

570 - 633
Teachers



Muhammad, Prophet of Islam

Muhammad is the central prophet of the Islamic faith. Born into a noble Quraish (Quraysh) clan, he was orphaned at an early age. He grew up to be a successful merchant, then turned contemplative; it's said that beginning when he was 40, Muhammad was...

870 - 950
Philosophers



Al-Farabi, Muslim Philosopher

Al-Farabi, Farabi, and Abunaser was a Muslim philosopher and scientist and one of the greatest scientists and philosophers of his time. Some historians claim Farabi was born in the small village of Wasij near Farab (in what is today Otrar, Kazakhs...

965 - 1039
Astronomers



Ibn al-Haytham, Father of Optics

Ibn al-Haytham was an Arab or Persian Muslim polymath who made significant contributions to the principles of optics, as well as to anatomy, astronomy, engineering, mathematics, medicine, ophthalmology, philosophy, physics, psychology, visual percept...

973 - 1048
Historians



Al-Biruni, Persian Mathematician

Abu Rayhan Biruni was a Persian mathematician, physicist, scholar, encyclopedist, philosopher, astronomer, astrologer, traveller, historian, pharmacist, and teacher, who contributed greatly to the fields of mathematics, philosophy, medicine, and scie...

1058 - 1111
Philosophers



Algazel (Al-Ghazali), Persian Scholar

Al-Ghazali known as Algazel to the western medieval world, born and died in Tus, in the Khorasan province of Persia (modern day Iran). He was a Muslim theologian, jurist, philosopher, and mystic of Persian origin and remains one of the most celebrate...

1128 - 1198
Philosophers



Averroes (Ibn Rushd), Muslim Scientist

Abu'l Waleed Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Rushd, known as Averroes in the West, was born in 1128 C.E. in Cordova. He studied philosophy and law from Abu J'afar Haroon and from Ibn Baja; he also studied medicine. Al-Hakam, the famous Umayyad...

1137 - 1193
Royalty



Saladin, Opponent of Crusaders

Saladin is a hero of Islam, he united Arab forces and recaptured the holy city of Jerusalem from Christian Crusaders in the 12th century A.D. Of Kurdish origin, Saladin became the vizier of Egypt in 1169 and then took full control of the country in 1...

1207 - 1273
Poets



Rumi, Sufi Mystic

Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi was a great Persian poet and Sufi mystic. His Masnavi-ye Manavi is a 6-volume poem regarded by many Sufis as second in importance only to the Qur'an; it is often called "Qur'an-e Parsi" (The Qur'an in Persian). Rumi's influ...

1304 - 1378
Explorers



Ibn Battutah, Muslim Traveler

Ibn Battuta, Muslim traveler from Tangier. No other medieval traveler is known to have journeyed so extensively. In 30 years (from c.1325) he made a series of journeys recorded in a dictated account. He traveled overland in North Africa and Syria to...

1371 - 1433
Explorers



Zheng He, the Chinese Admiral

In 1405, Zheng was chosen to lead the biggest naval expedition in history up to that time. Over the next 28 years (1405-1433), he commanded seven fleets that visited 37 countries, through Southeast Asia to faraway Africa and Arabia. In those years, C...

1432 - 1481
Conquerors



Mehmed II, The Conqueror

Mehmed II (1432-1481), nicknamed the conqueror, was the sultan of the Ottoman Empire a short time in 1444 to 1446, and from 1451 to 1481. Mehmed II brought an end to the Byzantine Empire by capturing Constantinople in 1453 (during the well-known Sieg...

1460 - 1533
Royalty



Muhammad XII of Granada, Boabdil

Muhammad XII, known as Boabdil (a Spanish corruption of the name Abu Abdullah), was the twenty-second and last Nasrid ruler of Granada in Iberia. He was also called el chico, the little, or el zogyobi, the unfortunate. Son of Abu I-Hasan Ali, sultan...

1465 - 1520
Conquerors



Selim I, Sultan Ottoman Empire

Selim I, also known as "the Excellent," "the Brave" or the best translation "the Stern", Yavuz in Turkish, the long name is Yavuz Sultan Selim; was the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1512 to 1520. He was also the first Ottoman Sultan to assume the...

1478 - 1546
Sailors



Barbarossa, Pirate Redbeard

Barbarossa Hayreddin Pasha, before being promoted to the rank of Pasha, was a Turkish privateer and Ottoman admiral who dominated the Mediterranean for decades. He was born on the Ottoman island of Midilli (Lesbos/ Mytilini in today's Greece) and die...

1483 - 1531
Conquerors



Babur, Founder Mughal Dynasty India

Babur was a Muslim conqueror from Central Asia who, following a series of setbacks, finally succeeded in laying the basis for the Mughal dynasty of India. He was a direct descendant of Timur through his father, and a descendant also of Genghis Khan t...