

Fabian Overkamp

Lyndell O'Hara

World Civilization 1

5 March 2023

## Research & Writing Assignment

### Alternate History Week 7

In this alternate history, Muhammad dies ten years earlier than he did in real life. His death in 622 instead of 632 leaves the young religion in a fragile state, with no clear successor to lead it.

One of the most important steps in the Islamic history is when “he (Muhammad) and his followers (...) established the first ‘umma’, or community of faith”. This is so important that it became the beginning of the Islamic calendar and made Muhammad a political and military leader as well as a prophet. This attracted a lot of new followers and gave him a vast amount of new options to keep strengthening and building up the community.

But when Muhammad would have actually died at that time, he would have never been able to establish the “umma” and therefore also not the empire and influential conquests he did.

“(...) the nomads of Arabia had too few resources to generate any political organization of their own. They had been both too poor and too few in numbers to play a major military role in most eras. A few Arab groups at times made alliances with nearby great powers, but Arab tribes were more the clients than the equal allies of sedentary kings and emperors”. Due to the fact that Muhammad wouldn't have made the crucial step to start a seriously growing community of faith

and the political and economical disadvantages of the Arabian groups at that time, the religion might have never received the importance and significance that it still has today.

With that being said, the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East and North Africa would have remained largely unchanged. The Byzantine and Sassanid Empires continue to dominate the region and influence and develop the societies on site. The Arabic language, which was spread by the early Islamic conquests fail and many of the scientific and philosophical works produced by Arabic scholars in our timeline are never written or are composed in a different language.

However, The rise of Christianity in Europe and the subsequent spread of Western imperialism continue to shape the world's political and economic order. The absence of Islam as a major world religion changes the religious landscape of the world, but it is unlikely to have a significant impact on the broader course of history.

Without Muhammad's guidance and leadership, the early Islamic community is divided into various factions, each claiming to be the rightful heirs to the Prophet's teachings. The lack of a centralized authority and the absence of clear doctrinal guidelines result in a period of intense theological debate and political maneuvering, with no clear consensus on the future direction of Islam.

As a result, the early Muslim community becomes fragmented, and the religion fails to gain the political and military momentum. The rapid conquest of neighboring regions, which helped to spread the religion in the decades following Muhammad's death, never occurs.

Without the Islamic Empire, the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East and North Africa remains largely unchanged. The Byzantine and Sassanid Empires continue to dominate the region, and the various smaller kingdoms and city-states that emerged in the wake of their decline remain independent.

The absence of Islam also has significant cultural and intellectual consequences. The Arabic language, which was spread by the early Islamic conquests, fails to become the lingua franca of the region. As a result, many of the scientific and philosophical works produced by Arabic scholars in our timeline are never written or are composed in a different language.

Despite these differences, the broad contours of world history remain largely unchanged. The rise of Christianity in Europe and the subsequent spread of Western imperialism continue to shape the world's political and economic order. The absence of Islam as a major world religion changes the religious landscape of the world, but it is unlikely to have a significant impact on the broader course of history.

In conclusion, while Muhammad's leadership and the development of the Islamic religion were undoubtedly influential in shaping the Middle East and North Africa, it is unlikely that the

absence of Islam would have fundamentally altered the course of world history. The power dynamics and network connections that underpin human societies, along with other historical factors, are likely to have played a more significant role in shaping the world we know today.