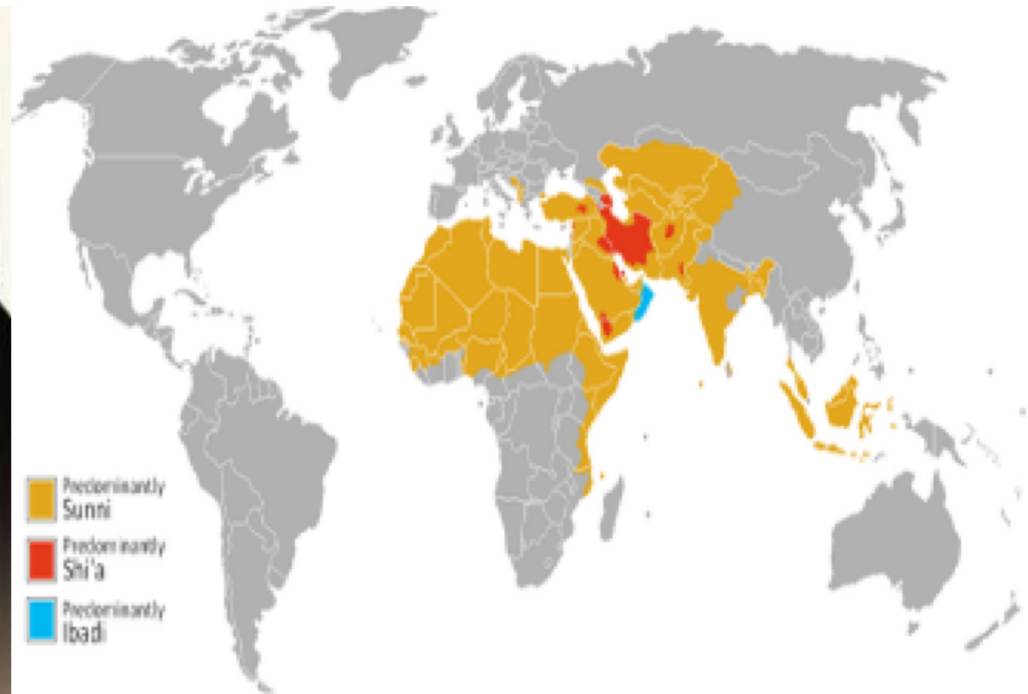


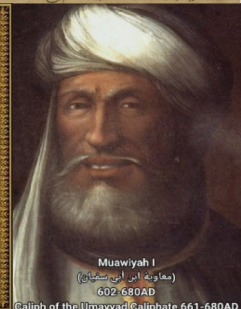
SSWH5: Examine the political, economic, and cultural interactions within the Medieval Mediterranean World between 600 CE/ AD and 1300 CE/AD



Element B: *Understand the reasons for the split between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims.*

Ali's Assassination

- ❑ While alive, Muhammad never established a plan for leadership of the Umma after his death.
 - The first three caliphs were selected from among his close companions and generally ruled without controversy until 656 when rebels from the army assassinated Uthman, the third caliph.
- ❑ The assassins then nominated Ali, a relative of Muhammad for the position.
 - Many in the community believed that Ali was Muhammad's legitimate heir because of sermon delivered by the Prophet at Ghadir al-Khumm in which he alluded to Ali as leader.
 - Ali accepted the position of caliph but he faced a challenge from two of Muhammad's close friends and his favorite wife A'isha.
 - This challenge resulted in the Battle of the Camel from which Ali emerged victorious.
 - However, after the battle Ali faced another challenge from a relative of the slain Uthman, the Syrian governor Mu'awiya.
 - This led to more armed conflict but this time the battles were inconclusive.
 - Ali and Mu'awiya agreed to negotiate a truce.
 - Some of Ali's followers, aggravated by his willingness to negotiate, assassinated him in 661.



Reasons for Sunni and Shi'a Split

- The assassination of Ali cleared the way for Mu'awiya to assume the position of caliph and establish the Umayyad Caliphate.
 - However, Ali's son Husayn revolted in 680 hoping to reestablish his family's right to rule.
- The Umayyad caliph ordered Husayn and his family massacred.
- The violent death of Husayn made him a martyr to his followers who broke away and formed the Shi'a branch of Islam while the supporters of the Umayyads became known as the Sunni.

