

# The Rise of Islam

# Arabia

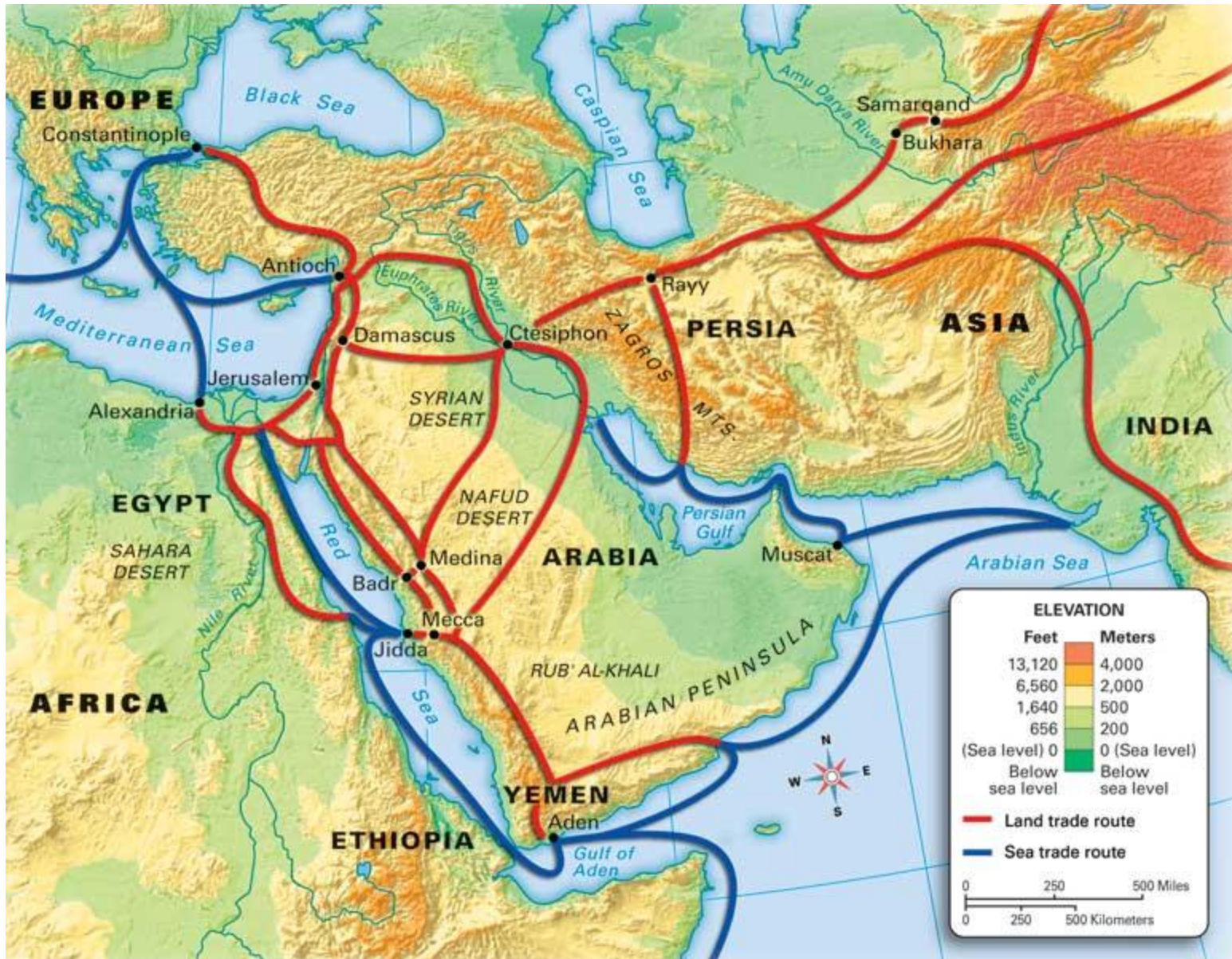
- Bedouin tribes
- Arabs, a **nomadic** people
- **Tribal** society
- Sheikh
- Shepherds and **caravan trade**; carriers of goods between the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea;
- Polytheistic, spirits inhabit natural objects – mountains, trees, etc.
- Sacred stone - **Ka'aba** – black meteorite;
- **Mecca** – commercial town;

# Geography



# Trade Increases

- 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries –
- Byzantine and Persian wars lead to **new trade route**; Mediterranean>Mecca>Yemen>Indian Ocean;
- Strained relations between **desert Bedouins and wealthy merchant class** in towns;



# Muhammad (570-632)

Born in **Mecca**, merchant family, orphaned at 6;  
**caravan manager**; marries rich widow, Khadija;  
merchant in Mecca;

troubled by growing gap between Bedouin values and  
values of the affluent commercial elites;

**meditates** in the hills;

believes he encounters the angel **Gabriel**; experiences a  
**revelation** from Allah;

Allah already revealed himself in past through people like  
Moses and Jesus, but Muhammad would receive the final  
and **complete revelation**;

# Muhammad

- **preaches** to residents in Mecca
- regarded as madman, charlatan or a threat to the social and political order;
- Muhammad and followers **persecuted**;
- **622 leaves Mecca** and retreats to Yathrib – later **Medina; Hegira** – first date on Islamic calendar;
- first Muslim community formed in Medina;
- returns to Mecca with a **military force** – conquers Mecca
- Converts townspeople; 630 -**destruction of idols**;

# Teachings

- **Islam – submission** to the will of God;
- Islam is **monotheistic**
- There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet – final and complete revelation;
- Allah – **creator** of the universe
- goal is salvation and eternal life



# Quran

- sacred book of Islam
- 114 suras-chapters
- ethical guidebook
- code of law
- political theory

# Fundamental Tenets

- Need to **obey the will of Allah**
- Basic ethical code consists of the **5 Pillars**
  1. **Belief** in Allah and Muhammad as his prophet;
  2. **Prayer** 5x day and public prayer on Friday;
  3. Holy month of **Ramadan**, **fasting** from dawn to sunset;
  4. **Pilgrimage** to Mecca-  
**the Hajj**
  5. **Giving Alms** – charity;  
**zakat**



# Haj



# Sharia Law

Regulates daily life:

No gambling

No pork

No alcohol

No dishonest behavior;

Strict sexual mores; limited contact between unmarried;

Women to keep themselves modest and covered;

Arranged marriages

No more than four wives;

# The Arab Empire

- Muslims saw **no separation between political and religious authority;**
- Submission to Allah meant submission to the prophet;
- the **problem of succession!**
- Followers select Abu Bakr as caliph; temporal and religious leader of the Muslim community;

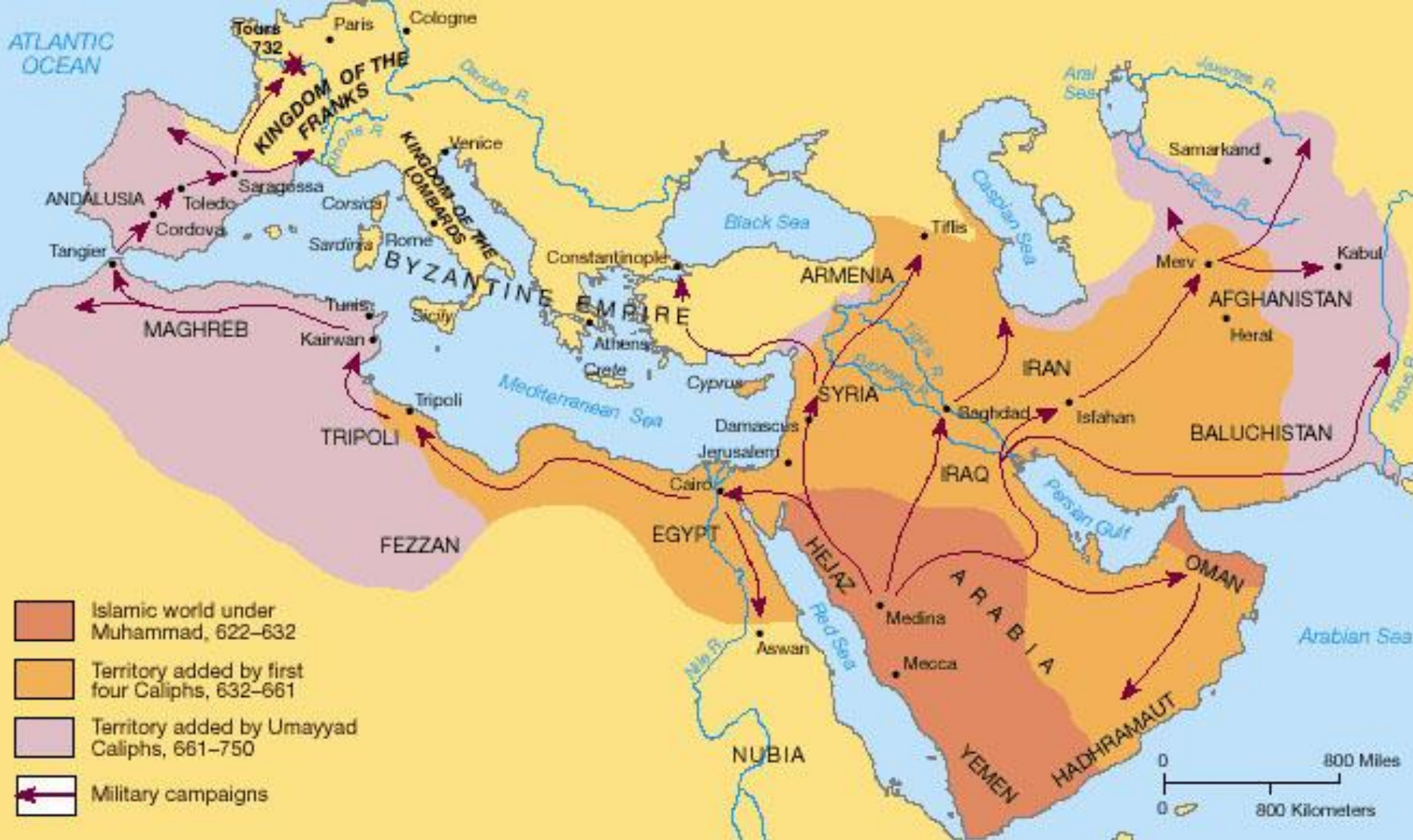
# Jihad

At least two meanings:

- The struggle **against the passions** and against the evil within themselves;
- Violent action **against the enemies of Islam**; Holy War; the expansion of the world of Islam into the realm of the unbelievers;

# Creation of an Empire

- Islam inspired a **zeal and fervor** among the Arab tribes; **conquest**;
- attack the neighboring Byzantine and Persian Sassanian Empires; 636 defeat Byzantine army at Yarmuk; 637 defeat Persian force;
- 640 conquer Syria and Cairo;
- by 650 conquered entire Persian Sassanid Empire;
- rest of Egypt and North Africa;





# How to account for this remarkable expansion?

- channeling **energies of new converts**;
- prolonged drought on Arabian peninsula;
- Byzantines weakened by plague;
- Meccan desire to **extend their trade routes** and bring surplus-producing regions under their control;

# How to account? cont.

- Byzantine and Persian empires weakened each other;
- **strength and mobility of the unified Bedouin armies** with their skilled cavalry;

\*\*\* Led by a series of brilliant generals, the Arabs assembled a large, unified, highly motivated army whose valor was enhanced by the belief that **Muslim warriors who died in battle were guaranteed a place in paradise;**

# Muslim Administration of Conquered Areas

- pagans, polytheists put to the sword;
- conversion of Christians and Jews usually voluntary but **under pressure**; people of the Book; second class citizens, special tax;
- Those who chose not to convert were required to submit to Muslim rule and to **pay a head tax** in return for exemption from military service; required of all Muslim males;

# Rise of the Umayyads

**A. Main Challenge to Growing Empire: no agreement on successor to Muhammed;**

Abu Bakr                      v.                      Ali

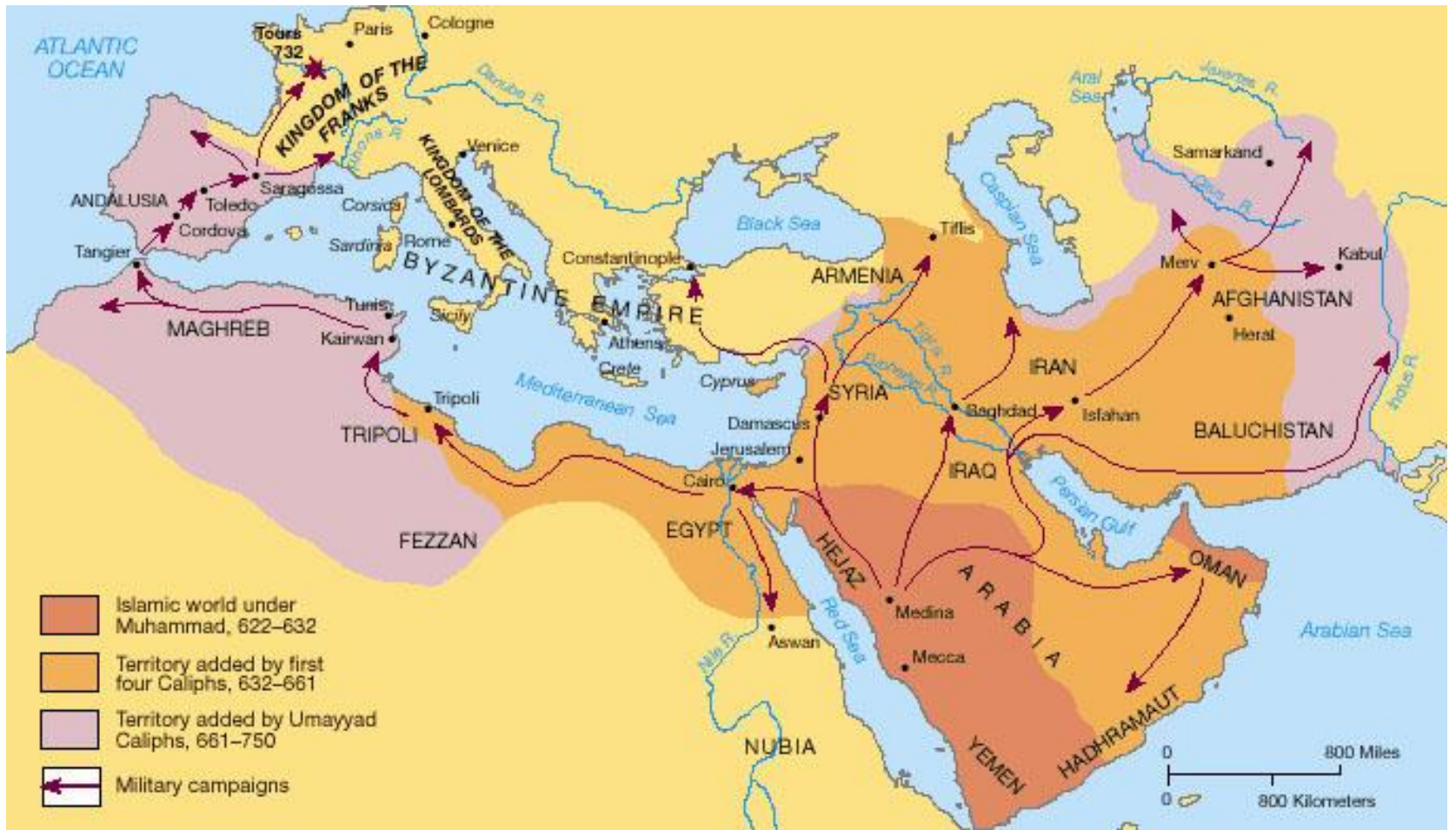
Umar

Uthman (assassinated)

Ali (assassinated)

Mu'awiya (hereditary caliphate)

**Umayyad Dynasty** capital at **Damascus**, Syria



**B. Continued Expansion:** 8<sup>th</sup> century – across North Africa (Berbers);

710 southern Spain;

Jebra Tariq

Muslim state in Spain, center in Andalusia

Stopped in southern France by Franks under

Charles Martel – Tours and Poitier

## **C. Main Adversary of Umayyad dynasty: the Byzantines;**

717 attack Constantinople

Greek Fire; Byzantines save the Empire and Christian Europe;

## **D. Islamic Rule in the East:**

### Mesopotamia and Persia

- tension between Arab and non-Arab Muslims;
- In Iraq, Hussein, Ali's second son contested legitimacy of Ummayyad dynasty; supporters of Ali called Shiite; defeated
- Permanent **schism between Shiite (partisans of Ali) and Sunni (orthodox);**



# Fall of Umayyad Dynasty

- described as increasingly decadent, morally corrupt behavior; one caliph allegedly swam in pool of wine;
- accurate or attempt to delegitimize the dynasty?
- similar to accusations about what other government we learned about?
- overthrown by Abu al-Abbas

# Abbasids

## **A. Brought political, economic and social change to the world of Islam;**

- tried to break down distinctions between Arab and non- Arab Muslims; all may hold civil and military offices
- helped open Islam to the influence of occupied civilizations;
- Intermarriage

## **B. New capital in Baghdad** on the Tigris R.

river traffic to Persian Gulf and caravan route;



# Abbasid Dynasty continued

- al-Ma'mun – patron of learning;

## **C. Growing Prosperity:**

- controlled trade routes;
- Baghdad center of enormous commercial market:
- Paper from China, rice, sugar, sorghum, cotton from India and Southeast Asia;
- Glass, wine, indigo dye to China;

# Fall of Abbasids

- political instability and division; rivalries and disputes over succession – civil wars;
- wealth contributed to financial corruption;
- luxury undermined strict moral code of Islam; sexual promiscuity, harems, widespread divorce, homosexuality, alcohol;