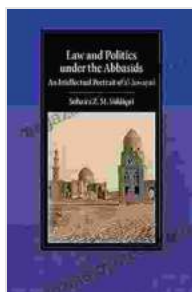# Law and Politics Under the Abbasids

The Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258) was one of the most important and influential empires in Islamic history. During this time, the Abbasids presided over a period of great intellectual and cultural achievement, including significant developments in law and politics. This article provides an overview of the Abbasid Caliphate, focusing on the important legal and political changes that took place during this time.

The Abbasid Caliphate

The Abbasid Caliphate was founded in 750 by Abu al-Abbas as-Saffah, who overthrew the Umayyad Caliphate. The Abbasids were descendants of the Prophet Muhammad's uncle, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, and they claimed to be the rightful successors to the caliphate. The Abbasids quickly established their control over most of the Islamic world and established a vast empire that stretched from Spain to India.

Law and Politics under the Abbasids: An Intellectual Portrait of al-Juwayni (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization) by Joseph J. Ellis

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 1801 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Print length	: 321 pages

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The Abbasid Caliphate was a time of great prosperity and cultural achievement. The Abbasid caliphs were patrons of the arts and sciences, and they established libraries, universities, and observatories. The Abbasids also made significant contributions to Islamic law and jurisprudence, and they compiled and codified many of the hadith (sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad).

Law and Politics Under the Abbasids

The Abbasids made a number of important changes to the legal and political system of the Islamic world. These changes included:

- **The codification of Islamic law.** The Abbasids were the first caliphs to codify Islamic law. They compiled and organized the hadith and other legal sources, and they issued legal decrees that were binding on all Muslims.

- **The development of Sunni and Shia jurisprudence.** Under the Abbasids, the two main branches of Islamic jurisprudence, Sunni and Shia, developed their own distinct legal traditions. Sunni jurisprudence was based on the hadith and the consensus of the community, while Shia jurisprudence was based on the hadith and the teachings of the Imams, who were the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad.

- **The establishment of a centralized government.** The Abbasids established a centralized government that was responsible for administering the empire and enforcing the law. The caliph was the head of state, and he appointed governors to rule the provinces.

- **The development of a sophisticated bureaucracy.** The Abbasids developed a sophisticated bureaucracy that was responsible for managing the affairs of the empire. The bureaucracy was divided into

departments, each of which was responsible for a specific area of government, such as finance, taxation, and justice.

The legal and political changes that took place under the Abbasids had a profound impact on the development of Islamic law and politics. The codification of Islamic law and the development of Sunni and Shia jurisprudence created a more standardized and structured legal system. The establishment of a centralized government and a sophisticated bureaucracy made it possible for the Abbasids to control their vast empire effectively.
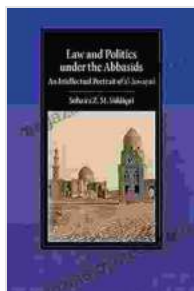
The Legacy of the Abbasids

The Abbasid Caliphate came to an end in 1258, when the Mongols invaded and sacked Baghdad. However, the legacy of the Abbasids continued to have a profound impact on the development of Islamic law and politics. The legal and political system that the Abbasids created served as a model for later Islamic empires, and their contributions to Islamic law and jurisprudence continue to be studied and respected today.

The Abbasid Caliphate was a time of great legal and political change. The Abbasids codified Islamic law, developed Sunni and Shia jurisprudence, established a centralized government, and created a sophisticated bureaucracy. These changes had a profound impact on the development of Islamic law and politics, and they continue to have a lasting legacy today.

To learn more about the Abbasids and their impact on law and politics, I highly recommend the book "Law and Politics Under the Abbasids" by Hugh Kennedy. This book provides a comprehensive and engaging overview of the Abbasid Caliphate, and it is an essential

resource for anyone interested in this important period of Islamic history.

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