Chapter 9 Vocabulary

Key Terms

Shi’ites

Sunnis

Sasanid Empire

Mecca

Muhammad

Muslim

Islam

Medina

Umma

Caliphate

Quran

Umayyad Caliphate

Abbasid Caliphate

Mamluks

Ulama

Hadith

Definitions:

* Shi’ites- Muslims belonging to the branch of Islam believing that God vests leadership of the community in a descendant of Muhammad’s son in lay, Ali. Shi’ism is the state religion of Iran.
* Sunnis- Muslims belonging to the branch of Islam believing that the community should select its own leadership. The majority religion in most Islamic countries.
* Sasanid Empire- Iranian Empire with a capital in Ctesiphon, Mesopotamia. The Sasanid emperor established Zoroastrianism as the state religion. Islamic Arab armies overthrew the empire.
* Mecca- City in western Arabia; birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad, and ritual center of the Islamic religion.
* Muhammad- Arab prophet; founder of the religion Islam.
* Muslim- An adherent of the Islamic religion; a person who “submits” to the will of God (in Arabic, “Islam” means “submission”).
* Islam- Religion expounded by the Prophet Muhammad on the basis of his reception of divine relations, which were collected after his death into the Quran. In the tradition of Judaism and Christianity, and sharing much of their lore, Islam calls on all people who recognize one creator god- Allah- who rewards or punishes believers after death according to how they led their lives.
* Medina- City in western Arabia to which the Prophet Muhammad and his followers emigrated in 622 to escape persecution in Mecca.
* Umma- the community of all Muslims. A major innovation against the background of seventh-century Arabia, where traditionally kinship rather than faith had determined membership in a community.
* Caliphate- office established in the succession to the Prophet Muhammad, to rule the Islamic Empire; also the name of that empire.
* Quran- Book composed of divine revelations made to the Prophet Muhammad between 610 and his death in 632; the sacred text of the religion of Islam.
* Umayyad Caliphate- First hereditary dynasty of Muslim caliphs. From their capital at Damascus, the Umayyads ruled an empire that extended from Spain to India. Overthrown by the Abbasid Caliphate.
* Abbasid Caliphate- Descendants of the Prophet Muhammad’s Uncle, al-Abbas, the Abbasids overthrew the Umayyad Caliphate and ruled an Islamic empire from their capital in Baghdad.
* Mamluks- under the Islamic system of military slaver, Turkic military slaves who formed an important part of the armed forces of the Abbasid Caliphate of the ninth and tenth centuries. Mamluks eventually founded their own state, ruling Egypt and Syria.
* Ulama- Muslim religious scholars. From the ninth century onward, the primary interpreters of Islamic law and the social core of Muslim urban societies.
* Hadith- A tradition relating the words of deeds of the Prophet Muhammad’ next to the Quran, the most important basis for Islamic law.