



# Israel

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This essay focuses on the political, economic, and cultural history of Israel. I discuss the impacts of the states that occupied Israel for 3,200 years. My goal is to examine the historical underpinnings of the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, the subsequent Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the search for sustaining peace. I wrote these lectures for Stanford's Israel Suitcase Seminar, October-November 2010.

I first discuss the ancient rulers of Israel/Palestine – Egypt (1300-1050 BCE), Israeli monarchs (1050-841), Assyria (841-612), Babylonia (598-539), Persia (539-332), Hellenistic Kingdoms (332-167), Maccabean dynasts (167-37), Rome (37 BCE-324 CE), Byzantium (324-613), and Sasanian Persia (613-629). I next look at transitions under Islamic rule of Israel/Palestine (637-1918) – Arab conquest, Crusader rule, Ottoman exploitation, and European influence. I then analyze changes under the British mandate in Palestine (1918-1948) – Jewish immigration, Jewish-Arab coexistence, and creation of the state of Israel. I end by examining independent Israel (1948-present) – the objectives of and conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians. I append a time line, a bibliography, and a description of sites I visited in Israel.

## Ancient Israel (1300-332 BCE)

**Origins of Agriculture in the Fertile Crescent.** Agriculture began when humans saw advantages in decreasing their reliance on hunting or gathering foods. Crop agriculture was first practiced about 8500 BCE in the Fertile Crescent of southwest Asia, a then fertile region including modern Israel, Lebanon, Syria, southeastern Turkey, and Iraq. Because the Fertile Crescent had the world's largest Mediterranean zone, it contained a wide ecological range and high biodiversity.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fertile\\_crescent\\_Neolithic\\_B\\_circa\\_7500\\_BC.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fertile_crescent_Neolithic_B_circa_7500_BC.jpg)>

*The Fertile Crescent in Southwestern Asia, c. 7500 BCE –  
Origin of Agriculture*

Three cereals (emmer wheat, einkorn wheat, and barley), four pulses (lentils, peas, chickpeas, and bitter vetch), and one fiber crop, flax, formed the Fertile Crescent “founder package” of crops. The domestication of animals predated that of plants. Both occurred first in the Fertile Crescent. Dogs were domesticated by 10,000 BCE, sheep and goats between 9000 and 7000 BCE, and pigs about 7000 BCE. Domesticated animals contributed meat, milk, manure, transport, leather, and wool.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bezoarziege.jpg>>

*Bezoar Ibex (Capra aegagrus aegagrus) –  
Wild Progenitor of Modern Domesticated Goats, Fertile Crescent*



The generation of food surpluses and the ability to store them led to the creation of cities. Associated innovations in this process included the wheel, writing, metallurgy, and monumental architecture. The gradual development of productive agriculture – and of a requisite sedentary life-style – permitted increases in population densities. Human societies thus were able to feed specialist, non-agricultural groups and afford a division of labor. Craftsmen produced tools, weapons, and art and developed new technologies, while warriors engaged in protection and conquest. With literacy, complex structures of social organization arose. Populations concentrated, and centralized political rule began. Rulers and their armies created and protected cities, nation states, and empires.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tower\\_of\\_Jericho.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tower_of_Jericho.jpg)>

*Tower of Jericho, Agricultural Village –  
Tell es-Sultan Archeological Site, Israel, c. 7000 BCE*

**Settlement and Statehood in Canaan (1300-900 BCE).** The four centuries, 1300-900 BCE, were turbulent and prosperous for Canaan. Trade boomed, but regional powers contested for control. At the battle of Kadesh in 1285 BCE, Egypt (under Rameses II) was fortunate to earn a standoff with the Hittites (from Anatolia, modern Turkey). Egypt and the Hittites signed a treaty that gave Syria to the Hittites and Canaan to Egypt, and that treaty was honored for 200 years. Egypt subjected the Canaanites to vassalage and focused on tribute and trade.

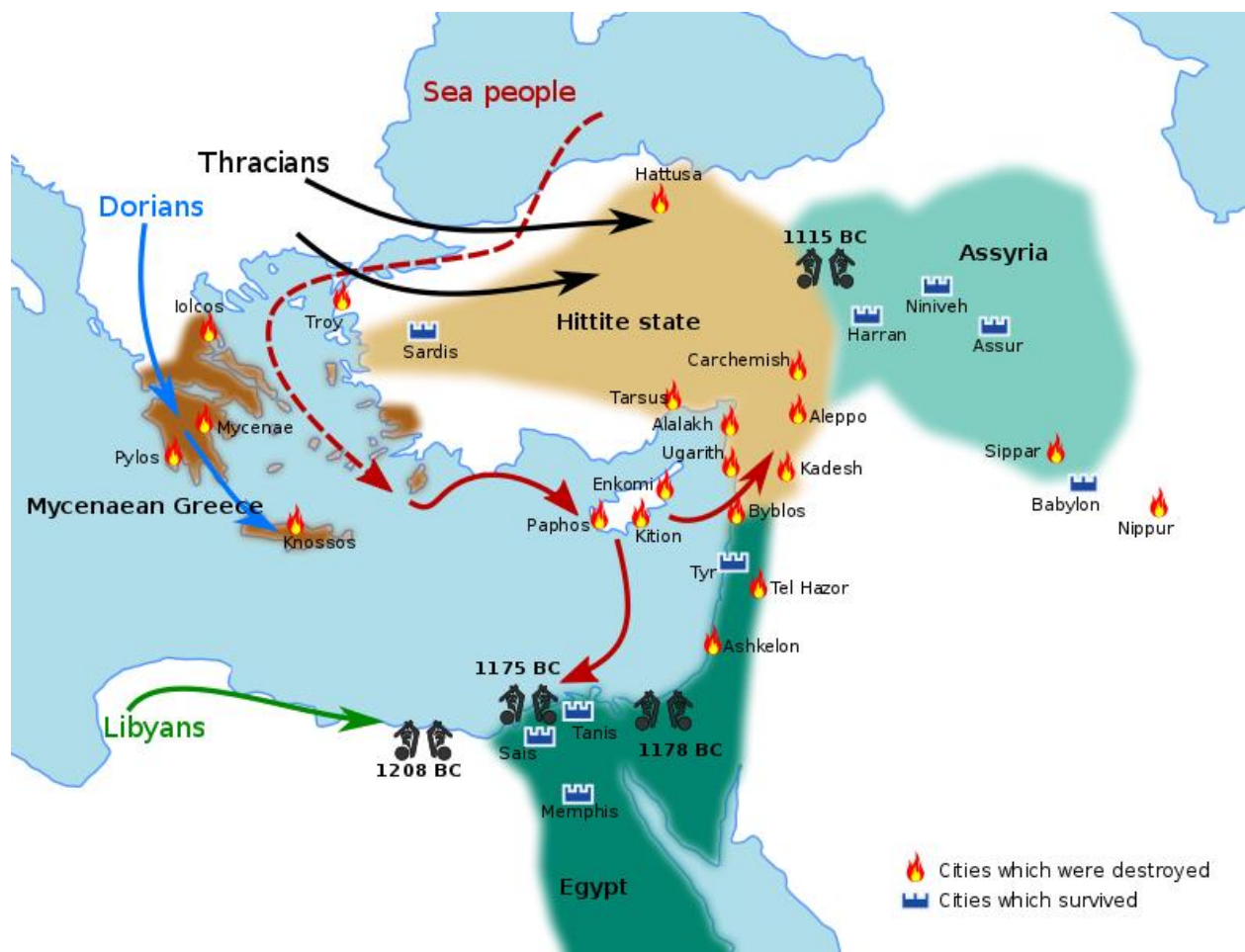


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hitt\\_Egypt\\_Perseus.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hitt_Egypt_Perseus.png)>

*Ramesses II's Incursions in Syria-Palestine – Egypt (Green) Was Stalemated by the Hittites (Red) at Kadesh, c. 1275 BCE*

Marauding nomads (the Sea Peoples) destroyed the Canaanite city-states (and the Hittite Kingdom) in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Egyptian Pharaoh Merneptah defeated the invaders and wrote about his victory on a stone slab in 1207 BCE, which contains history's first extant written

reference to the peoples of Israel. Thereafter in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, disrupted Canaan was settled by semi-nomadic migrants – Israelites (from Mesopotamia) in the eastern hill country, Philistines (from Crete) on the southern Mediterranean coast, and Aramaeans (from Arabia) in the north and in Syria. The settlement was mostly gradual and peaceful.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bronze-age-collapse.svg>

*Migrations of the Israelites, the Sea Peoples, and the Philistines – c. 1200-1150 BCE*

For a century and a half, the twelve Israelite tribes were governed by Councils of Elders in a tribal confederacy. In the late-11<sup>th</sup> century, the monotheistic Israelites formed a united monarchy, ruled consecutively by Saul, David, and Solomon. David (ruled *c.* 1000-965) captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites and established his capital there. Solomon (ruled 965-926) built the Israelites' principal Temple in Jerusalem. After Solomon's death, the monarchy split into two.

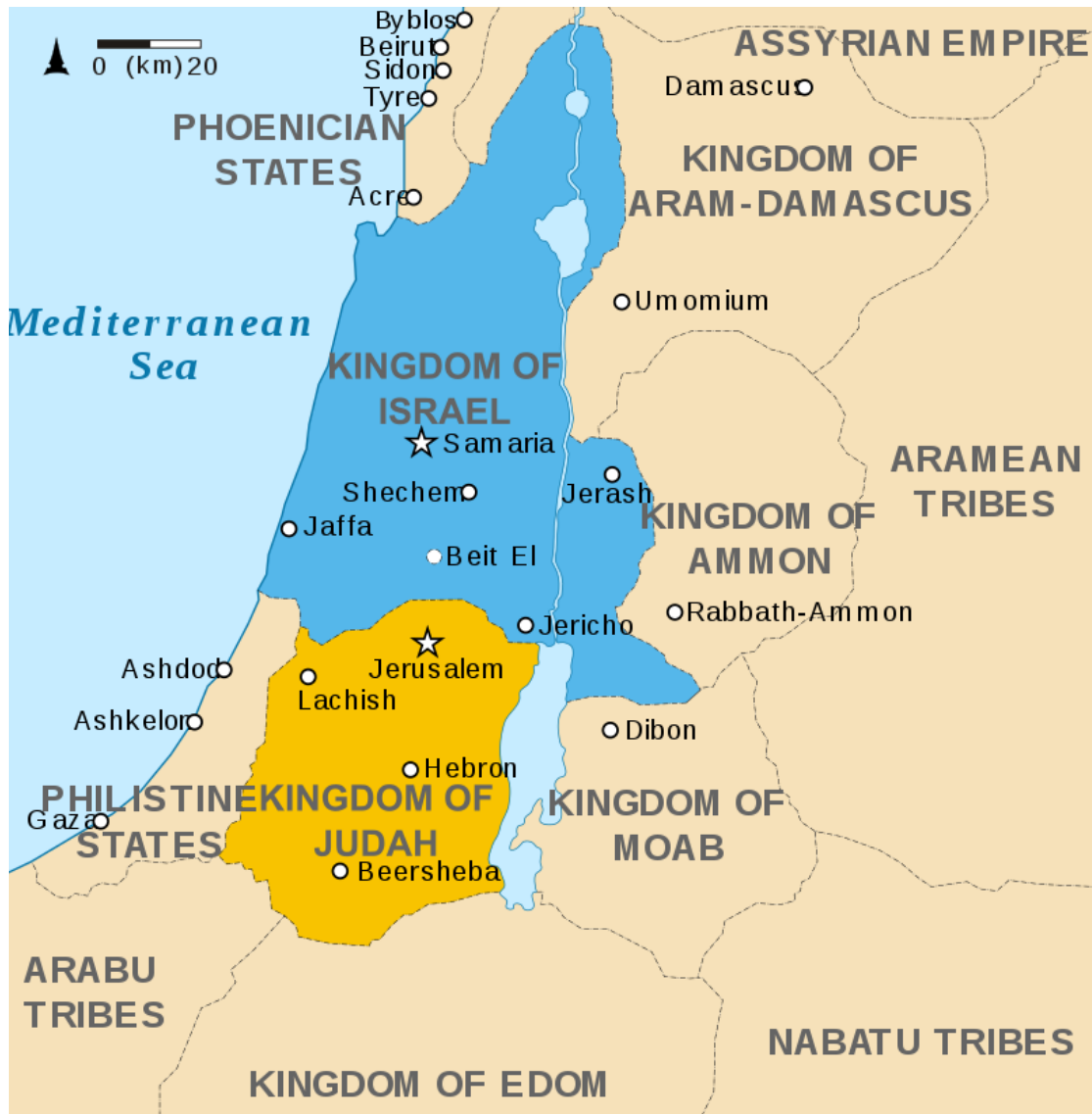




Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
 <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kingdom\\_of\\_Israel\\_1020\\_map.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kingdom_of_Israel_1020_map.svg)>

*The Biblical Israelite Kingdom of David and Solomon –  
 (1000-926 BCE)*

**Kingdom of Israel (876-721 BCE).** The 10<sup>th</sup>-century hiatus from foreign domination continued during the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Biblical secondary sources assert that, following the death of Solomon, the ten northern Israelite tribes declared their independence from the House of David and formed a new Kingdom of Israel, ruled first by Jereboam I (924-901). Assyrian primary sources attest to the existence of the new kingdom only from the rule of Omri (876-869). The small, rural kingdom probably had no more than 280,000 people. Its two main cities were Samaria and Jezreel.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kingdoms\\_of\\_Israel\\_and\\_Judah\\_map\\_830.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kingdoms_of_Israel_and_Judah_map_830.svg)

*Two Israelite Kingdoms (Israel and Judah), 926-722 BCE*

Agriculture was the primary occupation and source of wealth. The major crops were barley, wheat, and grapes, which provided the food staples – porridge, bread, and wine. The main domesticated animals – sheep, goats, and cattle – were raised for their milk, wool, leather, and

meat. Supplemental wealth was generated from artisanal crafts – weaving, dyeing, metal-working, masonry, and gold-smithing.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient\\_agriculture\\_in\\_Sataf,\\_Jerusalem,\\_Israel\\_\(29700647751\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient_agriculture_in_Sataf,_Jerusalem,_Israel_(29700647751).jpg)>

*Ancient Israelite Agriculture, Sataf, Jerusalem –  
Subjected to Severe Technological and Ecological Limits*

Independence did not last long. Sargonid Assyria (911-612) expanded from its capital, Nineveh, in northern Mesopotamia to control Babylonia (southern Mesopotamia), Syria, and Israel. The Assyrians had a holy war ideology based on a belief that their god, Assur, demanded that their kings assert universal rule.



Israel formed a coalition with several Aramaean states in Syria, led by Damascus, but lost to the Assyrian invaders in 841. For 30 years, Assyria backed off and Israel was dominated by Damascus. Israel and the Syrian states became Assyrian vassals, retaining their independence but paying tribute to Nineveh. Israel's independence ended in 722, when Sargon II destroyed Samaria, deported 27,000 Israelites to Assyria, and converted Israel into the Assyrian province of Samaria.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Neo-Assyrian\\_map\\_824-671\\_BC.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Neo-Assyrian_map_824-671_BC.png)

*Sargonid Assyria (911-612 BCE) –  
Holy War Ideology Based On Extreme Religious Tenets*



**Kingdom of Judah (783-587 BCE).** The second, and much smaller, Israelite kingdom was Judah. Judah housed only two Israelite tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and had about one-fifth of the area and one-fourth of the population of Israel (about 70,000 people). But it had Jerusalem as its capital and religious center. Biblical sources trace a continuity of twenty Judahite kings from the House of David, starting with Rehoboam (925-915), of whom six were assassinated and four died in battle or captivity. Primary historical sources from Assyria place the beginnings of effective statehood in Judah with Uzziah (783-742).



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A\\_reconstructed\\_israelite\\_house,\\_Monarchy\\_period\\_3.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A_reconstructed_israelite_house,_Monarchy_period_3.jpg)>

*Reconstructed Israelite House, 10<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE –  
Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv*

Like Israel, Judah depended mainly on agriculture and supplemented its wealth with trade and artisanship. Uzziah took advantage of a brief political vacuum to expand his kingdom into neighboring Edom and Ammon, and he re-built the port of Ezion-geber on the Red Sea. In 701, Sennacherib of Assyria defeated Judah, destroyed most settlements, but withdrew when plague decimated his forces. Hezekiah (715-686) then expanded Jerusalem's defensive fortifications by building new walls and digging a mile-long tunnel through rock to provide water from the Spring of Gihon. Manasseh (686-642) led a recovery of the Judahite economy by expanding farm production in the Negev region and by increasing caravan trade with Arabia.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
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*The Spring of Gihon, Kidron Valley (Upper Fountain of Siloam) –  
Painted by David Roberts, 1842*

The Assyrians overextended their empire by invading Egypt and fell to the Babylonians and the Medes in 612 BCE. Chaldean Babylonia (626-539 BCE) ruled Israel and Judah for less than a century.

Nebuchadrezzar rebuilt his capital of Babylon with magnificent architecture, featuring the massive Tower of Babel. But he also waged vicious campaigns, destroying Jerusalem in 587 and exiling one-fourth of Judah's people (mostly the skilled elite) to Babylonia.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
>[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tissot\\_The\\_Flight\\_of\\_the\\_Prisoners.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tissot_The_Flight_of_the_Prisoners.jpg)>

*The Exile of Jews to Babylonia, 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE –  
The Flight of the Prisoners, Painting by James Tissot, 1896*

**Babylonian and Persian Rule (598-332 BCE).** The period of Babylonian rule of Israel/Judah (598-539) was one of material decline. The region of Benjamin, which suffered limited destruction in the wars, became prominent. Most people scraped out their livings through farming. The forced exiles settled in and around Nippur in Babylonia and were permitted to own property and to practice their monotheistic Hebrew religion. Many became tenants of the king, government officials, or military mercenaries.





Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Neo-Babylonian\\_Empire\\_under\\_Nabonidus\\_map.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Neo-Babylonian_Empire_under_Nabonidus_map.png)>

### *Chaldean Babylonian Empire – Reign of King Nabonidus (556-539 BCE)*

In 550, Cyrus II (ruled 550-530 BCE) claimed leadership of the Median Empire. When the populace of Babylonia welcomed Cyrus the Great as a liberator from their unpopular king, Nabonidus, in 539, Israel and Judah entered the expanding Achaemenid Persian Empire. For political expediency, the Persians governed benevolently and embraced local institutions and cultures.





Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Achaemenid\\_Empire\\_at\\_its\\_Greatest\\_Extent.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Achaemenid_Empire_at_its_Greatest_Extent.jpg)

*The Achaemenid Persian Empire At Its Greatest Territorial Extent,  
 c. 500 BCE*

Cyrus recorded his ruling principles in the Cyrus Cylinder (538) – equality of ethnic groups and religions, freedom of repatriation of peoples to their homelands, and restoration of cities and temples. The Achaemenids established twenty governing units (satrapies), each led by a Persian noble (satrap) in charge of tax collection and military recruitment.

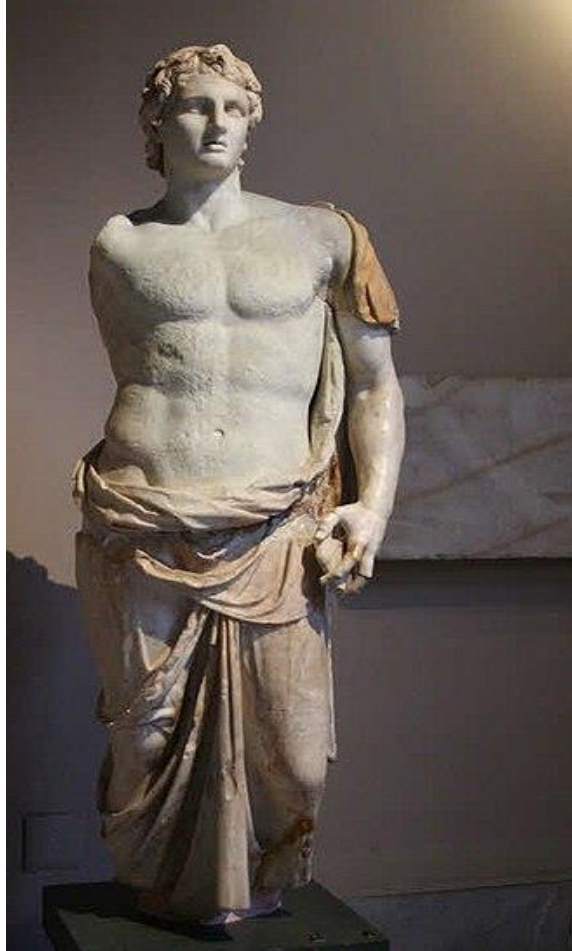


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cyrus\\_Cylinder.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cyrus_Cylinder.jpg)>

*The Cyrus Cylinder, 538 BCE, Cyrus the Great, Achaemenid Persia –  
History's First Human Rights Charter*

Cyrus sponsored the repatriation to Israel of 10,000 Jews who had been forcibly resettled in Babylonia, and he subsidized the restoration of their temple in Jerusalem. The Persians ruled Israel/Judah (539-332) as part of their Abarnahara (Beyond-the-Euphrates-River) Province. To facilitate tax collection, they established a local government led by a high priest of the Jewish Temple and advised by a Council of Elders.

Persian rule ended when Alexander the Great of Macedonia conquered the Persian Empire (334-323) and took Israel/Judah in 332.



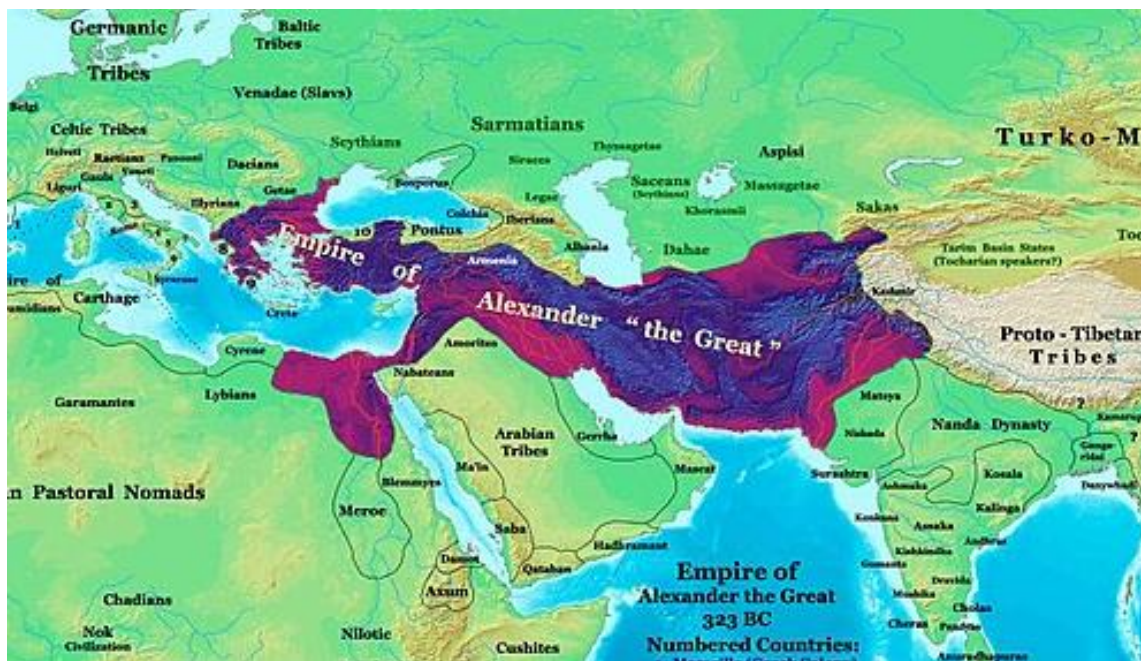
Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alexander1256.jpg>>

*Alexander the Great, 3rd century BCE statue, Istanbul Archaeology Museum – Conquered Israel/Judah in 332 BCE*



## Hellene, Roman, and Byzantine Judaea (332 BCE-637 CE)

**Hellene Rule (332-167 BCE).** Alexander the Great of Macedonia spent a decade conquering the Achaemenid Persian Empire (334-323 BCE). Alexander was an adroit public administrator as well as a brilliant militarist. Along his route of conquest, he established a series of Macedonian colonies, often led by Persian satraps. After Alexander died of a fever (possibly malaria) in 323 at the age of 33, his generals struggled for power.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alexander-Empire\\_323bc.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alexander-Empire_323bc.jpg)>

*Alexander the Great Conquered Achaemenid Persia, 334-323 BCE*

Alexander's empire then was divided into three kingdoms – Antigonid (centered in Macedonia), Seleucid (Syria), and Ptolemaic (Egypt). Israel and Judah, now called Judaea, became part of the Ptolemaic Kingdom in 312. The Ptolemies ruled Judaea indirectly through a Jewish High Priest and a Council of Elders.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Diadochi.png?>

*The Hellenistic (Seleucid, Antigonid, and Ptolemaic) Kingdoms, 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE*

Alexandria, the new Ptolemaic capital, emerged as the leading intellectual center in the world and had the largest population of Jews



outside of Judaea. Its innovative Mouseion housed an extensive research library, laboratories, observatories, lecture halls, and a zoo and hosted leading mathematicians, astronomers, geographers, and medical doctors.

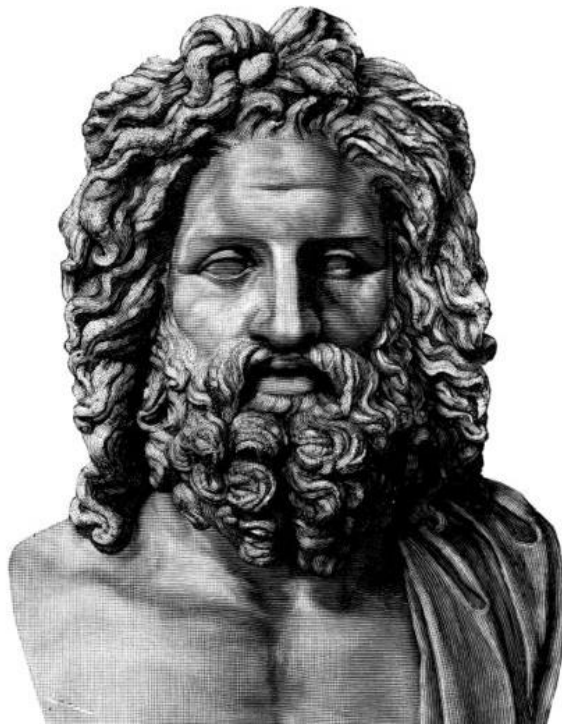


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pharouknowns Alexandria \(Fischer von Erlach\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pharouknowns_Alexandria_(Fischer_von_Erlach).jpg)>

*Alexandria Became the World's Leading Port –  
Pharos Lighthouse, 290 BCE-1362 CE, Johann von Erlach, 1721*

In the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Ptolemaic power declined, following internecine dynastic warfare. In 198, Antiochus II, the Seleucid king, conquered Judaea. Initially, the Seleucids continued to allow Jewish

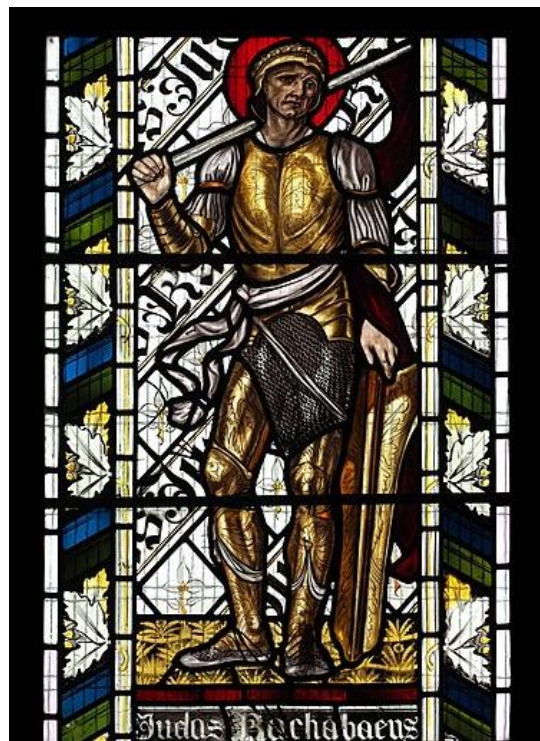
political autonomy and religious freedom. Synagogues first became prominent at that time. In 190, the Seleucids began paying tribute to the expansionist Roman Republic and thereafter raised land taxes to one-third of harvests. Fearing a pro-Ptolemaic coup d'état in Judaea, in 167 Seleucid King Antiochus IV looted Jerusalem, re-dedicated the Jewish Temple to Zeus, and demanded that Jews sacrifice to the Greek gods. That policy of forced Hellenization precipitated a Jewish rebellion.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Otricoli\\_Zeus\\_-\\_1889\\_drawing.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Otricoli_Zeus_-_1889_drawing.jpg)

*Zeus – Supreme Male Deity in the Greek Pantheon*

**Maccabean Independence (167-37 BCE).** Mattathias and his five sons led the Maccabean Rebellion (167-142), and the family founded the Maccabean Dynasty (ruled 142-63). The revolt started as a protest against the Hellenization policies of Antiochus IV and morphed into a Jewish independence movement. Upon Mattathias' death in 166, leadership of the rebellion passed to his son, Judas ("The Hammer"), a genius at guerrilla warfare.

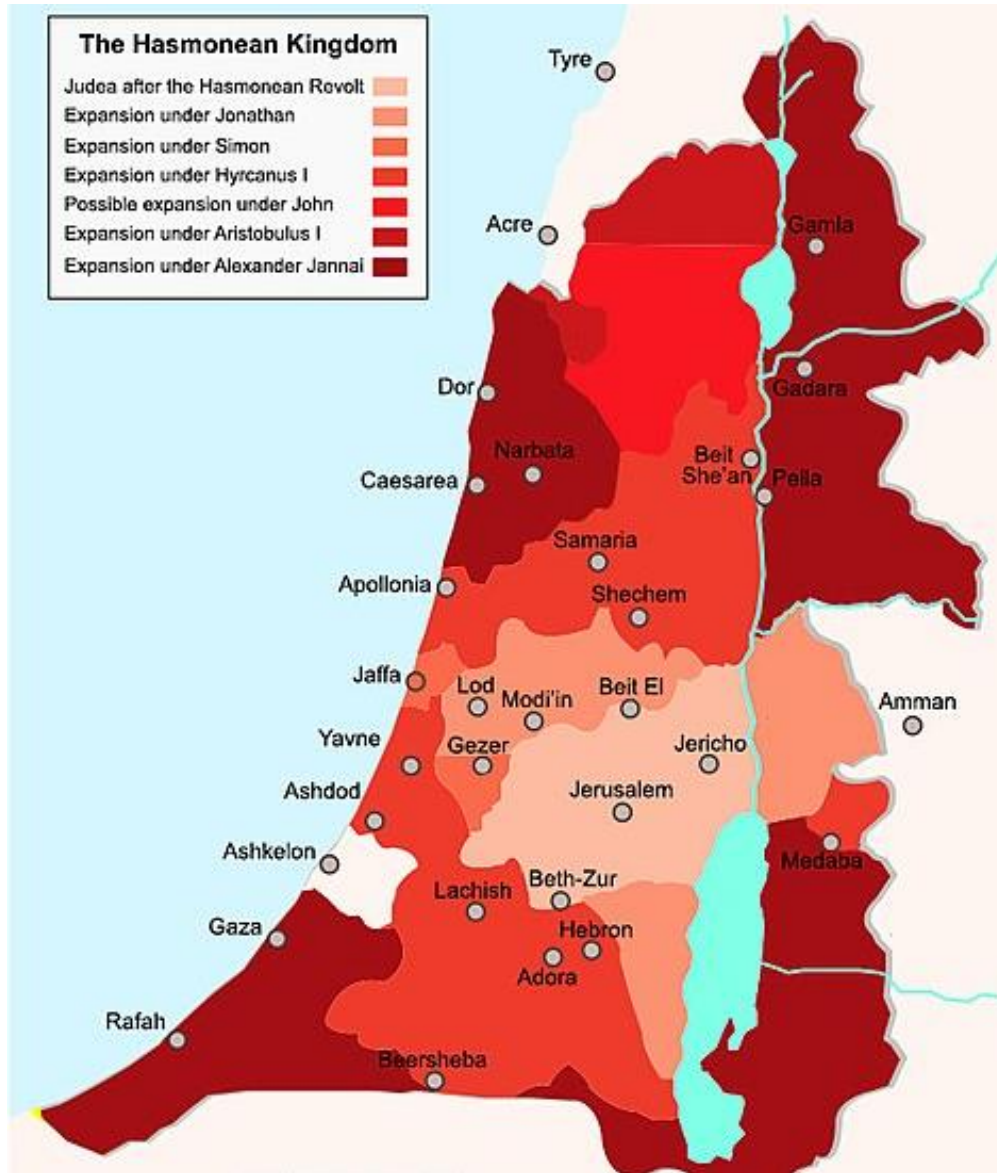


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:All\\_Saints%27\\_Church,\\_Cambridge\\_-\\_Judas\\_Maccabeus\\_stained\\_glass.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:All_Saints%27_Church,_Cambridge_-_Judas_Maccabeus_stained_glass.jpg)>

*Judas Maccabee, Died 160 BCE –  
Stained Glass Panel, All Saints' Church, Cambridge, England*

After Judas was killed in battle in 160, his younger brother, Jonathan, led the movement, achieved Jewish religious independence, and became High Priest in 152. A third Maccabean brother, Simon, assumed leadership in 143 after Jonathan died fighting. Simon negotiated a treaty with the Roman Republic, which protected Judaea against Rome's rivals – the Seleucid and Ptolemaic Kingdoms. He then declared political independence by refusing to pay taxes to the Seleucids. Simon's successor, John Hyrcanus I (134-104), renewed the treaty with Rome in 129 to reassert Judaea's independence (the Seleucids had re-conquered Judaea in 134). With Roman protection during the next half century, the Maccabeans conquered neighboring Samaria, Galilee, Idumea, Moab, and Gilead. Territorial expansion led to prosperity.





Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
 <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hasmonean\\_kingdom.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hasmonean_kingdom.jpg)>

*Expansion of Judea After the Maccabean Revolt (166-37 BCE)*

The Roman general, Pompey the Great, ended Judaea's independence in 63. In a bitter struggle between two Maccabean brothers to rule as High Priest, Pompey sided with John Hyrcanus II (64-



40) over Aristobulus (66-63). The Parthians from Persia briefly gained military supremacy over the Romans and installed another Maccabean, Antigonus (40-37), as High Priest. Rome returned and named an Idumaeen Jew and Roman puppet, Herod (37-4), as King of Judaea. Thereafter, the Jewish homeland was ruled by foreigners until 1948 CE.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons, available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_high\\_level\\_aqueduct\\_of\\_Caesarea\\_built\\_by\\_Herod\\_\(37BC\\_to\\_4BC\),\\_Caesarea\\_Maritima,\\_Israel\\_\(15774534885\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_high_level_aqueduct_of_Caesarea_built_by_Herod_(37BC_to_4BC),_Caesarea_Maritima,_Israel_(15774534885).jpg)>

*Herod's Aqueduct at Caesarea – Built 22 BCE*

**Roman Rule (37 BCE-324 CE).** The Roman Republic gained control of Judaea in 37 BCE. The thrust eastward was part of Roman strategy to expand the empire to its natural frontiers – the Euphrates

River in the east, the Sahara Desert in the south, the Atlantic Ocean in the west, and the Rhine and Danube Rivers in the north. Rome hoped to break even in the Greek-speaking eastern part of the empire, including Judaea, and to develop and tax heavily the rich agricultural regions in the west (northern Africa, Iberia, and France) and in Egypt.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roman\\_provinces\\_trajan.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roman_provinces_trajan.svg)

### *The Roman Empire At Its Peak, c. 110 CE – Population About 60 Million*

In Roman Judaea, the Jews twice revolted and briefly achieved independence. The Zealot Revolt (66-74), led by Menahem, was triggered by a Roman raid on the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem to offset

unpaid taxes. The anticipated support from Parthia, Rome's enemy in the east, never materialized. But it took 60,000 Roman troops eight years to regain control.



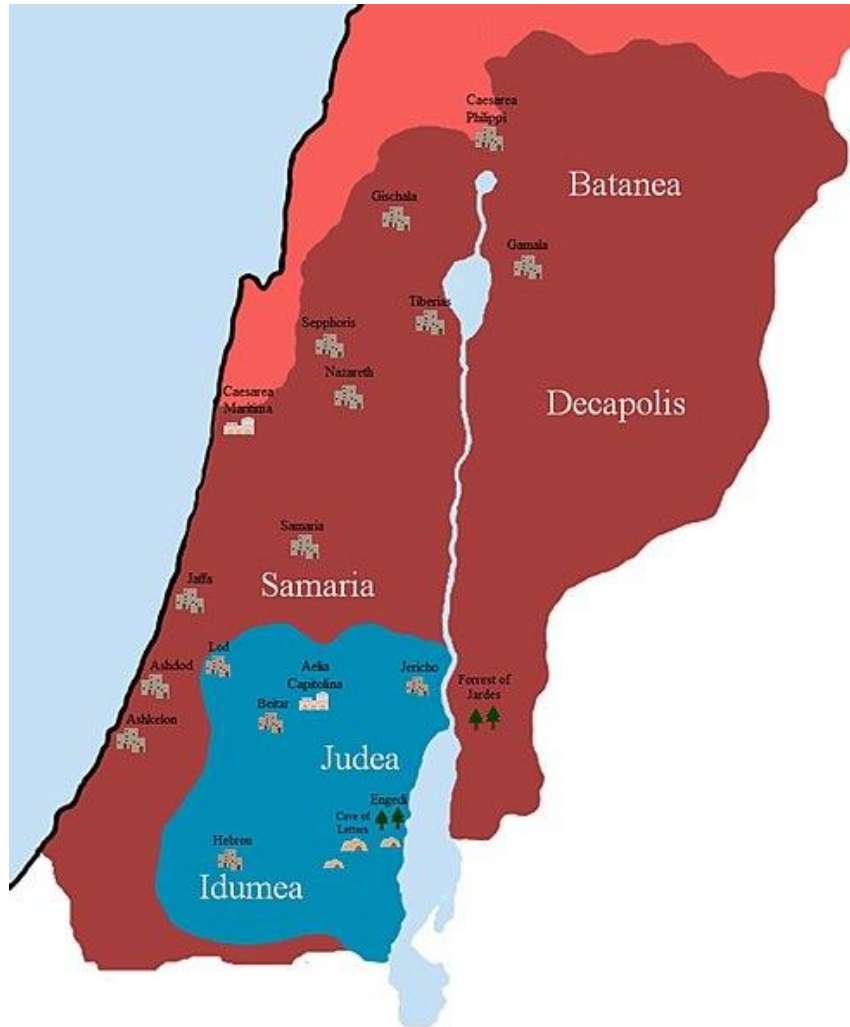
Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arch\\_of\\_Titus\\_Menorah.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arch_of_Titus_Menorah.png)>

*Objects Looted by Roman Troops from the Temple of Jerusalem, 66 –  
Bas-relief, Arch of Titus, Rome*

The Bar Kochba Revolt (132-135) was led by Simeon bar Kosiba (Bar Kochba or Son of a Star). Emperor Hadrian had decreed that Jerusalem be re-built as a Roman colony, Aelia Capitolina, and that the Jewish Temple be re-consecrated to the Roman god, Jupiter. It is



estimated that the number of Jews residing in Judaea fell from 1.3 million to 800,000 because of war losses, executions, and deportations.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
< [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Israel\\_under\\_Bar\\_Kokhba.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Israel_under_Bar_Kokhba.jpg) >

### *The Bar Kochba Revolt, 132-135 CE – Jewish-controlled Area in Blue*

Rome then ruled Judaea with a heavy military presence (two Roman legions, totaling 25,000 men). The number of non-Jews residing in Judaea grew so that the Jewish proportion in the 4<sup>th</sup> century fell to

about 15 percent of the total. The *pax romana* in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century allowed economic trends to improve. Agriculture, producing wheat, grapes, and olives on small farms, expanded with population growth, and exports, principally of linen textiles, olive oil, wine, and glassware, grew apace.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galea\\_\(helmet\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galea_(helmet))

*Militaristic Ethos in Roman Administration –  
Decorated Roman Officer's Helmet (Galea)*

**Byzantine Rule (324-613 CE).** Roman Emperor Constantine (ruled 307-337) built a new capital at Constantinople, an impregnable fortress guarding the trading routes to the Black Sea. Judaea (now called



Palestine by the Romans) became part of the eastern half of the Roman Empire, known later as the Byzantine Empire because Constantinople was located in Byzantium. Constantine converted to Christianity in 313, ended the persecution of Christians, and allowed their leaders to own property and levy taxes.

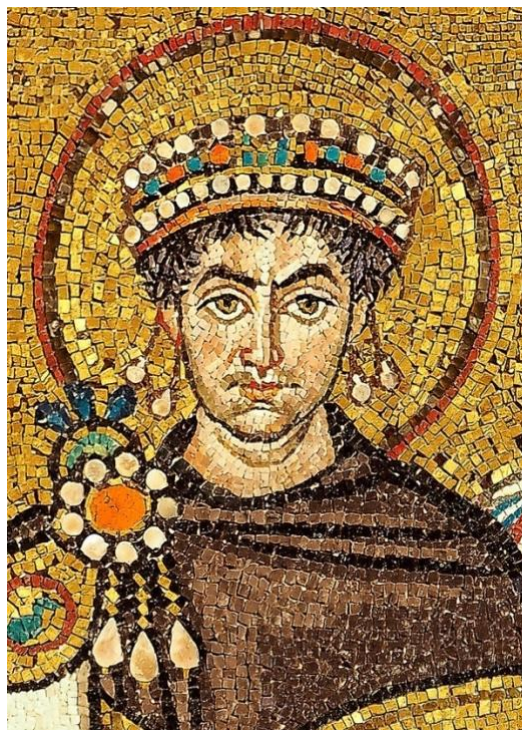


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rome-Capitole-StatueConstantin.jpg>>

*Roman Emperor Constantine the Great (Ruled 307-337), Founder of Constantinople – Capitoline Museum, Rome*

Justinian (ruled 527-565) realized the ultimate goal of all Byzantine emperors – to reunite the former Roman Empire under Byzantine rule. However, the costly wars to re-conquer the

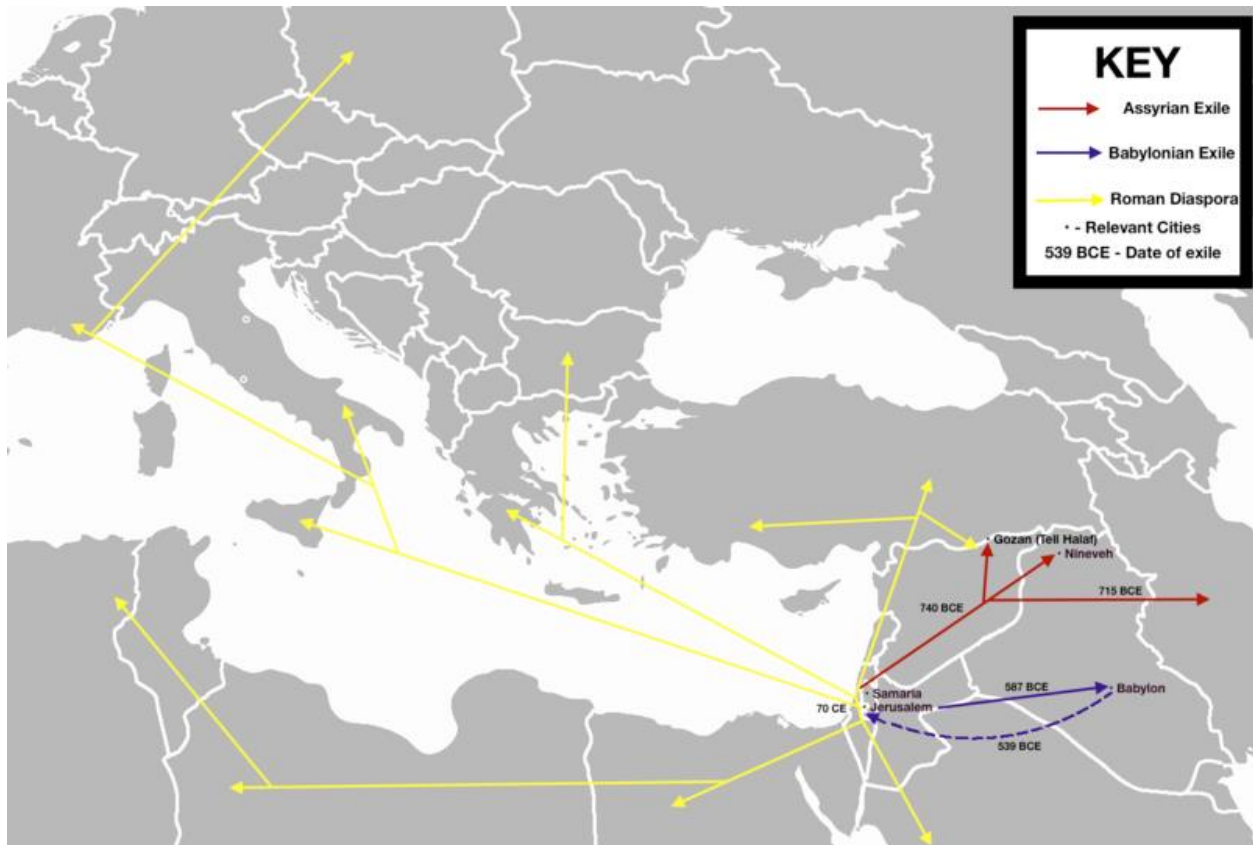
Mediterranean region ruined the Byzantine economy, and most conquered areas were soon lost. Under Justinian, the laws of Byzantium were codified and the arts flourished. But Justinian was an imperial tyrant who repressed religious minorities, especially the Jews. Byzantine imperial rule of Palestine (324-612) was high-handed and unpopular. Most residents resented the heavy taxation, corrupt administration, and religious suppression of the Byzantine rulers.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mosaic\\_of\\_Justinianus\\_I\\_-\\_Basilica\\_San\\_Vitale\\_\(Ravenna\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mosaic_of_Justinianus_I_-_Basilica_San_Vitale_(Ravenna).jpg)>

*Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (Ruled 527-565) – Contemporary Portrait Mosaic in the Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy*

Christianity spread rapidly within the Roman Empire from the 4<sup>th</sup> century. During the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Christians became the majority religious group in Palestine. The Jewish population of Palestine continued to decline and in the 6<sup>th</sup> century fell to perhaps 200,000, about one-tenth of Palestine's total. Voluntary migration, rather than deportations or warfare, accounted for most of that decline. Scattered evidence points to economic prosperity in Palestine during the Byzantine period. The area under cultivation increased, and the economy was boosted by imperial construction of Christian churches and revenues from pilgrimages to the Holy Land.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
 <<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jewishdiaspora.png>>

*The Jewish Diaspora under Roman and Byzantine Rule (Yellow Arrows)*

### **Persian, Byzantine, and Arab Conquests (613-637 CE).**

Between 540 and 629, Sasanian Persia (224-651) fought a debilitating war with the Byzantine Empire (324-1453) from which neither side could extract permanent gain. During the early 7<sup>th</sup> century (606-613), the Persians conquered Byzantine territories in Syria, Asia Minor, and Palestine. In 613, the Persians forged an alliance with Jewish leaders. In return for easy access to Caesarea (the Byzantine capital of Palestine)

across Jewish Galilee and the aid of 20,000 Jewish troops, the Persians offered to the Jews political autonomy, religious freedom, control of Jerusalem, and assistance in rebuilding their Temple. The Jews ruled Palestine for three years (614-617). But then the Persians betrayed them and switched their support to the Christian majority.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Byzantine\\_and\\_Sassanid\\_Empires\\_in\\_600\\_CE.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Byzantine_and_Sassanid_Empires_in_600_CE.png)

*The Sasanian (Persian, Yellow Area) and Byzantine (Eastern Roman, Purple Area) Empires, c. 600*

Meanwhile, Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor, counter-attacked. He invaded Persia through mountainous Armenia in 622. By 628, he took Ctesiphon, the Persian capital. Heraclius triumphantly marched



into Jerusalem in 629. Byzantine officials then expelled the Jews from Jerusalem and tried and executed many Jews for killing Christians.

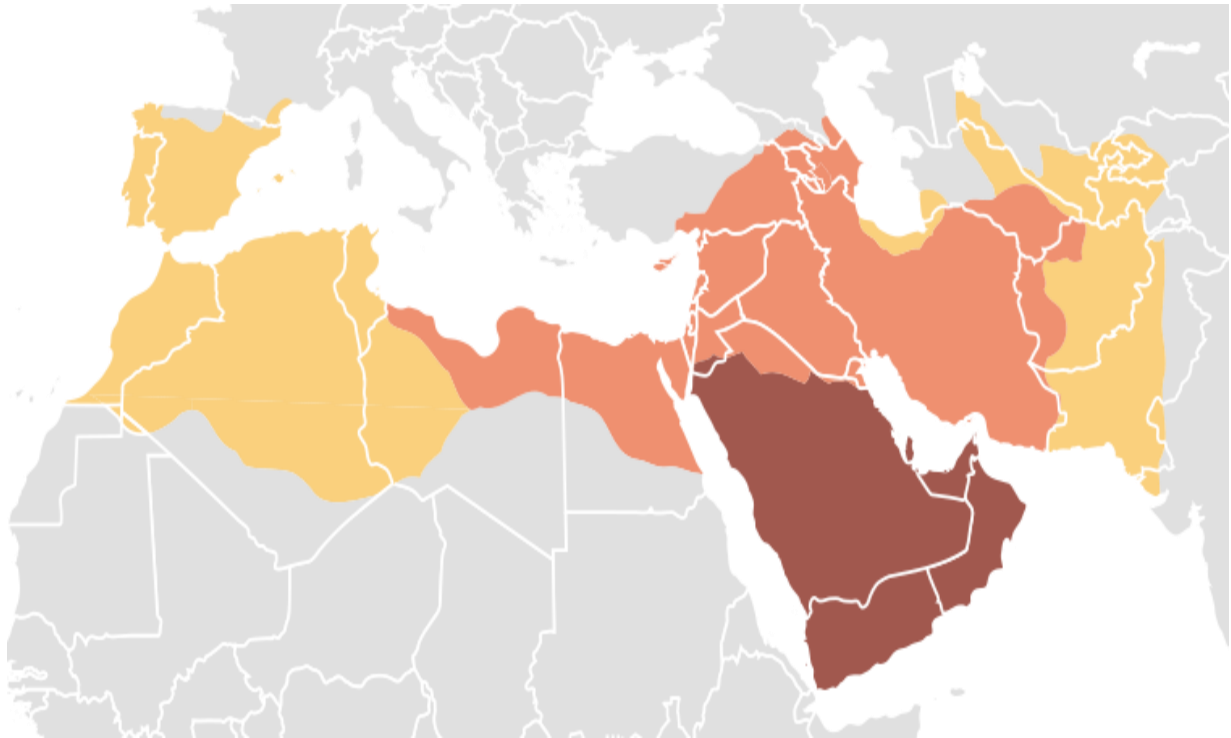


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Piero\\_della\\_Francesca\\_021.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Piero_della_Francesca_021.jpg)>

*Byzantine Emperor Heraclius Defeated Sasanid Persia and Regained Jerusalem, 629 – Painting by Piero della Francesca, c. 1452-1466*

When the Muslim Arabs began their jihad (religious war) in 634, they introduced significant innovations – religion (Islam), scripture (Quran), law (Sharia), and language (Arabic, in the Semitic family). The Arabs took Syria (636), Palestine (637), and Egypt (641) from the Byzantine Empire and conquered all of Sasanian Persia (651). Those two powers were vulnerable to Arab attack because of their incessant warfare with each other, plague infestations, and economic decline. The

Arab invaders had many advantages. Their Bedouin warriors were experienced, disciplined, mobile (with camel transport), and motivated to spread Islam and gain booty and land.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_of\\_expansion\\_of\\_Caliphate.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_expansion_of_Caliphate.svg)>

*The Muslim Arab Diaspora –  
622-632 (Dark Red), 632-661 (Light Red), 661-750 (Yellow)*

## **Islamic Palestine (637-1918)**

**Palestine under the Islamic Caliphates (637-1099).** Four successors of Muhammad ruled from Medina for almost three decades after his death. Muawiyah (ruled 661-679), an outstanding Arab leader,

established the new Umayyad caliphate in Damascus, Syria in 661. The Umayyad caliphs created a strict social hierarchy – from top to bottom – of Arab Muslims, non-Arab converts to Islam, tolerated non-Muslims (*dhimmis*, Christians and Jews), and slaves (prisoners of war).



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Syria\\_12\\_-\\_Damascus\\_-\\_Umayyad\\_Mosque\\_courtyard.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Syria_12_-_Damascus_-_Umayyad_Mosque_courtyard.jpg)

### *Courtyard of the Umayyad Mosque, Damascus*

In 750, the Abbasids set up a new caliphate in Baghdad (modern Iraq), shifting power to the east. Persian advisors and bureaucrats and Turkish soldiers undercut the Arabs' control of political power during

the five centuries of Abbasid rule. Abbasid administration became Persian except for the Arabs' Islamic religion and language.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abbasids850.png>>

*The Abbasid Caliphate, At Its Peak , c. 850*

Beginning in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Abbasid Empire splintered. Berbers, practicing the Shi'ite version of Islam, set up the Fatimid caliphate in Morocco and Tunisia in 909. They conquered Egypt in 969 and shifted the dynasty to a new capital at Cairo. By the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Fatimids gained control of North Africa, Egypt, Sicily, Syria, Palestine, and western Arabia and created a more powerful empire than that of the Abbasids in Baghdad. Fatimid wealth was based on Nile agriculture, urban crafts, and control of trade routes linking the

Mediterranean via the Red Sea to the Orient (exchanging gold and ivory for spices and silk).



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bab\\_Zuwayla\\_Cairo\\_12\\_0864.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bab_Zuwayla_Cairo_12_0864.jpg)>

*Bab Zuweila, South Gate of Fatimid Cairo, Built 1092 –  
Iconic Landmark of Old Cairo*

Palestine was politically unimportant in the caliphate empires. But Umayyad caliphs built the Dome of the Rock (692) and al-Aqsa Mosque (710) in Jerusalem and encouraged pilgrimages to Islam's third holiest city. Between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, the population of Palestine declined due to wars and epidemic disease. The majority of Palestinians were Christians in that turbulent era.





Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jerusalem-2013\(2\)-Temple\\_Mount-Dome\\_of\\_the\\_Rock\\_\(SE\\_exposure\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jerusalem-2013(2)-Temple_Mount-Dome_of_the_Rock_(SE_exposure).jpg)>

*Dome of the Rock, Temple Mount, Jerusalem –  
Erected 690-692 CE by Umayyad Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik*

**Crusader and Ayyubid Rule (1099-1291).** The Crusades were a series of eight military expeditions in the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries that pitted Christians (mostly Frankish knights) in holy wars against Muslims. In 1095, the Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus I asked Pope Urban II for assistance to protect the Christian Byzantine Empire and to liberate Palestine from the Seljuk Turks, who had conquered Abbasid Baghdad in 1055 and Palestine in 1070. Victorious Crusaders took Jerusalem in 1099, slaughtered its Muslim and Jewish inhabitants,

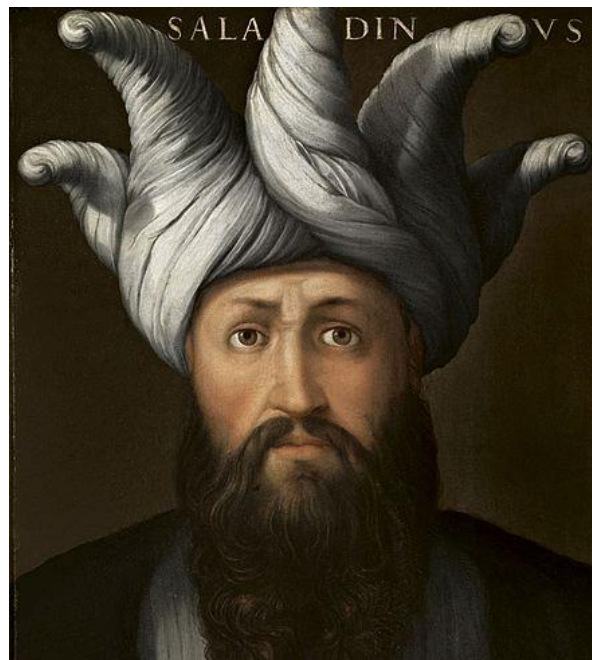
and established the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099-1187). King Baldwin I (ruled 1100-1118) settled Crusaders in Palestine's coastal ports and controlled the agricultural hinterland and principal trade routes with fortified Crusader castles.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_Crusader\\_states\\_1135-en.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_Crusader_states_1135-en.svg)>

*Crusader States in the Levant, including the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099-1187) – Pictured c. 1135*

Salah al-Din (known in the West as Saladin) was a Kurdish officer in the service of the Abbasid dynasty. In 1171, he went to Cairo to serve as vizier in the crumbling Fatimid government. He then took power in the name of the Abbasids, proclaimed Sunni Islam as the state religion, and established the Ayyubid dynasty that lasted until 1250.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cristofano dell%27altissimo\\_saladino\\_ante\\_1568\\_-\\_Serie\\_Gioviana.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cristofano_dell%27altissimo_saladino_ante_1568_-_Serie_Gioviana.jpg)

*Saladin (Saladinus) – Painting by Cristofano dell’Altissimo, c. 1552-1568, Uffizi Museum, Florence, Italy*

Saladin channeled the lucrative Asian spice trade from Christian and Jewish merchants to Muslim traders. He gained control of Palestine and Syria in 1174 and of Iraq five years later. In 1187, he defeated the

Crusaders and recaptured Jerusalem. By the time Saladin died in 1193, he had forced the Crusaders back into a narrow coastal strip on the Mediterranean in northern Palestine and Syria. However, political fragmentation, military incompetence, and corruption among his Ayyubid successors permitted the Crusaders to prolong the battle for another century. The Mamluk sultan of Egypt eventually drove the last Crusaders from Palestine in 1291.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Citadel\\_of\\_Salah\\_El.Din.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Citadel_of_Salah_El.Din.jpg)>

*Citadel of Cairo, Built by Salah al-Din, late 12<sup>th</sup> century*

**Mamluk Egyptian Rule (1260-1516).** In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Mongols conquered China and irrupted across the Eurasian steppes. For



several decades the Mongol horse-based warriors seemed invincible. But in 1260 at the Battle of Ain Jalut (“Eye of Goliath”) in Palestine, the Egyptian army, led by General Baybars, stopped the Mongol advance. Thereafter, the Mongols made no further attempts to invade Southwest Asia, and Egypt gained control of Syria and Palestine.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Campaign\\_of\\_the\\_Battle\\_of\\_Ain\\_Jalut\\_1260.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Campaign_of_the_Battle_of_Ain_Jalut_1260.svg)

*The Battle of Ain Jalut, 1260 – Sultan Qutuz of Mamluk Egypt Defeated Hulegu Khan of the Mongol Ilkhanate*

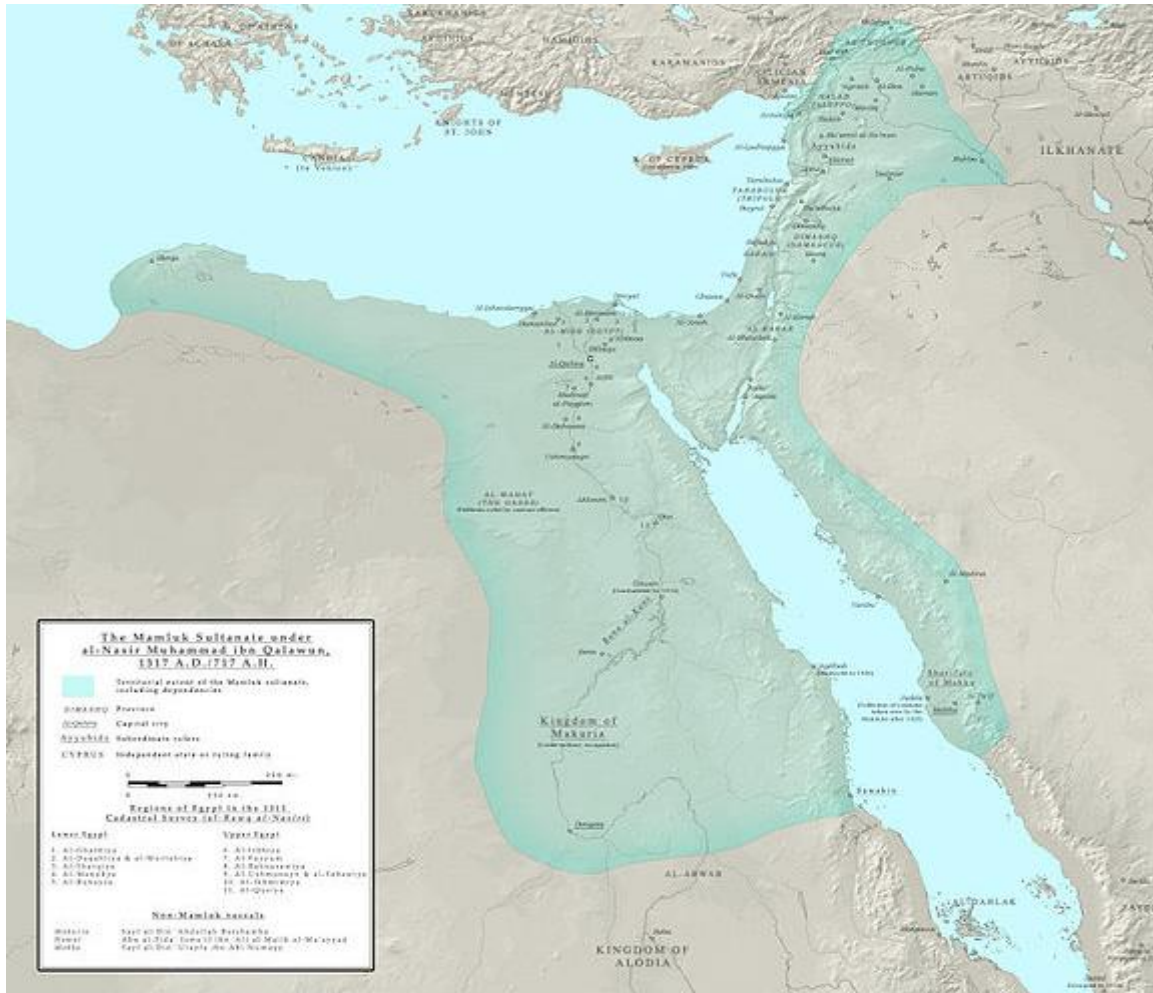
Mamluk means “owned” in Arabic. To enhance loyalty, Islamic rulers imported young male slaves and trained them in the Islamic religion, Arabic language, and military arts. When those mamluks became adults, they joined a military or bureaucratic caste. However, the mamluk soldiers owed primary allegiance to their commanders. Through this loyalty, the mamluk commanders gained military and political power and eventually replaced their rulers.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A\\_Mamluk\\_from\\_Aleppo.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A_Mamluk_from_Aleppo.jpg)>

*Circassian Mamluk Nobleman, Aleppo, Syria –  
Painting by William Page, c. 1816-1824*

Egypt experienced two periods of Mamluk rule. During the first, 1250-1383, most of the mamluks were Kipchak Turks from the Russian steppe and the system of ruler succession was hereditary. In the second, 1383-1517, the mamluks were principally Circassians from the Caucasus Mountains and succession went to the strongest military commander. The Mamluk rulers installed a dual administration, civil and military, and dominated both branches. In the Turkish period, the Mamluk rulers governed effectively and Egypt (plus Syria and Palestine) had a strong economy, wielded military muscle, and emulated the Mongols in military tactics and dress. But Egypt-Syria-Palestine went into severe decline during the Circassian Mamluk period, because the rulers spent endless time in succession struggles, overtaxed agriculture and trade, and experienced drought, famine, and plague.



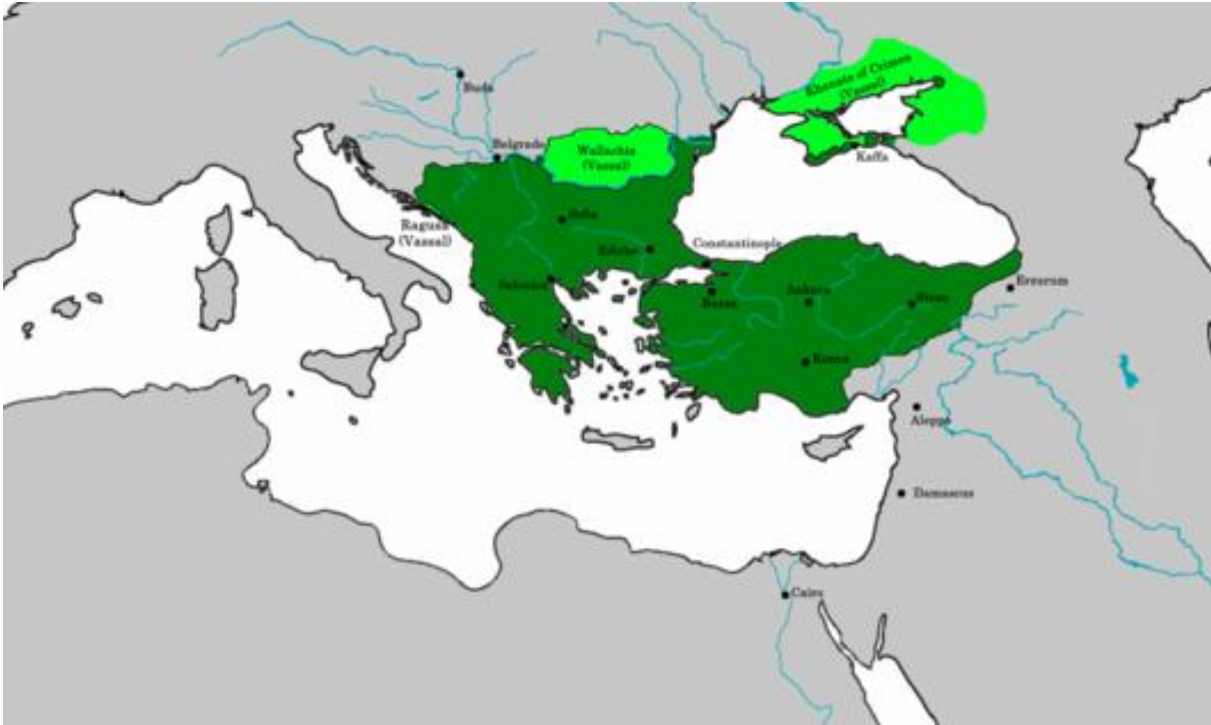
Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mamluk\\_Sultanate\\_of\\_Cairo\\_1317\\_AD.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mamluk_Sultanate_of_Cairo_1317_AD.jpg)

### *Mamluk Egyptian Empire (including Palestine), 1260-1517*

**Early Ottoman Rule (1516-1831).** Between the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Ottoman Empire expanded from its heartland in Anatolia and southeastern Europe into southwestern Asia and Iraq and across Egypt and North Africa. They expanded into southeastern Europe in the



14<sup>th</sup> century and captured the last remnant of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople, in 1453.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:OttomanEmpire1481.png>>

*The Ottoman Empire in 1481 – Two Lands (Rumelia and Anatolia) and Two Seas (Black and Mediterranean)*

The Turkish rulers (sultans) set up a military-administrative organization that depended on non-Turkish elements of the empire's population from the Balkans and the Caucasus. The Ottoman sultans imposed heavy taxes throughout their empire – on crops produced, goods traded or hand-crafted, and non-Muslims. The three Muslim

empires of that period – Ottoman (Turkish), Safavid (Persian), and Mughal (Indian) – wove together a network of trade routes from Europe to the Orient.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Islamic\\_Gunpowder\\_Empires.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Islamic_Gunpowder_Empires.jpg)

*The Ottoman (Red), Safavid (Purple), and Mughal (Orange) Empires, c. 1700*

When the Ottoman armies advanced into Mamluk Syria/Palestine in 1516 and Egypt in 1517, they faced little resistance from their Circassian-led adversaries. The Mamluk government had been crumbling under a debilitating system of ruler succession, and its army was weak. In contrast, the Ottoman military was experienced and

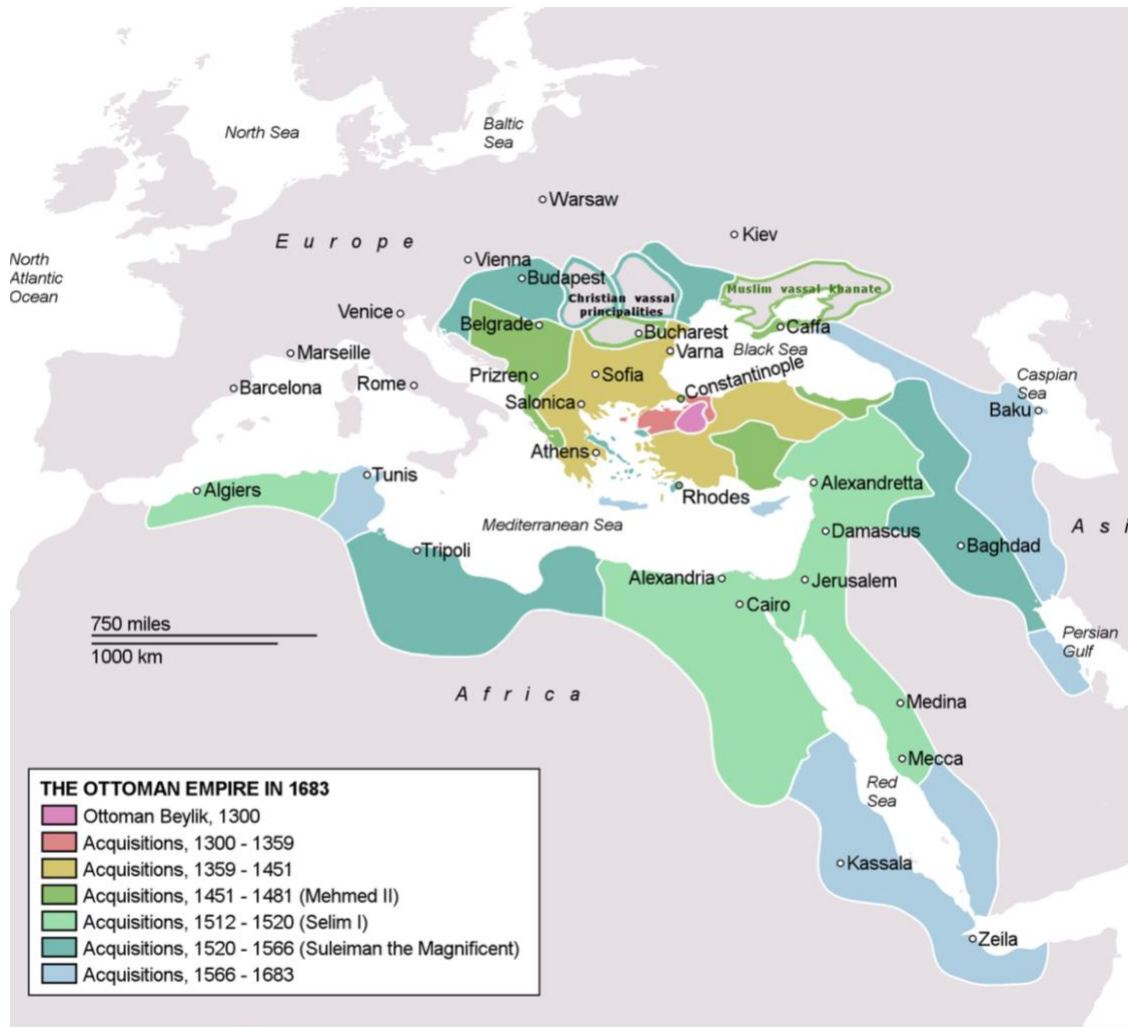
disciplined, had better firearms and artillery, and was led by more creative generals.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Battle\\_of\\_Vienna.Sipahis.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Battle_of_Vienna.Sipahis.jpg)>

*Ottoman Light Cavalrymen (Sipahis) –  
Experienced, Disciplined, and Well-led*

Tiny Palestine had only about one percent of the population of the Ottoman Empire. The Turks' primary interest in Palestine thus was cultural and strategic. Jerusalem had important religious significance for Muslims, and a key Muslim pilgrimage route to Mecca and Medina traversed Palestine. Border security also was critical because Palestine was the land-link between Anatolia and Egypt/North Africa.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Atlas\\_of\\_the\\_Ottoman\\_Empire](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Atlas_of_the_Ottoman_Empire)

*The Ottoman Empire At Its Peak in 1683 – Turkey, Southeastern Europe, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and North Africa*

**Egyptian and Later Ottoman Rule (1831-1918).** After centuries of decline under Ottoman rule, Palestine’s economy took an upward turn in the 1830s. Muhammad Ali Pasha (ruled 1805-1848) of Egypt conquered Palestine and Syria in 1831. His son, Ibrahim Pasha, ruled



the conquered region for nine years, before a European coalition (Great Britain, Russia, Prussia, and Austria) expelled Egypt and returned Syria and Palestine to Ottoman rule in 1840. Ibrahim introduced a radical set of reforms in Palestine – improved internal security, better roads and ports, new agricultural crops, centralized taxation, and representation for Christians and Jews in a new constitutional system.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ModernEgypt,\\_Muhammad\\_Ali\\_by\\_Auguste\\_Couder,\\_BAP\\_17996.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ModernEgypt,_Muhammad_Ali_by_Auguste_Couder,_BAP_17996.jpg)

*Muhammad Ali Pasha (Ruled Egypt, 1805-1848) –  
Portrait by Auguste Couder, 1841, Palace of Versailles, France*

Following the introduction of regular steamship service to Europe, Palestine enjoyed a period of export-led growth. Most Palestinian

exports were agricultural – wheat (for pasta), barley (for beer), olive oil, cotton, and citrus. By 1880, Palestine’s population reached 457,000 of whom 87 percent were Muslims.

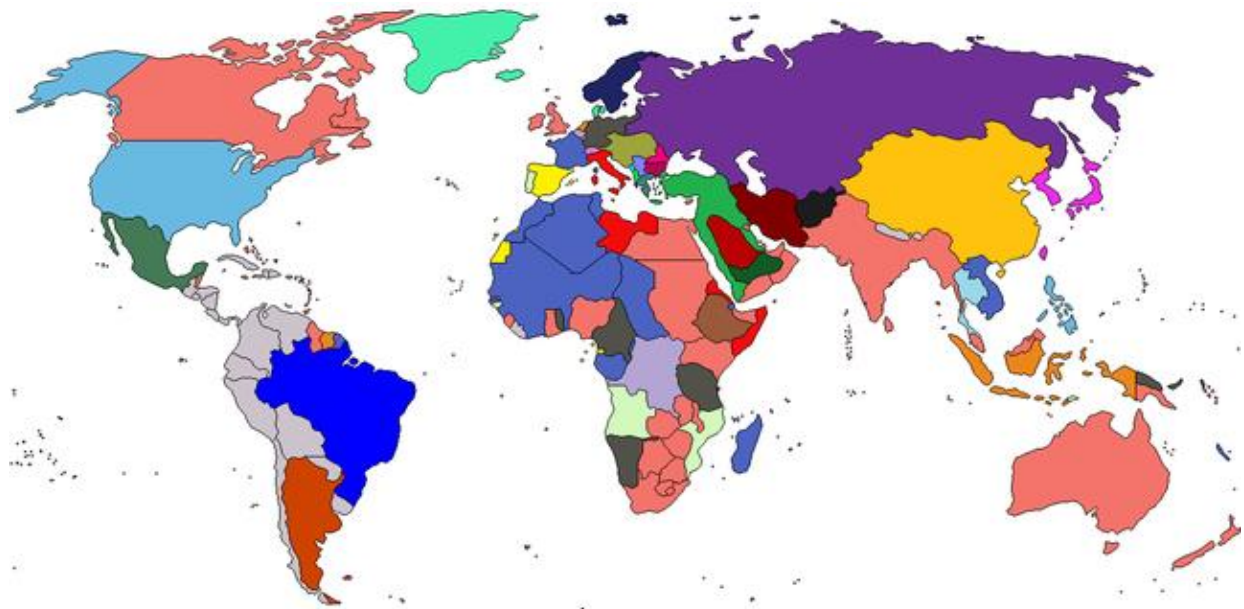


*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:OrangeBloss\\_wb.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:OrangeBloss_wb.jpg)>

*Citrus Exports from Palestine –  
Began in 19<sup>th</sup> century, Boomed in 20<sup>th</sup> century*

Palestine and the Ottoman Empire experienced a fateful transition in the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, when European kingdoms regained political, economic, and intellectual dominance. European revolutions – agricultural (England and France), and industrial (England) – transformed Europe and allowed it to spurt ahead of its Muslim

competitors. The European kingdoms had richer natural resource bases, more practical science and technology, stronger navies and armies, and thus greater control of key trade routes and colonial empires. In contrast, innovation was stifled in the Muslim countries, largely because military aristocracies usurped power and paid insufficient attention to science, technology, or public investments. The Muslim empires – Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal – lost their creativity, energy, and power and were threatened by European imperialism.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:World\\_empires\\_and\\_colonies\\_around\\_World\\_War\\_I.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:World_empires_and_colonies_around_World_War_I.png)>

*World Empires, 1914 – Ottoman (Green), British (Light Red), French (Dark Blue), Russian (Purple)*

## British Palestine (1918-1948)

### Creation of the British Mandate in Palestine (1915-1923).

Ottoman Turkish rule of the Middle East ended after World War I. The Ottomans lost the war after they sided with Germany and Austria against Britain, France, Russia, and (in 1917-1918) the United States. British troops bore the brunt of most of the fighting in the Arabic provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and Britain led the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire (which was dissolved in the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923).



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_Europe\\_alliances\\_1914-en.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_Europe_alliances_1914-en.svg)>

*Triple Entente (Green) and Triple Alliance (Central Powers, Brown) in World War One – The Ottoman Empire Later Joined the Triple Alliance*



While the war was raging, Britain had engaged in duplicitous diplomacy. To obtain the military support of Sharif Husain, the Hashemite Emir of Mecca, Britain, in the ten Husain-McMahon letters (1915-1916), promised significant portions of post-war Palestine and Syria to Husain and the Sunni Arabs. Concurrently, Britain secretly agreed in the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) with France to divide the Ottoman Arabic provinces (Palestine, Syria, and Iraq) between Britain and France. A year later (1917), the British government, in the publicly announced Balfour Declaration, “viewed with favor” the future establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.



Sources: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:T.E. Lawrence With Lawrence in Arabia.jpg>>

*T. E. Lawrence of Arabia –  
British Agent in the Arab Revolt, 1916-1918*

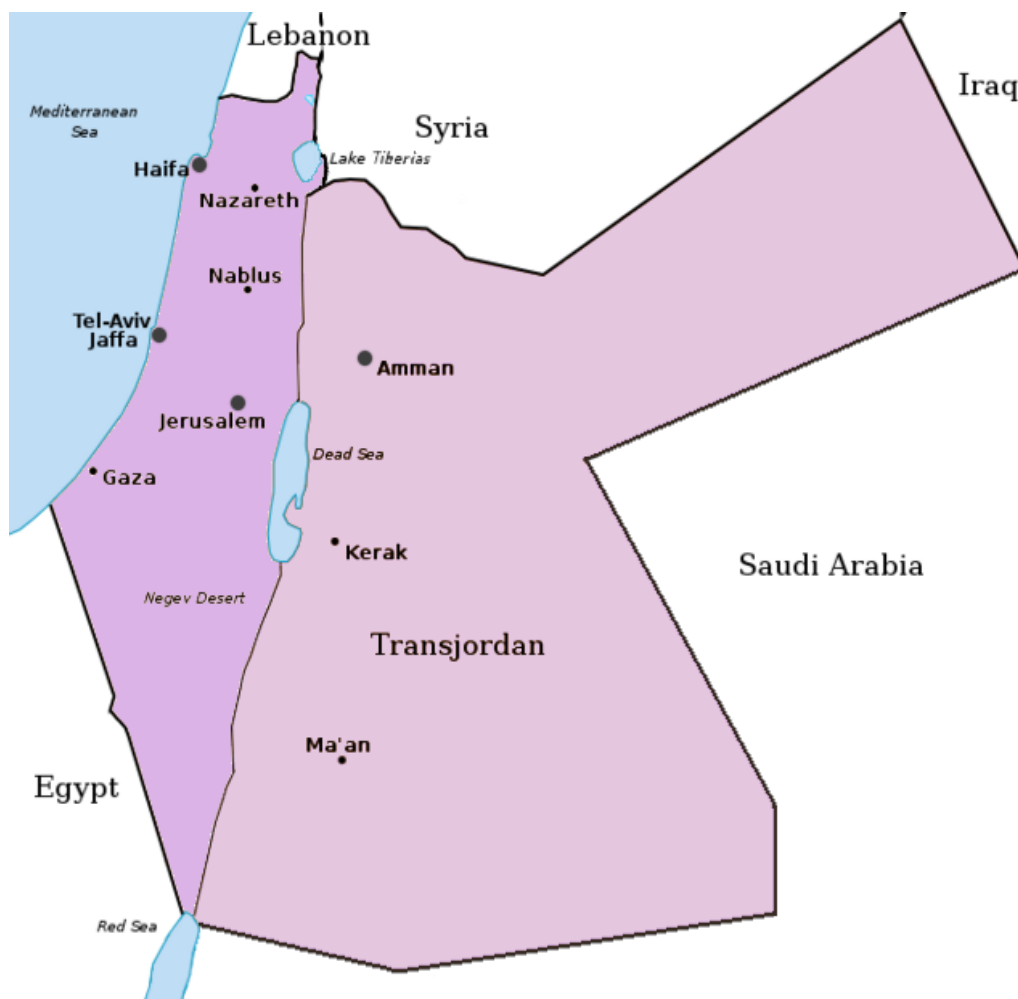
Those conflicting promises initially were resolved in the San Remo Conference (1920) in which Britain honored its commitment to France. Britain claimed mandates to rule Palestine (including Transjordan, which was not specifically mentioned) and Iraq, while France asserted mandates to rule Syria and Lebanon.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:French\\_Mandate\\_for\\_Syria\\_and\\_the\\_Lebanon\\_map\\_en.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:French_Mandate_for_Syria_and_the_Lebanon_map_en.svg)

*League of Nations Mandates (Created 1920, Ratified 1923) –  
French Mandates for Syria and Lebanon*

In 1921, Britain separated Palestine into the area west of the Jordan River (designated for Jewish settlement) and that east of the Jordan River (Transjordan). Britain then permitted two of Husain's sons to rule in its new colonies. Faisal (whom France had removed as King of Syria) became the King of Iraq, and Abdullah became the Emir of Transjordan.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PalestineAndTransjordan.png>>

*League of Nations Mandates (Created 1919, Ratified 1923) –  
British Mandates For Palestine and Transjordan*

## **Zionism and Jewish Immigration into Palestine (1882-1923).**

Zionism was a mostly secular, nationalist, and socialist movement that advocated the settlement of Jews in Palestine to avoid persecution in Europe. Moses Hess, in the first Zionist classic, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 1860, argued that Jews should establish a socialist state in Palestine to avoid impending anti-Semitism in Germany. Theodor Herzl, the father of the Zionist movement, expanded that theme in *The Jewish State*, 1896, and urged European Jews to set up a secure haven outside Europe.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Theodor\\_Herzl\\_retouched.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Theodor_Herzl_retouched.jpg)>

*Theodor Herzl – 19<sup>th</sup>-century Zionist Leader and Austrian Journalist*



Herzl promoted two abortive Jewish settlement schemes in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. His dream of turning the desert of El-Arish, near Gaza, into a flourishing Jewish oasis with irrigation water from the Nile River was scotched by the British governor of Egypt as impractical. Herzl's hope of establishing a Jewish state in Uganda, Britain's new colony in East Africa, which later would be moved to Palestine, was deemed both uneconomic and unrealistic. Instead, Jewish settlers in Palestine established Tel Aviv in 1909 as a modern, secular Jewish city.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:TelAviv-Founding.jpg>>

*Auction of Lots in Tel Aviv, 1909*

Between 1882 and 1923, Jews settled in Palestine in three waves (*aliyas*). In the First Aliya (1882-1903), about 25,000 Jewish immigrants entered Palestine. Most were religiously motivated and settled in towns. The majority were Ashkenazi Jews from Europe, but many were Sephardic Jews from North Africa and the Middle East. The immigrants in the Second Aliya (30,000, 1904-1914) and Third Aliya (30,000, 1918-1923) were primarily secular Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe who desired self-sufficiency in rural settlements (*kibbutzim*). Many future leaders of Israel – including David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, and Levi Eshkol – arrived in that immigration.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Founding\\_of\\_the\\_Hebrew\\_University.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Founding_of_the_Hebrew_University.jpg)>

*Opening Ceremony of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, April 1,  
1925 – Attended by Arthur Balfour*

**Arab-Jewish Peaceful Coexistence (1920-1929).** Britain established a colonial administration in Palestine in 1920. Britain wanted new territory in the Middle East to buttress its (declining) role as a super-power, permit an air route to India, and allow delivery of its promise of providing a Jewish homeland in Palestine. It also desired to expand markets for its manufactured exports, secure access to oil

supplies in Iran and Iraq, and buttress its control of the Suez Canal in Egypt. British colonial policy in Palestine tried to effect limited modernization – to raise living standards without generating demands for independence. The 1920s were relatively peaceful, until a riot erupted in 1929. British colonial administration was efficient, and British policy protected Jewish firms.





Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palestine\\_frontier\\_1922.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palestine_frontier_1922.png)

### *The British-drawn Frontiers of Mandated Palestine, 1922*

The Yishuv (Jewish community) had a clear political strategy – to create a para-state within the British Mandate, which would evolve into an independent Jewish state. The Jewish Agency served as a liaison

with British officials, the Hagana (defense force) provided security, and the Histadrut (labor union) was the engine of the Jewish economy.

Jewish rural settlers developed plantations, using mainly Arab labor.

The primary export crop was citrus (*shamuti* (also called Jaffna oranges), which made up one-fifth of the world market.

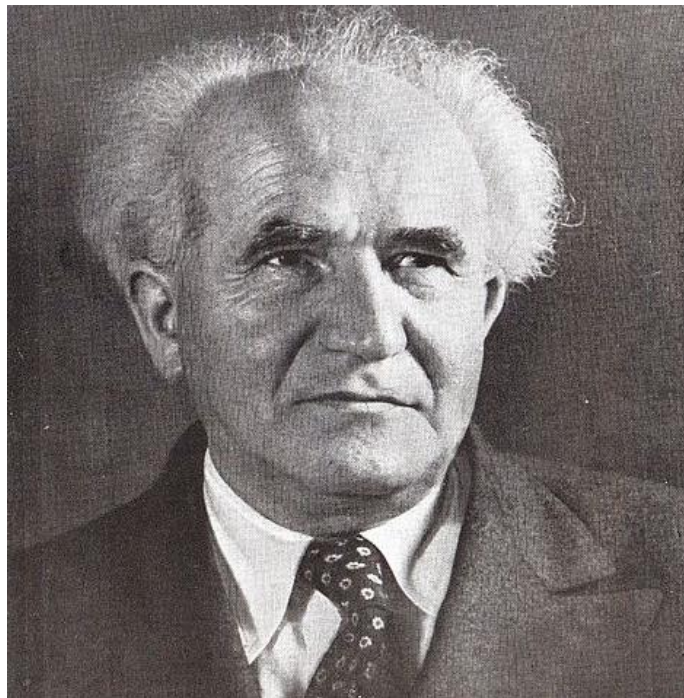


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PikiWiki\\_Israel\\_1114\\_hadera\\_%D7%91%D7%99%D7%AA\\_%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%96%D7%94.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PikiWiki_Israel_1114_hadera_%D7%91%D7%99%D7%AA_%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%96%D7%94.jpg)>

### *Citrus Packing by Jewish Settlers in Hadera, British Palestine, 1930s*

During the 1920s, 100,000 Jewish immigrants entered Palestine and 23,000 Jews emigrated. The 77,000 net migrants increased the Jewish share of Palestine's total population to 16 percent in 1929. The

Jewish settlers purchased about 500,000 dunams of cultivable land (125,000 acres – one dunam was 900 square meters) – mostly from absentee landlords (foreigners and Palestinian Arab notables). Arab leaders felt increasingly threatened by rising Jewish immigration and land-ownership.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PikiWiki\\_Israel\\_46061\\_David\\_Ben\\_Gurion.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PikiWiki_Israel_46061_David_Ben_Gurion.jpg)>

*David Ben-Gurion, Jewish Immigrant and Leader in British Palestine –  
Pictured in the 1950s*

**Jewish Expansion and the Arab Uprising (1930-1939).** In the 1930s, Jewish expansion in Palestine intensified and Arab-Jewish relations deteriorated sharply. Following Adolf Hitler's takeover of

Germany in 1933, Jewish immigration to Palestine accelerated. Between 1933 and 1936, 165,000 Jews, mostly from Germany, immigrated to Palestine. By 1936, Jews constituted 27 percent of the total population of British Palestine. Jewish farmers bought 300,000 more dunam (75,000 acres) of cultivable land, increasing landlessness among rural Arabs.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jewish\\_farmer\\_Paelestine.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jewish_farmer_Paelestine.jpg)>

### *Jewish Farmer in British-mandated Palestine, 1920s*

The Cement Incident (1935), in which clandestine weapons were discovered in a shipment of cement to a Jewish businessman in Tel Aviv, triggered an Arab revolt. The Arab Uprising (1936-1939) began



with a general strike and boycott. Disaffected rural Arabs instigated armed resistance to British and Jewish efforts to end the strike. The intermittent violence was not brought fully under control until 1939. After Britain negotiated the fateful Munich Agreement with Nazi Germany in 1938, it felt able to send additional troops to Palestine.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palest\\_against\\_british.gif](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palest_against_british.gif)>

*Anti-British Arab Forces in the Arab Uprising (1936-1939) –  
Pictured in 1936*

In 1937 Britain had set up a Royal Commission, chaired by Lord Peel, to investigate Arab grievances. The Peel Commission Report (1937) recommended that Mandated Palestine be partitioned into three parts. An Arab Area (with 70 percent of the land area) would be merged

with Transjordan and subsidized by British grants, a Jewish State (20 percent) would include fertile coastal regions (Jews then owned 7 percent of Palestine's land), and a British Enclave (10 percent) would protect the holy sites in the Jaffa-Jerusalem corridor. Arab leaders rejected the Peel plan, Jewish leaders endorsed it as a basis for negotiation, and Britain shelved it when World War II began in 1939.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
 <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peel\\_map\\_pd.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peel_map_pd.png)>

*Peel Commission's Proposal for Partition of British Palestine, 1937 – Arab State (Green), Jewish State (Blue), International Neutral Zone (Pink)*

### **World War II and Creation of the State of Israel (1939-1948).**

The Second World War boosted the economy in Palestine and led to

new industries (optical, electronic, and diamond-cutting). The horrific Holocaust, in which 6 million Jews were murdered, gave Jewish leaders even stronger resolve to create a safe haven in a state of Israel.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Prisoners\\_liberation\\_dachau.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Prisoners_liberation_dachau.jpg)>

*Surviving Prisoners at Dachau, Nazi Extermination Camp –  
Cheered the Arrival of Liberating Allied Troops in 1945*

In 1947, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) recommended the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state (with 56 percent of the land area), an Arab state (44 percent), and a neutral enclave in Jerusalem – all within an economic union. Jewish



residents then constituted 31 percent of the population and owned 11 percent of cultivable land.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_of\\_Jewish\\_settlements\\_in\\_Palestine\\_in\\_1947.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Jewish_settlements_in_Palestine_in_1947.png)

*British Mandate of Palestine (1920-1948) – Areas of Jewish Settlement in 1947 (Orange)*

In the face of ardent Arab opposition, the UN General Assembly supported partition (33 in favor, 13 opposed, and 10 abstentions). Both the American and Soviet governments applied strong lobbying pressure to gain votes for partition.



Sources: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:UN\\_Partition\\_Plan\\_Palestine.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:UN_Partition_Plan_Palestine.png)

*United Nations Plan for Partition of Israel/Palestine, 1947*

An independent Jewish state of Israel was created in May 1948. The Zionists had several advantages – unity of Jewish leadership, astute international diplomacy, flexibility in accepting incremental gains, and powerful allies (first Britain, later the US and the USSR). The Palestinian Arabs suffered many drawbacks – divided leadership, excessive dependence on expected British support, unwillingness to compromise, and unreliable Arab allies who were competing for Palestinian territory.



Sources: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Declaration\\_of\\_State\\_of\\_Israel\\_1948.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Declaration_of_State_of_Israel_1948.jpg)

*David Ben-Gurion, First Prime Minister of Israel – Pronounced the Declaration of the State of Israel, Tel Aviv, May 14, 1948*

Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria invaded Israel in May 1948. The Israeli Defense Forces (Tzahal) held many advantages over the Arab coalition – superior leadership, greater experience, more modern equipment, and better military intelligence. By the end of the war in 1949, Israel controlled 77 percent of Mandated Palestine’s area and had expropriated former Arab lands. More than 726,000 Arab-Palestinian refugees had fled to neighboring Arab countries.



Sources: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cia-is-map2.png>

*The International Borders of Israel (Light Tan Area) –  
 January 1949-June 1967*



## **Independent Israel (1948-1979)**

**Israeli and Palestinian Aspirations and Dilemmas.** The Zionist Jews who created independent Israel had three principal objectives. They wished to build a Jewish homeland, create a democratic state, and incorporate the areas of Biblical Israel. Each objective faced constraints and threats. Demography – the rapid growth of the Palestinian population – threatened to overcome the Jewish majority. Opposition by Palestinians and Arab countries led to anti-democratic, Israeli security measures. And the post-1967 Israeli takeover of Biblical Israel brought violent uprisings in the Occupied Territories (West Bank and Gaza).



Sources: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jews-pray-in-the-Western-Wall-1.jpg>>

### *Jews Praying at the Western Wall in Jerusalem on the Sabbath*

The Palestinian Arabs in Mandatory Palestine held parallel objectives – nationhood, democracy, and rights for Palestinian refugees. The creation of an independent Palestinian state conflicted with Jewish territorial claims to land. The desire to have a democratic Palestinian government was threatened by the lack of a viable politico-economic base. And compensation for Palestinian refugees required international assistance, given Israel’s unwillingness to grant them rights of return.



Sources: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Praying\\_at\\_the\\_Dome\\_of\\_the\\_Rock\\_\(2177686037\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Praying_at_the_Dome_of_the_Rock_(2177686037).jpg)>

### *Palestinian Muslim Praying at the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem*

Between 1948 and 1967, Israel attained its first two goals – by creating a Jewish, democratic state. After Israel gained control of the Occupied Territories in 1967, expanded Jewish settlement into more of Biblical Israel has heightened the Israeli-Palestinian dilemma. The pattern of demographic change shows why demography is a key influence. In 1949, 1 million Jews and 1 million Palestinians inhabited Mandatory Palestine and another 1 million Palestinian exiles, mostly refugees, lived in neighboring Arab countries. By 2009, the same area

(Israel plus the Occupied Territories) held 5 million Jews and 5 million Palestinians, and 4-6 million Palestinians lived abroad.



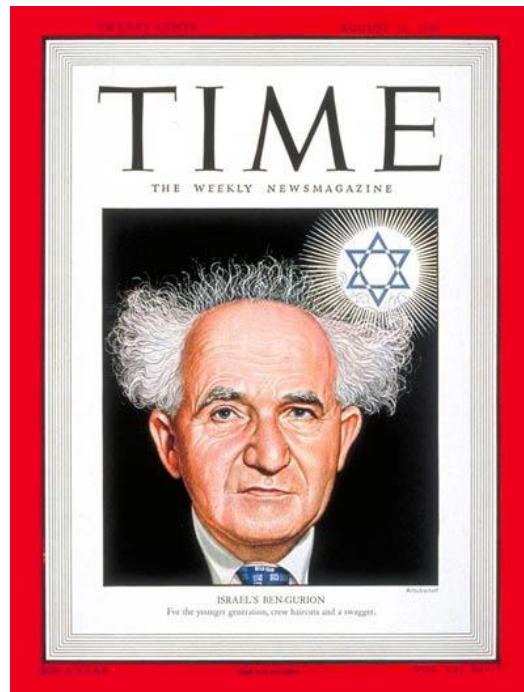
Sources: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palestinians\\_demonstrate\\_in\\_the\\_20th\\_anniversary\\_of\\_the\\_Massacre\\_of\\_Hebron.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palestinians_demonstrate_in_the_20th_anniversary_of_the_Massacre_of_Hebron.jpg)>

*Palestinians Demonstrate Against the Israeli Closure of Al-Shuhada (Martyrs') Street in Hebron – Site of the Massacre of Hebron in 1994*

**Tenuous Peace and the Suez War (1949-1956).** The new nation of Israel began with strong, experienced political leadership. David Ben-Gurion, the longtime leader of the Labor Party and the Yishuv, was elected Prime Minister in 1949 and served until 1963. In contrast, there was no Palestinian state because Jordan ruled the West Bank and Egypt the Gaza Strip. The Palestine National Council set up a government-in-



exile in Egypt. Refugees in Gaza formed the Palestinian guerrilla movement, Fatah (Movement for the Liberation of Palestine), in 1956 and began incursions in Israel.



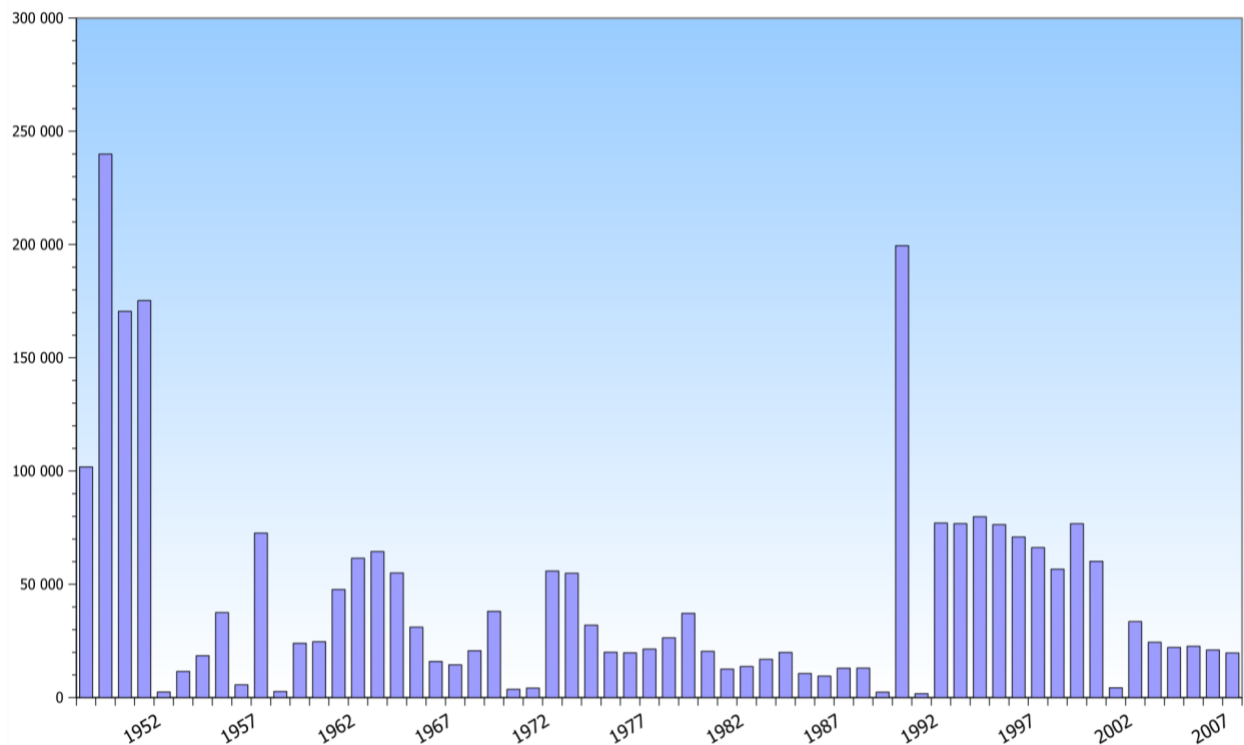
Sources: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:David-Ben-Gurion-TIME-1948.jpg>>

*David Ben-Gurion. Prime Minister of Israel (1948-1963) – Pictured on the Cover of Time Magazine, August 16, 1948*

Ben-Gurion pursued his political goals relentlessly. He believed that Israel needed a strong military capability and effective international diplomacy to underpin Labor's two pillars for success – migration and land. Israel attracted 250,000 Arab Jewish (Mizrachi) migrants in 1949 alone. Ben-Gurion used his military strength to dispossess Arabs



(within Israeli borders) of their land, and he enacted legislation to prevent the repatriation of Palestinians and to legalize Jewish public use of former Arab lands.

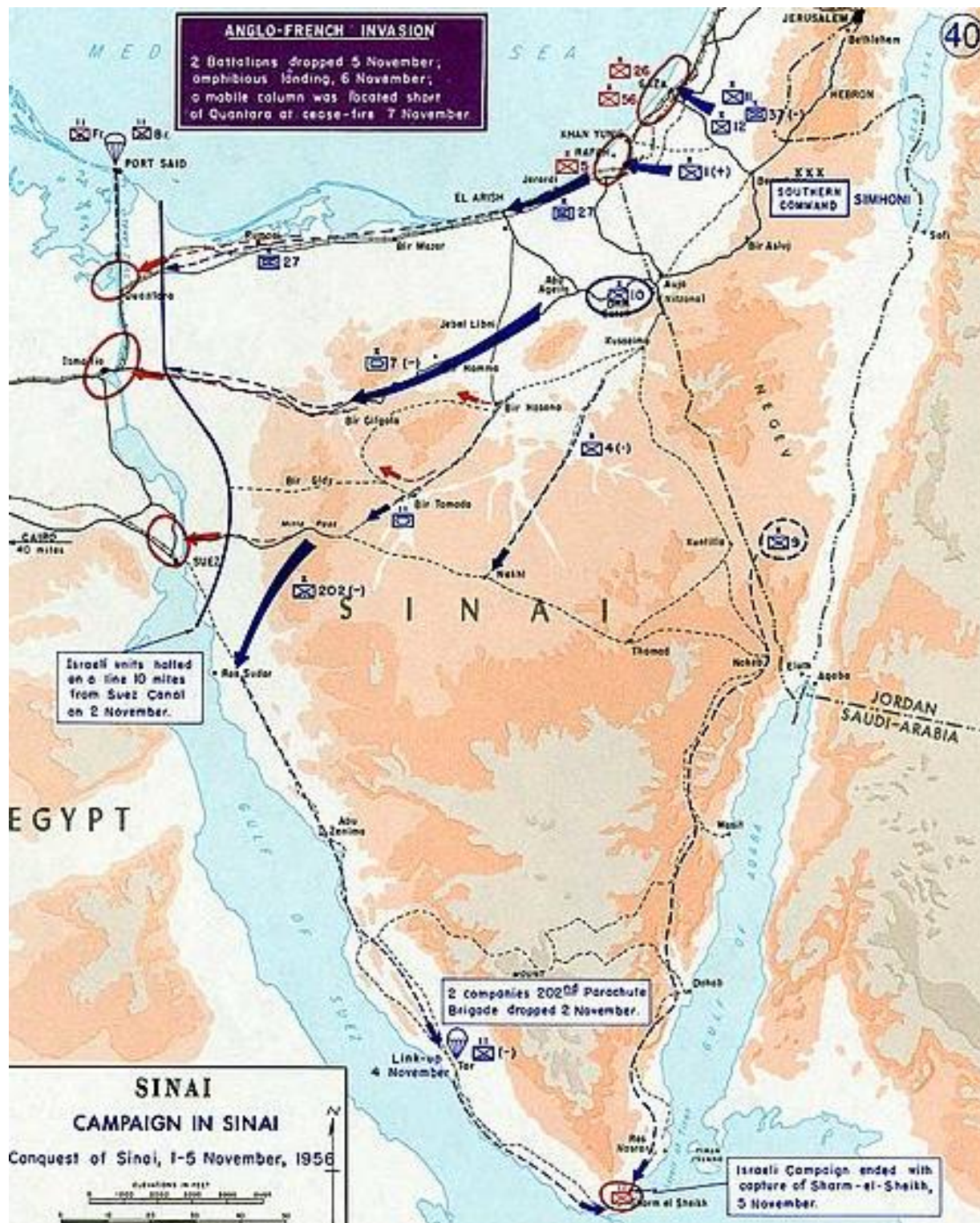


Sources: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alyah\\_1948-2007\\_en.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alyah_1948-2007_en.svg)

### *Jewish Immigration to Israel – 1948-2007*

To solidify French military aid and British diplomatic support, Ben-Gurion joined a French-British-Israeli conspiracy and started the Suez War in 1956. When the United States and the World Bank reneged on their offers to finance the High Aswan Dam, President Gamal Abdul

Nasser of Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal Company (largely British- and French-owned) and claimed ownership of the canal. Israel then invaded the Sinai, and French and British troops took control of the Suez Canal, ostensibly to stop Israeli progress. After the US and the USSR jointly forced all three invaders to withdraw, Nasser gained prestige whereas France, Britain, and Israel were embarrassed and weakened. But no territory changed hands.



Sources: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1956\\_Suez\\_war\\_-\\_conquest\\_of\\_Sinai.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1956_Suez_war_-_conquest_of_Sinai.jpg)

### Israeli, British, and French Invasion of Egypt – October-November 1956

**The PLO and the Six-Day War (1956-1967).** Lacking a strong alliance with Western powers, in the 1950s and 1960s Israel established a series of strategic diplomatic partnerships, called the Alliance of the Periphery, with Iran, Turkey, and Ethiopia. Those non-Arab nations on the outer circle of the Middle East shared Israel's anti-Nasser, anti-Soviet, and pro-American diplomatic stance.



*Sources: Wikimedia Commons, available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Turkish\\_Flag\\_inside\\_the\\_Grand\\_Bazaar.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Turkish_Flag_inside_the_Grand_Bazaar.JPG)>

*Grand Bazaar, Istanbul –  
Israel Was Linked to Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s*

In 1964, the Arab League, led by Nasser, formed the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to attempt to unify, support, and control



the numerous Palestinian guerrilla movements. In its early years, the PLO was led by and employed mostly urban Palestinian nationalist notables, and it had little support from Palestinian refugees.

Supported by substantial military and economic assistance from the Soviet Union, in May 1967 Nasser moved 100,000 troops into the Sinai and closed the Aqaba Strait to Israeli shipping. Three Arab countries surrounding Israel – Egypt, Syria, and Jordan – formed a military coalition. The coalition expected to prevail militarily or benefit from American intervention.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nasser\\_and\\_Eisenhower,\\_1960.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nasser_and_Eisenhower,_1960.jpg)>

*Gamal Abdel Nasser, President of Egypt (1956-1970) (Right), with  
Dwight D. Eisenhower, President of US (1953-1961), in 1960*



After exhaustive diplomatic efforts to convince its Western allies that it was acting in self-defense, Israel launched a massive, blitzkrieg attack in June 1967, destroyed Egypt's air force, and crushed all three opponents in six days. Israel's American weaponry and experienced leadership proved superior to the Soviet weapons and training in the Arab coalition.

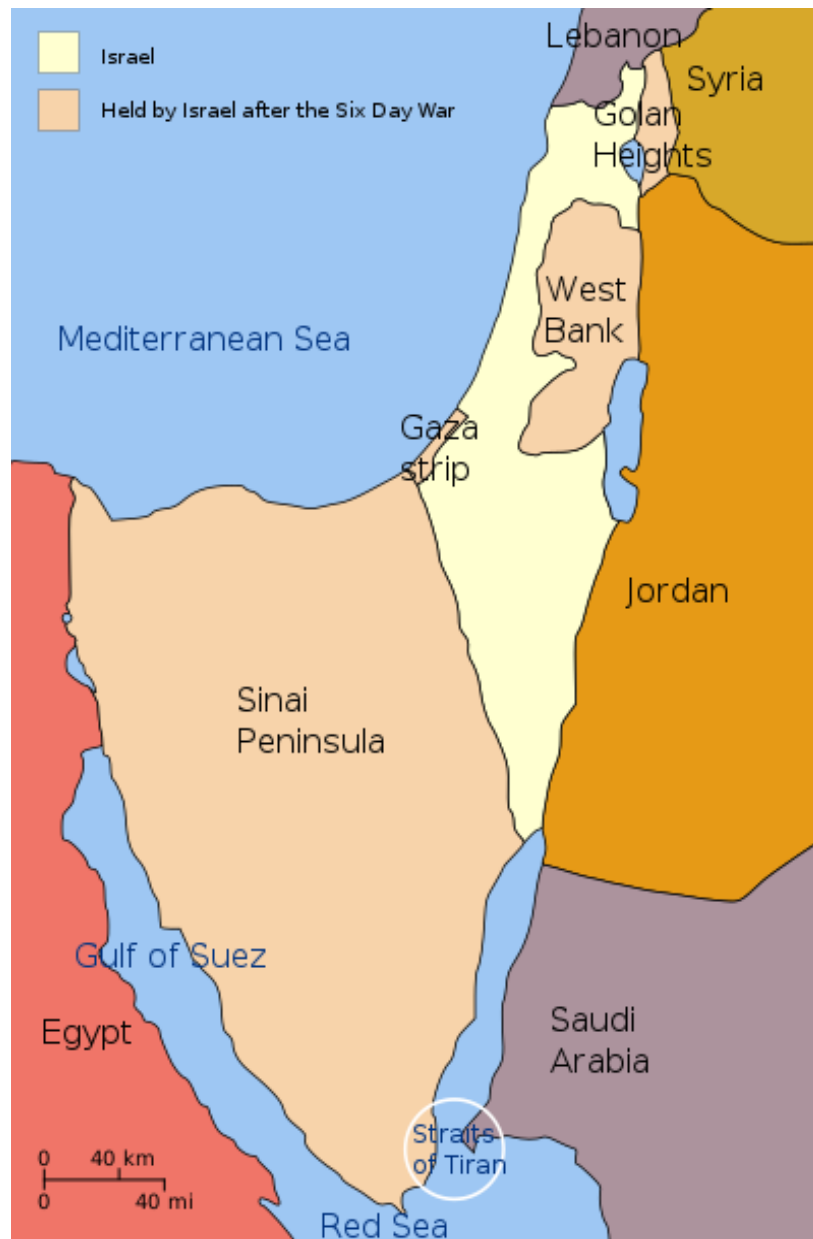


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Six\\_Day\\_War.\\_Israeli\\_troops\\_rolling\\_into\\_Rafa.\\_June\\_1967.\\_D326-032.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Six_Day_War._Israeli_troops_rolling_into_Rafa._June_1967._D326-032.jpg)>

*The Six-day War –  
Israeli Troops and Tank Rolling into Rafa, June 5, 1967*

The overwhelming military victory allowed Israel to occupy and claim territories that were three and one-half times the size of the pre-

war state of Israel – the Sinai Peninsula (from Egypt), the West Bank (Jordan), the Gaza Strip (Egypt), East Jerusalem (Jordan), and the Golan Heights (Syria). But those territories housed two million Palestinians.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Six\\_Day\\_War\\_Territories.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Six_Day_War_Territories.svg) >

*Territories Occupied by Israel (Tan), June 1967 – After the Six-Day War*

**Egypt and the Yom Kippur War (1967-1973).** Israel began to solidify the gains from its victory in the Six-Day War by annexing East Jerusalem in 1967. That war also led to the ascendancy of the United States and to the decline of the influence of the USSR in the Middle East. Application of the Nixon/Kissinger principle of global deterrence led to substantial levels of American military and economic aid to Israel. Led by Golda Meir, the Labor Party promoted Israeli settlement in the West Bank and Gaza and chose not to set forth a peace initiative.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Golda\\_Meir\\_\(1964\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Golda_Meir_(1964).jpg)>*

*Golda Meir, Prime Minister of Israel, Labor Party – 1969-1974*

In 1969, Yasser Arafat, the popular leader of the Fatah guerrilla movement, became Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO. Arafat drew his main support from Palestinian refugees outside Israel, and for two decades he refused to recognize the state of Israel and give up the right of refugees to return to their former homes. The PLO headquarters moved from Jordan to Lebanon in 1970, where Arafat established a mini-state for 12 years. The PLO opposed UN Resolution 242, calling for an exchange of Israeli-occupied land for peace, because it implied recognition of Israel's 1949 borders. Instead, Arafat and the PLO called for a democratic secular state in Palestine/Israel with equal rights for Arabs and Jews.

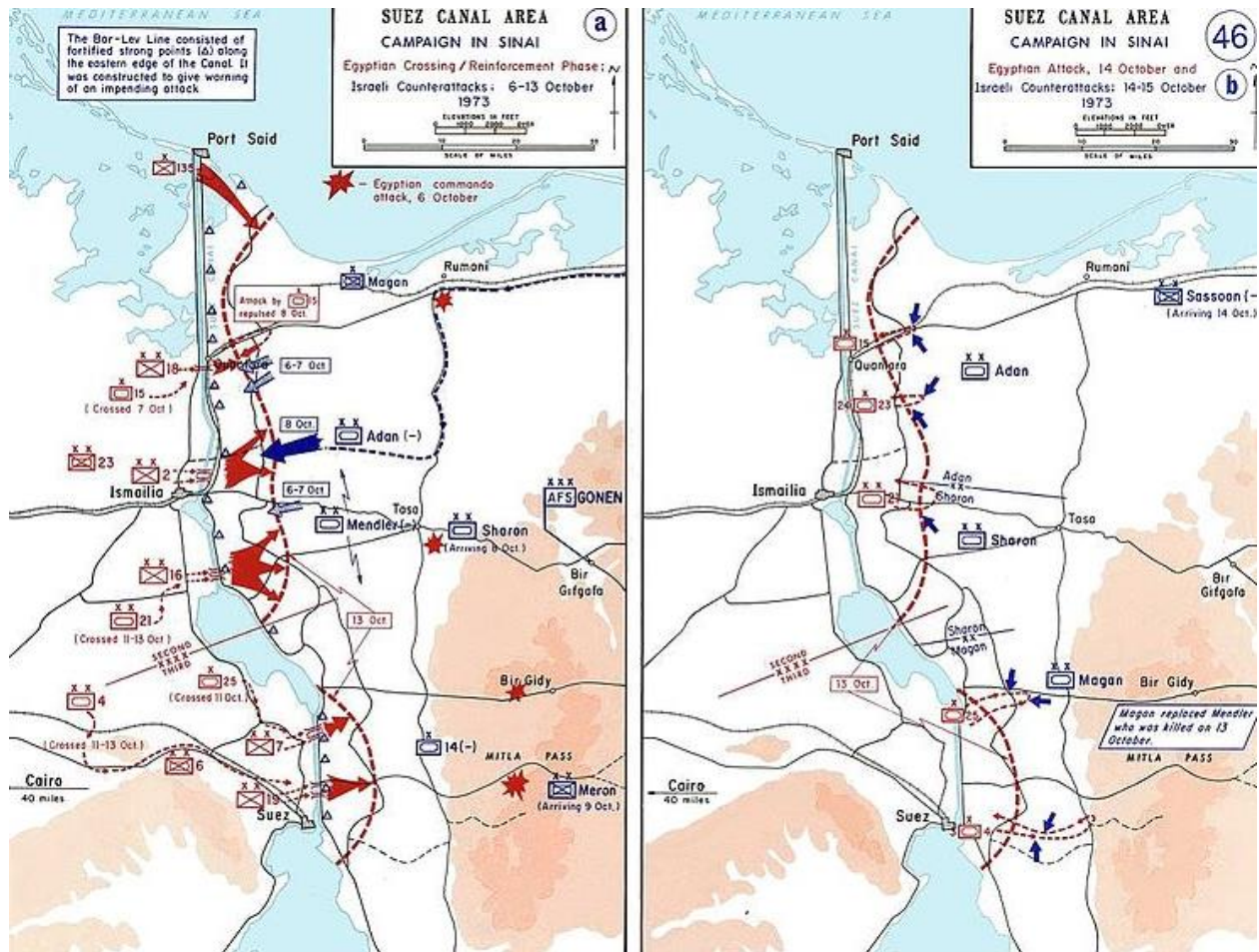


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arafat\\_by\\_Yaakov\\_Saar.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arafat_by_Yaakov_Saar.jpg)>

*Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), 1969-2004 – Pictured in 1994*

Egypt and Syria attacked Israel in the Yom Kippur War in October 1973. Anwar Sadat's war-for-peace strategy was designed to threaten the balance of power in the Middle East. The two Cold War super-powers intervened to ensure that neither side would win an unbalanced peace. Despite losing the bloody, three-week-long war, the Arab states won a moral victory because their significant early victories challenged the long-held Israeli military superiority.





Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1973\\_sinai\\_war\\_maps.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1973_sinai_war_maps.jpg)

## The Yom Kippur War – October 1973

### Begin, Sadat, and the Camp David Accords (1973-1979).

Labor Party leaders were criticized for Israel's military unpreparedness in the 1973 war. In the 1977 Israeli election, Menachem Begin, a former guerrilla fighter, led the Likud Party coalition to victory and became Prime Minister. War-preparedness critics, along with Mizrahi (Arab),

religious, and expansionist Jews, voted the Labor Party out of office. Begin opposed land-for-peace negotiations and promoted Jewish settlement in the West Bank and Gaza. In 1978, American President Jimmy Carter mediated the Camp David Accords between Begin and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Camp\\_David,\\_Menachem\\_Begin,\\_Anwar\\_Sadat,\\_1978.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Camp_David,_Menachem_Begin,_Anwar_Sadat,_1978.jpg)>

*Anwar Sadat of Egypt, Jimmy Carter of the US, and Menachem Begin of Israel – Meeting in Camp David, Maryland, 1978*

Sadat sought peace with Israel, return of the Sinai to Egypt, and an alliance with (and economic assistance from) the US. Begin's goals were peace with Egypt, Israeli retention of the West Bank and Gaza, and

expansion of American military and economic aid. In the Camp David Accords, Israel and Egypt agreed to permanent peace, open borders for trade, the transfer of Sinai to Egypt, the dismantling of Israeli settlements in the Sinai, and acceptance of eventual land-for-peace negotiations in the West Bank and Gaza.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anwar\\_Sadat\\_Jimmy\\_Carter\\_Menachem\\_Begin\\_signing\\_Camp\\_David\\_Accords-1978.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anwar_Sadat_Jimmy_Carter_Menachem_Begin_signing_Camp_David_Accords-1978.jpg)>

*Anwar Sadat of Egypt, Jimmy Carter of the US, and Menachem Begin of Israel – Celebrating the Signing of the Camp David Accords, 1978*

The Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty (1979) provided for joint diplomatic recognition, permanent peace, and the return of the Sinai to Egypt, but it deferred negotiations for the granting of Palestinian autonomy for five



years. Other Arab countries were incensed and evicted Egypt from the Arab League. The negotiating strategy of the PLO evolved away from supporting the creation of one democratic secular state in Palestine/Israel to supporting two independent states, Israel and Palestine, within the 1949 borders. The PLO demanded what Egypt had negotiated – Israeli withdrawal, dismantling of Jewish settlements, and Palestinian independence.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sinai-peninsula-map.jpg>>

*Israel Occupied the Sinai Peninsula, 1967-1982 –  
The Sinai Reverted to Egypt after the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty (1979)*

## **Independent Israel (1979-present)**

**Likud and the Invasion of Lebanon (1979-1987).** Menachem Begin (Prime Minister of Israel, 1977-1983) and his Likud Party were determined to retain and settle the West Bank and Gaza. Begin formed a strategic partnership with American President Ronald Reagan in 1981, which focused on the Soviet threat rather than on achieving peace in the Middle East. By 1987, there were 60,000 Jewish settlers in the West Bank and 2 million Palestinian refugees in Palestine and neighboring Arab countries.





Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palestine\\_Map\\_2007\\_\(Settlements\).gif](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palestine_Map_2007_(Settlements).gif)>

### *Jewish Settlements in the West Bank, 2007*

Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 in a military operation titled Operation Peace for Galilee. Begin and General Ariel Sharon, who planned the invasion, hoped to destroy the PLO's military infrastructure, install a Maronite (Christian) government, and neutralize Syrian

influence in Lebanon. The Israeli forces won a tactical victory, but suffered a strategic defeat. They evicted the PLO from Lebanon, installed Maronite President Amin Gemayel, and imposed a peace agreement.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at*  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Merkava-1-latrun-1.jpg>>

*Israeli Invaded Lebanon in 1982 –  
Israeli Merkava Mark I Tank, Used Effectively Throughout the War*

But Syrian-led Muslim forces in Lebanon made the peace treaty unworkable. Shi'ite Muslim opposition to Israeli control of south Lebanon unleashed Hezbollah, an anti-Israeli guerrilla movement funded and supplied by Iran. The war in Lebanon led to massive anti-war protests in Israel, after Israeli troops permitted their Phalangist

(Christian) allies to massacre 1,000 Palestinian refugees in camps in the Sabra and Shatila sections of Beirut.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ferris\\_wheel\\_and\\_the\\_corniche.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ferris_wheel_and_the_corniche.jpg)>

*Rebuilding Beirut with Western Trade and Aid –  
The Reconstruction of Beirut after the Israeli Invasion, 1982-2000*

Yasser Arafat and the PLO leadership relocated to Tunis in 1982. For the next five years, the PLO had divided guerrilla forces and weak ties with Palestinian refugees, and they drifted without clear focus. In 1985, Arafat refused to join King Hussein of Jordan in an American-led peace plan, choosing not to accept UNSC Resolution 242 (land-for-peace), renounce terror, and recognize Israel.



**First Intifada and the Oslo Agreement (1987-1999).** The First Intifada (1987-1992) was a spontaneous Palestinian popular rebellion, which began in Gaza and spread through the West Bank. Initially, the violent protests expressed Palestinian rage and frustration with Israeli occupation and PLO leadership. The intifada then morphed into an organized movement of non-violent civil disobedience to weaken Israel through strikes, a boycott of Israeli products, closures of shops, and withholding of Palestinian labor.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arton8011.jpg>>

*First Intifada (1987-1992) – Makeshift Palestinian Barricades in Gaza*

Two external events influenced both Israelis and Palestinians. The collapse of the USSR (1989) deprived the PLO of military aid and UN votes and permitted the migration of 1 million Russian Jews to Israel. The Gulf War (1991) resulted in a severe cutback of Saudi aid to the PLO (Arafat had sided with Saddam Hussein) and an increase in Israeli military vulnerability (Iraqi Scud missiles had attacked Israel).



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr - Government Press Office \(GPO\) - P.M. Rabin with Russian Immigrants.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr_-_Government_Press_Office_(GPO)_-_P.M._Rabin_with_Russian_Immigrants.jpg)>

*Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin Welcomed Russian Jewish Immigrants to Israel, 1994*

In the Oslo Agreement (1993), Yitzhak Rabin for Israel and Yasser Arafat for the PLO mutually recognized the other state's right to exist



and agreed on a Declaration of Principles (DOP) to bring eventual peace. The DOP created the Palestinian Authority with the right to govern in Gaza and the Jericho area initially. But it deferred for three years discussion of the critical “permanent status issues” – delineation of borders, Israeli settlements, Palestinian refugees, control of Jerusalem, Palestinian statehood, and division of water rights.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bill\\_Clinton,\\_Yitzhak\\_Rabin,\\_Yasser\\_Arafat\\_at\\_the\\_White\\_House\\_1993-09-13.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bill_Clinton,_Yitzhak_Rabin,_Yasser_Arafat_at_the_White_House_1993-09-13.jpg)>

*Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (Left), US President Bill Clinton,  
and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, Washington, DC, 1993 –  
Negotiations for the Oslo Accords*

In the period following Oslo (1993-1999), Israel enjoyed rapid economic growth (7 percent annually) and doubled its settler population

in the West Bank and Gaza (to 400,000). But Palestinian income levels stagnated. Arafat and Fatah were elected in 1996 to lead the Palestinian Authority government. Many Palestinians felt betrayed by Oslo.



Sources: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Israel\\_and\\_occupied\\_territories\\_map.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Israel_and_occupied_territories_map.png)

*Israel and the Occupied Territories, 1967-present*

**Camp David Failure and the Second Intifada (1999-2005).** In mid-2000, American President Bill Clinton invited Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to a summit peace meeting at Camp David. Clinton's team designed a comprehensive compromise package.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at*  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arafat%26Clinton%26Barak.jpg>>

*Ehud Barak (Left), Bill Clinton, and Yasser Arafat –  
Camp David Summit, Washington, 1999-2000*

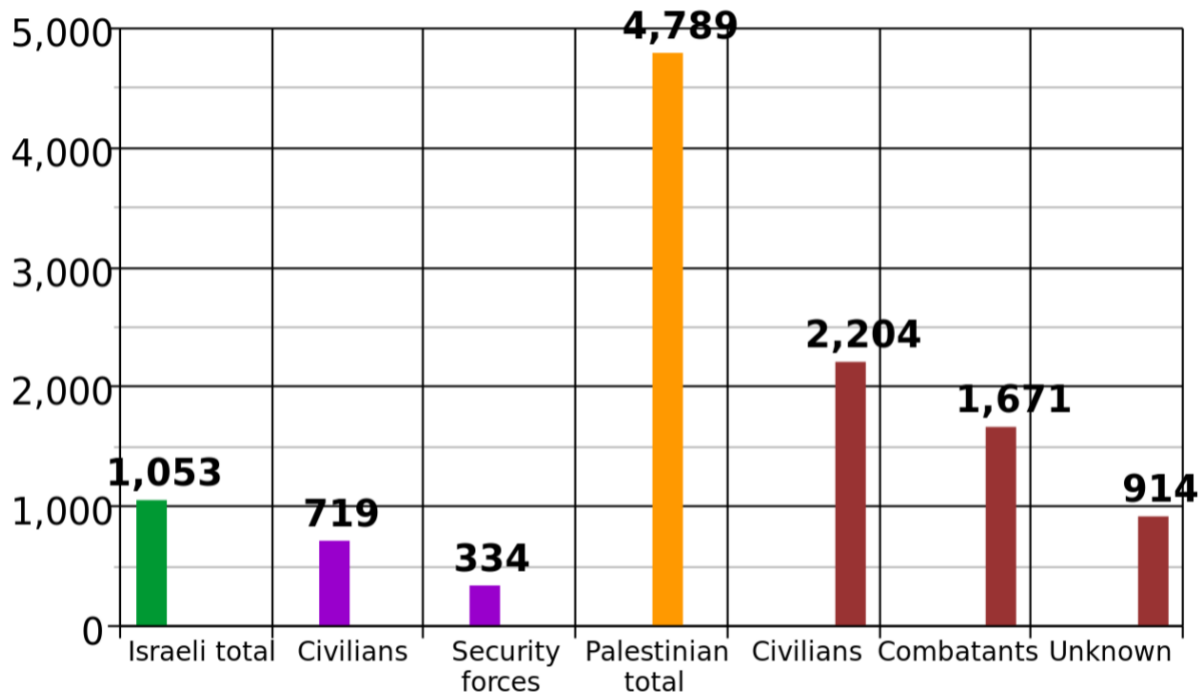
The principal concessions favoring Israel were that Palestinian refugees would not have the right to return to Israel (they would be compensated through an international fund) and that the Palestinian state

would be demilitarized. In turn, the Palestinians would receive 97 percent of the West Bank and all of Gaza, and they would control most of East Jerusalem, including the Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount). Barak agreed, most Arab leaders concurred, but Arafat refused the package.

In September 2000, Ariel Sharon, the Likud Party leader, visited the Temple Mount and claimed it for Israel. Sharon's visit triggered the Second Intifada, a violent uprising of Palestinians who were venting their anger at Israeli occupation, poverty, and stalled peace negotiations. The Palestinians protested with suicide bombings, Israel retaliated with powerful military force, and both sides suffered horrific human losses – nearly 6,000 dead and 35,000 wounded, four-fifths Palestinian and one-fifth Israeli.

By 2004, 60 percent of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were subsisting beneath the poverty level. As the Intifada raged, the Quartet (United Nations, United States, European Union, and Russia) introduced a Roadmap for Peace in 2003. The Roadmap was based on the land-for-peace principle and had three phases – peace, Palestinian

statehood, and negotiation of permanent status issues. The Palestinians accepted the Roadmap, but the Israelis introduced numerous caveats that delayed negotiations.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
 <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Intifada\\_deaths.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Intifada_deaths.svg)>

*Deaths During the Second Intifada (2000-2008) –  
 Israeli (1,053), Palestinian (4,729)*

**Politics and Economics (2005-present).** Israel has benefited from government and private resource transfers that have reached an estimated \$7 billion per year, including \$3.8 billion in US military aid (2019) and about \$3 billion in private remittances from Jewish individuals and agencies. Those transfers have been used to build the



Israeli economy, strengthen its military capacity, and service its large foreign debt (owed mostly to Americans for military and other equipment purchases). Effective leadership, huge inflows of funds, and privileged access to American military technology have allowed Israel to maintain its status as the dominant military power in the Middle East.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:US Israel Military Meeting \(49121017622\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:US_Israel_Military_Meeting_(49121017622).jpg)>

*Israeli Generals (Left) and American Generals Met in Tel Aviv in 2019*

Political relationships between Israelis and Palestinians became increasingly polarized after 2005. Conservative Israeli leaders have attacked Hezbollah (Lebanon, 2006) and Hamas (Gaza, 2006, 2009) and expanded Israeli settlement, walls, and bypass roads in the West Bank.

Since 2009, Benjamin Netanyahu has been Israel's prime minister, heading conservative coalitions and serving in the longest consecutive tenure in Israel's history. He was charged with criminal corruption (bribery, fraud, and breach of trust in three separate cases) in November 2019 but had not yet faced trial as of mid-2021.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Benjamin\\_Netanyahu\\_2018.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Benjamin_Netanyahu_2018.jpg)>

*Benjamin Netanyahu (1949 –), Prime Minister of Israel (1996-1999, (2009 –) – Charged With Criminal Corruption, 2019*

Following three inconclusive elections in one year, in April 2020 Netanyahu and Benny Gantz, the leaders of the two parties that won the most parliamentary seats, agreed to form a coalition (national unity)

government, headed by Netanyahu until November 2021 and by Gantz thereafter, to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. But that coalition fell apart in December 2020. Israeli politics faces an uncertain future.

The leadership of the Palestinian territories (the West Bank and Gaza) has been divided. Mahmoud Abbas, who succeeded Arafat as Chairman of the PLO in 2004, has served as President of the Palestinian National Authority since 2005 and in that capacity has headed the government of the West Bank (although about 60 percent of the West Bank remains under Israeli military control). Israel unilaterally removed Israeli settlers from Gaza (also known as the Gaza Strip) in 2005, and Gaza went under Palestinian leadership. The Hamas faction, which refuses to compromise with Israel or recognize the leadership of the Palestinian Authority, gained control of Gaza in 2007 and has governed there since then.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mahmoud\\_Abbas\\_May\\_2018.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mahmoud_Abbas_May_2018.jpg)>*

*Mahmoud Abbas (1935 –) – President of the Palestinian National Authority (2005 –), Head of Government of the Palestinian West Bank*

Israel's record of economic progress has been impressive, especially in view of the substantial amounts that the country devotes to military spending. But wide disparities exist between the economies of Israel and of the areas under Palestinian control (West Bank and Gaza). Israel's price-adjusted per capita income grew at an annual rate of 1.9 percent between 1990 and 2019 (in constant prices), and Israeli per capita income in 2019 was \$42,146 (65 percent of the US level). Israel

ranked in the top fifth of the World Bank's listing of per capita incomes (33<sup>rd</sup> of 186 countries in 2019).



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hashalom\\_interchange.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hashalom_interchange.jpg)>

### *High-Tech Tel Aviv – Israel's Silicon Valley*

Israel's population, 9.1 million in 2019, has been expanding at 1.9 percent per year. The life expectancy in Israel is 83 years, and 97 percent of its citizens are literate. Eighty-seven percent of Israel's people use the Internet. Israel's ranking in the UNDP's Human Development Index – the gold standard of quality-of-life indicators because it incorporates income, health, and education data – was a very impressive 19<sup>th</sup> of 189 countries (2019). Israel ranked 35<sup>th</sup> of 190



countries in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index (2019) and 35<sup>th</sup> of 198 countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index compiled by Transparency International (2019). Consequently, Israel was an attractive venue for foreign direct investment (\$19 billion in 2019).



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:21\\_Israeli\\_Jews.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:21_Israeli_Jews.png)>

*A Collage of Prominent and Ordinary Israeli Jews –  
Living in a Very Prosperous Country*

Israel's economy relies on high-technology industries, software development, pharmaceuticals, and diamond cutting. The Israeli economy moved quickly into information technology research and production – computer software, fiber optics, digital technology, and



Substantial deposits of natural gas offshore Israel were discovered in 2009. The Tamar and Leviathan fields are two of the world's largest offshore gas fields discovered in the past decade. Production began in 2013. The two fields are expected to make Israel self-sufficient in natural gas for at least 40 years.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Levant\\_Basin.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Levant_Basin.png)>

*Israel's Tamar and Leviathan Offshore Natural Gas Fields –  
Located in the Levant Basin in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea*

In contrast, the 4.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are very poor. Their per capita income was only \$6,495 in 2019 (only



15 percent of the level in Israel). The Palestinians' per capita income level grew (in constant prices) at an annual rate of 1.5 percent (1994-2019), slower than Israel's annual growth rate (1.9 percent), and started at a very low base level (\$2,113 in 1994). The West Bank and Gaza ranked in the bottom third of the World Bank's listing of per capita incomes in 2019 (128<sup>th</sup> of 186 countries).



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at*  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palestine- West Bank- Batter- agricultural lands- UAWC.jpg>>

### *Small-scale Agriculture in the Palestinian West Bank*

The Palestinian population is expanding very rapidly (2.5 percent per year). Their average life span is just 74 years, but their literacy rate

is 97 percent (equivalent to Israel's). Seventy-one percent of the Palestinian people use the Internet. The West Bank and Gaza's ranking in the UNDP's Human Development Index was 115<sup>th</sup> of 189 countries. The West Bank and Gaza ranked 117<sup>th</sup> of 190 countries in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index (2019) and was not included in the Corruption Perceptions Index compiled by Transparency International.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palestinian\\_children\\_with\\_slingslots.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palestinian_children_with_slingslots.jpg)>

*Palestinian Youth in the West Bank – The Hope for the Future*



Export earnings in 2018 were \$2.6 billion. The Palestinians export stone, furniture, plastic articles, olives, and citrus, and their industry is limited to textiles, cement, and food processing. The West Bank and Gaza relies heavily on personal remittances (\$2.4 billion in 2019) and foreign assistance (\$2.2 billion in 2018). The latest available study of poverty in the West Bank and Gaza, carried out by the World Bank in 2017, concluded that 29.2 percent of the Palestinian population had incomes beneath the poverty line.



(pre-war) borders, adjusted for equivalent land swaps to allow the largest areas of Jewish settlement in the West Bank to be in Israel. Sovereignty in Jerusalem would be divided, each state would establish its capital there, Israel would control the Western Wall, and Palestine would control the Noble Sanctuary.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jerusalem-2013\(2\)-Aerial-Temple\\_Mount-\(south\\_exposure\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jerusalem-2013(2)-Aerial-Temple_Mount-(south_exposure).jpg)>

### *Divided Sovereignty in Jerusalem – Holy City for Jews and Muslim*

To ensure a Jewish majority in Israel, there would be no right of return for Palestinian refugees (or only a tiny number of permitted

returnees). But refugees could return to Palestine and be compensated through an international fund. The new Palestinian state would be demilitarized, and both sides would reject the use of violence. The border along the Jordan Valley would be monitored by an international security force, although Israel would retain the right to intervene in an emergency.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bethlehem-hamasrally.JPG>>

*Hamas Party Members Rallying in Bethlehem – Would They Stop Demanding the Palestinian Right of Return to Ancestral Land in Israel?*

The most difficult concessions for the Palestinians likely would be yielding the right of refugees to return to their ancestral homes and the sharing of control of holy sites in Jerusalem. For the Israelis, the hardest concessions probably would be giving up the hope to settle Greater (biblical) Israel and agreeing to share control of holy and historical sites in Jerusalem. A successful peace negotiation most likely would require leadership by a robust international coalition, brokered by hard-nosed negotiators, probably American, to ensure compromise and international legitimacy. Before productive negotiations could begin, the Israelis would have to freeze all expansion of settlement activity in the West Bank and the Palestinians would have to settle the rivalries between Fatah and Hamas and agree to cease violence.





Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at <<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Is-map.PNG>>

### *Contemporary Israel, West Bank, and Gaza*

## **Time Line for Israel and Palestine**

<i>c.</i> 8500 BCE	origins of crop agriculture – Fertile Crescent – barley, wheat, pulses, flax
<i>c.</i> 3000 BCE	rise of irrigated agriculture – Tigris-Euphrates and Nile Valleys
<b>1285-332 BCE</b>	<b>Ancient Israel</b>
1285 BCE	Battle of Kadesh – Egypt-Hittite Treaty – Canaan to Egypt
1285-1050 BCE	Egyptian New Kingdom ruled Canaanite vassal city-states – tribute
1207 BCE	Egyptian Pharaoh Merneptah – first written reference to Israelites
12 <sup>th</sup> century BCE	Canaan settled by Israelites (Mesopotamia), Philistines (Crete), and Aramaeans (Arabia)
1050-926 BCE	Israelite united monarchy – ruled by Saul, David, and Solomon
926-722 BCE	independent kingdoms of Israel and Judah – agricultural wealth
722-612 BCE	Assyrian rule of Israel, tribute, deportations – Judah remained independent
598-539 BCE	Chaldean Babylonian rule of Israel and Judah – deportations, material decline

587 BCE	Nebuchadrezzar destroyed Jerusalem – exiled Israelite population
539-332 BCE	Achaemenid Persian rule – repatriation of Jews – tribute and trade
538 BCE	Cyrus Cylinder – religious equality, repatriation, restoration
<b>332 BCE-637 CE</b>	<b>Hellene, Roman, and Byzantine Judaea</b>
332 BCE	Alexander the Great conquered Judaea – began Hellene conquests
312-198 BCE	Ptolemaic rule of Judaea – trade and tribute – Jews in Alexandria
198-167 BCE	Seleucid rule of Judaea – raised taxes – forced Hellenization
167-37 BCE	Maccabean Independence – Jewish rule – expansion and prosperity
37 BCE-324 CE	Roman rule of Judaea – Jewish population fall – economic growth
37-4 BCE	Herod – King of Judaea – Idumean Jew – Roman puppet
66-74 CE	Zealot Revolt – led by Menahem – failed – no Parthian support
132-135 CE	Bar Kochba Revolt – Roman Aelia Capitolina – no Christian aid

324-613 CE	Byzantine rule of Judaea – heavy taxation – Christian majority
613-629 CE	Sasanian Persian rule of Judaea – Jews aided Byzantine defeat
614-617 CE	Persian-Jewish alliance – Jews ruled Judaea under Persian aegis
629-637 CE	Byzantines returned – restored Christian rule – expelled Jews
<b>637-1918</b>	<b>Islamic Palestine</b>
637-651	Muslim Arab conquest of Palestine –also of Syria, Egypt, Persia
661-750	Umayyad Sunni Caliphate rule of Palestine – al-Aqsa Mosque (710)
750-969	Abbasid Sunni Caliphate rule of Palestine – Christian majority
969-1171	Fatimid Shi'ite Caliphate rule of Palestine – economic decline
1099-1187	Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem – Crusaders slaughtered Muslims and Jews
1171-1193	Saladin (Salah al-Din) – Kurdish – Sunni – ruled Egypt
1174-1250	Ayyubid Sunni Egyptian rule of Palestine – took Jerusalem in 1187

1260	Battle of Ain Jalut, Palestine – Mamluk Baybars defeated Mongols
1260-1516	Mamluk Sunni Egyptian Dynasty – ruled Egypt, Palestine, Syria
1260-1383	Kipchak Turkish Mamluk leaders – economic and military strength
1291	Mamluk sultan of Egypt – expelled last Crusaders from Palestine
1383-1516	Circassian Mamluk leaders – economic and military decline
1516-1831	Ottoman Empire rule of Palestine – Muslim pilgrimage route
1831-1840	Muhammad Ali Pasha’s Egyptian Government – reforms, roads
1840-1918	Ottoman Empire rule of Palestine – agricultural export boom
1896	Theodor Herzl, Zionist – <i>The Jewish State</i> – Jews need a secure haven outside of Europe
1909	Tel Aviv – founded by Zionist settlers – modern, secular city
1915-1916	Hussein-McMahon letters – Britain promised land to Emir Husain
1916	Sykes-Picot Agreement – Britain, France divided Ottoman areas



1917	Balfour Declaration – Britain supported Jewish state in Palestine
<b>1918-1948</b>	<b>British Palestine</b>
1920	San Remo – Palestine, Iraq to Britain – Syria, Lebanon to France
1920-1946	League of Nations mandates – British mandates in Palestine, Transjordan, Iraq – French mandates in Syria, Lebanon
1933-1936	165,000 Jews, mostly from Nazi Germany, immigrated to Palestine
1935	Cement Incident – weapons found in a shipment of cement to a Jewish businessman
1936-1939	Arab Uprising, 1936-1939 – anti-Jewish, anti-British – suppressed
1937	Peel Report – partition Palestine (70% Arab, 20% Jewish, 10% British enclave) – Arabs rejected – Jews accepted as basis for talks
1939-1945	World War II – Holocaust – 6 million Jews murdered – resolve for a Jewish homeland
1947	UN Partition Plan – Israel, 56% land – passed 33-13 – 10 abstained
<b>1948-present</b>	<b>Independent Israel</b>

- 1948 Israel became independent – strong military – modern economy
- 1948-1949 Arab-Israeli War – 5-country Arab invasion – Israel won – took 77% of Mandated Palestine – 726,000 Arab refugees
- 1949-1963 David Ben-Gurion, Prime Minister – military strength – diplomacy
- 1956 Fatah (Movement for the Liberation of Palestine) formed – Gaza
- 1956 Suez War – French-British-Israeli Conspiracy – US/USSR forced withdrawal – no territorial changes
- 1964 Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) formed – by Arab League
- 1967 Six-Day War – Nasser occupied Sinai – Egypt, Syria, Jordan – Israeli blitzkrieg – Israel gained West Bank, Gaza, Golan, Sinai
- 1969-2004 Yasser Arafat – Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO
- 1973 Yom Kippur/October War – Egypt/Syria – Sadat's war-for-peace – Israeli victory – US/USSR intervention – Arab moral victory
- 1978 Camp David Accord – Israel-Egypt peace – Sinai to Egypt – aid

- 1978 Menachem Begin (Israel) and Anwar Sadat (Egypt) – received Nobel Peace Prize
- 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty – joint diplomatic recognition – Sinai to Egypt – deferred granting Palestinian autonomy
- 1982-2000 Operation Peace for Galilee – Israeli invasion of Lebanon
- 1987-1992 First Intifada – Palestinian rebellion, strikes – anti-Israel, anti-PLO
- 1989 USSR collapse – less aid to PLO – 500,000 Russian Jews to Israel
- 1991 Gulf War – less Saudi aid to PLO – Iraqi Scud missiles hit Israel
- 1993 Oslo Agreement – Israel and PLO mutual recognition – deferred key issues (borders, settlements, refugees, Jerusalem)
- 2000 Camp David Summit – 97% West Bank, Gaza to Palestinians – Ehud Barak, Arab leaders agreed – Yasser Arafat refused
- 2000-2004 Second Intifada – Palestinian suicide bombings – Israel invasions
- 2003 Roadmap for Peace – Quartet (UN, US, EU, Russia) – land-for-peace – peace, Palestinian statehood, permanent status issues

2005-present	Mahmoud Abbas – President of the Palestinian National Authority
2009-present	Benjamin Netanyahu – Israel’s prime minister – heading conservative coalitions
2019	Israel ranked 19 <sup>th</sup> of 189 countries in the UNDP’s Human Development Index
2019	Palestinian Territories (West Bank and Gaza) ranked 115 <sup>th</sup> of 189 countries in the UNDP’s Human Development Index
2020	Benjamin Netanyahu and Benny Gantz – formed national unity government – Netanyahu prime minister until Nov 2021
2021	Parliamentary election in March – Benjamin Netanyahu vs. Benny Gantz – inconclusive

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## **Sites Visited in Israel and Palestine**

### **Israel Suitcase Seminar and Jordan Extension**

#### **Stanford Travel/Study Program**

**October 16-November 2, 2010**

#### **Land-based**

### **Tel Aviv and Jaffa**

Sixty percent of Israel's people live along 50 miles of the Mediterranean coast, north and south of Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv, a booming city that is the heart of modern Israel's high-tech economy, alone houses about 500,000 residents. Zionists in the Second Aliya (migration from Europe) constructed Tel Aviv above sand dunes, starting in 1909. The Jewish migrants had arrived in the port of Jaffa, immediately south of Tel Aviv, and desired to create their own new city around a wide boulevard, based on European designs. Jaffa was then the leading port for Ottoman-controlled Palestine and the port of entry for Jewish migrants. Today, Jaffa is a small suburb of Tel Aviv with an impressive history. Jaffa was a leading port for nearly three millennia – for Canaanites, Philistines, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, and Arabs.

In Jaffa, we visited the elegant Al Mahmoudiya Mosque, which is wedged in a corner of the old city walls and thus is not as much a focal point of Palestinian Arab trade and culture as mosques often are in Muslim towns. We wound our way down narrow streets to the historic port of Jaffa, which now focuses on tourism not foreign trade. The high point of our two days of touring in Tel Aviv was our visit to Independence Hall. David Ben Gurion declared Israel an independent state on May 14, 1948 in the first building constructed in Tel Aviv – the former home of Meir Dizengoff, the city's first mayor. We also enjoyed a tour of the Eretz Israel Museum, which houses a collection of artifacts from the land of Biblical Israel. We were impressed with the demonstration of agricultural production and processing from Roman Palestine.

## **Caesarea and Upper Galilee**

King Herod, an Idumean Jew who ruled Judaea between 37-4 BCE as a puppet of the Roman Empire, constructed Caesarea as his main port and capital. The new city was a monumental achievement because Roman engineers had to create an artificial harbor with moles and transport water 12 miles from Mt. Carmel by aqueduct. Caesarea, named for Emperor Augustus Caesar, housed 35,000 residents and was the principal city in Roman and Byzantine Palestine for over six centuries. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Frankish Crusaders rebuilt the port and created a fortified castle to protect it. Baybars, an Egyptian Mamluk sultan, destroyed the Crusader port town in 1265. Earthquakes and storms later ruined the port. Impressive ruins remain today. We visited the Roman theatre (which seated 2,700), the hippodrome (built for chariot races), and the Crusader fortifications.

Upper Galilee is the historically significant, agricultural region north and west of the Sea of Galilee in northern Israel. (The Sea of Galilee is a freshwater lake, 13 by 8 miles with a depth of 150 feet, which today is the source of about half of Israel's water.) Upper Galilee was sited on the main trade (or military) route connecting Egypt with Syria, it was a primary region of ancient Jewish settlement and modern Israeli kibbutzim, and it was the site of Jesus Christ's ministry. The diversity of historical sites is almost overwhelming. We visited the synagogue in Safed (Sfat), the long-time center of Jewish mysticism and now an artists' colony, the springs in Banias (once Caesarea Philippi) where Christ gave papal authority to Peter, and Nimrod's Castle, the Islamic (Ayubbid and Mamluk) fortification built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century during the wars to oust the Crusaders.

## **Lower Galilee and Bet She'an**

In the Lower Galilee region, we visited two principal sites, Zippori and Nazareth. Zippori (Sepiphorus) was unusual in two key respects.

During the Roman rule of Judaea (37 BCE-324 CE), Zippori was one of the few cities in which Jews and Romans lived together in peaceful cooperation. In the first Jewish revolt against Roman rule, the Zealot Revolt (66-74 CE), Zippori chose not to join the rebellion, escaped destruction, and later became a center for the restoration of Jewish traditions. Rabbi Judah compiled the Mishnah, the Jewish laws and traditions, in Zippori, about 200 CE. Nazareth was the early home of Jesus Christ. There Christ worked as a carpenter and stone mason. We visited the Basilica of the Annunciation, constructed to commemorate the site where Christians believe that angels told the Virgin Mary that she would have a child.

Bet She'an, sited in the Jordan River valley south of the Sea of Galilee, had a long and impressive history as an administrative center. The Egyptians ruled Canaan from there during the late New Kingdom (1285-1050 BCE). During the time of the united Jewish kingdom (1050-926 BCE), Kings David and Solomon used Bet She'an as an administrative center. The Maccabees expelled the Greek Seleucids from the city in 167 BCE, and Bet She'an became predominantly Jewish during the period of Maccabean Independence (167-37 BCE). Thereafter, the Romans transformed the city, renamed it Scythopolis, made it one of the ten cities of the Roman Decapolis, and created a major Roman city of 40,000 residents. Scythopolis was leveled by an earthquake in 749 CE. Today, the former Roman city houses massive ruins, including a theater with 5300 seats.

## **Jerusalem**

Jerusalem is overwhelming. The three-millennia-old city, constructed on a series of hills at 2500-foot elevation, is spectacularly beautiful. Jerusalem houses high holy places for three world religions – Judaism (the Temple Mount and Western Wall), Christianity (the Church of the Holy Sepulcher), and Islam (the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque). Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven to receive the Quran from Allah from the site of the Dome of the

Rock. Jews believe that their first and second temples were sited there. Currently, Palestinian Muslims control the Temple Mount (or Noble Sanctuary), while Israel controls access to the Western Wall. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, and the Palestinian Authority plans to make East Jerusalem the capital of the new state of Palestine whenever statehood is achieved.

Our group spent a morning visiting the old city of Jerusalem (in East Jerusalem). We observed the Islamic holy sites in the Noble Sanctuary (the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock) and the Western Wall, the Jewish holy site that is part of the Temple Mount, the location of the two Judaic temples. Later, we agonized over the horrific impacts of the Holocaust at the magnificent Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial. The videotapes of stories told by Holocaust survivors were especially poignant. To gain insight into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we spent a fascinating morning at Al Quds University where two deans of that leading Palestinian educational institution offered their interpretations of recent events. Our brief visit to the Israel Museum introduced us to its diverse collections of art and historical memorabilia, featuring the Dead Sea Scrolls.

### **Bethlehem and Masada**

From Jerusalem, we made side trips to visit nearby Bethlehem and Masada. Both visits were extremely interesting, though emotionally wrenching. Bethlehem, the birth-place of Jesus Christ and today a small city of 200,000 Palestinian Arabs, is one of the portions of the West Bank under the administration of the Palestine Authority. To enter Bethlehem from Israel (and later to re-enter Israel), we had to go through extensive security checks in the shadow of the new wall built by Israel to improve security against potential suicide bomb attacks. Once in Bethlehem, we boarded a Palestinian bus and drove to the Church of the Nativity which contains sections administered by Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Armenian Orthodox Christians. After a long wait in line,



we observed the place where it is believed that Christ was born in a manger.

Masada is a table-topped, steep-sided mountain near the Dead Sea. King Herod (ruled 37-4 BCE) built a Roman fortress on Masada to serve as a defensive retreat. The well-preserved site includes extensive storage areas, cisterns to collect and store water, agricultural land between residences, and a full Roman bath. But Herod rarely visited Masada. In the Zealot Revolt (66-74 CE), most Jews rebelled against the oppressive Roman rule of Judaea. Titus led the Roman counterattack and sacked Jerusalem and its Jewish temple in 70 CE. Masada was the last refuge of nearly 1,000 Jewish rebels. Rome used 15,000 troops to build a vast dirt ramp to besiege the mountain fortress. When all hope was lost, the last Jewish Zealots committed suicide rather than submit to Roman slavery. Today, a comfortable funicular permits easy access to historic Masada.

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