

Islamic Civilization

Overview

- **No strict separation between religion and state;** human beings should believe and behave in accordance with the commandments of Islam;
- Questions of politics, economics, civil and criminal law, and social ethics **are all thought about and discussed within the framework of Islam; Quran and Sharia Law**

Political Structures

- ongoing ambiguity around relationship between political and religious authority;
- challenge of ruling a large, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural empire; unity in Arabic and the Quran;
- problem of succession

Economics

- **Foreign Trade** – flourished with China, Byzantine Empire and Southeast Asia; fleets and camel caravans;

From West Africa: gold and slaves

From China: silk and porcelain;

From East Africa: gold, ivory and rhinoceros horn;

From Southeast Asia: sandalwood, cotton, wheat, sugar, spices;

Economics cont.

Internal Trade:

- Egypt-grain;
- Iraq-linen and dates;
- Spain – leather, olives and wine;
- West India – pepper and textiles;

New Methods and Instruments of Trade

- development of banking;
- use of currency;
- letters of credit;

Naval Technology

Flourishing of Urban Life

- **Baghdad**
- **Cairo** rises with the Fatimid Caliphate;
- **Basra** at head of Persian Gulf;
- **Aden** in Arabia;
- **Damascus** in Syria;
- **Marakech** in Morocco;

Reminder: bulk of population still lives in countryside;

Dangers of Urban Life: fire, flood and disease;

Society

- religious egalitarianism – all equal in eyes of Allah;
- trade brought prosperity and the growth of a non-landowning upper class; no hereditary nobility; merchants received respect;
- slavery widespread – non-Islamic populations;
- women – right to own and inherit property; to be treated with respect according to Quran; male dominated; polygamy;
- adultery and homosexuality forbidden;

Culture

1. Adopt cultural aspects of occupied, ancient civilizations; Greco-Roman, Byzantine, Persian;

- Greek, Persian and Syrian scientific and philosophical works trans. into Arabic;
- Preserver of Greek learning:

Greek-speaking East > Arabic > western Europe in Latin;

Culture cont.

- Paper and block printing from China along Silk Road;
 - Ibn Sina (Avicenna) Aristotelian philosophy, natural laws, reason;
 - Ibn Rushd (Averroes) scholar
2. Mathematics: Islamic scholars adopted and passed on the numeral system of India, including the use of zero; al-jabr (reduction)-algebra;

3. astronomy: observatory in Baghdad; earth is round; astrolabe for sailors;

4. medicine: knowledge of optics and anatomy, disease;

Culture cont.

5. Islamic Literature

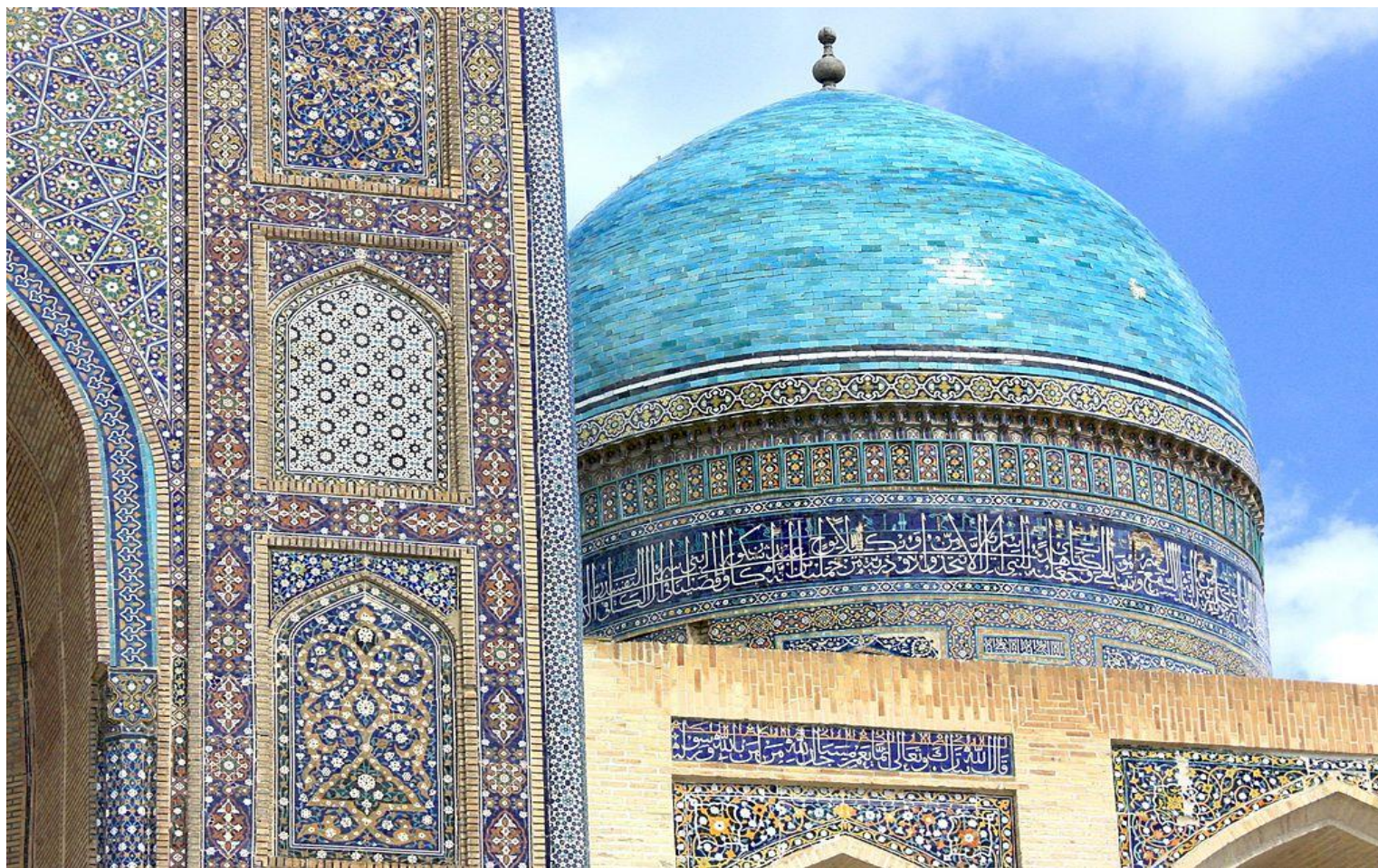
- Diverse
- Most noteworthy in Arabic and Persian;
- Poetry: Book of Kings – 10 volume epic poem;
- Love poetry: Rabea of Quzdar (late 10th c.);
- Sadi-Persian Shakespeare – Rose Garden; sonnet-like love poems;
- proverbs
- Rubaiyat
- Arabian Nights

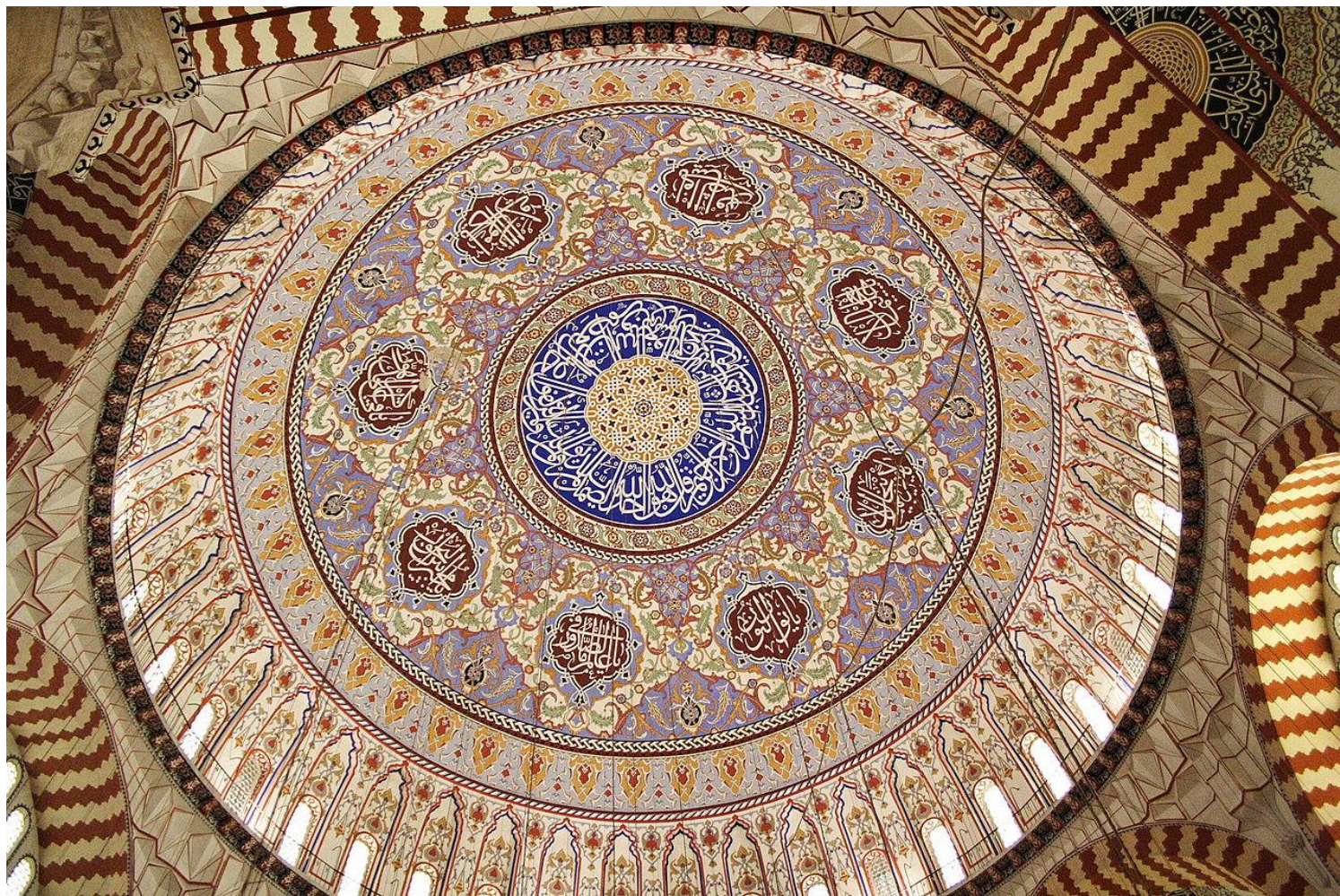
Culture cont.

Islamic Architecture:



Persian Style







Great Mosque of Damascus

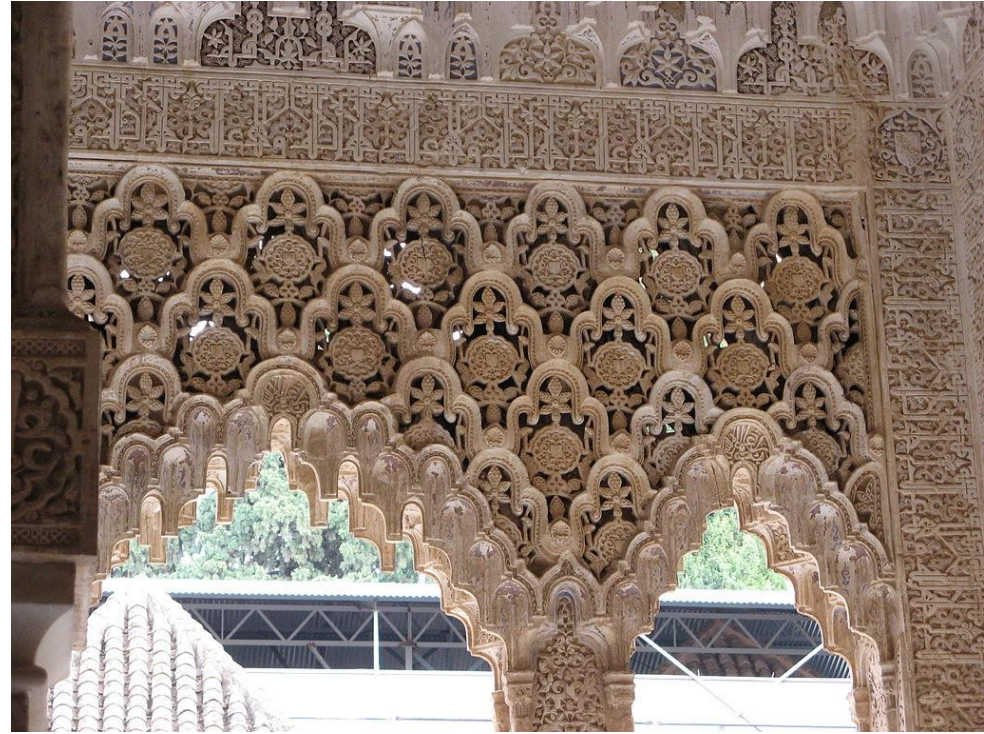
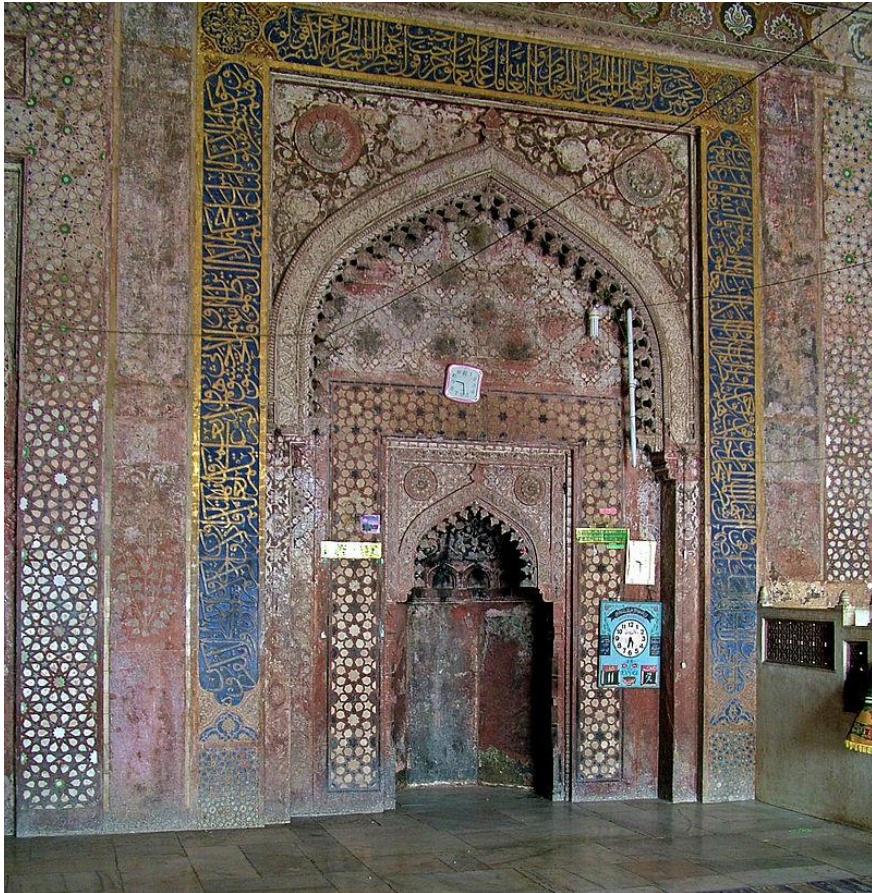


Calligraphy





Geometric Patterns



Arabesque

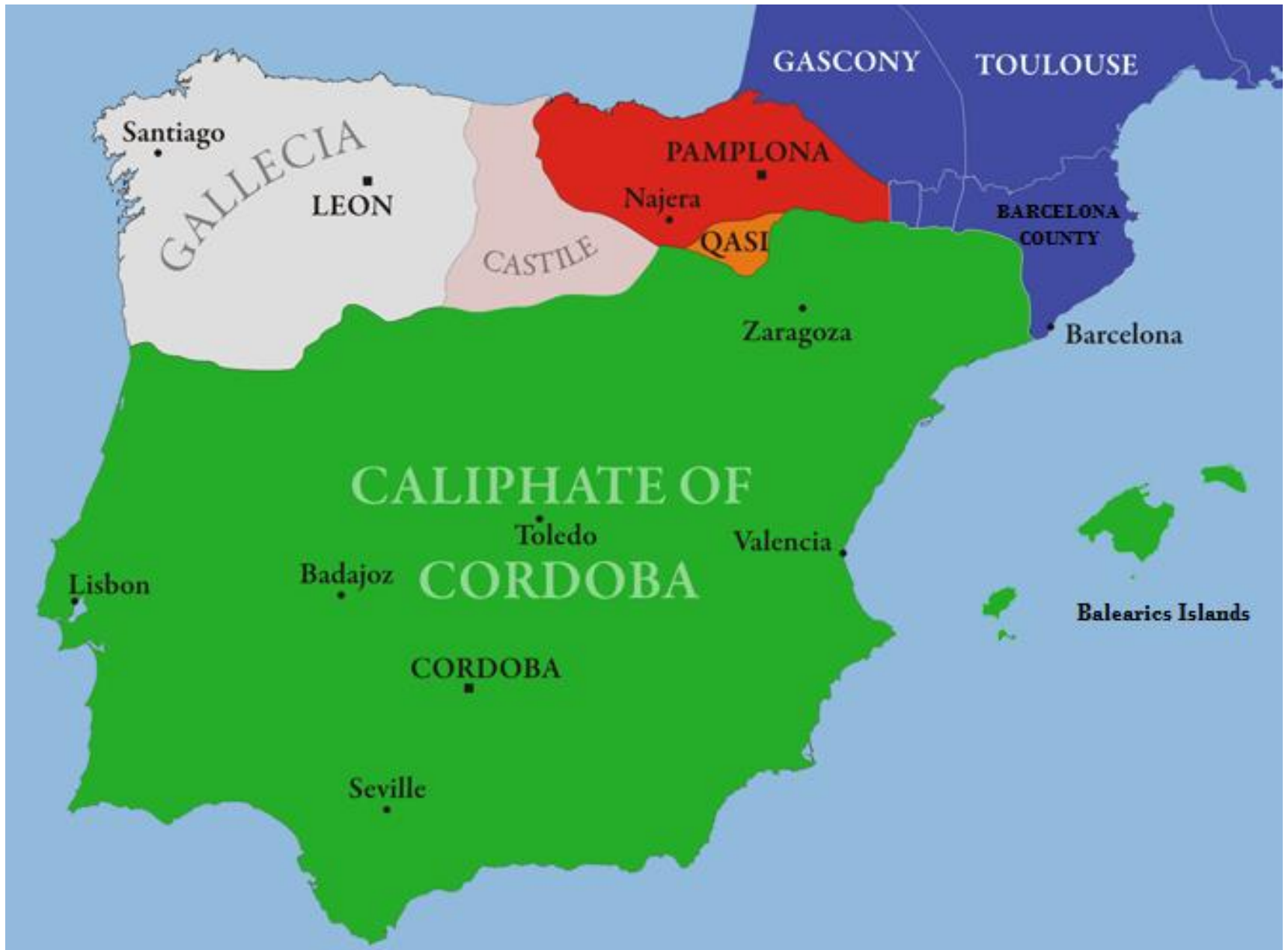


Arabesque



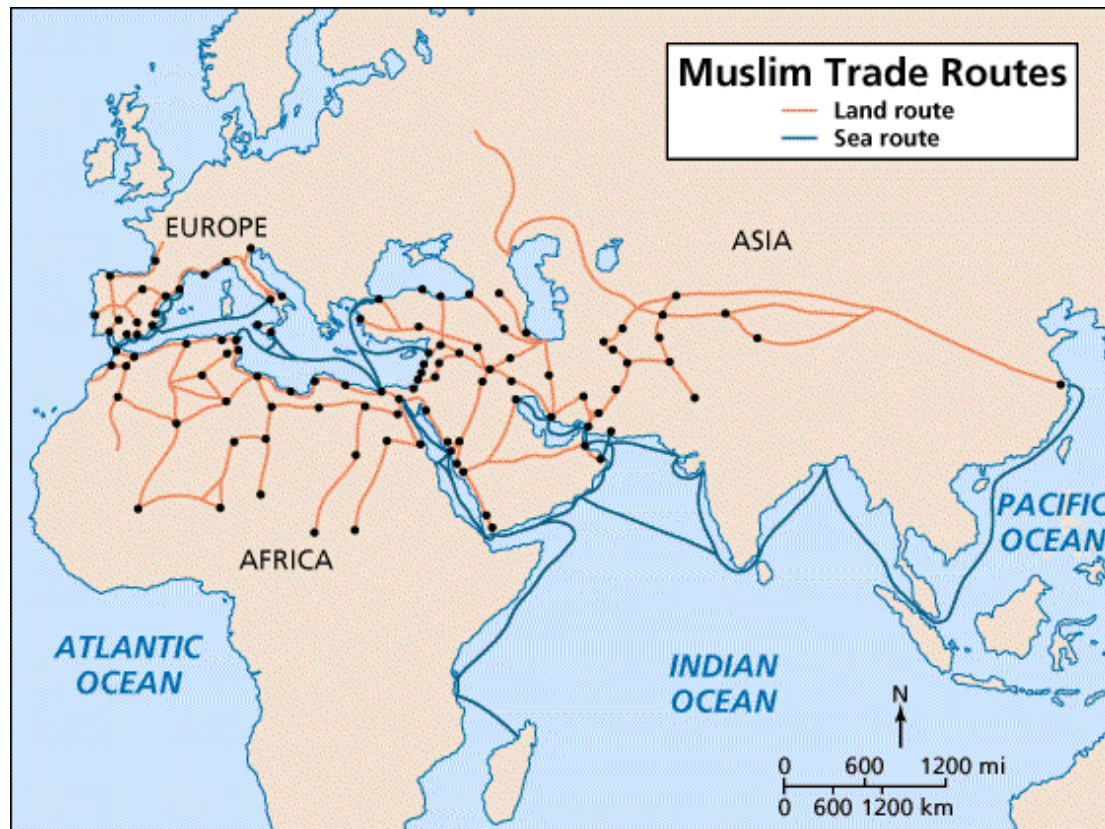
Andalusia: Muslim Outpost in Europe

- Abd al-Rathman
- Al-Andaluz
- Emir
- Cordoba
- vibrant center of Islamic culture
- A new Caliphate after decline of Damascus and Baghdad;



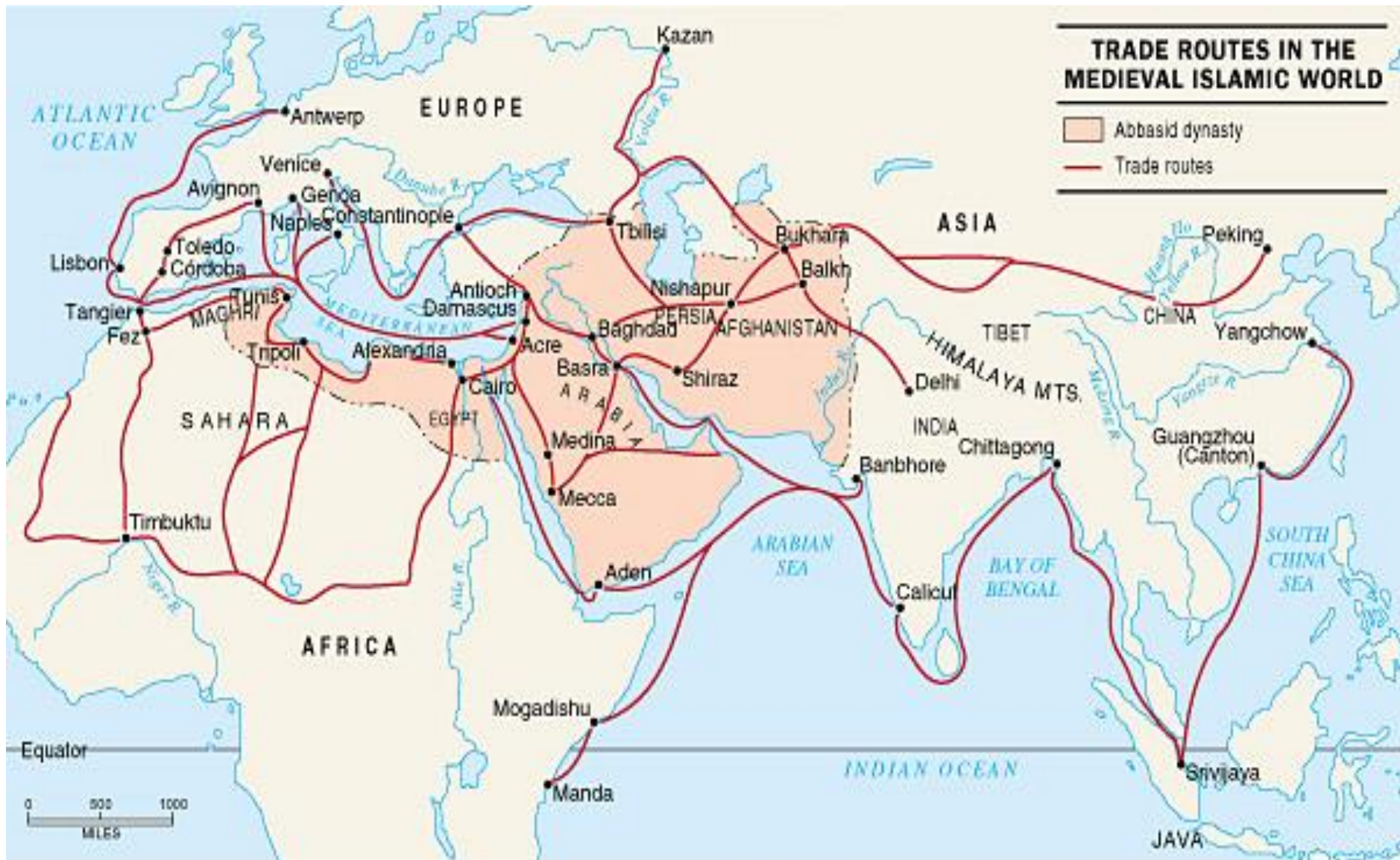
Mediterranean Sea a Muslim Lake

- Andalusia part of a vast trade network;
- Imports incl. cotton, sugar, olives, citrus and dates



TRADE ROUTES IN THE MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC WORLD

- Abbasid dynasty
- Trade routes



Artistic and Intellectual Center

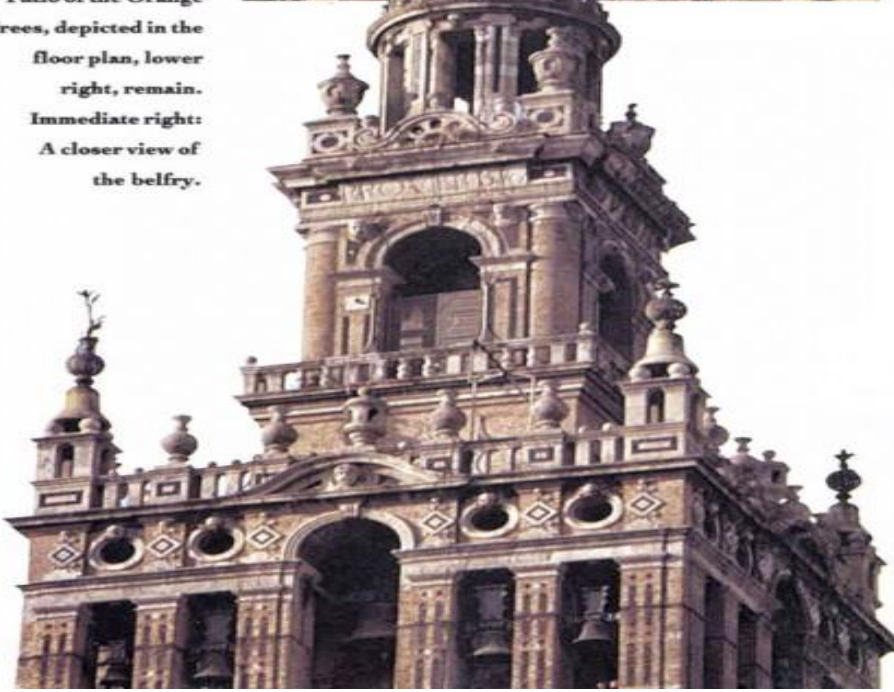
- libraries and learning: medicine, astronomy, mathematics and philosophy; inspired by occupied countries and older civilizations; ancient Greek writings **re-enter western Europe** through Spain from Arabic translations;
- Intellectual and cultural rivalry - Umayyads v. Abbasids
- Supported writers and artists;
- 3 cities – Cordoba, Seville, Toledo
- For Jews: stable and wealthy community; scholars; sciences, commerce and industry; Maimonides(Musa Ibn Maymon)

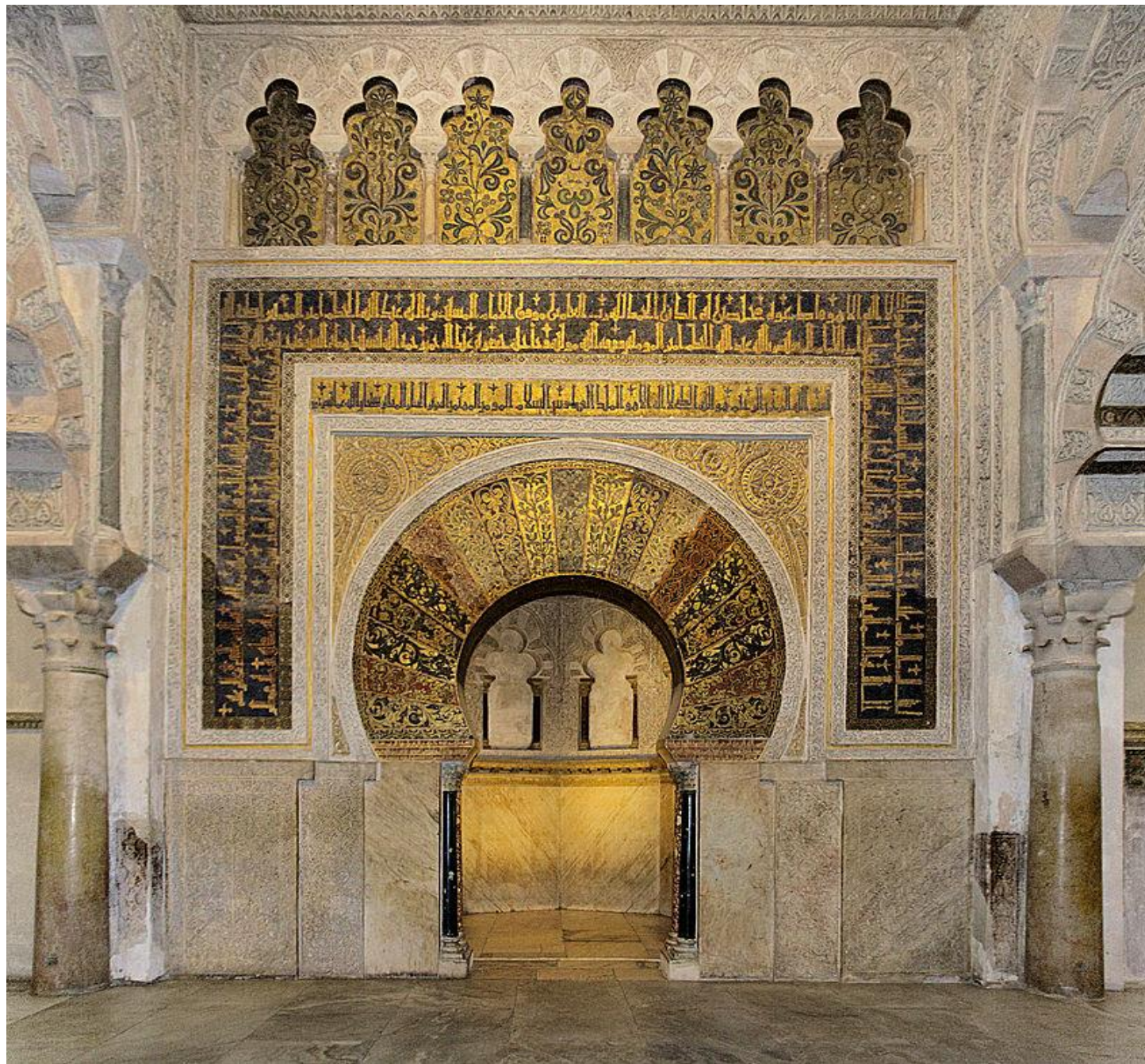




Seville

The Giralda, once part of the Great Mosque, now serves as bell tower for a Gothic cathedral, right, completed in 1506. Of the original mosque, only the minaret, a wall, the Gate of Pardon and part of the Patio of the Orange Trees, depicted in the floor plan, lower right, remain. Immediate right: A closer view of the belfry.







Alhambra











Averroes



- **Ibn Rushd** - **Averroes** was a medieval Andalusian polymath. He wrote on logic, Aristotelian philosophy, logic and Islamic philosophy, theology, Islamic jurisprudence, psychology. Politics, Andalusian classical music theory, geography, mathematics and medieval sciences of medicine, astronomy, physics and celestial mechanics;

A Multi-Cultural Society?

Was there an atmosphere of tolerance in social relations?

Islam was the official faith of the caliphate;
non-Muslims paid a special tax;
non-Muslims second class citizens
Non-Muslims prohibited from proselytizing for their faith;

Muslims, Jews and Christians interacted on a regular basis in relative peace;



מלך הבית נשבע בידו שאומרים יתעורר





TRAVESIA

DEL JUDIO

Decline

By end of tenth century, factionalism undermines the emirate; 1009 civil war;

the caliphate dissolves into city-states;