

# The Thin Tweed Line



A Lecture Series on the History of the  
Modern University

Sponsored by

The William O. Douglas

Honors College at

Central Washington

University

# The University

The development of the university is one of the key factors that would lead to the enlightenment, technological, and information revolutions.

-Steve Jackson, 2001

# Not a Business

The University has its own history of development. The modern university is not a dysfunctional wreck in urgent need of reform by business, military, or political leaders, but an organization built from trial and error that create colleges and universities that survive hundreds of years.

# Understanding

To truly understand the university requires an understanding of the culture that created it, and the forces that tested the university, as well as understand the models and systems that were tried, found wanting, and discarded.

# Lecture Two: The Forgotten Enlightenment

## Education in the

## Caliphate

By

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# Muhammed

- Muhammad is born CE 570 in Mecca to a prominent Arab family (although his own branch may not have been wealthy.)
- He becomes a trader, and marries around CE 595.
- Around CE 610 he undergoes a revelation and becomes the first prophet of the muslim religion.

# Shia - Sunní Split

After the death of Muhammad, two schools of thought were put forward on how to rule the growing Muslim world. The first, now called **Shia**, saw the blood and marital relatives of Muhammad as the key to creation of a Muslim nation. The second, now called **Sunni**, felt that the Muslim nation should be ruled by laws

# The Shia Tradition

- The Shia see the twelve imams as the infallible leaders of the Muslim religion after the death of Muhammad. The three major branches of Shia Islam differ on the identity of one of the twelve imam.
- Most of the imams lead religious revolts against governments, this would be a unifying theme of the Shia doctrine: the infallibility of religious leaders, and their duty to remove corrupt secular leaders.
- Shia were a persecuted minority during much of the Muslim golden age.

# Early Muslim History

- After the end of the Fitna (early wars of integration) the Muslim world was dominated by Sunni dynasties. This complex period is shrouded by politics and religion, but by CE 661 Muawiyah I would introduce a period of Sunni rule of the middle eastern portions of the former Roman Empire.
- Muawiyah was the brother-in-law to Muhammed, and served as his scribe. He then served as a military officer under the first two Sunni Islamic ruler: Abu Bakr and Umar, participating in the expansion of Islam from its roots on the Saudi peninsula to control of much of the modern middle east.

# Early Muslim History

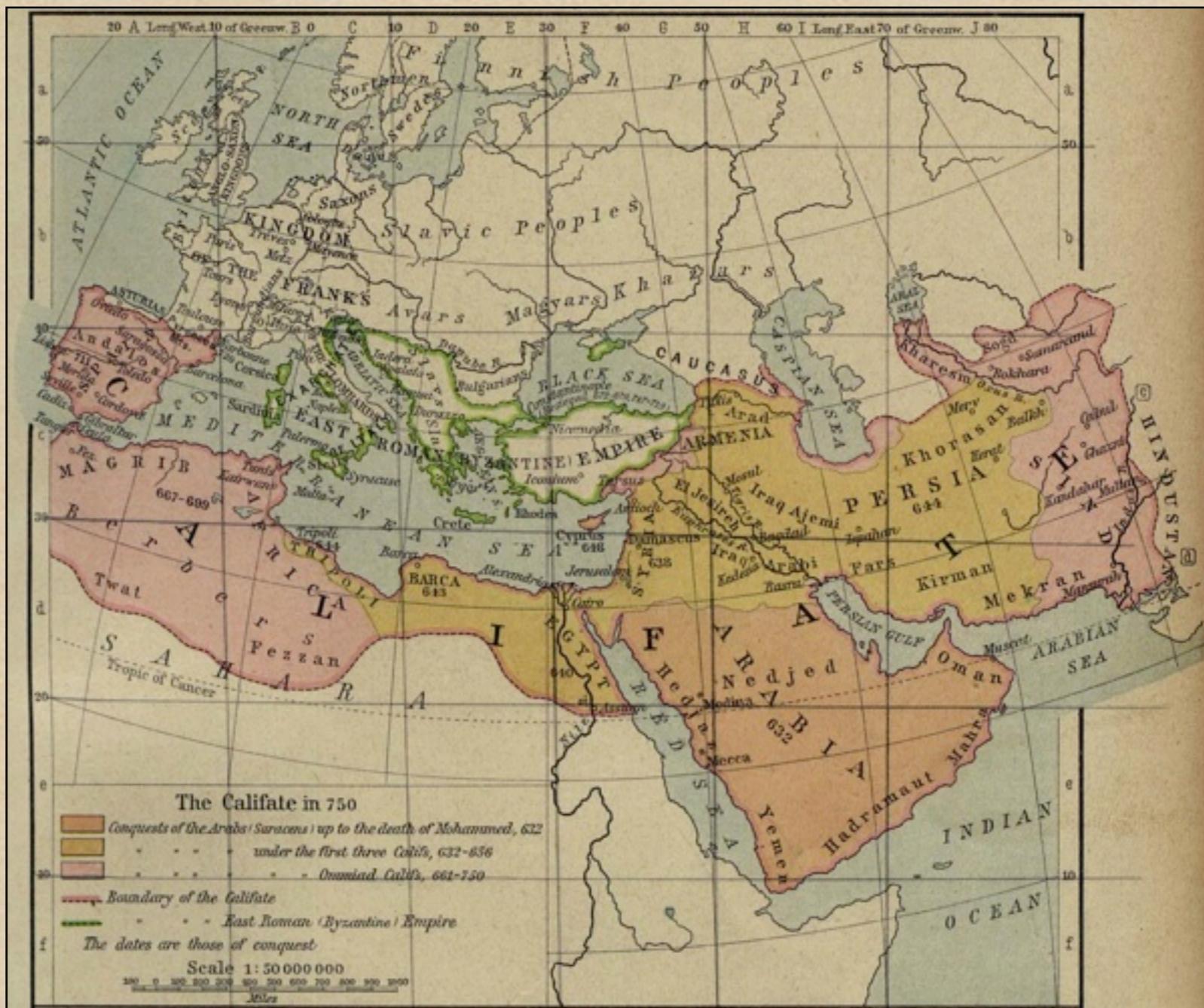
- Muawiyah I was the first member of the Umayyad Caliphate.
- The Umayyad Caliphate would expand Islam from the Middle East to the entire southern Mediterranean including much of Iberia (Spain).
- Umayyad Muslims would be stopped from entering Europe in series of defeats (Toulouse in 721 and Tours / Poitiers in 732 reaching its farthest expansion before the fall of the dynasty.

# Trade, Invasion, and

- ◆ Ummayad's invade Hispania after CE 710 and attempted to move into the Kingdom of the Franks (modern France) where they were defeated at Poitiers by Charles Martel in CE 733).
- ◆ Once Muslim expansion ended the Muslim lands became a major route of trade between east and west.

# The Abbasids

- The Abbasid Dynasty replaced the Umayyad Dynasty in CE 750.
- By CE 850 the Muslim “nation” would stretch from Asia to the Atlantic Ocean (although loosing its farthest western possessions early in its existance).
- The Muslim nation under the Abbasids would reach is cultural high water mark. Features of the nation include a stable, universal currency, mutli-ethnic and multi-religious political systems, trade that reached from southern Africa, to China, to Northern Europe, and a strong legal system.



# The Caliphate

# Sunni Education Traditions

- Abu Hanifa (CE 699 - CE 767) founded the earliest “Sunni” legal school, arranging and codifying Islamic legal thinking. Zahir al-riwaya by his student Muhammad al-Shaybani would become one of the most influential works of Muslim law.
- Other Sunni schools include Maliki School, founded by Malik ibn Anas (CE 714 - CE 796), the Shafi'i School founded by Muhammad ibn Idris ash-Shafi'i (CE 767 - CE 820), and the Hanbali School founded by Ahmad bin Hanbal (CE 780 - CE 855).
- Sunni legal scholarship would be a key part of the Islamic Renaissance or Golden Age.

# Openness

- The Abbasids reversed the previous trend in Islamic society of rejecting foreign cultural experience. With its new capital in Baghdad, the Abbasid Caliphate opened its arms to literature and culture from the far east, the Indian subcontinent, the Persians, the Roman (Byzantine) Empire, and from Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Translations of foreign works into Arabic and Sunni legal scholarship laid the seeds for what would become the **Islamic Renaissance** or **Golden Age**.

# Greek, Indian, and Chinese

- In CE 751 the Abbasids and Chinese clashed in what is today Kazakhstan. Traditionally, paper making, a known art, was introduced into the heart of the Abbasid nation by Chinese prisoners of war from this battle.
- Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī and Kūshyār Gilānī introduced “Hindu” numerals to the Abbasids between CE 825 and 830
- The House of Wisdom in Baghdad, originally founded as a palace library by Al-Mansur, acted as a repository and translation service for Greek works.



■ al-Khwārizmī



## ■ House of Wisdom

# Islamic Enlightenment

- The University of Al Karaouine opens its doors in CE 859, the first university.
- The Canon of Medicine, by Avicena (CE 980 - CE 1037) rejected Galens humors theory and outlined experimental medicine.
- Jabir Ibn Hayyan (CE 721 - CE 815) developed experimental chemistry.
- Ibn al-Haytham (CE 965 - CE 1039) was an Arab Leonardo da Vinci, working in optics and mathematics. His reading of the Greeks would develop into a scientific method

# Islamic Enlightenment

- Abu'l Hasan Ahmad ibn Ibrahím Al-Uqlidísi (c. CE 920 to c. CE 980) in the work The Arithmetic's of Al-Uqlidísi outlined the theory of decimal fractions and how to do basic mathematic calculations.
- Abū Al-rayḥān Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Al-bīrūnī (CE 973 to CE 1048) pioneered history, comparative religion, scientific mechanics, and math.
- Al-Jazari (CE 1136 - CE 1206) developed mechanical industrial engineering.

## ■ Gerbert

### (Pope Sylvester II)

Gerbert, a European priest, would study in Muslim Spain, bringing for the first time the educational and scientific ideas of the Caliphate to Europe.

