

Religion in the Middle East

DEFINITIONS, ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORY

JUDAISM

Monotheistic Religion: God = Jahwe
Capitals: Jerusalem

Scriptures: Tanakh (Hebrew Bible), Talmud (63 tracts), other Texts

Law: Torah (5 Books of Moses), 613 commandments, directed to very specific kinds of people, Talmud, 10 Commandments

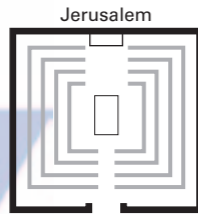
13 principles of faith by Maimonides:

Existence of God; his Oneness; negation of physicalness of God; his eternity; ministry and doxology; prophecy; Moshe's prophecy; the Torah; there will be no other Torah; God's awareness of the human deeds; God's reward and punishment; the coming of the Messiah; resurrection

Main festivities: Yom Kippur (last of the 10 atonement days), Pessach (remembrance of the exodus from Egypt), Sukkot (remembrance of wandering in the wilderness), Chanukka (consecration of the temple)

Denominations: Ashkenazi Jews, Sephardi Jews

Synagogue: Like the Mosques, a Synagogue (= room for conventions) is not only a church. In former times it was a hall for the council and a courthouse with enclosed space for prayers. There is a prayer leader who is mostly a Rabbi or a Cantor. The scrolls of the Torah are kept at the eastern side of the Synagogue, but they are taken to the middle during the ceremony.



CHRISTIANITY

Monotheistic Religion: Trinity of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit

Capitals: Jerusalem, Rome (Catholics), Byzantium (Orthodox), Antioch and Bkerké (Maronite)

Scriptures: Holy Bible (New Testament)

Law: Canonic right had a big influence in the christian countries, church and state are separate nowadays

7 Sacraments (Catholic Church and Orthodox Church):

Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Confession, Ordination of Priests, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony

Protestants only believe in Baptism and Eucharist

Main festivities: Christmas (Birth of Jesus Christ), Ash Wednesday (atonement), Easter (Death and resurrection of JC), Whitsun (reception of the Holy Spirit), Corpus Christi, All Saints' Day, All Souls' Day

Leaders: Pope (Catholic), Katholikos (Armenian Apostolic), Kosmopolit (Orthodox), Patriarch (Maronite)

Denominations: Catholic (Roman-/Christian-/Greek-), Protestant, Eastern (Orthodox, Apostolic, Maronite, Nontrinitarian)

Christian Church: The church faces east, towards Jerusalem (Catholic and Protestant). The priest stands at the altar in front of the faithful.



ISLAM

Monotheistic Religion: God = Allah, his messenger is Mohammed

Capital: Mecca, birth city of the Mohammed, Medina
Scriptures: Qur'an, the literal word of god, revealed to Mohammed, written down by his companions

Law: Sharia (religious duties) and Fiqh (jurisprudence)

-> often no distinction between church and state

"5 Pillars of Islam", which every religious person has to practice:

1. Shahadah - creed, must be repeated in prayer
2. Salah - ritual prayer, 5 times a day
3. Zakat - everyone who can afford it is supposed to give alms to the needy
4. Sawm - fasting during the month of Ramadan
5. Hajj - pilgrimage to the Kaaba in Mecca, has to be done once in a lifetime

Denominations: Sunni, Shia (Ismailite, Imamite), Alawite, Zaidite, Druze

Mosque: Not only praying, offers scholastic education as well and serves for conventions of the faithful. Room for prayer with a Mihrab, an alcove that indicates the direction of Mecca. In some cases there is a Dikka (pulpit) for the prayer leader. Fountains for washing before praying, and minarets to announce prayers



Armenian Apostolic:

Founded by the apostles Bartholomew and Jude in the mid-first century, it is an own christian religion. Like the Catholics have a pope, the Armenian Apostolic are led by the "Katholikos"

Maronite:

Eastern Catholic religion, founded by St. Maron in the beginning of the 5th century. Most worshippers in Lebanon, a few in Syria

Druze:

Islamic sect, founded by the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah († 1021) he is supposed to return sometime in the future

Yezidi:

monotheistic Religion, kurdish-speaking, non-missionary (people are born Yezid), founded by Caliph Yazid I. (680/683)

no scriptures, the religion is manifested in songs and rituals, religious symbol: peacock = Sheikh Adi's incarnation

Different dogmatics in different countries

In the middle ages, Islam tried to eradicate the Yezids



Solomon's Temple, Jerusalem 960 - 586 BC



Herod's Temple (model), Jerusalem 19 BC - 70 AD



Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem 335 - 1009 (rebuilt)



Hagia Sophia (orthodox church, now mosque), Istanbul 537



Al-Nabawi Mosque, Medina 622



Al-Haram Mosque (Kaaba), Mecca 638



Dome of the Rock, Shrine, Jerusalem 691



Ramban Synagogue, Jerusalem 1267

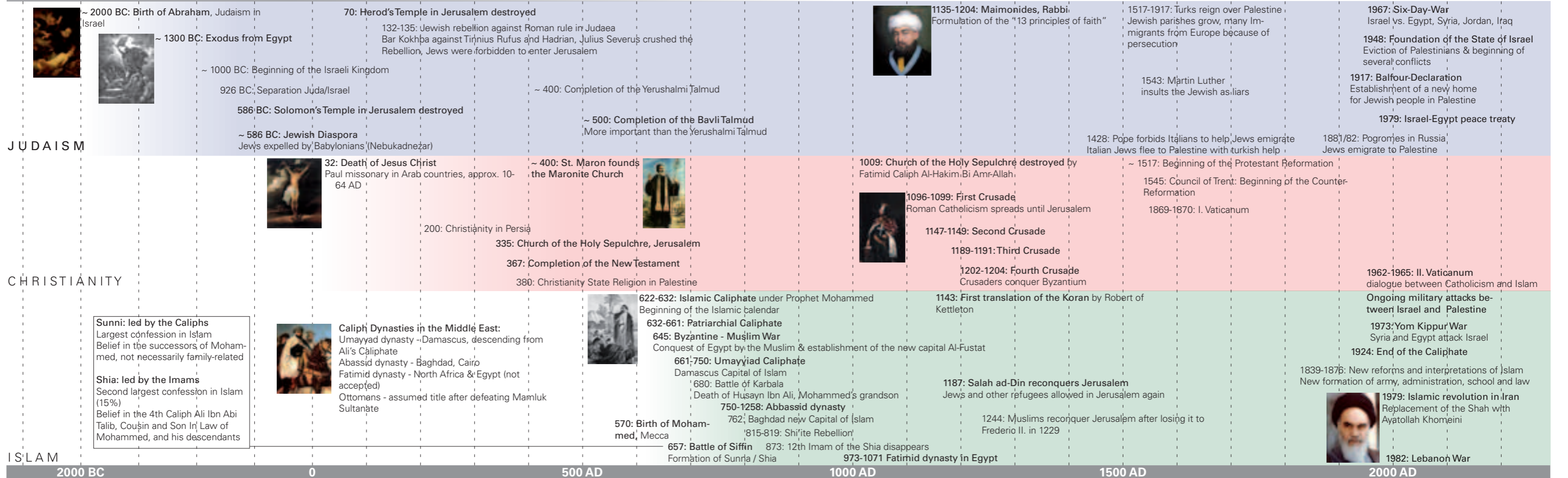


St. Peter's Basilica, Rome 1626



St. Grigor Lusorovich Cathedral, Jerevan 2001

antique religions: Roman, Greek, Babylonian, ... (cults with different gods)



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ETH Studio Base

Source: Gabriel Palmer-Fernandez, Encyclopedia of religion and war, Routledge, New York/London 2004; Monika und Udo Tworuschka, Religionen der Welt, Grundlagen, Entwicklung und Bedeutung in der Gegenwart, Orbis Verlag, München 1996; Meyers Taschenlexikon; www.mapeofwar.com, 06-10-2009

Religion in the Middle East

PERCENTAGE AND DISTRIBUTION, 2009

- Judaism
- Christianity
- Orthodox
- Catholic
- Protestant
- Armenian Apostolic
- Maronite
- Islam
- Sunni
- Shia
- Alawite
- Druze
- Yezid
- Other (incl. minorities)

Armenia
94% Christian, 94.7% Armenian Apostolic, 1.3% Yezidi

Azerbaijan
Christian minorities, 58.5% Sunni, 31.5% Shia

Bahrain
9% Christian, 52.65% Sunni, 28.35% Shia

Egypt
Jewish and Christian minorities, 80% Sunni, 15% Coptic

Georgia
Jewish minorities, 84.8% Christian, 10% Islam, 4% Druze

Iran
Jewish and Christian minorities, 8% Sunni, 90% Shia, 1.6% other Islam, minorities of Parsis and Mandaeans

Iraq
5% Christian, 31.7% Sunni, 63.3% Shia

Israel
75.5% Jewish, 2.1% Christian, 16.6% Islam, 1.7% Druze

Gaza & Westbank
3% Christian, 97% Islam, mostly Sunni

Jordan
6% Christian, 92% Sunni, 1% Shia, 1% Druze

Kuwait
65% Sunni, 35% Shia

Lebanon
40% Christian, 60% Islam, Sunni minorities, mostly Shia, Druze and Alawite minorities

Oman
75% Islam

Qatar
8% Christian, 77% Sunni

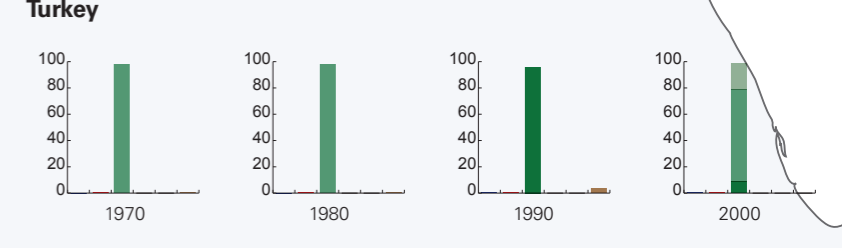
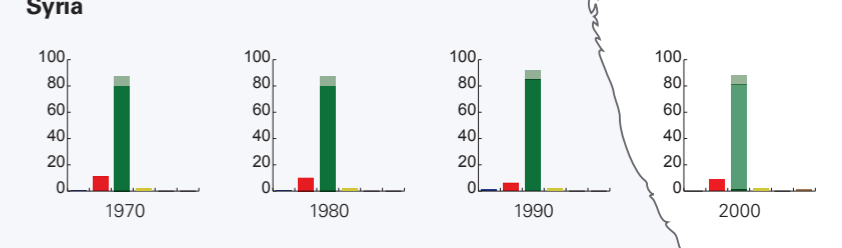
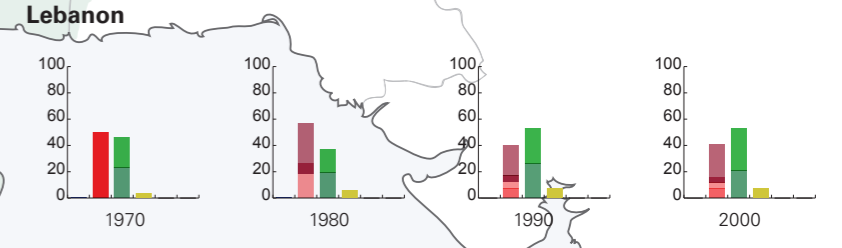
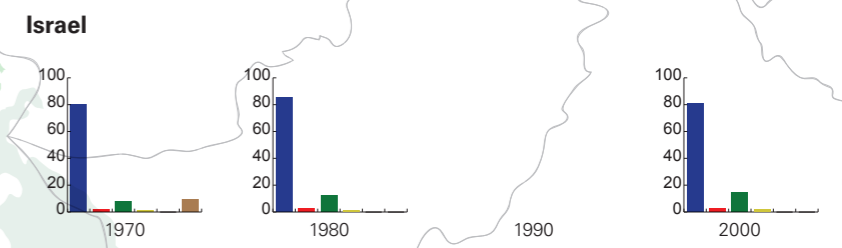
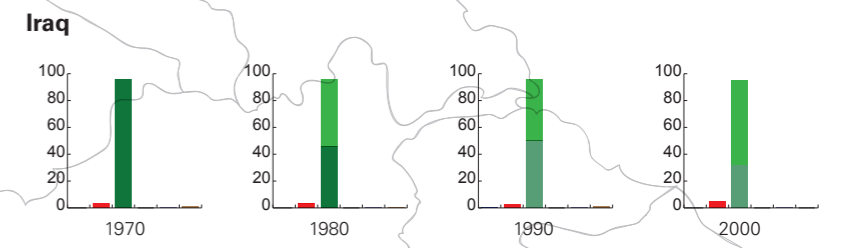
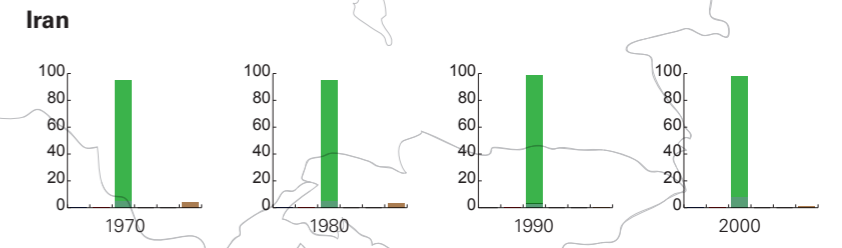
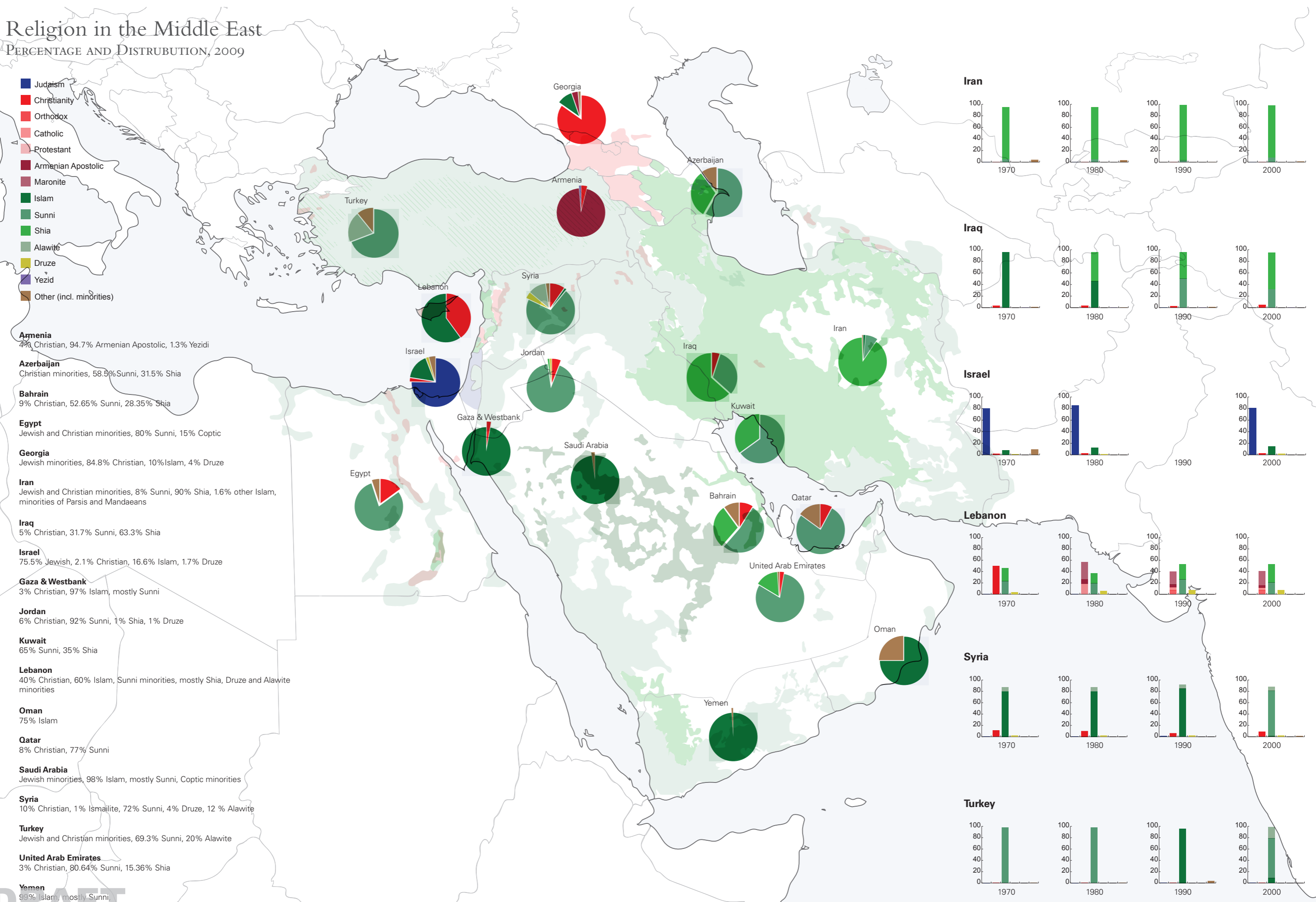
Saudi Arabia
Jewish minorities, 98% Islam, mostly Sunni, Coptic minorities

Syria
10% Christian, 1% Ismailite, 72% Sunni, 4% Druze, 12% Alawite

Turkey
Jewish and Christian minorities, 69.3% Sunni, 20% Alawite

United Arab Emirates
3% Christian, 80.64% Sunni, 15.36% Shia

Yemen
99% Islam, mostly Sunni



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Source: Various Authors, Fischer Weltalmanach 2010, Fischer Taschenbuchverlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2009; Frank Altmann, Dr. Mario von Baratta, Dr. Wolf-Rüdiger Baumann, et al., Der Fischer Weltalmanach 2000, Fischer Taschenbuchverlag, Frankfurt am Main 1999; Eleonore Baumann, Dr. Wolf-Rüdiger Baumann, Doris Reuter, et al., Der Fischer Weltalmanach 1990, Frankfurt am Main 1989; Prof. Dr. Gustav Fochler-Hauke, Der Fischer Weltalmanach 1980, Fischer Taschenbuchverlag, Frankfurt am Main 1979; Prof. Dr. Gustav Fochler-Hauke, Der Fischer Weltalmanach 1970, Fischer Taschenbuchverlag, Frankfurt am Main 1969; CIA Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>, 04-10-2009;