

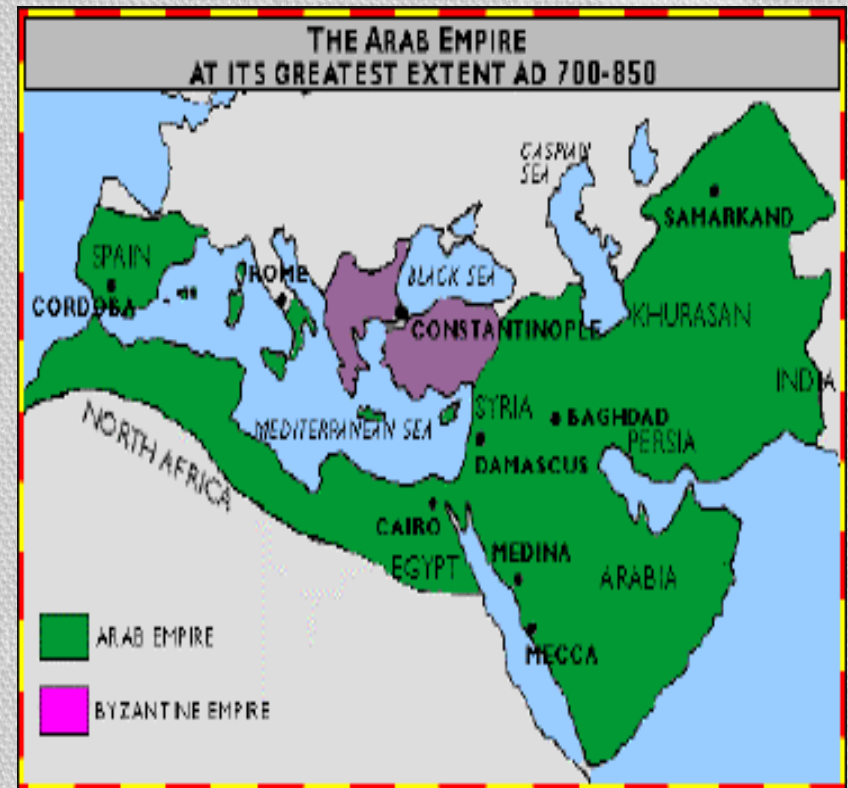


THE ARAB EMPIRE

AP World History Notes
Chapter 11

The Arab Empire

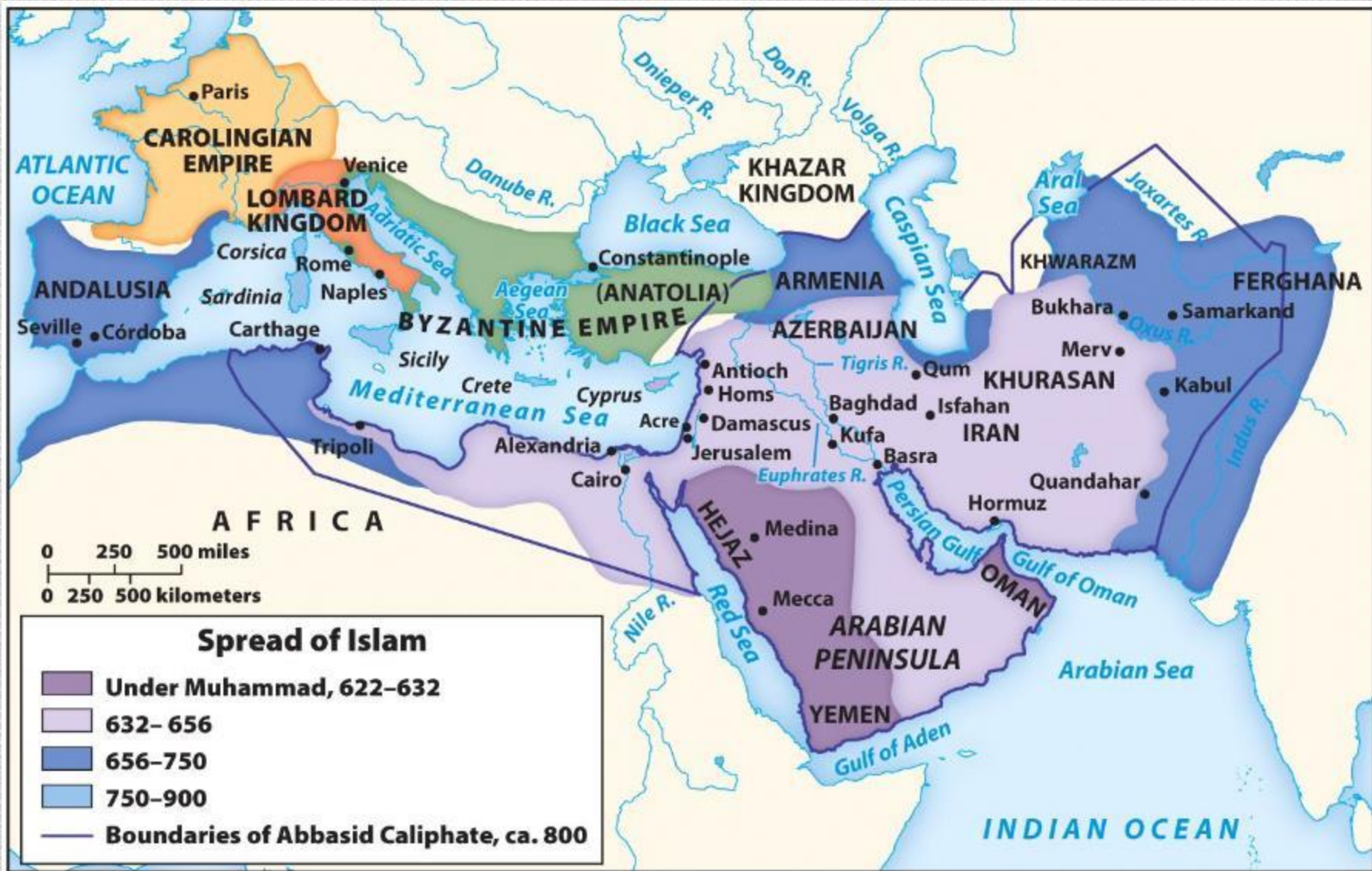
- Stretched from Spain to India
- Extended to areas in Europe, Asia, and Africa
- Encompassed all or part of the following civilizations:
 - Egyptian, Roman/Byzantine, Persian, Mesopotamian, and Indian
- With the expansion of the Arab Empire came the spread of:
 - Islamic faith
 - Arabic language
 - Culture of Arabia



War and Conquest



- 650s = Arab forces defeated the Persian Empire and took over about half of Byzantium's territories
 - Both had been weak for a long time due to fighting with each other
- Early 700s = Arab forces swept through North Africa, conquered Spain, and attacked southern France
- Early 700s = Arab forces reached the Indus River and took over some major oases towns in Central Asia



Map 11.1 The Arab Empire and the Initial Expansion of Islam, 622–900 C.E.
 Chapter 11, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources*, First Edition
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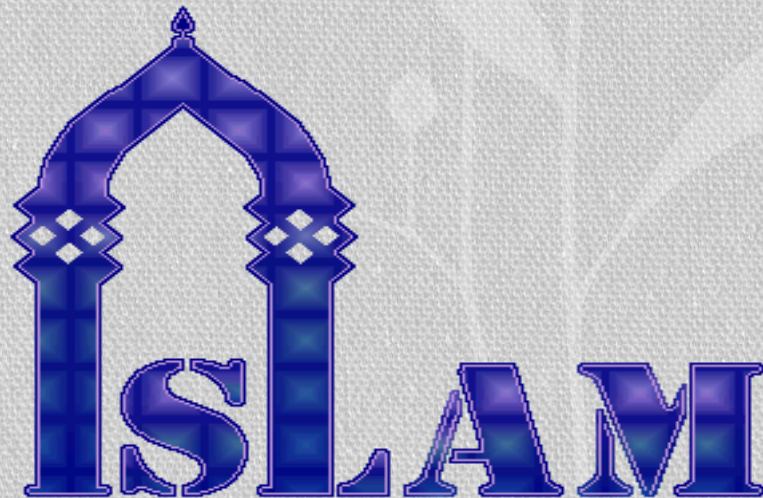
War and Conquest: Motives

- Merchants wanted access to profitable trade routes and wealthy agricultural regions
- Individuals wanted to gain wealth and social promotion
- Expansion provided a common task for the Islamic community (*umma*) that was on the verge of falling apart after Muhammad's death
- Spread of Muslim faith and righteous government across the world



War and Conquest

- Conversion to Islam not forced on anyone in the Arab Empire
 - In fact: Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians all considered “people of the book” and were given the status of *dhimmis* (protected subjects)
- In the 400s years following Muhammad’s death, millions of individuals and many whole societies within the Arab Empire adopted Islam



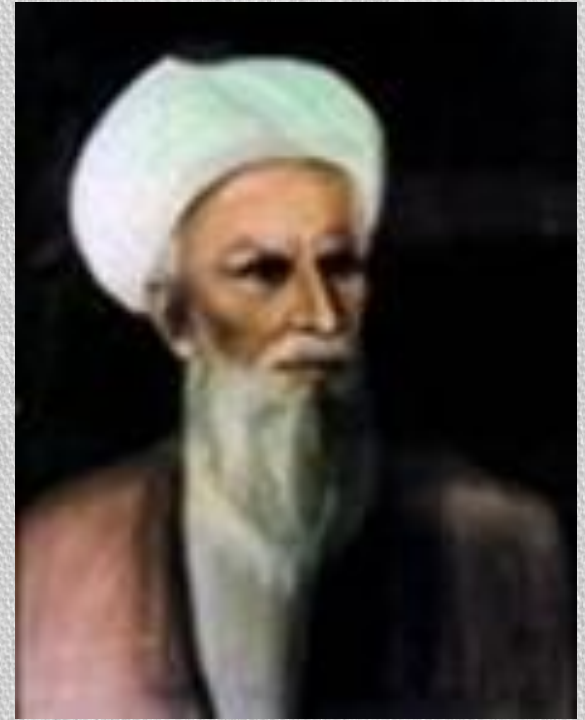
Widespread Conversion to Islam – WHY?

- Not such a dramatic change for many Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians
 - Already familiar with ideas of: monotheism, heaven, hell, final judgment, divine revelation, fasting, ritual prayer, etc.
- Islam sponsored by a powerful state → Wealth and prestige of Arab Empire attracted people
- Successful conquest called into question the power of old gods; perhaps Allah really is all-powerful
- Many incentives for converting
 - Ex: Didn't have to pay *jizya* = tax on non-Muslims
 - Ex: Could hold official positions; social mobility



Divisions and Controversies

- The “Rightly Guided Caliphs” (632 – 661)
 - First 4 caliphs after Muhammad
 - (Caliph = the political and religious leader of the Islamic community)
 - Close companions of Muhammad
 - Chosen by Muslim elders of Medina
- Division surfaced almost immediately
- Sunni vs. Shia Muslims



Abu Bakr
The 1st Rightly
Guided Caliph

Sunnis vs. Shi'ites



- Believe the caliph is the rightful political and military leader of Islam
- Believe the caliph should be chosen by the Islamic community
- Believe the caliph can be any devout Muslim
- Religious authority comes from the larger Islamic community; particularly *ulama* = religious scholars

- Believe that the leader of the Islamic community should be a blood descendant/relative of Muhammad
- Religious authority comes from prayer leaders called *imams*
- *Imams* = only ones that can correctly interpret divine revelations and Islamic law

Islamic Caliphs



- As the Arab Empire grew, caliphs were transformed from modest Arab chiefs into absolute, all-powerful monarchs
 - Elaborate court rituals
 - Complex bureaucracy
 - Standing army
 - Centralized systems of taxation and money
- 2 major ruling dynasties came to control the Arab Empire during this time = Umayyad dynasty and Abbasid dynasty

Umayyad Dynasty (661 – 750)



The Dome of the Rock
Built in Jerusalem in 691 CE
Built by Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik

- Vast expansion of Arab Empire
- Caliphs became hereditary rulers
- Empire's capital moved from Medina to Roman/Byzantine city of Damascus in Syria
- Ruling class = Arab military aristocracy

Umayyad Dynasty (661 – 750)

- Overthrown because:
 - Non-Arabs resented their status as second-class citizens
 - Shia Muslims believed Umayyad caliphs were illegitimate
 - Many Arabs protested the luxurious living of their rulers

Abbasid Dynasty (750 – 1258)

- Built up a new capital for the empire in Baghdad
- Non-Arabs now played a prominent role
 - Persian culture became the culture of Islamic elites
- Political unity = didn't last long
- By the mid-800s = many local governors or military commanders asserted autonomy over their regions
 - Islamic world fractured into multiple “sultanates”
- Dynasty officially ended when conquered by the Mongols in 1258

And no, we can't watch Aladdin OR Mulan in class.



Central Question in the Empire: What does it mean to be a Muslim?

- Answer = strict adherence to the *sharia* = Islamic religious and civil law
- *Sharia* created based on the Quran, the life and teachings of Muhammad, deductive reasoning, and the consensus of the *ulama* (Muslim scholars)
- *Sharia* addressed virtually every aspect of life; Examples:
 - Guidance for prayer and ritual cleansing
 - Treatment of slaves
 - Rules for political life
 - Rules for marriage, divorce, and inheritance
 - Rules for business and commercial practices

Sufis



- Muslims who believed that the wealth and success of Islamic civilization was a deviation from the purer spirituality of Muhammad's time
- Searched for a direct and personal experience with the divine
- Rejected the material world
- Meditated on the words of the Quran
- Believed teachings about the law and correct behavior didn't bring people closer to Allah

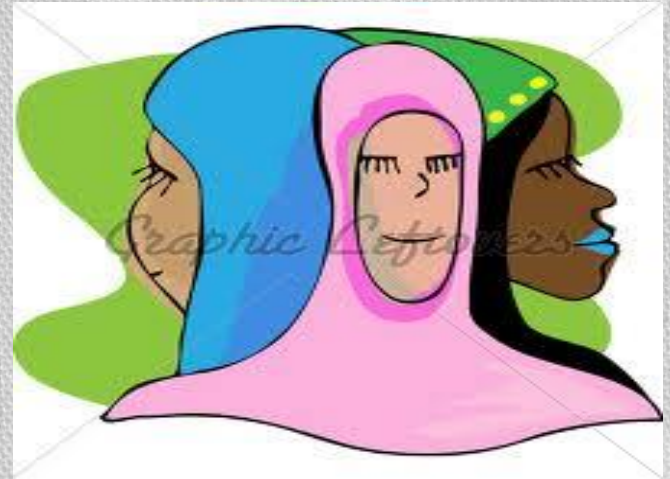
Sufis

- Believed many *ulama* had been corrupted by their association with worldly and corrupt governments
- Often challenged the religious authority of these *ulama* and charted their own course to Allah



Women and Men in Early Islam

- According to interpretations of the Quran made by Muslim scholars:
 - Spiritually → men and women are equal
 - Socially (especially in marriage) → women are inferior to men and should obey them
- The Quran provided a mix of rights, restrictions, and protections for women



Women and Men in Early Islam

- Examples of rights & protection for women within the Quran include:
 - Rights to dowries and some inheritances
 - Control over their own property
 - Marriage = must be consensual
 - Women could divorce men; especially if they weren't pleased in the bedroom



Growing Restrictions

- Occurred during the Abbasid dynasty
- Arab Empire grew in size, wealth, and splendor
 - Result = role of women became more limited
- Applied to upper-class women
- Lower-class women = didn't have servants; had to leave the house for shopping or work
- These restrictions stemmed from the traditions and cultures within the Arab Empire; NOT the Quran itself

Examples of the Growing Restrictions

- Women now expected to pray at home instead of in public mosques
- Veiling and seclusion of women became standard practice
- Separate living quarters in wealthy homes for women
- “Honor killing” = women killed by male relatives if they violated a sexual taboo
- Clitorectomy = female genital cutting



The Hadiths



- The Hadiths = traditions about the sayings or actions of Muhammad
- Became an important source of Islamic law
- Negative view of women → weak, deficient, etc.

