

# Islamic Empires

# Expansion

- \* Many clan fought each other
- \* Clans were unified under Islam
- \* Began military attacks against neighboring people
- \* Defeated Byzantine area of Syria
- \* Egypt
- \* Northern Africa
- \* Qur'an permitted warfare through *jihad*-  
"struggle in the way of God"
- \* Muslim warriors were guaranteed a  
place in paradise if died in battle



# Political Rule

- \* *caliph*-“religious & political leader”
- \* After Muhammad’s death, many of his next successors (caliphs) were assassinated.
- \* Conquered Christians and Jews were allowed to practice their religion because they were religious “People of the Book”
- \* According to Muslim rule, Christians and Jews had to pay taxes or convert to Islam



# Abbasid Dynasty

- \* In 762 AD, created a new capital at Baghdad (near the Tigris River)
- \* Baghdad became a center of trade
- \* Conquered much of rich Roman provinces
- \* Controlled trade routes to the East
  - \* by ship & camel caravan
  - \* From Africa=gold & slaves
  - \* From China= silk & porcelain
  - \* From India= sandalwood & spices
  - \* From western India= textiles (cloth)
  - \* From Egypt= grain
  - \* From Iraq= Linens, dates, precious stones
- \* Hārūn al-Rashīd, most famous leader, encouraged learning, art and writing
- \* Dynasty decline due to fighting over successor, financial corruption, & land divided



# Seljuk Turks

- \* Nomadic group from Asia
- \* Cairo, Egypt became center of trade
- \* Converted to Islam
- \* Conquered Baghdad, ruler became *sultan* (ruler)
- \* Tried to conquer the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Roman Empire)
- \* This began the Crusades



# Living in Islamic Empires

- \* The *bazaar*, or covered market, was an important part of every Muslim city/town
- \* A place to buy, sell & bargain. Trade routes often passed through the cities with large bazaars



- \* Muslims were considered equal
- \* Non-muslims were not considered equal
- \* Women
  - \* could own property and were to be protected by men
  - \* Every woman was to have a male guardian
  - \* Women covering their whole bodies with clothing was common
  - \* Arranged marriages were common
  - \* Qur'an allows men to have more than one wife but not more than 4
  - \* Wives were expensive because they had to pay a dowry (gift, money or property) to the bride. So many did not have multiple wives
  - \* Women could divorce
  - \* Adultery was forbidden
- \* Eventually women lost many rights and were treated like slaves in some areas. The treatment of women is still under debate by Muslims today
- \* Many male slaves were used in the military. Many women slaves were used for domestic work
  - \* Some slaves could purchase freedom. It was considered a good act to free them
  - \* By law, slaves were treated fairly



# Social System

# Education

- \* Familiar with Greek philosophers and translated works of Plato and Aristotle into Arabic
- \* Preserved much of Greek & Roman culture by translating works
  - \* These texts were put into a library “House of Wisdom” in Baghdad for scholars to study
    - \* It is because of the Muslim world that we have the writings of Plato and Aristotle today....and thanks to the Chinese for the process of paper making!
  - \* Mathematics were also brought from India
  - \* Studied medicine and how diseases could be spread with contaminated water
    - \* These texts were written and used by medieval Europe!
  - \* Set up observatories in Baghdad to study astronomy.
    - \* Knew the earth was round
    - \* Named many of the stars
    - \* Perfected the *astrolabe*, that helped sailors determine their locations using the stars
      - \* This will later help discoveries find the Americas!
- \* Literature was written such as “Arabian Nights”, a collection of folktales, fables and romances... which led to the story of Aladdin!





# Art and Architecture

- \* Art was a mixture of Arab, Turkish & Persian traditions
- \* Mosques were built
- \* Palaces had protective walls, gates and baths
- \* Castles resembled a fortress and had holes over the entrance gate to pour boiling oil over the heads of attacking forces
- \* This was later used in medieval Europe!

