

Chapter 2.2.1. The Expansion of the Arabs

a. What does the term Islam mean, who founded it and how, and what are its principles?

- a. Islam means "submission and faith in the will of God."
- b. It is the monotheistic religion founded by Muhammad.
- c. Muhammad was a caravan guide. He traveled often to the countries of the Middle East. There, he met and was influenced by Christianity and Judaism.
- d. Influenced by these two religions, Muhammad proclaimed the principles of the new religion of Islam:
- e. These principles are contained in the Quran, which means "Word of God" and is the holy book of the new religion.
- f. It required believers (Muslims) to spread Islam by war (jihad) against the infidels (without forcing Christians and Jews to convert by force).
- g. Paradise was open to the martyrs of faith.
- h. Muhammad was expelled in 622 from his homeland, Mecca, and fled to Medina, where he gained many followers.
- i. The year 622, the year of the Hijra (migration = emigration of Muhammad), was established as the starting point of the chronological system of the Arabs.
- j. Islam prevailed in the 7th century throughout Arabia.

b. How did the expansion of Islam take place, what factors contributed to it, and what were the consequences of this expansion?

Expansion:

Two years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (632), the warriors of Islam, under the leadership of the Caliph (= deputy and successor of the Prophet, leader of the Muslims):

- a. set out from their peninsula.
- b. they crush the Byzantines at Yarmouk (636).
- c. they conquer the neighboring provinces (Roman and Persian) which are incorporated into the Caliphate (= Arab State).
- d. they are stopped by Charlemagne, mayor of the palace (courtier) of the Franks, in the French Poitiers (732).
- e. two attempts to conquer Constantinople failed (strong walls, Byzantine liquid fire = a new weapon with which they burned enemy ships and was an invention of the Syrian Callinicos).

Expansion factors

- a. The exhaustion of the Byzantines and Persians from the constant wars.
- b. The opposition of the eastern provinces (Monophysites = Christian heresy) with the center of the Byzantine Empire.

Consequences of expansion

- a. The split of the Mediterranean world (Christian-Islamic).
- b. The territorial contraction of the Byzantine Empire.
- c. The loss of important urban centers and the desertification of many areas of the Empire.
- d. The reduction of agricultural production in Byzantium.
- e. The restriction of internal and external trade in Byzantium.

Exercises:

A. Match the events in Column A with the dates in Column B. Some dates correspond to two items in Column A:

Column A	Column B
Hijra	a. 636
Battle of Yarmouk	b. 732
Battle of Poitiers	c. 622
Death of Muhammad	d. 634
Start of the Arabic calendar	e. 632
Jihad by the Caliph	

B. Match the items in Column A with the items in Column B:

Column A	Column B
Caliphate	a. Charles Martel
Martyrs of faith	b. Callinicos
Mayor of the palace	c. Deputy of Muhammad
Liquid fire	d. Arab State
Quran	e. Submission and faith in God
Muslim	f. Believer in Islam
Islam	g. Paradise
Caliph	h. Faithful to the Caliph

C. Mark the following statements as correct (C) or incorrect (I). Correct any errors:

- The Quran excluded Christians from the infidels to whom violence was allowed to convert.
- Muhammad was influenced only by Christianity.
- The Arabs conquered Constantinople twice.
- The Battle of Poitiers stopped the Arab advance into the interior of Europe.
- The Caliph is the head of the Persian state.
- The Arabic calendar begins with the Hijra.
- The Hijra is the emigration of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina.
- The Byzantine Empire grew in size after the conflicts with the Arabs.
- With the liquid fire, the Arabs could burn the ships of their opponents.
- Agricultural production in Byzantium decreased after the conflicts with the Arabs.