



# BEFORE 1945

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# ANCIENT HISTORY OF MIDDLE EAST

- Convenient climate, generally good living conditions for the first men.
- First agricultural settlement in 9th century BC (Jericho 8,000 BC, Byblos 5,000 BC).
- Many influential and developed civilizations in the region (Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Ancient Egypt, Persian Empire, Jewish kingdoms, Roman Empire etc.)



# EMPIRES OF THE WORLD

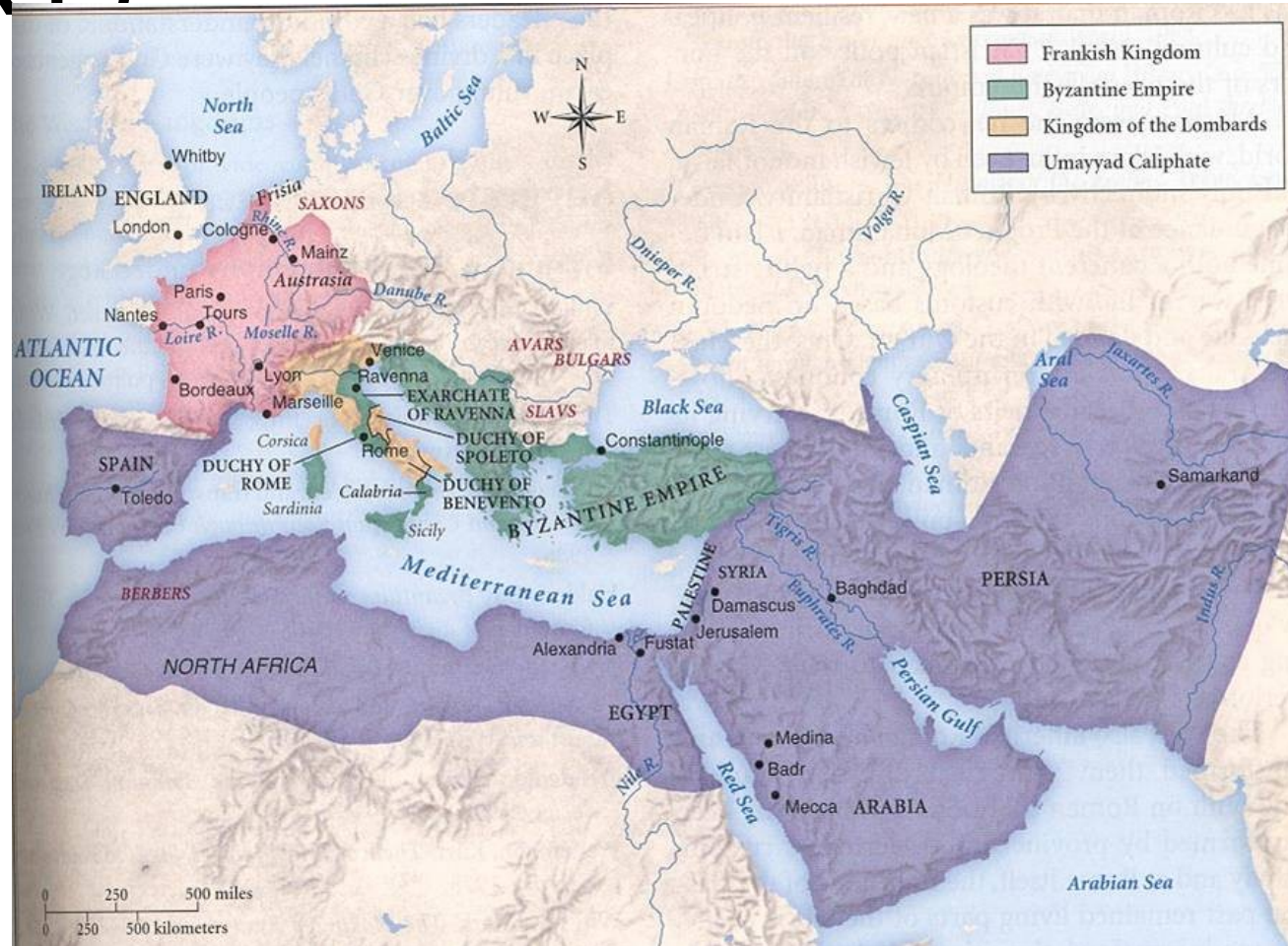
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwEE4YFZkpw>



# HISTORY OF THE REGION BEFORE THE CRUSADES

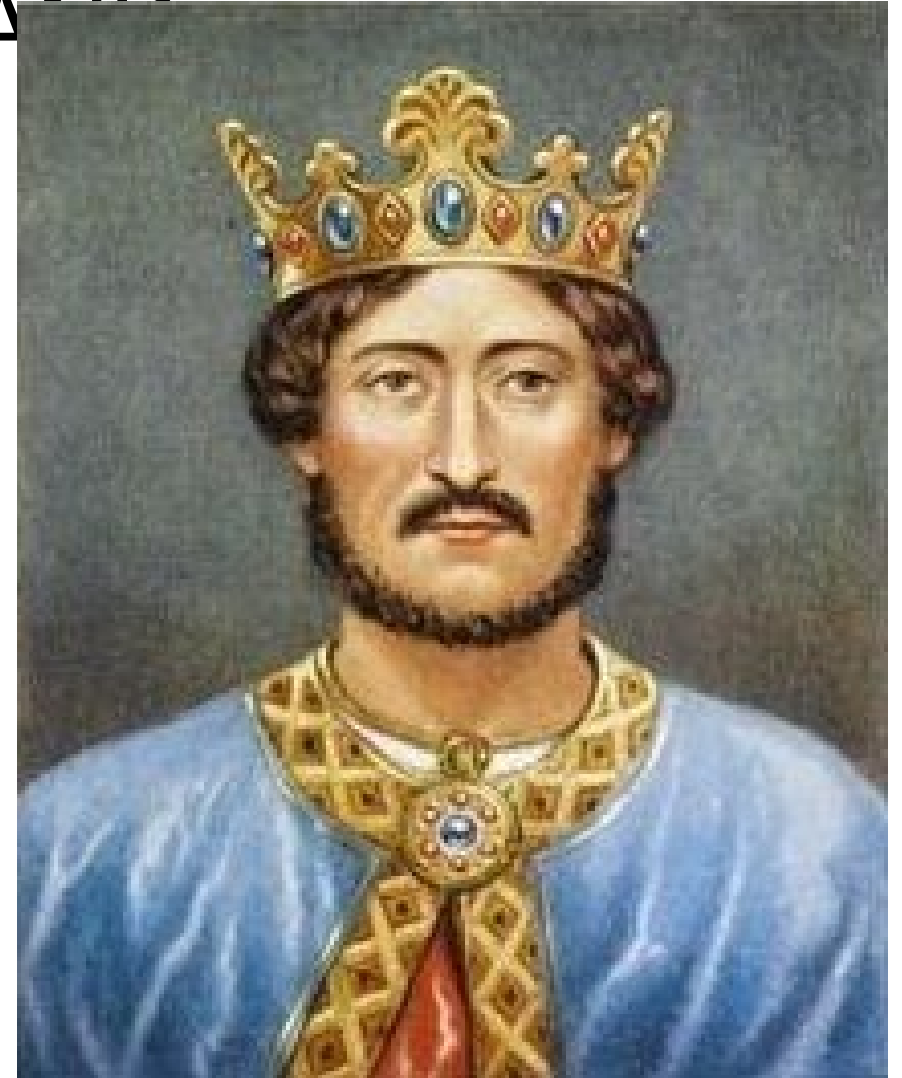
- 1st century: birth of Christianity.
- 2nd century: Jewish diaspora.
- 6th century: birth of Islam in Arabic peninsula (Mecca, Medina).
- Palestine/Holy Land – important for Islam, Judaism, Christianity (Jerusalem, Hebron, Sea of Galilee).
- 7th century: migration of Arabic tribes to Middle East and northern Africa.

# GOLDEN AGE OF ISLAM (8-13th CENTURY)



# CRUSADES TO THE HOLY LAND

- First crusade was initiated by pope in 1095 with a declared goal to liberate the Holy Land and Jerusalem (Holy Sepulcher).
- Altogether 9 crusades, some of them were more successful than the others (Richard the Lionheart).
- Motivation of the crusaders:
  - Religious.
  - Economic.
  - Political.
- Temporary Christian states established in the area (Kingdom of Jerusalem, Principality of Antioch, County of Edessa) – fall of Akko in 1291, end of crusaders presence in the Middle East.



# RISE OF OTTOMAN EMPIRE

- In 13th century the Turkish tribes led by Osman I got to Anatolia and started to compete with the Byzantine Empire.
- 1453 – the conquest of Constantinople (Istanbul) by sultan Mehmed the Conqueror.
- During the next centuries territorial expansion to Europe, Middle East, and northern Africa.
- Siege of Vienna 1683.



Sultan Mehmed



# TERRITORIAL EXPANSION OF OTTOMAN EMPIRE





# DECLINE OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

- During the time the power status of Ottoman Empire had been weakening (economically: inability to follow the trends of industrial revolution; corruption; political instability: frequent palace coups; lack of military reforms) → "*sick man of the Bosphorus*" (1853-56 Crimean War: confirmation of growing weakness of the Ottoman Empire).
- 1798: Napoleon's invasion to Egypt – sometimes interpreted as a milestone regarding the growth of Arab nationalism (Egypt: pasha Muhammad Ali; turmoils in Syria and Palestine in 19th century).
- 19th century: „Race for Africa“ – European powers attempted to get control over territories in Africa, since 1830s growing influence of France in northern Africa (Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco), since 1870s consolidation of British power in Egypt.

# The Middle East in 1914

THE MIDDLE EAST 1914



-  BRITISH CONTROL
-  OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN 1914
-  INDEPENDENT TERRITORY
-  BRITISH ZONE OF INFLUENCE
-  RUSSIAN ZONE OF INFLUENCE
-  BOUNDARY OF OTTOMAN EMPIRE C. 1800

# POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION TO WW1

- 19th century: the birth of Zionism = Jewish nationalism (Theodor Herzl: *Der Judenstaat*), 1897 founding of Zionist organization in Basel → more and more European Jews emigrate to Palestine – first clashes and disputes with local people.
- Deepening crisis of the Ottoman Empire – in WW1 Ottoman Empire joined the coalition of the Central Powers.
- The region had become the center of interests of European colonial powers (Great Britain claimed Egypt as her protectorate in 1914, competition of Russia and Great Britain in Persia).





# WW1 AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- Both Jews and Arabs (Lawrence of Arabia) supported the Triple Entente with a hope that after the collapse of Ottoman Empire that would be granted independence or at least autonomy.
- Military operations in the region: Palestinian Front, Mesopotamian Front, Caucasian front → armistice October 30, 1918
- The goals and ambitions of both groups were obviously contradictory: European great powers had the negotiations with both of them (Balfour Declaration 1917, correspondence of Henry McMahon and Sharif Hussein 1915-16).
- Concurrently secret negotiations between Great Britain and France in order to divide the Middle East: Sykes-Picot Agreement 1916 – violation of all pledges given to Arabs and Jews.

# VERSAILLES PEACE CONFERENCE 1918-1919

- Discussion of the future settlement of territories of Ottoman Empire (Ottoman Empire in turmoil → civil war → 1923 Republic of Turkey).
- The negotiations were to continue in follow-up conferences in San Remo and Sèvres (1920).
- The regional delegations had very limited options, France and Great Britain made the crucial decisions → modern map of Middle East.



# POSTWAR MIDDLE EAST

- In fact, the distribution of power and territories in accordance with Sykes-Picot Agreement.
- Officially, the leading role had newly established League of Nations → A League of Nations mandate: Palestine (Israel/Palestine + Jordan), Mesopotamia (Iraq), Syria (later Lebanon was excluded as separate territory).
- Egypt and Persia became officially independent but under heavy British influence + British political and economic interest in Arabic peninsula (city of Aden; Oman, Qatar and Bahrain were British protectorates).
- Turkey since 1923 a republic, significant territorial losses.
- European great powers were not that much interested in most of Arabic peninsula – leading figure king Ibn Saud.



# 1920s in MIDDLE EAST

- Postwar settlement of the region was a deep disappointment for the hopes of local nationalists.
- Very problematic situation in Palestine (escalation of conflict) as well as in other parts of the region (coup in Iran → rise of Reza Khan – new royal dynasty), instability in Syria.
- The borders with lack of respect to distribution of local population (Kurds and the others).

# WW2 AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- Growth of Nazi Germany in Europe: Nazi diplomacy was seeking for the allies in the Middle East (negotiations with Persia, Saudi Arabia, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem).
- Most of the countries of the region preferred to claim political neutrality or to support the Allies.
- Some groups more or less secretly cooperated with the Axis powers (some movements in French colonies, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem).
- Strategic importance of the region: natural resources, crucial transport routes (Suez Canal, Mediterranean Sea, Aden etc.).
- Open fights in northern Africa (Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco) – Afrikakorps led by Erwin Rommel (victory of the Allies in 1943).
- 1943 conference in Tehran (Churchill, Stalin, Roosevelt).



# BIG THREE IN TEHRAN 1943





THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION