

SSWH5: Examine the political, economic, and cultural interactions within the Medieval Mediterranean World between 600 CE/ AD and 1300 CE/AD



Element A: Analyze the origins of Islam and the growth of the Islamic Empire

ORIGINS OF ISLAM

- ❑ In 600 CE the northern portion of Middle East was dominated by the Christian Byzantine Empire and the Zoroastrian Sassanid Persian Empire.
- ❑ The Arabian Peninsula lacked any centralized political authority and was dominated by independent Arab tribes that profited from a lucrative trade route that transported frankincense and myrrh from southern Arabia and East Africa to the Byzantine and Sassanid Empires.
- ❑ In 570 Muhammad was born in a prosperous trading town along this trade route, Mecca.
 - Mecca also served as an important pilgrimage site for the polytheistic Arabs as it was home to an important temple to these gods, the Ka'ba.
 - As an adult, Muhammad had a lucrative career as a merchant and eventually married a wealthy widow, Khadijah.
 - Financially secure, Muhammad now turned to spiritual pursuits which included meditating in the mountain caves outside of Mecca.



ORIGINS OF ISLAM

- ❑ In about 610, Muhammad began to have visions while meditating.
 - He came to believe that these visions were the Angel Gabriel who had been charged by the one true God (Allah in Arabic) to deliver a message to Muhammad.
 - The message delivered in these revelation outlined the basic beliefs of Islam and were eventually recorded in the Quran.
- ❑ While Muslims believe that the Jewish and Christian holy books contain religious truth, only the Quran contains the exact words of God.
- ❑ These basic beliefs of Islam (outlined in the Six Articles of Faith) include the belief in one God that created all of things.
- ❑ Muslims believe that God sent a series of messengers (prophets) including Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.
 - Each prophet delivered a divine message which is preserved in the Books of God, these include the Torah, Gospels, Psalms, and Scrolls.



ABBASID CALIPHATE & FATIMID CALIPHATE

- The Abbasid caliphs were never able to maintain the level of political unity or centralized authority of the Umayyads.
 - Abbasid authority never extended to Iberia and by 969 a rival caliphate, the Fatimids controlled Northern Africa and parts of Palestine and the Arabian Peninsula.


