

Developments and Challenges of Islam from the 7th to 15th centuries

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Enriching Knowledge Series: The Rise of Islamic
Civilisation and Cultural Interactions between Europe
and Asia in Medieval Times

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Before he died, the Prophet Muḥammad is reported to have said:

...فإنه من يعيش منكم بعدي فسيرى اختلافا كثيرا فعليكم
بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء المهديين
الراشدين تمسكوا بها

“...those of you who live after me will see great disagreement. You must then follow my *Sunna* and that of the **Rightly-Guided Caliphs (al-Khulafā' al-Rashidūn)**. Hold to it and stick fast to it.”

(Narrated by al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dawūd, Ibn Mājah)

The Caliphate

الخلافة

al-Khilāfa

- From the Arabic word for “successor” (خليفة *khalīfa*, or caliph), those who succeeded the Prophet Muḥammad as temporal, political leaders of the Muslim community.

Roles of the Prophet Muḥammad

- Spiritual Leader
- Religious Teacher
- Judge/Arbitrator
- Legislator
- Political Leader
- Military Leader

Crisis of Succession

- Although no one could replace the Prophet in all of his roles, someone had to lead the Umma (Muslim community).
- How would the community be governed, and how would they choose a leader when the Prophet left no specific guidelines for succession?
- The choice came down to two candidates: Abū Bakr and ʿAlī.

Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (573-634)

أبو بكر الصديق

- A wealthy merchant from Mecca.
- The Prophet Muḥammad's close friend and Companion.
- One of the earliest converts to Islam.
- The Prophet married his daughter, 'Ā'isha.
- A respected elder of the Quraysh tribe.
- Leader of the prayer in the Prophet's absence.

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‘Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib (601-661)

علي بن أبي طالب

- The Prophet Muḥammad’s younger paternal cousin, who grew up in his household.
- Married the Prophet’s daughter, Fāṭima (father of the Prophet’s grandsons, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn).
- Considered the rightful successor to the Prophet by the Shi‘a faction.
- Recognized as the fourth caliph (successor) by the Sunni (656-661 CE).

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Shi‘a (Shi‘ites)

- The minority branch of Islam who believe religious authority emanates from the family of Muḥammad through his cousin and son-in-law ‘Alī.
- The name derives from *Shi‘at ‘Ali* شيعۃ علي, the “Partisans of ‘Alī.”
- Shi‘a recognize descendants of ‘Alī as the rightful leader (Imām) of Islam.
- Today, Shi‘a make up approximately 15% of the world’s Muslims.

Ahl al-Bayt اهل البيت “The People of the House”

Members of the immediate
family of Muḥammad:

Fāṭima (his daughter); ‘Alī
(his cousin/son-in-law);
Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (his
grandsons).

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Succession Election

- Many in the Umma felt that ʿAlī was still too young and not strong enough to become caliph.
- The majority of the community opted for Abū Bakr, a tribal elder.
- Thus, a tribal model of succession (similar to the pre-Islamic method) was followed.
- The (Shiʿa) supporters of ʿAlī felt he had been cheated out of his rightful position; they did not all swear allegiance to Abū Bakr and remained a disgruntled minority.

Ridda Wars (632-633)

After the death of the Prophet, during the rule of the Caliph Abū Bakr, many of the Arab tribes who had converted to Islam by submitting to the authority of the Prophet began to renounce the new religion.

In Arabic, the term for renouncing (**apostasy**) is *ridda* (ردة), literally, “turning away.”

Because becoming a Muslim also meant joining a political community, apostasy was seen not only as a religious betrayal but also treason..

Abū Bakr and the Muslim armies therefore had to spend two years (632-633) fighting the rebellious tribe and compelling them to return under the authority of the Caliphate. This conflict was called the Ridda Wars (حروب الردة).

The Rightly-Guided Caliphs

الخلفاء المهديين الراشدين

Al-Khulafā' al-Mahdī'ūn al-Rāshidūn

Abū Bakr (r. 632-634)

‘Umar (r. 634-644)

‘Uthmān (r. 644-656)

‘Alī (r. 656-661)

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‘Alī versus Mu‘awiyya

- ‘Uthmān was assassinated in 656 by Shi‘a rebels who accused him of poor leadership and corruption, especially appointing his relatives to high positions.
- The rebels supported ‘Alī; ‘Alī reluctantly became Caliph in 661.
- Mu‘awiyya, the Governor of Syria and leader of the Umayya clan, sought revenge for the death of ‘Uthmān and raised an army against ‘Alī.
- ‘Alī and Mu‘awiyya faced off in the Battle of Şiffīn in 657.

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- Facing defeat, Mu'awiyya's army petitioned for arbitration, rather than fighting, by hoisting the Qur'ān on the points of their spears.
- 'Alī agreed to arbitration, but some of his followers disagreed with this decision.

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Ummayyad Caliphate (661-750)

Mu'āwiyya designated himself Caliph in 661, founding the Umayyad dynasty in **Damascus**, their capital.

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The Sons of 'Alī and Fāṭima: Ḥasan and Ḥusayn

Ḥasan bin 'Alī (625-669),
2nd Shi'a Imām (661-669)

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Ḥusayn bin 'Alī (625-680),
3rd Shi'a Imām (669-680)

Civil War

- Yazīd I (son of the Umayyad Caliph Mu‘āwiyya), had ruled as governor in the city of Kufa (Iraq).
- The people of Kufa disliked Yazīd, and sent a message to Ḥusayn in Medina, complaining of Yazīd’s cruelty and heavy taxes.
- They appealed to Ḥusayn as the true successor to the Prophet (Caliph and Imām), to help them against Yazīd.
- Ḥusayn raised an army and marched with his followers and family towards Kufa.
- They stopped at Karbala to try to get water...

The Martyrdom of Husayn

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Islamic Expansion

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Islam: Spread by the Sword?

“People of the Book”

Ahl al-Kitāb اهل الكتاب

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Qur'ānic expression for people (e.g., Jews and Christians) who, like Muslims, believe in God, and had received divine revelation. They had the status of “protected peoples” (*dhimmi*) under Islamic rule.

Ummayyad Caliphate (661-750)

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The Umayyad “Golden Age”

- ‘Abd al-Malik was the 5th Umayyad Caliph.
- ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 685-705) regained control of all previous Umayyad territory, after suppressing a rebellion.
- ‘Abd al-Malik centralized the administration of the Caliphate and established Arabic as the official language.
- He introduced new Islamic coins, replacing Byzantine and Sassanic currency.
- He resumed military campaigns against the Byzantines.
- He constructed the first major monument of the Muslim world: The **Dome of the Rock** in Jerusalem (692).

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Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem

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Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem

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Umayyad Mosque, Damascus

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Ummayyad Expansion

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Downfall of Umayyad Caliphate

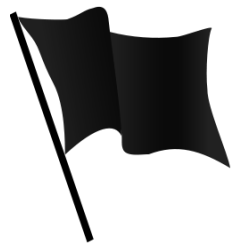
- In the Persian province of Khurasān, the resident Arab population joined forces with non-Arab Muslims (*mawālī*) in a rebellion against the Umayyad governor. These rebels were joined by a Shi‘a faction who also wanted to overthrow the Umayyads.
- Umayyad rule was opposed by: Shi‘a; non-Arab Muslims (*mawālī*); Arab Muslims who had mixed with the non-Arabs; pious Muslims who resented Umayyad impiety; and non-Muslim subjects who resented the *jizya* tax and second-class status.

Ummayyad Contraction

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The ʿAbbāsids

A coalition of rebel factions, under the leadership of a descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad's uncle, al-ʿAbbās, that sought to overthrow the Umayyad dynasty.



The ‘Abbāsīd Revolution

- In a desperate attempt to stop the rebels, in 750 the Caliph Marwān II led his forces from Syria to Iraq but suffered a decisive defeat in the Battle of the Zab River. His army was utterly destroyed and over 300 members of the Umayyad family were killed
- Marwān II fled to Egypt where he was eventually caught and killed in 750, ending the Umayyad Caliphate.
- Almost all of the Umayyad family were killed except for one prince, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, who escaped westward to al-Andalūs (Spain), where he established his own Umayyad branch.

'Abbāsīd Revolution

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‘Abbāsīd Caliphate (751-1258)

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Rise of the ʿAbbāsids

- The ʿAbbāsīd Revolution began as a political campaign against alleged Umayyad corruption, immorality and religious impiety.
- In 747, an ʿAbbāsīd military commander opened an armed rebellion in the city of Merv.
- After successive victories over the Umayyad armies, the ʿAbbāsīd forces won the decisive Battle of the Zab River in 750.
- Abūʿl ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ (r. 750-754) was proclaimed the 1st Caliph of the ʿAbbāsīd Caliphate.
- Their capital was established in the Iraqi city of Kufa.

ʿAbbāsīd Caliphate vs, Tang Dynasty

- In his first year (751) Abū'l ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ sent troops to consolidate rule over Central Asia; the ʿAbbāsīd army defeated forces of the Tang Empire at the Battle of Talas.

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- It is said that captured Chinese paper-makers brought their technology to the ʿAbbāsīd Caliphate, which fuelled a renaissance of knowledge and scholarship in the Arab-Muslim world.

Frontiers of *Dār al-Islām*

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- Battle of Poitiers, 732
- Battle of Talas River, 751

'Abbāsīd Baghdad: Trade

Baghdad was also home to thriving commerce. Its location along the Tigris River was ideal for connecting the Silk Road with the Gulf.

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The ‘Abbāsīd “Golden Age”

- The 3rd ‘Abbāsīd caliph, al-Mahdī (r. 775-785), built on the stability and prosperity initiated by his father.
- He treated enemies ruthlessly, including putting down rebellions Khurasān (777) and Syria (778), and an inquisition to root out perceived religious heretics (*zindīq*).
- Yet, his reign was marked by a reconciliation with the ‘Alids and Shi‘a, peace with the Byzantine Empire, and friendly relations with Tang China.
- Al-Mahdī was a noted patron of the arts (poetry and music).
- Baghdad flourished as a cosmopolitan capital.

The ‘Abbāsīd “Golden Age” (II)

- Al-Hādī was succeeded by his brother, Hārūn al-Rashīd, the 5th ‘Abbāsīd caliph (r. 786-809).
- Hārūn’s epithet, “*Al-Rashīd*”, means “the Righteous”.
- His reign is widely considered to be the apex of ‘Abbāsīd rule, politically and culturally.
- Hārūn’s government was managed by competent ministers..
- He built up Baghdad into arguably the greatest city of its time, spending lavishly on public works and the arts.
- Under Hārūn, the Caliphate received tribute (payments) from other kingdoms.
- In 799, Hārūn received an embassy from Charlemagne, King of the Franks (and later Holy Roman Emperor).

The ‘Abbāsīd “Golden Age” (III)

- Hārūn and Charlemagne maintained friendly relations and exchanged expensive gifts.
- During his reign, the ‘Abbāsīds also established an alliance with the Tang dynasty.
- The Caliphate did, however, resume fighting with the Byzantine Empire, leading to a treaty.
- Hārūn presided over a period of relative peace and prosperity, allowing him to focus on cultural pursuits.
- One of these was the establishment of the renowned *Bayt al-Ḥikmah* (“House of Wisdom”, an expansion of the earlier translation project initiated by Al-Manṣūr).

Bayt al-Ḥikmah

- Began with Hārūn al-Rashīd's own library collection.
- Expanded into an institution where classic books in many languages (Greek, Persian, Sanskrit, Syriac and Chinese) were translated into Arabic.
- The texts covered many disciplines including mathematics, astronomy, geography, chemistry, medicine, engineering, and philosophy.
- This flourishing of scholarship in Baghdad continued under Hārūn's successors.

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Bayt al-Hikmah

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Bayt al-Hikmah

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The ‘Abbāsīd “Golden Age” (IV)

- Hārūn spent extravagantly on his own palace lifestyle, including decoration, feasts, entertainment, clothing, jewels, etc.
- The opulence (some would say decadence) of Hārūn’s court is reflected and romanticized in the literature of the period, especially in the famous collection of stories, *One Thousand and One Nights*.

Arabian Nights

天方夜譚

الف ليلة و ليلة

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The 'Abbāsīd Decline (III)

- 'Abbāsīds put down a Hindu rebellion in the province of Sind, and managed to expand 'Abbāsīd rule in Central Asia (Afghanistan and Turkestan).
- However, his greatest challenges were internal, as he faced sectarian, religious divisions in Baghdad itself.
- Al-Mahdī (r. 775-785) had set a precedent by asserting the Caliph's right to intervene in religious affairs and decide matters of **orthodoxy**.
- But Caliph al-Ma'mūn took this a step further by endorsing a particular theological perspective as the only "correct" Islamic doctrine, and condemning others as **heresy**.

‘Ilm al-Kalām

- The term for Islamic Theology literally means “knowledge of speech,” because it is based on an understanding of the Word of Allah, the Qur’ān.
- The meaning of speech also includes the fact that *Kalām* originated in scholarly debates, about various theological questions.

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Sunni

Derived from the Arabic word *Sunna*, meaning "tradition", the Way of the Prophet Muḥammad, Sunni means one who follows the tradition.

The term is shortened from *Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jam'a* (People of Tradition and Congregation).

It was developed in the medieval period to establish designate the body of "orthodox" Muslims in the face of juridical and theological diversity.

It also identified those to who accepted the political legitimacy of the first four caliphs, in distinction from the Shi'a.

Golden Age – Decline

- The “Golden Age” was also the beginning of ‘Abbāsīd decline.
- Hārūn had grown displeased with the independent power of his ministers.
- By that time, the Caliphate was also facing conflict and rebellions on multiple fronts:
 - Umayyad sympathizers in Syria
 - Protests of taxation in Egypt
 - (Shi‘a) Idrisid rule in Morocco
 - Aghlabids rule over Ifriqiya (Algeria/Tunisia/Libya)
 - Uprising in Yemen
 - Kharijite rebellions in Persian provinces
 - Unrest in Khurasān
 - War with the Byzantines
- Hārūn was accused of assassinating the 7th Shia Imam, Mūsa al-Kāẓim.

‘Abbāsīd Fragmentation

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ʿAbbāsīd Decline

- Fragmentation of the Caliphate continued, as regional rulers became increasingly independent.
- They officially recognised the authority of the ʿAbbāsīd caliphs in Baghdad/Samarra, but ruled independently of the central leadership.
- In several regions, (especially Persia) local hereditary dynasties had emerged as the ruling class.
- Various Shiʿa dynasties also emerged as local rulers: the Arab Hamanids in norther Syria/Southern Anatolia (895-1002); the Persian Buyids (934-1062); the Mubārakiyya Ismāʿīlī Qarmatians in southern Iraq/Eastern Arabia (899-ca. 1050); and the Fāṭimids in Egypt (909-1171).

'Abbāsīd Fragmentation, 10th- 11th c.

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Umayyad Al-Andalus (Islamic Spain)

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Al-Andalus الأندلس

- The Umayyad Caliphate first reached the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) in 711, during the reign of Al-Walīd (r. 705-715), when the general Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād crossed the sea from North Africa, landed in Gibraltar and defeated the Visigoths.
- Al-Andalus was a loosely controlled province of the Umayyad Caliphate, settled mostly by Muslim Berbers from North Africa and Arab commanders and governors.
- By the 740s, as the Umayyad Caliphate was fighting off the the 'Abbāsīd Revolution, they lost control of the Maghrib (Morocco) and Al-Andalus.
- In 750 the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān II, was defeated and eventually killed. His army was utterly destroyed and over 300 members of the Umayyad family were killed.

Straits of Gibraltar

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‘Abd al-Raḥmān in Al-Andalus

- While most of the Umayyad family were killed, one prince, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (731-788), escaped westward through North Africa to Al-Andalus in 755 (at age 24).
- At the time, Al-Andalus was in a state of political and civil unrest, as Muslim Berbers and Arabs clashed, and various Arab tribal factions also fought amongst themselves.
- No member of the Umayyad family had ever been in Al-Andalus before ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, so he took a risk that he would be well-received by the local Muslim groups.

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‘Abd al-Raḥmān in Al-Andalus (II)

- ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ruled as Emir of Córdoba from 756-788, but he aspired to reclaim the throne of the entire Caliphate and avenge his family by overthrowing the ‘Abbāsids in Baghdad.
- The ‘Abbāsīd Caliph Al-Manṣūr wanted to eliminate this threat and destroy the Umayyad family once and for all so he sent an army from Africa to invade Al-Andalus.
- Though outnumbered, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s army emerged victorious in the battle at Carmona in 763, staving off the ‘Abbāsīd invaders.
- As the undisputed ruler of an independent Al-Andalus, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān had to put down numerous uprisings by local groups.
- By 783, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān pacified the rebellious cities.

‘Abd al-Raḥmān in Al-Andalus (III)

- He turned his attention to consolidating his rule and building up his capital of Córdoba.
- He recruited capable locals as civil servants, regardless of their religion or ethnicity.
- He welcomed Jews and Christians to live in Al-Andalus, especially Córdoba; they were expected to pay the *jizya* tax; many Jews and Christians also converted to Islam.
- Muslims, Christians and Jews freely interacted in Islamic Spain, creating a tolerant multicultural environment known as “**Convivencia**” (“Co-existence”) in Spanish.
- ‘Abd al-Raḥmān also began many public works, including roads, bridges, aqueducts, and construction of the Grand Mosque in 786.

Convivencia

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Umayyad Al-Andalus

- The subsequent emirs of Córdoba also constantly faced challenges from the Basques and the Christian Visigoth kingdom of Asturias in the North of Spain.
- During Al-Ḥakam's reign (796-822), the cities of Toledo, Zaragoza and Mérida all attempted to break away from Córdoba.
- Al-Ḥakam established diplomatic relations with Charlemagne, seeking help in controlling rebel cities.
- Al-Ḥakam also put down to violent attempts to overthrow him in Córdoba in 806 and 818.
- Al-Ḥakam died in 822, succeeded by his son 'Abd al-Raḥmān II (r. 822-852).

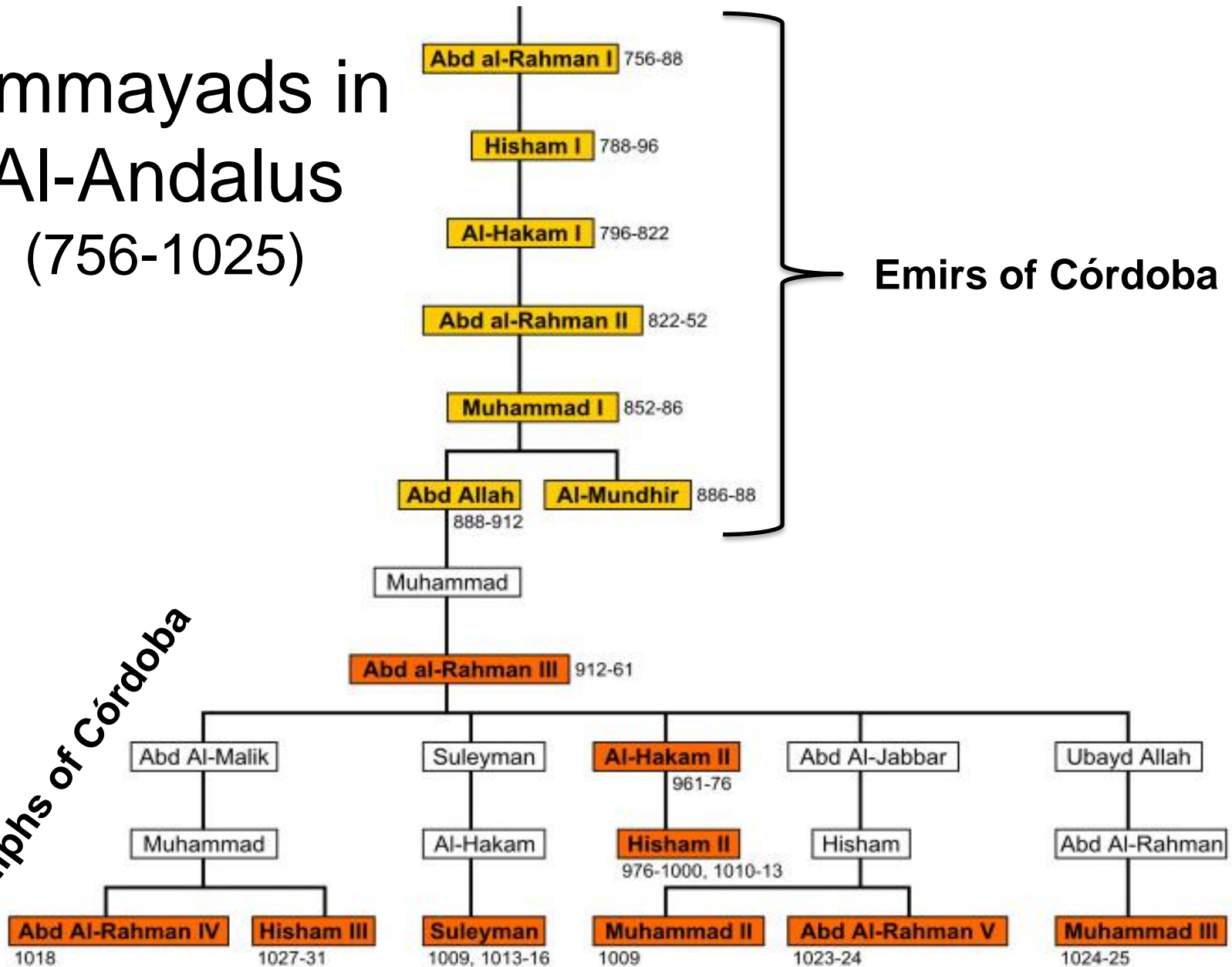
Umayyad Al-Andalus (II)

- ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II had to put down a rebellion of Jews and Christians in Toledo in 837.
- He also repelled a naval invasion by Vikings at Cádiz, Sevilla and Córdoba in 844.
- ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II expanded the Grand Mosque of Córdoba.
- He was succeeded by his son Muḥammad (r. 852-866), who also faced challenges from local Iberian Muslim (*Muladī*) and *Mozarab* (Arabized Christian) families.
- Sometimes, Muslim rebels allied with Christian kingdoms like Asturias, to fight the Emirs of Córdoba.

Ummayyads in Al-Andalus (756-1025)

Caliphs of Córdoba

Emirs of Córdoba



Caliphate of Córdoba, 929-1031

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Medina Al-Ṣahra, Córdoba

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Grand Mosque of Córdoba

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Grand Mosque of Córdoba

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Peak of the Córdoba Caliphate

- After his death in 961, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III was succeeded by his son Al-Ḥakam II (r. 961-976).
- Al-Ḥakam II made peace with the Christian kingdoms of the North, prevented a Fāṭimid invasion in Morocco, and oversaw a period of peace and prosperity.
- He invested in public works: roads, aqueducts, irrigation canals for agriculture.
- He also funded a great library and supported scholarly activities, including translation of Greek and Latin texts into Arabic.
- Mathematics, medicine, chemistry, astronomy, philosophy and history all flourished under his rule.
- He complete construction of Medīna al-Ḍahra and expanded the Grand Mosque.

Decline of the Córdoba Caliphate

- The role of the Caliph became mostly ceremonial, yet there was a prolonged struggle over succession.
- The descendants of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, cousins and brothers, vied with one another for the throne.
- The period 1009-1031 is known as the “Fitna of Córdoba”, marked by civil disorder and war.
- After the fall of the Caliphate (1031), Córdoba was reduced to an independent city-state (*taifa*); many of the cities of the Caliphate similarly became *taifas*.

The End of Muslim Rule in Spain

- After the fall of the Umayyads, various Muslim *taifas* allied and struggled with one another, and with the Christian kingdoms, who gradually became united in their Catholic Reconquista.
- Parts of Al-Andalus were gradually united under two different North African dynasties, the Almoravids (1040–1147) and the Almohads (1121–1269).
- One Muslim *taifa* after another fell to Christian kings, until only one Muslim state, Granada, remained.
- Granada was finally defeated by the Castille-Aragon coalition of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in 1492, ending over 700 years of Muslim rule in Spain.

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Catholic *Reconquista* of Spain

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Mezquita/Cathedral of Córdoba

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Rival Caliphates, 10th–11th c.

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Rise of the Ismā‘īlīs

- Al-Manṣūr (r. 754-775), the 2nd ‘Abbāsīd caliph, persecuted Shi‘a factions, who had originally supported the ‘Abbāsīds, deeming their practices “unorthodox”.
- He also faced challenges from the ‘Alīds and ordered the assassination of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (702-765), the 6th Shi‘a Imam, in 765.
- The death of Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq led to a crisis of succession.
- Imam Ja‘far’s eldest son, Ismā‘īl, was expected to succeed, but apparently he died before his father.
- This led to a split within the Shi‘a community, as some recognized Ismā‘īl and his son Muḥammad as the 7th and 8th Imams, while others recognized Imam Ja‘far’s younger son, Mūsa al-Kāẓim as the 7th Imam.

Rise of the Ismā‘īlīs (II)

- Those who recognized Ismā‘īl’ as the 7th Imam, and his descendants, starting with Muḥammad (740-809), as his successors, became known as “**Ismā‘īlīs**”.
- (Those who recognized Ismā‘īl’ as the 7th Imam but did not recognize any successor after him became known as “**Sevens**”).
- Those who recognized Imam Ja‘far’s younger son, Mūsa al-Kāẓim as the 7th Imam, succeeded by a line of five of his descendants, became known as “**Twelvers**”.
- Many Ismā‘īlīs saw Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl not only as the rightful 7th Imam, but as the “**Mahdī**” (lit. “Rightly-guided One”), who would be sent by God to redeem and save the Shi‘a, as the true leader of the Muslim Umma.

“Occultation” *Ghayba* غيبة

- The ‘Abbāsīd Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd was trying to root out his political enemies, including the Shi‘a Imams.
- The Ismā‘īlī Imam Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl thus fled to Kufa and went into hiding to escape detection.
- Subsequent Ismā‘īlī Imams also remained hidden from the public.
- This state of hiding, is known as “**occultation**”, or ***ghayba*** in Arabic.
- Later, this physical occultation was re-interpreted among some Shi‘a as a spiritual occultation, whereby God had taken the Imam out of sight.
- Twelver Shi‘ā, developed the belief that the 12th Imam, al-Mahdī, was hidden and would return in the last days.

The Fāṭimids

- In the generations immediately succeeding the Ismāʿīlī Imam Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, the Imams remained in occultation and seclusion, spreading their teachings through *daʿwa*.
- This situation changed under the 12th Ismāʿīlī Imam, Al-Mahdī Billāh (873-934), who emerged from hiding in Syria and revealed that the occultation was a temporary political strategy to protect the Imams.
- He declared that he was the Imam of the time and was ready to lead publicly.
- In the previous generation, his father's agents had already spread the Ismāʿīlī belief in Yemen and North Africa.

Fāṭimid Caliphate (909-1171)

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Fāṭimid Egypt

- The Fāṭimid Caliph Al-Muʿizz (r. 953-975) had the ambition of overthrowing the ʿAbbāsids and becoming the sole ruler of the Muslim Umma.
- He moved his base of power to Egypt.
- In 969 the Fāṭimids defeated the Ishkidids, who ruled Egypt in the name of the ʿAbbāsids.
- Al-Muʿizz then established the new Fāṭimid capital of **Cairo** (*Al-Qāhira*, “the Victorious”).

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Golden Age of the Fāṭimids

- Al-Muʿizz created a tolerant culture at court and in society, allowing for the free mingling of different ethnic and religious groups.
- At court, he instituted a **meritocracy**, though he favoured Jews and Christians for ministerial positions.
- Al-ʿAzīz (r. 975-996) continued his father's policies of multi-culturalism and religious tolerance.
- In fact, Ismāʿīlīs were a minority in their own Caliphate, ruling over a Sunni majority with significant Jewish and Christian (Maltese and Coptic) minorities.
- Jews and Copts continued to be appointed to powerful positions, leaving some Muslims resentful, so Al-ʿAzīz implemented a policy to promote more Muslims.

Al-Azhar University

- Established first as a mosque in 972, under the Fāṭimid Caliph Al-Muʿizz, and expanded by successors.
- By 975, students studies under prominent scholars of Islamic Law, Arabic grammar and philology, Astronomy, Logic, and (Greek) Philosophy.
- Known for its vast library.
- Became a Sunni institution under the Ayyubids (12th c.).

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Al-Ḥākim (985-1021)

- Al-ʿAzīz was succeeded by his son Abū ʿAlī Maṣṣūr al-Ḥākim in 996, who was only 11 years old.
- As a boy, Al-Ḥākim was dominated by his Berber ministers, causing resentment from the Turkis officials.
- The Turkish treasurer, Barjawān, took control and managed the rival factions and stabilize the government until he was assassinated in 1000.
- Al-Ḥākim then assumed power for himself, ousting and/or executing numerous officials and government elites; he went through over 15 prime ministers during the next 20 years.

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Al-Ḥākim (II)

- During this prolonged period of instability, Al-Ḥākim also faced mounting challenges from the ‘Abbāssids.
- Al-Ḥākim fended off Sunni uprisings in North Africa, and to hold control over Syria.
- He maintained peace with the Byzantines and promoted trade and diplomatic relations with Song China (960-1279).
- However, over his 25-year reign, his domestic and foreign policies were erratic, changing dramatically at times.
- His erratic and sometimes cruel behavior, especially after the year 1000, has led historians to call him the “Mad Caliph”, questioning his mental stability.

Al-Ḥākim (III)

- Al-Ḥākim managed to fend off Sunni uprisings in North Africa, and to hold control over Syria.
- He also maintained peace with the Byzantines and promoted trade and diplomatic relations with the Song dynasty (960-1279) in China.
- However, within the Fāṭimid Caliphate, over the 25 years of his reign, Al-Ḥākim's domestic and foreign policies were inconsistent and changed dramatically at times.
- His erratic and sometimes cruel behavior, especially after asserting his own rule around the year 1000, has led historians to call him the “Mad Caliph”, questioning his mental stability.

Al-Ḥākim's Extremism

- Al-Ḥākim was somewhat hostile to Sunni Muslims, officially cursing the first three Rashidūn Caliphs (Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān) and the Umayyad dynasty.
- But he was at first quite tolerant of Jews and Christians in the Caliphate.
- Suddenly, in 1004, he forbade Christians from celebrating religious festivals like Easter, and prohibited the consumption of wine.
- In 1005, he enacted the “**Laws of Differentiation**” whereby Christians were required to wear an iron cross and Jews to wear a necklace of a wooden cow. Jewish and Christian women were required to wear one red shoe and one black shoe.

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Al-Ḥākim's Extremism (II)

- Al-Ḥākim also forbade women to go out in public without their faces covered and prohibited many forms of public entertainment.
- In the period 1007-1012, Al-Ḥākim actually showed a preference for Sunni over Shi'a Islam.
- During this period, his treatment of People of the Book became even more hostile and extreme.
- Al-Ḥākim further forbade Jewish and Christian practices throughout the Caliphate and began to demolish Jewish and Christian places of worship.
- Most notably, in 1009 he ordered the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre** in Jerusalem to be **burned down**, including burning alive pilgrims staying in the attached hostel.

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Church of
the Holy
Sepulchre,
Jerusalem
(original layout)

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Traditionally
thought to be
Jesus' burial
site

Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem

(Rebuilt in 1042 by the Emperor Constantine IX)

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The Crusades (1095-1289)

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Al-Ḥākim's Final Years

- In the final years of his reign, Al-Ḥākim reversed most of his religious positions and policies.
- He permitted the People of the Book to return to their religious practices and to restore their places of worship
- He became hostile to Muslims, Sunni *and* Shi'a.
- But he built a monumental mosque in Cairo in 1013, named after himself.
- He established the Dār al-ʿIlm (“House of Knowledge”) to rival the Bayt al-Ḥikma of Baghdad, with a vast library.
- He sponsored scientific and religious scholarship and participated in theological discussions.
- He promoted the Ismāʿīlī Daʿwa abroad (Iraq and Persia).

Decline of the Fāṭimids

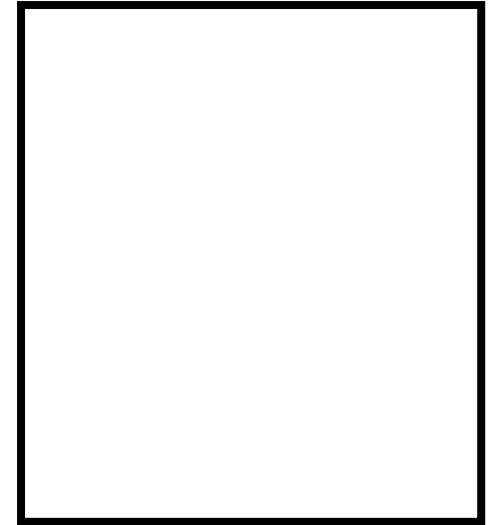
- Al-Ḥākim's successors faced years of plague and famine in Egypt.
- Ethnic tensions within the Fāṭimid military escalated, especially between the Turks and Black Africans, with the Berbers changing sides multiple times.
- In the 1040s, a Berber faction in North Africa declared independence from the Fāṭimids.
- In the 1060s civil war broke out between the Turkish and African military factions.
- The Turks won, and dominated Cairo, holding the Caliph Al-Muntaṣir (r. 1036-1094) a virtual prisoner in his own palace.

Seljuq Invasions

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Rise of the Seljuqs

- Seljuq Beg's grandson Tughrul (990-1063) took Baghdad from the Buyids in 1055, and soon became the de facto ruler of all 'Abbāsid territories.
- Officially recognized the 'Abbāsid Caliph and was the Caliphate's "defender".
- Tughrul was named "**Sultan**" becoming the first holder of this title of the Seljuq dynasty.
- Also extended Seljuq conquests into Byzantine territories.



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Sulṭān سلطان

- From the Arabic word meaning “authority” or “power”.
- Under the caliphate, *sulṭān* referred to the ruling authority in a particular region, e.g., governor of a province.
- Eventually, with the fragmentation of the ‘Abbāsid Caliphate, *Sulṭān* came to refer to a sovereign ruler, who may officially recognize the Caliph, but rules as an independent authority.
- Although a sultan may have wielded absolute power over his domain, the title did not carry the same religious prestige the Caliph, who was still regarded as the successor to the Prophet, and leader of the entire Muslim Umma. (This claim was usually accompanied by control over the territories of Mecca and Medina).

Seljuq Empire, 1037-1194



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East-West Christian Schism, 1054

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Call for a Crusade

- In 1095, the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I, concerned with the expansion of the Muslim Seljuq Empire, asked Pope Urban II for assistance.
- The Pope made an appeal to Christians in Europe, nobles and commoners, to rally to aid the Eastern Church and retake the **Holy Land** (especially Jerusalem) from the infidels.

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First Crusade, 1095-1099 (I)

- Pope Urban II called this effort a “**Crusade**”, a campaign **in the name of Christ and the Cross**.
- The first wave in 1095 were European commoners, the “**People’s Crusade**”, followed the next year by the “**Princes’ Crusade**”.

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First Crusade, 1095-1099 (II)

- On their way to the Middle East, the Crusaders attacked and persecuted Jewish communities in Europe.
- They also **sacked Constantinople**, the Byzantine Capital and center of the Eastern Church.
- Finally, in 1099 the Crusaders reached the Holy Land and after a bloody siege, they captured **Jerusalem**.

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Jerusalem

- Changed hands in rapid succession from the Seljuqs (1073) to the Fāṭimids (1098) to the Crusaders (1099).

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The Crusades (1095-1289)

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Franks vs. Saracens

- The Western Christian and Eastern Muslims really did not know much about each other.
- The Crusaders came from various European nations but were stereotyped by Muslims as “**Franks**” (*Faranja* فرنجة 佛郎機).
- Likewise, the Muslims were Arabs, Turks, Persians, etc., but were collectively called “**Saracens**”, a term for pre-Islamic Arabs, by the Europeans.

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Crusader Kingdoms

- Besides the conquest of Jerusalem, various Crusader princes established independent Christian-ruled principalities and kingdoms in Asia Minor and the Levant.
- These Crusader kingdoms continued to struggle against local Muslim forces over the next two centuries .

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Seljuq Fragmentation

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Zengid Dynasty, 1127-1250

- One powerful Seljuq *atabeg* was Imād al-Dīn Zengi, the Orghuz Turkish governor of Mosul (Iraq) from 1127.
- Zengi was successful in taking the Crusader County of Edessa in Northern Syria in 1144, making him the most respected Turkish warrior in the region, and initiating a Muslim re-conquest of territories lost to the Crusaders.
- After Zengi's assassination in 1146, his lands were divided between his two sons, Sayf al-Dīn (Iraq) and **Nūr al-Dīn** (Syria).
- Nūr al-Dīn expanded on his father's conquests in Syria and also began to challenge the Crusader **Kingdom of Jerusalem** for control of the defeated Fāṭimid Caliphate in Egypt.

Nūr al-Dīn

- Nūr al-Dīn aspired to unify the Muslim lands and reclaim the Crusader lands under his rule, in the name of Sunni Islam.
- As Amir of Aleppo, he faced the invasion of the **Second Crusade (1147-1149)**, which was unsuccessful in capturing any Muslim lands.
- He regained control of Mosul when his younger brother, Quṭb al-Dīn recognized his authority in 1149.
- After struggling against both Muslims and Crusaders until he managed to take Damascus in 1154.
- Nūr al-Dīn then set his sights on Egypt.
- His Kurdish general **Shirkuh** led the Egyptian campaign, allying with the deposed Fāṭimid vizier Shawar.

Nūr al-Dīn (II)

- In 1169, Nūr al-Dīn defeated the Kingdom of Jerusalem and took Egypt.
- His general Shirkuh became the ruler of Egypt, under the authority of Nūr al-Dīn and in the name of the 'Abbāssid Caliphate.
- Shirkuh was succeeded by his nephew Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Saladdin) in Egypt, who became increasingly independent.
- Nūr al-Dīn turned his attention to the ambition to re-conquer Jerusalem.
- After Nūr al-Dīn died of illness in 1174 the Zengid dynasty continued in Iraq until 1250, but declined in power.

Şalāḥ al-Dīn

- Şalāḥ al-Dīn briefly served as vizier under the last Fāṭimid Caliph, Al-‘Aḏīd (r. 1160-1171).
- When Al-‘Aḏīd died, Şalāḥ al-Dīn officially abolished the Fāṭimid Caliphate.
- After 1174, he ruled as Sultan of Egypt; this was the beginning of the Ayūbbid Dynasty, named after Şalāḥ al-Dīn’s father, Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb.

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Şalāḥ al-Dīn (II)

- Şalāḥ al-Dīn nominally recognized the authority of the Zengid rulers, but already had his own ambition to unify Egypt and Syria under his rule.
- In 1174, Şalāḥ al-Dīn laid siege to and conquered Damascus, and over the next two years advanced his conquests all the way north to Aleppo in 1183.
- The ‘Abbāssid Caliph Al-Mustaḍī named him **Sultan of Egypt and Syria**.
- In 1187, he launched a campaign against the Crusaders from Egypt to Palestine, culminating in the **re-conquest of Jerusalem**.

Şalāḥ al-Dīn's Conquests

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Şalāḥ al-Dīn (III)

- The conquest of Jerusalem prompted **Third Crusade** (1189-1192), led by King Richard I of England, (r. 1189-1199).
- Eventually, the Ayyubids and Crusaders made a truce whereby the Muslims held Jerusalem and allowed Christian pilgrims to travel freely to the Holy City, while the Crusaders maintained their castles along the Mediterranean coast.
- Şalāḥ al-Dīn died of illness in 1193, a year after the end of the Third Crusade.

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Regional Fragmentation, 1200

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Mongol Invasions

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The Mongol Conquest

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- By the mid-13th century, the Mongol hordes had conquered most of Persia.
- In 1258, Hulagu Khān (1218-1265) attacked Baghdad and killed the 34th Caliph Al-Mustaʿsim II, effectively ending the ʿAbbāsīd dynasty.

Hulagu Khān (1218-1265)

- Grandson of Chinggis Khān.
- Led the invasion of Persia and the **conquest of Baghdad**.
- Founder of the **Ilkhān dynasty** in Persia.
- Was poised to continue conquest westward but was called back to Mongolia to elect the new Great Khān in 1260 when his brother, the Great Khān Möngke, died.
- Hulagu's general, Kitbuqa, led an invasion into Palestine, but was defeated by the Mamlūks at the **Battle of 'Ayn Jalūt**.

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The Fall of Baghdad, 1258

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The Battle of 'Ayn Jalūt, 1260

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Mongol Successor States

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Pax Mongolica

- The Mongols created the largest land empire in history, ruling from present-day Hungary to Korea.
- This permitted the free flow of people and goods across Eurasia, reviving the old Silk Road and reconnecting China with the Middle East.
- The fragmentation of the Mongol Empire eventually damaged this peace, as two of the Mongol successor states, the Golden Horde (Russia) and the Ilkhānate (Persia) began fighting with each other
- Infighting over regional economic interests and religious conflict overcame Mongol brotherhood and tribal unity; Berke, the ruler of the Golden Horde converted to Islam and allied himself with the Mamlūks against Hulagu's Ilkhānate..

Ghazan Khān (r. 1295-1304)

- The 7th Ilkhān ruler
- Raised Buddhist, but in 1295, upon ascending the throne, Ghazan **converted to Islam** (to gain favor with Muslim allies in Khurasān) and took the name **Maḥmūd**.
- Many Mongols in the Ilkhānate also converted thereafter.
- Despite his conversion, Ghazan fought against his fellow Muslim Mongols of the Chaghatai Khānate as well as the Mamlūk Sultanate, allying against the latter with the European Crusaders and invading Syria in 1299.

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Ilkhān Invasion of Syria

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Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328)

- As part of a delegation of scholars who confronted Ghazan Khān, Ibn Taymiyya reproached the Ilkhān leader:

“You claim that you are Muslim and you have with you *mu’adhdhins*, *muftis*, *imams* and *shaykhs* but you invaded us and reached our country for what? While your father and your grandfather, Hulagu were non-believers, they did not attack and they kept their promise. But you promised and broke your promise.”

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- He declared military *jihād* against Mongols obligatory, despite the conversion of Ghazan.

Ibn Taymiyya (II)

- Syrian scholar of the Hanbalī school of law and theology
- Advocated literal reading of the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth
- Denounced the Shiʿa as heretics
- Opposed many Sufi practices
- Idealized the *salaf* (“pious ancestors” = first 3 generations of Muslims)
- Denounced all forms of *bidʿa* (innovation)
- Roots of Salafism, Islamic “fundamentalism”, Jihadism

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The Black Death (1347-1350)

- Originating in China/Mongolia, and spread by conquest and trade, the **Black Death**, or **Bubonic Plague**, was caused by the bacteria *Yersinia pestis* transmitted by fleas carried by rats.
- In the mid-14th c., it spread westward across Eurasia, devastating populations from China, to Central Asia, to the Middle East and Europe .
- In all, over 50 million people died in the pandemic worldwide.



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The Black Death (1347-1350)

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Eurasia, 14th c.

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Osman I (ca. 1280-1324)

- Osman (‘Uthmān) Ghazi was an Oghuz Turkish clan leader, who ruled one of the *beyliks* (principalities) that arose from the fragmentation of the Seljuq Empire in Anatolia.
- ***Ghazi*** is an epithet given to (usually non-Arab) Muslim warriors who conquered lands for plunder, glory, and to spread Islam.
- From his base near Bursa, Osman began to conquer and control former Seljuq territories, and expanded into Byzantine lands as well.
- In 1299, he declared independence from the Seljuq Sultanate, the **first sultan of the Ottoman dynasty**.

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Osman's *Beylik*

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Expansion Under Orhan I (r. 1324-1362)

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Expansion Under Murad I (r. 1362-1389)

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“Fātiḥ” Sultan Mehmet II (r. 1444-1481)

- The seventh Ottoman Sultan, Mehmet II is known as “Fātiḥ”, the “Conqueror”, especially for his successful **conquest of Constantinople in 1453, ending the Byzantine Empire.**
- He renamed the city **Istanbul** and made it his capital, investing heavily in its rebuilding and repopulation.
- Istanbul became a cosmopolitan imperial city as he invited Christians and Jews to return after the war.

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“Fātiḥ” Sultan Mehmet II

- Mehmet II was a patron of religion, the arts and scholarship, building mosques and madrassas, and a university.
- His successful conquests continued throughout his reign, as all of the Balkans and much of Southern and parts of Eastern Europe were added to the empire.
- These conquests dealt a serious blow and created an ongoing threat to Christian Europe.
- The taking of Constantinople was not only a symbolic victory for Islam, but also gave the Ottomans control over maritime trade routes.

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Hagia Sophia

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Ottoman Caliphate

- In 1362, Sultan Murad I (r. 1362-1389) conquered Edirne and declared himself “Caliph”.
- Mehmed II strengthened that claim, as the Ottoman’s fulfilled the long-standing Muslim goal of capturing Constantinople in 1453.
- Selim I’s conquest of most of the Umayyad and ‘Abbāsīd lands, and control of Mecca and Medina, further solidified the image of the Ottomans as leaders of the Islamic world, the first non-Arab caliphate.

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Suleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566)

- Suleyman was a brilliant military strategist and general.
- He expanded the empire in Southern Europe and North Africa.
- His expansion was finally stopped when he lay siege to Vienna but failed to capture it.
- Also called Suleyman Qanūnī the “Law Giver”
- Suleyman was a patron of the arts (e.g., architecture and poetry)
- Under his reign, Istanbul the cultural center of the Islamic world.

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Siege of Vienna, 1525

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Ottoman Empire, 1299-1923

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