

The establishment of abbasid dynasty history essay



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After the death of Prophet Muhammad, the al-Rasyidin continues to spread the Islamic teaching as what was left by Muhammad. All four al-Rasyidin caliphs were appointed through syura and altogether had led Islamic government in Madinah for 29 years. Only after the last al-Rasyidin caliph Ali bin Abu Talib, died in 661 A. D, Umayyad gained control over Islamic civilization. The Umayyad was founded by Muawiyah I ibni Abu Sufyan a descendent of Umaiyah bin Abdul Syams. The Umayyad was the first in Islamic history to introduce inheritance system in choosing the next caliph. While still maintaining the caliph title, each of the Umayyad leaders was from the same line of family of Umaiyah. Thus the entire 89 years of Umayyad administration in Damascus, Syiria was called Umayyad dynasty.

A dynasty is defined as a sequence of powerful leaders in the same family. Abbasid who emerged after winning battle against the Umayyad follow the same tradition as Umayyad which was to pass down their leadership power to someone in the same family tree. The Abbasid however is blood related to Prophet Muhammad where Muhammad's youngest uncle Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib was the founder of the Abbasid in 750 A. D. The title of first Abbasid caliph was then given to Abu'l Abbas As-Saffah who is related to Abbas in the same year. In the following section, we will delve into the establishment of Abbasid dynasty

2. 2 ABBASID ESTABLISHMENT

During the reign of Umayyad, there are several conflicts aroused. These conflicts trigger anti-Umayyad among the people of Umayyad itself. Islamic institution began to weaken under Umayyad control where people are discriminated by race, and high ranking officer live in luxury denying public's

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welfare. On top of that, there are some of the leaders, neglecting the Islamic way of life. All these factors turned some Umayyad people to go against their own government. They combined forces with the Abbasid in a great battle on the bank of Zab River a battle known as the Battle of Great Zab.

The Battle of the Great Zab was the ending point for Umayyad era when Abu Abbas As-Saffah won the battle. Although in term of military power, the Umayyad army led by Marwan II outmanned the Abbasid combined force, As-Saffah still have the advantages over the battle. This was all due to the fact that Umayyad was so corrupted that their army did not fought for the sake of Umayyad government. Meanwhile, on the other side, the combined army of Persian, Shi'ite and Abbasid fought for the same reason, which was to take down the Umayyad and stop the corruption.

On January 25, 750 near the Zab River, Abbasid combined army led by As-Saffah formed a spear wall, a tactic they learned from Syrian army. The Umayyad cavalry charged forward believing with their experience (the fact that they consist of many veterans and elites army) they will win. However everything went against them. Most of the armies were killed and the rest were force to retreat. Marwan II survived the battle and fled to Egypt however was killed several months later. About 300 members of Umayyad family were killed on the battle. The Abbasid ensure that almost no trace of Umayyad family left which also signaled the total collapsed of Umayyad power in the Middle East.

Damascus fell under control of Abbasid after the clash. In addition, As-Saffah was appointed as the first caliph. The end of Umayyad was the beginning of

Abbasid dynasty. Abbasid was officially established in 750 A. D with Damascus was the first capital. Subsequently, immediately after the great battle, As-Saffah sent his army to China to fight against Tang dynasty. It was another glorious victory for As-Saffah when he won the fight. Some of Chinese who kept captive was sent to Baghdad where they introduce the first paper production technology there.

Over four years of administrating the Abbasid, As-Saffah died from smallpox and appointed his brother Al-Mansur for the next caliph. Al-Masur, the second Abbasid caliph moved the capital from Damascus to Baghdad in 762. Since then Abbasid dynasty began to flourish and it was regarded that during the dynasty, Islamic civilization raised to its top in many aspects including art, sociology and science and technology. This is where Islamic Golden Age got its name.

2. 3 THE ABBASID PERIOD

The Abbasid administration pattern evolved over time to accommodate the culture, social and politic at that time. Historian divided the Abbasid period into five major elements:

Caliph

Period (A. D.)

Comment

First Period

From As-Saffah to Al-Wathiq

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750 – 847

First Arabic and Persian influence

Second Period

From Al-Mutawakkil to Al-Muttaqi

847 – 945

First Turkish influence

Third Period

From Al-Mustakfi to Al-Qa'im

945 – 1055

Second Persian influence

Fouth Period

From Al-Qa'im to An-Nasir

1055 – 1194

The reign of Seljuk clan in Abbasid administration (also known second Turkish influence)

Fifth Period

From Al-Qa'im to Al-Musta'sim

1194-1258

A time at which caliphs were not under influence of any other dynasty.

During the First Period, the Abbasid reach its glorious. The Abbasid during this period was an influential center for politics and Islamic religion as well. Apart from that, people's understandings among each other were strong where no conflict or discrimination issues arise unlike during Umayyad dynasty. In addition, the Abbasid colonies stretch from Middle East across Atlantic Ocean including Spain. On the other hand, Baghdad the capital of Abbasid, became an international city with multi-race groups of people co-exist in harmony.

Perhaps the most outstanding caliph during the First Period would be Harun al-Rashid and his son al-Ma'mun. Harun had established many infirmaries in many areas with total over 800 doctors to provide health treatment. Alongside, several pharmacies were also established. Another notable contribution of Harun in educational area was the introduction of Baitul Hikmah as the center for knowledge translation from various language such as Greek into Arabic.

There are many other contribution of Harun during his era and not to forget other caliphs contribution in driving Islamic civilization to its Golden Age. Such caliph includes Al-Mansur and Al-Ma'mun will be covered in other section.

Glossary

Al-Rashidin – Refer to the first four caliphs after the death of Prophet Mohammad

Syura – A process of appointing a new caliph through discussion between close friends of Prophet Muhammad s. a. w or by previous caliph

Shi'ite – A group of people who regards Ali (the fourth caliph of al-Rashidin) as the true successor of Prophet Muhammad

Smallpox – Refer to two virus variants: Variola major and Variola minor that infectious to human and may cause fatal death

Islamic Golden Age – An era during Islamic civilization where development in knowledge especially in science and technology at its glory

Baitul Hikmah – A library and center of translation of knowledge during the era of Abbasid in Baghdad