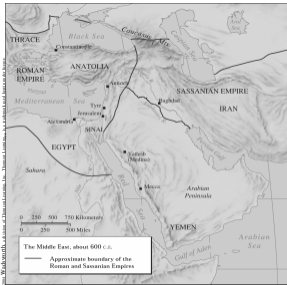


7

Islam and Byzantium

The Middle East in the Time of Muhammad



The Rise of Islam

- ❏ Arabs were a Semitic-speaking people
- ❏ Bedouins – nomadic peoples from the northern part of the peninsula
- ❏ Organized into tribes and ruled by a Sheikh
 - Majlis -- council of elders who selected the Sheikh
- ❏ Were polytheistic; supreme god known as Allah
- ❏ No priesthood; Allah symbolized by a sacred stone
 - All worshiped a massive black meteorite enshrined in the Ka'aba in Mecca

The Role of Muhammad (570-632)

- ❏ Born to a merchant family but orphaned at age six
 - Grew up to be a caravan manager
 - Married his employer, Khadija
- ❏ Disturbed about the gap between the Bedouin values and the culture of the affluent commercial elites
 - During meditation experiences visions and heard a voice
 - The angel Gabriel commanded Muhammad to preach the revelations that he would be given
- ❏ Hegira (Hijrah), 622, Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Yathrib (Medina)
 - Forms the first Muslim community (the Umma)
 - Returns to Mecca with an army and conquers it
 - Visit to the Ka'aba, 630
 - Declared it a sacred shrine and ordered the destruction of the idols of the traditional faith

Teachings of Muhammad

- ❏ Monotheistic; offers afterlife
- ❏ Koran (recitation)
- ❏ Five Pillars of Faith
 - Belief in Allah and Muhammad as his Prophet
 - Prayer five times a day and public prayer on Friday at noon
 - Observance of Ramadan, fasting from dawn to sunset
 - Pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj)
 - Giving alms to the poor (zakat)
- ❏ Not just a set of beliefs, but a way of life
- ❏ Ulama (Muslim scholars)
 - Shari'ah (law code)
 - Hadith (collection of saying from the Prophet)
- ❏ Strict behavioral requirements

The Arab Empire and Its Successors

- ❏ Abu Bakr, Muhammad's father-in-law succeeds Muhammad
- ❏ Creation of an Empire
 - After Arabs united, jihad directed at neighboring peoples
 - Possible explanations for rapid expansion
 - Prolonged drought on the Arabian peninsula
 - Desire of Islam's leaders to channel the energies of their new converts
 - Planned by the ruling elites of Mecca to extend their trade routes and bring surplus-producing regions under their control
 - Administration was generally tolerant

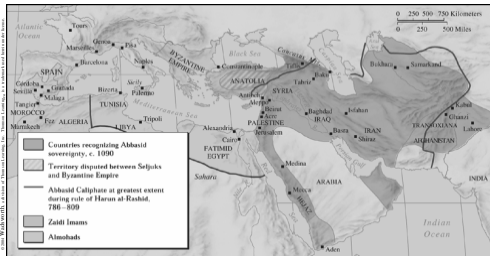
The Expansion of Islam



Succession Problems and the Rise of The Umayyads (661-750)

- ❏ Challenge to Abu Bakr's selection as first caliph
- ❏ Umar succeeded Abu Bakr
- ❏ Uthman succeeded Umar in 656, but was assassinated
- ❏ Muhammad Ali (656-661), assassinated in 661
- ❏ Mu'awiyah became caliph in 661
 - Made his own family, the Umayyads, hereditary rulers
- ❏ Beginning of the eighth century new attacks launched by Arab armies
 - Tariq, 710, crossed into Spain
 - Battle of Tours, 732
- ❏ Constantinople attacked and Muslim fleet defeated, 717
- ❏ Succession Problems
 - Shi'ites and Sunnis
 - Revolt led by Abu al-Abbas in 750 leads to overthrow of Umayyads and establishment of Abbasid dynasty

The Abbasid Caliphate at the Height of Its Power



The Abbasids (750-1258)

- ❏ Opened all offices to all Muslims (whether Arab or non-Arab)
- ❏ Capital at Baghdad
- ❏ Reign of Harun al-Rashid (786-809) often called the golden age
- ❏ Ma'mun (813-833), son of Harun al-Rashid
 - Patron of learning
 - Trade Caliphs took on more regal rule and life
 - Advised by a council, *diwan*, with a *vizier* as prime minister
- ❏ Civil war between Amin and al-Ma'mun after Harun's death
- ❏ Disintegration

Seljuk Turks

- ❏ Nomadic people from central Asia
- ❏ Capture Baghdad (1055); leader took the title of sultan, "holder of power"
- ❏ Battle of Manzikert, 1071, Turks took over most of Anatolia

Turkish Occupation of Anatolia



The Crusades

- ❏ Byzantine emperor Alexius I, 1096, asked for help against the Turks; used the Holy Land as the excuse
- ❏ Saladin (1174-1193) controlled Egypt and Syria
 - Invaded Jerusalem in 1187 and destroyed the Christian forces
- ❏ The last Christian stronghold, Acre, fell in 1291

The Mongols

- ❏ Pastoral people out of the Gobi Desert to seize Persia and Mesopotamia
- ❏ Found it difficult to adjust to settled conditions of the Middle East
- ❏ When they conquered cities, they:
 - Wiped out whole populations (even pets)
 - Razed cities
 - Destroyed agricultural works (irrigation dams, etc)
 - Destroyed the economy
- ❏ Elites converted to Islam
- ❏ By 14th century began to split into separate kingdoms and then disintegrate
- ❏ The Ottoman Turks now emerged on the Anatolian Peninsula

Islamic Civilization

- ❏ The Wealth of Araby: Trade and Cities in the Middle East
 - Trade flourished during this period
 - Development of banking, currency, and letters of credit
 - Urbanization
 - Several centers flourished throughout this period
 - Exquisite palaces built for the caliph and great mosques
 - Eating habits varied according to economic class

Islamic Society

- ❏ All equal in the eyes of Allah
- ❏ Upper class
 - Senior officials, tribal elites, wealthiest merchants
- ❏ Farmland eventually in the hands of the wealthy
- ❏ Slavery: came from non-Muslim peoples
- ❏ Women
 - To be treated with respect
 - Had right to own and inherit property
 - Polygamy permitted
 - Right of divorce restricted to the husband
 - Adultery and homosexuality strictly forbidden
 - Women were cloistered in their homes nor permitted social contacts with males outside their own family
 - Covering all parts of the body common in urban areas

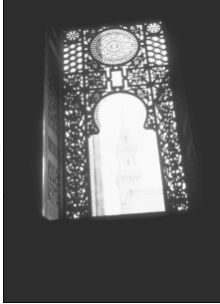
Culture of Islam

- ❏ Philosophy and science
 - The Arab Empire was responsible for preserving the spreading ideas and achievements of ancient civilizations
 - Ibn Rushd (Averroës) helped reintroduce Europe to Greek works
 - Manufacturing of paper begin in the eighth century
 - Adopted numerical system from India; Iranian system of Algebra (al-jabr); set up observatory to study the stars; were aware that the earth is round
 - Advanced medicine using Galen's (c. 180-200) ancient texts
 - Ibn Sina (Avecinna), 980-1037, compiled medical encyclopedia
- ❏ Islamic Literature
 - Koran was considered the greatest literary work
 - Omar Khayyam, Rubaiyat
 - The Tales from 1001 Nights
 - Rumi in the 13th century adopted beliefs of Sufism to his poetry
 - al-Mus'udi (b. 896) was the first great Islamic historian

Islamic Art and Architecture

- ❏ Blend of Arab, Turkish, and Persian traditions
- ❏ Mosques
 - Great Mosque of Samarra is the largest mosque
 - Mosque of Córdoba
- ❏ Palaces
 - Alhambra in Spain
- ❏ Woolen rugs
 - Young girls learned the technique from their mothers
 - Eventually manufactured by professional artisans
- ❏ Decorations on all forms of Islamic art were Arabic script, plant and figurative motifs, geometrical designs
- ❏ No representation of the Prophet Muhammad was made
 - Muhammad warned against trying to imitate God
 - After the Dome of the Rock, there is no figurative representations in religious art

Example of Middle Eastern Islamic Ironwork on Window



Wailing Wall in Jerusalem



The Byzantine Empire

- ☞ The Reign of Justinian (527 – 565)
 - Well trained and determined to reestablish the Roman Empire over the entire Mediterranean world
 - Belisarius defeated the Vandals and the Ostrogoths
 - His new empire fell within three years of his death
- The Codification of Roman Law
 - Justinian's most lasting contribution
 - Was the basis of imperial law in the east until 1453
 - Was the basis of the European legal system
- Life in Constantinople: The Emperor's Building Program
 - Rebuilt Constantinople after revolt of 532
 - City important as chief port of exchange of goods from East to West
 - Public works, churches
 - Royal palace, Hagia Sophia, Hippodrome

From Eastern Roman to Byzantine Empire

- ❏ Problems after Justinian's death
- ❏ Developed a new system of defense
 - New administrative unit, the theme
 - Combined civilian and military offices
- ❏ Most serious challenge to the east was Islam
- ❏ Problems in the Balkans and the Bulgars
- ❏ Beginning of eighth century saw it as just an eastern Mediterranean state
- ❏ Now had unique civilization of its own: Byzantine

The Byzantine Empire in the Eighth Century

- ❏ Greek was the language of the empire
- ❏ Christianity was the religion of the empire
- ❏ Widespread use of icons led to the iconoclastic controversy
 - Leo III outlawed the use of icons
 - The Roman Popes opposed the edits
- ❏ Will move both sides toward the separation between Roman Catholicism and Greek Orthodoxy
- ❏ Emperor was absolute and thought to be chosen by God
- ❏ West owed much to the Byzantine Empire

The Zenith of Byzantine Civilization

- ❏ In the seventh and eighth centuries lost much of its territory
- ❏ By 750 only Asia Minor, lands in the Balkans and the southern coast of Italy remained
- ❏ Revival under Michael III (842-867)
 - Reforms and noticeable intellectual renewal
 - Problems
 - Religious controversy over revised Nicene Creed

The Macedonian Dynasty (867 – 1056)

- ❏ Remarkable number of achievements
- ❏ Cultural influence
- ❏ Period of capable rulers and strong civil service

New Challenges to the Byzantine Empire

- ❏ After the Macedonian dynasty, empire has series of incompetent rulers
- ❏ Problem of growing division between the Roman Catholic church and the Greek Orthodox church
 - Eastern Orthodox church would not accept the Pope's claim as the sole head of the church
 - Pope Leo IX and Patriarch Michael Cerularius excommunicated each other
- ❏ Renewed external threats
- ❏ A new dynasty, the Comneni, will revive the empire
- ❏ Impact of the Crusades
 - Problems with the crusaders
 - Will no longer be a Mediterranean power

Discussion Questions

- ❏ Describe Arabic culture and society prior to the rise of Islam. To what elements in Arabic society did Islam most appeal?
- ❏ How would you explain Islamic expansion in the centuries after Muhammad's death?
- ❏ What were the distinctive features of Byzantine civilization?
- ❏ What new challenges did the Byzantium empire face during the 10th and 11th centuries?
