

ISLAMIC CIVILISATION

UNIT 8

THE BIRTH AND EXPANSION OF ISLAM

- Islamic civilisation is inseparable from the religion that gives it its name: **Islam**. This religion has its origin in the **Arabian Peninsula** in the early **7th century**.



TRIBES

- When Islam first emerged, the desert of the Arabian Peninsula was occupied by **tribes** that often confronted each other and did not have a political power that united them.
- Their religion was **polytheistic**. In other words, they believed in many gods. **Mecca** was a **sacred city** by this time, as people worshipped the Kaaba or black stone and different idols.
- Most of the population was **nomadic** and they lived by grazing goats and camels.
- There were also groups of **merchants**. They crossed the desert in **caravans** that traded goods from the Far East and the Mediterranean. The importance of these caravans favoured the emergence of **urban settlements** such as Mecca and Medina.

MUHAMMAD

- **Muhammad** was born in the city of Mecca in around 570. He travelled in his uncle's caravans until, after a period of meditation, he claimed to have received the call of **Allah**, the Arabic name for God. From that moment, he began **preaching** about a new monotheistic religion - Islam - which means 'submission (to Allah)'. His followers were called **Muslims**, which means 'those who submit (to Allah)'



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- Muhammad is the prophet of ISLAM
 - 570: he was born in Mecca.
 - 610: according to the legend, archangel Gabriel appeared before him and told him to preach a new religion called ISLAM.



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- 610 - 622: Muhammad preached Islam in Mecca. He became enemy of rich merchants & authorities because Islam denied polytheism, and Mecca's wealth was based in the pilgrimage to the Kaaba which had a polytheistic nature.



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- 622: Muhammad & his followers escaped from Mecca to Yathrib (renamed Medina = “City of the Prophet“). This event is known as HEGIRA, and it’s taken as the beginning of the Muslim calendar.

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- 622 – 630: Muhammad lived in Medina, where he became a political, religious & military leader:
 - He created the first community of Muslim believers.
 - He organised an army.



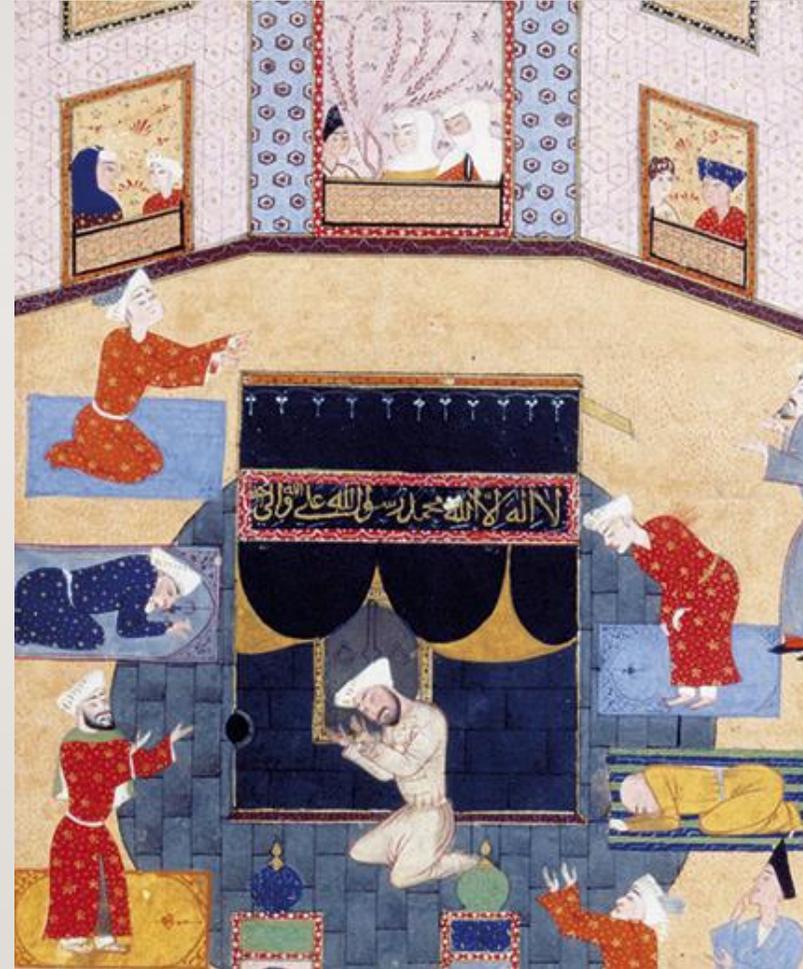
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- 630 He conquered Mecca, and continued the expansion of Islam across the rest of the Arabian Peninsula.



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- 632 Muhammad died having achieved the unification of the Arabic tribes under a common political & religious leader.

THE PRINCIPLES AND PILLARS OF ISLAM

- Proclaiming faith in Allah, expressed in the phrase 'there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet'.
- Praying five times a day facing Mecca.
- Giving charity to the poor.
- Fasting during the day in the month of Ramadan.
- Pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their life.



THE MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS

- Islam was inspired by the two great monotheistic religions: Judaism and Christianity. These religions were known in Arabia, probably because of the routes taken by the caravans.
- Muhammad believed that there were two types of people: pagans, on whom Islam should be imposed, and the people of the Book (Christians and Jews), who should be treated well.

THE EXPANSION OF ISLAM

- Muhammad's preaching was not well accepted in his city, **Mecca**, mainly because he opposed polytheism. As a result, Muhammad was expelled from Mecca in **622**. This date is known as the **Hegira** and is the date that starts the Muslim calendar.
- After this, the prophet and his followers took refuge in the city of **Medina**, where Muhammad also became a military and civilian chief. The process of the **expansion of Islam** began. Along with the language, this was a way of uniting the Arabs. Eight years after the Hegira, Muhammad returned triumphantly to Mecca. He ended worship of all idols, except for the **Kaaba**, where he introduced Islamic rites.

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- After this time, Muslims rapidly gained territory, aided by the weakness of the Byzantine Empire. Over the period of a century, the Muslims gained control over a vast territory. The key to the religion's rapid expansion lay in the **warlike zeal** of its followers, who were convinced that paradise awaited them if they died in combat, or a large **booty** if they managed to survive. However, the most effective factor was the intelligent policy of **assimilating non-Arabs** who had been conquered. They gradually submitted to Islam and contributed to its expansion.

THE KORAN

- Islam's holy book is the Koran (or Quran). Muhammad's teachings were put into writing in this book.
- As well as the religious aspects of Islam, the rules for the behaviour of believers are written in this book. For example, it states that Muslims must not eat pork or drink alcohol, that they should be tolerant of other religions and that they must not depict Allah or Muhammad in images or sculptures.



In 632, when Muhammad died, Muslims controlled most of Arabia. They occupied Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Persia and Egypt until 642.

In the first half of the 8th century they had expanded across North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula. They reached as far east as India.



EXERCISES!

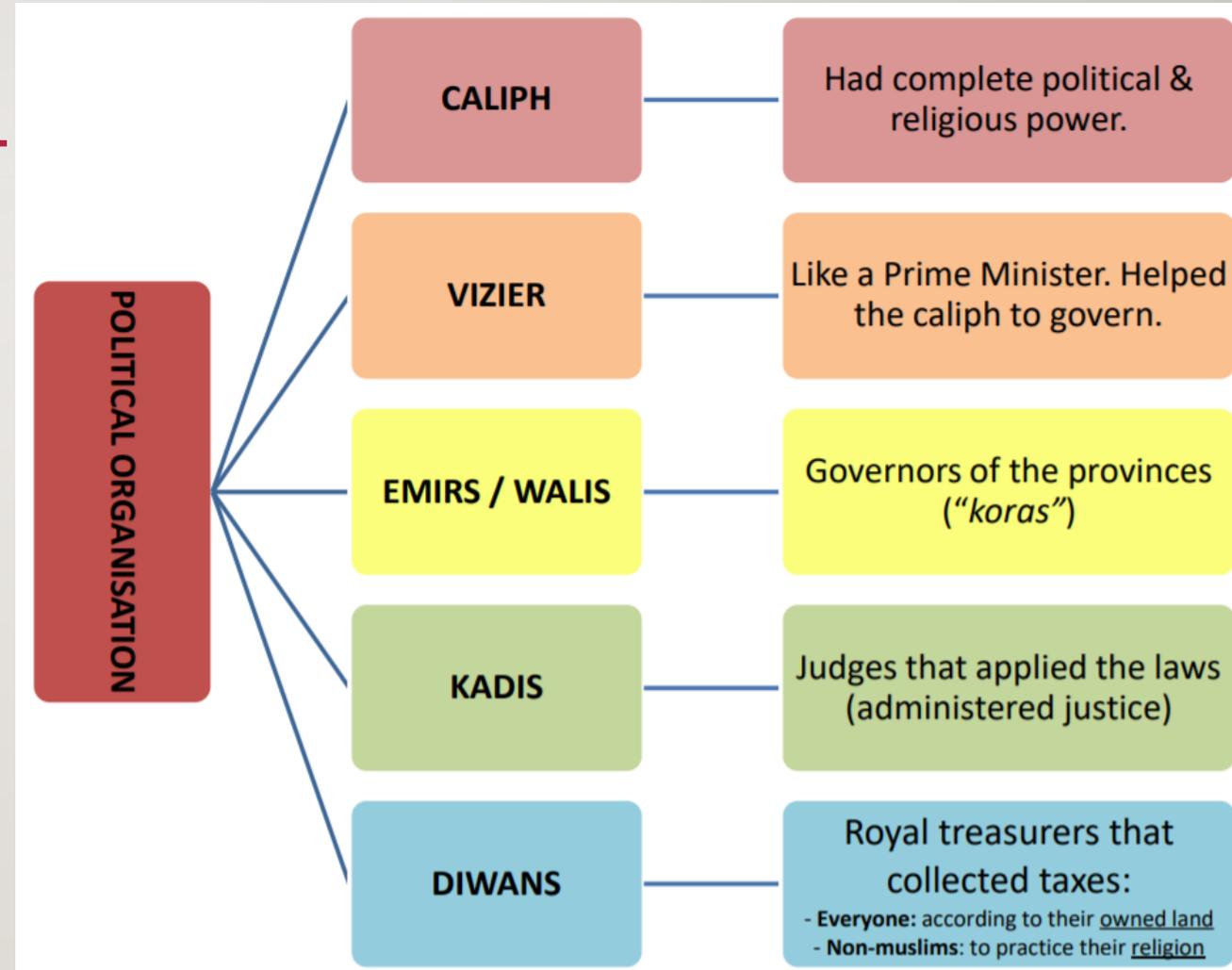
- What is the difference between monotheistic and polytheistic religions? Give some examples of each of them.
- Make a timeline showing the most important dates in Muhammad's life.
- What factors facilitated the rapid expansion of Islam?
- What was the Hegira?

MEDIEVAL ISLAM



POLITICAL ORGANISATION

- After Muhammad's death, the great empire that was formed was known as a caliphate, because it was led by a caliph. He was the highest political and religious authority, and was considered the Prophet's successor. The caliph governed, aided by the following officials:
- The vizier (or minister) was in charge of the central administration.
- Valis were the governors of the provinces of the empire.
- The diwan (or royal treasurer) was responsible for collecting taxes.
- Cadi administered justice according to the rules of the Koran.



632

660

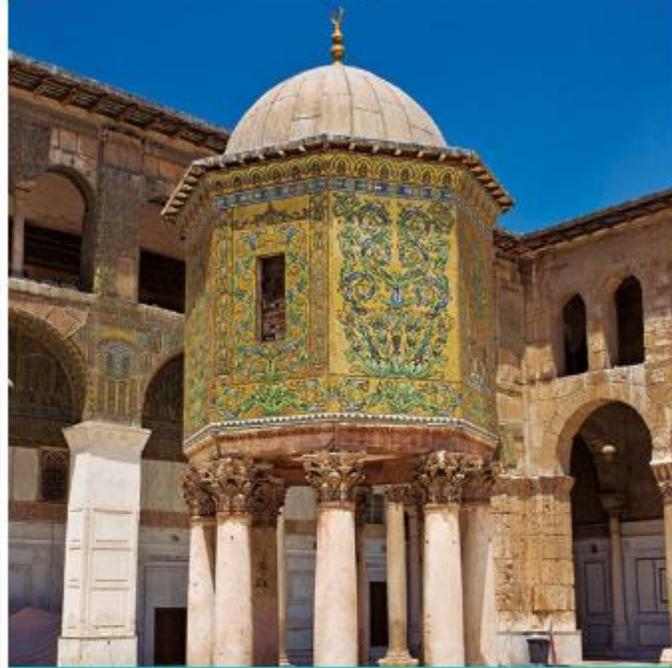
750

1258



ORTHODOX CALIPHATE

After Muhammad's death in 632, the family of the Prophet were at the forefront of the caliphate. This **Orthodox Caliphate** set up its capital in the city of **Medina** (in present-day Saudi Arabia).



UMAYYAD CALIPHATE

Between 660 and 750, the caliphate was in the hands of the **Umayyad dynasty**, which established its capital in **Damascus** (in present-day Syria).

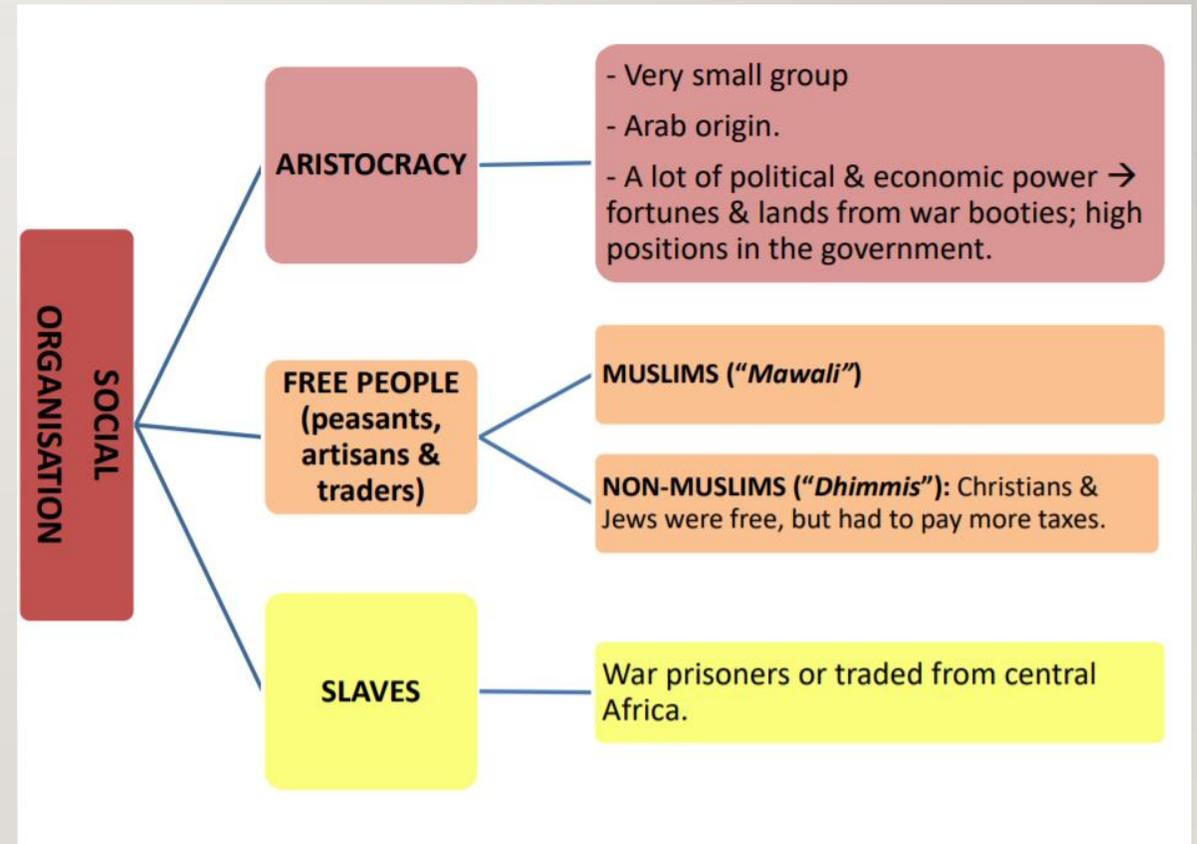


ABBASID CALIPHATE

The **Abbasid** dynasty established its capital in **Baghdad** (in present-day Iraq). However, this dynasty gradually lost power and the unity of the caliphate broke up between the 8th and 10th centuries. The expansion of Islam therefore no longer corresponded to that of a caliphate, but independent kingdoms emerged that could be ruled by caliphs or emirs, who were princes with political authority.

SOCIETY

- The nature of society was determined by the existence of different religious groups.
- The following groups of **Muslims** could be distinguished:
 - An **aristocratic minority** occupied the highest positions in the administration. It was usually made up of family members of rich caliphs or emirs.
 - An **intermediate group** consisted of traders and smallholders.
 - **Most** of the population was made up of craftsmen and farmers who did not own property. They were all required to pay high taxes.
 - There were also **slaves**, although their situation was generally less **harsh** than in Rome and the Germanic kingdoms.
- **Jews** and **Christians** had their own laws. They could follow their religion, but paid special taxes in return.



ECONOMY

- Islamic civilization arose in territories with very little rain, so the development of agriculture depended on the creation of irrigation systems to supply water. These systems were made up of ditches and water wheels. As a result, a thriving agriculture developed in which the predominant crops were rice and fruit, as well as olives, wheat and grapes.



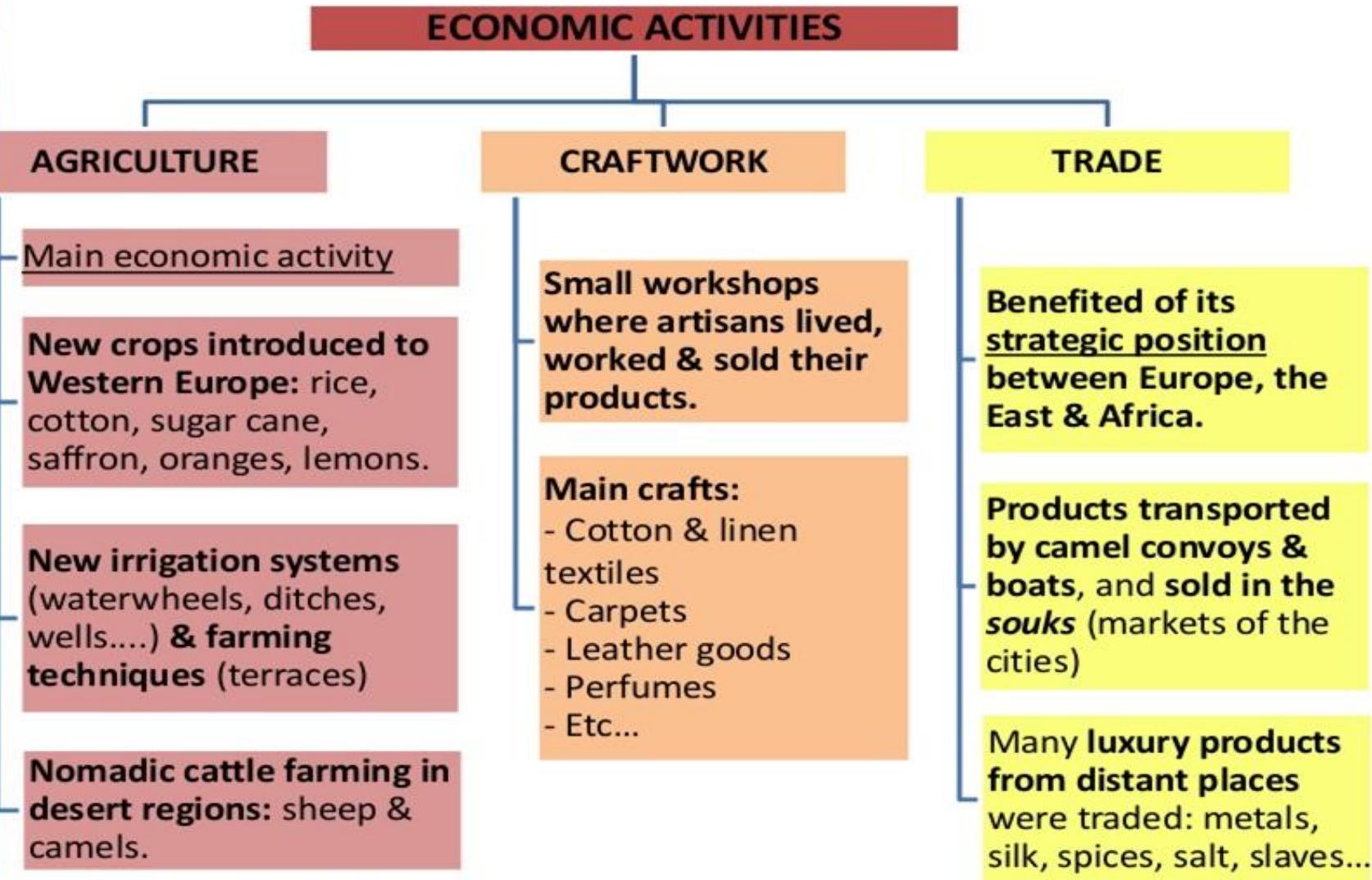
Water wheels allowed people to take water from wells or raise it from rivers. It was deposited in ditches and then used to water crops

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- **Trade** was particularly important due to the location of the Islamic territory between Africa, Europe and the Far East. In addition, maritime trade was boosted by the development of **navigational instruments** such as the compass and the astrolabe. For commercial transactions, merchants used hard **currency**, such as the gold dinar and silver dirham.



Sailors used the astrolabe and compass to navigate using the stars, without the need to follow the coast.

ORGANISATION OF THE EMPIRE: economy



AL-ANDALUS



Benefited from all the inventions and new products that flowed throughout the Islamic empire, the Islamic empire served as a cultural and economic channel between Asia, Africa and Europe.

NEW CROPS INTRODUCED TO WESTERN EUROPE

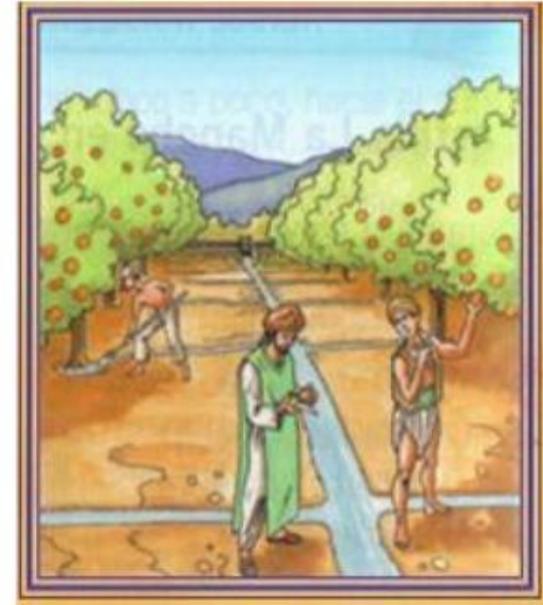


Oranges & lemons



Cotton

Saffron



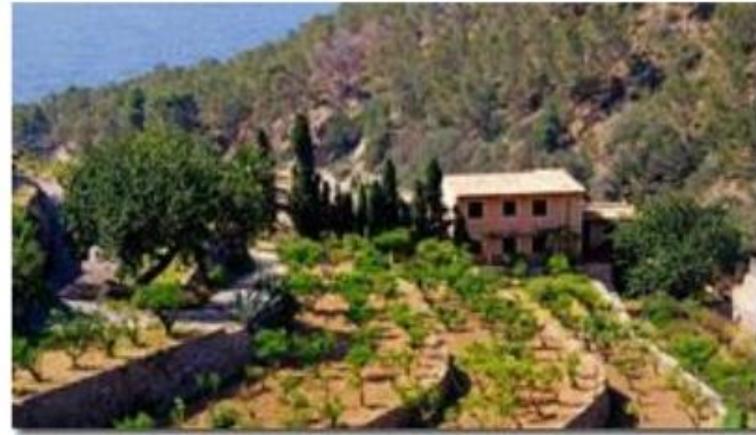
Sugar cane

Rice

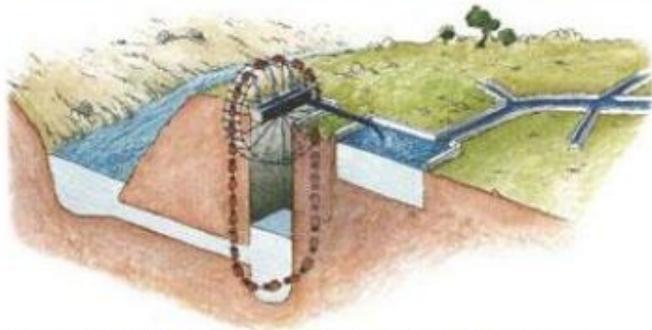


NEW FARMING TECHNIQUES

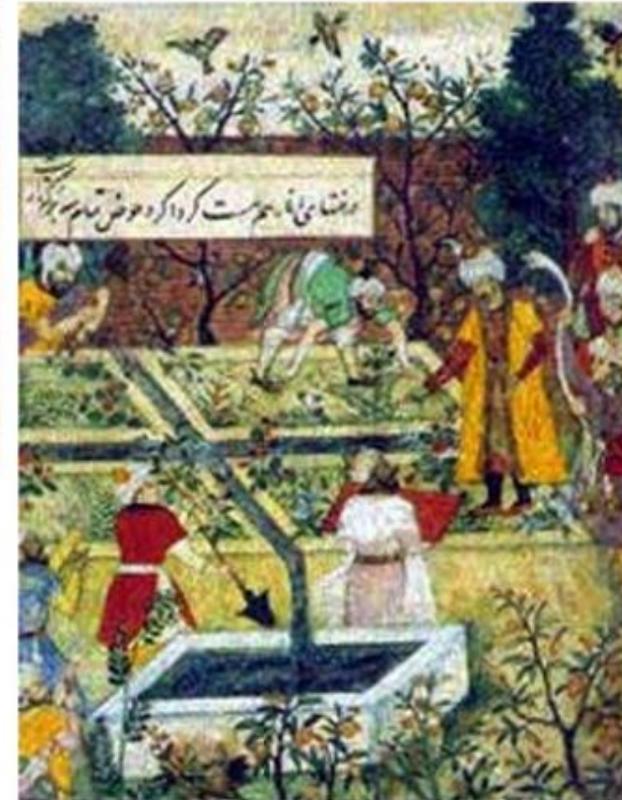
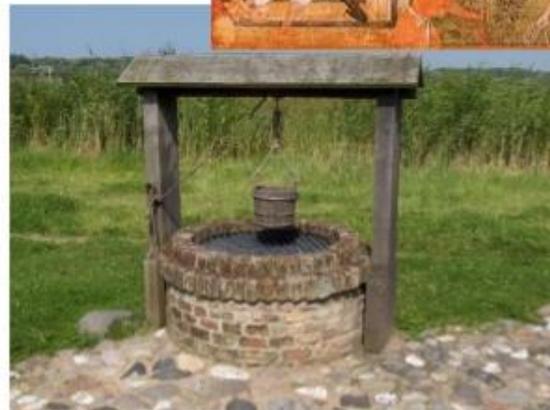
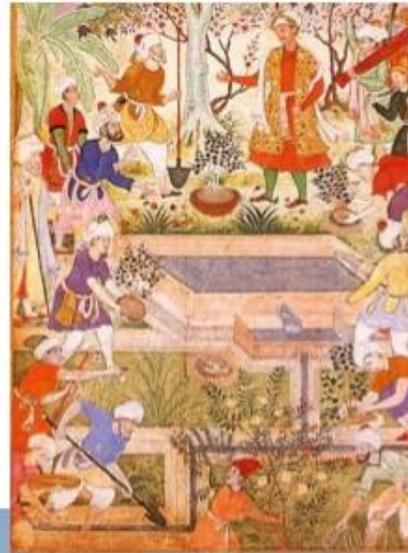
Terraces to cultivate on mountain slopes.



Irrigation systems:
waterweels, ditches, wells...



http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzzSLqPckZM&feature=player_embedded#!



CRAFTWORK & TRADE IN THE SOUKS

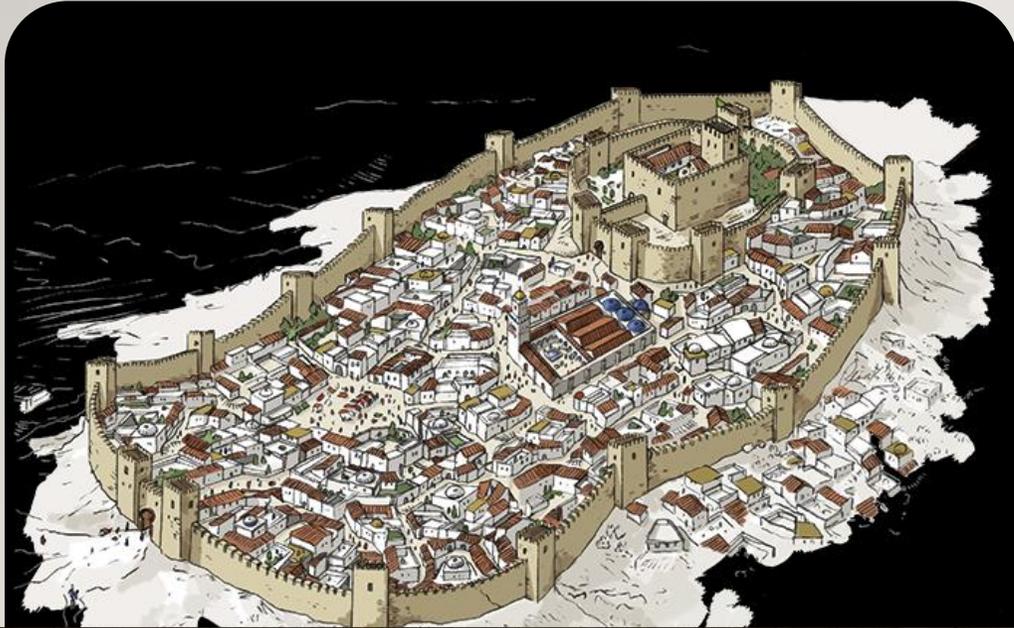


Leather goods



THE MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC CITY

- The main socioeconomic characteristic of medieval Islamic civilisation was the predominance of cities over the countryside.



Baths: They were people had a bath everyday, morning-women evening-men



Zoco: market where the social and economic life was centred .



Mosque : It's where the religious life was centred



Medina ; The old city It contained the most important buildings



Alcazar : A fortified area in the highest part of the city , where municipal employees and authorities lived.



Alhondigas : It was the merchants kept their goods



Arrabal : They were located around the medina .They were worker's districts, where the craft workshops were located



The **medina** (*city*) was surrounded by walls.

- Inside the walls is the **medina** (divided into quarters)

- Outside the walls is the **arrabal**

- (*Marrakech, Morocco*)



Medina:

- Divided into **quarters**
- Protected by walls and gated entrances
- Densely populated with irregular pattern of buildings and streets
- Streets were narrow and winding

Inside the Medina



Public spaces:

☞ Mosque - Islamic place of worship

☞ Souk(s) - commercial quarter / market

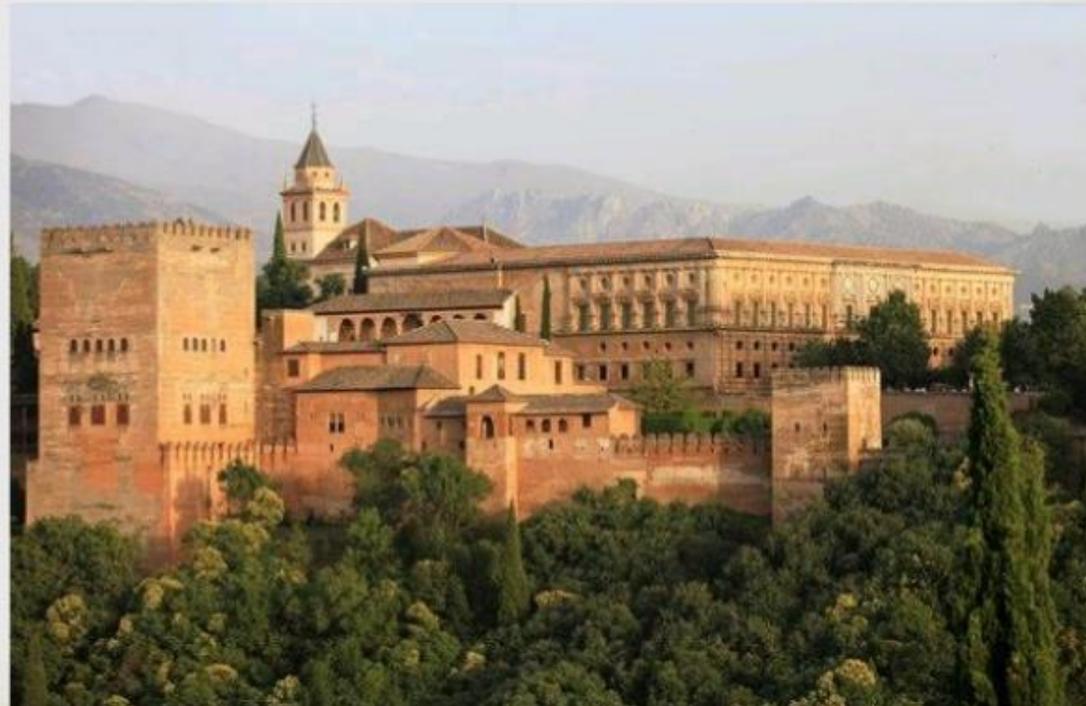
☞ Public baths – (*hamman*) used by everyone in the city

☞ Fortress (*alcazaba*) - built on highest part of medina. Protects the city from enemy attacks

Fortress (*alcazaba*)



Alhambra, Granada:
palace and fortress
built in the 10th century



EXERCISES

- How did the loss of power of the Abbasid Caliphate influence the expansion of Islam?
- What were the main social groups in the caliphates? How did they differ from the social groups in the Germanic kingdoms?
- What were the main economic activities in the Islamic Empire? Compare them with those of the Germanic kingdoms.

MUSLIM ART AND CULTURE

Muslim art was mainly expressed in **architecture**. The influences of other cultures can be seen, especially Persian and Byzantine.

The most characteristic building was the **mosque**, but there were also other important civilian buildings, including the residences of the caliphs and bath houses.

ISLAMIC ART

- Islamic art is very easy to recognise by everyone because its own characteristics.
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- Key characteristics:
 - ✓ Poor building materials (brick, plaster, wood).
 - ✓ Columns, pillar and arches (rounded, lobed, horseshoe).
 - ✓ Buildings covered by domes and flat wooden roofs.
 - ✓ Decoration with plaster, ceramics and paint (geometric patterns, floral motifs and inscriptions).
 - ✓ Water used as decoration.
 - ✓ Also works with ceramics, glass, ivory, leather, bronze and wood.



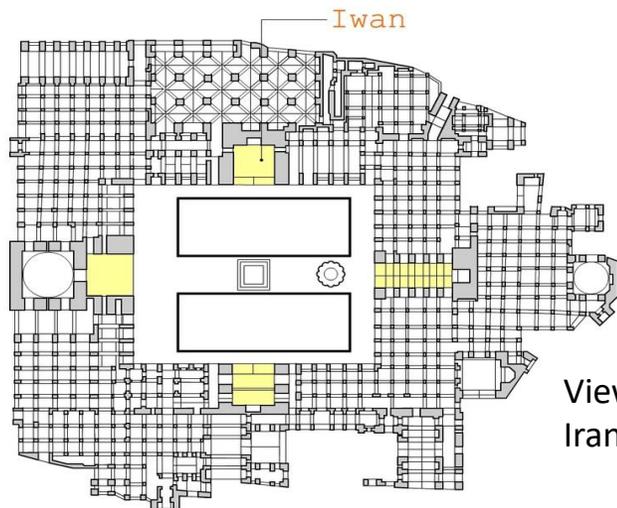
MOSQUE ARCHITECTURE



The Hypostyle mosque. Interior of the Great Mosque of Cordoba, Spain, 8th-10th centuries



The centrally-planned mosque. Hagia Sophia, Istanbul

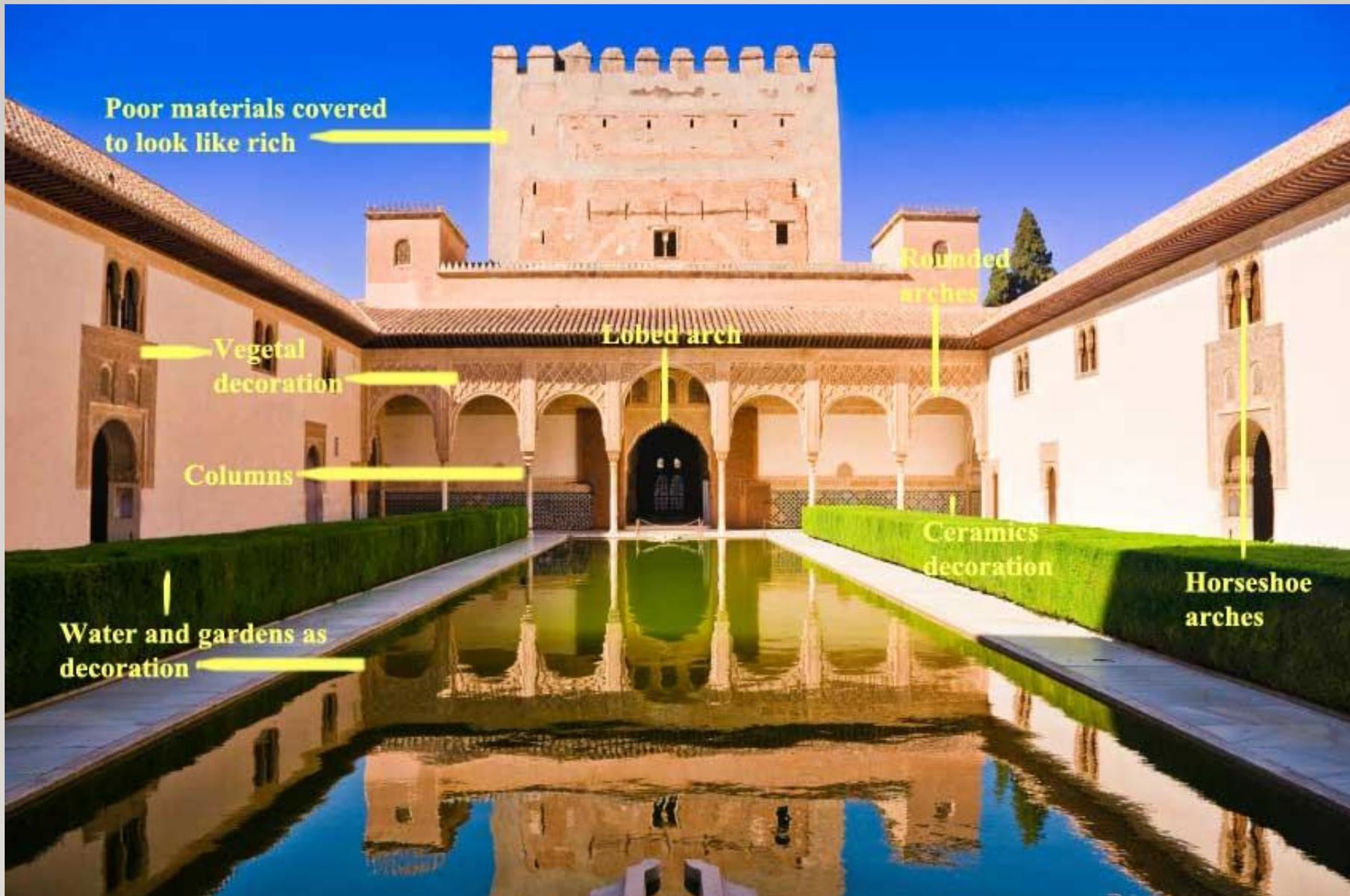


Floor Plan

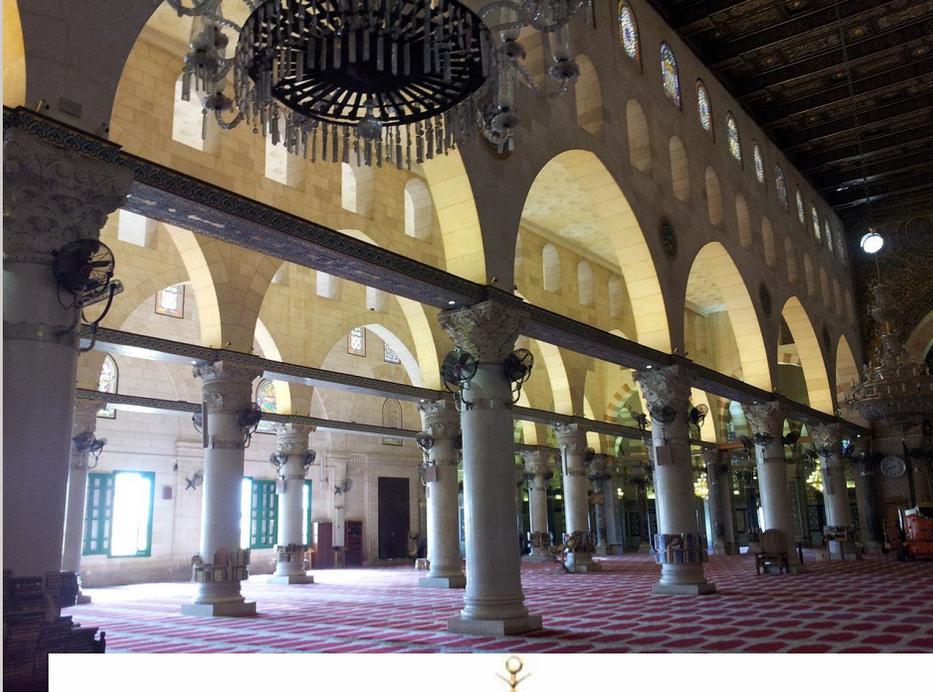
View of three (of four) Iwans, Great Mosque of Isfahan, Iran, 11th - 17th

*The Great
Mosque of
Cordoba
(784-1236)*

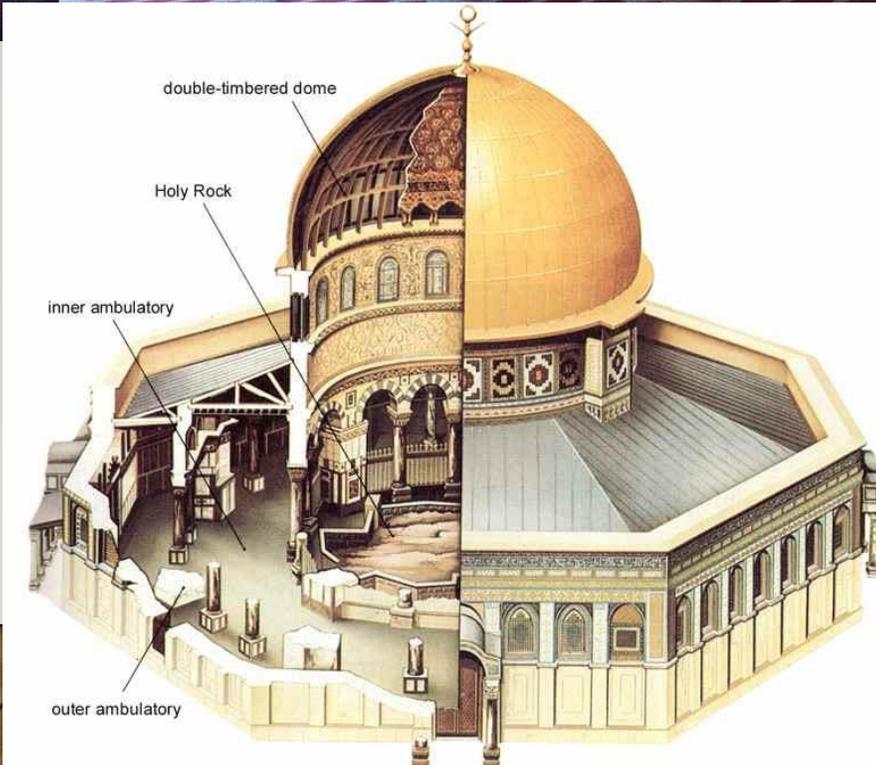




The Alhambra Palace, 1238

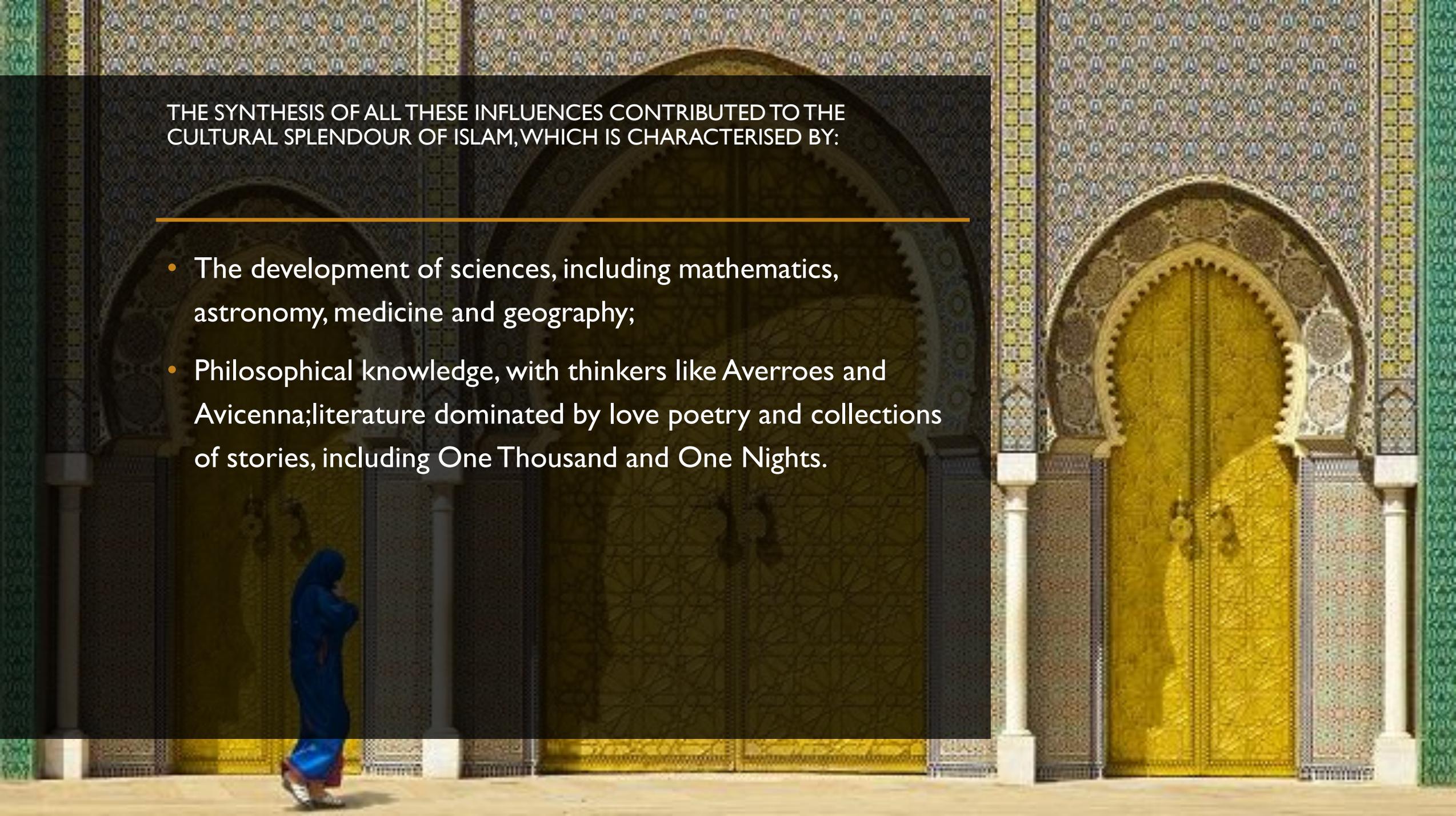


The Temple Mount (*The Mount of the Rock*) is the third holiest site for Muslims behind Mecca and Medina. In Muslim tradition, this is where the Prophet Mohammed made his “Night Journey” to the throne of God. In the **seventh century (Umayyad Caliphate)**, when the Muslims conquered Jerusalem, they built the Dome of the Rock, the gold-topped Islamic shrine seen in many iconic photographs of the Old City, as well as the Al-Aqsa Mosque.



CULTURAL SPLENDOUR

- Islam was involved in significant cultural activity during the Middle Ages. This was based on **Islamisation** (spreading the religion) and **Arabisation** (spreading use of the Arabic language).
- It was a culture of **fusion**, because Muslims studied the philosophy and science of **Greece** and **Rome**, as well as the cultures of **India**, from where we get our current number system, and **China**, from which they learnt about astronomy, mathematics and literature, and other advances such as **gunpowder** and paper. Muslims embraced these contributions to culture and, thanks to the spread of Islam, they reached the West.



THE SYNTHESIS OF ALL THESE INFLUENCES CONTRIBUTED TO THE CULTURAL SPLENDOUR OF ISLAM, WHICH IS CHARACTERISED BY:

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- The development of sciences, including mathematics, astronomy, medicine and geography;
 - Philosophical knowledge, with thinkers like Averroes and Avicenna; literature dominated by love poetry and collections of stories, including One Thousand and One Nights.

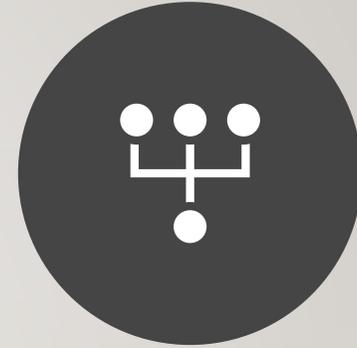
AL-ANDALUS



MUSLIM INVASION



THE ARRIVAL OF THE MUSLIMS ON THE IBERIAN PENINSULA IN THE EARLY 8TH CENTURY IS RELATED TO A **CIVIL WAR** BETWEEN THE **VISIGOTHS** WHEN DIFFERENT FACTIONS FOUGHT TO SUCCEED TO THE THRONE. ONE OF THE OPPOSING SIDES, FORMED BY THE OPPONENTS OF KING RODRIGO, DECIDED TO SEEK THE HELP OF MUSLIMS WHO WERE IN NORTH AFRICA.



IN 711, IN RESPONSE TO THIS REQUEST FOR HELP, A **MUSLIM ARMY** ENTERED THE IBERIAN PENINSULA. IN THE SAME YEAR, LED BY TARIQ AND MUSA, IT CONQUERED KING RODRIGO AND BEGAN A RAPID **CONQUEST** OF THE SPANISH TERRITORY.

Tariq landed in Gibraltar in 711 at the head of an army of thousands of soldiers who were, for the most part, Berbers from North Africa.

The Muslims easily defeated the Visigoths in the Battle of Guadalete (711). Tariq then decided to call Musa, the governor of North Africa, to complete the conquest of the Visigothic Kingdom.

Muslim expansion took place rapidly. In just four years they dominated most of the Iberian Peninsula, except for the mountainous areas of the north. The conquered territory was called al-Andalus.

The Muslims tried to continue their conquest of Europe, but were defeated by the Franks in Poitiers. After this defeat, they withdrew to the Iberian Peninsula.

CAUSES OF QUICK MUSLIM EXPANSION

The **weakness** of the **Visigothic monarchy**, immersed in a series of civil wars. In addition, there were frequent sacking expeditions by the Vascones, contributing to a climate of general insecurity.

The indifference of the population, who offered no resistance to the new rulers. The peasants lived in very precarious conditions, so had no **incentive** to defend the Visigothic monarchy.