

7/8 World History

Week 20

Byzantine Empire & Islam

Monday

Do Now

What are the three reasons that Rome fell?

Objectives

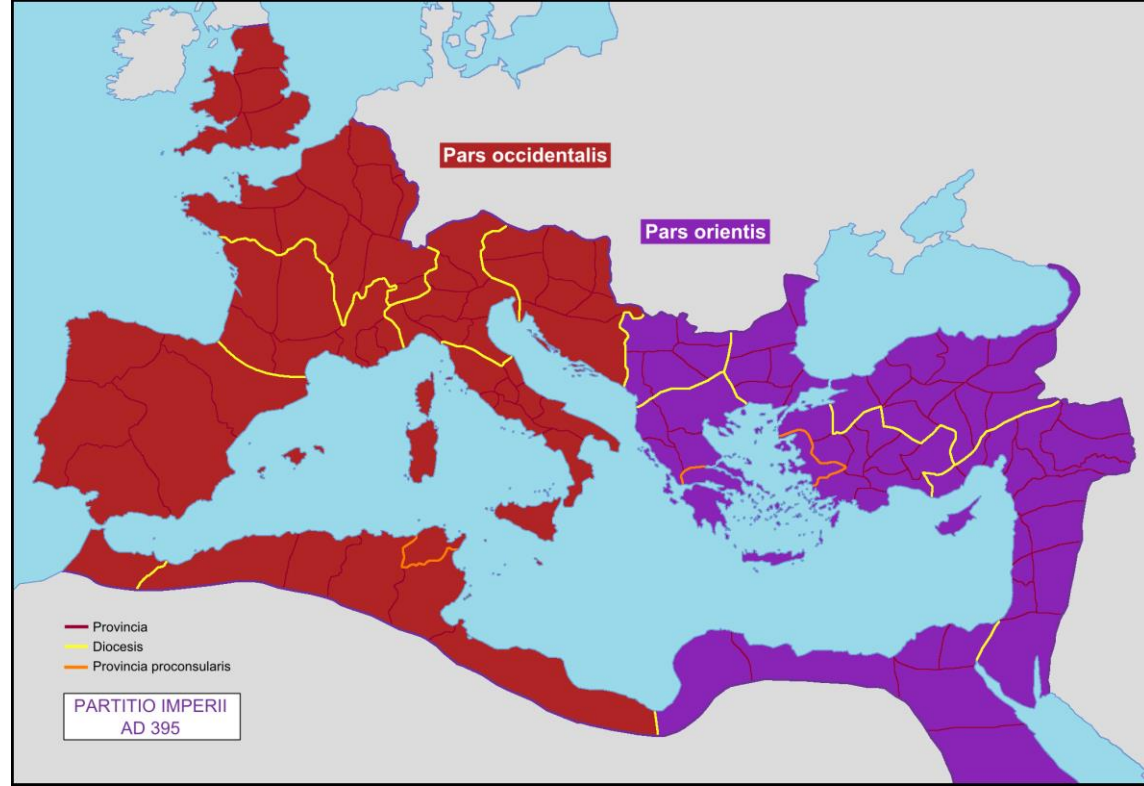
Understand the concepts of continuity and change over time.

Key Terms

Term	Definition	Sentence
Pagan	A term used by monotheists (such as Jews, Christians, and Muslims) to describe polytheistic religious traditions and people.	The word “pagan” comes from the Latin word for “village” or “countryside” – a reflection of early Christian times, when most Christians lived in large cities.
Nomadic	When a group of people move from place to place frequently.	Most hunter-gatherer and pastoralist societies are nomadic because they must follow food and water supplies for themselves or their herds of animals.

Eastern Roman Empire

- After the death of the emperor Constantine in 337 CE, the Roman Empire split into two separate halves again: Western and Eastern. Christianity continued to become more and more popular throughout the empire.
- In 391, Christianity was made the official religion of the empire and worshipping the traditional pagan gods and goddesses was now illegal.
- In the early 400's, while the Western Roman Empire was slowly crumbling from Germanic migration and a growing gap between rich and poor, the Eastern Roman Empire was in a better state.
- The Eastern Roman Empire had a richer, more stable economy, and the capital city of Constantinople (named after Constantine) was actually larger and more of a center of art and learning than Rome by that time.
- The Eastern Romans, though, had a growing problem: the Huns.



The Huns



- The **Huns** were a group of nomadic tribes who had recently moved into the lands north of the Eastern Roman Empire.
- They were a **warrior society originally from Asia**, near the western edge of China. They were fierce warriors who travelled on horseback, and now that they were in Europe, they were drawn to the rich villages of the Eastern Roman Empire.
- The Huns were led by a powerful chief that the Romans called simply Attila the Hun. He led raid after raid into the Eastern Roman territory, each time getting a little closer to the capital of Constantinople.
- The Hun raids were part of the **reason why the Eastern Romans were unable to send troops to Rome** to help protect them against the Germanic invaders. They were too busy trying to protect their own cities from the Huns.
- When Attila the Hun suddenly died in 453, the Eastern Romans were finally safe because the Hun Empire quickly disappeared.

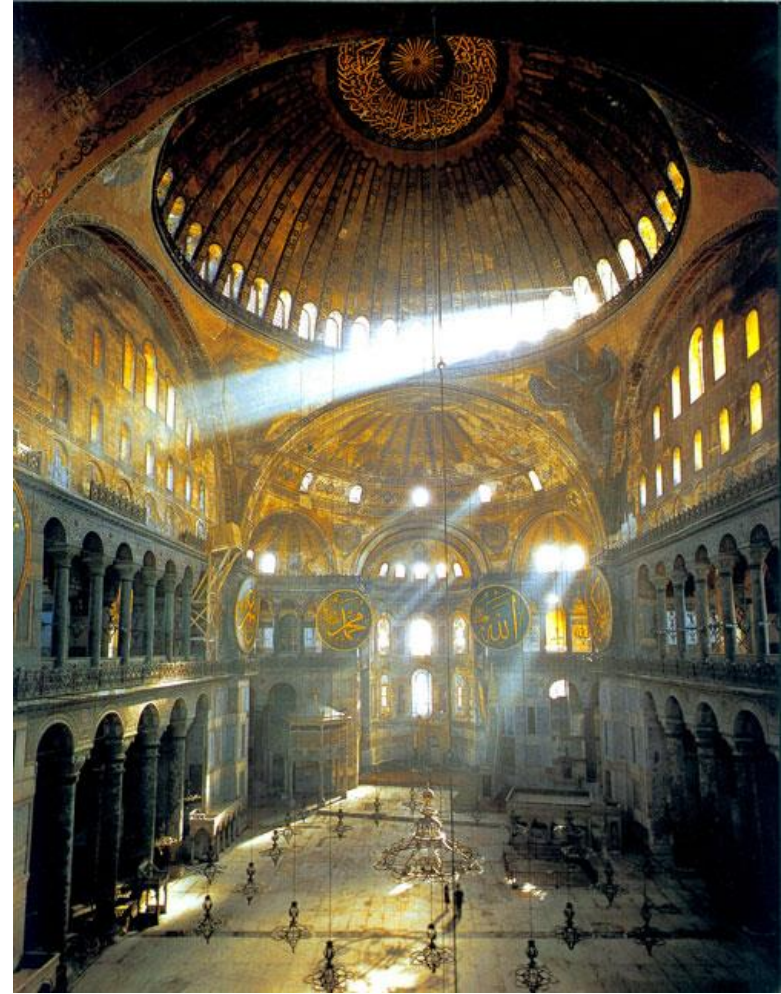
Byzantium

- When the Western Roman Emperor was defeated by a Germanic general in 476, the western half of the Roman empire completely fell apart. The eastern half, though, was doing fine now that the Huns were no longer a threat.
- Although the Eastern Romans continued to think of themselves as Romans, historians begin to refer to the area as the **Byzantine Empire** after this time, named after the old Greek name for Constantinople (Byzantium).
- The Eastern Romans/Byzantines were, in reality, quite different from the Romans in Italy. Many of the Byzantine people were actually of **Greek ancestry**, spoke the Greek language, and had great respect for Greek philosophy and art. The Italian Romans, on the other hand, spoke Latin and were more focused on the accomplishments of the old Roman Republic.



Justinian

- About 50 years after the Western Roman Empire fell, in 527, the Byzantines got a new emperor named **Justinian**, who is now remembered as the greatest Byzantine emperor.
- He came from a poor family far away from the capital of Constantinople, but raised his way through the ranks of the Byzantine army and became a general before being declared emperor by his troops at the age of 45.
- Justinian was an ambitious ruler and **wanted to reconquer the western half of the former Roman Empire from the Germanic invaders**. Although he was not totally successful, he did manage to conquer a lot of territory, including the city of Rome, and parts of northern Italy, Sicily, and the coast of North Africa.
- In addition to his military victories, he had many achievements in developing Byzantine society. He built a huge Christian church in the center of Constantinople, called the Hagia Sophia (shown above), that was the **largest church in the world** at the time.
- He also reorganized and rewrote a lot of the old Roman laws, creating a **new law code** called the Corpus Juris Civilis ("Body of Civil Law"). Justinian's law code formed the basis of the legal systems in much of modern-day Europe, including France, Spain, and many others.



Plague

- In the year 541, right when Justinian was at the height of his success reconquering Roman territory in Western Europe, disaster struck the Byzantines back home in Constantinople with a **devastating plague**.
- The plague started in Egypt and quickly spread to the capital of Constantinople, where it was carried all around by the city's rats.
- Over the next year, 40% of the city's population died and many more fled to uninfected cities, which only spread the plague further. In the course of just 2 years, around **25 million people died** throughout the Byzantine Empire.
- The plague had a terrible effect on the Byzantine Empire. With so many people dead, entire villages were empty and abandoned, and there were a lot **fewer people to pay taxes**, which meant that Justinian had no more money to continue conquering and improving the city of Constantinople.
- Justinian continued as emperor for 20 more years, but his successes were cut short by the plague. His wise ruling kept the empire from completely falling apart, but it was severely weakened and the **economy never fully recovered**.



The symptoms of the plague were a sudden fever and large black boils all over the body, often killing the victim in less than 24 hours.

Constant Warfare

- Unfortunately for the Byzantines, the plague effected them, but not their enemies. After Justinian died and was replaced by a series of weaker emperors, the Byzantines' enemies took advantage of their weakened state to attack their cities and slowly shrink their borders.
- In the early 600's, the Byzantines' main enemy were the Persians, who controlled most of the Middle East at that time. They fought many wars with the Byzantines and chipped away at their eastern borders.
- At the same time, a tribe called the Bulgars began slowly taking away the Byzantines' territory in the north.
- In the 670's, a new, unexpected enemy arrived at the Byzantine Empire's borders: the Arabs. Although they used to be a collection of poor, nomadic tribes always at war with each other, they had recently unified under a new religion and become a powerful military force.
- The Arabs got as far as the gates of Constantinople, but were never able to enter and attack the city, thanks to the mysterious Byzantine military weapon called **Greek fire** - [a liquid they sprayed on people and ships that continued to burn even in water.](#)



Exit Ticket

What stayed the same in the Byzantine Empire from the Roman Empire? What changed? Does this surprise you? Why or why not?

Homework

- Constantinople reading & questions

Tuesday

Do Now

What do you know about the religion of Islam (the people are known as Muslims)?

List 3 questions that you have about Islam or Muslims.

Objectives

Make connections between Islam and the other Abrahamic religions.

- "From Polytheism to Islam" reading
- "Islam: Beliefs & Practices" reading

Exit Ticket

Were your questions from the Do Now answered? What are the answers? If you still don't know the answers, what are some ways you could find out?

Homework:

Finish annotating text.

Finish Islam column on religions chart.

Block Day

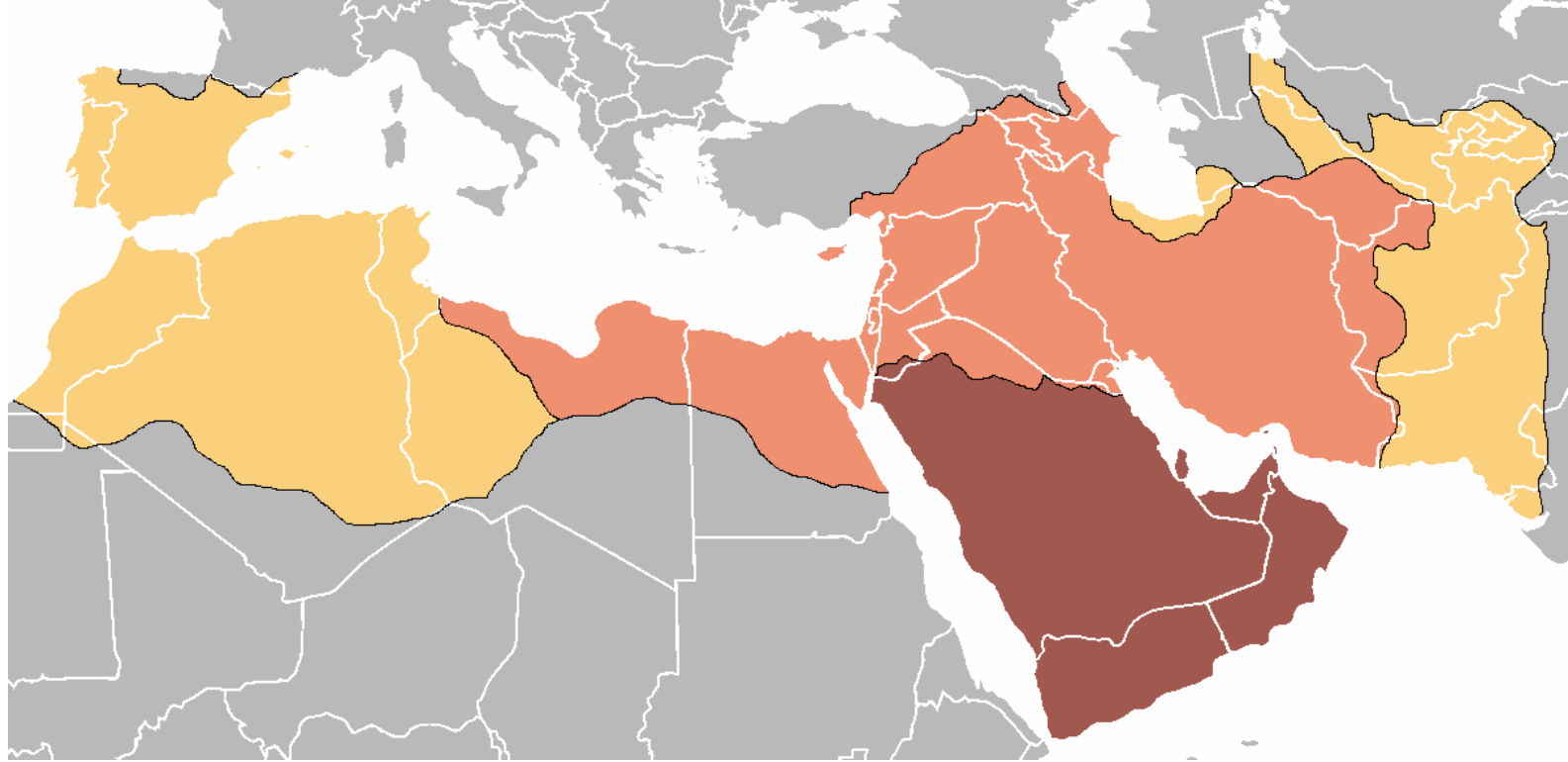
Do Now

What usually happens when a king dies without an obvious heir (person to take his place)? Why?

Objectives

Understand the concept of splinter groups/religious sects. Further examine the results of ambiguous succession.

Area in dark red
conquered during
Muhammad's life



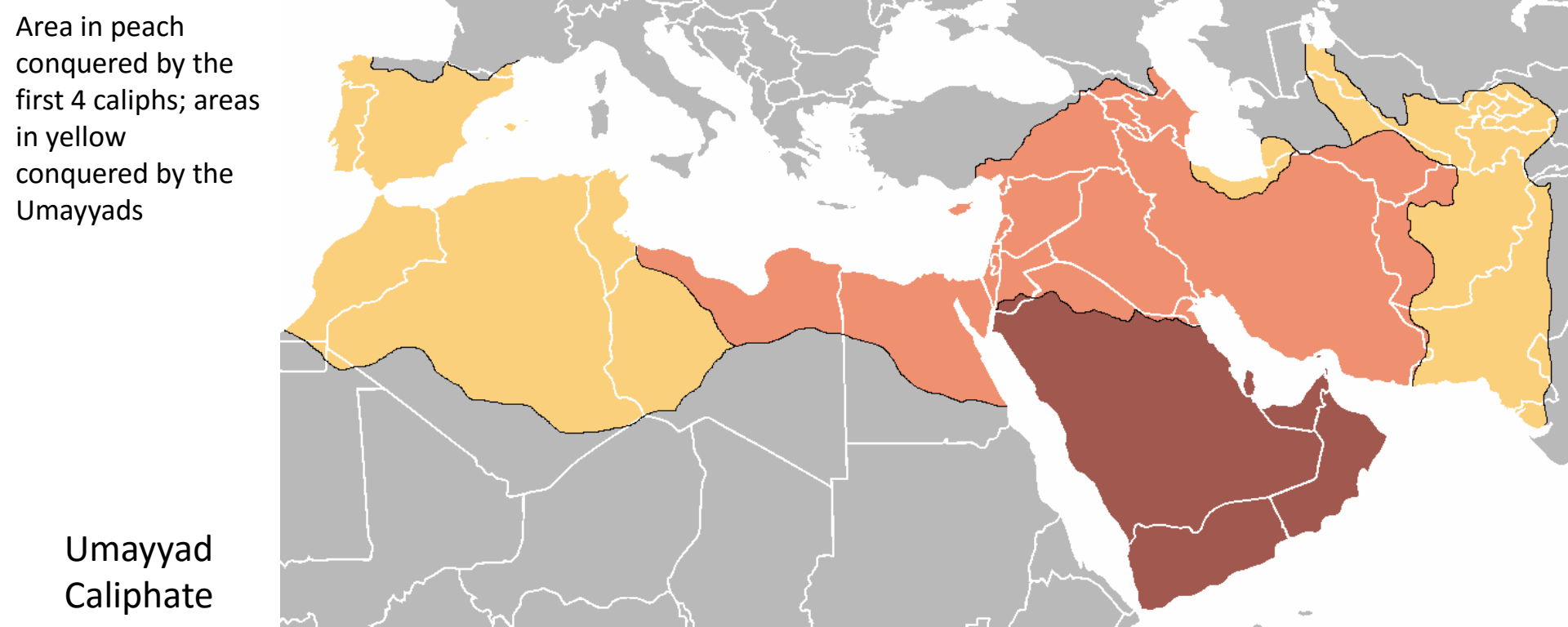
Islamic
Expansion

- While Muhammad was still alive, he was a very popular leader among his new followers. After conquering the city of Mecca together, they continued travelling around Arabia, conquering more and more towns as they went.
- Muhammad and his army gave the towns and tribes they encountered a choice: join Islam and Muhammad's army, or fight. Most Arabs were so impressed with the way that Muhammad had united the warring tribes that they chose to join Muhammad instead of fighting him.
- Before he died, Muhammad and his army of followers managed to conquer and unite all the tribes of Arabia.
- When Muhammad died of an illness in 632, though, there was a problem - Muhammad had no son to succeed him.

Succession Crisis

- Although the new Islamic empire did not completely fall apart after Muhammad's death, the people were divided about who the next leader should be.
- Some people believed that Muhammad promised his son-in-law, Ali, to be the next leader, but a majority of people wanted his father-in-law, Abu Bakr, to be the next leader. In the end, Abu Bakr won and became the next **caliph** (Islamic religious leader).
- Under Abu Bakr and the two caliphs after him, the Islamic empire expanded greatly, conquering the entire Persian kingdom, and taking Syria, Egypt, and part of North Africa from the Byzantines.
- When the third caliph was assassinated, the people finally chose Ali to be the caliph. Ali, though, proved to be an unpopular caliph and spent most of his time as caliph fighting off enemies before he was finally assassinated by one.
- Ali's son, Hasan, then became caliph, but was soon poisoned by his father's chief rival. This man became the next caliph, and his descendants ruled for almost 100 years. They are known as the Umayyad Caliphate (**caliphate** = kingdom/empire).





- The Umayyad caliphs expanded the Islamic territory into most of the lands that Alexander the Great had conquered almost a thousand years before, spreading past Persia into the Indus Valley and Central Asia. They also conquered the rest of North Africa and moved up into Spain, making the Islamic empire even larger than Alexander's.
- While the first caliphs after Muhammad had been welcoming to new Muslim converts and non-Muslims in their lands, the Umayyad caliphs were much more exclusive, keeping all the power to themselves and the descendants of the original Muslims.
- **The Umayyad caliphs eventually began to be unpopular** among the majority of Muslims. Their exclusiveness and obsession with conquering made them seem **more concerned with earthly power than the religion** they were supposed to be leading.

Charles Martel

- Spain had been an important part of the Western Roman Empire, but after that half of the empire fell in 476, so did Spain. The country broke up into many small, unstable kingdoms that were constantly at war with each other. So when the Umayyads marched into Spain in the early 700's, it was easy for them to take over most of the country.
- After seeing how easy it was to conquer Spain, the **Umayyads decided they wanted to keep marching into Europe** and take advantage of the chaos left after Rome fell.
- In the year 732, the Muslim armies crossed over the tall mountains separating Spain from France and began taking over village after village.
- France, at that time, was also divided into many small, unstable kingdoms, but the situation was not quite as bad as Spain. A powerful French leader named **Charles Martel** realized that his country would soon be take over by the Muslims as well, and decided to try to stop them.
- He travelled all over France gathering up a large army, and they met the Muslims in battle outside the city of Tours. The **Battle of Tours** ended up being a dramatic, bloody fight with thousands of soldiers on each side, and unexpectedly, the French army had a strong victory, even killing the Muslim general in battle.
- After the Battle of Tours, no Muslim army ever tried crossing into France from Spain again.



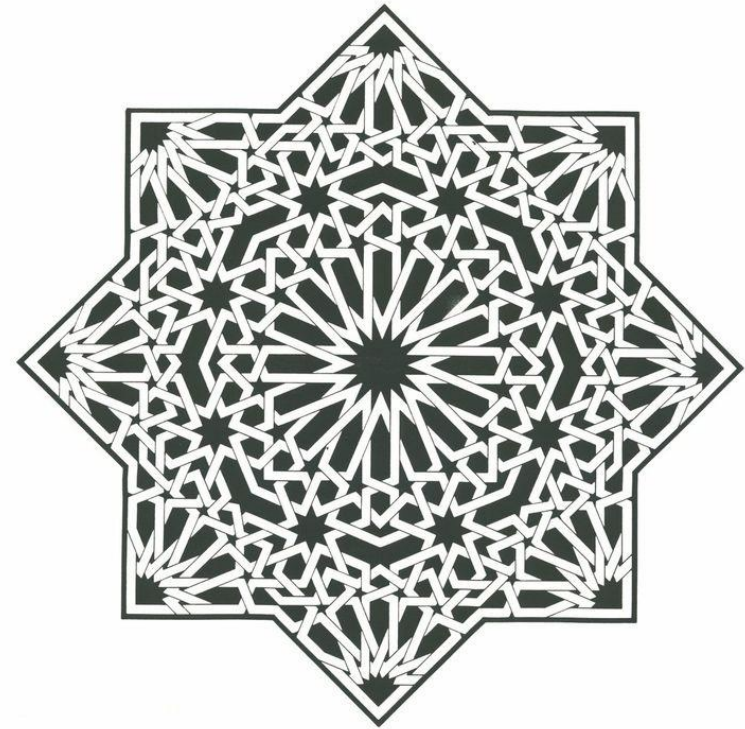
Abbasid Caliphate

- Not long after the Battle of Tours, there was a successful revolt against the Umayyads, and a new family came into power: the **Abbasids**.
- The Abbasid family proved to be much more popular than the Umayyads. Instead of lasting only 100 years, they lasted 500. Their caliphate (750-1258 CE) is remembered as the **Golden Age of Islam**, a time of great prosperity and cultural achievements.
- During the Abbasid Caliphate, Islam became much more similar to what it is today. One of the biggest changes was the role of women.
- In early Islam, women had played very important roles as leaders and teachers. Under the Abbasids, though, **women gradually lost power and importance**. Women came to be seen as inferior to men, and it was unacceptable for them to have positions of authority outside the home. Women also came to be seen as objects or possessions to be owned and traded from one family to another through marriage.
- As one writer from the time wrote, "The choicest women were imprisoned behind heavy curtains and locked doors, the strings and keys of which were entrusted into the hands of a faithful servant..."



Al-Andalus

- During the Abbasid Caliphate, in the year 929, Spain and part of North Africa broke off to become their own caliphate, known as **Al-Andalus**.
- Although Al-Andalus was far away from the Middle East, where Islam began and most Muslims lived, it became a **very important center for Islamic art, architecture, and learning**.
- The capital city of Córdoba, and the beautiful Alhambra palace not far away, are some of the most beautiful, best-preserved examples of Islamic architecture still in existence.
- Because of certain passages in the Quran and hadith, Islamic art and architecture took very unique, easily recognizable forms. One reason is that most Muslims believe the religion forbids drawing human and animal figures, which means that Islamic art focuses on nature and abstract geometric designs.
- Islamic art also emphasizes certain symbols, like the crescent moon and 8-pointed star, in particular, and uses decorative written verses from the Quran as decoration as well.

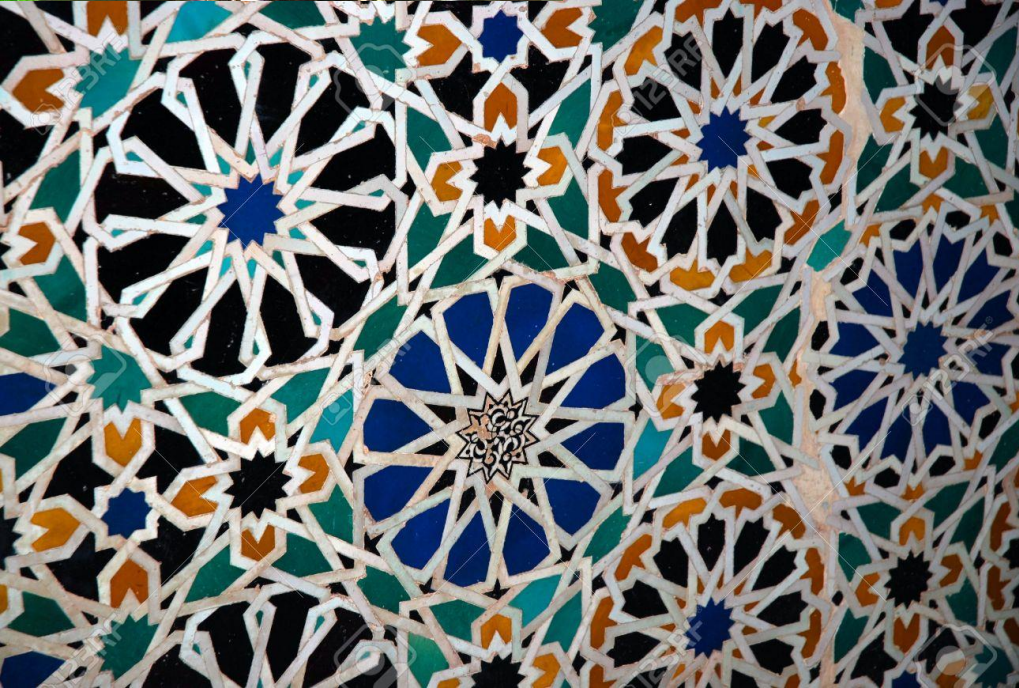




- Because most Muslim countries are in hot, sunny places, the **buildings were often built with central courtyards** that were kept in shade most of the day, and filled with plants and fountains.
- The call to prayer five times a day used to be literally called out by a person, so in order for their voice to travel far, mosques (Islamic places of worship) were usually built with tall, thin towers called **minarets**.



Alhambra Palace



Exit Ticket

Why did the Islamic religion splinter (break into more than one group)? Do you think this was avoidable, or inevitable? Why?

Homework

- Islamic Golden Age reading & questions
- Come prepared for a socratic seminar with your readings annotated!

Friday

Do Now

Who do you think contributed more to our modern society (who invented the most important things), Athens or the Islamic Arabs?

Objectives

Analyze the historic and ongoing impact of Islam through discussion.

Socratic Seminar

- Who contributed more to our modern society? Ancient Athens, or Islamic Arabs?
What kinds of connections can you see between the three "Abrahamic" religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam?
- In what ways did Islam change Arab culture? Why do you think Arab culture became so much more advanced when they adopted Islam?
- Are you surprised that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are still so influential, even though many other religions have disappeared? Why or why not?
- Do you think that Islam treats women unfairly? Can women and men have different roles and jobs, but still be equal? Or do different roles automatically make them unequal?
- Do you think it's a woman's job to cover up and dress modestly so that they don't tempt men? Why or why not?

Exit Ticket

Inner Circle:

What did you want to say, but not get a chance to? What do you think you could do better in the next socratic seminar?

Outer Circle:

What would you have said during the seminar if you had been in the inner circle? What can you learn from your partner's successes and mistakes today?