

# Palestine: From the Romans to the Ottomans (135 CE - 1918)

The biblical story of Ancient Israel is fairly well known, as is the modern State of Israel, including its conflict with the Arabs and the 'Palestinians'. The period in between – from the Romans to the Ottomans – is not known all that well. This 6-part course will try to explain what happened 'in between'.

## Palestine: A definition

Palestine is a region but has never been a specific nation or terrain. In the 2nd century CE, the Romans crushed the revolt of Shimon Bar Kokhba (132 – 135 CE), during which Jerusalem and Judea were conquered and the area was renamed Palaestina in an attempt to minimize Jewish identification with the Land of Israel. The name fell into disuse over the succeeding centuries. It was finally resurrected by the British in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its borders are imprecise and it often included both sides of the Jordan, as in the days of Ancient Israel.



## Aim of the series

- 1) To explain what happened to Palestine, i.e. which external powers (empires) affected Palestine?
- 2) To explain what happened in Palestine, i.e. what happened to the population within Palestine, especially the Christians, Jews and Muslims?
- 3) To discuss the possible significance of what occurred to and in Palestine

## What does this course intend to deliver?

You should learn more about the empires and other major powers that affected Palestine (The Romans, the Byzantines, the Arab Caliphate, the Crusaders, the Mamluks, the Mongols, and the Ottomans). You will also learn more about the development of Christians, Jews and Muslims within Palestine, plus other peoples such as the Samaritans, the 'Arabs' more generally and the historical developments that took place within Palestine.

## What does this course not intend to deliver?

It will not settle the question of who does Palestine belong to. It will not attempt to solve the Israel-Arab conflict! In fact, we are only covering the period up to the end of the Ottoman rule in Palestine (1918) and will not be describing in any detail what took place under the British Mandate let alone later.

## References

The principal book used for this course is **Parkes, James. *Whose Land?: A History of the Peoples of Palestine*. Penguin Group, 1970.** However, this was supplemented by various other sources, including Internet-based ones.

## Purpose of these notes

The notes highlight some of the most important topics covered in the series but only in very brief, almost dictionary-style terms. Hopefully, it will make it easier for you to follow the complicated history of Palestine, given the number of 'players' involved during these almost 1800 years of history.

## Disclaimer

These notes were taken largely from Internet sources. There is no claim to originality.

## Lecture 1: The Romans (135 – 324)



**135 CE** marks the date when the insurrection by Bar Kokhba, the leader of the Jews in Ancient Judea, was defeated by the Romans. Subsequently, the Romans renamed the region Palaestina – which is when our story begins. The year **324 CE** is when the Roman Emperor Constantine defeated his rival Licinius to unite the Empire under his rule. However, in 330 he moved the capital from Rome to Byzantium, soon to be renamed Constantinople. After the Western part of the Roman Empire finally collapsed in **476 CE**, the Eastern part became known as the Byzantine Empire. So, this development can be traced back to that victory in 324, although the precise beginning of the Byzantine Empire is open to discussion.

### The Roman Empire

There were several ‘eras’ of the Roman Empire which, according to legend, was founded in 753 BCE, with Romulus becoming the first king in 750 BCE. This ushered in the ‘**Period of Kings**’ (750 -510 BCE), followed by ‘**Republican Rome**’ (510-31 BCE). Julius Caesar was the last dictator of this period which was then followed by ‘**Imperial Rome**’, i.e. ruled by Emperors (31 BCE – 476 CE). This period is divided into two: 1) **The Principate** (31 BCE – 284 CE) – where the Emperor was the first or ‘principal’ person in the Empire; and 2) **The Dominate** (284 CE – 476 CE), in which the Emperor was a dictator.

### The Roman Empire divides

In **305 CE**, Emperor Diocletian decided that the Roman Empire was too big to manage. He divided the Empire into two parts, the Eastern and Western Roman Empires. Over the next hundred years or so, Rome would be reunited, split into three parts, and split in two again. Finally, in **395 CE**, the empire was split into two for good, one ruled from Rome and the other from Constantinople.

### Palaestina

The name given by the emperor Hadrian to the Roman province of Judea following the crushing of the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 AD. Hadrian formally adopted a name that had been in use as a Græco-Roman geographic term since at least the time of 5th century BC. It actually referred to the southern part of Syria – hence it was often referred to as Syria(n) Paelestina.

### The Mishnah

The Mishnah (‘study by repetition’) is the first major written collection of the Jewish oral traditions which is known as the Oral Torah. It is also the first major work of rabbinic literature. It was compiled by Judah Ha Nasi (‘the prince’) around 200 CE.

### Tannaim and Amoraim

The Talmudic rabbis whose views are recorded in the Talmudic literature are called Tannaim and Amoraim. **Tannaim** (singular = Tanna), meaning ‘repeaters’ or ‘teachers’ were the rabbinic sages whose views are recorded in the Mishnah, from approximately 10–220 CE. **Amoraim** were Jewish scholars from 200 to 500 CE, who ‘told over’ (‘expounders’) the teachings of the Oral Torah (Gemara).

### The birth of Christianity (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries)

In the mid-2nd century CE, Christianity began a gradual process of identity formation that would lead to the creation of a separate, independent religion from Judaism. Initially, Christians were one of many groups of Jews found throughout the Roman Empire. The 2nd century CE experienced a change in the demographics, the introduction of institutional hierarchy, and the creation of Christian dogma. Paul was said to have commenced this process when he decided that one could become a Christian without first being a Jew.

## Lecture 2: The Byzantines (324 – 638)

### Byzantine Empire (330 – 1453)

With its capital founded at Constantinople by Constantine I (r. 306-337), the Byzantine Empire (or Byzantium) varied in size over the centuries. Byzantium was significantly influenced by the Greco-Roman cultural tradition. Finally destroyed by the Ottomans.



### Palaestina Prima, Secunda and Tertia

Syria Palaestina (literally, 'Palestinian Syria') was the name given to the Roman province of Judea by the emperor Hadrian following the suppression of the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 CE. The province was divided into Palaestina Prima and Palaestina Salutaris in about 357, and by 409 Palaestina Prima had been further split into a smaller Palaestina Prima and Palaestina Secunda, while Salutaris was named Tertia.

### Persian (Sassanid) Empire (224–651 CE)

The last pre-Islamic Persian empire, established in 224 CE by a descendant of Sasan. The Empire lasted until 651 CE when it was overthrown by the Arab Rashidun Caliphate. The Sassanian Empire succeeded the Parthian Empire.

### The Jerusalem Talmud

Jerusalem Talmud, also called the Palestinian Talmud, one of two compilations of Jewish religious teachings and commentary that was transmitted orally for centuries prior to its compilation by Jewish scholars in Palestine (actually, in northern Israel, in the Galilee). It was redacted around 400 CE. The other larger and more influential Talmud was the Babylonian one. The Talmud is made up of the Mishnah and commentaries written on it called the Gemara, i.e. Mishnah + Gemara = Talmud.

### Christian controversies

- **Arianism** - a major theological movement in the Christian Roman Empire during the fourth and fifth centuries CE. The most important of these controversies concerned the relationship between the substance of God the Father and His Son – the former had created the latter and were therefore not of the same (unlike the trinitarian view). Named after an Alexandrian priest called Arius.
- **Monophysitism** - from the Greek *monos* meaning 'one' and *physis* meaning 'nature'. This is the Christological position that Christ has only one nature in which his divinity and humanity are united. The opposing Chalcedonian ('orthodox') position holds that Christ has two natures, one divine and one human. A major controversy during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### St Jerome

Saint Jerome (ca. 342 – 419) was an early Christian theologian and ascetic who is best known for his single-handed composition of a new Latin translation of the Bible. Late in the summer of 388, he returned to Palestine and settled in a hermit's cell near Bethlehem.

### Monasticism

Monasticism (from the Greek *monachos*, meaning 'alone') is the religious practice of renouncing all worldly pursuits in order to devote one's life fully to spiritual work. Many monastics (i.e. monks and nuns) live in abbeys, convents, monasteries or priories to separate themselves from the secular world. There were many monasteries in Palestine.

### Christian Councils: Nicaea and Chalcedon

- **Nicaea:** A council of Christian bishops convened in the city of Nicaea (in modern Turkey) by the Roman Emperor Constantine I in 325. One of its main accomplishments was the settlement of the Christological issue of the divine nature of God the Son and his relationship to God the Father (i.e. the Arian controversy).
- **Chalcedon:** The Chalcedonian Creed was adopted at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 in Asia Minor (Turkey) as a response to certain heretical views concerning the nature of Christ. The Creed specifically maintained the two distinct natures of Christ (divine and human – see monophysitism above).

### Samaritans

The Samaritans (means guardians or keepers of the Torah) are members of an ethnoreligious group originating from the Israelites. Samaritans believe that their religion is based exclusively on the five books of Moses given to the Israelites on Mount Sinai.

## Lecture 3: The Arab Caliphate (638 - 1099)

### Muhammad and his connection to Palestine

Muhammad ibn Abdullah (570 – 632 CE) united Arabia into a single Muslim polity, with the Quran as well as his teachings and practices forming the basis of Islamic religious belief.

'Isra' – the 'night journey' from Mecca to Jerusalem. The Quran says the prophet was 'carried...by night from the Sacred Mosque [in Mecca] to the Farthest Mosque [al-Aqsa], whose precincts we have blessed.' From there, it is believed that Muhammad ascended to heaven – called the Mir'aj. The Dome of the Rock is said to shelter the rock from where Muhammad physically ascended. The mosque, first built in 637, has been destroyed, rebuilt and renovated multiple times.



### Rashidun Caliphate (632 – 661)

The Rashidun Caliphate was the first of the four major caliphates (Rashidun, Umayyad, Abbasid and Ottoman) established after the death of the Islamic prophet Muhammad. It was ruled by the first four successive caliphs of Muhammad after his death in 632 CE. These caliphs are collectively known in Sunni Islam as the Rashidun, or 'Rightly Guided' caliphs.

Islam was brought to the region of Palestine during the early Muslim conquests of the 7th century, when armies of the Rashidun Caliphate under the leadership of Umar defeated the armies of Persia and the Byzantine Empire. The Muslim army conquered Jerusalem, held by the Byzantines, in 636.

### Sunni-Shia split

The original split between Sunnis and Shiites occurred soon after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, in the year 632, over the question of succession. Most of Muhammad's followers (**Sunnis**) wanted the community of Muslims to determine who would succeed him. A smaller group (Shia) thought that someone from his family should take up his mantle. They favoured Ali, who was married to Muhammad's daughter, Fatimah. Today, the great majority of the world's more than 1.5 billion Muslims are Sunnis - estimates suggest the figure is somewhere between 85% and 90%.

**Shia Muslims** are in the majority in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Azerbaijan and, according to some estimates, Yemen. They claimed that Ali was the rightful successor to the Prophet Muhammad as leader (imam) of the Muslim community.

### **Umayyad Caliphate (661 – 750)**

The caliphate was ruled by the Umayyad dynasty until it was eventually overthrown by a rebellion led by the Abbasids in 750. Survivors of the dynasty established themselves in Cordoba (756 – 1031) which, in the form of an emirate and then a caliphate, became a world centre of science, medicine, philosophy and invention during the Islamic Golden Age. The Umayyad Caliphate ruled over a vast multiethnic and multicultural population.

### **Abbasid Caliphate (750 – 1258)**

They ruled as caliphs mainly from their capital in Baghdad after having overthrown the Umayyad Caliphate in the Abbasid Revolution of 750 CE. Baghdad became a centre of science, culture, philosophy and invention in what became known as the **Golden Age of Islam** (8th – 14th centuries). The Abbasid's age of cultural revival ended in 1258 with the sack of Baghdad by the Mongols under Hulagu Khan.



### **Fatimid Empire (909 – 1171)**

The Fatimid Caliphate was a Shia caliphate of the 10th to the 12th centuries. The Fatimids, a dynasty of Arab origin, trace their ancestry to Muhammad's daughter Fatima and her husband 'Ali b. Abi Talib, the first Shi'ite imam. The Shiite dynasty ultimately made Egypt the centre of the caliphate. In 1171, Saladin abolished the dynasty's rule and founded the Ayyubid dynasty, which incorporated Egypt into the nominal sphere of authority of the Abbasid Caliphate.

### **Seljuk Empire (1037 – 1194)**

The Seljuk Empire was a Turko-Persian Sunni Muslim empire originating from a branch of Oghuz Turks. The Seljuks won the **Battle of Manzikert** in 1071, and then conquered most of the rest of Anatolia, wresting it from the Byzantine Empire. This was one of the impetuses for the First Crusade (1095–1099). The Seljuk empire began to decline in the 1140s.

### **Dhimmi**

The word literally means 'protected person'. Derived from Islamic legal conceptions of membership to society, non-Muslims ('dhimmis') were afforded protection by the state and did not serve in the military, in return for specific taxes. The dhimmi status was legally abolished in 1839 and this was formalized with the 1869 Ottoman Law of Nationality as part of wider Tanzimat Reforms.

### **The Masoretes**

The Masoretes were groups of Jewish scribe-scholars who worked from around the end of the 5th through to the 10th centuries, based primarily in Palestine in the cities of Tiberias and Jerusalem as well as in Iraq (Babylonia). Each group compiled a system of pronunciation and grammatical guides on the external form of the biblical text in an attempt to standardize the pronunciation, paragraph and verse divisions, and cantillation of the Hebrew Bible (the Tanakh) for the worldwide Jewish community. This vowel notation system for Hebrew is still widely used today, as well as the trope symbols used for cantillation. The **ben Asher family** of Masoretes was largely responsible for the preservation and production of the Masoretic Text. The word *Masorete* comes from the ancient Hebrew word for 'bond', used to refer to the Jews' obligation to keep covenant with God.

## Lecture 4: The Crusades (1099 – 1291)

The Crusades were a series of wars during the Middle Ages where the Christians of Europe tried to retake control of Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Muslims.



### Why did they want to control Jerusalem?

Jerusalem was important to a number of religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) during the Middle Ages.

### Who fought in the Crusades?

The Crusades were between the armies of Europe, mostly the Holy Roman Empire, and the Arabs that had control of Jerusalem. In the first Crusade Europe battled the Seljuk Turks. Some saw the army as a way to get rich and try out their fighting skills, while others saw it as a way into heaven.

### How they got started

The initial Crusade began when the Seljuk Turks took control of the Holy Land. Prior to this, the Arabs had been in control of the land. However, the Arabs had allowed Christians to visit the city of Jerusalem. In 1070, when the Turks took control, they began to refuse Christian pilgrims into the area. Byzantine Emperor Alexius I called for help from the Pope by defending his empire from the Turks; helped to push them out of the Holy Land. The Pope helped to gather an army, primarily with the help of the Franks and the Holy Roman Empire.

### Timeline of the Crusades

There were a number of Crusades that took place over the course of 200 years starting in 1095:

- The First Crusade (1095-1099): The First Crusade was the most successful. Armies from Europe drove out the Turks and took control of Jerusalem.
- The Second Crusade (1147-1149): In 1146 the city of Edessa was conquered by the Turks. The entire population was killed or sold into slavery. Then a second Crusade was launched but was unsuccessful.
- The Third Crusade (1187-1192): In 1187 Saladin, the sultan of Egypt, recaptured the city of Jerusalem from the Christians. A third Crusade was launched led by Emperor Barbarossa of Germany, King Philip Augustus of France, and King Richard the Lionheart of England. Richard the Lionheart fought Saladin for several years. In the end he could not conquer Jerusalem, but he did win the right for pilgrims to visit the holy city once again.
- The Fourth Crusade (1202-1204): The Fourth Crusade was formed by Pope Innocent III with the hope of taking back the Holy Land. However, the Crusaders got sidetracked and greedy and ended up conquering and plundering Constantinople instead.
- Children's Crusade (1212): Started by a French child named Stephen of Cloyes and a German child named Nicholas, tens of thousands of children gathered to march to the Holy Land. This ended in total disaster. None of the children made it to the Holy Land and many were never seen again. They were likely sold into slavery.
- Crusades Five to Nine (1217 - 1272): Over the next several years there would be 5 more Crusades. None of them would be very successful in terms of gaining control of the Holy Land.

## Lecture 5: The Mamluks and early Ottoman Empire (1291 – 1798)

### Mamluk Empire or Sultanate (1250–1517)

The Mamluk Sultanate also known as Mamluk Egypt or the Mamluk Empire, was a state that ruled Egypt, the Levant and the Hejaz (western Arabia) in the mid-13th–early 16th centuries. It was ruled by a military caste of mamluks (slave soldiers) at the head of which was the sultan. The Abbasid caliphs were the nominal sovereigns. The sultanate was established with the overthrow of the Ayyubid dynasty in Egypt in 1250 and was conquered by the Ottoman Empire in 1517. **Mamluk** is a term most commonly referring to non-Arab, ethnically diverse (mostly Turkic, Caucasian, Eastern and Southeastern European) slave-soldiers and freed slaves to which were assigned military and administrative duties, serving the ruling Arab dynasties in the Muslim world.



Most notably, Mamluk factions seized the sultanate centred on Egypt and Syria, and controlled it as the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517).[2] The Mamluk Sultanate famously defeated the Ilkhanate at the Battle of Ain Jalut. They had earlier fought the western European Christian Crusaders in 1154–1169 and 1213–1221, effectively driving them out of Egypt and the Levant. In 1302 the Mamluk Sultanate formally expelled the last Crusaders from the Levant, ending the era of the Crusades.

### The Ottomans: Early phase (1299 – 1798; note: finally dissolved in 1923)

The Ottoman Empire ruled a large portion of the Middle East and Eastern Europe for over 600 years. It first formed in 1299 and finally dissolved in 1923, becoming the country of Turkey. The Ottoman Empire was founded by Osman I, a leader of the Turkish tribes in Anatolia in 1299. Osman I expanded his kingdom, uniting many of the independent states of Anatolia under one rule.

Over the next 150 years the Ottoman Empire continued to expand. The most powerful empire at the time was the Byzantine Empire. In 1453, Mehmet II the Conqueror led the Ottoman Empire in capturing Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantium Empire. He turned Constantinople into the capital of the Ottoman Empire and renamed it Istanbul. When Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Empire, a large number of scholars and artists fled to Italy. This helped to spark the European Renaissance. It also caused the European nations to begin to search for new trade routes to the Far East, beginning the Age of Exploration.

The Ottoman Empire reached its peak during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. He ruled from 1520 to 1566. During this time the empire expanded and included much of Eastern Europe including Greece and Hungary. The Ottoman Empire began to decline in the late 1600s. It ceased to expand and began to face economic competition from India and Europe. Internal corruption and poor leadership led to a steady decline until the empire was abolished and the country of Turkey was declared a republic in 1923.

### The Kabbalists of Safed

Kabbalah (literally ‘reception’, ‘tradition’ or ‘correspondence’) is an esoteric method, discipline, and school of thought in Jewish mysticism. It is a part of Jewish tradition that deals with the essence of God. Whether it entails a sacred text, an experience, or the way things work, Kabbalists believe that God moves in mysterious ways. However, Kabbalists also believe that true knowledge and understanding of that inner, mysterious process is obtainable, and through that knowledge, the greatest intimacy with God can be attained. The Zohar, a collection of written, mystical commentaries on the Torah, is considered to be the underpinning of Kabbalah. Written in medieval



Aramaic and medieval Hebrew, the Zohar is intended to guide Kabbalists in their spiritual journey, helping them attain the greater levels of connectedness with God that they desire.

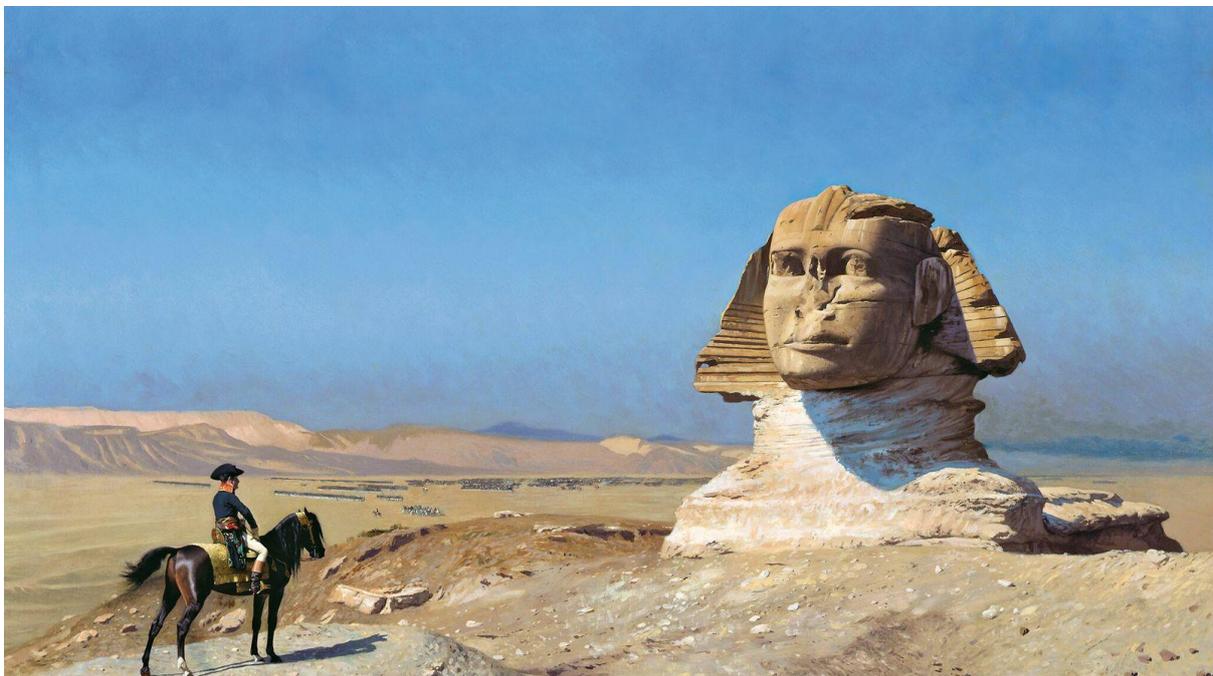
The 16th century would see Safed's Golden Age. As a result of the Spanish Expulsion, a huge influx of pious and well-educated Jews flooded the city. They brought with them brand new technology in textile development, leading Tzfat to become one of the main Mediterranean producers of felt.

During these years, **Rabbi Joseph Karo** completed his work, the *Shulchan Aruch*, the Code of Jewish Law which still serves today as *the* authoritative codification of *halacha*, Jewish law. No future reference to *halacha* could go without referencing this work.

The major gift imparted by this singularly spiritual society was the development of Lurianic Kabbalah. **Rabbi Isaac Luria**, known as the Arizal (the Lion), was one of the leaders of this eclectic band of scholars. Although he lived in Tzfat for only two years before passing away at the age of 38, he has forever left his imprint on city. The Arizal worked to elucidate the difficult text of the Zohar and elaborated on its meaning and mysteries. Unfortunately, this Golden Age ended as swiftly as it came, and Safed went through a series of ups and downs. By the mid-19th century, it was emerging from the tail end of a Druze rebellion and an earthquake that had destroyed much of the city.

### **The invasion of the Levant by Napoleon**

The French campaign in Egypt and Syria (1798–1801) was led by Napoleon Bonaparte. It proclaimed to defend French trade interests, to establish scientific enterprise in the region and ultimately to join the forces of the Indian ruler and drive away the British from the Indian subcontinent. The campaign ended in defeat for Napoleon, and the withdrawal of French troops from the region. Despite the fact that the military campaign was a failure following the destruction of the French Fleet by Lord Nelson and the British Navy in the Battle of the Nile, Napoleon's Egyptian campaign acquired legendary status for him. It was the beginning of Europeans meddling in the Middle East in the 'modern' era.



## Lecture 6: The demise of the Ottomans (1798 – 1918)

### The Ottomans: The later phase till its demise

The Ottoman military system fell behind that of their European rivals, the Habsburg and Russian empires in the mid-18th century. The Ottomans consequently suffered severe military defeats in the late 18th and early 19th centuries which prompted them to initiate a comprehensive process of reform and modernization known as the Tanzimat. Thus, over the course of the 19th century, the Ottoman state became vastly more powerful and organized internally, despite suffering further territorial losses, especially in the Balkans, where a number of new states emerged.



The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) established the Second Constitutional Era in the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, turning the Empire into a constitutional monarchy which conducted competitive multi-party elections. However, after the disastrous Balkan Wars, the now radicalized and nationalistic CUP took over the government in the 1913 coup d'état, creating a one party regime. The CUP allied the Empire with Germany hoping to escape from the diplomatic isolation which had contributed to its recent territorial losses, and thus joined World War I on the side of the Central Powers. The Empire's defeat and the occupation of part of its territory by the Allied Powers in the aftermath of World War I resulted in its partitioning and the loss of its Middle Eastern territories, which were divided between the United Kingdom and France. The successful Turkish War of Independence, led by **Mustafa Kemal Atatürk** against the occupying Allies, led to the emergence of the Republic of Turkey in the Anatolian heartland and the abolition of the Ottoman monarchy.

### Reforms in the Ottoman Empire

- **Tanzimat** - the Tanzimat reforms (means 'reorganization') were carried out between 1830 and 1870 in the Ottoman Empire. They were a wide-ranging series of educational, political and economic reforms. The Tanzimat reforms were **only partially successful** and did not halt the Ottoman decline. The reforms encouraged Ottomanism among the diverse ethnic groups of the Empire and attempted to stem the tide of the rise of nationalism in the Ottoman Empire.
- **Young Turks** – this was a political reform movement in the early 20th century with a rebellion against the absolute rule of Sultan Abdulhamid II in the 1908 Young Turk Revolution. With this revolution, the Young Turks helped to establish the Second Constitutional Era in the same year, ushering in an era of multi-party democracy for the first time in the country's history.

### Palestine-relevant conferences and treaties after WW1

There were several conferences and treaties as a result of the allied victory in 1918. The post-war conference was known as the Paris Peace Conference (1919 – 1920) which led to the creation of the League of Nations, the Treaty of Versailles (1919 – affecting Germany), the Treaty of Sèvres (which was subsequently revised by the Treaty of Lausanne, in 1923), and several other treaties.

### The beginnings of Zionism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

Proto-Zionism is a term attributed to the ideas of a group of men deeply affected by the idea of modern nationalism spread in Europe in the 19th century as they sought to establish a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel. The central activity of these men was between the years 1860 to 1874, before the Zionist movement established practical (1881) and political Zionism (1896). The first wave of immigration (first 'aliyah') began in 1881 ('practical' Zionism), and Theodor Herzl wrote The Jewish State in 1896, which marks the commencement of 'political' Zionism.

### **Palestinian land ownership under the Ottomans**

The Ottoman Land Code of 1858 was the beginning of a systematic land reform programme during the Tanzimat (reform) period of the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century. Land could be owned by clan representatives although the peasant class (fellaheen) could remain on land that they and their families had worked on over generations. The Ottoman Land Code of 1858 'brought about the appropriation by the influential and rich families of Beirut, Damascus, and to a lesser extent Jerusalem and Jaffa and other sub-district capitals, of vast tracts of land in Syria and Palestine and their registration in the name of these families in the land registers'. Jewish buyers who were looking for large tracts of land found it favourable to purchase from the wealthy owners.

### **The beginning of the British Mandate**

The Mandate for Palestine was a League of Nations mandate for British administration of the territories of Palestine and Transjordan, both of which had been conceded by the Ottoman Empire following the end of World War I in 1918. The mandate was assigned to Britain by the San Remo conference in April 1920, after France's concession in the 1918 Clemenceau–Lloyd George Agreement of the previously-agreed 'international administration' of Palestine under the Sykes–Picot Agreement. Civil administration began in Palestine and Transjordan in July 1920 and April 1921, respectively, and the mandate was in force from 29 September 1923 to 15 May 1948 (Palestine) and to 25 May 1946 (Transjordan). Transjordan had been established as a separate British administration in September 1922.

### **Summary list of the empires referred to in this series**

- The Romans 135 – 324 (founded in 753 BCE and collapsed in 476 CE)
- The Byzantines 324 – 638 (collapsed in 1453)
- The Sassanids 224 - 651
- The Arab Caliphates
  - Rashidun 632 - 661
  - The Umayyad 661 - 750
  - The Abbasid 750 - 1258
- The Mongols 1206 - 1368
- The Fatimids 909 - 1171
- The Seljuks 1037 - 1194
- The Mamluks 1250 - 1517
- The Ottomans 1291 – 1922 (also a caliphate)

