

# Umayyad vs abbasid dynasties essay



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Umayyad vs. Abbasid Dynasties In the rise and spreading of the Islam religion, there were many dynasties that were similar and different in their own way. The Umayyad and Abbasid Dynasties can be compared: culturally, through religious tolerations and cultural blending; politically, through bureaucracy and misuse of government powers; and economically, through trade and advancements of technology. Culturally through religious toleration and cultural blending, the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties can be compared.

Umayyad practiced a fair degree of religious tolerance and they hired Christians and Jews that belonged to the Levant to high ranks, but they weren't as open minded when it came to race, and their leaders and officials of the Empire were Arabs. But the Abbasids gave the most important jobs to non-Arab administrators, merchants, and scholars. Although both dynasties tolerated the “ people of the book” they charged higher taxes, convincing even more people by themselves to convert to their religion.

The “ people of the book” knew that in order to succeed, they had to convert even though both these dynasties accepted them. During the early years of the dynasty the Abbasid rulers encouraged intellectual expansion, which was basically cultural blending. The Abbasids absorbed ideas from Byzantium and India and ancient Greek philosophers were translated into Arabic. The Abbasids adopted Indian mathematical ideas such as a system of numerals and the concept of zero. The Umayyad also wrought many changes in Islamic government.

The most significant of these was the adoption of Byzantine administrative and financial systems. These intellectual improvements made the Islamic community a center of cultural and intellectual growth. Politically, through bureaucracy and the misuse of government power, Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties can be compared. Many Abbasid caliphs were relegated to a more ceremonial role than under the Umayyad, as the leaders began to exert greater influence, and the role of the old Arab aristocracy was slowly replaced by a Persian bureaucracy.

While the Umayyad's political center of community shifted to Damascus in Syria, the succession of Umayyad caliphs strove to build a bureaucracy that would bind together the vast domains they claimed to rule also. Bureaucracy in these dynasties allowed the local government to rule over their territories, creating a more centralized government. However while the officers of the guard ruled in Baghdad, the empire's economy weakened, and across the empire respect for the Abbasid caliph fell to new lows generating more rebellions because of the misuse of power.

The Umayyad's plans were to create a stable administration for the empire following the main ideas of the Byzantine Empire which had ruled the same region previously, and had three main governmental branches: political and military affairs; tax collection; and religious administration. Each province had a governor who was in charge of the religious officials, army leaders, police, and civil administrators in his province and as the central power of the Umayyad rulers waned in the later years of the dynasty, some governors neglected to send the extra tax revenue to Damascus and created great personal fortunes.

These political leaders stole the money from hard working people to increase their treasuries and abused their power over their regions creating rebellions and disaster over the dynasty. Economically through trade and the advancements of technology, the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties can be compared. Abbasid merchants dominated trade in the Indian Ocean and formed a dense network of trade routes in the Mediterranean and the Silk Road which passed through Muslim states between China and Europe. The Umayyad also used the silk roads for overland trade.

The roads used for trade were also inherited for military forces to cross. These roads for the Umayyad and Abbasid were said to be very efficient and fast so a lot more money came into the Dynasty. Trading was very respectable and important to both dynasties. While both dynasties were reliant to trade and advancements in technology were also important to the economy. Advances were made in irrigation and farming, using new technology such as the windmill to create more crops in dry times in the Abbasid dynasty.

Muslim engineers also developed pumps, employed gears in mills and water-raising machines, and used dams to provide additional power to watermills and water-raising machines. Such advances made it possible for many industrial tasks that were previously driven by manual labor in ancient times to be mechanized and driven by machinery instead in the medieval Islamic world. While the Umayyad created saddles to ride camels through the brutal heat and carry heavy loads. The Umayyad also used the compass from the Chinese and lateen sails from south Asian and Indian mariners to engage in maritime trade and ran some of the first banks.

Although the Umayyad designed great inventions, the Abbasid improved their ideas and benefitted from it significantly. As shown, the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties can be compared in many political, economical, and cultural aspects. The misuse of government power and the use of bureaucracy within the two dynasties helped and destroyed the government. With the help of overland trade and advancements of technology contributed to the height of the dynasties. The cultural tolerations and cultural blending within the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties also contributed to the powerful regions.