

Sources for Islamic Expansion

[Expansion of the Early Islamic Empire](#)

Document A: Battle of the Yarmuk (Modified)

Muslim forces took control of Syria in 636 CE when they fought the Eastern Roman Empire (which included Greece) at the Battle of Yarmuk. This account, written by Muslim historian Ahmad al-Biladuri in the 800s CE, describes the battle.

The Muslims gathered together, and the Greek army marched against them. The Greeks and their followers in this battle tied themselves to each other by chains, so that none of them would run away. The battle they fought at al-Yarmuk was of the fiercest and bloodiest kind. In this battle 24,000 Muslims took part. By Allah's help, some 70,000 of them [the Greeks] were put to death, and their remnants took to flight, reaching as far as Palestine, Antioch, Aleppo, Mesopotamia and Armenia. In the battle of al-Yarmuk certain Muslim women took part and fought violently. Among them was Hind, daughter of 'Utbah and mother of Mu'awiyah ibn-abi- Sufyan, who repeatedly exclaimed, "Cut the arms of these non-Muslims with your swords!"

Document B: Treaty of Tudmir (Modified)

This treaty was signed in 713 CE between 'Abd al-'Aziz, the commander of the Muslim forces invading Spain, and Theodemir, the Christian King of a region in southern Spain.

In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. We [Abd al-Aziz's forces] will not harass him [Theodmir], nor remove him from power. His followers will not be killed or taken prisoner, nor will they be separated from their women and children. They will not be coerced in matters of religion, their churches will not be burned, nor will sacred objects be taken from the realm, as long as he remains sincere and fulfills these conditions that we have set for him: He will not give shelter to fugitives, nor to our enemies, nor encourage any protected person to fear us, nor conceal news of our enemies. He and [each of] his men shall [also] pay one dinar every year, together with four measures of wheat, four measures of barley, four liquid measures of concentrated fruit juice, four liquid measures of vinegar, four of honey, and four of olive oil. Slaves must each pay half of this amount.

Document C: Fred Donner

Fred Donner is a historian at the University of Chicago who specializes in early Islam and early Islamic expansion. Below is an excerpt from his book where he challenges some of the common knowledge about early Islamic conquests.

During the conquest period the granting of gifts, which had been practiced by Muhammad, became more regularized and eventually institutionalized. In the first place, there was established a system of stipends or direct salary payments ('ata-') to warriors serving in the Islamic armies. . . . Tribesmen in the Islamic armies who rebelled against the regime now did so at the cost of losing the stipends that the regime provided. Similarly, stipends were granted to some Persian or Aramean nobles (dihqans) who cooperated with the Muslims in Iraq. In most cases, it appears that these individuals were required to embrace Islam in order to receive their stipend.

Source: Excerpt from Fred Donner, The Early Islamic Conquests, 1981.