Anatolia and the Caucasus

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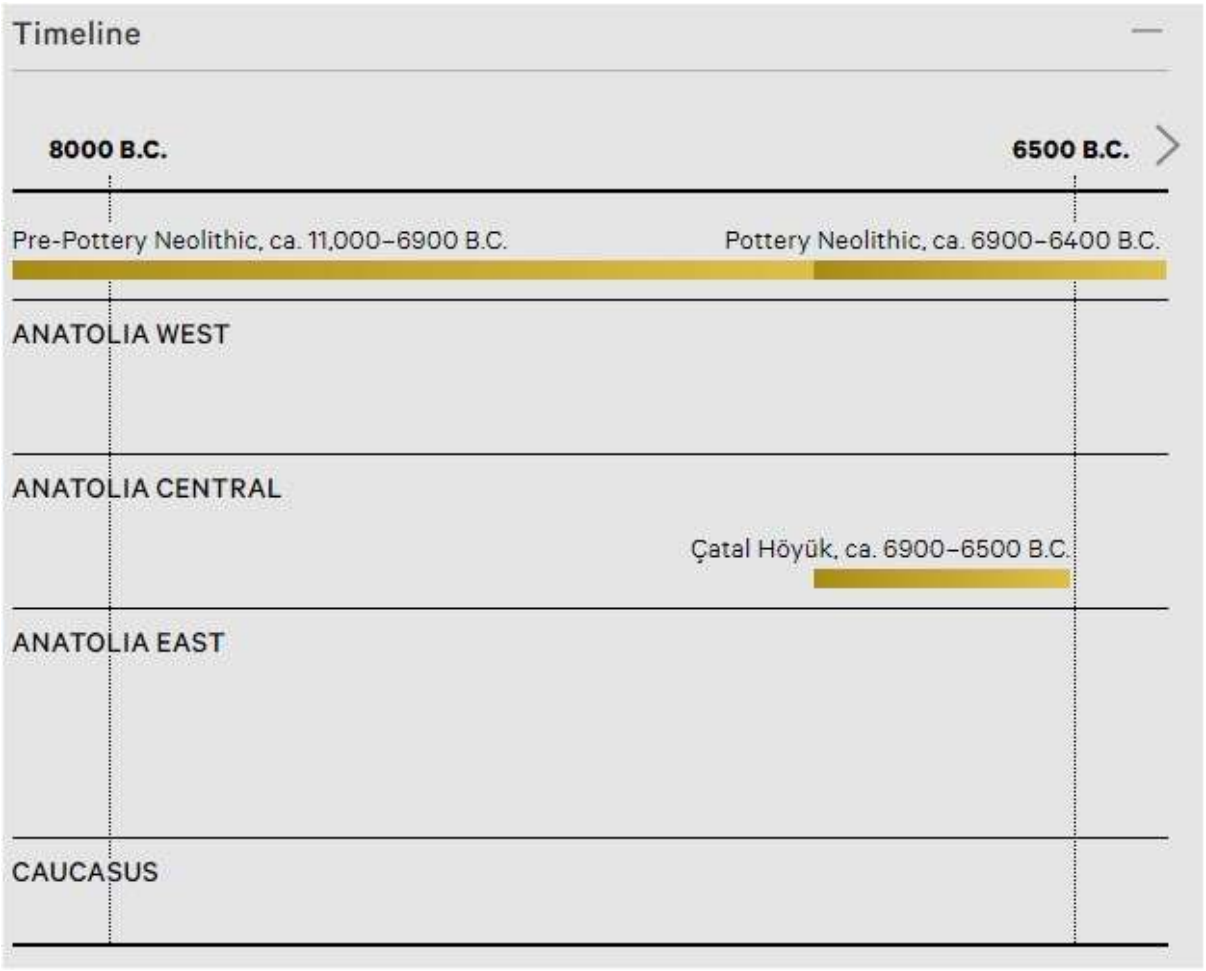
Contents

Anatolia and the Caucasus (8000–2000 B.C.)

Timeline

8000 B.C.-6500 B.C.



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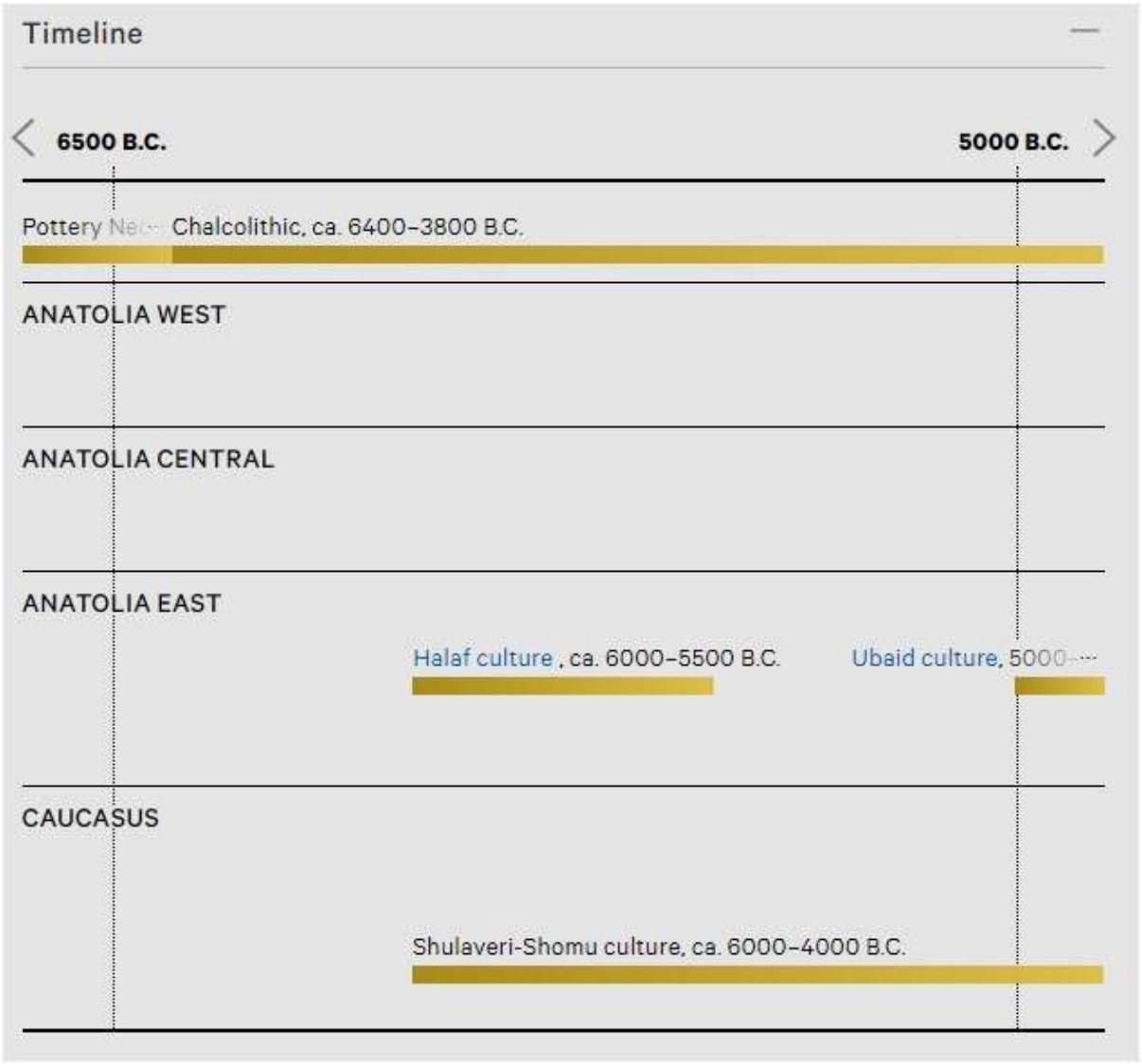
6500 B.C.–5000 B.C.



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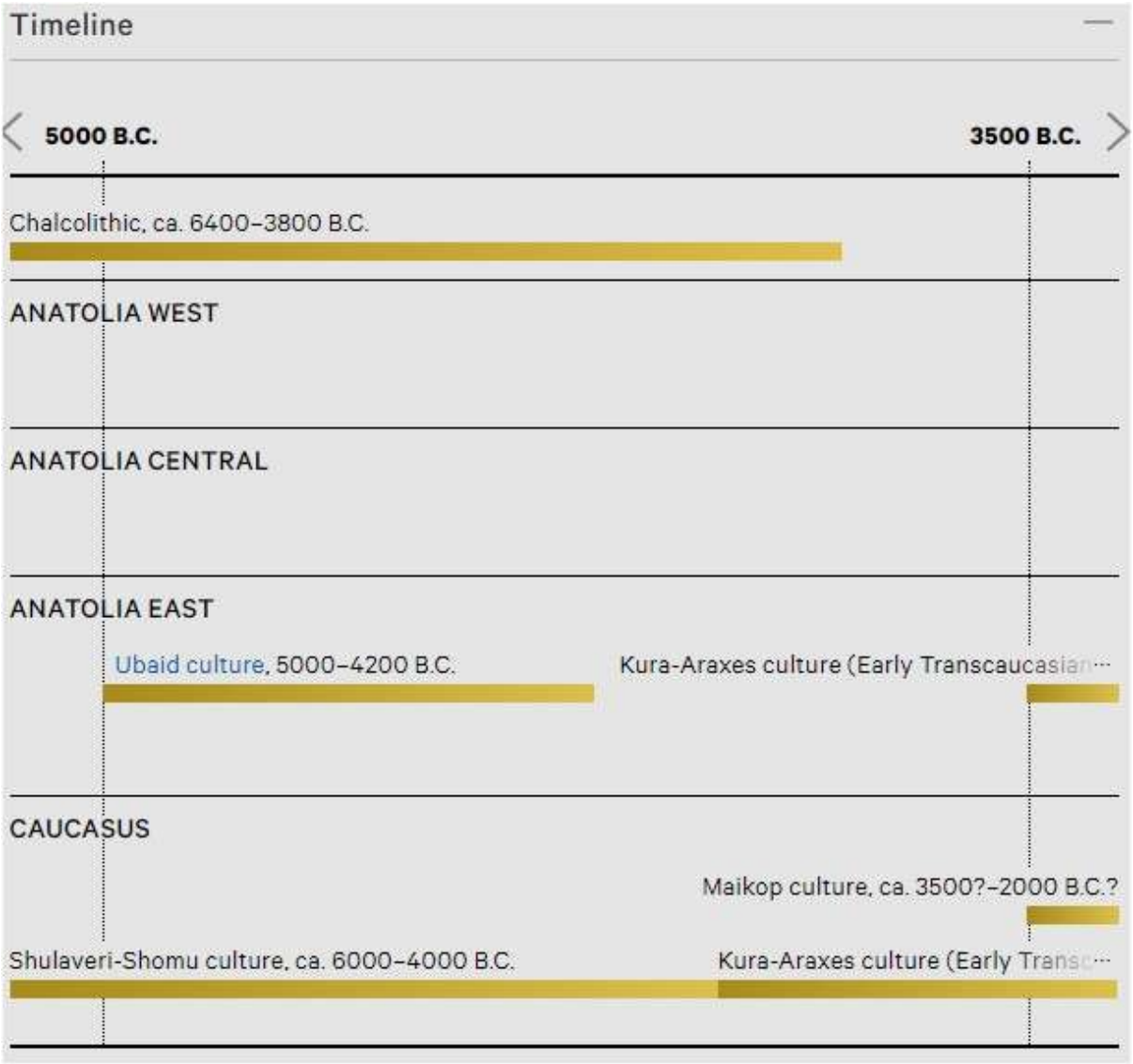

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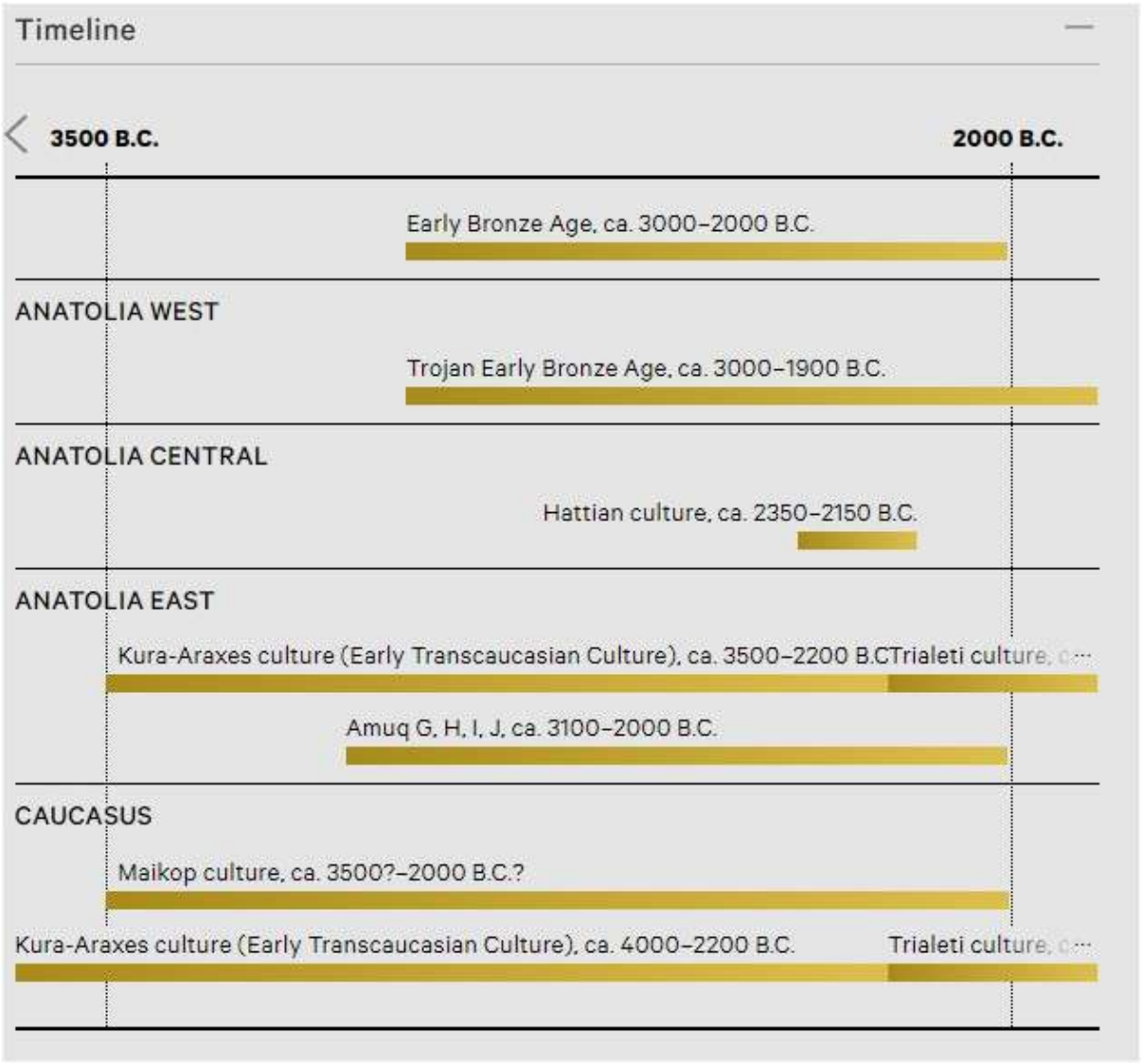
3500 B.C.–2500 B.C.



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Overview

A universally accepted chronology for the entire ancient Near East remains to be established. On the basis of the Royal Canon of Ptolemy, a second-century A.D. astronomer, regnal dates can be determined with certainty in Babylonia only as far back as 747 B.C. (the accession of King Nabonassar). Through the use of excavated royal annals and chronicles, together with lists of annually appointed limmu-officials, the chronology of Assyria can be confidently extended back to 911 B.C. (the accession of King Adad-nirari II). The earliest certain link with Egypt is 664 B.C., the date of the Assyrian sack of the Egyptian capital at Thebes. Although it is often possible to locate earlier events quite precisely relative to each other, neither surviving

contemporary documents nor scientific dating methods such as carbon 14, dendrochronology, thermoluminescence, and archaeoastronomy are able to provide the required accuracy to fix these events absolutely in time. The West Asian portion of the Timeline therefore employs the common practice of using, without prejudice, the so-called Middle Chronology, where events are dated relative to the reign of King Hammurabi of Babylon, which is defined as being ca. 1792–1750 B.C.
Between ca. 11,000 and 9000 B.C., hunters and gatherers settle the first permanent villages in southeastern and central Anatolia. They produce sophisticated utilitarian tools from readily available resources of animal bone and stone. Perhaps to meet the demands of a growing population, a shift to an economy based largely on farming occurs in the Neolithic period (ca. 11,000–6400 B.C.). The period is divided into an early phase without pottery and a later phase when pottery is present. Obsidian (volcanic glass) from Anatolia is widely traded across the Near East.
In the Chalcolithic period (ca. 6400–3800 B.C.) there is a continuity of Neolithic traditions with an increase in the use of copper. In the Early Bronze Age (ca. 3000–2000 B.C.), the region's rich resources in such metals as tin and silver attract new populations, customs, and artistic styles from the surrounding regions of Mesopotamia, Syria, and the Caucasus Mountains. i

Key Events

ca. 11,000–6400 B.C.

The Neolithic period in Anatolia is divided into the Pre-Pottery and Pottery Neolithic, to distinguish settlements that do not have pottery vessels from those later ones that do. The Neolithic is the period during which humans live in villages and first domesticate plants and animals. In Anatolia in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, nondomestic buildings contain large stone sculptures of human figures, and in the later Neolithic, the site of Çatal Höyük has buildings with elaborate wall paintings and modeled reliefs, with animal skulls attached to the walls. i

ca. 6000–4000 B.C.

The southeastern part of Anatolia is settled by peoples from Mesopotamia, who bring ceramics and everyday objects different from those of the local populations. The Mesopotamians move into this area apparently to acquire agricultural products and raw materials such as metal. The Shulaveri-Shomu and other Neolithic/Chalcolithic cultures of the Southern Caucasus use local obsidian for tools, raise animals such as cattle and pigs, and grow crops, including grapes. i

ca. 4000–2200 B.C.

Eastern Anatolia, the Southern Caucasus, and part of the Northern Caucasus are occupied by people of the Kura-Araxes culture (also called the Early Transcaucasian Culture), who make distinctive handmade pottery with burnished black exteriors and red interiors, portable andirons of clay for use in hearths, and new kinds of bronze tools, weapons, and pins. At least in the Caucasus Mountains, these people probably herd cattle. i

mid-3rd millennium B.C.

(some suggest a date in the second half of the fourth millennium B.C.) A group of large tumulus graves (burial pits placed under mounds of earth) in the northern Caucasus Mountains belong to the Maikop culture. In the best known of these elite tombs, a person is buried under a canopy held up by poles topped by gold and silver bull figurines that appear similar in artistic conception to some standards from the burials of Alaca Höyük in Central Anatolia. Some scholars see similarities between objects from the Maikop graves and some from Mesopotamia as well. i

ca. 2350–2150 B.C.

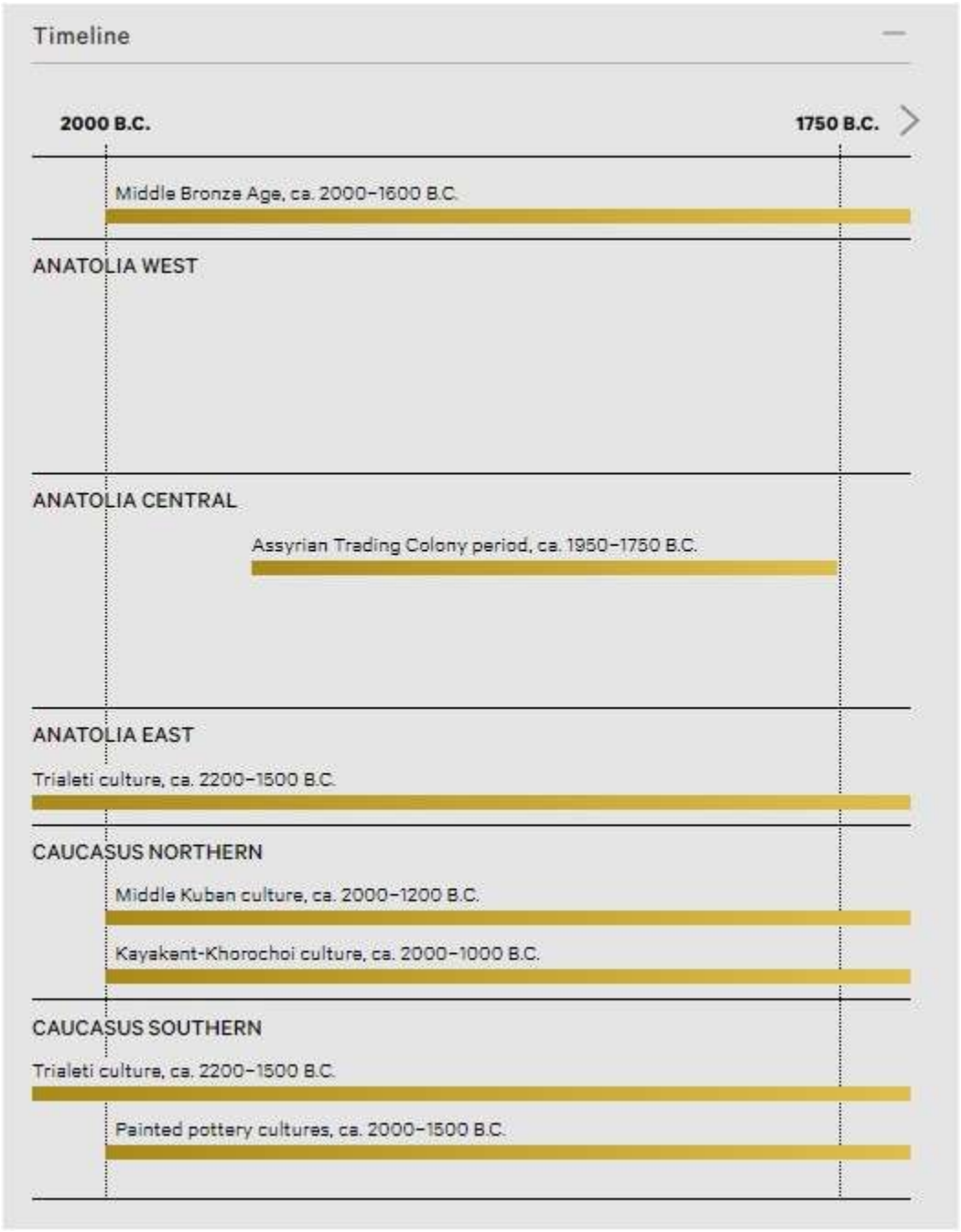
At the site of Alaca Höyük is a group of burials called the Royal Tombs, which contain elaborate gold jewelry, vessels of precious metal, and stag and bull standards of bronze. Though we may be able to identify the people buried here as Hattians,

a local Anatolian population, the significance and function of their art remains enigmatic. [i]

Anatolia and the Caucasus (2000–1000 B.C.)

Timeline

ca. 2000 B.C–1750 B.C.



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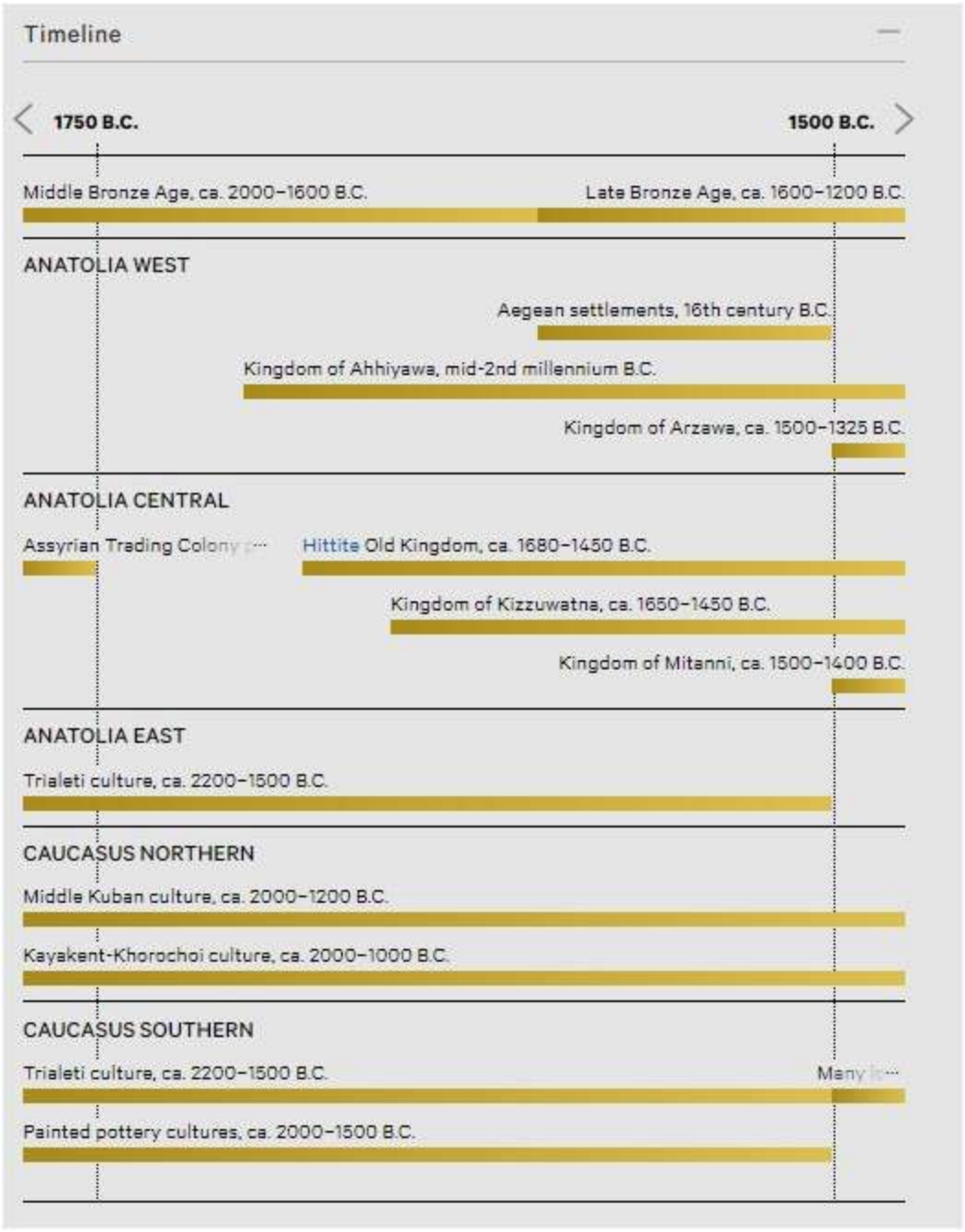
ca. 1750 B.C–1500 B.C.



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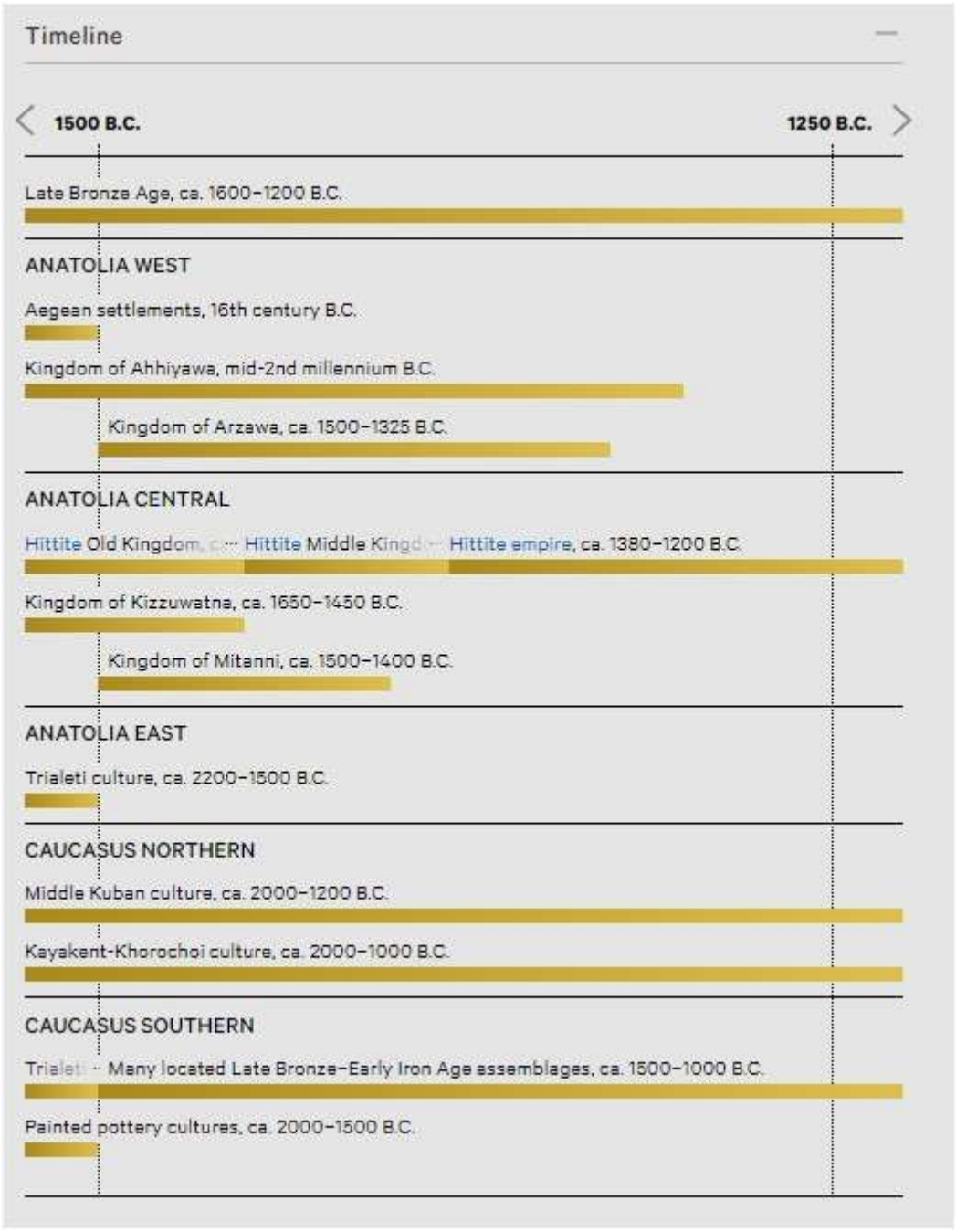
ca. 1500 B.C–1250 B.C.



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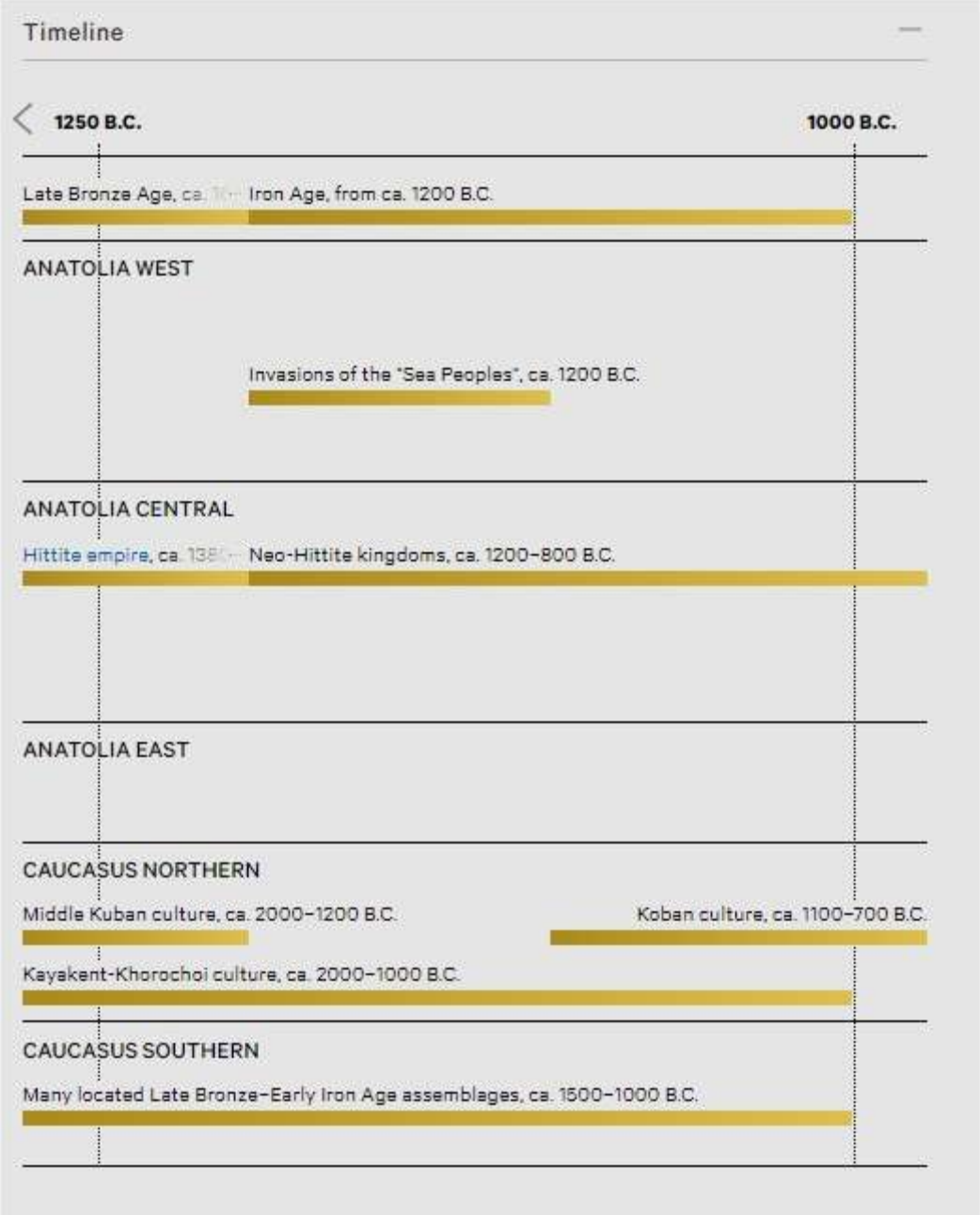
ca. 1250 B.C–1000 B.C.



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Overview

Precious metals such as silver, gold, and tin attract merchants to the Anatolian plateau, particularly from the northern Mesopotamian city of Ashur. These merchants establish trading centers (karum)—such as the one at Kanesh (modern Kültepe)—and the details of their transactions are documented in cuneiform tablets, the earliest texts found in the region. During the fourteenth century, the Hittite kingdom, with its capital at Hattusha (modern Bogazköy) and religious center at

Yazilikaya, creates an empire extending into northern Syria. By around 1200 B.C., Hattusha is violently destroyed and the Hittite empire collapses.

In the Caucasus, the earlier culture of Kura-Araxes gives way to the Trialeti culture, known for its particular form of burial. Large mounds with extensive underground graves contain bronze weapons, tools, and unique artifacts in gold and silver. i

Key Events

ca. 2200–1500 B.C.

In Georgia and part of Armenia, the Trialeti culture develops from the earlier Kura-Araxes tradition. Because their settlements are today difficult to find, some think that the peoples of the Southern Caucasus are pastoralists around this time. The elite are interred in large, very rich burials under earth and stone mounds, which sometimes contain four-wheeled carts. The precious materials in these tombs reflect influences from Anatolia; pottery from the Trialeti culture is found in simple burials in eastern Anatolia. i

ca. 1950–1750 B.C.

Assyrian merchants from northern Mesopotamia establish trading colonies (karum) in Anatolia at sites including Kültepe (ancient Kanesh). The presence of these merchants is known primarily from the large number of clay tablets (66.245.5b) that record the commercial transactions and correspondence between the merchants in Anatolia and those at home in Assyria. i

ca. 1700–1000 B.C.

In Homer's Iliad, the site of Troy, in Anatolia, is known as "Troia" or "Ilios." Archaeologists dispute which level of settlement at Troy is specifically referred to by Homer, but it is considered to be either late level VI (ca. 1700–1250 B.C.) or level VII (ca. 1250–1000 B.C.). In both levels, pottery from Mycenaean Greece is found, demonstrating connections between this part of Anatolia and Greece. In period VI, Troy is

an enormous settlement, among the largest trading centers in Anatolia at this time. i

ca. 1380–1340 B.C.

After many years of successful military campaigning, the Hittite empire, with its capital at Bogazköy (ancient Hattusha, founded ca. 1650 B.C.), reaches its maximum extent in central and southeast Anatolia as well as lands to the south, which border on Egyptian-controlled territory. The ruler Shuppiluliuma I (r. 1370-1330 B.C.) is both a great general and a master builder of large stone structures decorated with stone reliefs. It is during this time that concepts of the sacred nature of royal leaders develop. The influence of Hittite language, art, and ideas continues after the fall of the empire in independent states in southeastern Anatolia. i

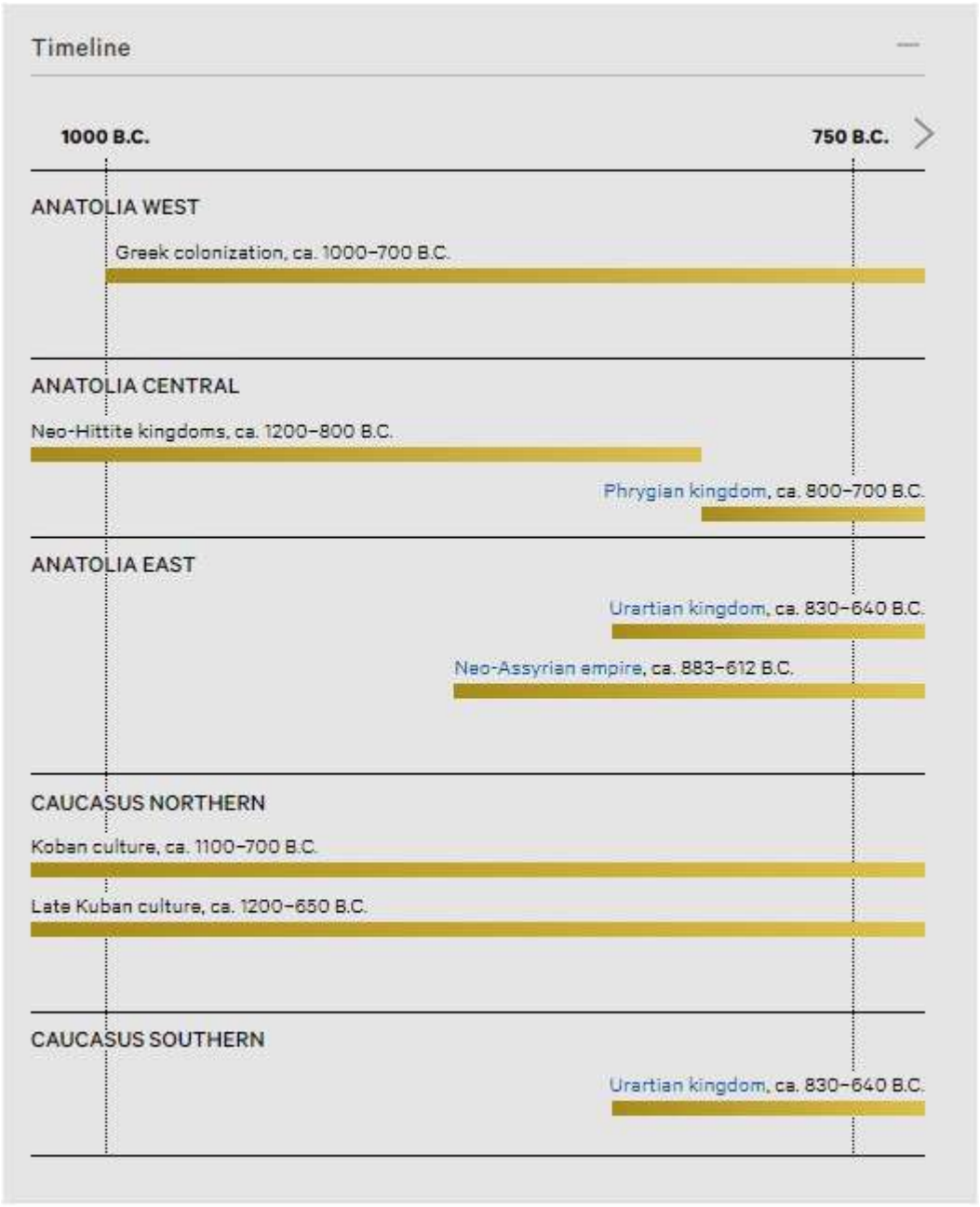
ca. 1200–800 B.C. and later

In West and Central Anatolia, this is a time of great social and political change, marked by invasions of many foreign groups, including the "Sea Peoples," Thracians, and Phrygians. Mycenaean settlements in the coastal areas come to an end, and the Hittite empire is destroyed. i

Anatolia and the Caucasus (Asia Minor) (1000 B.C.–1 A.D.)

Timeline

ca. 1000 B.C.–750 B.C.



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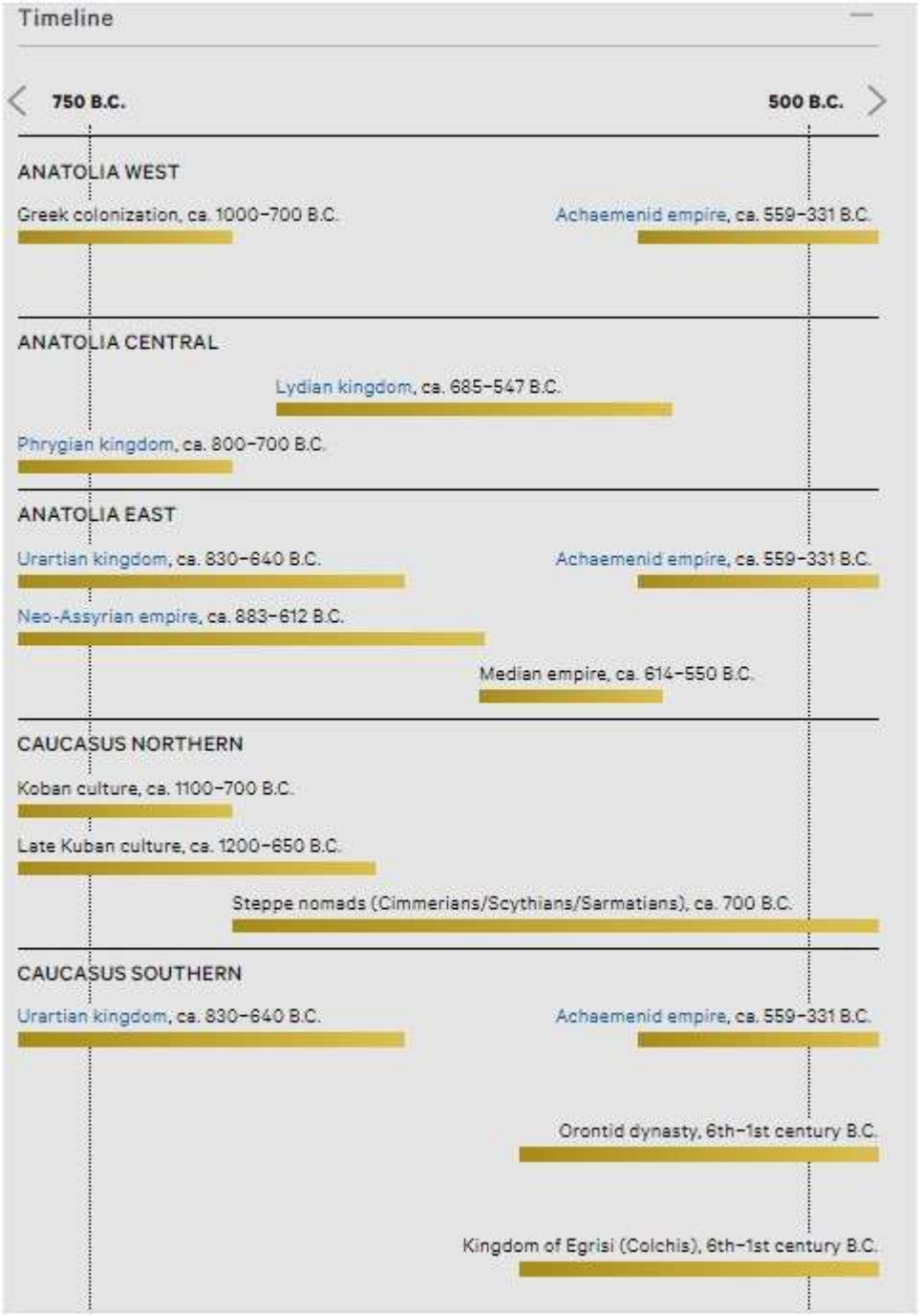
ca. 750 B.C.–500 B.C.



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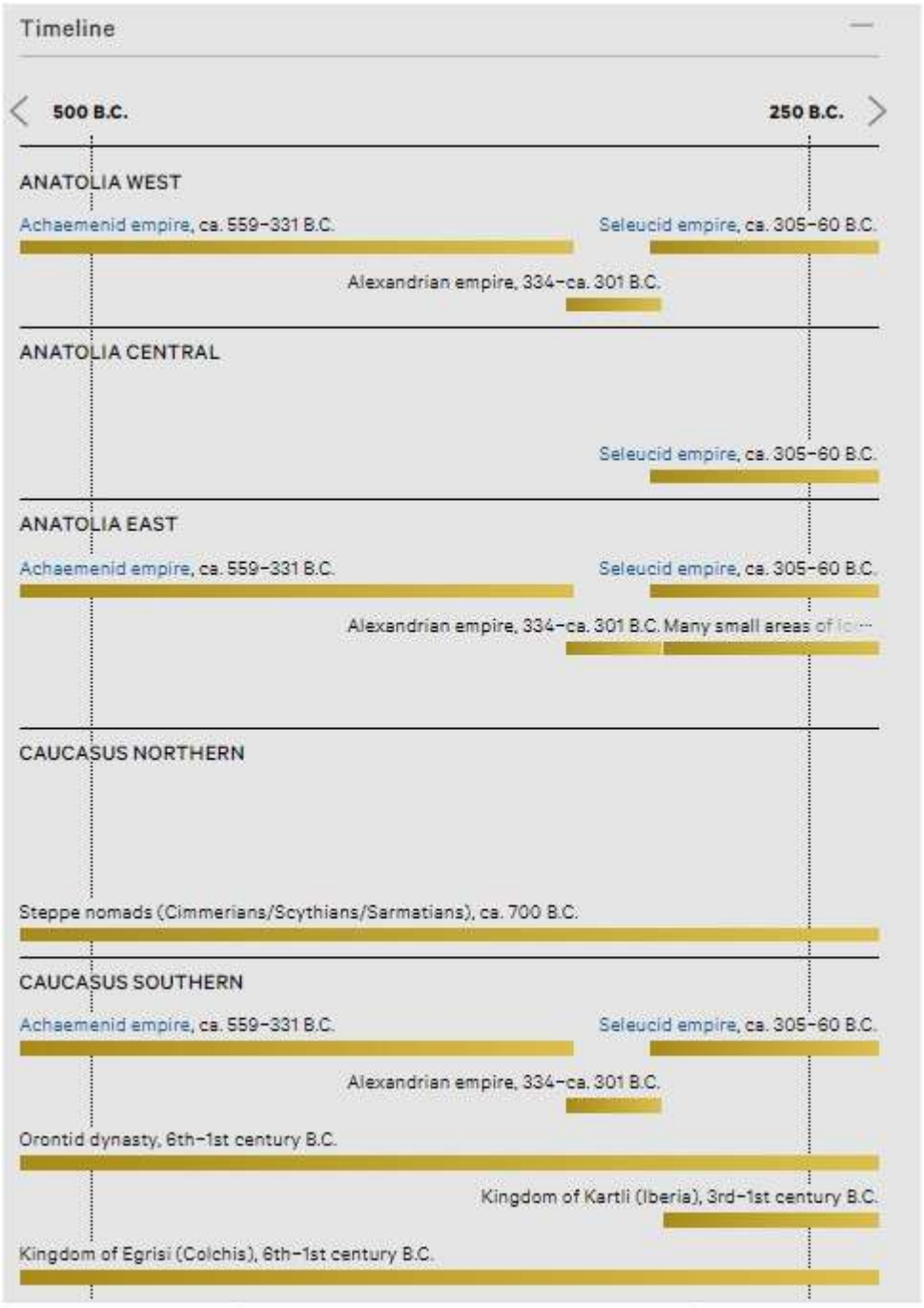
ca. 500 B.C.–250 B.C.



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ca. 250 B.C.–1 A.D.

i

Overview

In Anatolia, the first millennium B.C. begins in a period of disruption and decentralization: new states form and regroup. Greek colonies are established in southern and western Anatolia and, later, on the Black Sea coasts. By the late eighth century B.C., the Neo-Assyrian empire, with its capital cities in Mesopotamia, confronts small kingdoms in both Anatolia and

the Southern Caucasus, including Urartu, Phrygia, and (later) Lydia. From the mid-sixth century B.C., the area is ruled by Persian satraps (governors) as part of the vast Achaemenid empire. In 333 B.C., the armies of Alexander of Macedon launch their successful attack on the Persian empire. Within twenty years of Alexander's death (323 B.C.), his empire is divided into four kingdoms. Control of Anatolia is divided between the Seleucids—who dominate Syria and Mesopotamia—and the Ptolemies of Egypt. Cities on the Aegean coast remain independent. By 200 B.C., Rome's imperial ambitions fuel eastward expansion; by the first century B.C., the remaining Hellenistic kingdoms become vassal states. Emperor Augustus annexes Anatolia to Rome. i

Key Events

late 2nd–early 1st millennium B.C.

The cultures of the Northern and Southern Caucasus create enormous quantities of bronze weapons and ornaments. Settlers come to Anatolia from mainland and island Greece and establish colonies first on the western and southern coasts, and later on the coast of the Black Sea. Initially, these settlements are impelled by political forces outside of Greece and the growing density of Greek populations. By the eighth to seventh centuries B.C., colonies provide fish, grain, and other goods to the city-states of Greece, and Greek culture, art, and architecture spread to the coastal regions of Anatolia, influencing nearby cultures. i

ca. 730–?696 B.C.

King Midas rules the kingdom of Phrygia, which comprises the whole of Central and West Anatolia, from the Urartian frontier in the east to Lydia, with the capital at Gordion. The wealth of this kingdom, due to its position at the crossroads of many first-millennium trade routes, is reflected both in the myth of Midas, whose touch turns all to gold, and the richly appointed burials of the kings, located in wooden chambers under large earthen mounds. i

7th–early 6th century B.C.

The earliest coinage is invented by a Lydian ruler, possibly Croesus (r. ca. 560–546 B.C.). i

7th–4th century B.C.

The successive Median and Achaemenid empires conquer Anatolia and the Southern Caucasus from their capitals in Iran. i

333 B.C.

Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.) defeats the Achaemenid Persian king Darius III (r. 336–330 B.C.) in a battle at Issus near modern Iskenderun, Turkey. The Alexandrian conquest brings Hellenistic Greek art and culture to Anatolia and the Southern Caucasus, through the rule of Alexander and his Seleucid successors. Greek traditions continue until the Roman conquest of much of the same area, beginning in 133 B.C, when western Asia Minor becomes a Roman province. i

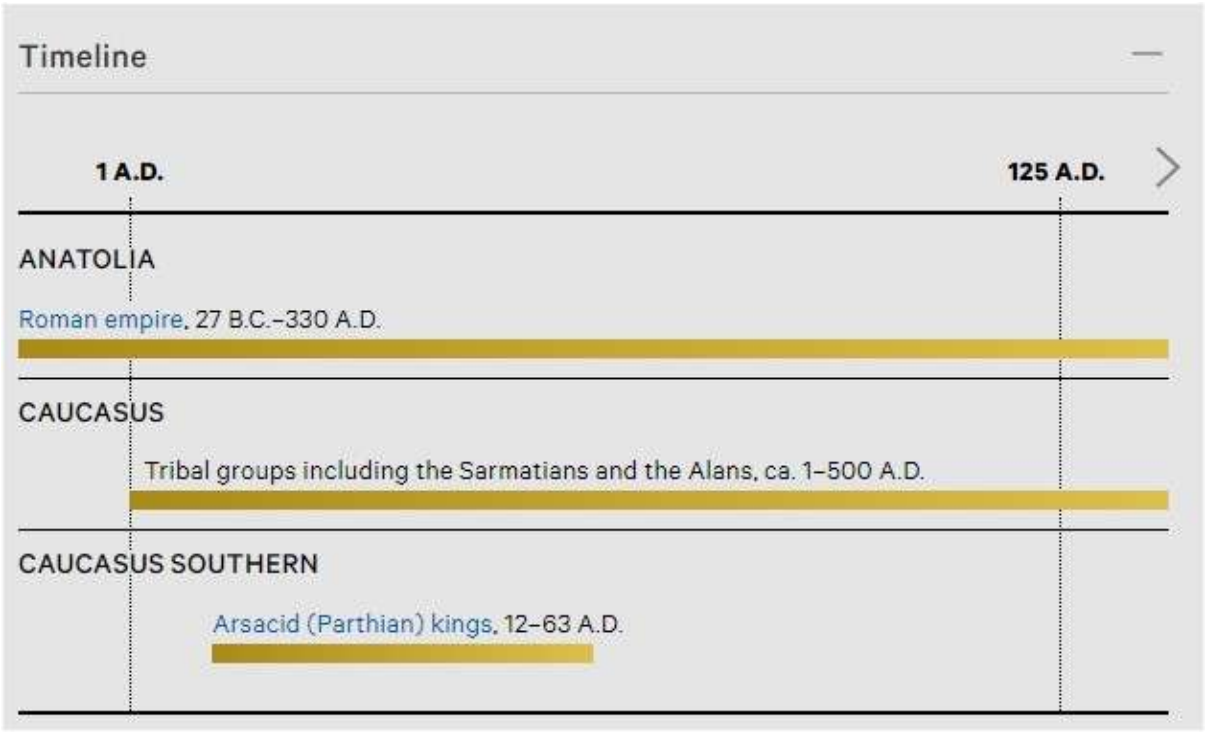
133 B.C.

Attalus III, king of Pergamon, bequeathes his realm to the Roman people, providing Rome with its first foothold in Asia. i

Asia Minor (Anatolia and the Caucasus) (1–500 A.D.)

Timeline

ca. 1 A.D.-125 A.D.



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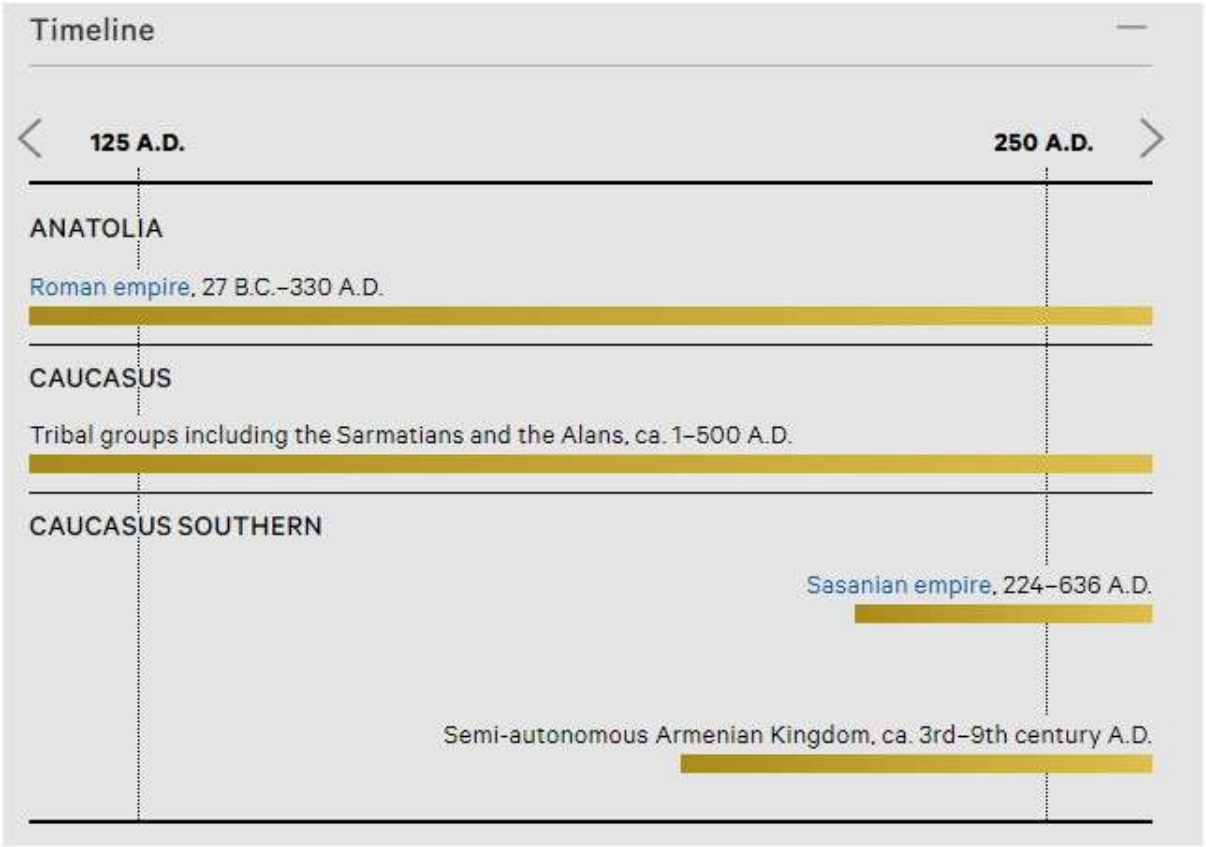
ca. 125 A.D.–250 A.D.



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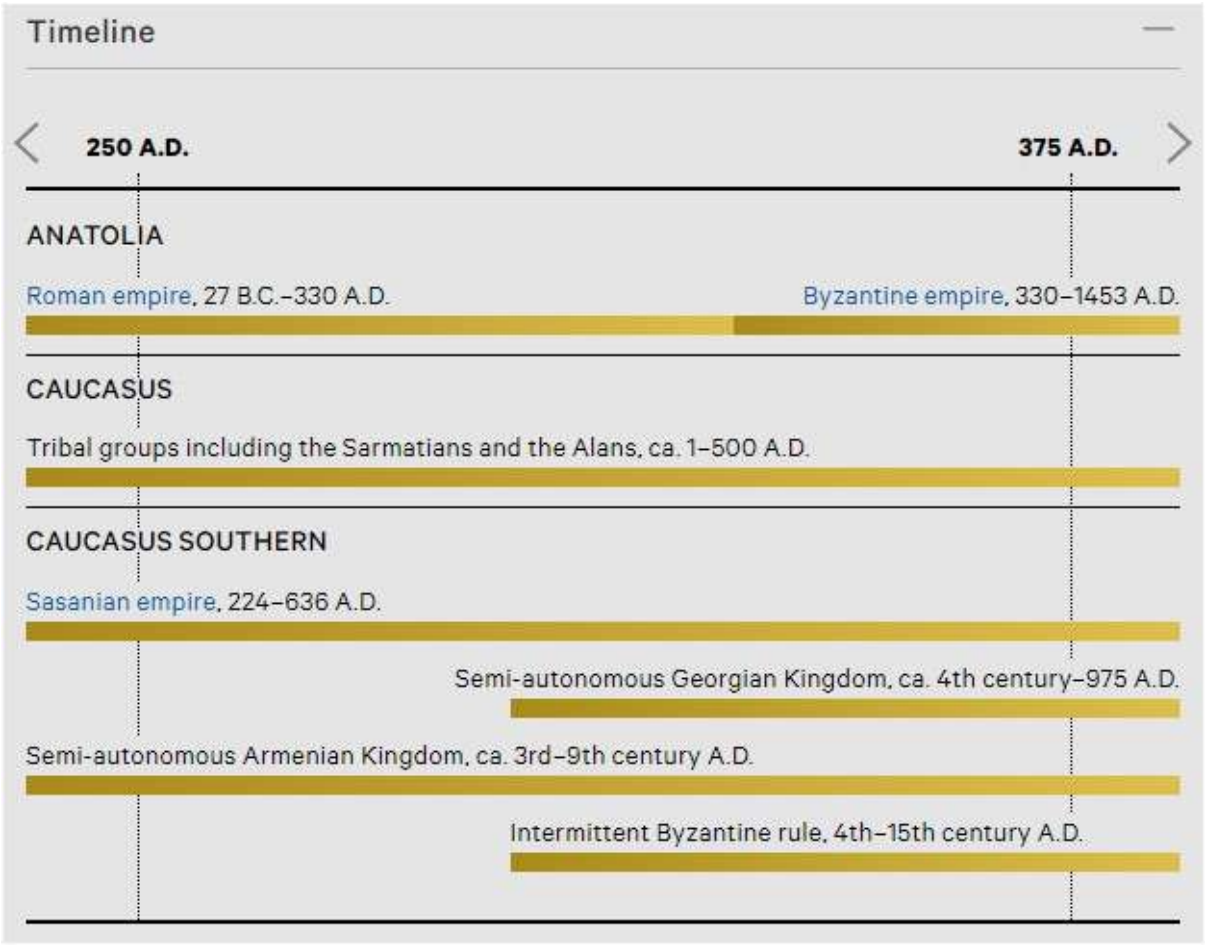
ca. 250 A.D.–375 A.D.



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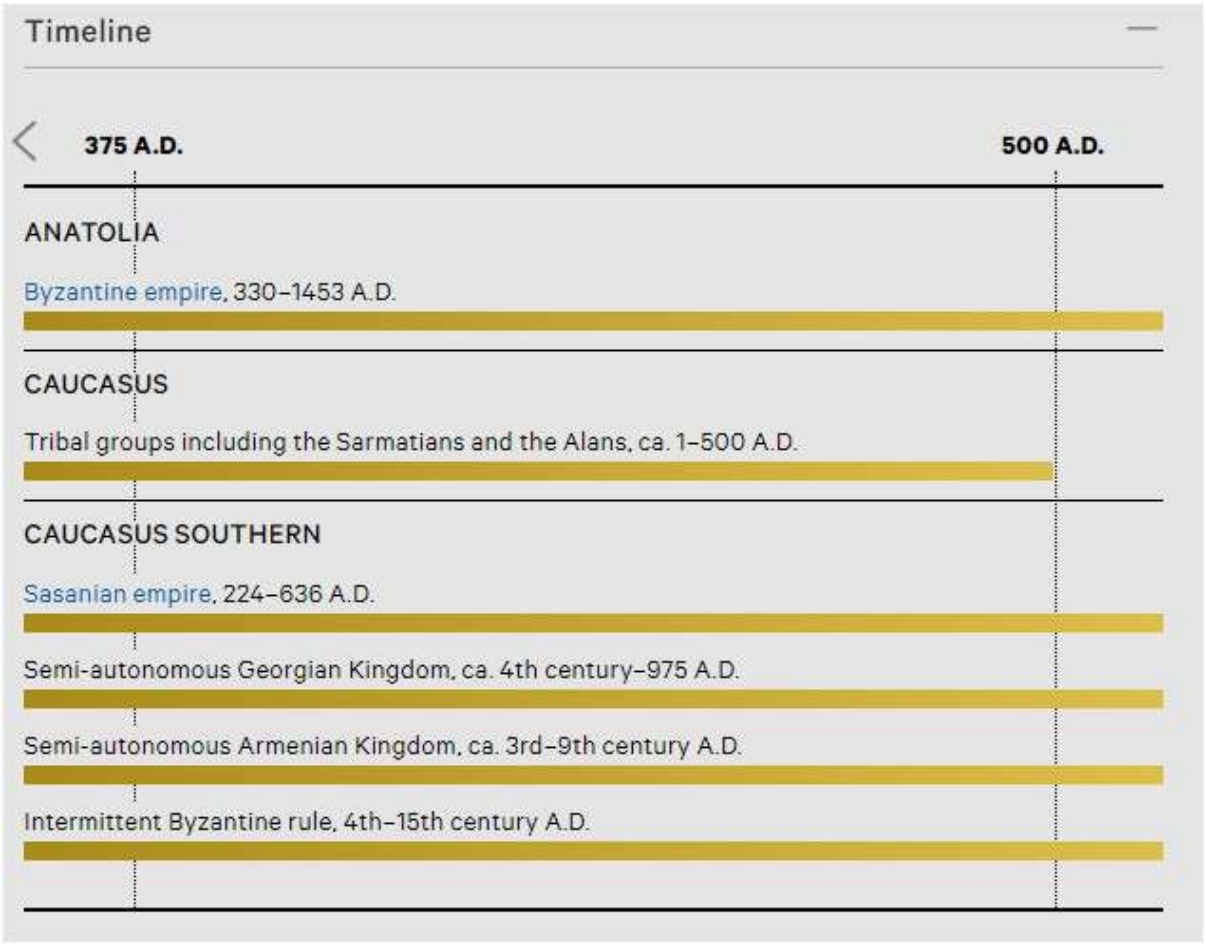
ca. 375 A.D.–500 A.D.



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Overview

From 25 B.C. to 235 A.D., five Roman provinces are established in Anatolia: Asia, Bithynia, Pontus, Galatia, and Cappadocia. During this period, numerous roads are built linking the highland cities to the Anatolian coast. Primarily designed for military use, they become important communication and trade routes. By the mid-third century, the expanding power of the Sasanian empire to the east, along with rebellious dynasts in the desert city of Palmyra to the south, threaten the collapse of the empire's frontiers. In response, fortifications are hastily built around major cities. During the fourth and fifth centuries, urban life prospers with a revival of classical forms in literature and the arts, especially sculpture. Christianity becomes the official religion of the Roman empire in the fourth century, and churches and other ecclesiastical buildings are rapidly built. i

Key Events

25 B.C.–235 A.D.

At the height of its power, the Roman empire controls Anatolia from the western coast to the Euphrates River, an area divided into five Roman provinces. The Roman cities of Anatolia, with their fertile farmland and extensive trade networks, become the richest in the empire. A vast road system marked by milestones and many new bridges is in place by the end of the first century A.D. throughout Anatolia and remains in good repair for about 300 years. i

1st–early 4th century A.D.

Christianity transforms the vocabulary of artistic expression, including new subjects for representation and new media such as church architecture. In the first century, Saint Paul introduces Christianity into Anatolia, where it becomes a recognized religion in the early fourth century. Armenia is a Christian state by 314 A.D. and Georgia converts in the late 330s A.D. Christianity is recognized as the official religion of the imperial territories in 380 A.D. i

ca. 1 A.D.–5th century A.D.

The political situation in the area of the Southern Caucasus is in a state of flux for several centuries as the Roman and then Byzantine empires fight with the Parthian and Sasanian empires for control of the Near East. Independent states exist intermittently in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. i

17 A.D.

An earthquake levels twelve cities in western Anatolia, including Sardis. The rebuilding of these cities under the direction of the Roman emperor Tiberius results in their transformation from Greek or Hellenistic to Roman plans, including Roman architectural forms such as the hippodrome and the monumental arch, as well as long, broad main streets. Roman architecture and city planning are not restricted to these rebuilt cities, but are introduced in many other cities in

Anatolia and the Southern Caucasus, as well as elsewhere in the empire. i

late 3rd–4th century A.D.

Catacomb burials may be those of the Alans, a tribal group new to the Caucasus. The burials contain ceramics similar to those of the urban centers to the south, as well as iron weapons. Bronze belt plaques covered with gold are decorated with stylized snakes, birds, and human figures. i

324 A.D.

The emperor Constantine moves the capital of the Roman empire to the site of Byzantium, which is now referred to as Constantinople or New Rome. i

395 A.D.

Upon the death of the emperor Theodosius, the empire is formally split in half. The Eastern Roman Empire, with its capital at Constantinople, becomes the Byzantine empire. i

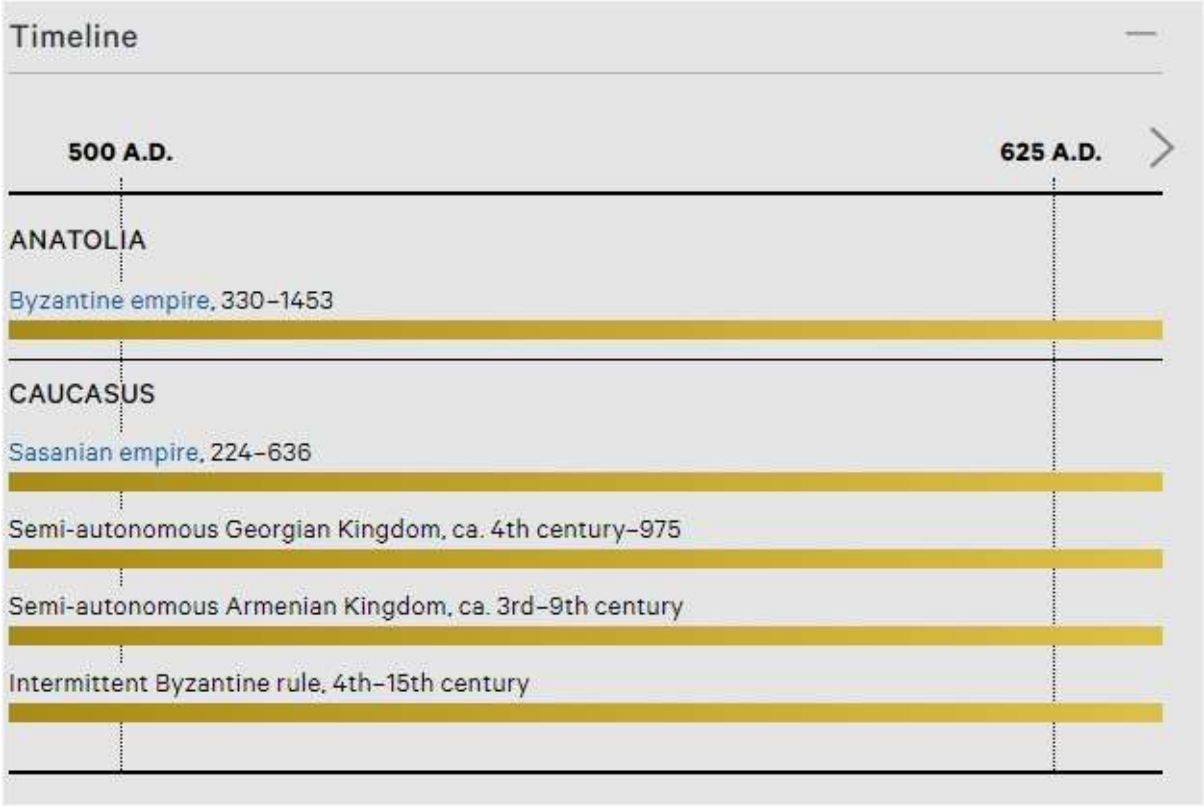
5th century A.D.

The Georgian and Armenian alphabets are created, initially for ecclesiastical use. i

Anatolia and the Caucasus (500–1000 A.D.)

Timeline

500 A.D.–625 A.D.



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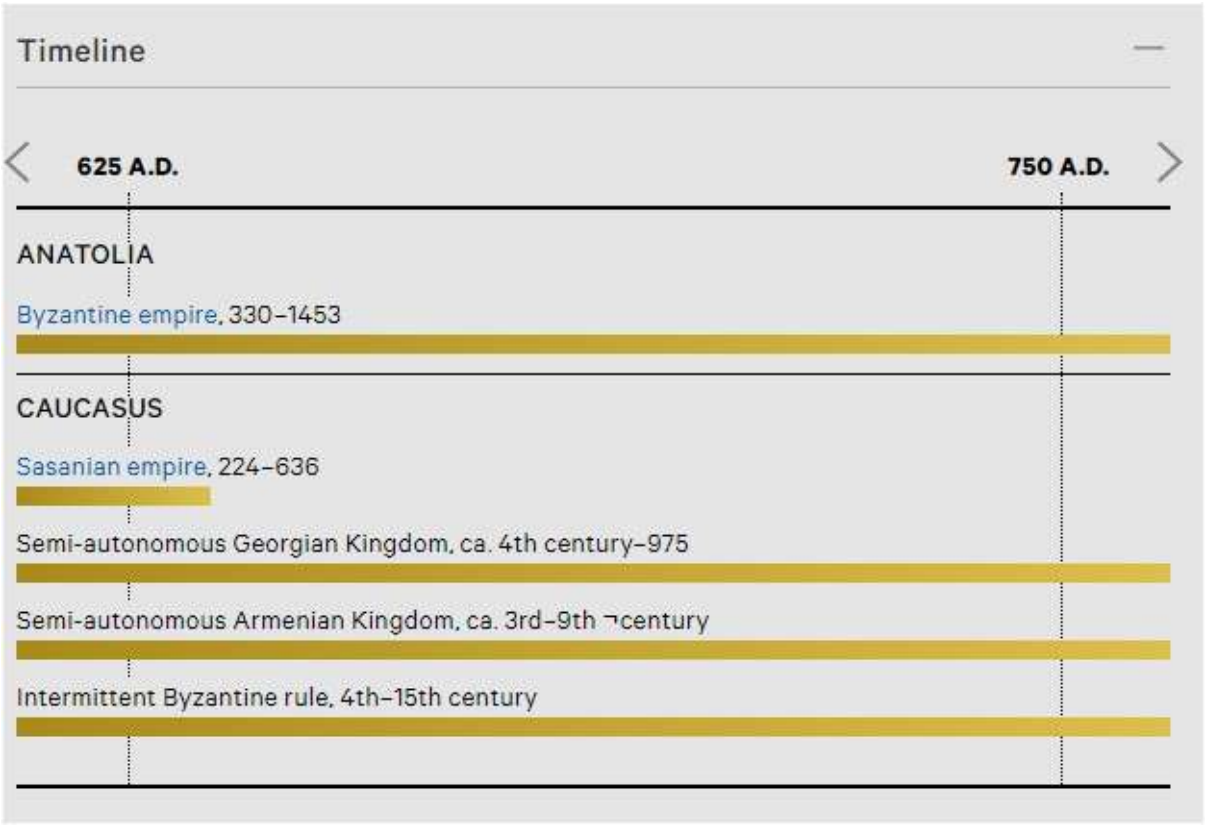
625 A.D.–750 A.D.



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750 A.D.–875 A.D.

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875 A.D.–1000 A.D.

i

Overview

Anatolia remains one of the most important territories of the Byzantine empire during this period. Eastern Anatolia becomes increasingly militarized in the 600s due to Persian and Arab invasions. The Iconoclastic controversy affects all of the empire, including this region, until around 850, when Byzantium restores economic prosperity and military security. During this period, the Armenians and Georgians establish themselves as relatively independent Christian states on the empire's eastern frontier. In Anatolia, Byzantine art and architecture flourishes, particularly in the sixth-century cities along the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts—including Ephesus, Sardis, and Aphrodisias—and in the region of Cappadocia, notable for its medieval rock-cut structures. i

Key Events

ca. 500

Beginning in the early sixth century, monumental rock-cut architecture flourishes in the Byzantine region of Cappadocia in Central Anatolia. Large basilica churches as well as domestic dwellings are hewn from the soft volcanic tuff. Modern travelers describe these sculpted edifices as “fairy chimneys.” i

510

Sasanian Persians conquer the independent kingdom of Caucasian Albania, a state converted to Christianity in the fourth century by Armenian missionaries. Following closely upon these conquests, in 523, eastern Georgia and Armenia again fall to the Sasanians. By the early seventh century, eastern Byzantine centers such as Sebasteia (modern Sivas) and Caesarea Mazaca (now Kayseri) are under Persian control. i

548–565

The cruciform basilica of Saint John at Ephesus is rebuilt by the emperor Justinian I (r. 527–65), who adds six domes to the original design in emulation of the Holy Apostles Church in Constantinople. As an important seaport and seat of the metropolitan bishop, Ephesus continues to prosper into the early seventh century, when large areas of the city are destroyed, the result of the Persian invasion and earthquakes. i

550

The churches of Georgia and Armenia split. While the Armenian church remains independent, the Georgian church unites with the Byzantine. This ecclesiastical union deepens political and cultural contact between the two states. As a sign of Georgia’s status vis-à-vis Byzantium, Georgian princes are vested with honorific titles of the Byzantine court, including kouropalates, or “minister of the imperial palace.” i

591

The Byzantine emperor Maurice (r. 582–602) extends the empire's eastern border, absorbing portions of western Armenia. In the same period, the Byzantine church unsuccessfully attempts to bring the church of Armenia under its authority. i

ca. 650

Islam makes inroads into the region as Arab forces begin to occupy eastern Georgia and Armenia, and western territories are organized as a military frontier. In response, an extensive system of fortifications is added along Byzantium's eastern border in Anatolia. i

ca. 700

Citing Old Testament warnings against idolatry, certain bishops in Byzantine Anatolia, including Thomas of Claudiopolis and Constantine of Nakoleia, argue against the use of icons in religious worship. Their objections contribute to the development of the Iconoclastic controversy (726–843). i

726

The Byzantine emperor Leo III (r. 717–41) initiates the first Iconoclastic legislation. Four years later, Leo orders the removal of figural images from all churches. i

ca. 9th century

As the power of the Abbasid caliphate declines, elite Armenian families establish kingdoms independent of both Abbasid and Byzantine rulers: the Bagratid dynasty in the north (now Armenia and northeastern Turkey), and the Vaspurakan dynasty in the south (present-day southeastern Turkey). Native Armenian goods exported for sale include precious metals such as silver and copper, and red-dyed, embroidered textiles. i

ca. 800–1000

Aristocratic life in ninth- and tenth-century eastern Anatolia inspires the Byzantine epic-romance Digenis Akritas, or "Two-Blooded Border Lord." The surviving text of this verse poem, compiled sometime during the twelfth century, tells the story of Anatolian communities situated on the borders between Byzantium and Arab emirates. Digenis' father is an Arab amir who marries the daughter of a Byzantine general. Digenis' magnificent palace and church, as well as his tomb monument, are vividly described in the poem. i

944

The city of Edessa (modern Urfa in Turkey) is recovered by the Byzantine army and the renowned relic of the Holy Mandylion, a textile bearing the impression of Christ's face, is conveyed from the city, where it had been kept since the first century, to Constantinople. There the miraculous relic is deposited in the Pharos chapel of the Great Palace of the Byzantine emperors. i

963–989

Local magnates in Cappadocia revolt against Byzantine central authority, threatening the emperor's control over Anatolia. Basil II (r. 976–1025) restores imperial power in the region, seizing the wealth of local aristocratic families who had inspired the rebellion. i

978

With the ascension of Bagrat III (978–1019), all of Georgia is united under a single ruler. i

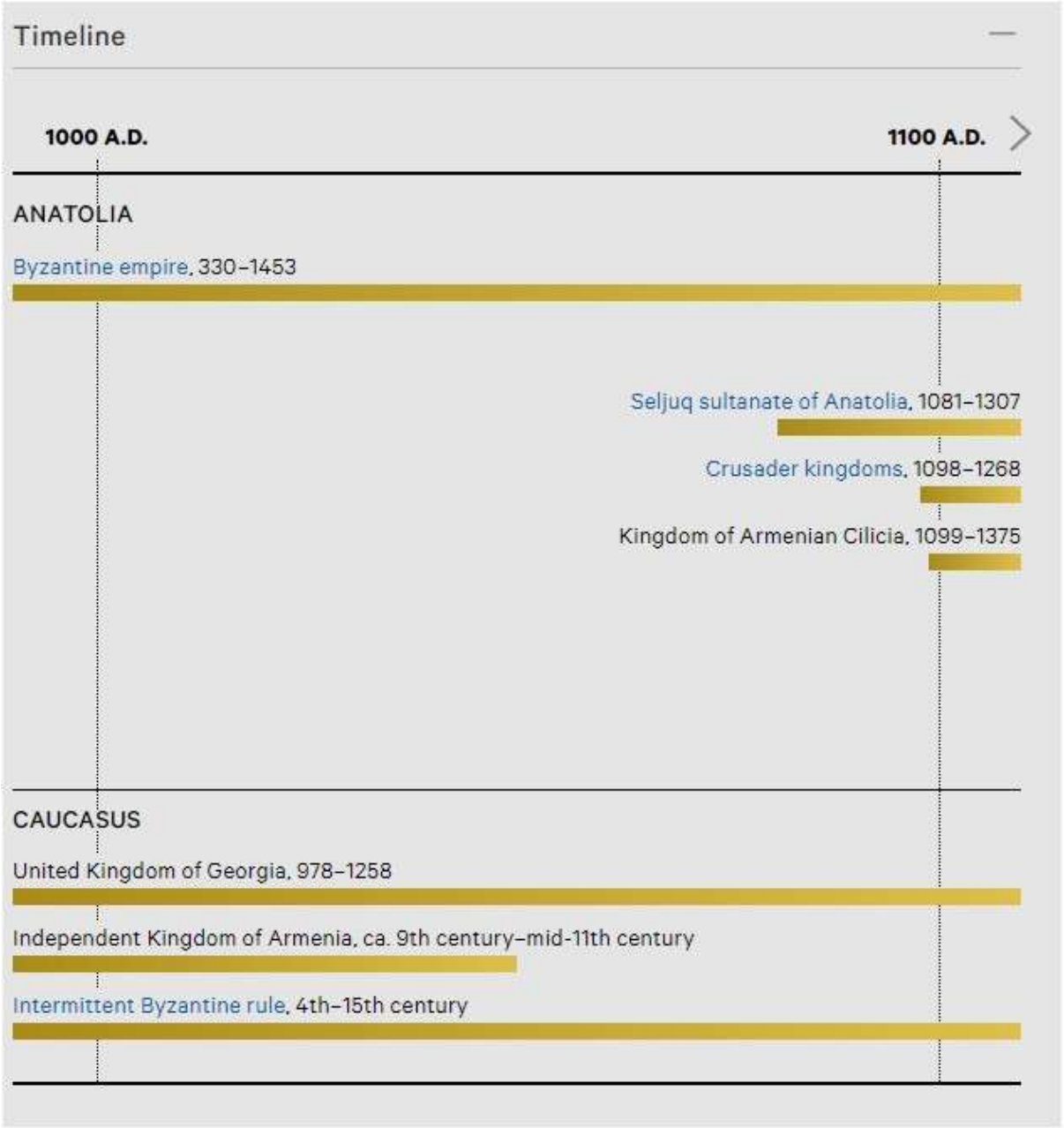
989

After the collapse of Hagia Sophia's dome in Constantinople, the Armenian architect Trdat is commissioned to repair damages. The tradition of domed architecture in Armenian building provides a training ground for architects such as Trdat. i

Anatolia and the Caucasus (1000–1400 A.D.)

Timeline

1000 A.D.–1100 A.D.



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1100 A.D.–1200 A.D.

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1200 A.D.–1300 A.D.

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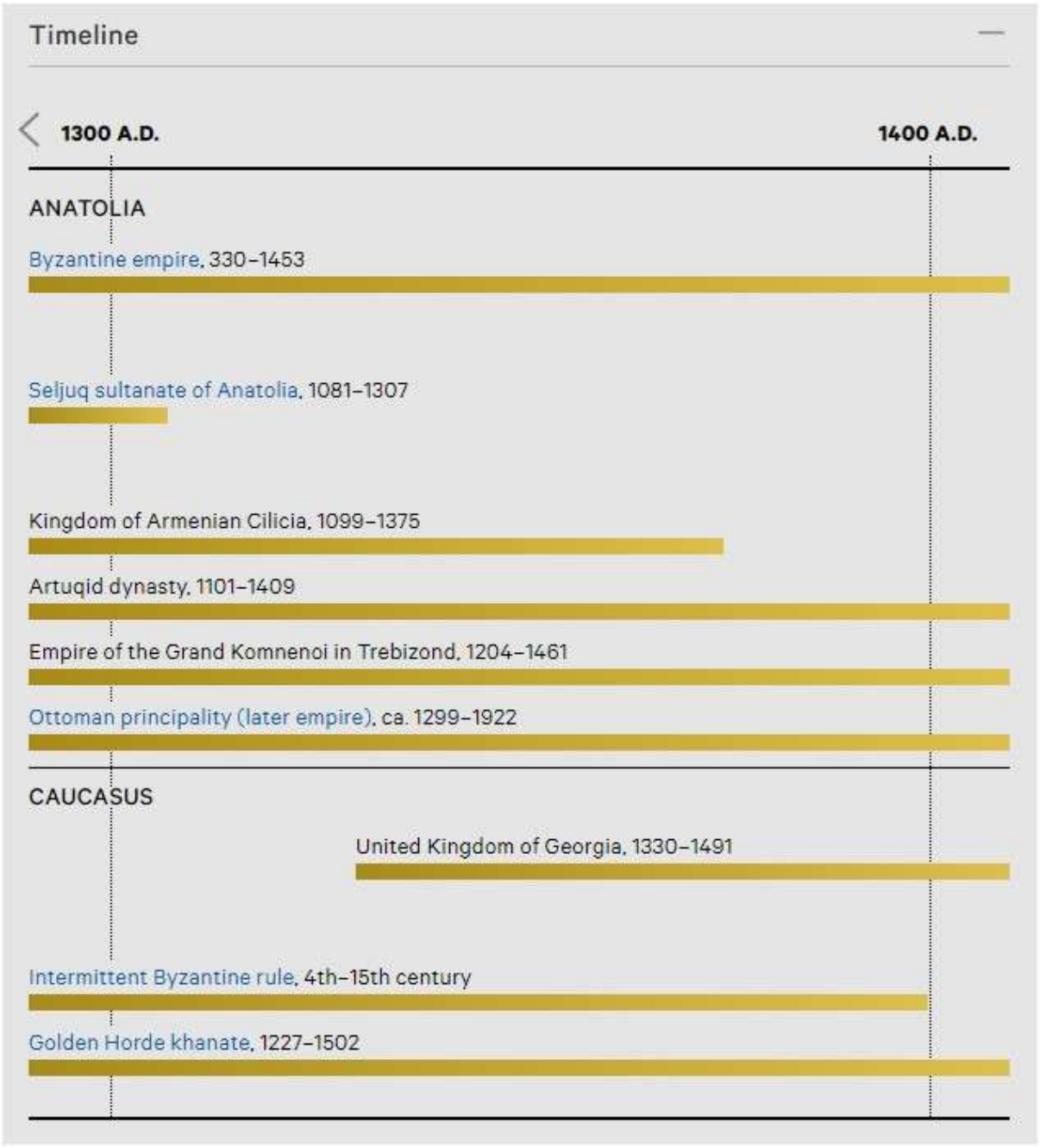
1300 A.D.–1400 A.D.



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Overview

The period from 1000 to 1400 in Anatolia and the Caucasus is a time of Turkic and Muslim expansion at the expense of the Byzantine empire's eastern territories. The arrival of the Crusaders from the west, especially the conquest of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade in 1204, further undermines the civil authority of the Byzantine state. The advance of the Mongol armies from the east also fragments power in the region. Anatolia will not be reunified until the

Ottoman conquests in the late fifteenth century. The plurality of the period, however, brings cross-cultural exchange and innovations in the arts as well as architecture. i

Key Events

ca. 1025

Under the Byzantine emperor Basil II (r. 976–1025), western Armenian territories are annexed and Byzantium reaches its greatest medieval extent. i

1071

The defeat of the Byzantine army by Seljuq forces at the Battle of Manzikert (in present-day eastern Turkey) leads to the penetration, settlement, and conquest of Anatolia by Turkic tribes. At this time, Armenia passes under Seljuq rule, while Georgia expands its control over the Caucasus. A branch of the Seljuqs establishes its own realm in Anatolia and rule from Nicaea (modern Iznik). The Turkic/Muslim expansion prompts the First Crusade. i

1087

The relics of Saint Nicholas, patron saint of seafarers, are stolen by Italian sailors from his patron church in Myra on the Mediterranean coast of Anatolia and transported to Bari in southern Italy, where the saint’s cult flourishes. i

1096–1097

At the invitation of the Byzantine court, the first Crusaders arrive in Anatolia en route to the Holy Land. Their capture of Nicaea (Iznik) forces the Anatolian Seljuqs to find a new capital, which is eventually established in Konya (1116). i

1101–1409

Two branches of the Artuqid dynasty rule in southeastern Anatolia. Architecture and the arts, especially metalwork and textiles, reflect Seljuq influences and contact with Byzantium and the Crusaders. i

1147

The city of Ephesus serves as a staging point for the Second Crusade, en route to the Holy Land. i

ca. 1200–1300

A period of tremendous cultural activity in Anatolia, with a synthesis of different immigrant traditions; important personages include Ibn al-ʻArabi (philosopher), Maulana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi (spiritual leader), and Yunus Emre (poet). i

1204

Byzantium is conquered and occupied by Western armies of the Fourth Crusade. As plunders of war, Byzantine works of art are dispersed throughout the Western medieval world. In place of a centralized Byzantine government, with its one capital in Constantinople, independent Byzantine states in exile are established in the former imperial provinces: the empire of Nicaea (1204–61), the empire of the Grand Komnenoi at Trebizond (1204–1461), and the despotate of Epirus (1204–1318). i

1205–1243

The zenith of Anatolian Seljuq power. Besides centralization and military expansion, trade and artistic creativity also define this period. The caravanserais built for traveling merchants, as well as the architectural activity during the reign of ʻAla’ al-Din Kai Qubad I (r. 1219–37), including his palace and mosque in Konya, are especially noteworthy. i

1227–1502

The Golden Horde khanate rules the western part of the Mongol empire in the Caucasus and the Volga basin north of the Black and Caspian seas. At its greatest extent, the khanate stretches from the Danube to the River Irtysh in Siberia. i

1243

The Seljuqs are defeated by the Ilkhanids, the Mongol dynasty ruling in Iran, at the Battle of Köse Dagh, and are forced to pay a large tribute; Anatolia becomes closely linked to Iran politically, culturally, and artistically. i

1261

A new Byzantine emperor, Michael VIII Palaiologos (r. 1259–82), emerges from exile in the state of Nicaea and recovers Constantinople, reestablishing the empire on a much reduced scale. i

ca. 1261–1310

Dozens of independent regional principalities, including the Osmanli (Ottomans) in northwestern Anatolia, replace the relative unity of Seljuq rule and become prominent after the fall of the Ilkhanids. While this fragmented power continues until Ottoman supremacy in the late fifteenth century, the courts of these regional dynasties provide multiple centers of artistic patronage. i

ca. 1314

With the move of its capital to Kutaisi, the western Georgian kingdom enters a period of increased diplomacy and trade with the empire of the Grand Komnenoi at Trebizond. i

ca. 1350

The Grand Komnenoi form marriage alliances between Byzantine princesses in Trebizond and Turkmen rulers in the east. i

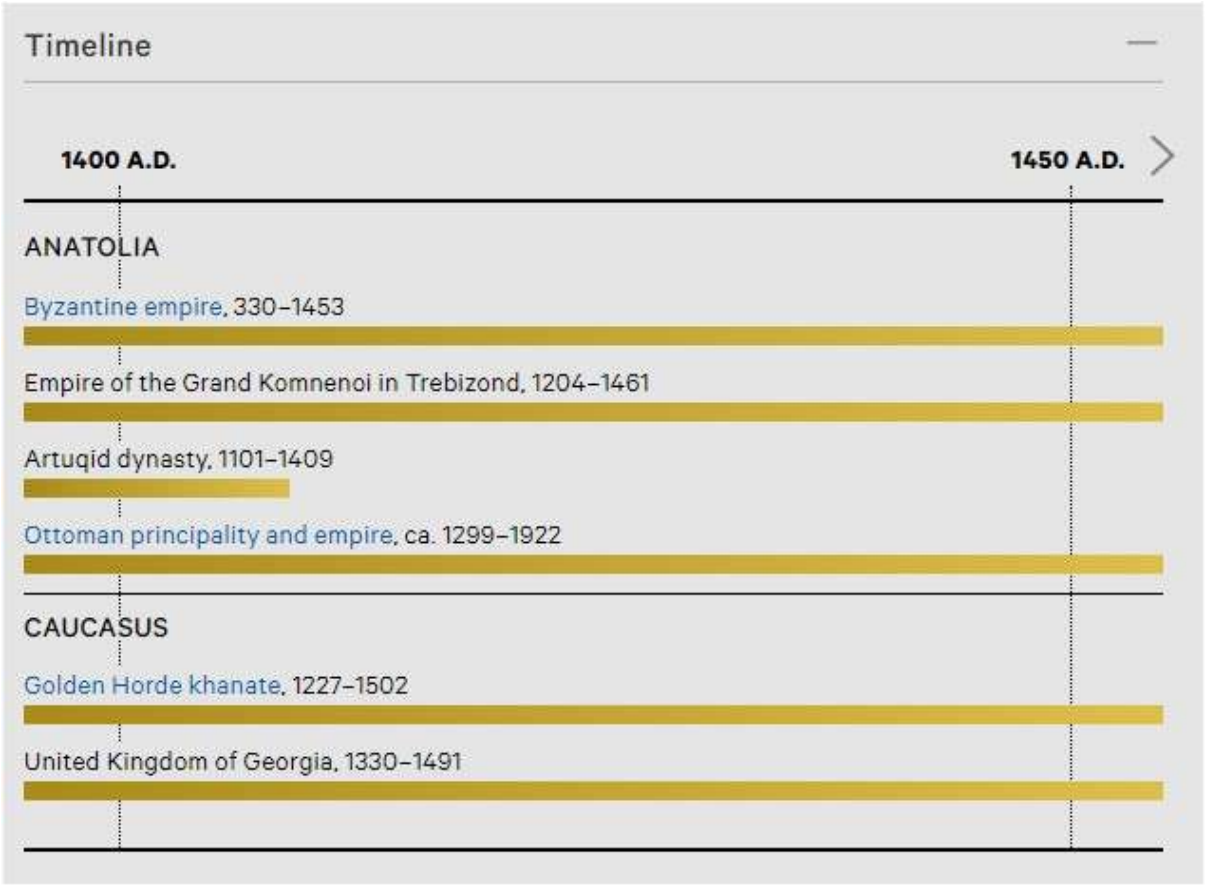
1389–1403

Reign of Bayezid I (“the Thunderbolt”), the Ottoman ruler whose conquests in Anatolia and the Balkans bring on the fatal battle against Timur (Tamerlane), the great Turko-Mongol ruler. Bayezid is equally ambitious in his patronage, which is exemplified by the Great Mosque of Bursa (1396–1400). i

Anatolia and the Caucasus (1400–1600 A.D.)

Timeline

1400 A.D.–1450 A.D.



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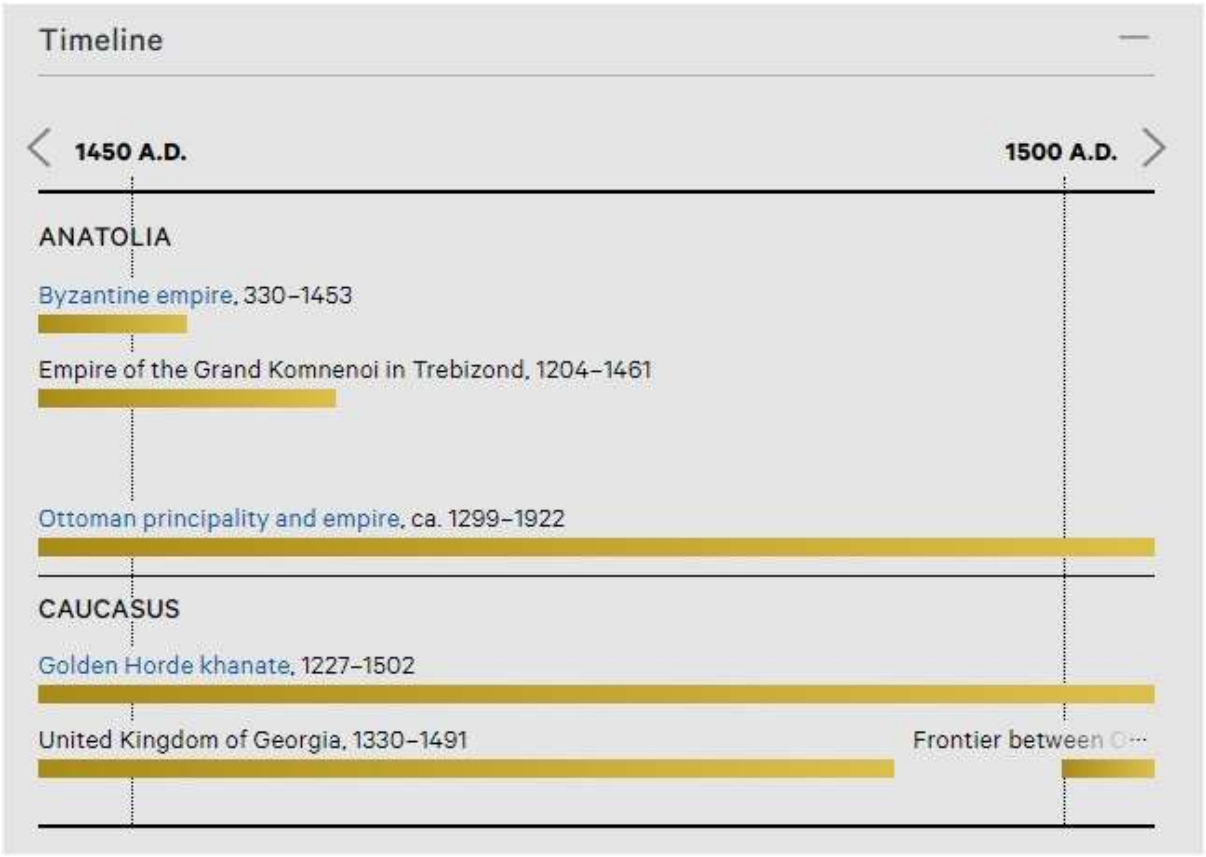
1450 A.D.–1500 A.D.



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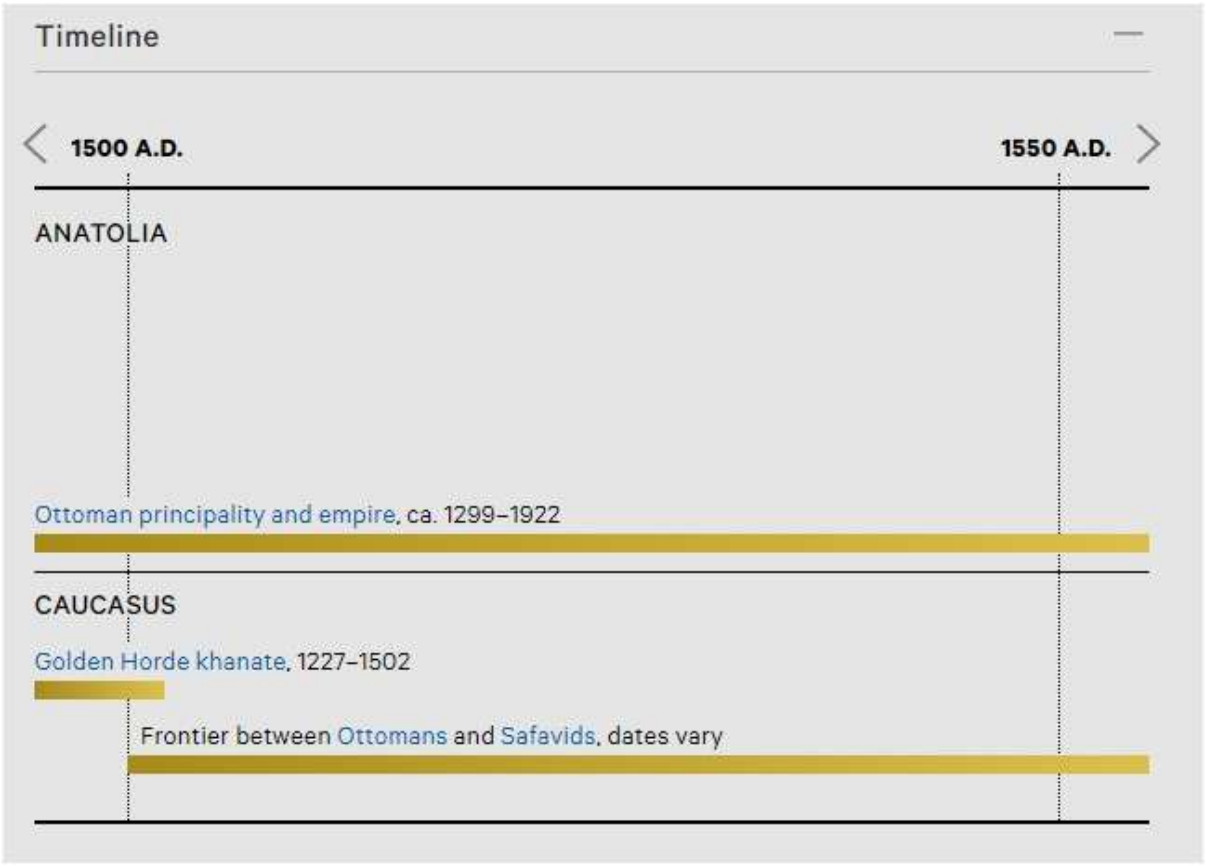
1500 A.D.–1550 A.D.



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1550 A.D.–1600 A.D.

i

Overview

During the period from 1400 to 1600 A.D., Anatolia and the Caucasus witness a shift from the earlier fragmentation (1000–1400 A.D.) to increased unification. While the Caucasian region remains independent during the earlier half of this period and then becomes a frontier zone between the Ottoman and Safavid empires, Anatolia is tied to Ottoman imperial capitals in the Balkan peninsula, Edirne (Adrianople) and Istanbul (Constantinople). With the great Ottoman expansion in the sixteenth century, Anatolia becomes part of a world empire. Earlier heterogeneity gives way to a uniquely Ottoman synthesis of different artistic traditions. i

Key Events

1402–1403

Conquests in Anatolia and the Balkans under the Ottoman ruler Bayezid I ("the Thunderbolt," r. 1389–1403), lead to the fatal battle of Ankara against Timur (Tamerlane), the great Central Asian Turko-Mongol ruler. In the aftermath of Bayezid's death, his sons fight for the throne while recently conquered regions declare their autonomy. Through the vassalage of Anatolian principalities and the influx of artisans, Timurid influences are seen in the arts of Anatolia. i

1413–1421

Emerging victorious from the interregnum after his father Bayezid's death, Mehmet I reestablishes a unified Ottoman state. During his reign, Bursa is a cultural center attracting migrant artists, especially from Iran. New techniques are introduced into the artistic vocabulary. Mehmet's convent-mosque and tomb complex (begun 1419, popularly known as "Green" after the color of the tiles covering his mausoleum), built in stone, is lavishly decorated inside with cuerda seca tiles and elaborate woodwork. i

1453–1481

After his conquest of Constantinople, which puts an end to the Byzantine empire, Mehmet II ("the Conqueror," r. 1444–46 and 1451–81) sets out to unify Anatolia under Ottoman rule. Mehmet's takeover of various lands, including the realms of Trebizond and Karaman, ends the long period of fragmentation following Anatolian Seljuq rule. With a keen interest in centralization, Mehmet ties Anatolia to his new capital. In doing so, he also relocates artists and scholars in order to realize his imperial ambitions of creating a world empire together with a rich artistic tradition. i

1481–1512

During the reign of Bayezid II, a conservative religious reaction against Mehmet's cosmopolitan outlook and centralizing interests surfaces. Social unrest in the eastern Anatolian provinces creates tension with the newly emerging Safavid polity in Iran. In terms of the arts, Bayezid focuses on

architectural patronage, commissioning buildings in the cities of Tokat, Amasya, and Manisa. i

ca. 1500–1600

Several cities in the western Anatolian region develop into major artistic and commercial centers. While Iznik is renowned for ceramics and Bursa for silks and textiles, various cities are recognized in the production of carpets. i

1512

Usurping power from his father Bayezid, Selim I ("the Grim") proceeds to confront religious turmoil and sectarian divisions in eastern Anatolia, which bring him into conflict with Safavid Iran. The Ottoman victory at the Battle of Çaldıran (1514) leads to the increased presence of Iranian artists and works of art at the Ottoman court. During his eight-year rule, Selim adds Syria, Egypt, and the Holy Cities of Islam (Mecca and Medina) to the Ottoman realm. Through this expansion, Anatolia is politically unified with immediately neighboring Arab provinces to the south. i

1520–1566

The reign of Süleyman, popularly known as "the Magnificent" or "the Lawmaker," is often regarded as "the Golden Age" and is defined by geographic expansion, trade, economic growth, and tremendous cultural and artistic activity. During this period, the Ottoman realm in Anatolia is extended toward Tabriz (Iran) and Baghdad (Iraq) in 1534 and into Georgia in 1549. The region becomes part of an empire whose control extends from present-day Hungary to the Caucasus, from Crimea to the eastern Mediterranean, Arabian Peninsula, and North Africa. i

1539–1588

Sinan, the only architect among the great Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal dynasties to become famous by name, is chief of the Corps of Royal Architects under sultans Süleyman I, Selim II (r. 1566–74), and Murad III (r. 1574–95). Born to a

Christian family in the Central Anatolian city of Kayseri, Sinan rose through the Ottoman ranks to become one of the most celebrated Islamic architects of all time. His designs for hundreds of public service buildings are carried out throughout the Ottoman empire. i

Anatolia and the Caucasus, 1600–1800 A.D.

Timeline

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Overview

After great military successes throughout the sixteenth century, the Ottomans face a series of setbacks in the seventeenth. The siege of Vienna against the Habsburgs ends unsuccessfully in 1683, and soon afterward Hungary and Transylvania break free of the empire. In the east, parts of Iraq are lost to the Safavids. The Ottomans continue to hold onto most provinces, but locals gain greater power in determining their governors, and by the 1800s the Ottomans face a new threat in the form of Russian expansionism. The arts, however, continue to flourish and in this period are transformed under the influence of the European Baroque. i

Source

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