hanafi school while followers of the

Shafi, Maliki, and Hanbali schools within the empire followed the Ashari school. Thus, wherever can be found Hanafi followers, there can be found the Maturidi creed.

Maturidiyyah argue that knowledge of God's existence can be derived through reason.

Athariyyah (meaning Textualist) or Hanbali. No specific founder, but Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal played a key historic role in keeping this school alive.

This school differs with the Ash'ariyyah in understanding the names and attributes of God, but rather affirms all of God's names and attributes as they are found in the Qur'an and Sunnah (prophetic traditions), with the disclaimer that the "how" of the attribute is not known. They say that God is as He described Himself "in a way befitting of His majesty." Thus, regarding verses where God is described as having a yad (hand) or wajh (face), the textualists say that God is exactly as He described himself in a way befitting of His majesty, without inquiring as to the "how" of these attributes.

The Athariyyah still believe that God does not resemble His creation in any way, as this is also found in the texts. Thus, in the Athari creed, it is still prohibited to imagine an image of God in any way. The Athariyyah say that the yad" (hand) of God is "unlike any other yad" (since God does not resemble His creation in any way) and prohibit imagining what God would be like, even though this attribute of a yad is still affirmed.

This is the view of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal who said: "The hadiths (regarding the attributes of Allah) should be left as they are... We affirm them, and we do not make any similitude for them. This is what has been agreed upon by the scholars."[6

SUNNI VIEW OF HADITH

The Qur'an as we have it today was compiled by Muhammad's companions (Sahaba) in approximately 650, and is accepted by all Muslim denominations. However, there were many matters of belief and daily life that were not directly prescribed in the Qur'an, but were actions that were observed by the prophet and the community. Later generations sought out oral traditions regarding the early history of Islam, and the practice of Muhammad and his first followers, and wrote them down so that they might be preserved. These recorded oral traditions are called hadith. Muslim scholars sifted through the hadith and evaluated the chain of narration of each tradition, scrutinizing the trustworthiness of the narrators and judging the strength of each hadith accordingly. Most Sunni accept the hadith collections of Bukhari and Muslim as the most authentic (sahih, or correct), and grant a lesser status to the collections of other recorders. There are, however, four other collections of hadith that are also held in particular reverence by Sunni Muslims, making a total of six(6):

- Sahih al-Bukhari
- Sahih Muslim
- Sunan an-Nasa'ii
- Sunan Abu Dawud
- Sunan at-Tirmidhi
- Sunan ibn Majah

There are also other collections of hadith which, although less well-known, are still thought to contain many authentic hadith and are frequently used by specialists. Examples of these collections include:

- Muwatta of Imam Malik
- Musnad of Ahmad ibn Hanbal
- Sahih Ibn Khuzaima
- Sahih Ibn Hibban
- Mustadrak of Al Haakim

- Musannaf of Abd al-Razzaq

Shi'a Islam

Shia Islam (Arabic: شيعة Shīʿah, sometimes Shi'a or Shi'ite), is the second largest denomination of Islam, after Sunni Islam. Shīʿah Muslims, though a minority in the Muslim world, constitute the majority of the populations in Iran, Azerbaijan, Bahrain and Iraq, as well as a plurality in Lebanon and Kuwait.

Shi'a Muslims attribute themselves to the Qur'an and teachings of the final Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, and in contrast to other Muslims, believe that his family, the Ahl al-Bayt (the People of the House), including his descendants known as Imams, have special spiritual and political rule over the community[1] and believe that Ali ibn Abi Talib, Muhammad's cousin and husband of his daughter, Fatimah, was the first of these Imams and was the rightful successor to Muhammad who was appointed by God as his prophet, and thus reject the legitimacy of the first three Rashidun caliphs.[2]

The Shi'a Islamic faith is vast and inclusive of many different groups. There are various Shi'a theological beliefs, schools of jurisprudence, philosophical beliefs, and spiritual movements. Shi'a Islam embodies a completely independent system of religious interpretation and political authority in the Muslim world. The Shi'a identity emerged soon after the death of Muhammad, and Shi'a theology was formulated in the second century[3] and the first Shi'a governments and societies were established by the end of the third century.

Shi'a Islam is divided into three branches. The largest and best known are the Twelver (اثنا‌عشرية iṯnāʿašariyya), named after their adherence to the Twelve Imams. They form a majority of the population in Iran, Azerbaijan, Bahrain and Iraq. The term Shi'a often refers to Twelver Shi'a only. Other smaller branches include the Ismaili and Zaidi, who dispute the Twelver lineage of Imams and beliefs.[4]

Etymology

Shīʿah, collectively, or Shīʿī, singularly, means follower. It has been used in Qur'an in singular or plural forms with both positive[Qur'an 37:83] and negative[Qur'an 54:51] connotations.

"Shia" is the short form of the historic phrase šīʿat ʿAlī (شيعة علي), meaning "the followers of Ali" or "the faction of Ali". Both Shia and Sunni sources trace the term to the years preceding the death of Muhammad.

Origin

There are two theories about the emergence of Shia. One of them emphasizes the political struggle about the succession of Muhammad after his death and especially during the First Fitna.[5] According to this theory, early in the history of Islam, the Shīa were a political faction (party of 'Alī) that supported caliphate of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and, later, of his descendants. Starting as a political faction, this group gradually developed into a religious movement. [6]

The other one emphasizes on different interpretation of Islam which led to different understanding about the role of caliphs and ulamas. Hossein Nasr has quoted:

Shi'ism was not brought into existence only by the question of the political succession to Muhammad as so many Western works claim (although this question was of course of great importance). The problem of political succession may be said to be the element that crystallized the Shi'ites into a distinct group, and political suppression in later periods, especially the martyrdom of Imam Husayn-upon whom be peace-only accentuated this tendency of the Shi'ites to see themselves as a separate community within the Islamic world. The principal cause of the coming into being of Shi'ism, however, lies in the fact that this possibility existed within the Islamic revelation itself and so had to be realized. Inasmuch as there were exoteric [Zaheri] and esoteric [Bateni] interpretations from the very beginning, from which developed the schools (madhhab) of the Sharia and Sufism in the Sunni world, there also had to be an interpretation of Islam which would combine these elements in a single whole. This possibility was realized in Shi'ism, for which the Imam is the person in whom these two aspects of traditional authority are united and in whom the religious life is marked by a sense of tragedy and martyrdom... Hence the question which arose was not so much who should be the successor of Muhammad as what the function and qualifications of such a person would be.[7]

Demographics

As stated above, an estimate of approximately 10-15% of the world's Muslims are Shi'a, which corresponds to about 130-190 million Shi'a Muslims worldwide.[8] Shi'a Muslims, though a minority in the Muslim world, constitute the majority of the populations in Iran, Azerbaijan, Bahrain and Iraq.

Shi'a Muslims also constitute over 35% of the population in Lebanon,[9] over 45% of the population in Yemen,[10] over 35% of the population in Kuwait,[11] 20-25% of the population (primarily Alevi) in Turkey,[12] 20% (primarily Bektashi) of the population in Albania,[13] 20% of the population in Pakistan and 18% of population in Afghanistan. They also make up at least 15% of the Muslim populations in India, the UAE, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Serbia/Montenegro & Kosovo.

Significant Shi'a communities exist on the coastal regions of West Sumatra and Aceh in Indonesia (see Tabuik). The Shi'a presence is negligible elsewhere in Southeast Asia, where Muslims are predominantly Shafi'i Sunnis, though there are almost a million Shi'a Muslims in Indonesia, mainly converts.

A significant syncretic Shi'a minority is present in Nigeria, centered around the state of Kano (see Shia in Nigeria). East Africa holds several populations of Ismaili Shia, primarily descendants of immigrants from South Asia during the colonial period, such as the Khoja.

According to Shi'a Muslim, one of the lingering problems in estimating Shi'a population is that unless Shi'a form a significant minority in a Muslim country, the entire population is often listed as Sunni. The reverse, however, has not held true, which may contribute to imprecise estimates of the size of each sect. For example, the 1926 rise of the House of Saud in Arabia brought official discrimination against Shi'a.

Concept of Imamah