

Notes pss 156-166

Abd al-Rahman I

- Survived slaughter of Abbasids
- Conquest of Iberia (Al-Andalus)
- Growth of Cordoba - Great mosque
- Connection to other civilizations/Regions
- Cross-cultural connections - Cultural diffusion
- "people of the book"
- Translations of Greek texts

Pre-Islamic Arabia

Physical Geography

Pre-Islamic Culture

- Bedouin - Nomadic herders
- Limited urbanization
- Limited agriculture
- Society organized by clans/Tribes
- Trade hubs scattered in Arabia

Clan Dynamics / social organization

Clans = Related groups of individuals that traveled together

● Multiple Clans = Tribes - Rarely came together as one unit

- Why? - physical geography
- Cooperation to support within clans

Shaykhs - Clan/Tribal leaders

Clan Rivalries over resources

Consequences of frequent clan violence?

Towns and Trade

Mecca - Trade-based city founded by Umayyad clan

Umayyad dominate economics & politics in Mecca

- Pilgrimage site

- Ka'ba = ~~Religious~~ Pre-Islamic Religious shrine

Yathrib (Medina)

- Agriculture / trade

- Controlled by 5 clans

- Impact on power & unity of the city?

Family in Pre-Islamic Arabia

- Women = no higher status / Freedom than other contemporary cultures

Why?

- Evidence? (pg 162)

Culture

- Little focus on art & Architecture

- poetry - oral traditions (think Ancient Greece)

Religion - polytheistic / ~~Animism~~ Animism (nature spirits)

Allah = supreme god, but not often worshipped

most gods/spirits associated with physical geography

Muhammad & Islam

Byzantine & Sassanid Persia

- Attempts to influence bedouins
- Bedouin (Arab) migration = cultural diffusion
- Influence of monotheistic religions

Arab prophets rise in support of monotheism

Muhammad

- Merchant, marries widow of wealthy merchant
 - Travels = various cultural influences
 - Understanding of social/political rivalries among Arabs
 - Receives revelations from the Angel Gabriel - later written as the Qur'an
 - Begins preaching monotheistic ideas in Mecca
 - Umayyad see him as a threat
 - Growing power?
 - What does it mean for polytheistic shrine - Ka'ba
 - Muhammad moves to Medina - mediates clan rivalries
 - hijra - Muhammad's flight to Medina
 - Gains many followers
 - Medina begins to unify - Conflict with forces from Mecca - Victory against them
- ← more followers → proclaims Allah as the one true god → Ka'ba transformed to Islamic shrine

Arabs and Islam

Islam - Early converts = Arabs

- Unifying force for clans/tribes
- Umma - community of Islamic believers
 - Increased political unity
 - Single system of ethics - Increased social unity
 - zakat (tax for charity) - Increased economic unity
 - sharia - Islamic law - More unity
- Close connection to Judaism & Christianity.

Five pillars of Islam.