

The Caliphates

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| <p>The Ummah under Muhammad (622-632 AD): Muhammad and most of the Muslims fled the city of Mecca in 622. This is called the <i>Hijrah</i> and marks year 0 in the Muslim Calendar. Muslims resettled in the nearby city of Medina. Shortly after the <i>Hijrah</i>, conflict broke out between the Muslims and Mecca. Muhammad led several stunning victories against the more powerful government of Mecca before finally conquering Mecca in 629. Shortly after, most of the tribes of Arabia had pledged loyalty to Muhammad or entered into alliance with him.</p> | <p>What is the Hijrah?</p> <p>What regions were under Muslim Control by the time Muhammad died?</p> |
| <p>Rashidun Caliphate (632-661 AD): The founder of Islam, the prophet Muhammad, died in 632. His successor, the first caliph, was elected in that year. Abu Bakr, Muhammad’s father-in-law and one of his leading lieutenants, became the first Caliph Abu Bakr reigned until his death in 634. He was succeeded by Umar ibn Khattab who reigned for ten years until 644. When Umar was assassinated, a council of Muslim leaders elected Uthman Ibn Affan who reigned until 456. He too was assassinated and Muhammed’s son-in-law, Ali, seized control of the Caliphate and reigned until 661.</p> <p>The first four caliphs are known as the Rightly Guided Caliphs or Rashidun Caliphs. They all knew Muhammed personally. During their reigns, despite the challenges and instability that they had to deal with, the Caliphate grew stronger and succeeded in conquering vast areas of the Middle East, Egypt, and Persia.</p> | <p>List the first four Caliphs and the years of their reign:</p> <p>What was the relationship between these first 4 Caliphs and Muhammad?</p> |
| <p>Umayyad Caliphate (661-750) AD: Ali’s succession was controversial and plunged the Muslim community into civil war. The Governor of Syria, Mu’awiyah, won the civil war and turned the Caliphate into a hereditary monarchy, in the hands of his family, the Umayyad dynasty.</p> <p>Under the Umayyads, the empire grew immensely. North Africa, Spain, and much of Central Asia and India were conquered. But it was also under the Umayyads that the conquests ground to a halt. Defeats at Constantinople in 718, Tours in 732, and Sindh in 725 turned back the tide of Muslim conquests and defined the borders of the Caliphate for the next 600 years.</p> <p>Despite these setbacks to their ambitions, the Umayyad caliphs ruled a vast state, one of the largest empires in world history. This expansion caused severe stresses within the empire. At this time, the <i>Ummah</i> was still dominated by Arabs, even though they were now no longer the ethnic group of the majority of Muslims. More and more, other ethnic groups called for power within the <i>Ummah</i>.</p> | <p>How did the Umayyad’s change the Caliphate?</p> <p>Why did the conquests stop towards the end of the Umayyads?</p> <p>What was the relationship between Arabs and the Ummah?</p> |
| <p>The Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258 AD): In 747, a revolt by Persian Muslims broke out in the eastern parts of the Caliphate. They called themselves the Abbasids. By 750, the Abbasid forces had control of most of the Caliphate. All surviving members of the Umayyad family were tracked down and killed. Only one survived, fleeing to Spain where he founded a rival state (that would later claim to be the true caliphate).</p> | <p>What ethnic group started the Abbasid Caliphate?</p> |

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| <p>The Abbasid Caliphate is, by far, the longest dynasty of the early Caliphate. The strength of the Abbasids was neither military nor political. Within 200 years of their takeover, a dozen new states sprung up out of the Caliphate. Each of these were technically loyal to the Abbasids but rarely actually loyal.</p> | <p>How did Caliphal authority change during the Abbasids?</p> |
| <p>Golden Age of Islam: The rule of the Abbasids has generally been termed the Golden Age of Islam. The Abbasids put a lot of focus on scientific, philosophical, and mathematic understandings. They put faith in Hadiths such as “The ink of the scholar is more precious than the blood of the martyr.” During this time, the Caliphate made enormous advances in most major scientific pursuits. Of particular note are advances in math (Algebra was created in the Caliphates), medicine, and astronomy. The Caliphate was also a center of culture, where literary works from the Middle East, Europe, Africa, India, and China could be found in great number. It was also extraordinarily wealthy. Merchants from the Caliphate purchased silk, spices, porcelain, paper, coffee, citrus, tea, and other rare goods. They would then sell it to Europe and Africa at enormous markups, becoming very rich in the process.</p> | <p>Why are the Abbasids the “Golden Age of Islam?”</p> <p>In what specific ways was the Abbasid Caliphate remarkable?</p> |
| <p>Baghdad, Center of the World: At the center of the Abbasid trade routes, the Caliph al-Mansour built the new city of Baghdad. This new city, which would become the capital of the Caliphate, became not only the center of Islamic culture but the center of world culture. Trade routes that stretched from Africa to Asia to Europe to Indonesia all met in Baghdad. This gave Baghdad a unique position as a melting pot of dozens of cultures, philosophies, and academic works.</p> <p>Caliph al-Mansur’s new city of Baghdad was built with one enterprising goal in mind: to stand unrivaled, the greatest city of the world. The city grew rapidly after its creation: its economic power, booming trade, cultural and intellectual dominance and dizzying wealth establishing it as the center of an empire stretching from across the East and into North Africa. It is one of the tragedies of history that nothing stands today from Baghdad’s golden age. However, 9th century geographer and historian Al Y’qubi described the early Baghdad as a city ‘with no equal on earth, either in the Orient or the Occident,’ being ‘the most expansive city in area, in importance, and in prosperity.’”</p> | <p>What was remarkable about Baghdad?</p> <p>What did people of the time think of Baghdad?</p> <p>How much of the old city still survives?</p> |
| <p>House of Wisdom: the center of Baghdad was The House of Wisdom, an enormous library. It was originally created as a project to protect knowledge, including philosophy, astronomy, science, mathematics, and literature. The library grew to become the center of intellectual growth and discovery in the world and would remain so for over 400 years.</p> <p>The House of Wisdom’s first project was collecting and translating numerous works from the Greek literary canon, which established an enormous influence on Arab thought. Works including those by Plato, Aristotle, Ptolemy, Hippocrates, and Euclid were requested from libraries in the West and brought back to Baghdad to translate. At the same time, such works were disappearing from Europe as its literate populace declined</p> | <p>What was the House of Wisdom?</p> <p>What was the original purpose of the House of Wisdom?</p> <p>Why is the House of Wisdom responsible for the survival of the Greek Canon?</p> |

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| <p>through the Early Middle Ages. If not for the House of Wisdom, most of the Greek canon would not have survived.</p> <p>Scholars and scientists from all over Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia came to the House of Wisdom to study. From this center came enormous advances in Math, Astronomy, Optics, and Medicine. It was the opening of trade between Europe and the Caliphate in the 1200s which brought on the beginning of Europe's ascension—the renaissance, enlightenment, and scientific revolution all draw inspiration from the works of Muslim scholars or the works reintroduced to Europe from the Caliphate.</p> | <p>What are the legacies of the House of Wisdom?</p> |
| <p>End of the Abbasids: Eventually the gradual weakening of the military would prove disastrous. In 1258, the Mongols arrived from Central Asia. Insulted by the Abbasid Caliph Al-Musta'sim, the Mongols crushed the armies of the Abbasids and laid waste to Baghdad.</p> <p>The accomplishments of the House of Wisdom and the Islamic Golden Age were brought to a cruel halt. The mosques, libraries, homes and hospitals of the great city were all destroyed. The family of the last Abbasid Caliph Al-Musta'sim, as well as hundreds of thousands of the city's inhabitants, were slaughtered, and the extensive collection of books and manuscripts at the House of Wisdom were thrown into the Tigris River. It is said that for days afterwards the river ran black with the ink of books and red with the blood of citizens.</p> | <p>How did the Abbasids come to an end?</p> <p>What happened to Baghdad during the conquest?</p> |
| <p>The Mamluks and Ottomans: The fall of the Abbasid Caliphate led to a number of empires that continued to claim the authority of Muhammad's successor. The two greatest, the Mamluk and Ottoman Sultanates, were both strong military powers with conservative governments. The sun began to set on the Islamic Golden Age the moment they took power.</p> <p>The Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt filled the vacuum in the Islamic world immediately after the fall of Baghdad. They appointed a puppet Caliph and pretended to carry on the Abbasid Dynasty and are sometimes referred to as the Cairo Abbasid Caliphate but there is no real connection between the two dynasties. The Sultan ruled, not the Caliph. In fact, Caliphal authority had declined so much that one Mamluk leader announced "Stupid fellow. For God's sake—who pays any heed to the caliph now?"</p> <p>The Ottoman Sultanate began to rise in the 1300s as the Mongols fell out of power in the Middle East. A rivalry began between the Ottomans and Mamluks for dominion of the <i>Ummah</i>. In 1517, the Ottomans conquered the Mamluks and had the last of the Cairo Abbasids surrender his place as Caliph to the Ottoman Sultan. For the next 400 years, the Ottomans would dominate Islam. Most of the Muslim world was reunified under the Ottomans and for the first time in centuries, new lands were added to the Caliphate. For the second time in history, the Caliphate pushed deep into Europe, culminating in the defeat at Vienna in 1683. During the 1750s, the Ottomans began a long decline that eventually ended in the splitting up of the empire at the end of World War One in 1918 and its final collapse in 1924.</p> | <p>What were the Mamluks and Ottomans like?</p> <p>Why is this the end of the Golden Age?</p> <p>What were the successes of the Ottoman Empire?</p> |

Analysis Questions

| Fill in Each Caliphate in its time period and write a couple critical details about that Caliphate. | | |
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| Years of Reign | Name | Details |
| 632-661 AD | | |
| 661-750 AD | | |
| 750-1258 AD | | |
| 1261-1517 AD | | |
| 1299-1924 AD | | |

Long Response (4-5 sentences)

Prompt: Should the Caliphate be remembered more for its conquests or for its trade/cultural/scientific successes?