

History

Iran at the Crossroad of Civilizations



- Iran has been inhabited by humans since pre-historic times.
- Ancient Iranian culture existed centuries before the earliest civilizations arose in nearby Mesopotamia.
- The written history of Persia (Iran) begins in about 3200 BC with the Proto-Elamite civilization, and followed by the Elamites.
- The arrival of the Aryans (Indo-Iranians), and the establishing of the Median dynasty, culminated in the first Persian Empire, the Achaemenid Empire.

Cyrus the Great founded the Persian Empire in **550 BC** by conquering the Median Empire.



Cyrus the Great created the **Cyrus Cylinder**, considered to be the first declaration of human rights.



Discovered in **1879** in the Marduk temple of Babylon, and today is kept in the **British Museum**.

- Cyrus' seminal ideas greatly influenced later human civilizations; as shown in a documentary movie clip named "*In Search of Cyrus the Great*".
- Based on this documentary, Cyrus' principles of ruling - advocating "**Love**" rather than "**Fear**" - has influenced the current **U.S. constitution**.

Cyrus' Mausoleum

(near Shiraz – Iran)

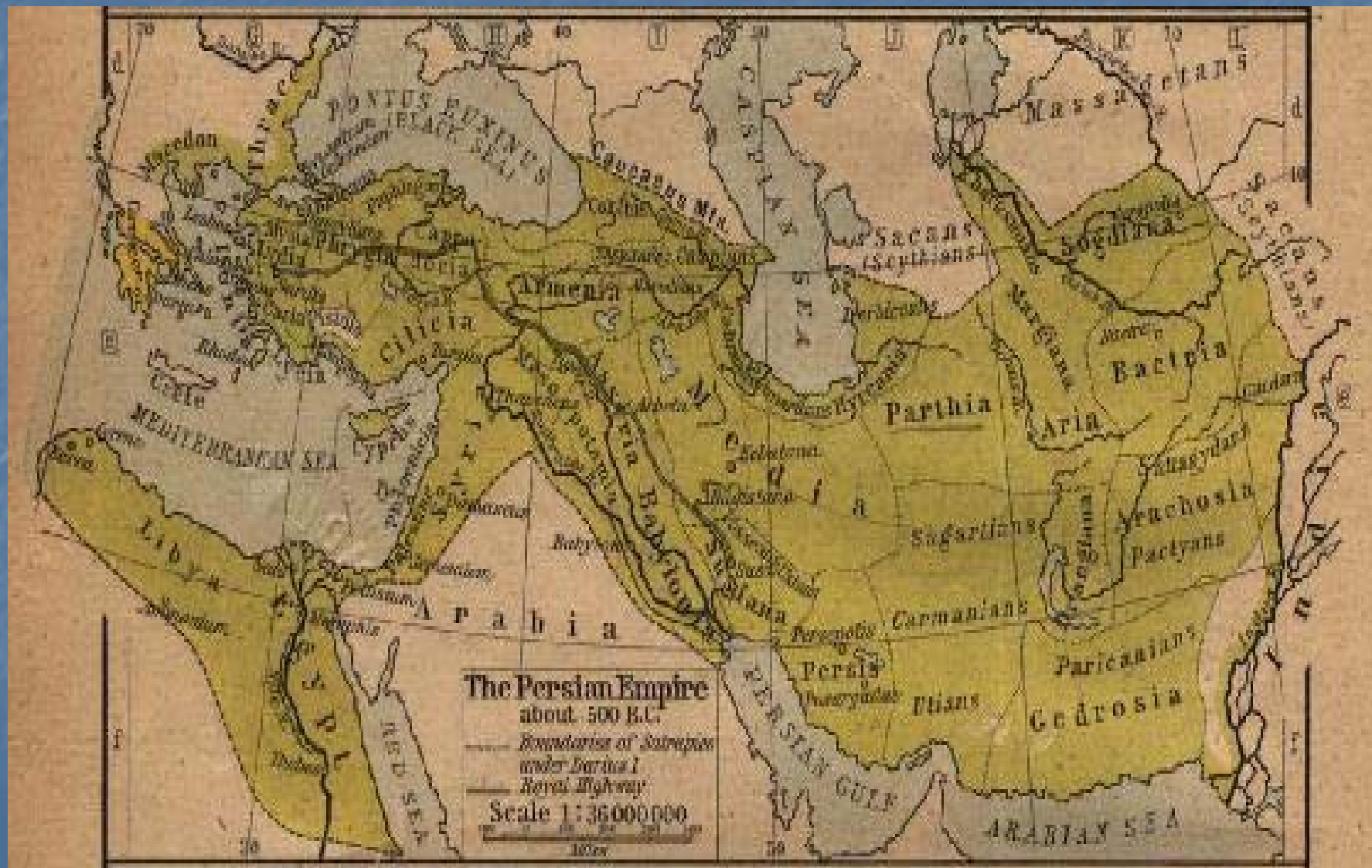


- After Cyrus' death in 530 BC, his son **Cambyses** ruled for eight years (530-522 BC) and continued his father's work of conquest, making significant gains in **Egypt**.
- After Cambyses' death, **Darius** was declared king (ruled 522-486 BC). He was to be arguably the **greatest** of the ancient Persian rulers.

Achaemenid Empire



Achaemenid Empire



Darius started the building programme at
Persepolis















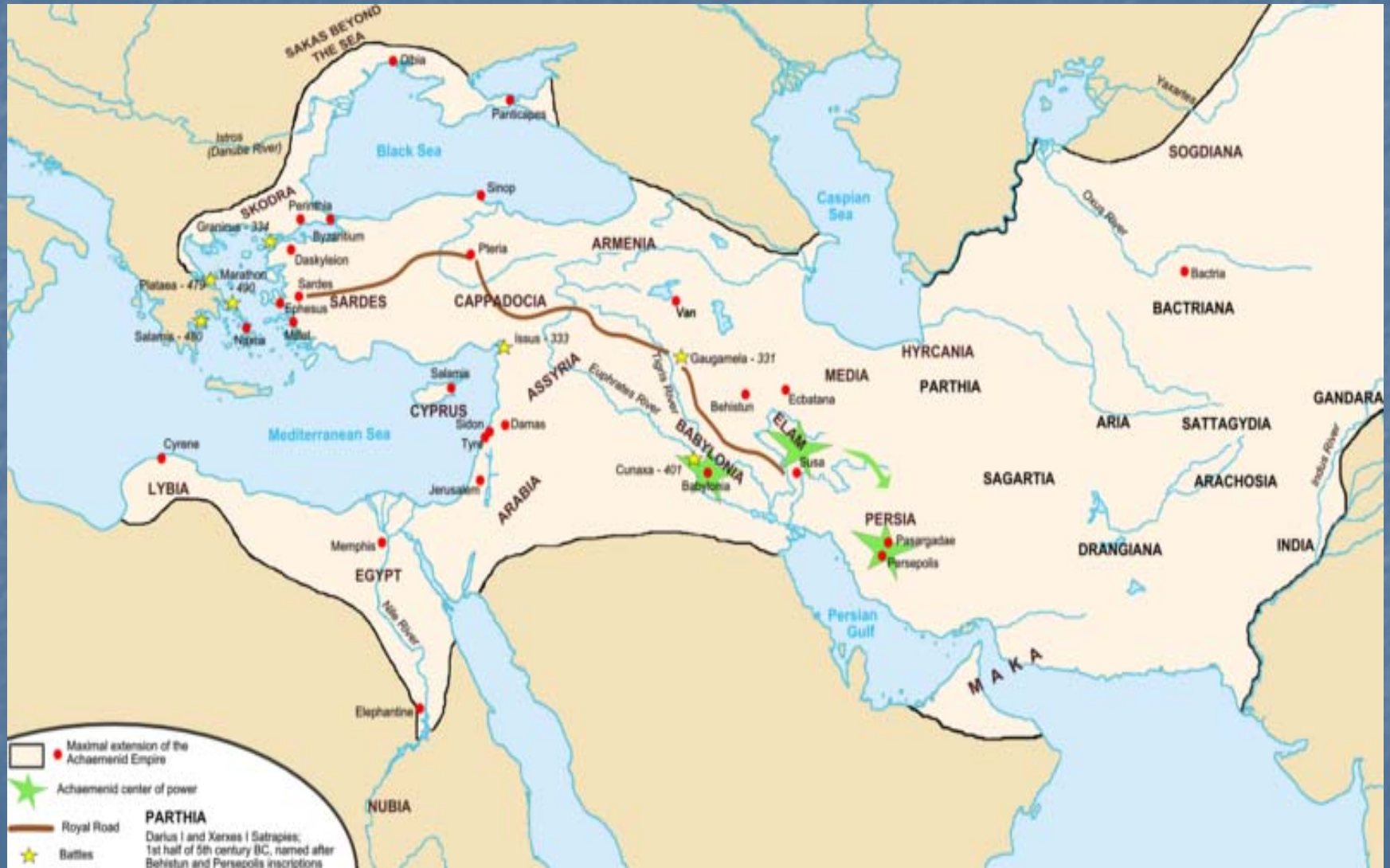




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- Darius built a canal between the Nile and the Red Sea, a forerunner of the modern Suez Canal.
- He improved the extensive road system, and it is during his reign that mention is first made of the Royal Road, a great highway stretching all the way from Susa to Sardis with posting stations at regular intervals.

Royal Road

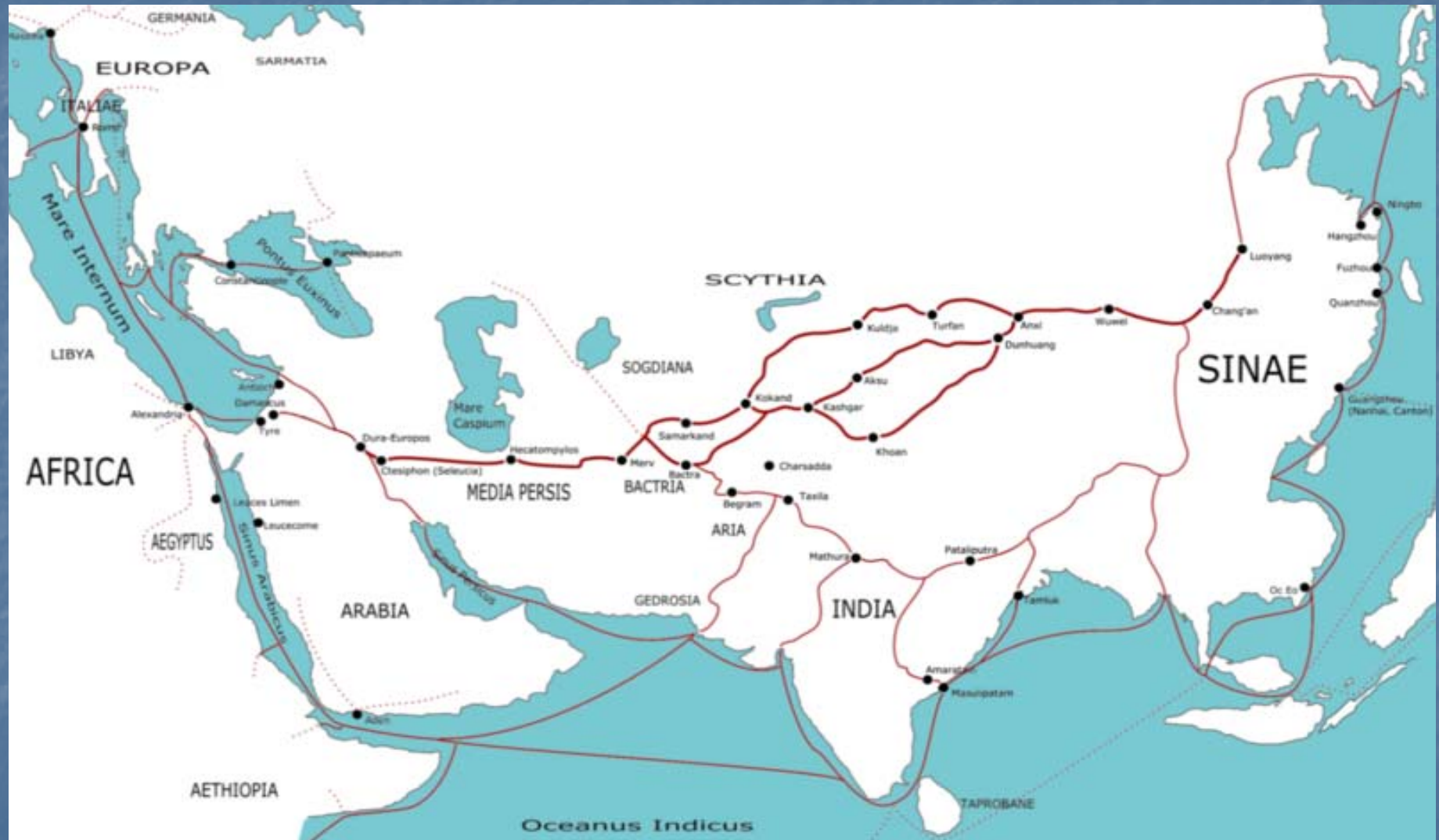


- The **first credible claim** for the development of a real **postal system** comes from **Persia**.
- The best documented claim (**Xenophon**) attributes the invention to **Cyrus the Great**, while other writers credit his successor **Darius I**.
- The Persian system worked on **stations**, where the message carrier would ride till the next post, where upon he would **swap his horse with a fresh one**, for maximum performance and delivery speed.

- **Herodotus** described the system in this way: "It is said that as many days as there are in the whole journey, so many are the **men and horses** that stand along the road, each horse and man at the interval of a day's journey; and these are stayed neither by **snow** nor **rain** nor **heat** nor **darkness** from accomplishing their appointed course with all speed."

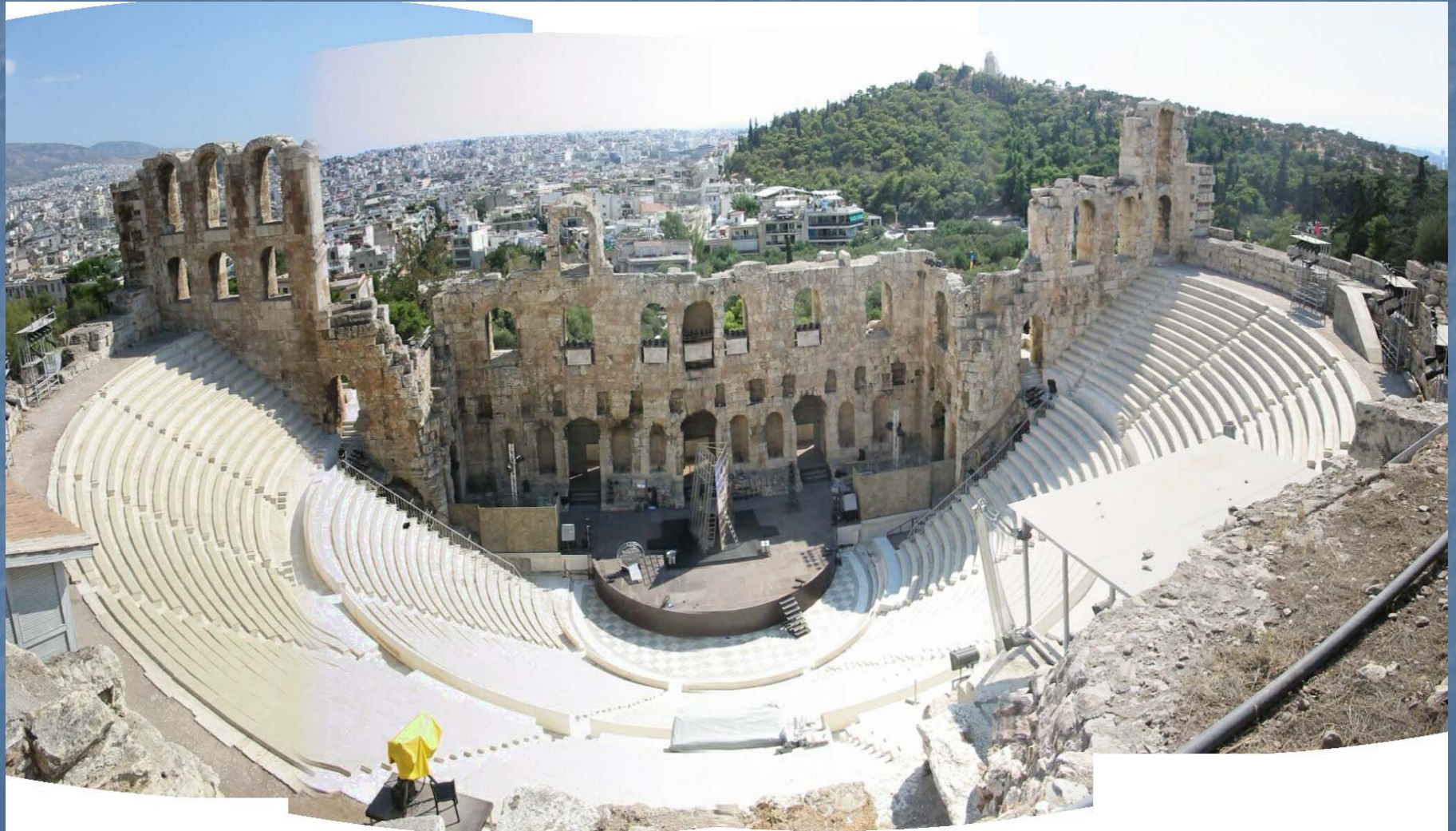
- Iran was in the heart of the **Silk Road**, with a length of more than **8000 km**, connecting **Persia** to **China**.
- It was significant not only for the development and flowering of the great civilizations of **China**, **ancient Egypt**, **Mesopotamia**, **Persia**, **India** and **Rome**, but also helped to lay the foundations of our modern world.

Silk Road



- The **Greco-Persian Wars** were a series of conflicts between several **Greek** city-states and the **Persian Empire** that started about **500 BC** and lasted until **448 BC**.
- There were two Persian invasions of the Greek mainland in **490 BC** and in **480 BC**.
- The **Acropolis of Athens** was razed to the ground and burnt by **Persians** in **480 BC**.

Acropolis of Athens



- **Athens** was defeated in Egypt around 448 BC and signed the **Peace of Callias** with **Persia**.
- The **Greeks** and the **Persians** continued to meddle in each other's affairs until Persia was conquered by **Alexander the Great**.
- **Alexander the Great**, conquered Persia in **333 BC** and in retaliation, razed to the ground and burnt **Persepolis**.

Alexander the Great Fighting Darius III



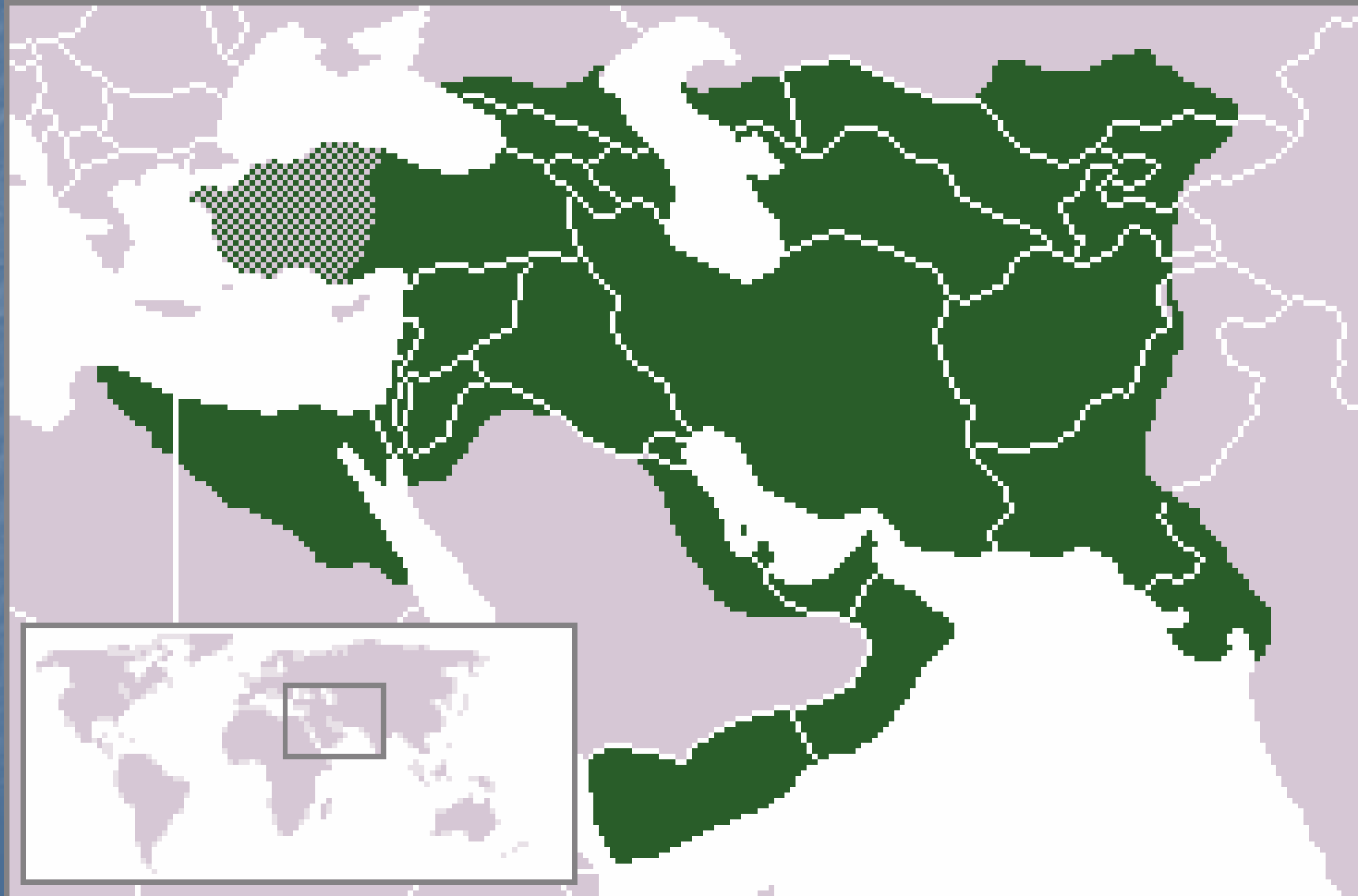
- The fall of **Achaemenid Empire** was followed shortly by two more vast and unified Persian empires that shaped the **pre-Islamic** identity of **Iran** and **Central Asia**:

1. The **Parthian** dynasty (250 BC – 226 AD),

2. The **Sassanid** dynasty (226 AD – 650 AD).

- These two dynasties defeated the **Roman Empire** at the height of its power on several occasions.

Sasanid Empire Boudaries



- Iran was conquered by Arab (Muslim) Army in 650 AD.
- Islam became the religion of most Iranians.
- Iran was ruled by Arab (Muslim) Caliphates from 650 to 934.
- Major Iranian uprisings finally brought down the Caliphates, but Islam remained in Iran.

- Persian Language was revived by Ferdowsi (935 - 1020).
- His masterpiece, the *Shāhnāma* (The Book of Kings), is the most popular and influential of the Iranian national epics.
- The *Shāhnāma*, consists of the translation of old Pahlavi (Middle Persian) works.
- It tells the history of old Persia before the Arab conquest of the region from 7000 years ago, all in poem.

Ferdowsi (935 AD – 1020 AD)



Persian Poet

Ferdowsi's Mosoleum

Mashhad - Iran



- Tahirid dynasty (821-873)
- Saffarid dynasty (861-1003)
- Samanid dynasty (875-999)
- Ziyarid dynasty (928-1043)
- Buwayhid dynasty (934-1055)
- Ghaznavid **Empire** (963-1187)
- Seljukid **Empire** (1037-1187)
- Khwarezmid **Empire** (1077-1231)

Invasion of Iran by Genghis Khan (Mongol) Army in 1220



Iran was ruled by Mongol Ilkhanate from 1256 to 1353

- Timurid Empire was created by Timur (Tamerlane) in 1370 and lasted until 1506.
- Iran was conquered by Timur's Army in 1385.

Timurid Dominion



Statue of Tamerlane (Timur) in Uzbekistan



- Iran was freed from foreign invaders by Safavid dynasty again.
- Safavid dynasty ruled Iran from 1501 to 1736.
- Iran reached it climax in Arts, Architecture, Science and Trade.

Shah Ismail I, the founder of Safavid Dynasty



- The **Battle of Chaldoran** occurred in **1514** and ended with a decisive victory for the **Ottoman Empire** over the **Safavids**.
- As a result the Ottomans gained control over the eastern half of **Anatolia**.
- The Ottomans had a **larger, better equipped** army numbering **200,000**, while the Iranians numbered some **50,000-80,000**.
- The Battle of Chaldoran demonstrated that **firearms** were a decisive factor in warfare.
- The outcome at Chaldoran established the border between the two empires, which remains the **border between Turkey and Iran today**.

Map of Iran in 1808



Last Changes Before Today's Status

- Afsharid dynasty (1736-1802)
 - India was conquered twice
- Zand dynasty (1750–1794)
- Qajar dynasty (1781-1925)
 - Major defeats in 2 wars against Russia and 1 war against Britain
 - Constitutional Revolution

- Under the **Treaty of Golestan** in **1813**, Iran recognized **Russia's annexation** of **Georgia** and the north **Caucasus region**.
- In **1828** Iran signed the **Treaty of Turkmanchai** accepting **Russian sovereignty** over the entire area north of the **Aras River** (territory comprising **Armenia** and **Republic of Azerbaijan**).
- By **1881**, **Russia** had completed its **conquest** of present-day **Turkmenistan** and **Uzbekistan**.

In 1856, Britain prevented Iran from reasserting control over Herat (Afghanistan), which was part of Iran in Safavid times but had been under non-Iranian rule since the mid-18th century.

Iran's boundaries since 1881



- **Constitutional Revolution** took place in **January 1906**.
- In October 1906 an elected assembly convened and drew up a **constitution**.
- It provided strict **limitations on royal power**, an **elected parliament**, or Majles, with wide powers to represent the people, and a government with a **cabinet** subject to **confirmation** by the Majles.

- The constitution was signed on **December 30, 1906**.
- The Constitutional Revolution marked the **end** of the **medieval period** in Iran.

■ Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979)

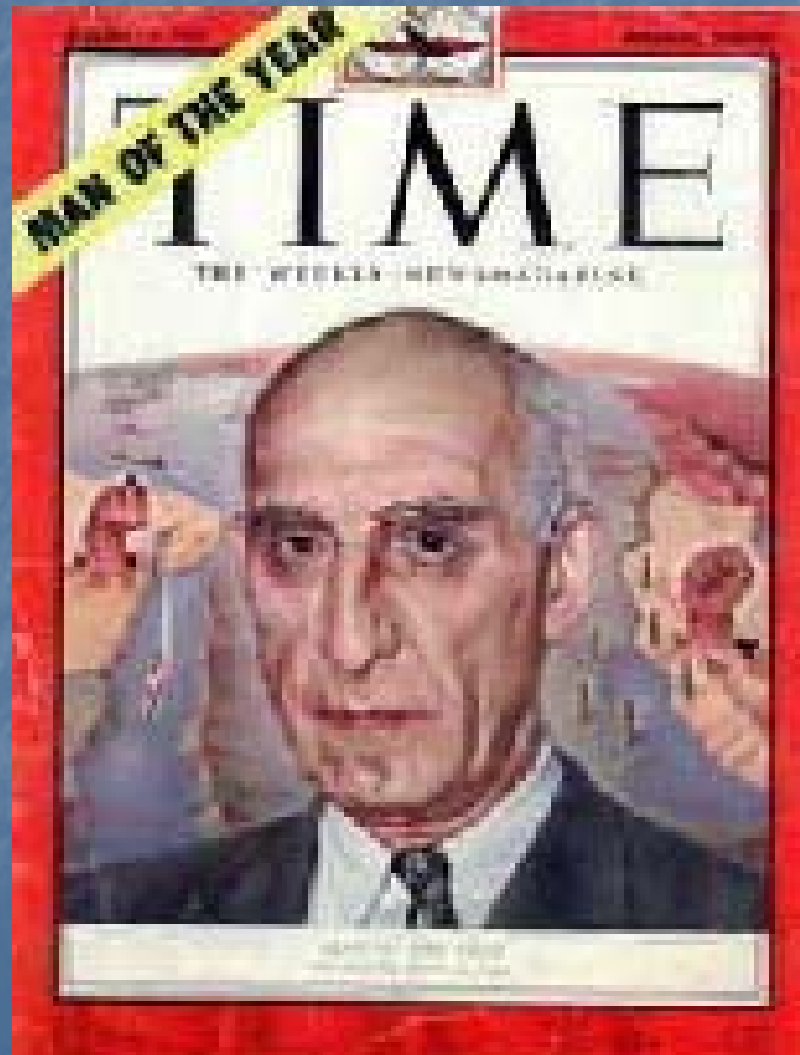
- Last Iranian Monarchy.
- Despite her neutral stance during WWII, Iran was occupied by Allied Forces in 1941 to support Soviet Union against Nazi Germany's invasion.
- Iran was declared The Bridge of Victory.

Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill in Tehran – November 1943



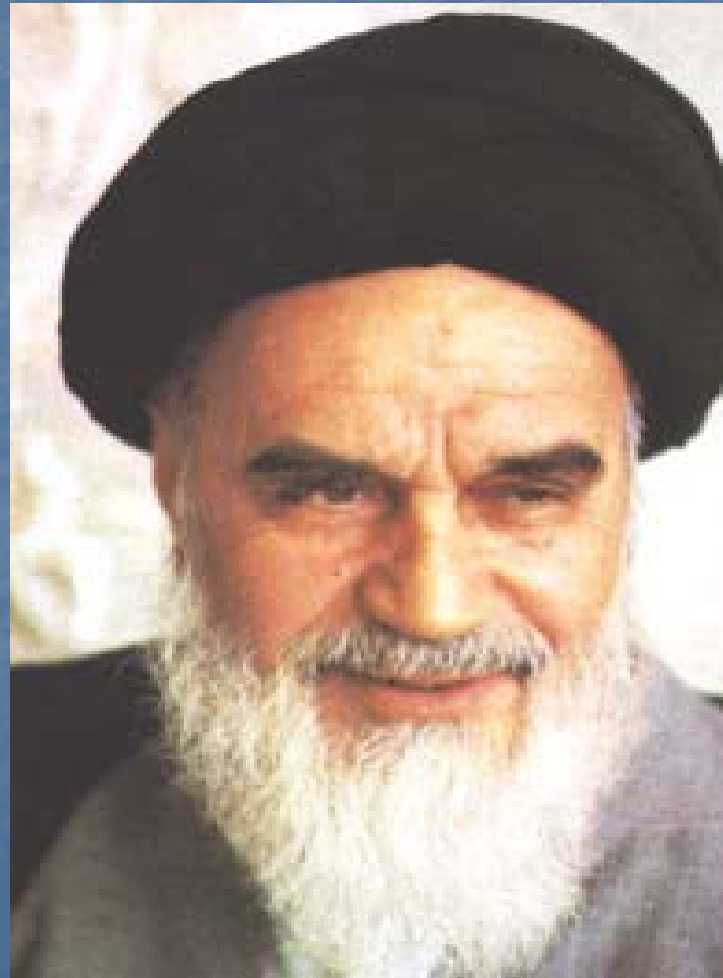
- On March 15, 1951 the Iranian parliament voted to nationalize Iran's oil industry and seize control of the British-owned and operated Oil Company.
- The Iranian Prime Minister, Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh, enforced the Oil Nationalization Act in May 1951.

Mosadegh's action encouraged **Egypt** to
Nationalize The Suez Canal



Dr. Mossadeqh's
government was
overthrown by an
American-British coup
in **August 1953.**

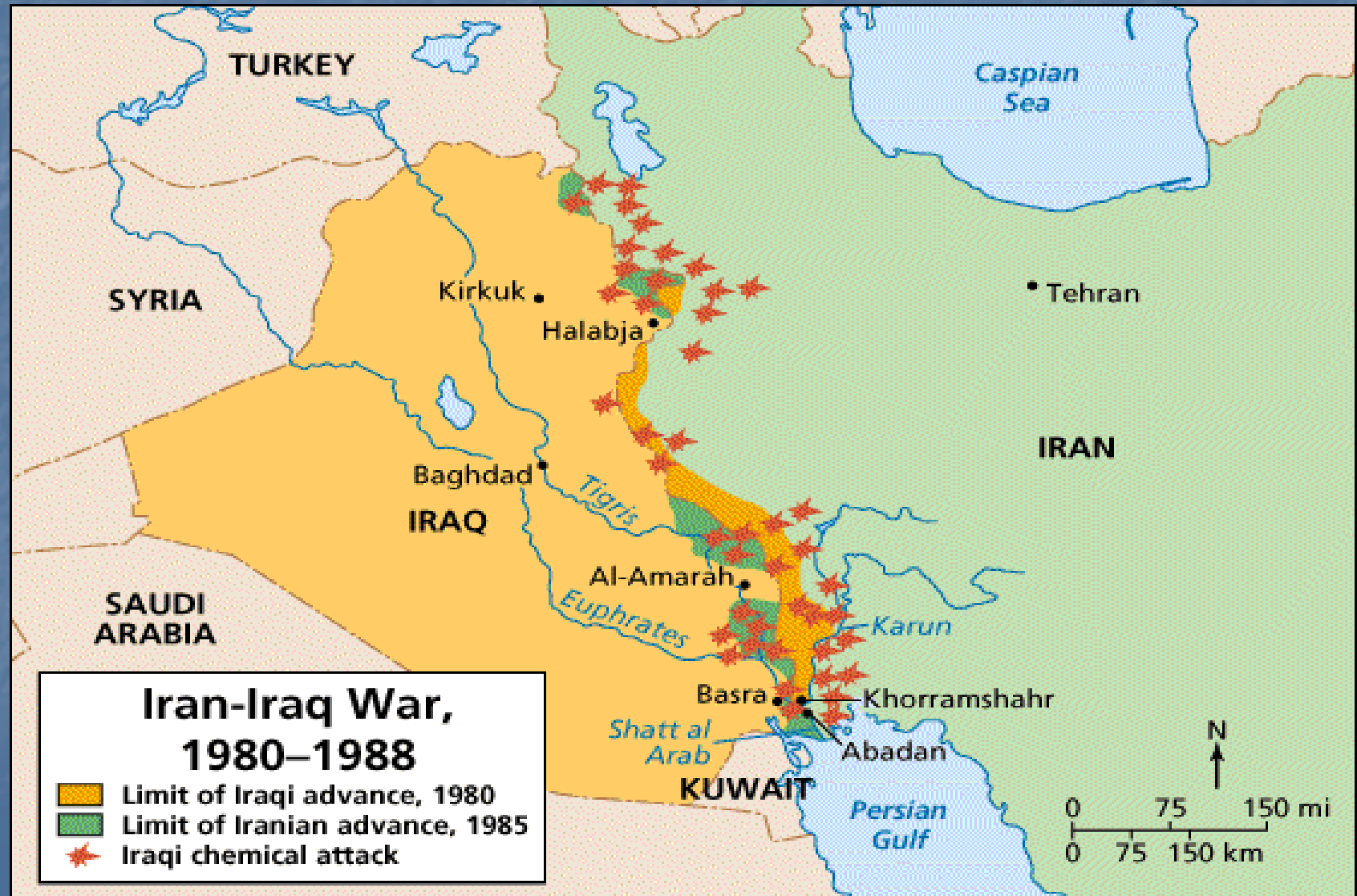
Islamic Revolution, lead by **Ayatollah Khomeini**,
ended the monarchy in **1979** and established
Islamic Republic of Iran.



Iran was invaded by Iraq in 1980



Iraqi Advances and Chemical Attacks









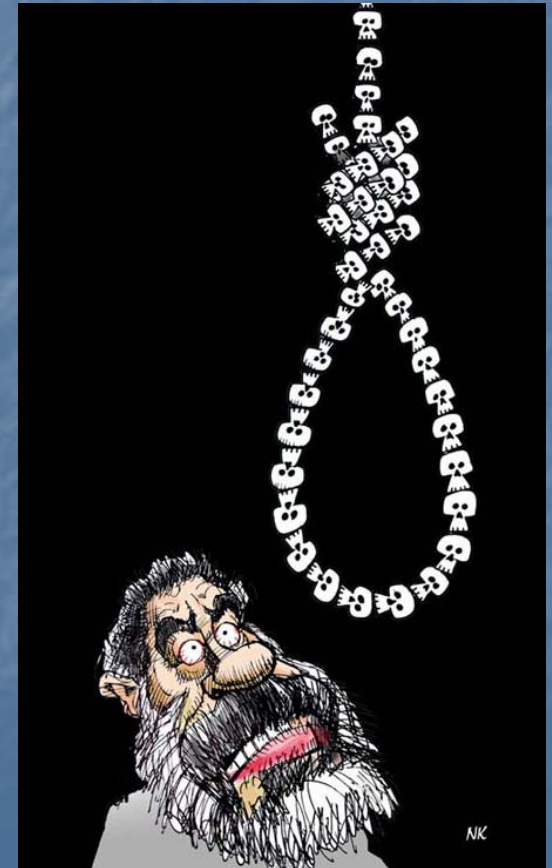








Saddam Hussein: Then and Now.



Some of the Major
Iranian Contributors
to Human Civilization
in the History

Khwarezmī (780 AD – 850 AD)



Mathematics, Astronomy, Astrology and Geography.

- Author of the book: *al-jabr wa-l-muqābala*.
- The first book on the systematic solution of **linear** and **quadratic** equations.
- He is considered to be the father of **algebra**.
- The words **algorithm** stem from *Algoritmi*, the **Latinization** of his name.
- His name is also the origin of the **Spanish** word *guarismo*, meaning **digit**.

Razi (864 AD – 930 AD)



Medicine, Mathematics, Astronomy, Chemistry,
Philosophy and Music.

- well versed in the ancient Greek, Persian and Indian **systems of medicine** and other subjects.
- Some of his works in medicine e.g. *Kitab al- Mansoori*, *Al-Hawi*, *Kitab al-Mulooki* and *Kitab al-Judari wa al-Hasabah* earned everlasting fame.
- His book *Kitab al-Mansoori*, which was translated into **Latin** in the 15th century A.D., comprised **ten volumes** and dealt exhaustively with Greco-Arab medicine.
- His book *Al-Hawi* was the **largest medical encyclopaedia** composed by then.
- As a **chemist**, he was the first to produce **sulfuric acid** together with some other acids, and he also prepared **alcohol** by fermenting sweet products.

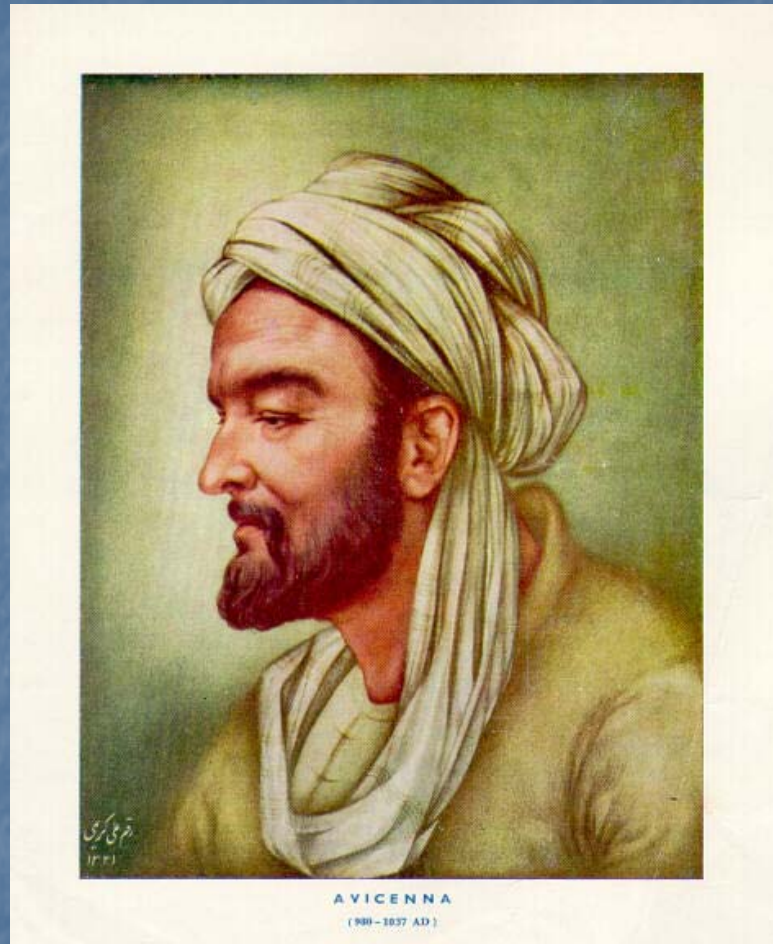
Farabi (870 AD – 950 AD)



Medicine, Mathematics, Philosophy and Music.

- As a philosopher and **Neo-Platonist**, he wrote rich commentary on **Aristotle's** work.
- He is also credited for categorizing **logic** into **two** separate groups, the first being "**idea**" and the second being "**proof**."
- Farabi wrote books on **sociology** and a notable book on **music** titled *Kitab al-Musiqā* (**The Book of Music**).
- He **played** and **invented** a varied number of **musical instruments** and his pure Arabian tone system is still used in Arab music .
- Farabi is famous for his demonstration of the existence of **void** in **physics**.

Avicenna (980 AD – 1037 AD)



Medicine, Philosophy and Science.

- He was the author of **450 books** on a wide range of subjects.
- Many of his work concentrated on **philosophy** and **medicine**.
- From the **12th** to the **17th century** Ibn Sina (Avicenna) was the guide of medical study in **European universities**.
- **George Sarton** (the Belgian-American historian of science) called Ibn Sina "**The most famous scientist of Islam and one of the most famous of all races, places, and times**".

Avicenna's Mosoleum Hamedan - Iran



Omar Khayyam (1048 AD – 1131 AD)



Persian poetry, Mathematics and Astronomy.

- Khayyám very accurately (correct to 6 decimal places) measured the **length of the solar year** as 365.24219858156 days.
- His system has **1 day** error in every **5,000 years** while the **Gregorian Calendar** used today, has a **1 day** error in every **3,330 years**.
- He demonstrated that **earth revolves** on its axis. He also elaborated that **stars** are **stationary objects** in space. **Facts** which were discovered **centuries later** in **Eorupe**.
- Khayyam invented **Khayyam-Pascal Triangle**, a very useful mathematical concept and tool.
- English-speaking world best knows him for his **poetry**, "***The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám***", translated by **Edward Fitzgerald** (1809-1883).

Cornel Wilde & Debra Paget in Paramount's "Omar Khayyam" (1957)



Khayyam's Mosoleum

Neyshabour - Iran



Khayyam's Mosoleum

Neyshabour - Iran



Iran

The Birthplace of
Zoroastrian Religion

Atashkadeh (Fire Hose) Yazd - Iran











Jewish & Christian Communities in Iran

Esther & Mordekhai's Tombs

Hamedan - Iran























