

المرحلة الثالثة

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## Baghdad in Islamic History

After 500 years of rule, however, the Abbasid dynasty slowly begun to lose its vitality and relevance over the vast Muslim world. The reasons were partly natural (vast flooding and fires), and partly human-made (rivalry between Shia and Sunni Muslims, internal security problems).

The city of Baghdad was finally trashed by the Mongols in 1258 CE, effectively ending the era of the Abbasids. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers reportedly ran red with the blood of thousands of scholars (a reported 100,000 of Baghdad's million residents were massacred).

Many of the libraries, irrigation canals, and great historical treasures were looted and forever ruined. The city began a long period of decline and became host to numerous wars and battles that continue to this day.

In 1508 Baghdad became part of the new Persian (Iranian) Empire, but very quickly the Sunnite Ottoman Empire took over the city and held it virtually uninterrupted until World War One.

Economic prosperity did not begin to return to Baghdad for several hundred years, until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as trade with Europe returned in earnest, and in 1920 Baghdad became the capital of the newly formed nation of Iraq. While Baghdad became a thoroughly modern city in

the 20<sup>th</sup> century, constant political and military upheaval has prevented the city from ever returning to its former glory as the center of Islam culture. Intense modernization occurred during the oil boom of the 1970s, but the Persian Gulf War of 1990- 1991 and 2003 destroyed much of the city's cultural heritage, and while many of the buildings and infrastructure have been rebuilt, the city has not yet achieved the stability needed to return it to prominence as a center for religious culture.