

When reading any historical work, one's "first concern should be not with the facts it contains but with the historian who wrote it...By and large, the historian will get the kinds of facts he wants."

....Edward Hallett Carr

Israel and Palestine



Israel and Palestine

February 2026

Instructor: Chris Schaefer, Chris.Schaefer@bataandairy.com

Books: Suggested outside reading, for those interested in more in-depth study:

Abraham: A Journey to the Heart of Three Faiths, by Bruce Feiler.

A Peace to End All Peace, by David Fromkin. (The treaties that ended World War I)

The Road Not Taken: Early Arab-Israeli Negotiations, by Itamar Rabinovich.

Six days in June: How Israel Won the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, by Eric Hammel.

The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967-1977 by Gershom Gorenberg.

Arafat: From Defender to Dictator, by Said K. Aburish.

Politics of Diplomacy, James A. Baker (the only successful period in the Middle East peace process).

The Israelis: Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land, 2005, by Donna Rosenthal.

The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace, by Aaron David Miller.

Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations: 1820-2001, by Ussama Makdisi.

News sources:

Haaretz: www.Haaretz.com

Al Monitor: www.al-monitor.com

Jerusalem Post: www.jpost.com

Times of Israel: www.timesofisrael.com

BBC: www.bbc.com

Al Jazeera: www.aljazeera.com

The Economist, Middle East Newsletter: www.economist.com/newsletters/middle-east-dispatch

The Guardian: www.theguardian.com

Media Line: www.themedialine.org

UNRWA: www.unrwa.org

Movies:

The Oslo Diaries. Documentary movie produced by Mor Loushy and Daniel Sivan, 2018.

No Other Land. Academy Award winning documentary movie produced by Israeli Yuval Abraham and Palestinian Basel Adra, 2024.

Other resources:

The Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/> (To search, click the small magnifying glass icon in the upper right corner.)

The Women's Institute

Israel and Palestine

Dates: Tuesdays and Thursdays, February 10 thru February 26, 2026

Time: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Instructor: Chris Schaefer, Chris.Schaefer@bataandiary.com

Course Overview

Over the past two years the Gaza strip deteriorated into the site of some of the world's most intense bloodshed. Yet few people are fully aware of why this conflict has gone on for so long, or why the powerful Israeli Defense Force (IDF) was unable to quickly destroy the much smaller, but ruthless, Hamas.

In this course we will learn how these closely related adversaries, the Israelis and the Palestinians, came to occupy and claim the same land, and the political and religious factors that brought them into such intense confrontation. We will discuss the factions that control both Israeli and Palestinian politics. We will examine the relationships of both parties with Iran and its proxies, the stunning shift in Middle Eastern power after Israel's successful attacks on Iran and Hezbollah, and the overshadowing influence of the United States. We will discuss the peace negotiations that have failed, and the basis and progress of the peace plan now advanced by Donald Trump.

February 10: Founding Modern Israel. Geography. Semites: Canaanites, Jews and Palestinians—where did these people come from? The Christian and Muslim eras. Diaspora. Zionism. World War I and the Balfour Declaration. Early migration into Palestine and Arab resistance. Jewish and Arab resistance to the British Mandate. The UN partition plans. The 1948 War for Israeli Independence.

February 12: The Israeli state. Palestinian refugees. Arab opposition to Israel. Sephardic/Mizrahi immigration to Israel. Governance. The Suez War and The Six Day War. The Islamic resurgence. Arab terrorism. The October War.

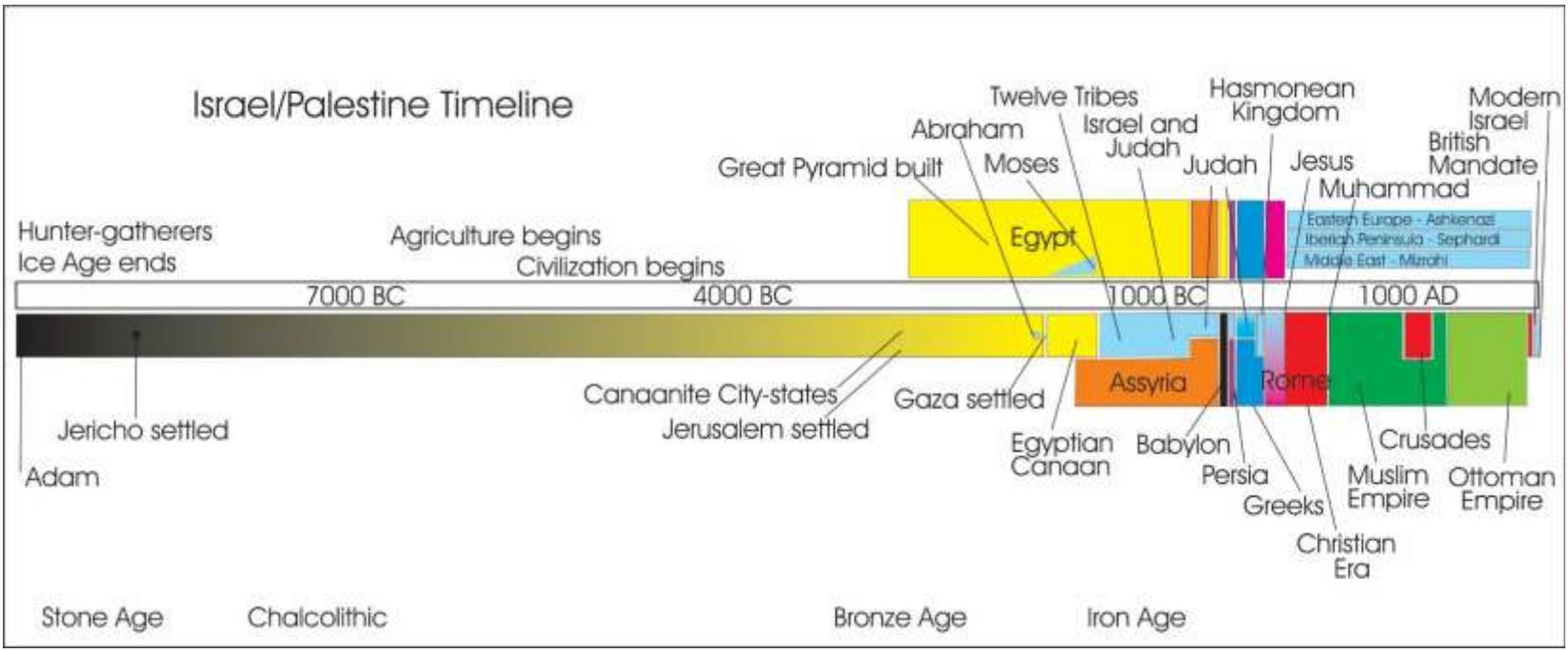
February 17: The Peace Process. Jimmy Carter begins the Peace Process. Radical Islam and Hezbollah. Religious Zionism. Settlements in the 1980s. The first Intifada. Founding Hamas. The Madrid Conference. The Oslo Accords.

February 19: Israeli and Palestinian co-existence. Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. Russian immigration to Israel. The rise of Benjamin Netanyahu. The Peace candidate, Ehud Barak. The Second Intifada and suicide bombing. Settlements, Jerusalem and Likud. The Peace Process fails. The Haredim—objectives, subsidies and universal conscription. Areas B and C, and the Wall. The Arab Peace Initiative.

February 24: Israeli and Palestinian politics. Hamas wins the Palestinian elections. Salaam Fayyad's plan. The Kerry negotiations. Israeli elections and Israel/Hamas wars. The Great March of Return. The Abraham Accords. Israeli coalition politics—Benjamin Netanyahu, Yair Lapid, and Mansour Abbas. The Israeli election of November 2022. Trouble over judicial reform. Trouble in the West Bank.

February 26: The Gaza War. Hamas' plan/Israel's error. The October 7 attack. The war in Gaza. Hostage negotiations. The theory of Transfer. Destruction and the death toll. Humanitarian facilities and aid. Religious Zionism and the Israeli cabinet. Israeli victories. Netanyahu's dilemma. The Gulf states and international pressures. The Trump peace plan—can it work?

Israel/Palestine Timeline



Semites, Canaanites, Jews and Palestinians

Zionism

Early Jewish and Palestinian struggles

UN Partition Plans

Israeli Independence

Geopolitics



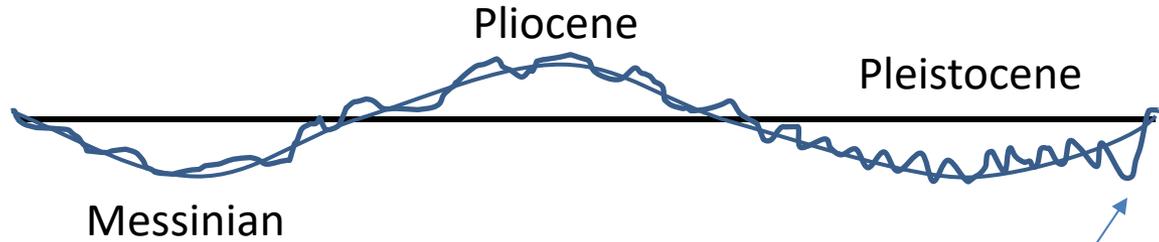
Levant



Fertile Crescent

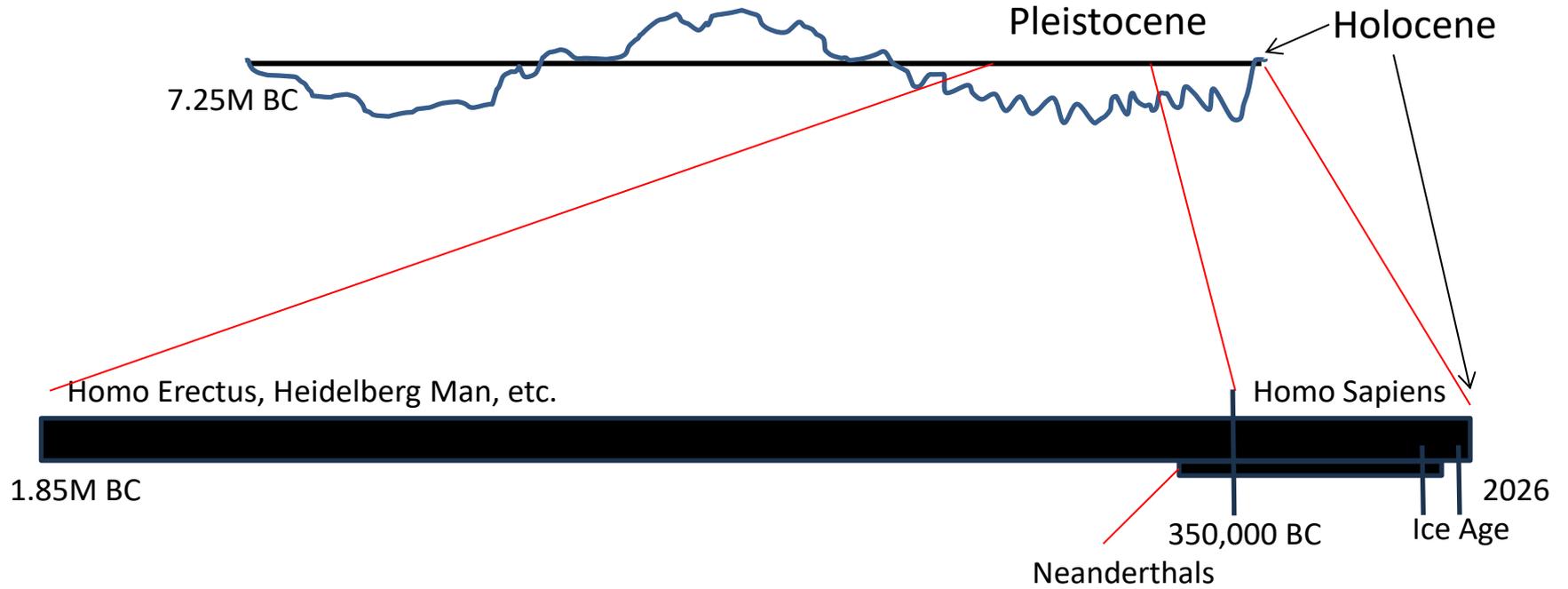
Who are the Semites?
Where did they come from?

Climate Timeline

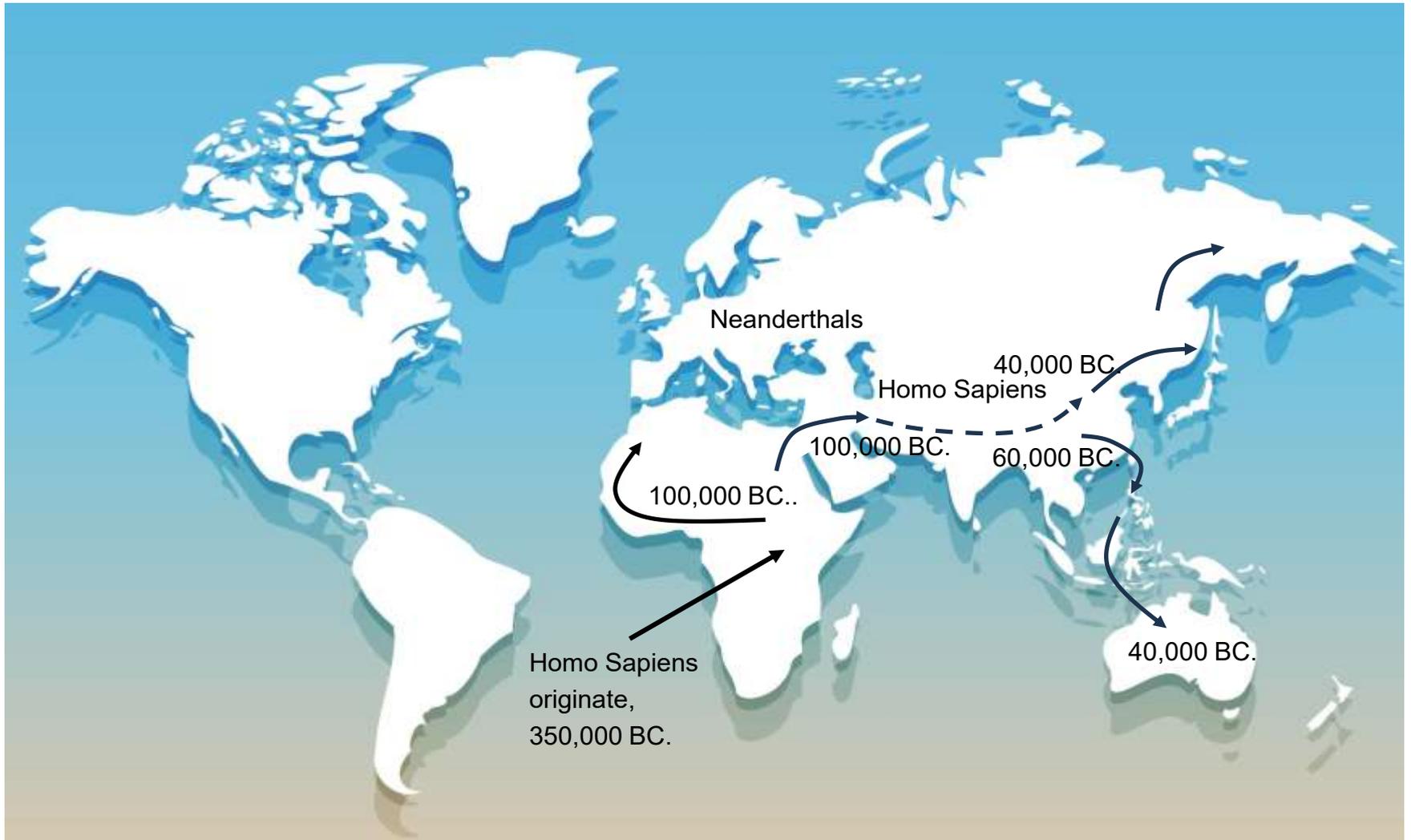


The Last Glacial Period (the Ice Age) hit its maximum about 20,000 years ago.

Human Timeline



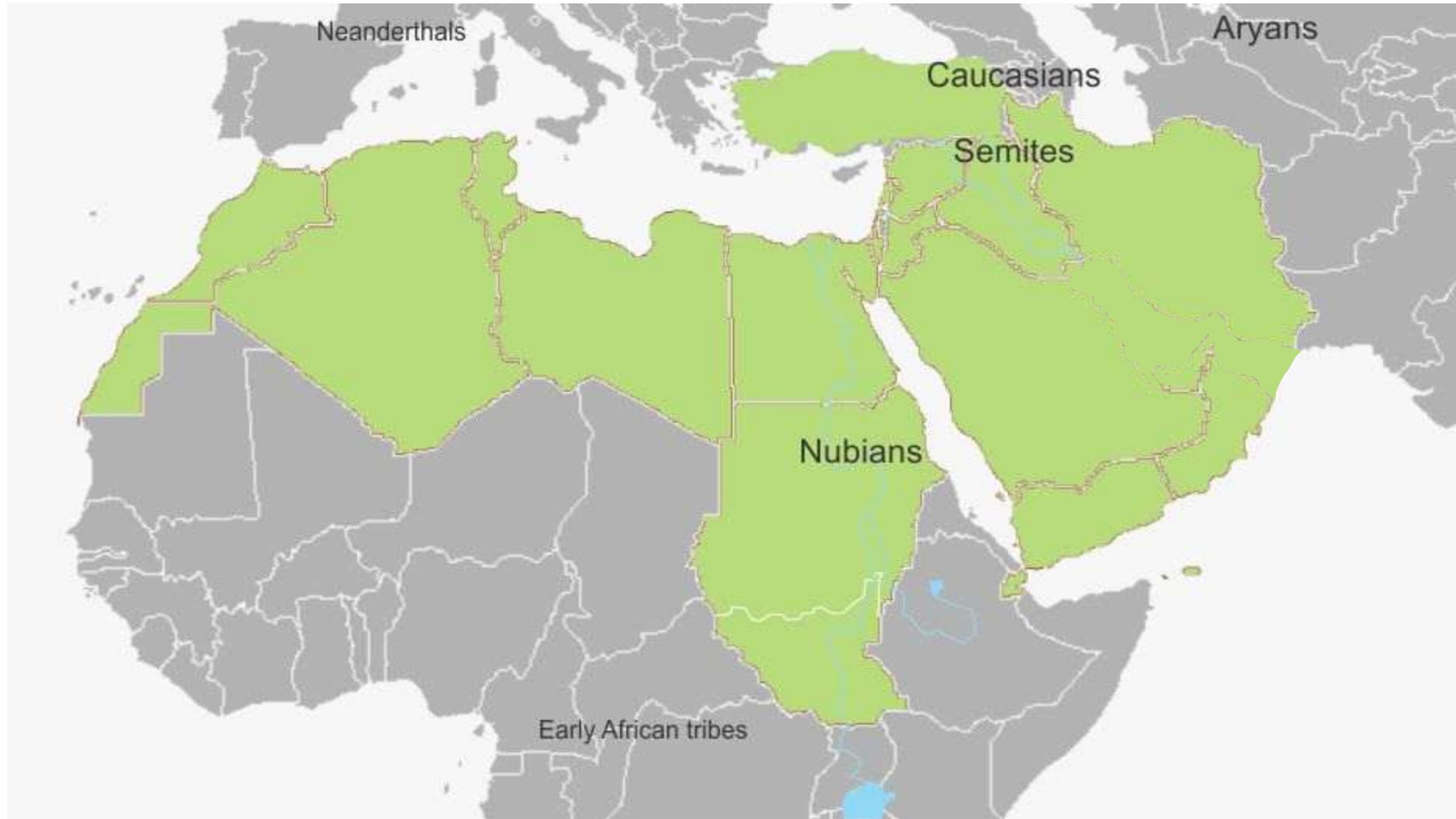
Homo Sapien "cave men" began about 350,000 BC.



Human diaspora before the Ice Age.

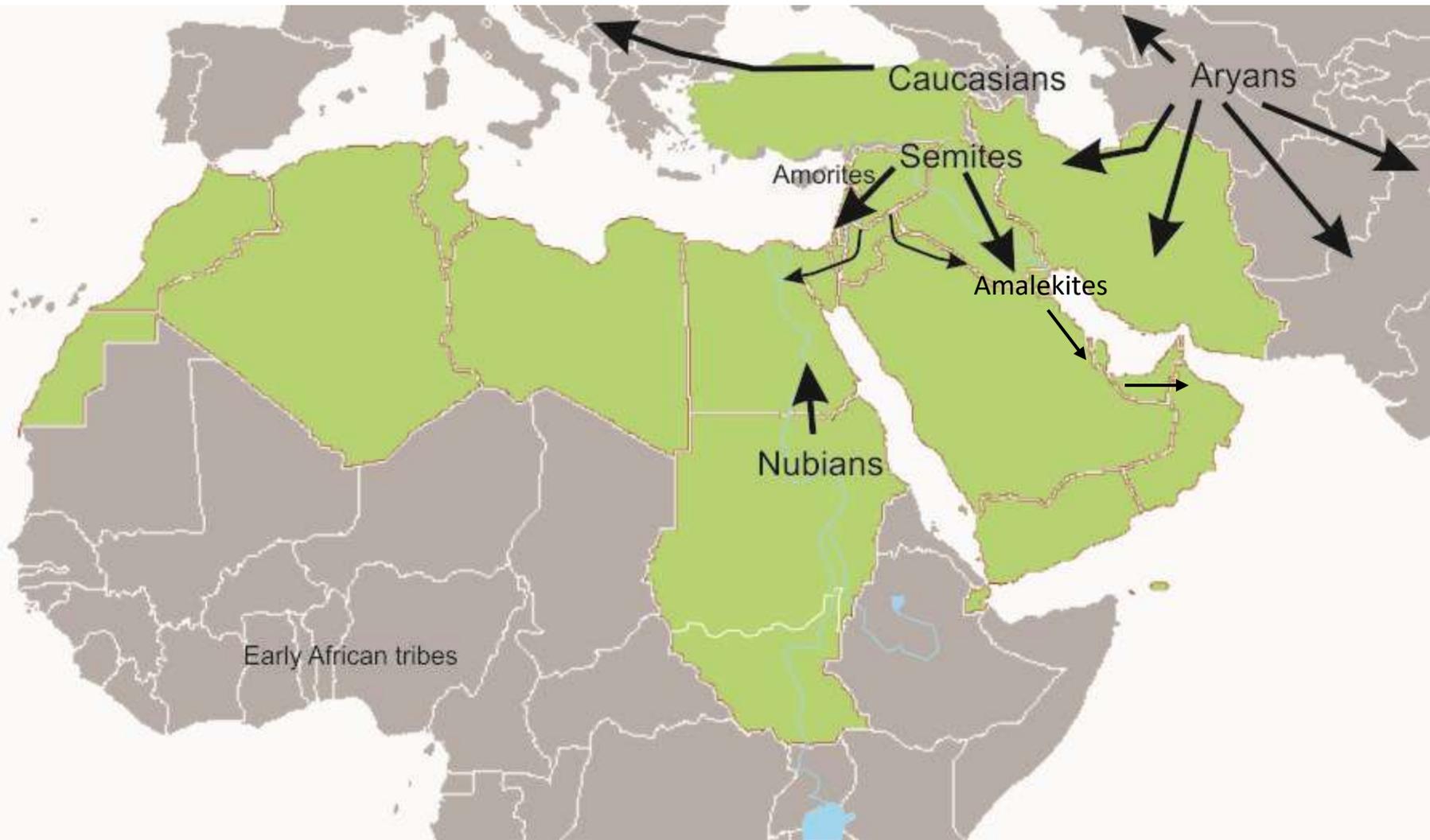


The Ice Age (40,000 BC - 13,000 BC).



The Ice Age (40,000 BC - 13,000 BC)
Homo Sapiens develop spoken languages

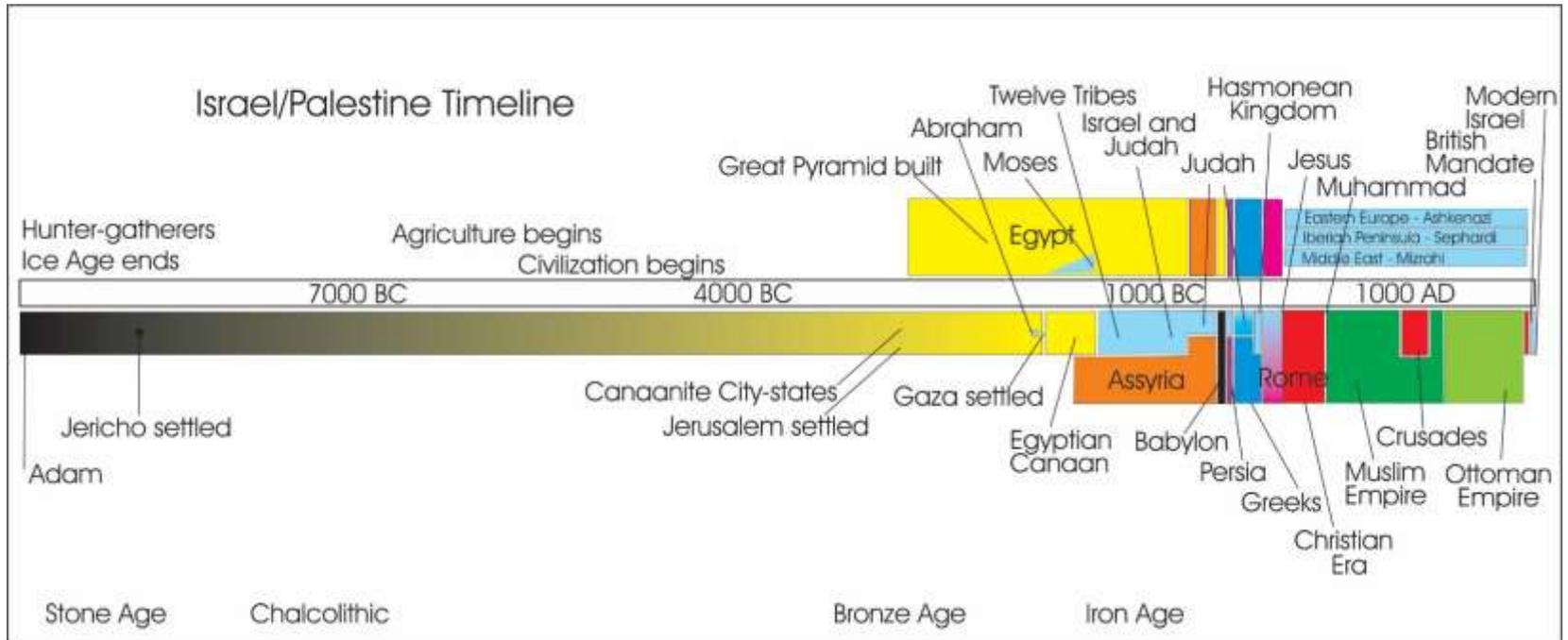
Who are the
Canaanites?



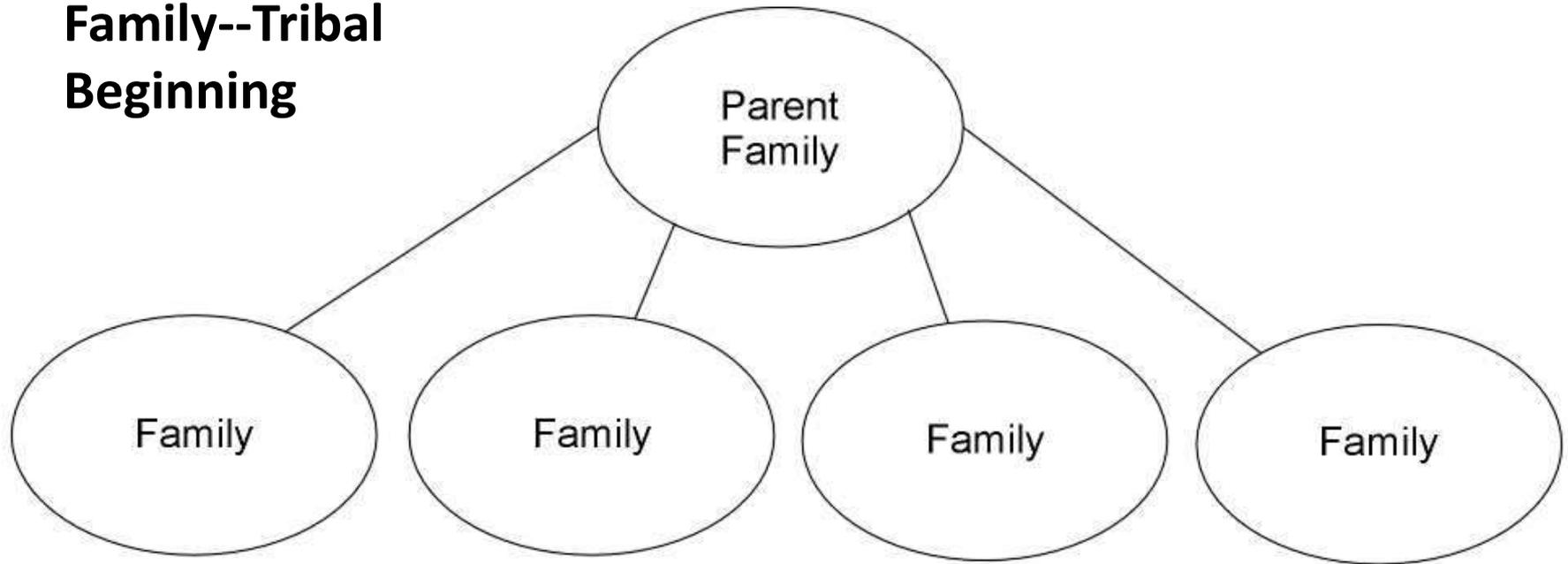
Expansion after the Ice Age (13,000 BC)

Homo Erectus, Heidelberg Man, etc.

Homo Sapiens



Family--Tribal Beginning



Family:

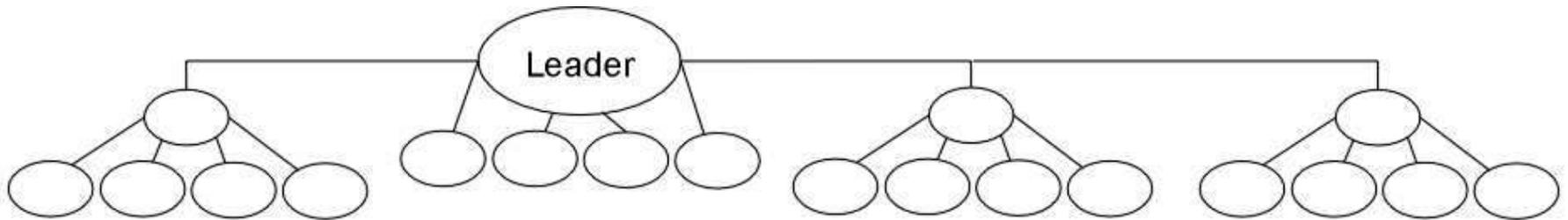
Paternal leadership

All living

Less than 100 people

Often common skills: herders, farmers, craftsmen

Clan--Tribal Growth



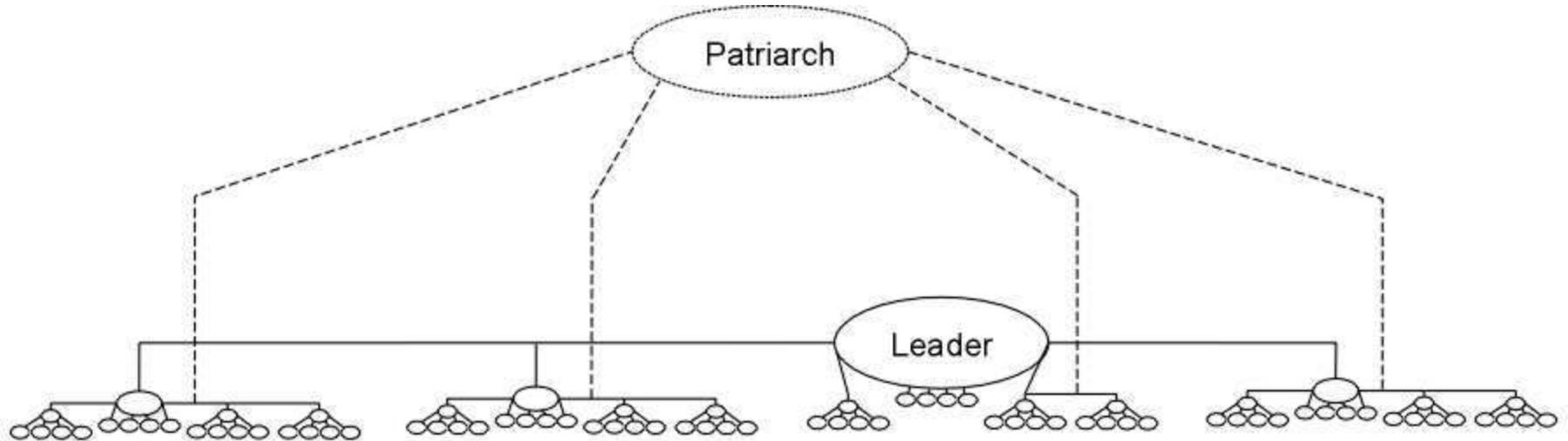
Clan:

Selected leadership

Several hundred or more people

Herders, farmers, craftsmen, raiders

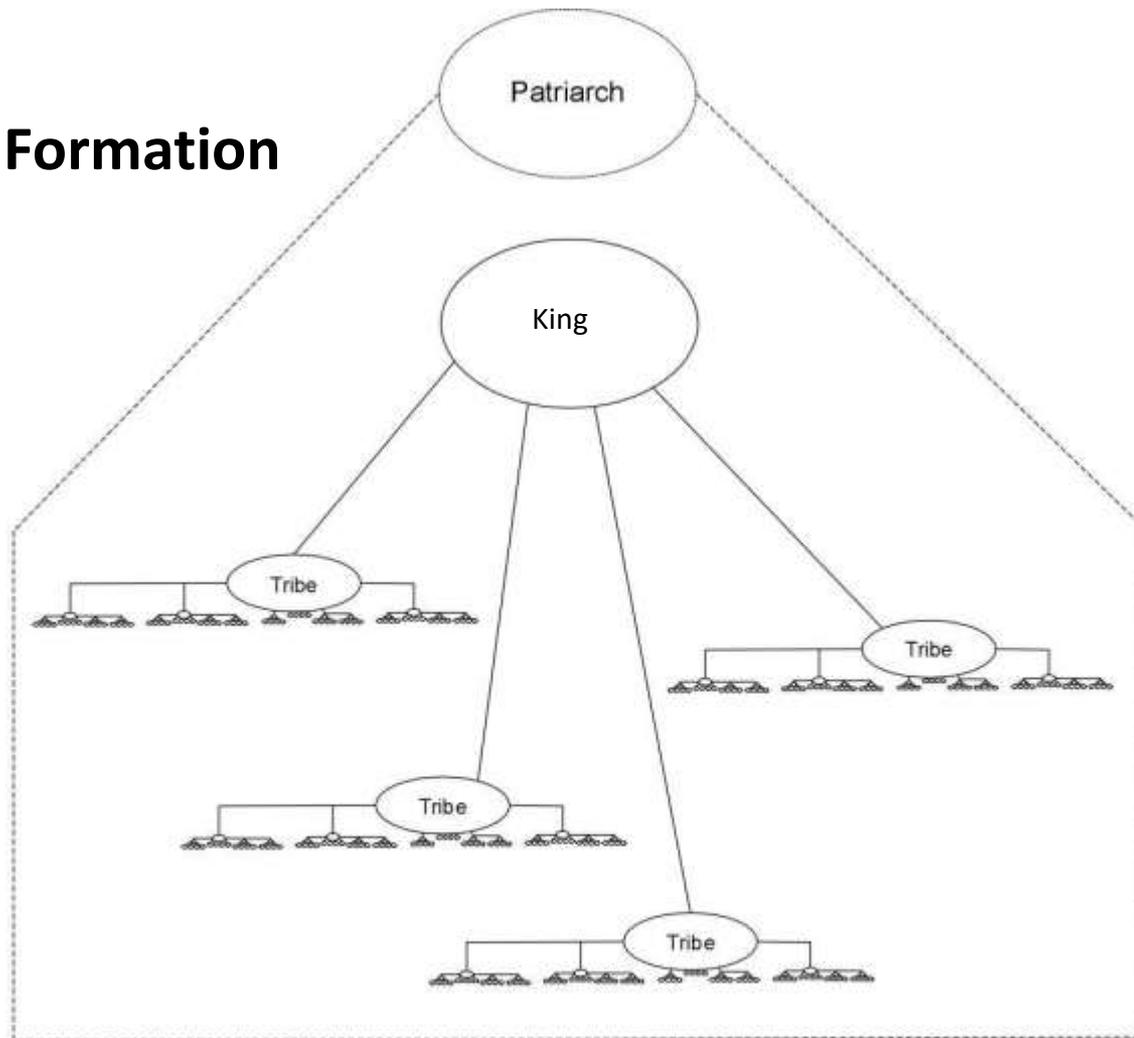
Tribal Formation



Tribe:

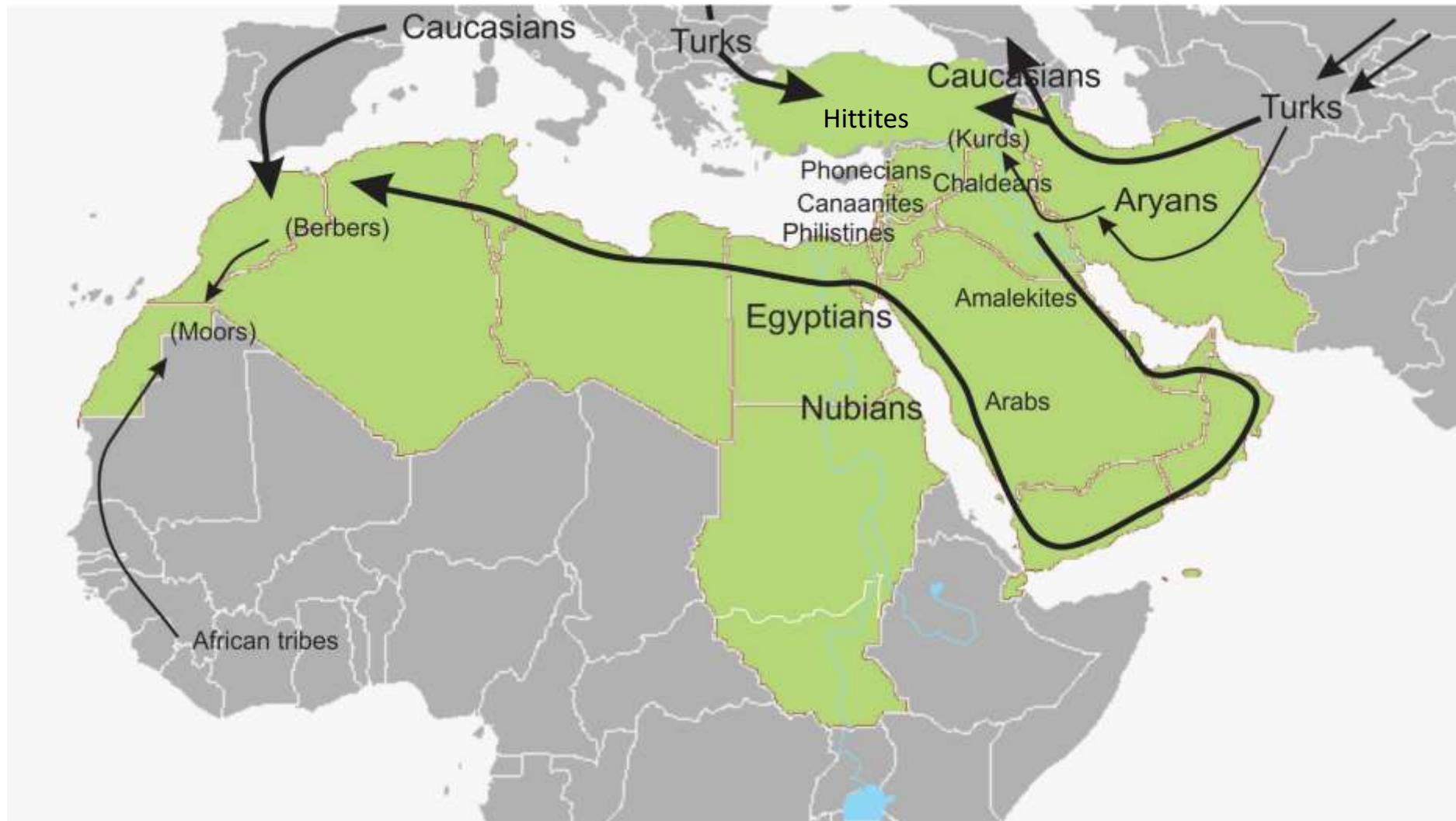
- Common ancestral patriarch
- Selected leadership
- Several thousand people, or more
- Territorial, with permanent villages

National Formation



Nation:

- Common ancestral patriarch
- Hereditary King
- Tens of thousands of people
- Territorial, with a capital
- Class-based hierarchy, may include slaves
- Tribute-based taxation
- Laws, armies



Pre-historic migration (12,000 BC – 1,000 AD)

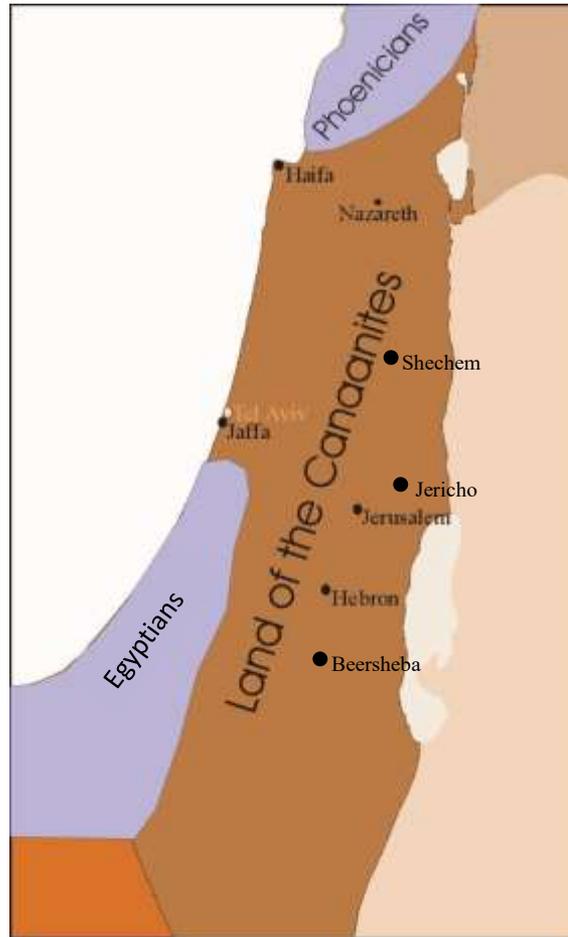
Origin of the Jews: Abraham



Abram, cir. 1800 BC



Abram migrates from Ur to Chaldea, to Hebron



Canaan at the time of Abraham



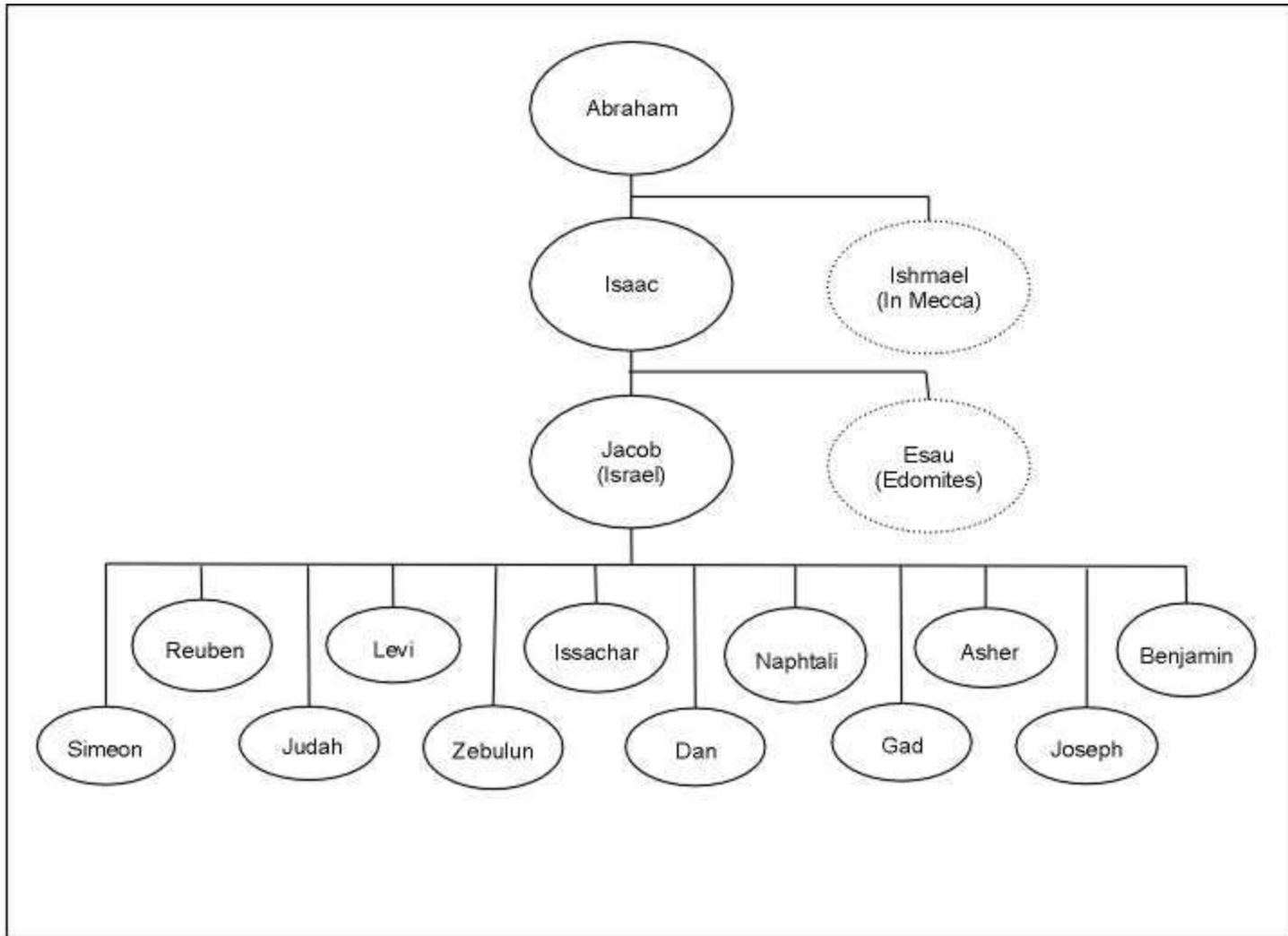
God speaks to Abram,
by Carolsfeld,



Abram entertains the angels,
by Rembrandt

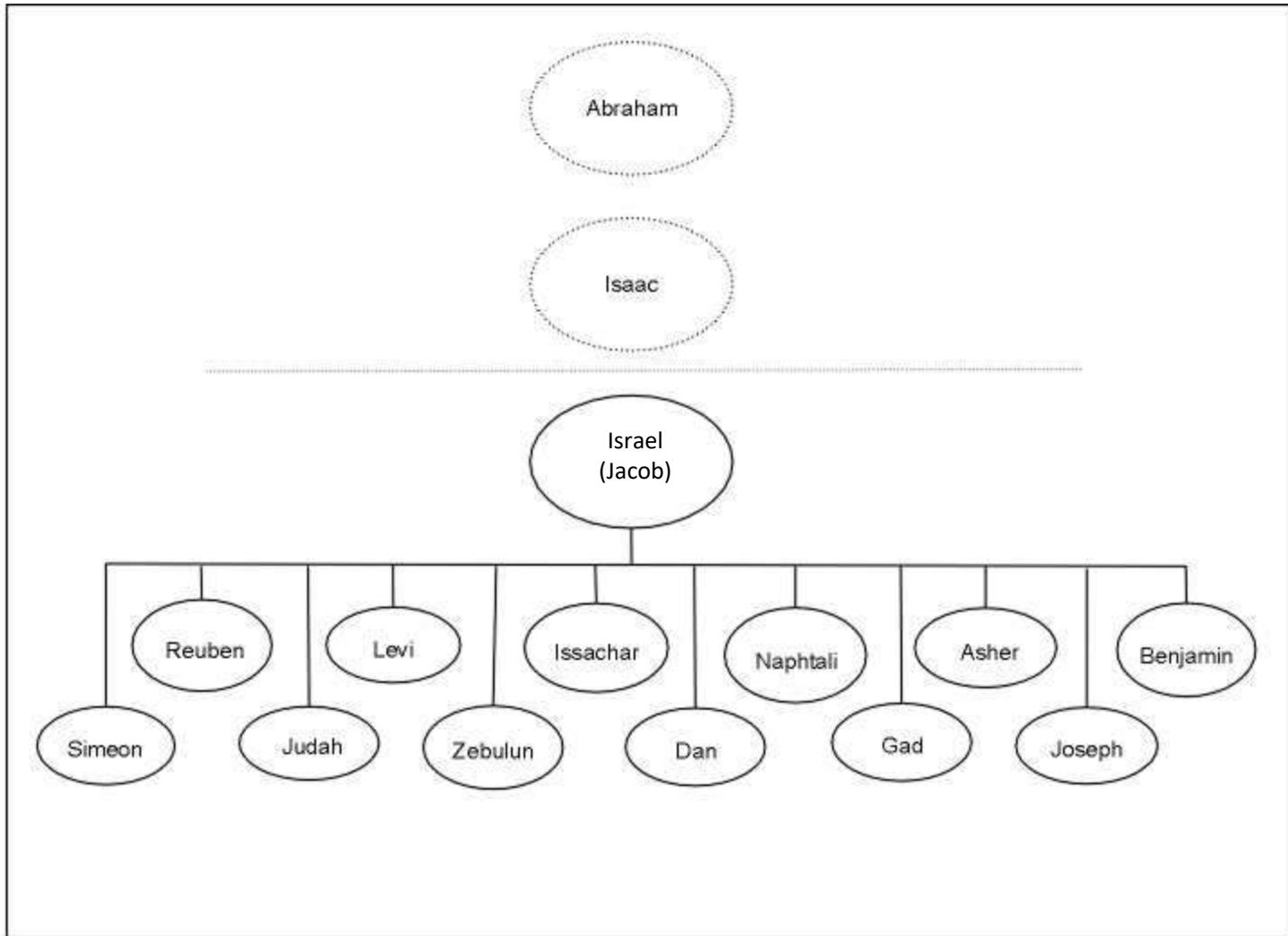


Abraham's sacrifice,
by Rembrandt



Isaac's family

Egypt



Israel's family moves to Egypt to escape a drought in Canaan, about 1700 BC.



The Great Pyramid, built around 2,800 - 2,500 BC (before the Israelites came to Egypt).



Pharaoh and family

Court, Priests

Scribes, governors, architects,
engineers, military officers

Government overseers of
worksites

Artisans, merchants, craftsmen,
doctors, tomb builders

===

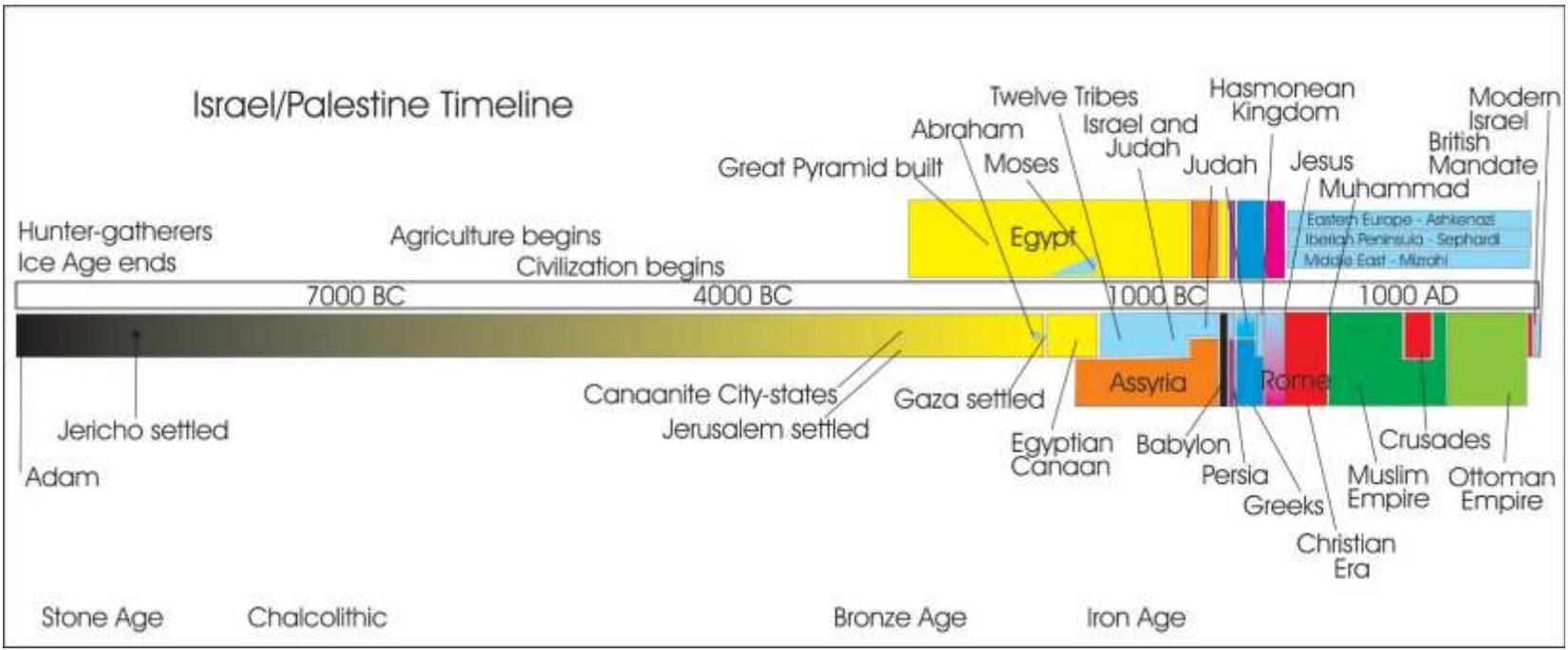
Farmers

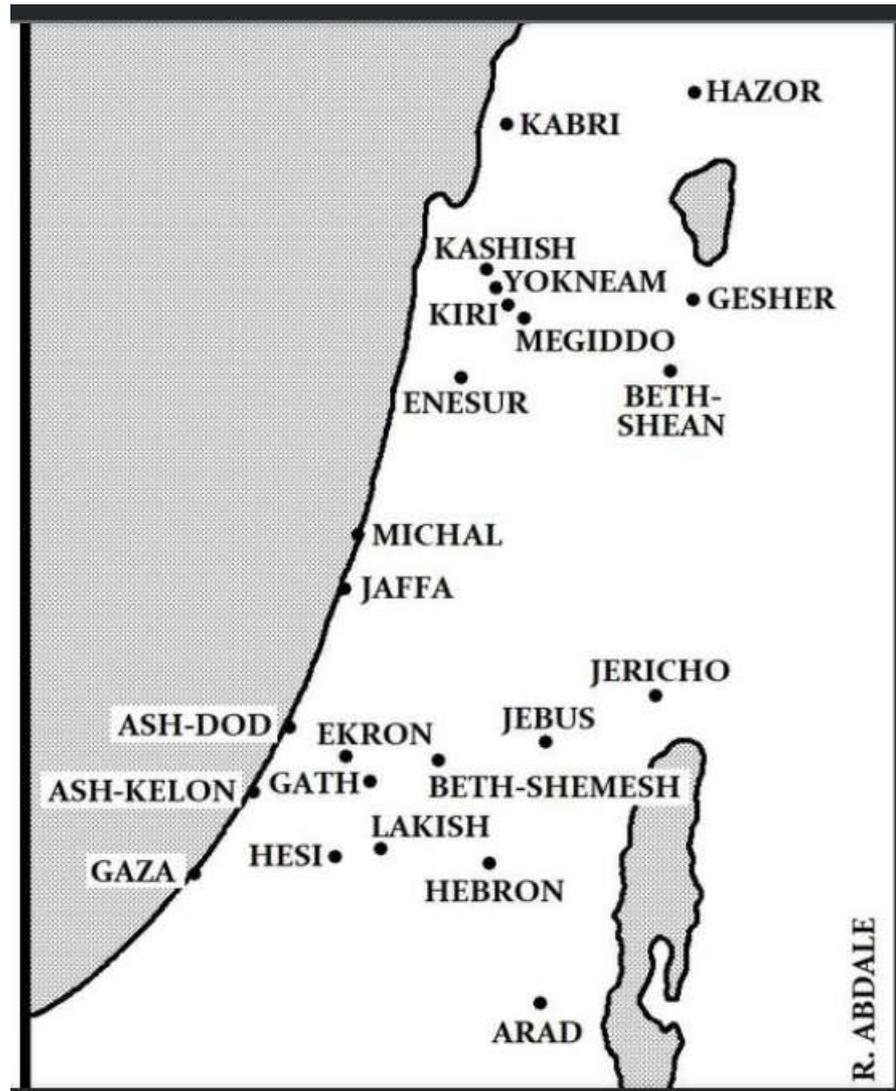
Shepherds, butchers

Morticians

Slaves, criminals

Israel/Palestine Timeline





Canaanite city-states. Map by Jason Abdale.

Exodus

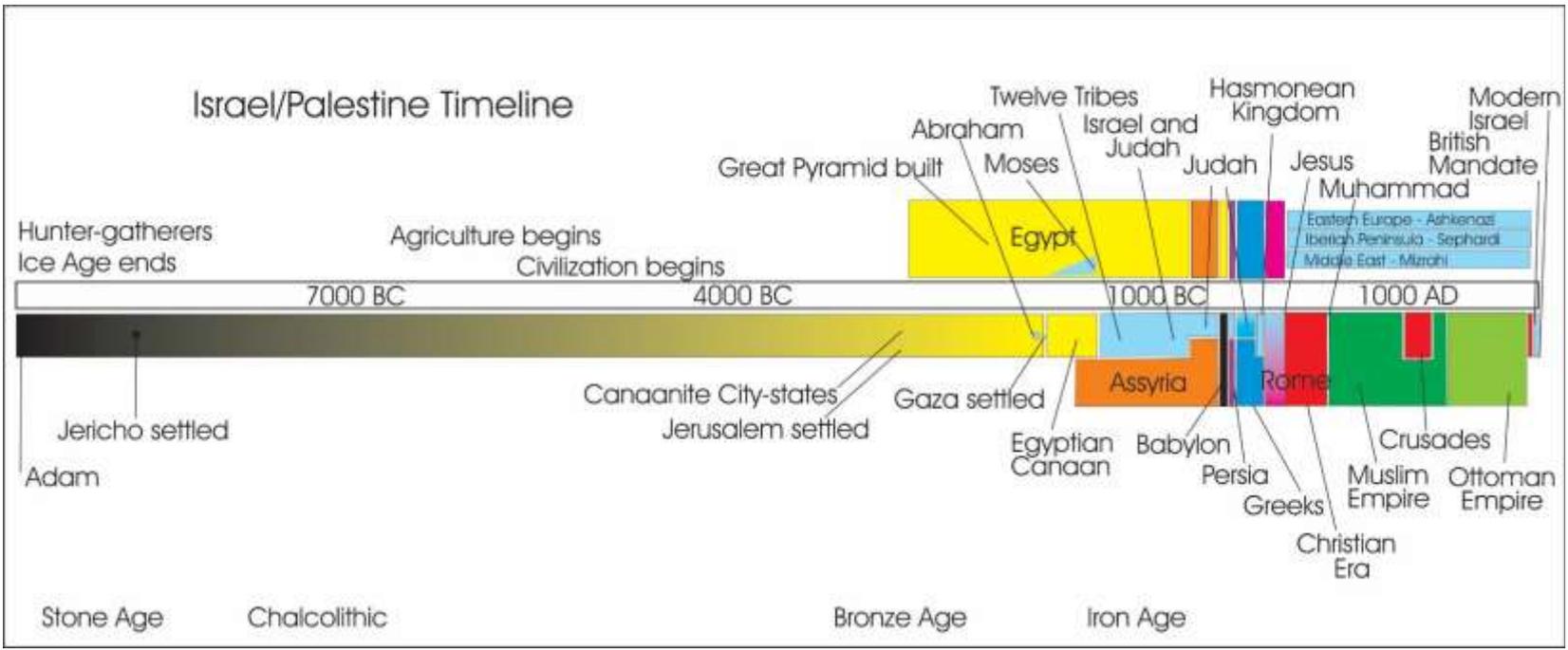


Route of the Exodus



The Battle of Jericho, the first Canaanite city to fall to the Hebrews.

Israel/Palestine Timeline



Adam

Genesis

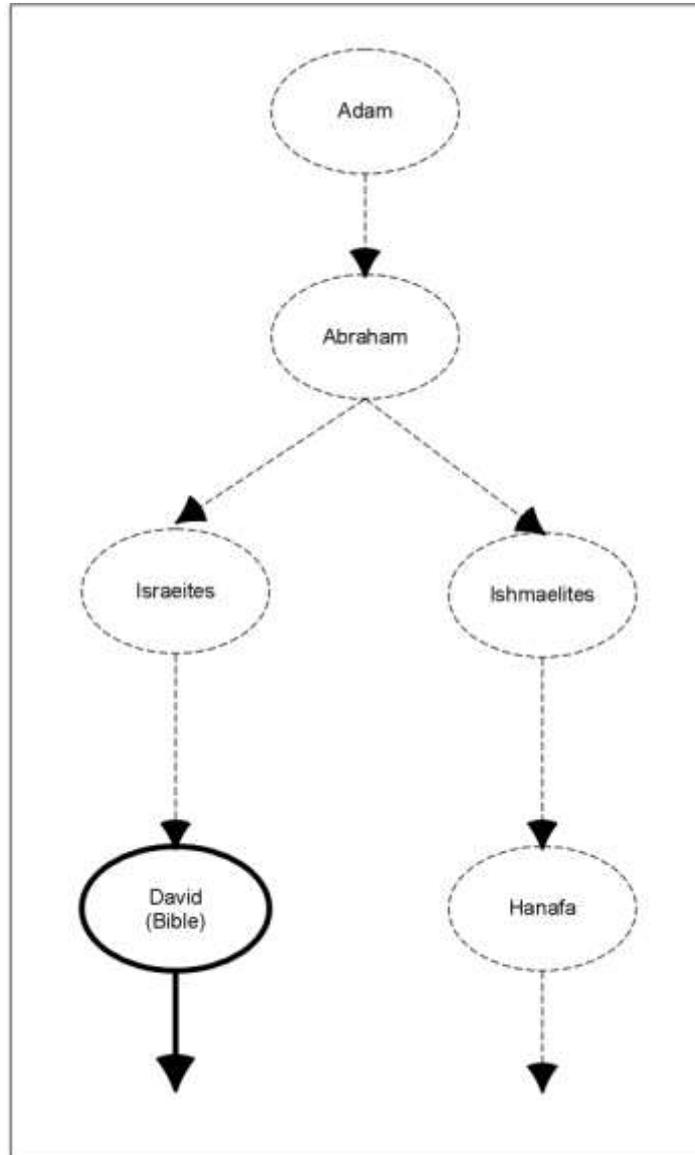
400 yrs
In Egypt

Abraham David
Moses

Israel



The Hebrew tribes
After the conquest
Of Canaan,
1200 – 1022 B.C.



Written vs.
oral history

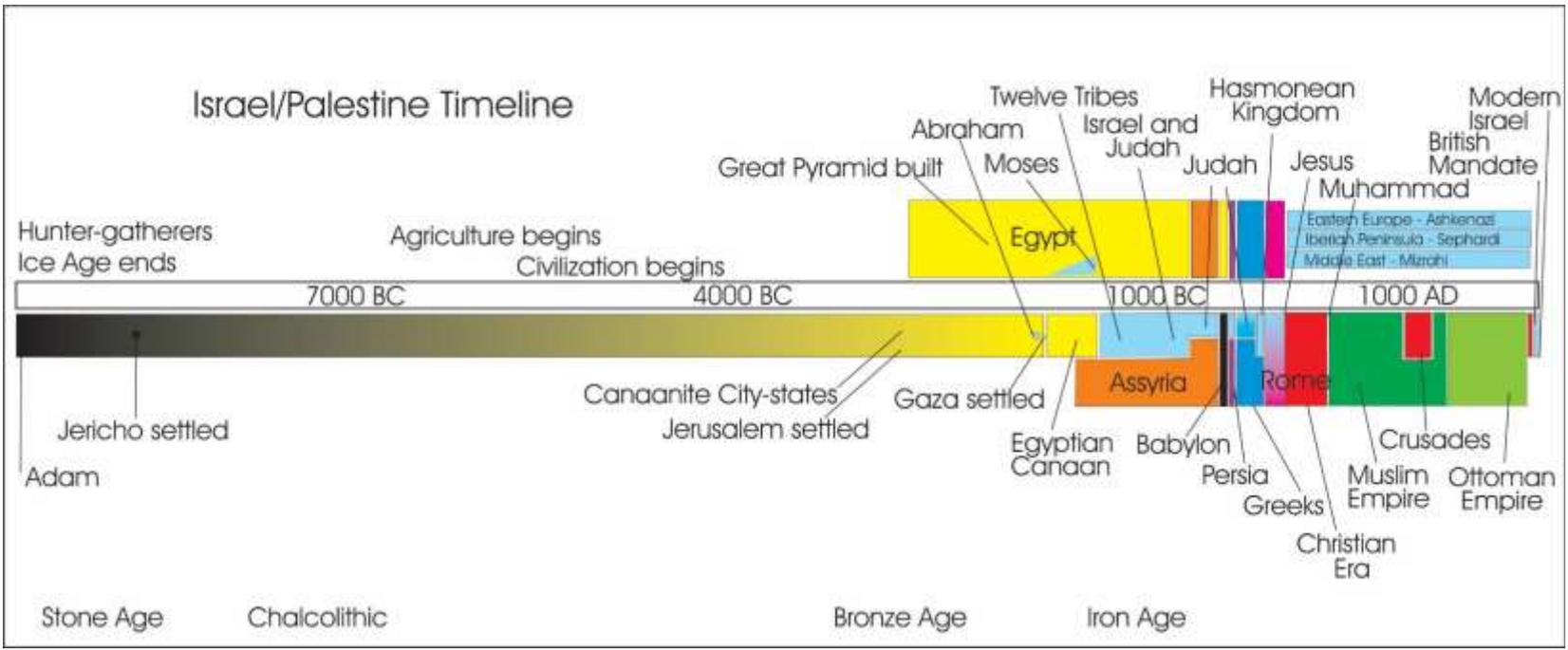


Israel united
 Into a single
 Kingdom under
 Kings Saul, David
 and Solomon,
 1022 – 933 B.C.



The two Kingdoms, after Solomon, until the Assyrian conquest, 933 – 722 B.C.

Israel/Palestine Timeline





Hasmonean
Kingdom of Israel,
Between the
Greek and Roman
conquests
152 B.C. – 63 B.C.



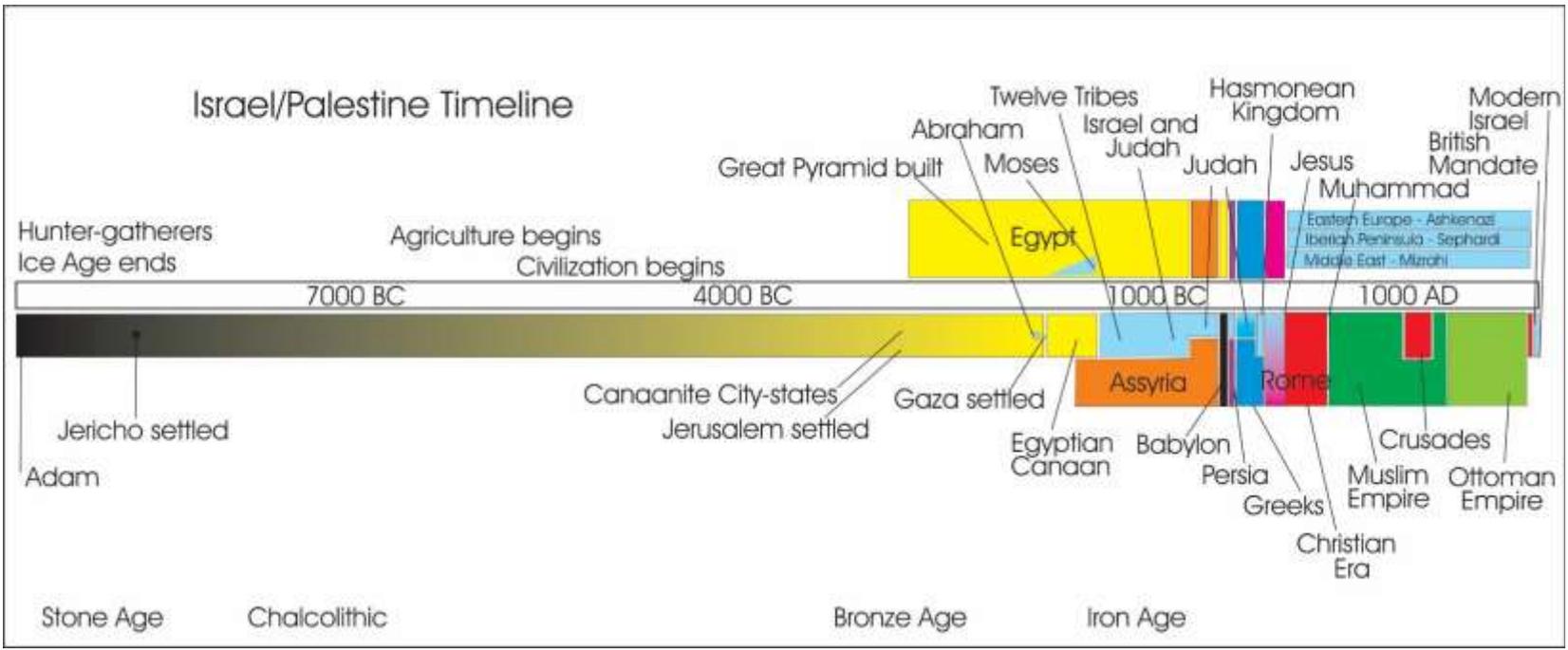
The Roman Empire

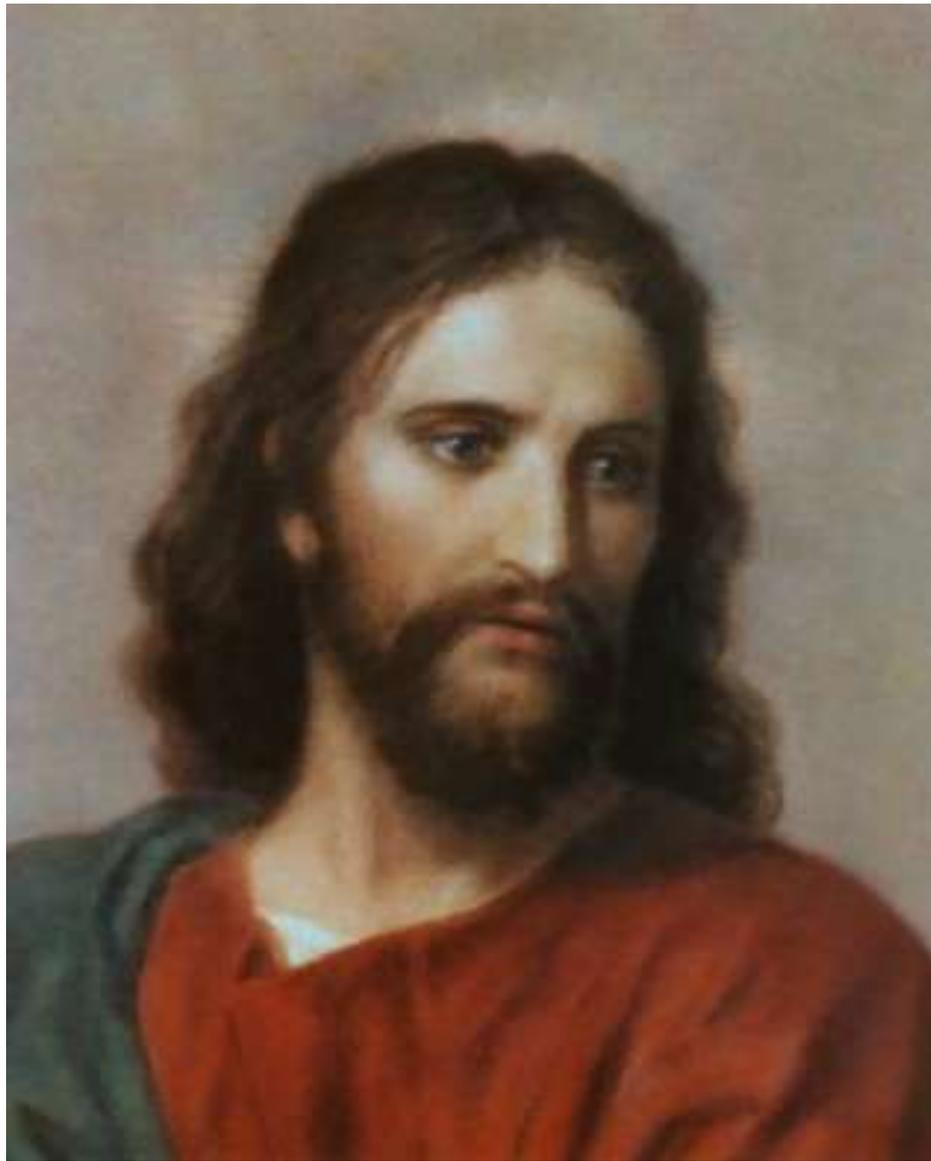


Roman Provinces of Galilee, Samaria and Judea, under Herod, appointed King of the Jews, 37 – 4 B.C.

Christian Era

Israel/Palestine Timeline





Jesus



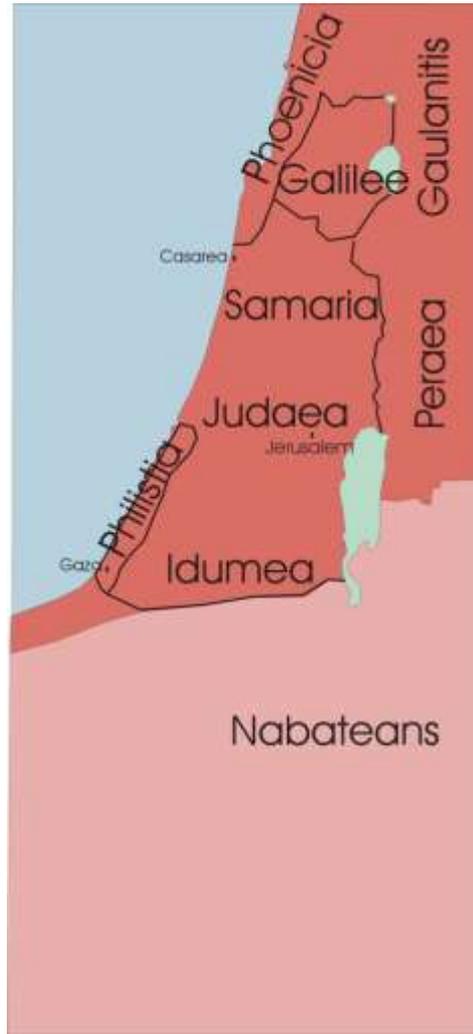
70 AD. Second temple destroyed by Roman Emperor Titus.



132 AD. Jewish Bar Khokba revolt defeated by Roman Emperor Hadrian.



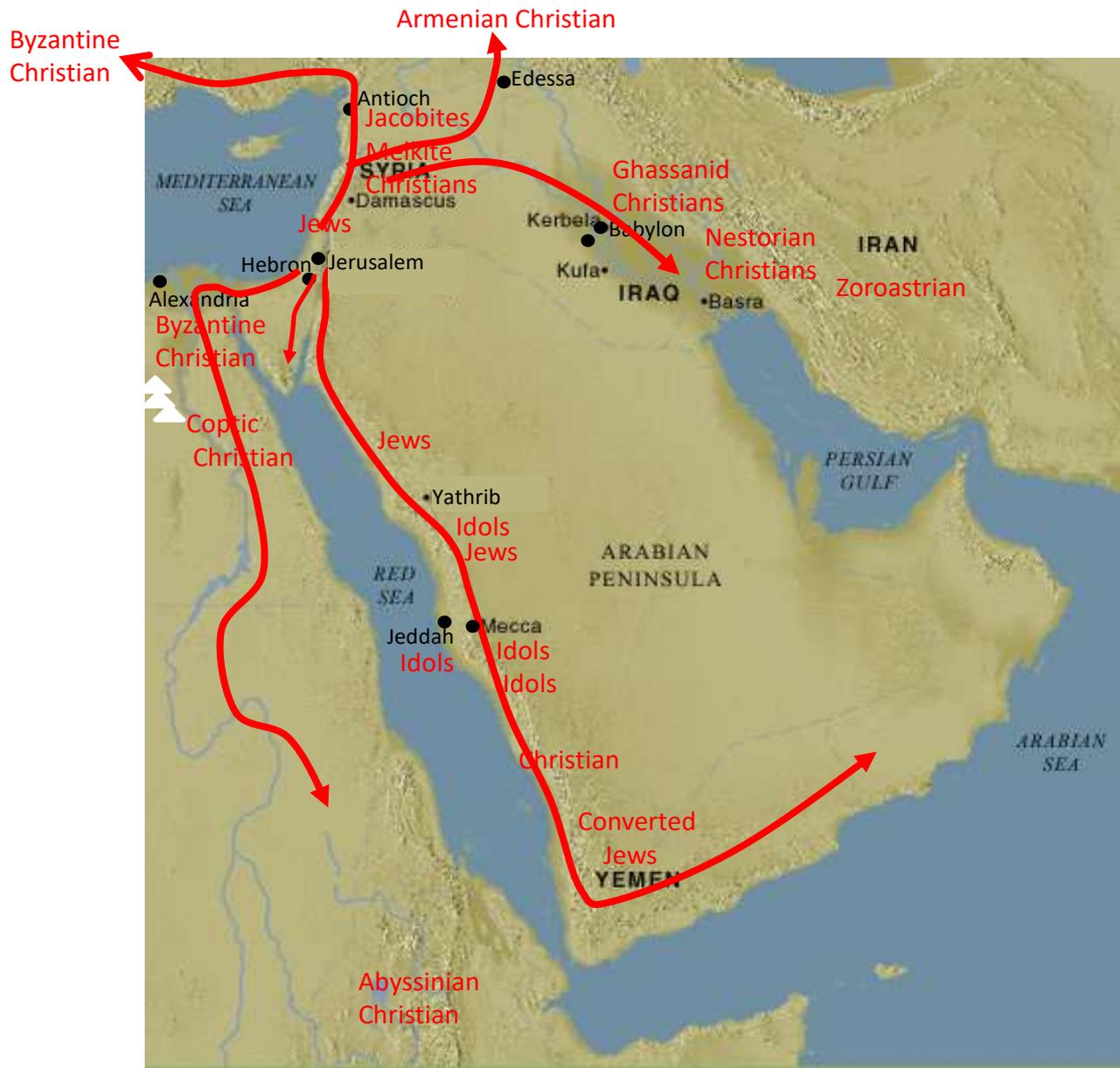
135 AD, The Diaspora.
Hadrian's Roman legions drive the Jews out
of Jerusalem and Judea after 1,300 years.



Roman Judea and Samaria before 135 AD



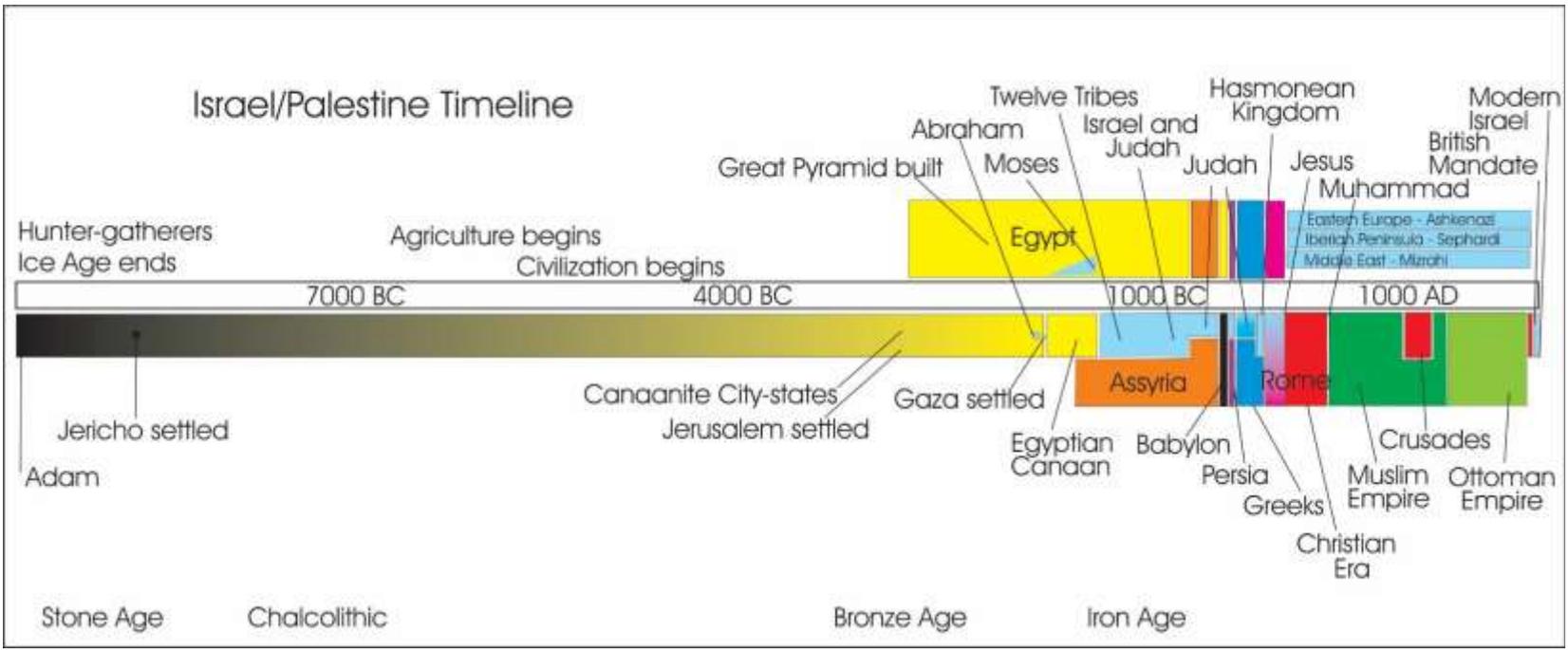
Roman and Byzantine Palaestina 135 AD – 636 AD



Christian Expansion

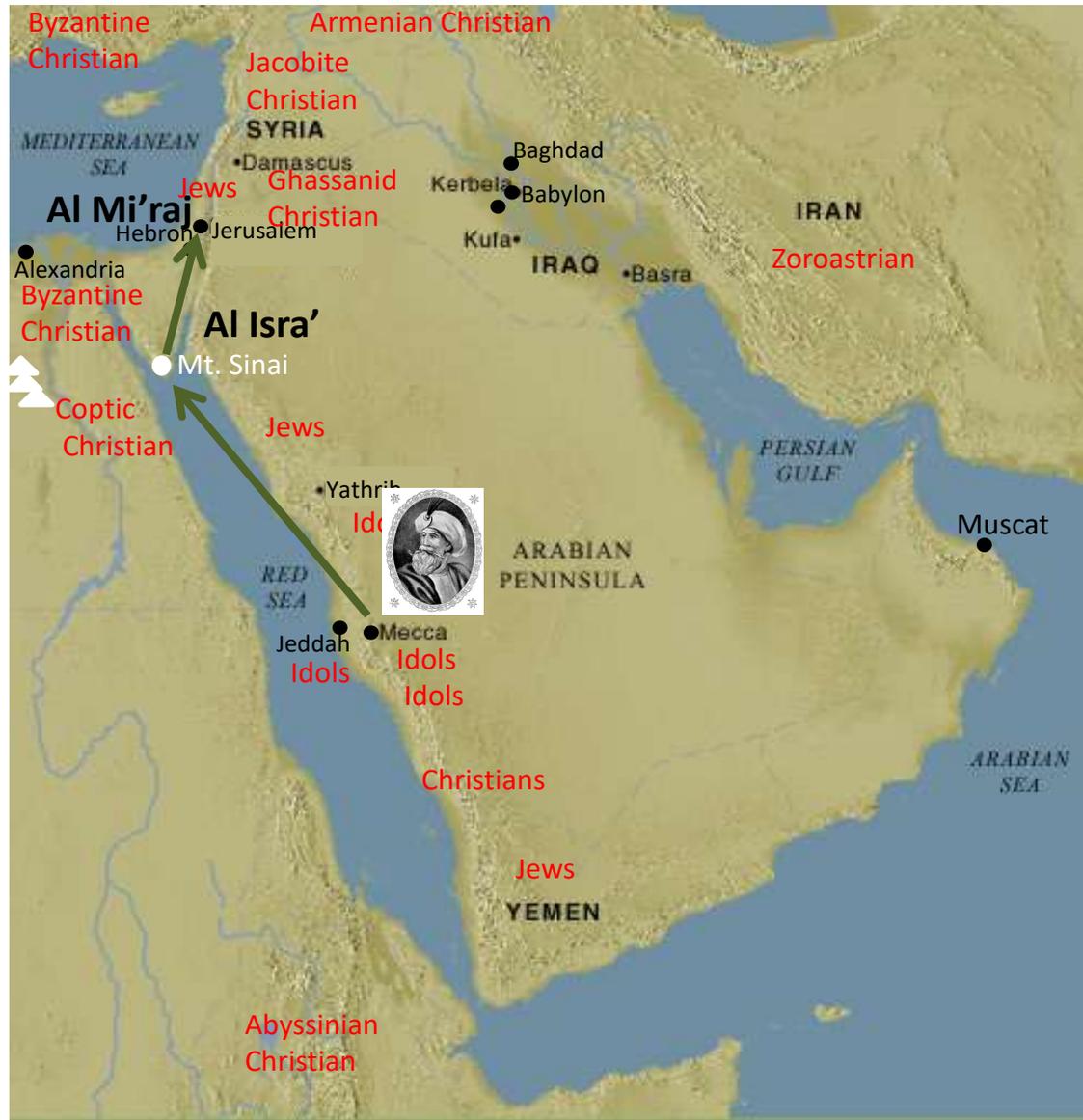
The Muslim Period

Israel/Palestine Timeline



Muhammad
Born 570 AD, into the
Hashemite clan of the
Quraish tribe,
In Mecca





621, Al Isra' and Al Mi'raj.



Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif

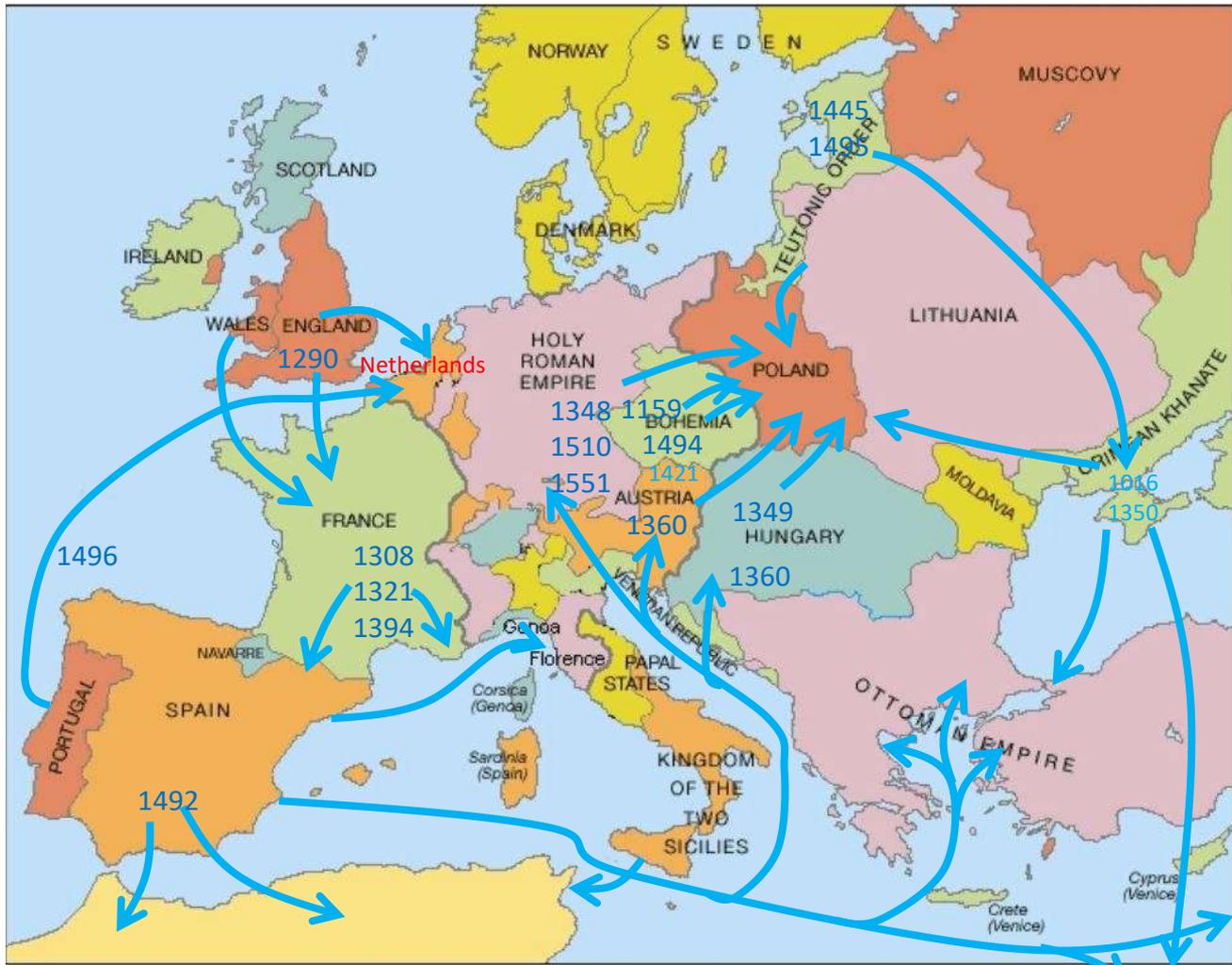


Al-Aqsa Mosque.
Built by Umayyad Caliph al-Walid, 701 AD

The Birth of Zionism



135 AD, The Diaspora.
Hadrian's Roman legions drive the Jews out
of Jerusalem and Judea after 1,300 years.



The Diaspora, 1100 -1600
 Europeans expel Jewish populations.





Theodor Herzl, founder of Zionism



Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion

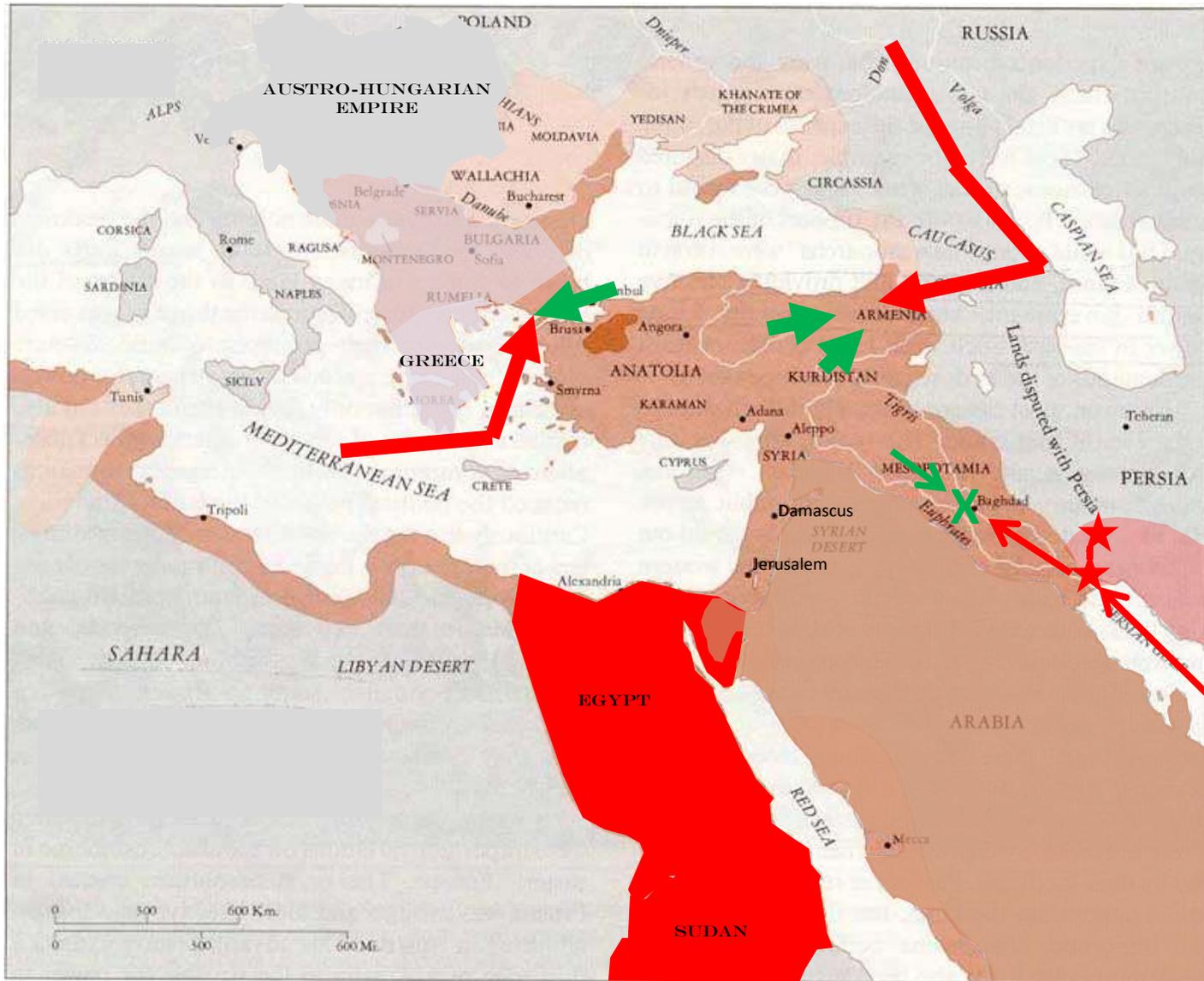


Jews on selection ramp at Auschwitz, May 1944



Late 1800s – 1910s, Ashkenazi Jewish
immigration—Political Zionism

World War I



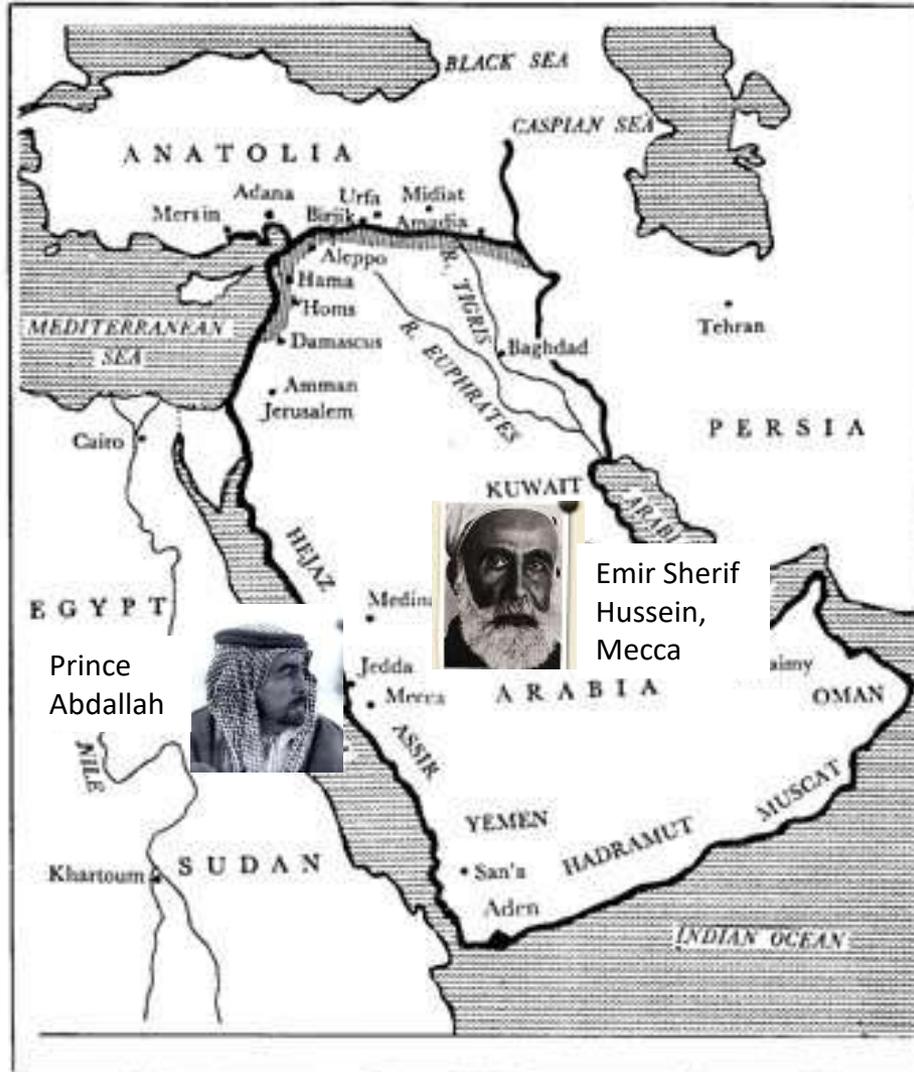
Early World War I

Ottoman Empire decisively defeats the British Empire at Gallipoli and Kut, defeats the Russian Empire in Armenia

The Hussein-McMahon Correspondence



Sir Henry McMahon,
Cairo



Emir Sherif
Hussein,
Mecca



Prince
Abdallah

— Area of Arab independence as defined by Sherif Hussein in his letter dated 14 July 1915 to Sir Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner in Egypt.

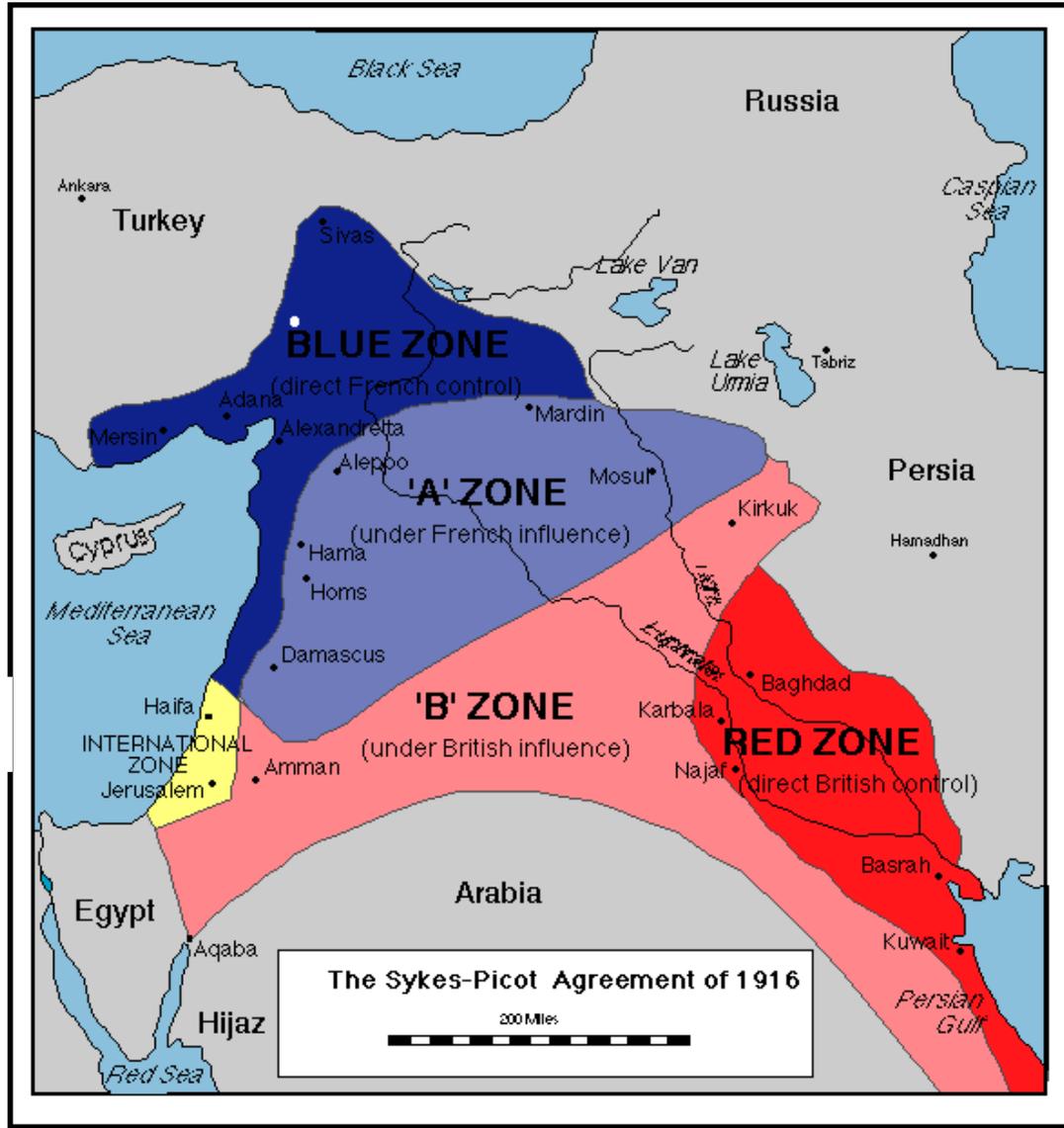
/////// Area excluded from Arab independence as defined by Sir Henry McMahon in his letter to Sherif Hussein No. 4 dated 24 October 1915 and further explained by letter No. 6 dated 14 December 1915.



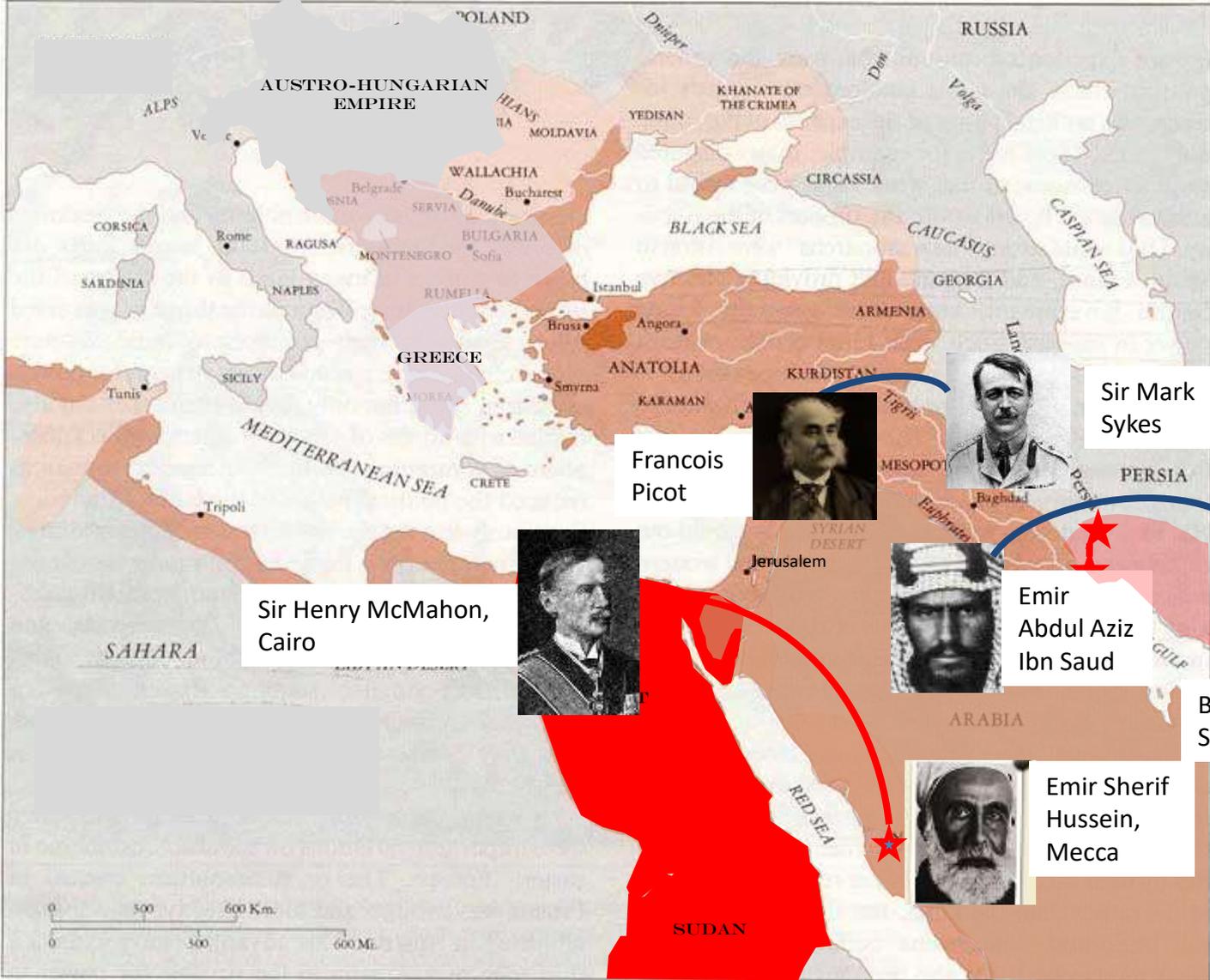
Francois Georges-Picot
France



Sir Mark Sykes
England



Sykes-Picot Agreement



Sir Henry McMahon, Cairo



Francois Picot



Sir Mark Sykes



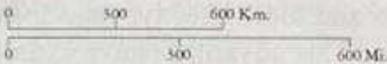
Emir Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud



Brit-India Resident Sir Percy Cox



Emir Sherif Hussein, Mecca





Arthur James Balfour



Chaim Weizman



Arthur James Balfour

Foreign Office,
November 2nd, 1917.

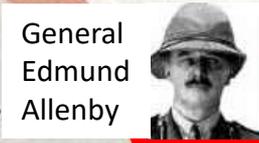
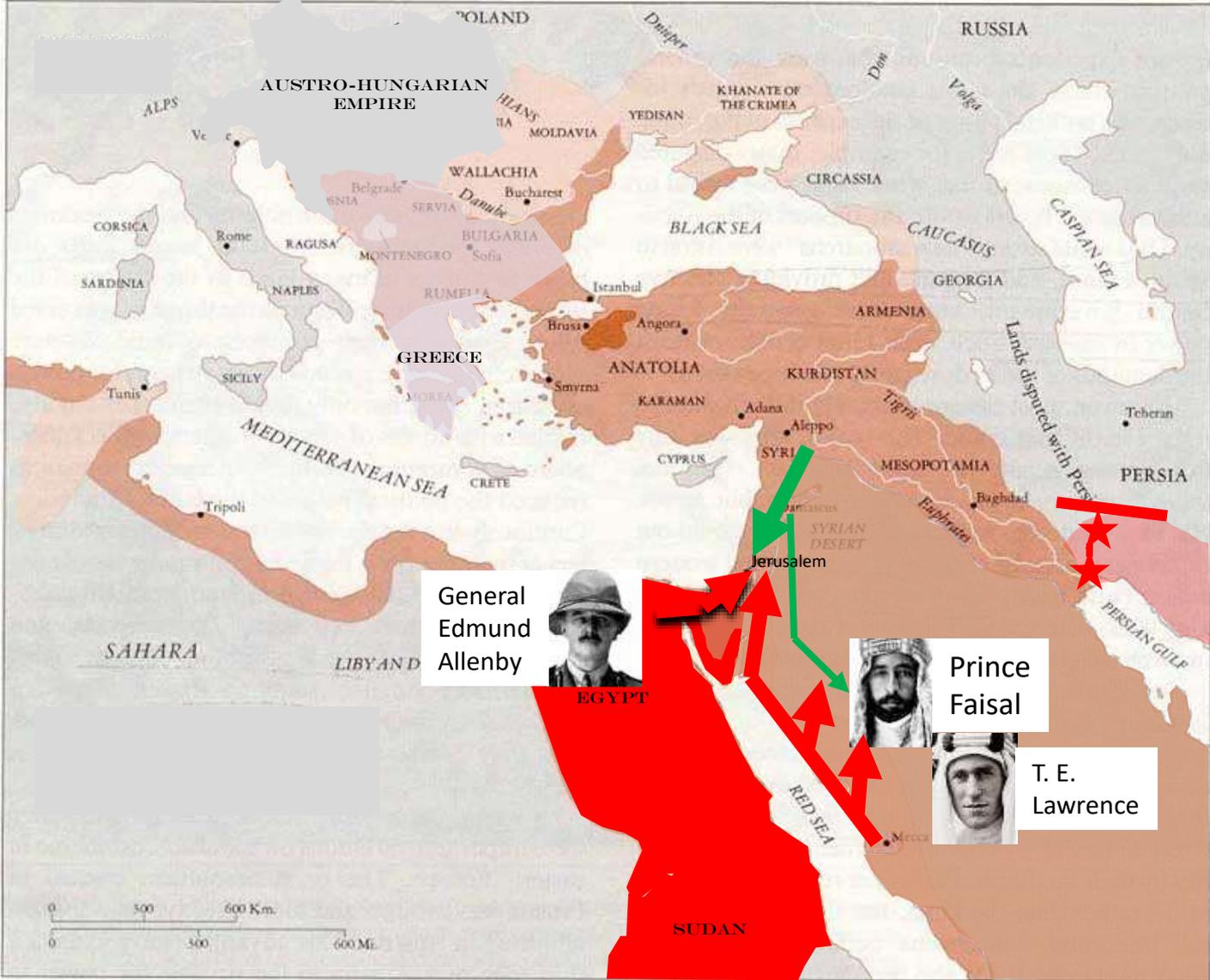
Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country'

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

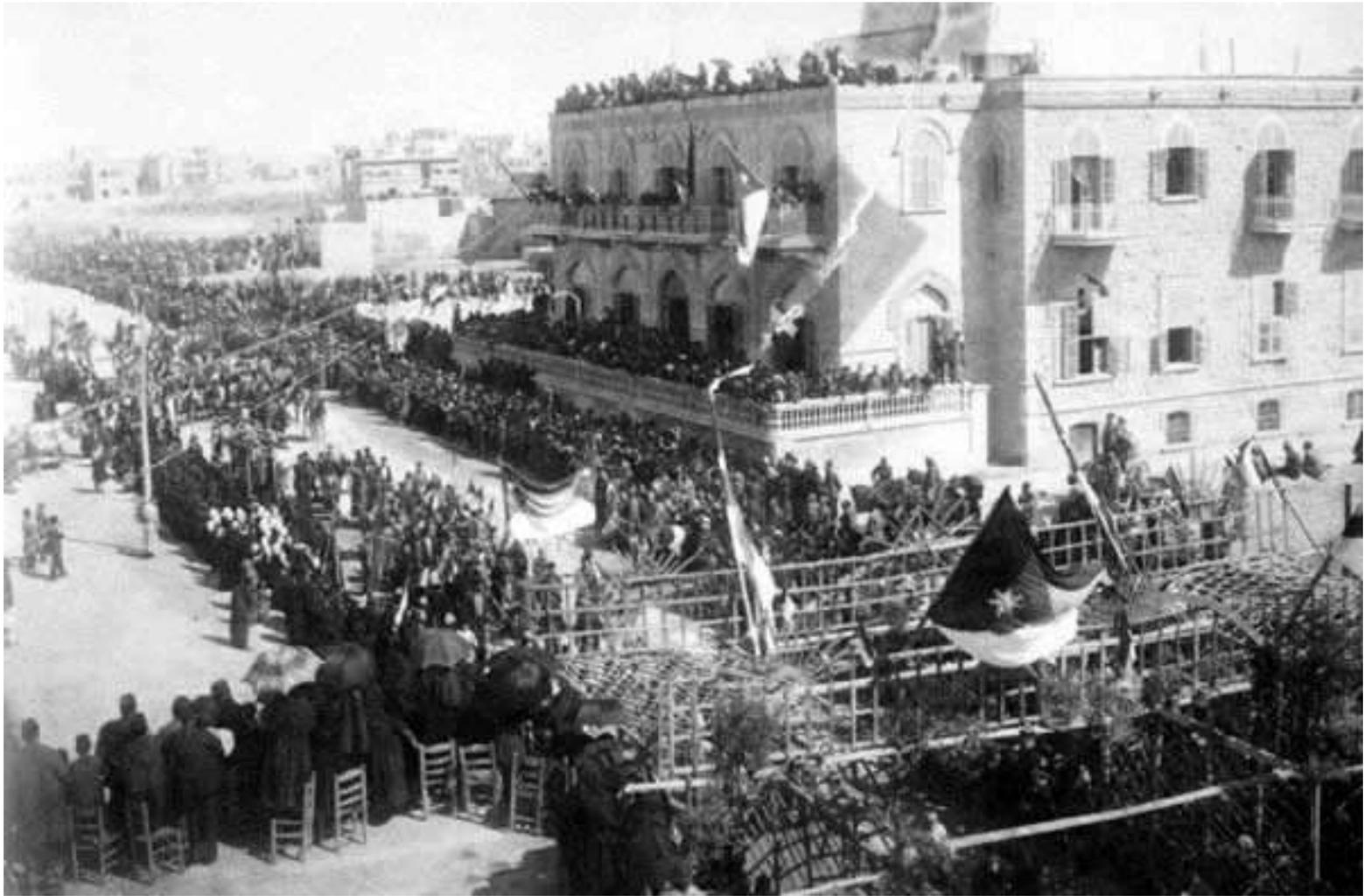
Y. in
Arthur James Balfour



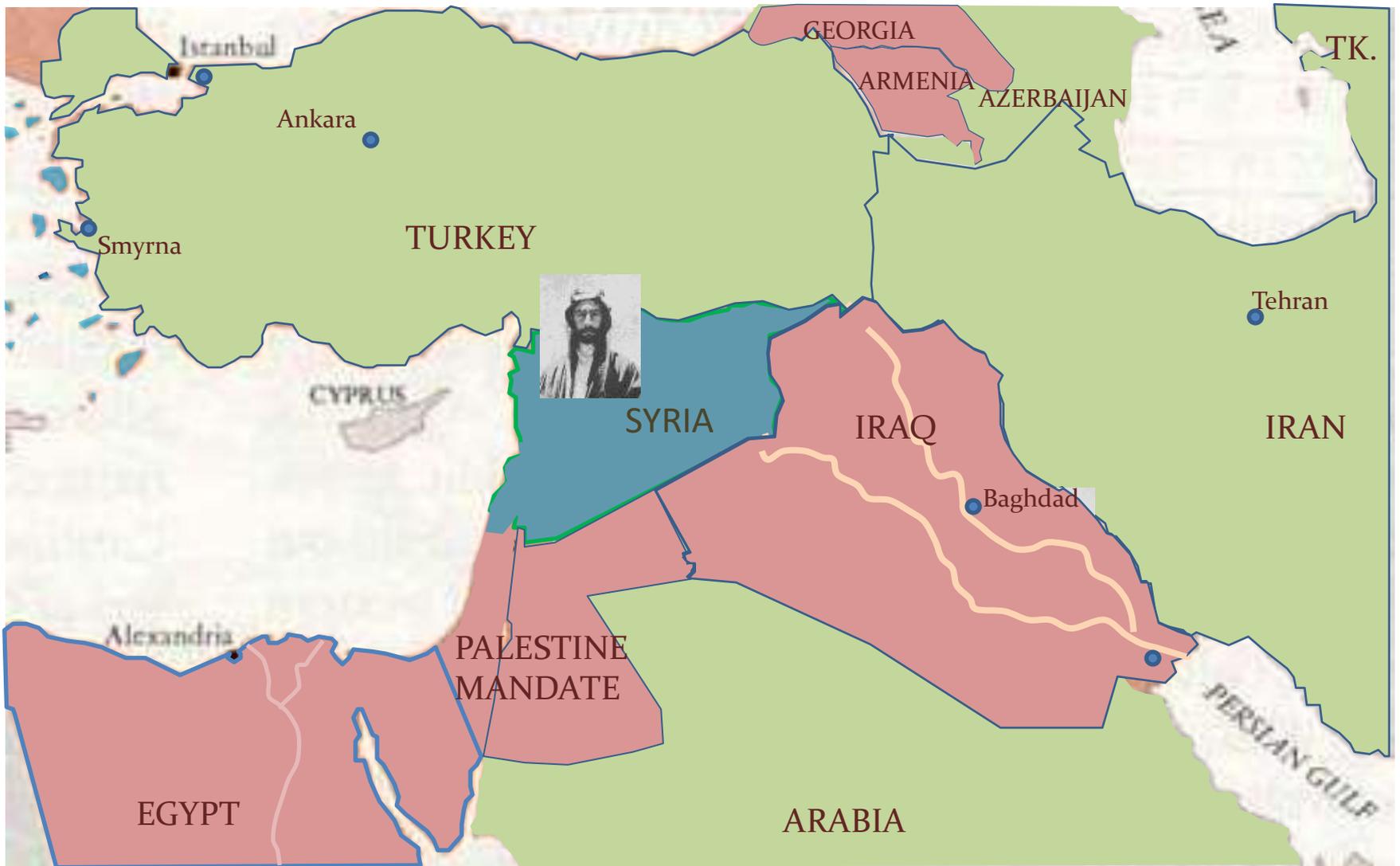
0 500 600 Km.
0 300 600 Mi.



British troops, under General Allenby, enter Jerusalem, Dec. 11, 1917



Prince Faisal enters Damascus, October, 1918



The Middle East at the end of World War I

Israel and Palestine

