MIDDLE EAST IN THE MODERN WORLD

JSIS A 402
instructed by Denis Bašić
Two important characteristics distinguishing modern history are:

- The emergence of an integrated world market established by the Western powers to serve their interests binding together nations in a global division of labor.
- The emergence of the world system of nation-states.
To understand the modern history of the Middle East or any other region, one must understand its roots in the early modern history.

- The period from about the beginning of the 16th century through the first half of the 18th century is considered early modern history.
Three important events that marked the early modern era and that occurred during the first decades of the 16th century are:

1. Emergence of three large-scale and long-lived Islamic empires
2. Commercial Revolution in Europe
3. Protestant Reformation
FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO THE DAWN OF A NEW AGE

- Chapter One
FIVE PARTS MAKING THE ISLAMIC “CORE AREA”

- **Levant** (from eastern Mediterranean coast to the Euphrates river, and from the Taurus mountains to the northern border of the Arabian peninsula.)

- **Mesopotamia** (the territory between and surrounding the Euphrates and Tigris rivers)

- **Iran**

- **Egypt**

- **Arabian Peninsula**
Islam appeared in the Late Antiquity (Late Antiquity 400 CE - 700 CE)
The strongest powers of the time were

- **Byzantine Empire** (aka Eastern Roman Empire) with the capital in Constantinople established by the emperor Constantine in 324 C.E.

- **Sassanid (Sasanian) Empire** with the capital in Ctesiphon. The empire lasted from the early 3rd century C.E. until 651 C.E.
The Byzantine Empire Under Justinian. Justinian's reconquests of North Africa, Italy, and the coast of Spain severely strained the empire's resources.
THE SIEGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE - 1453
Ctesiphon was the imperial capital of the Persian Empire in Parthian and Sassanian times. The ruins of the city are located on the east bank of the Tigris, across the river from the Hellenistic city of Seleucia. Today, the remains of the city lies in Baghdad Governorate, Iraq, approximately 35 km south of the city of Baghdad. Ctesiphon was the largest city in the world in 570 until its fall in 637.
FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

- Mushahadah - Testimony of Faith
- Salah - 5 Daily Prayers
- Zakah - Almsgiving
- Sawm - Fasting during Ramadan
- Hajj - Pilgrimage to Mekka once in the lifetime if financially capable
After the death of the Prophet Muhammad (632) the four following “Rightly-Guided Caliphs” led the Islamic World

- **Abu Bakr** as-Sadiiq (632-634 C.E.)
- ‘**Umar** ibn al-Khattaab (634-644 C.E.)
- ‘**Uthman** ibn ‘Affaan (644-656 C.E.)
- ‘**Ali** ibn Abi Taalib (656-661 C.E.)
# The Shi’a Imams

**The Seveners = Ismailis**

1. ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib (600-661)
3. Husayn ibn ‘Ali (626-680)
5. Muhammad ibn ‘Ali (677-732)
6. Ja’far ibn Muhammad (702-765)
7. Ismail ibn Ja’far (722-765)

**The Twelvers = Ja’faris**

7. Musa ibn Ja’far (744-799)
8. ‘Ali ibn Musa (765-817)
10. ‘Ali ibn Muhammad (827-868)
12. Muhammad ibn al-Hassan (868 - unknown) = Mahdi

Watch the documentary *Imam Husayn in the eyes of non-Shia Muslims*
Umayyad Caliphate (661 - 750)
capital - Damascus
first leader the caliph Mu’awiyyah
extending from Eastern to Western Mediterranean
including al-Andalus (Andalusia / Spain)

Abbasid caliphate (750 - 930 / 1258)
capital - Baghdad
center of high learning, sciences, medicine,
intensive translations of ancient scholarship
AGE OF THE CALIPHS

Age of the Caliphs

- Expansion under the Prophet Mohammad, 622-632
- Additions during the Patriarchal Caliphate, 632-661
- Additions during the Umayyad Caliphate, 661-750

Legend:
- Brown: Peripheral peoples
- Black: Present international boundary
ABBASID CALIPHATE (750 - 1258)
MAJOR DIVISION OF WORLD MUSLIMS

- Sunni 85%
  - Predominant in most of the Islamic world except for the areas with Shi'a majority

- Shi'a 10%
  - Predominant in Iran, Southern Iraq, Lebanon, parts of Gulf, India
    - 7 Imamate Shi'a (Isma'ili)
      - Their modern leader is Agha Khan
    - 12 Imamate Shi'a (Twelvers)

- Sufism - Islamic Mysticism

- Other 5%
- Other religions
SOURCES OF ISLAM

- Qur’an (Divine Word)
- Hadith (accounts of the words and actions of the Islamic prophet Muhammad)

The Sunni Collections of Hadith

- Sahih Bukhari by Imam Bukhari (d. 870) includes 7275 hadiths
- Sahih Muslim by Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj (d. 875) includes 9200
- Sunan Abi Da'ud by Abu Da'ud (d. 888)
- Sunan al-Tirmidhi by al-Tirmidhi (d. 892)
- Sunan al-Sughra by al-Nasa'i (d. 915)
- Sunan Ibn Maja by Ibn Maja (d. 886)
The Shia Collections of Hadith - The Four Books

- *Kitab al-Kafi* by Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni al-Razi (d. 941) 15,176 hadiths
- *Man la yahduruhu al-Faqih* by Muhammad ibn Babuya (d. 991) 9,044 hadiths
- *Tahdhib al-Ahkam* by Shaykh Muhammad Tusi (d. 1067) 13,590 hadiths
- *Al-Istibsar* by Shaykh Muhammad Tusi (d. 1067) 5,511 hadiths

Notice the time when the compilers of the Sunni and Shi‘a hadiths lived. Remember that Muhammad died in 632 C.E.

Islamic reformists & other rationalists claim that hadiths could have gotten seriously corrupted during two to four centuries of oral transmissions.

Islamic traditionalist theologians, on the other side, trust the tradition of oral transmission, strong memorization skills, as well as the ethics of transmitters. Additionally, they add that some hadiths were written down even before they were compiled. However, the fact remains that the vast majority of hadiths were recorded two to four centuries after the Prophet’s death.
PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

Monotheists having the New Testament (Injil) and/or the Old Testament (Torah) as their holy books

- Christians
- Jews
- Zoroastrians
  (added later due to the fact that they had their holy book Avesta though they are essentially dualists, not monotheists)
Quran 9:4 “Excepted are those with whom you made a treaty among the polytheists and then they have not been deficient toward you in anything or supported anyone against you; so complete for them their treaty until their term [has ended]. Indeed, Allah loves the righteous [who fear Him].”

Quran 9:5 “And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they should repent, establish prayer, and give zakah, let them [go] on their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

Quran 9:6 “And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allah. Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know.”
Quran 5:48 “And We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it. So judge between them by what Allah has revealed and do not follow their inclinations away from what has come to you of the truth. To each of you We prescribed a law and a method. Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation [united in religion], but [He intended] to test you in what He has given you; so race to [all that is] good. To Allah is your return all together, and He will [then] inform you concerning that over which you used to differ.”

Quran 2:62 “Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans [before Prophet Muhammad] - those [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness - will have their reward with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.”
The groups that made the longest-lasting impact on the Middle East were the Turkic-speaking peoples from Central Asia

- **Seljuk sultanate** (11-13th century) became the powerful Ottoman sultanate (1281-1922)

- **Mamluks** (1250-1517) - Egyptian slave soldiers’ dynasty

- **Ghaznavids** (962-1186) - ruled in the area of modern day Afghanistan; created under the Turkic Khan Alp Tigin

- **Ak Koyunlu** (1378-1508) - the White Sheep Turkomans - ruled present-day Azerbaijan, eastern Anatolia, northern Iraq and western Iran

- **Kara Koyunlu** (1375 to 1468) - the Black Sheep Turkomans - ruled what is today Azerbaijan Republic, including present-day northwestern Iran and Iraq
Saffarids (861-1003) - ruled in the area Modern-day Afghanistan and Iran; created by Ya'qub bin Laith as-Saffar (?-879?) - originally a coppersmith (saffar) from eastern Persia. In Iranian folklore, Ya'qub is sometimes regarded as an Iranian Robin Hood because according to legend he stole from the wealthy and helped the poor.

Samanids (875-999) - Persian dynasty in Central Asia and eastern Iran, named after its founder Saman Khoda. It was among the first native Persian dynasties in Persia and Central Asia after the Arabian conquest and collapse of Sassanid Persian empire.

Ghurids (1175-1192) - Tajik - Sunni Muslim dynasty - ruled over a massive empire including parts of present day Iran, Pakistan, India, Turkistan, Iraq and parts of other Arab countries

Some Persian/Farsi speaking dynasties that influenced the Middle East
The Seljuks were a group of Nomadic Turkic Warrior Leaders from Central Asia who established themselves in the Middle East during the 11th Century as guardians of the declining Abbasid caliphate.

After 1055 founded the great Seljuk Sultanate; an empire centered in Baghdad and including Iran, Iraq, and Syria. They helped to prevent the Fatimids of Egypt from making Shiite Islam dominant throughout the Middle East.

In the 12th century, they blocked inland expansion by the Crusader states on the Syrian Coast. Their defeat of the Byzantines at the battle of Manzikert (1071) opened the way for the Seljuk occupation of Anatolia.

Watch the History Channel Documentary on the Ottoman Empire.
The Ottomans trace their origin back to the legendary Seljuk leader **Osman** who lived in the **13th century** in the northwestern Anadolia.

In his time Anatiolia was a fairly lawless land full of **ghazis** who plundered the neighboring Byzantine territories.

The wealth of ghazis attracted the artisans, merchants and religious scholars to the country as well as peasants.
Ottoman Empire (1281-1922) was at its peak in the beginning of the 16th century during the reign of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent (1494-1566).

Two sieges of Vienna in 1529 and in 1683.
Inherited by Qajar Dynasty (1796-1925)

Safavids established state boundaries that coincide with the borders of modern Iran

Safavids also made Shi’ism the official religion of their empire in 1501.
In the early 15th century, the Turkic pastoralists of northern Persia gave their allegiance to another legendary figure Safi al-Din, a Sufi leader, from whom the dynasty was born.

His Sufi followers wore a very specific red headdress due to which the Ottomans named them Qizilbash (red heads.)

This initially Persian religious movement spread even in the parts of the Ottoman empire.
In 1501, an alleged descendant of Safi al-Din with the name ‘Ismail proclaimed himself shah in the northern Persian city of Tabriz.

He was 14 when he took the throne and within 10 years he succeeded to unite the whole Persia.

Soon Shah ‘Ismail proclaimed Shi’ism the official religion of his realm inviting the Shi’a scholars from today’s Lebanon and Bahrain to live and work in his realm.
**Mughal Empire (1526-1857)**

- Founded by Central Asian Mughal Emperor Babur

- The Taj Mahal is a monument located in Agra in India, constructed between 1631 and 1654 by a workforce of 20,000. The Muslim Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan commissioned its construction as a mausoleum for his favorite wife, Arjumand Bano Begum, who is better known as Mumtaz Mahal.
The gunpowder empires dominated Asia, North Africa, and southeastern Europe in the sixteenth century.
Watch the History Channel Documentary *Inside Islam* to learn or refresh your knowledge of the basic tenets of the Islamic faith and history.

Answer the questions in the study guide #1 B available in Lecture Notes # 2 - *From Late Antiquity to the Dawn of the New Age.*