

Transitions and Transformations

250-900CE

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

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Agenda

Transformation of the Ancient World (250-900)

The Medieval World (1000-1300)

Recovery, Collapse, and Reform: Rise of the Global Maritime Age (1400-1650)

The Beginning of the Great Divergence (1650-1800)

This week:

Introduction

Importance of History

- Empirical Theory of Knowledge

Perception and Analysis of History

Eurocentric Perspectives

- Familiarising yourselves with Antiquity and Late-Antiquity Transitions

Introduction

Foundations for Modern States

- Influence of late antiquity on modern state formation
- Development of international systems

Historical Thoughts and Approaches

- Different perspectives on historical events
- Impact on understanding past and present

Limits of Narratives and Historical Analysis

- Challenges in interpreting historical events
- Constraints of historical narratives



Patterns in World History

Key Concept

- Structures attributed to early modernity have roots in antiquity

Rethinking how we see the
world and how our
perception is shaped.

“Civilisations”



What is history?

HISTORY IS AN ONGOING DIALOGUE
BETWEEN THE PAST AND PRESENT – E.H
CARR

Importance of History: Social Science Tradition



Social Science Tradition Stemming from History

- History disciplines contribute to social science

Ferdinand Braudel's World System Theory

- Explains global economic systems

tehst

Marxist and Neo-Marxist Theory

- Focuses on class struggle and societal change

Social Evolution

- Studies the development of societies over time

Importance of History: Bias Theories

Imperialist Context of Bias Theories

- Emerged during the 19th and early 20th century

Austro-Germanic School of Thought

- Centred around this school

Western European Christian Views

- Encultured by pre-17th century views

Social Evolution Theories

- Environmental/Christian Determinism

Roots of Change and Relativism

- Drawn from the Greco-Roman tradition

There are many tensions in the disciplines of history:

- Methods of gathering and narrating information
- Binary perceptions
- Creations, revolutions, gradual changes, discoveries → history is about phenomena for “What happened, and why?”
- Factoids
- Subjectivity

The “European” penned history: Modern States and Greco-Roman Influence

Renaissance Revival of Greco-Roman Concepts

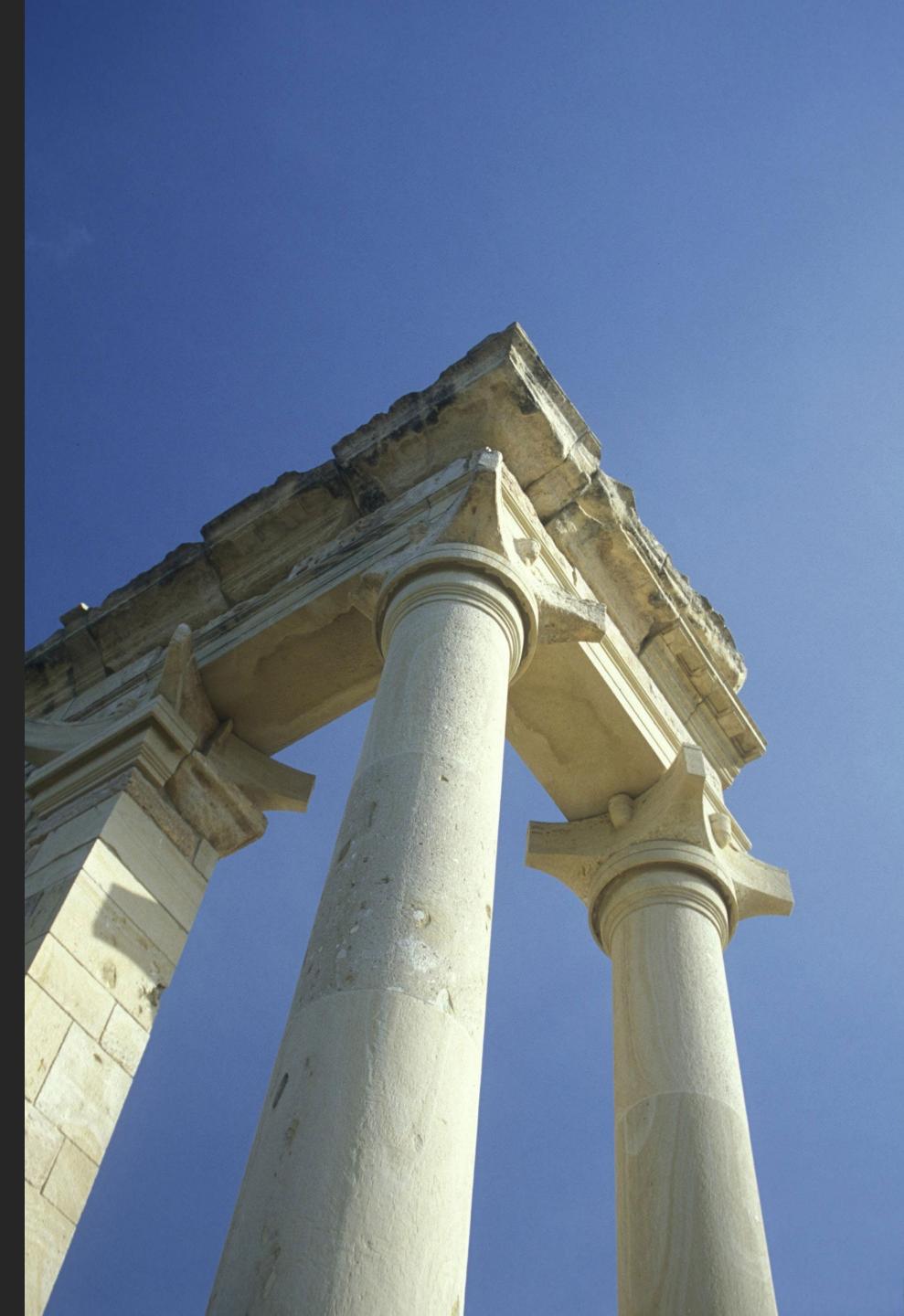
- Modern states drew inspiration from these concepts

Western Historians' Perspective

- Appoint western civilisation as the 'inheritor' of Greek and Roman civility

Ongoing Dialogue in History

- History is a continuous interaction between past and present





Empirical Theory of Knowledge: Positivist Approach

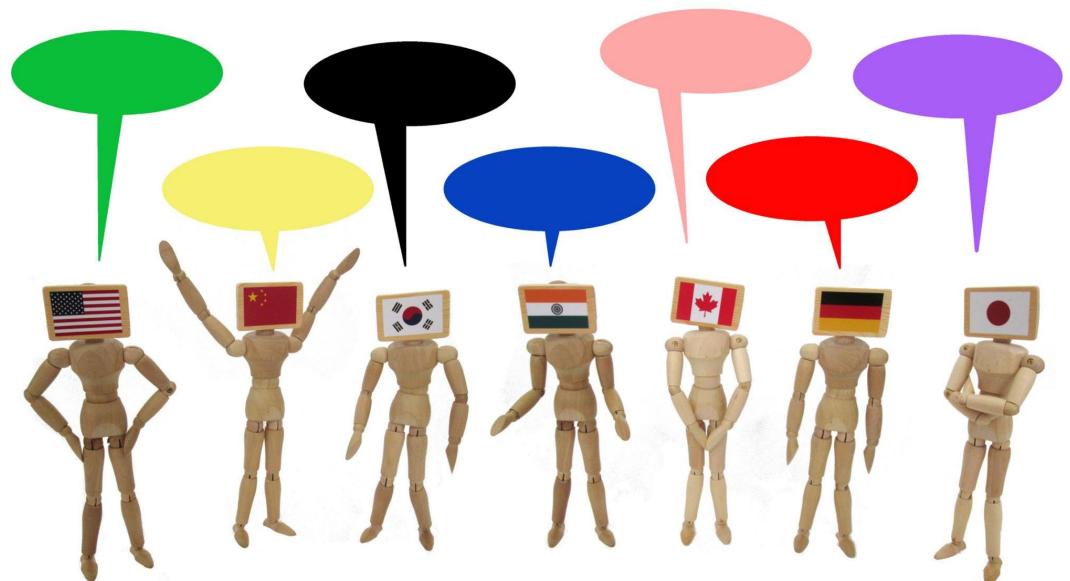
Empirical Theory of Knowledge

- Outside stimuli are separate from one's capacity to process them

Positivist Approach

- Facts point to an absolute conclusion
- History could be studied as a hard science

Empirical Theory of Knowledge: E.H Carr's Argument



Positivist Approach to History

- History viewed like hard sciences
- Dependent variable: conclusion
- Independent variable: facts
- Controlled variable: objectivity

Human Impressionability

- People have guarded opinions
- Opinions influenced by others
- Example: Influence of Christian culture in a Christian society
- Shared experiences remembered differently

Subjectivity in History

Exploitation of Subjectivity

- Can be taken advantage of by anyone, whether good or bad
- Can be intentional or unintentional

Nation States and Origin Myths

- Create origin myths to foster a shared identity
- Unite disparate groups of people

Demagogues and Historical Reshaping

- Reshape history to serve their aims

Revisionists and Political Objectives

- Make changes to prevailing historical narratives
- Serve political objectives

E.H Carr's Argument: “history is inherently subjective, oftentimes offering an infinity of possible meanings”,

Perception and Analysis of History: Linear/Progressive Thinking

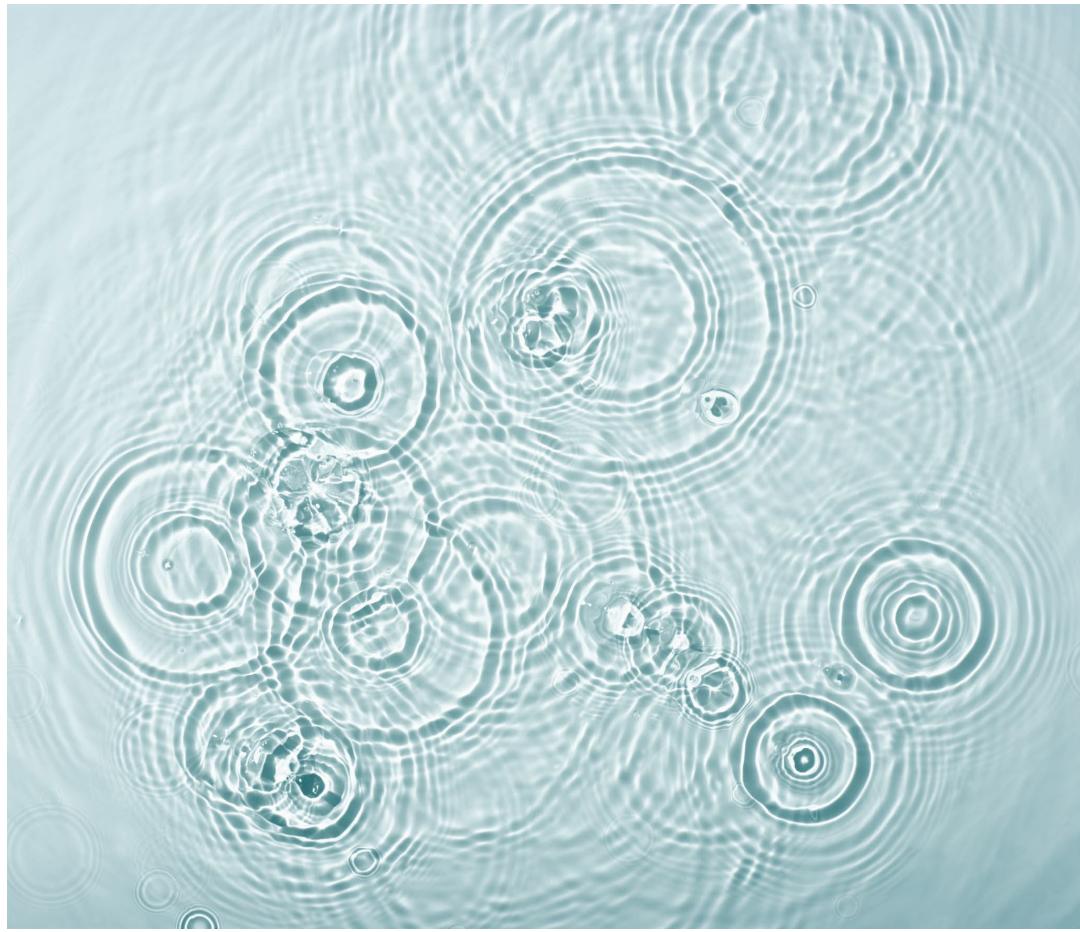
Dependence on Societal Changes and Time

- Our understanding of history is influenced by how we view societal changes
- Time plays a crucial role in shaping our perception of historical events

Linear/Progressive Thinking

- Society is seen as moving forward or declining in a linear fashion
- Many social evolution theories fall under this category
- Example: Marxist Framework





Perception and Analysis of History: Ripples of Effects

Non-directional and Non-linear Changes

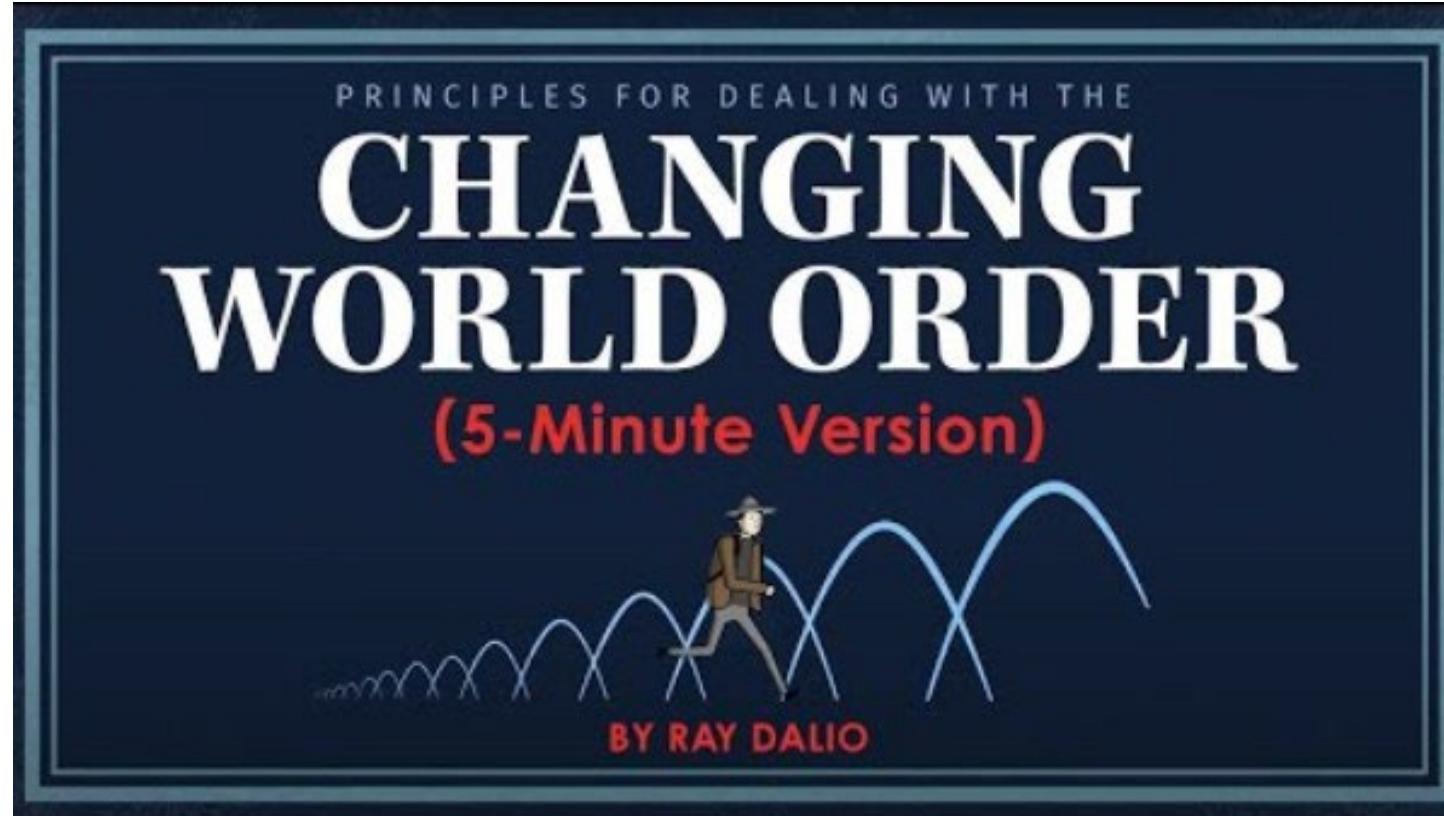
- Changes can recur and are induced by different factors

Absence of a Starting Point

- Phenomena doesn't always have a clear origin

Simultaneous Occurrence

- Many phenomena can happen together



Polarity and Dynamics

DO COLLAPSE HAPPEN
SUDDENLY OR
GRADUALLY?

Perspectives and Arguments

Importance of Perspectives

- No correct or ultimate answers
- Arguments should be weighed with evidence
- Balance heritage and intellectual history

Economic Measurements

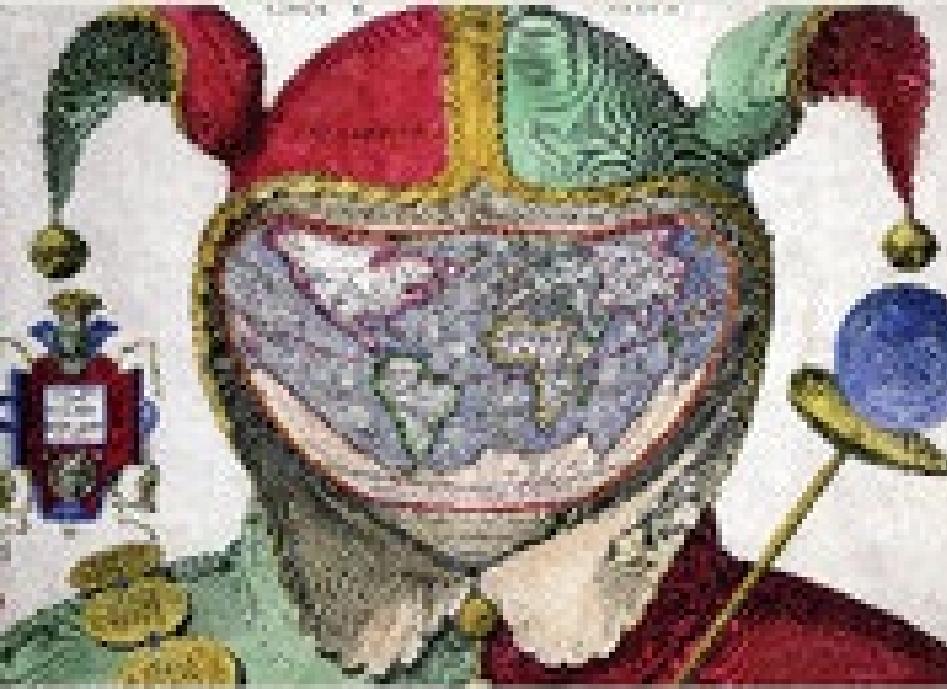
- GDP and productivity as progress indicators
- Issues with resource depletion
- Constructed indicators for economic superiority

Problems with Measurement Standards

- Differences in employment concepts
- Indian weavers paid by piece/bulk rates

Accounting Differences

JOHN M. HOBSON



The **EUROCENTRIC** **CONCEPTION** of **WORLD POLITICS**

Western International Theory, 1760–2010

CAMBRIDGE

Eurocentric Perspectives

International Order

- Established by European and North American powers

Historical Ideas

- Explaining societies, similarities, and differences

Eurocentrism

- Highlights European and North Atlantic superiority
- Arguments on convergence and divergence of societies



Types of Eurocentrism: Historical-Contextual Eurocentrism

Historical-Contextual Eurocentrism

- Focuses on European dominance and its development
- Highlights how historical narratives favor European achievements
- Emphasizes the unique development of European societies
- Particularly focuses on rationality and progress

Marxist Rationality Argument

- Belongs to the school of Eurocentrism

Greco-Roman Dominance

- Emphasizes the superiority of Greco-Roman heritage
- Rome is considered the only great empire
- All other empires are compared to Rome

Types of Eurocentrism: Ideological Eurocentrism

European Superiority

- Justifies imposition of European norms and values on other cultures
- Belief in European culture as the pinnacle of human development

Predecessors

- Abrahamic Religion's belief in determinism

Historical Context

- Supports “White man’s burden” argument
- Influences religious expansion, missionaries, and conquest



Types of Eurocentrism: Residual Eurocentrism

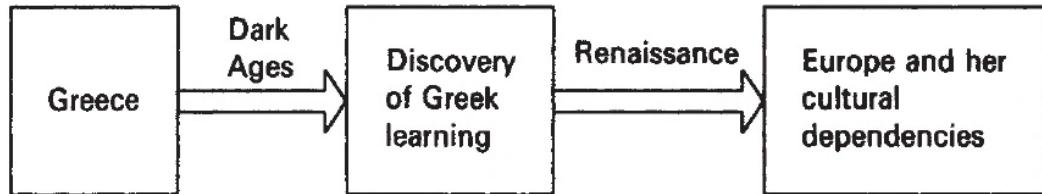


FIGURE 1.1: The “classical” Eurocentric trajectory

Definition of Residual Eurocentrism

- Lingering effects of Eurocentric views in modern thought and practices
- Influences policies and attitudes subtly

European Standards as Universalist Views

- Holding European standards as universal perspectives

Example in International Relations

- Mainstream theories reflect Eurocentric assumptions
- Assumptions about state behaviour, sovereignty, and international norms
- Limitations in accounting for diverse geopolitical realities

Types of Eurocentrism: Philosophical Eurocentrism

Critique of European Philosophical Dominance

- Marginalisation of non-European philosophies
- Propagation of European concepts of reason and rationality as universal

Roots in Enlightenment Discourses

- Scientific progress and rationality developed by Europeans
- Superior Christian philosophy in Western Europe

Examples of Philosophical Eurocentrism

- Political theories considering only Western philosophers
- Trivialising contributions of non-Western philosophers

Types of Eurocentrism: Cultural Eurocentrism

Definition of Cultural Eurocentrism

- Interpretation and representation of cultural history through a European lens
- Leads to marginalisation or misrepresentation of non-European cultures

Examples in Media and Material Culture

- Perception of media influenced by Eurocentrism
- Usage of material culture reflecting European bias

Impact on Cultural Development

- Museums representing non-European cultural objects non-contextually
- Simple categorisation not used with European material culture



Political and Economic Eurocentrism: Political Eurocentrism

European Political Models

- Dominant and most sophisticated models

Exclusion of Non-European Systems

- Non-European political systems and histories are excluded

Critique of Eurocentrism

- Viewing European political developments as the standard for progress and governance

Political and Economic Eurocentrism: Economic Eurocentrism

Definition of Economic Eurocentrism

- Emphasizes European economic models and theories
- Views these models as universally applicable

Impact on Non-European Societies

- Ignores economic practices of non-European societies
- Overlooks contributions from non-European societies

Paternalistic Eurocentrism

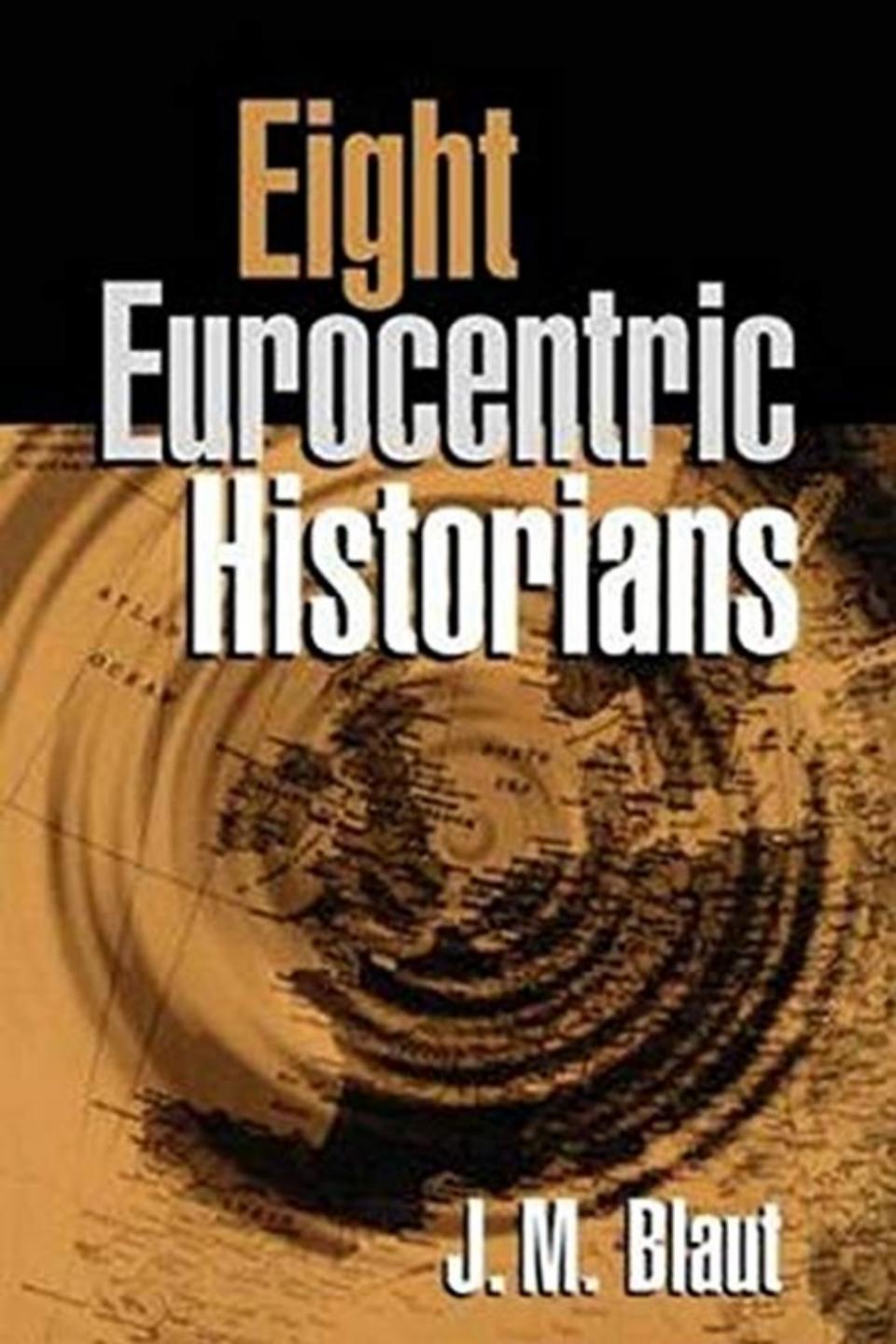
Marx's View on Non-European Societies

- Seen as passive or backward
- Needing European-style industrialization and revolution

Paternalistic Perspective

- Non-European societies viewed as incapable of autonomous progress





Eight Eurocentric Historians

J.M. Blaut

The Eight Eurocentric Historians

The Eight Eurocentric Historians by J.M Blaut

This book highlights the problem presented by key historians whose arguments would come to shape most of the historical approaches that are used to analyse contemporary and past societies. Blaut highlighted the following problems with Eurocentric frameworks:

Problems with Eurocentric Frameworks: Marginalisation of Non-European Contributions

Eurocentric Perspectives

- Minimize or ignore non-European achievements
- Create a biased historical narrative

Significant Achievements

- Non-European civilizations have made significant contributions
- These contributions are often overlooked

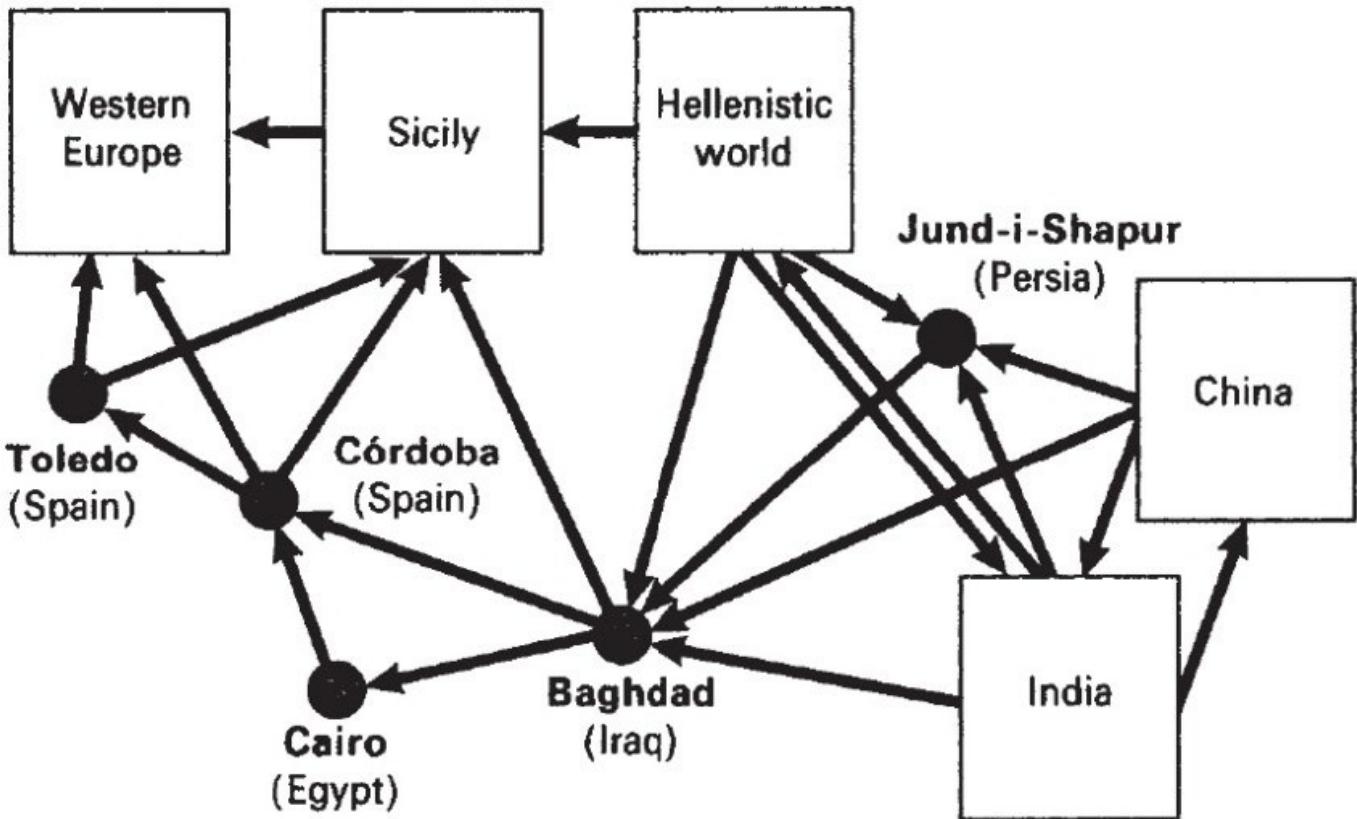


FIGURE 1.3: An alternative trajectory for the “Dark Ages”

Problems with Eurocentric Frameworks: Reinforcement of Superiority Myths

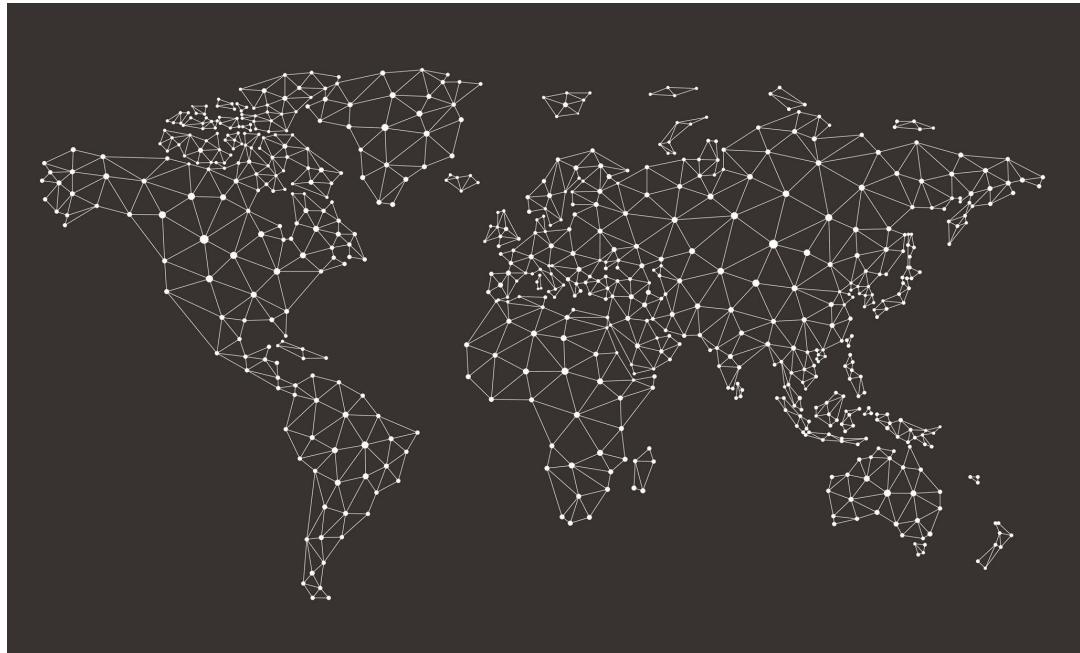
Attribution of Global Progress

- Primarily credited to European innovations
- Emphasizes European rationality

Perpetuation of Superiority Myths

- Views suggest inherent European superiority
- Reinforces myths of European dominance

Problems with Eurocentric Frameworks: Distorted World History



Distorted View of World History

- Overlooks interconnectedness of regions
- Ignores mutual influences between regions

Western Rationality: Max Weber

Weber's Argument on Western Rationality

- Protestant work ethic as a key factor in capitalism development
- Rationalism led to efficient bureaucratic structures and innovative economic practices

Blaut's Critique of Weber's Thesis

- Ignores similar rational and ethical developments in non-European societies
- Unjustly elevates European achievements
- Overlooks global diffusion of rational practices

Criticism of Weberian Framework

- Relied on Marx and Engels' Orientalist views on Asian societies
- Protestant work ethic thesis negated in European context
- No significant economic differences between Catholic and Protestant German areas
- Small difference in literacy rates had minimal impact on early 20th-century production

Inventive and Innovative Europeans: Lynn White Jr

White's Argument

- Europe's technological and industrial advancements attributed to its inventive spirit and culture
- Middle Ages highlighted for innovations like the heavy plough and mechanical clock

Blaut's Critique

- Criticises White for overlooking non-European technological contributions
- Argues that non-European innovations influenced or preceded European developments
- Claims White's view reinforces European exceptionalism narrative

Non-European Influence

- European technological inventions relied on importing non-European science and technology
- Contributions from Mongols, Chinese, and Islamic societies

The Tunnel of Time: Robert Brenner

Brenner's Argument

- Internal class struggles within Europe explain the rise of capitalism
- Emphasises agricultural productivity and transition from feudalism to capitalism
- Driven by conflicts between landlords and peasants

Blaut's Critique

- Contends Brenner's perspective ignores significant external influences
- Argues Brenner's focus perpetuates a Eurocentric view of history
- Only Europe is credited for the capacity to change and transform
- Transitions are endogenous of Western institutions
- Other regions remain static and require exogenous interventions

The European Miracle: Eric L. Jones

Jones' Argument on European Economic Transformation

- Unique environmental and cultural factors in Europe
- Advantages in climate, geography, and cultural traits

Blaut's Critique of Jones' Argument

- Similar favourable conditions in other regions
- Jones' thesis simplifies global historical development
- Unfairly credits Europe with unique advantages

Jones' Revised Position

- Focus on Chinese economic history
- Influence of Joseph Needham's work
- Technological progress of the Song dynasty in the 12th century

The March of History: Michael Mann

Mann's Argument

- Focuses on European military and political organisation shaping global history
- Claims no global history existed until European Imperialism
- Europe's ability to organise and project power was key to its dominance

Scholars' Expansion

- European fragmentation and warfare during Medieval and Early Modern period
- Unique European technological, political, and economic advancements

Blaut's Critique

- Criticises Mann for underestimating non-European societies
- Argues Mann's focus reinforces European superiority narrative
- Limits global history framework to European experience

Democratic Europeans: John A. Hall

Hall's Argument

- Attributed democracy and modern state institutions to European innovations
- Suggested democratic principles were uniquely developed in Europe
- Drew on Greco-Roman traditions and legacies

Blaut's Critique

- Neglects early democratic practices in non-European cultures
- Argues Hall overstates Europe's unique role
- Limits perception of Europe to a democratic pathway
- Treats other forms of institutions as abnormal in Europe's political development

Euro- Environmentalism: David Landes

Diamond's Argument

- Geographical and environmental factors gave Europeans significant advantages
- Europe's geography facilitated agricultural and technological advancements

Blaut's Critique

- Diamond's thesis downplays environmental challenges of non-European societies
- Contends that Diamond's view perpetuates a narrative of inevitable European superiority

Cultural/Religious Determinism

- God gave Europeans the best land to innovate or dominate
- Idea extends to choices for White settlements during the colonial period

The Empire Strikes Back: Jared Diamond

Landes' Argument

- Focus on cultural and intellectual factors within Europe
- Emphasis on European values, work ethic, and intellectual traditions
- Attributed economic and technological progress to these factors

Blaut's Critique

- Argues Landes ignores global context
- Highlights contributions of other civilisations to Europe's development
- Claims Landes' view reinforces a Eurocentric narrative

Civilisation Recast by Stephan Feuchtwang and Michael Rowlands

Self-Fashioning in Civilisation

- Choices in restraints and rejections shape civilisation
- Rules define collective self and actions based on experiences

Formation and Transformation

- Assimilation and interaction with other civilisations
- Dynamic process over long durations

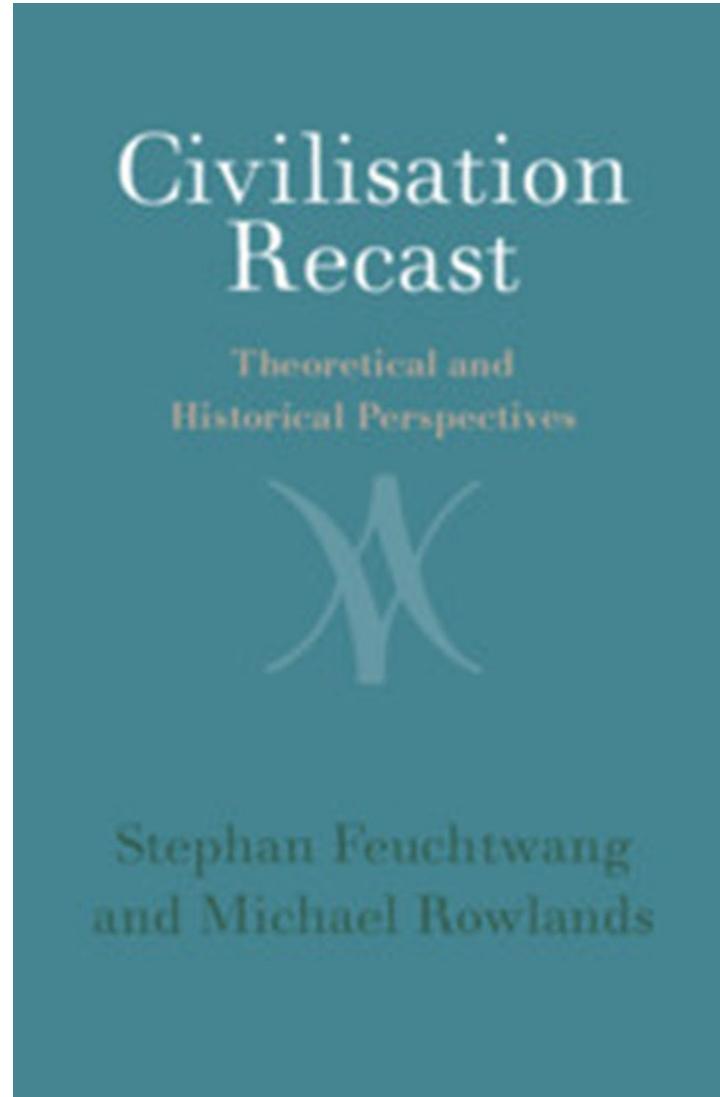
Opposition to Chaos

- Stands against breakdown of social order
- Destroyed by loss of cultural and social framework

Material Modes of Learning

- Transformed by interactions with other civilisations

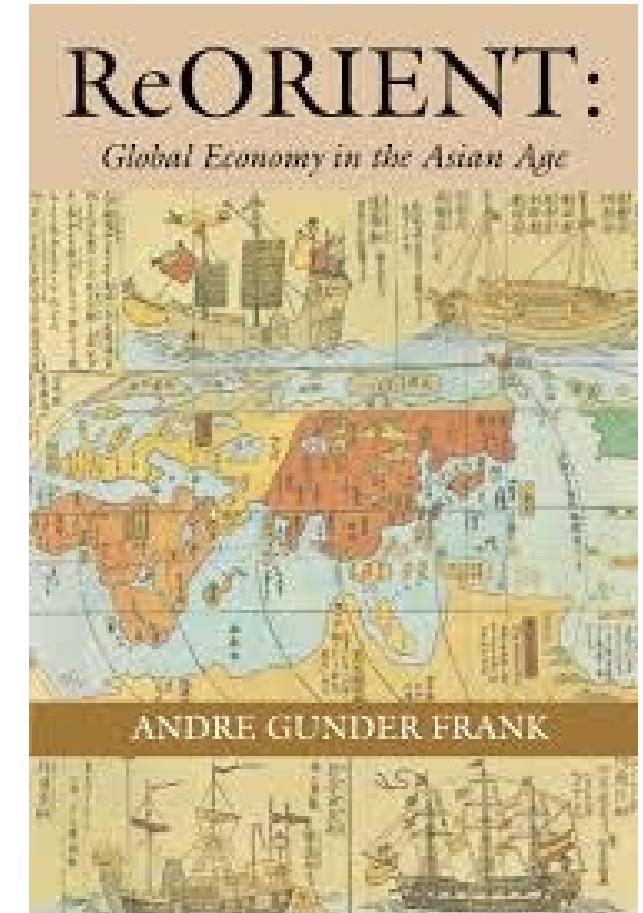
Dynamic and Interactive Nature



Marking of Antiquities and Ancient Empires

Debate on the Origins of Capitalism

- Some scholars trace it back 5000 years
- Others view it as a more recent phenomenon



Path Dependency in Global Antiquity

Stability and Predictability

- Provides stability in social, economic, and political systems
- Established practices offer a framework for societies

Resistance to Change

- Ensures stability but can lead to resistance to change
- Institutions rooted in ancient traditions may be slow to adapt

Cultural Continuity

- Ensures continuity of cultural identities and practices
- Preserves the heritage of ancient civilizations

Innovation and Adaptation

- Allows for innovation within established frameworks
- Recognizes historical roots of contemporary practices



Aspects of Antiquity Inherited in Modern World

Legal and Political Systems

- Modern legal codes and political institutions draw from Roman law and Greek democratic principles
- Includes bureaucracy, urban organization, public works, property rights, legal contracts, and personal liability

Economic Systems

- Global trade networks and economic systems evolved from early trade routes
- Concept of currency and monetary systems from ancient coinage practices
- Includes ideas of investments, commercial contracts, and resource management debates

Literary and Philosophical Heritage

- Classical literature and philosophy form the bedrock of modern education and thought

Architectural and Engineering Innovations

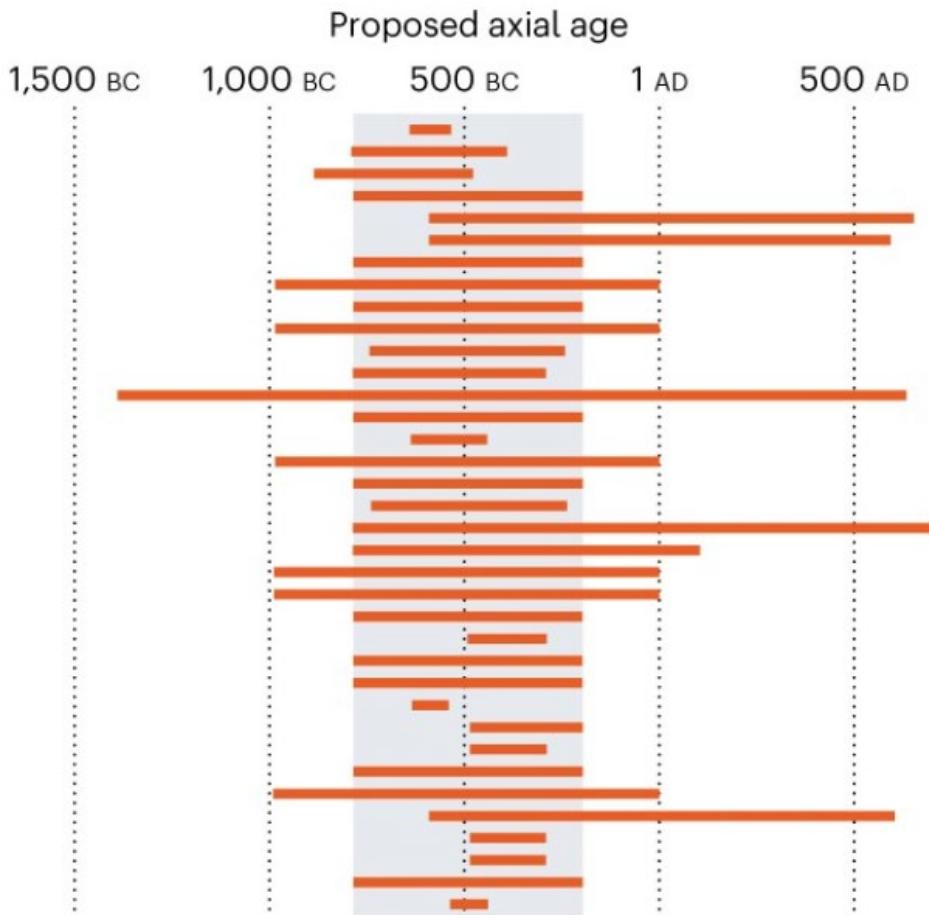
Scientific Foundations

Cultural and Religious Traditions

ANCIENT TO MODERN

Historians have long suggested that an 'Axial Age' — a supposed simultaneous shift to modernity in several ancient societies — occurred some time in the first millennium BC, but their estimates of when this happened vary widely. Now, a team of scholars suggests that there was no such neat transition.

■ Mean of published estimates



Estimates published from 1873 to 2016.

©nature



The Axial Age

Definition of Axial Age

- Proposed by Karl Jasper
- Defines a turning point in history through collective transcendentalism

Regions Affected

- Greece, Israel-Palestine, Iran, India, China

Changes in Ideas

- Fairness and equity
- Universal rights and freedom
- Representation and balanced governance
- Democratic governance
- No one is above the law

Emergence of Political and Religious Ideology

Historiography of Late Antiquity and Medievalism

Historiography of Late Antiquity and Medievalism

- Concept of linearity and binary perception of historical periods
- Influence of 20th-century European thinkers

Challenges in Historical Writings

- Limited access to historical resources and archives
- Influence of secular and non-secular Christianised academic thinking

Gaps Between Disciplines

- Historians' views dominate narratives on primitivism and societal superiority
- History often written by privileged individuals

Jairus Banaji's Revisions

- Critique of past attitudes towards historical periods
- History sees... “the deadweight of other, earlier generations who looked on the past with the patronising attitudes of the world in unbridled expansion. The triumph of capitalism was also the downgrading of every preceding epoch with its supposedly increasing primitive forms of technology and social interactions, and its inability to achieve a rational organisation of the world.”



The world before the “Middle Ages”



Expansionism and Pastoralism

The world during the 1st century CE was filled with large states and complex urban system.

- Rome was at its peak in the Europe and North Africa
- The Han Empire stretched from the Huanghe Plain and was beginning to encroach on the Yangtze Delta
- Satavahana and Kushan linked the Eurasian plains and the South Asian subcontinent

By the 4th century CE, the global economy had doubled. Inflation bubbles began to emerge across empires.

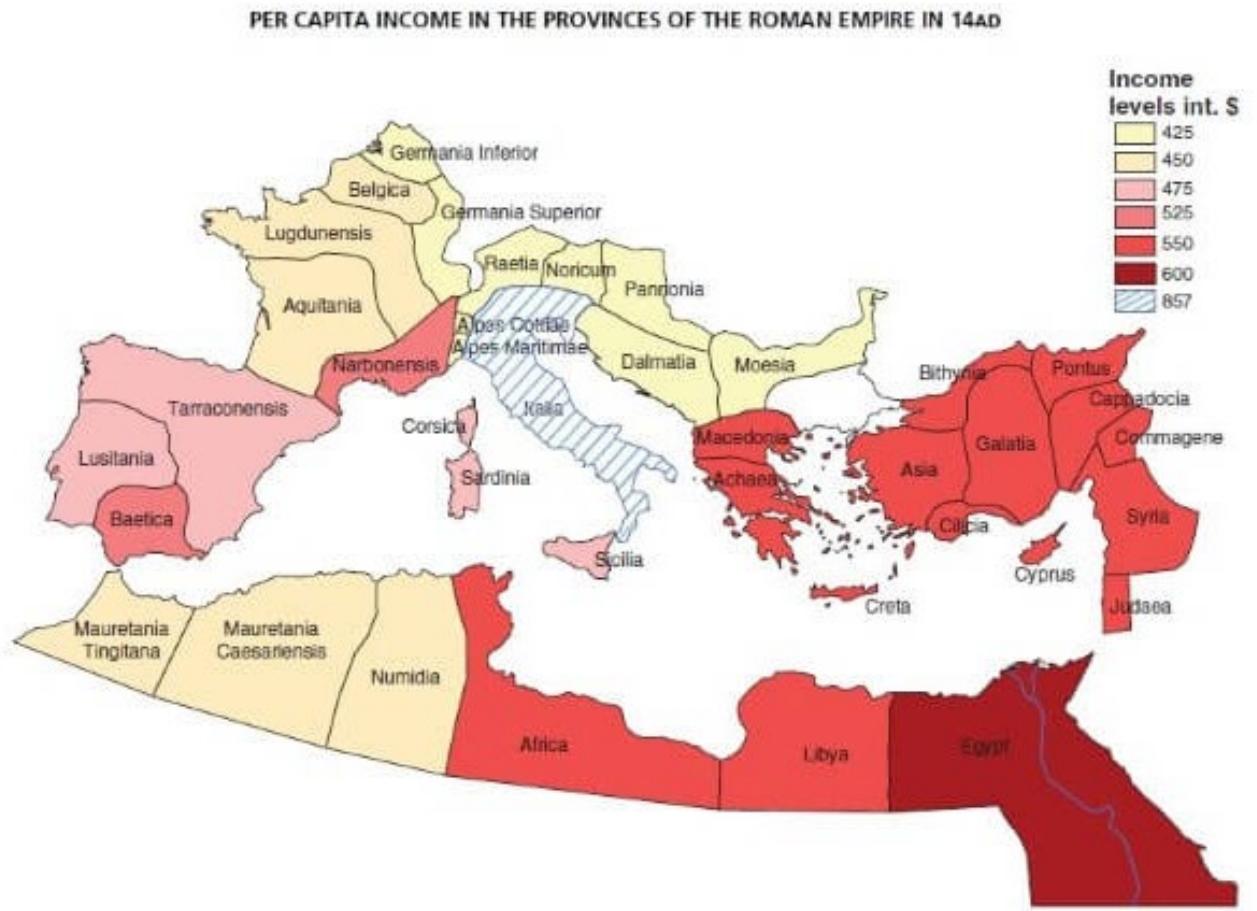
World population: 150 million -> over 375 million

- Complex bureaucratic system
- Military Organization
- Taxation and Monetary System
- Urban administration
- Political organisation
- Intellectual and religious thinking

S P Q R

Roman Empire
“Senatus Populusque Romanus”

MARCAE CAESARIS
DICT PERPETVO



Madison, 2000* This is a baseline preliminary estimate see Wilson, 2005 for critique

The Romans and the subsequent Βασιλεία τῶν Ρωμαίων (Kingdom of the Romans, Byzantine Empire)



Rome's Legacy: Administrative and Fiscal Systems

Rome's complex administrative system influenced modern government bureaucracy

Fiscal practices, such as taxation and monetary systems, have roots in Roman methods

Rome's urban administration provides a framework for modern city planning



Roman Republic

Males have full citizenship, women had limited citizenship

People who lived in newly conquered land have limited citizenship (Citizenship count every 5 years)

Run their own internal affairs

Everyone is entitled to vote, but only patricians could be elected to government offices

Elected Senate and several assemblies

Law of Nations established to set a standard for Justice

Pax Romana

Rulers treated the ruling class with respect

Maintained peace

Good emperors created new social programs to help the people

Public works were built

Taxation centralized

Women gained full rights

Women can obtain divorce, attended races, theatres, and influenced politics (Hypatia!)

Freeman can buy full citizenship

Roman Citizenship: Rights and Responsibilities

Taxes

The Romans did not have income tax, any attempt at setting up one often created chaos (The Emperor Augustus can testify!)

Tributum (tax for military expenses)

- Tributum soli (Land Tax)
- Tributum capitis (Poll Tax)

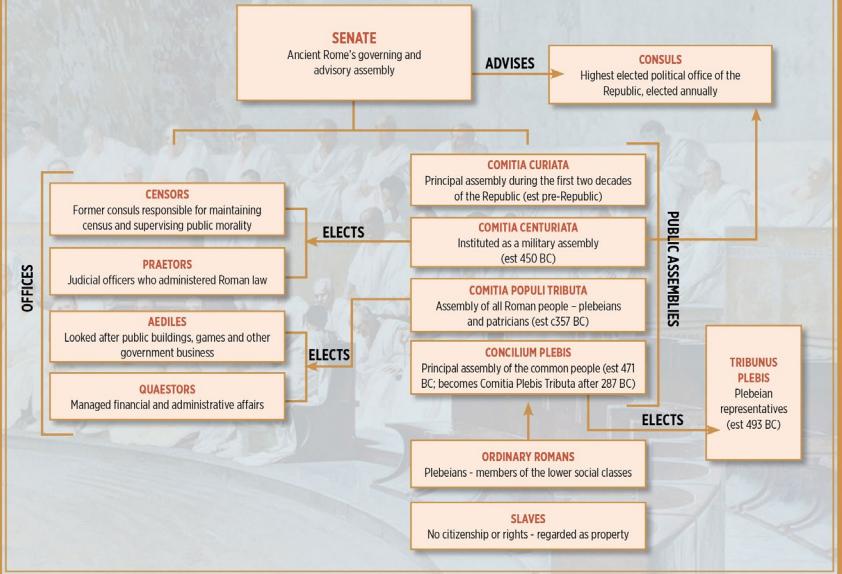
Vectigalia (Local tax for administration cost and local consumption)

- Portoria (Poll Tax)
- Vicesima hereditatum (Inheritance Tax)
- Vicesima liberates (Postage tax)
- Centesima rerum venalium (auction sales tax)



POWER FOR THE PEOPLE?

The Republic was governed on democratic principles, though that doesn't mean everyone had a say...

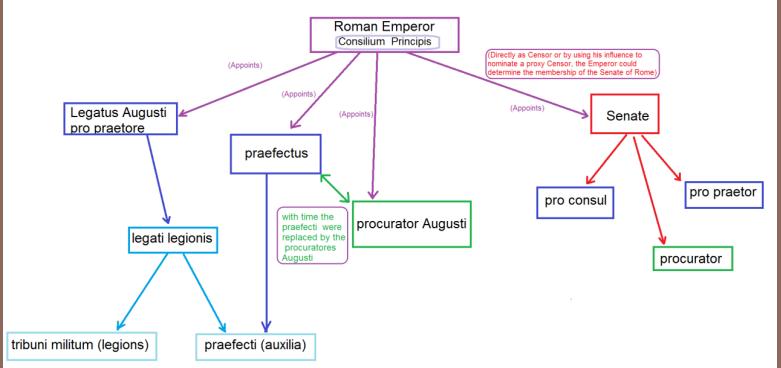


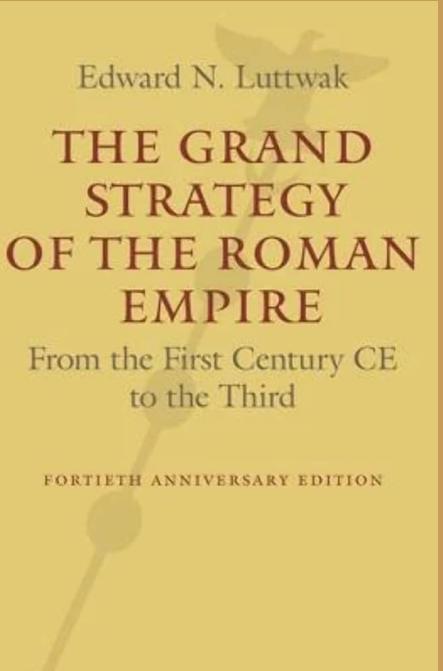
Roman Magistrate and Principate

The roman magistrates were elected officials that administered the Roman Kingdom, Roman Republic, and the Roman Empire

- Transfer of power from Roman King (principal magistrate to Roman Consuls in 509BCE:
- Magistrate had maior potestas (major power)
- Amongst magistrates there were dictator (extraordinary magistrate endowed with power to solve specific issue) , censors, and consuls
- Plebeian tribunes
- Plebeian aediles

Administrative/Political/Military Structure of the Principate





Legacies of the Roman Empire

Urban infrastructure laid foundations for modern cities

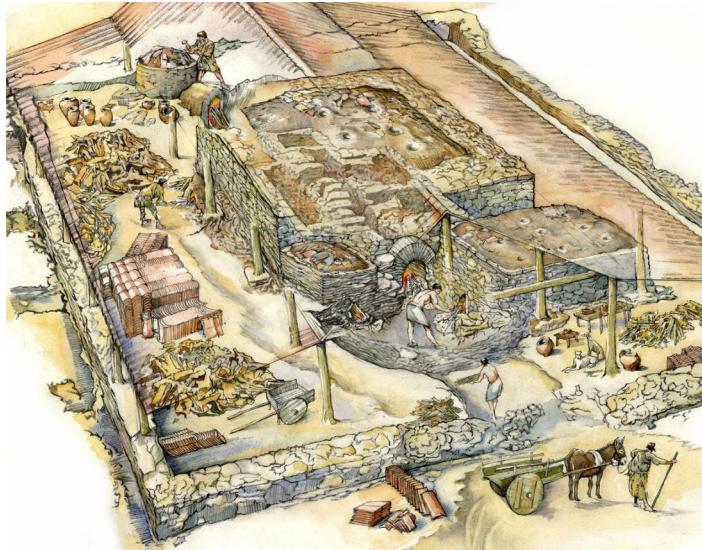
Military organisation served as model for future armies

Cultural and religious continuity preserved throughout centuries

Economic structures provided basis for modern systems

Imperial Ideology

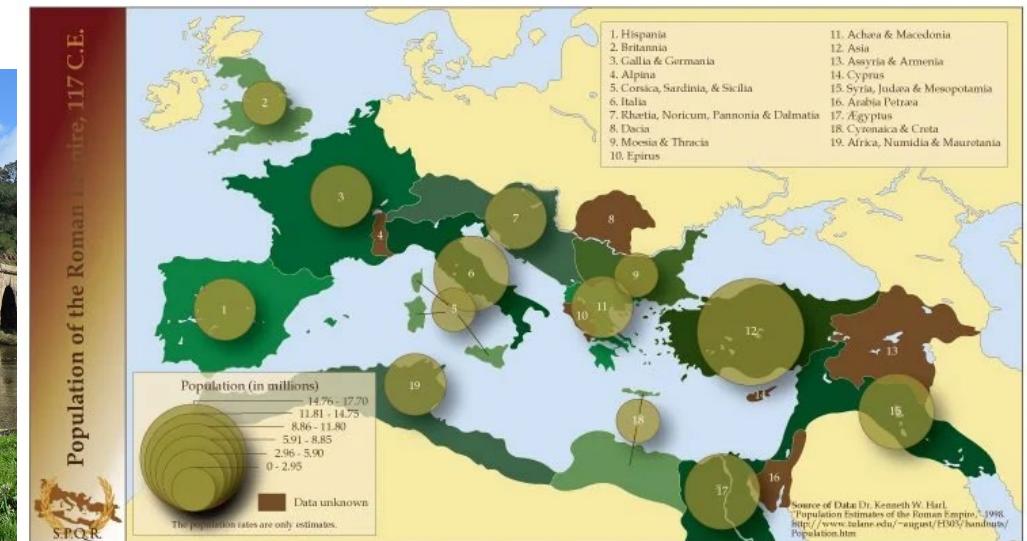
Demographic and social Impact



Roman Engineering, Manufacturing and Urban Centres

- Manufacturing centres were concentrated in North Africa and Anatolia.

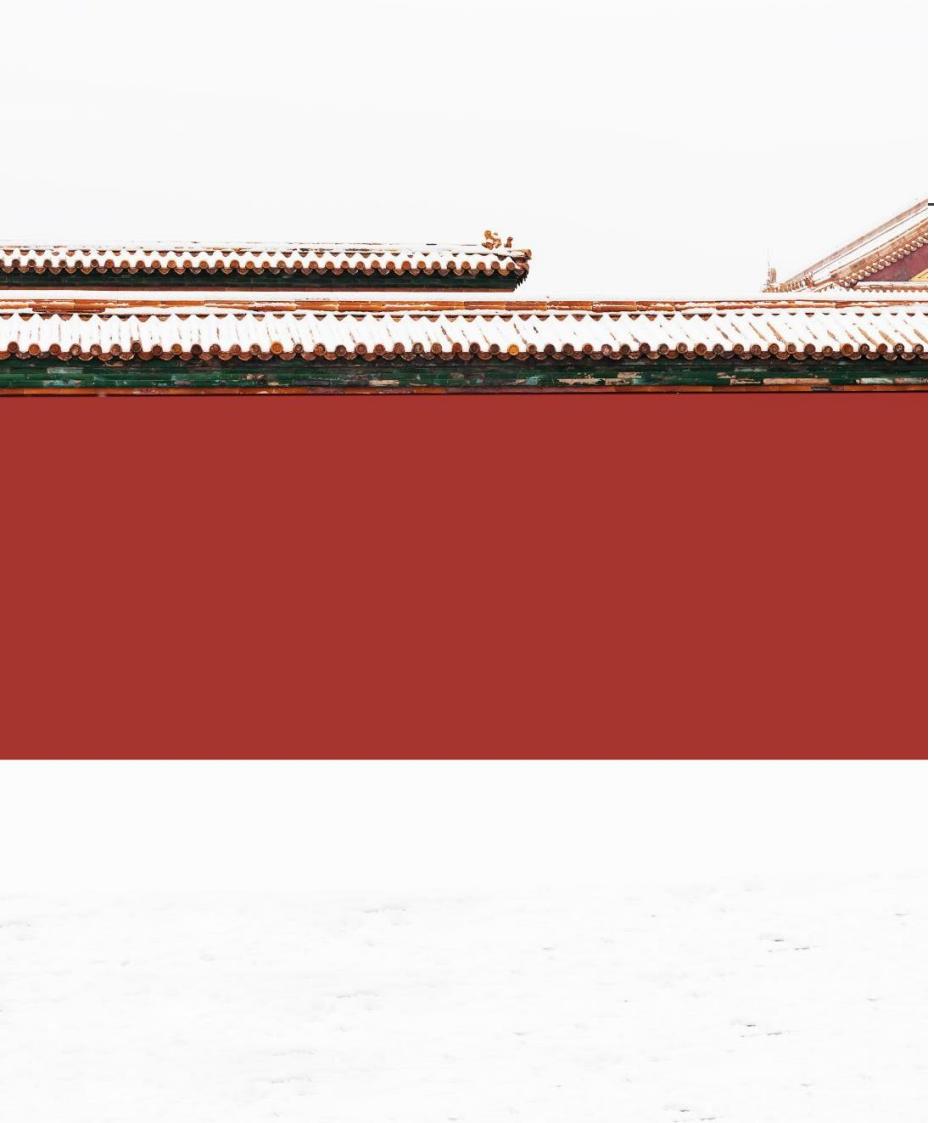
- 2CE: 70–75 million





Sino-Sphere System

INFLUENTIAL DYNASTY
THAT SHAPED ANCIENT
CHINA



The Han Dynasty and its Characteristics

Centralized Government

The Han Dynasty had a centralised government headed by an emperor who held absolute power. This allowed for effective decision-making and implementation of policies.

Civil Service System

The Han Dynasty had a sophisticated civil service system based on meritocracy. Candidates were selected through rigorous examinations and trained to become officials, ensuring a highly competent bureaucracy.

Stability and Well-being

The institutions of the Han Dynasty, including its centralised government and civil service system, allowed for stability and promoted the well-being of its people.

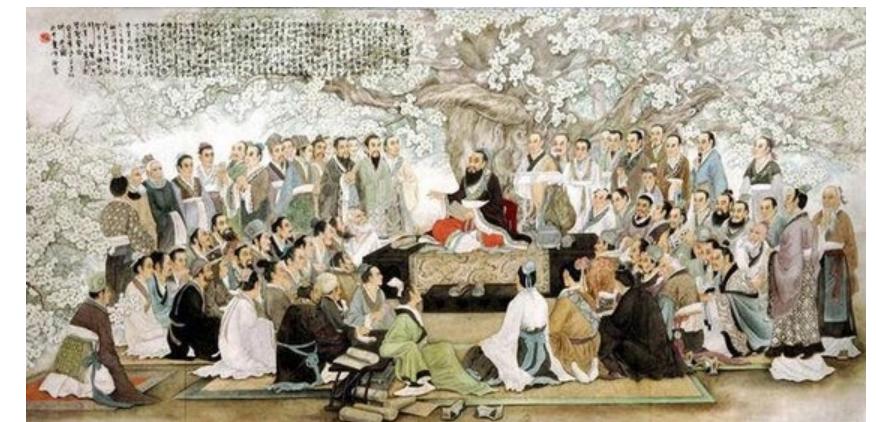
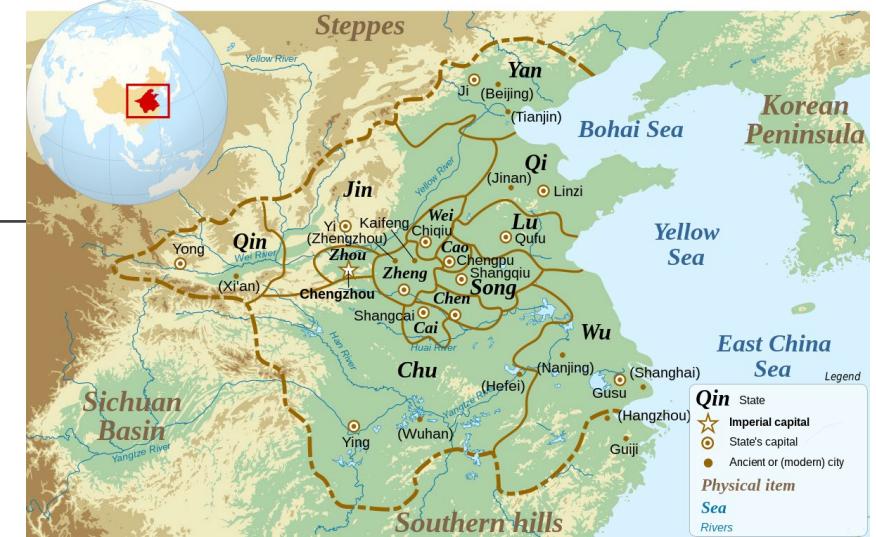
Ultimately there would be a struggle for the balance of power between the Emperor and the Civil Service System

The Rise of Imperial China

Establishment of a cultural community, de facto independent states in competition with each other

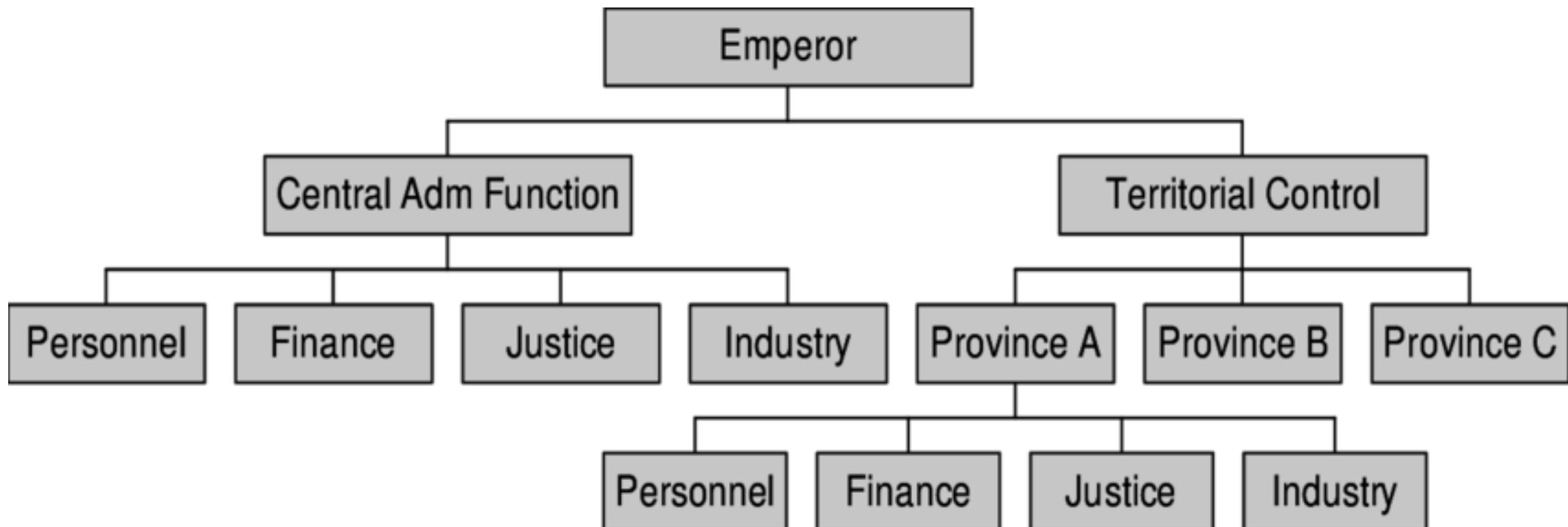
- Zhou kings (771BCE-256BCE) kept losing power to overlords
- Spring and Autumn Period would be the beginning to an end of decentralized Chinese governance
- Mozi (Mohism)m (379-304BCE): Defensive warfare, advocated meritocracy, principle of non-aggression
- Confucius (551-479 BCE) : advocated harmony which would form the principal for the ‘imperial examination system’ and bureaucratic order
- ‘Mandate of Heaven’, whose authority → sacred monarchy
 - The Mandate depended upon the ruler's possessing virtue

Chinese plain in the late Spring and Autumn period (5th century BC)



Core Chinese State Characteristics

The mandate and the people
Status and meritocracy
Public service
Confucious (li) *Ritual Conduct* and (ren) *Humanesss*
Established low taxation rate



No feudalism in China? India?

private	private	private
private	public	private
private	private	private

Fengjian (Old system of aristocratic feudalism...this ended very early in Asia)

Division of land and land tenancy, private property

Well-Field System (Han dynasty):

Equal field system invented in 384CE

- China operates an equal land field system
- Management of property rights would come to define bureaucratic resilience that gave rise to dynastic cycles and fragmentation.
- World population continued to increase.
- Introduction of insipient private ownership (inheritance right)

LABOUR and LAND SUPPLY

- Capacity to migrate: the free peasant
- Han Dynasty registered census 2CE: 57,671,400 people



Civil Service System

Merit-based System

The civil service system developed by the Han Dynasty was based on merit and education, ensuring that only the most talented individuals could become officials.

Examination System

Candidates for civil service positions were selected through a rigorous examination system that tested their knowledge of Confucian philosophy, literature, law, and history.

Equal Opportunity

The civil service system in the Han Dynasty provided equal opportunities for people of all social status and background to become officials, as long as they had the talent and education.



The Legacies of the Han Dynasty

Centralized Government and Civil Service System

The Han Dynasty developed a centralized government and civil service system that influenced the structure of future Chinese dynasties and governments.

Art and Literature

The Han Dynasty made significant contributions to Chinese art and literature, including the development of calligraphy, poetry, and historical writing.

Innovations and Technology

The Han Dynasty made significant advances in the field of technology, including the invention of paper, the compass, and many other innovations that transformed Chinese society.

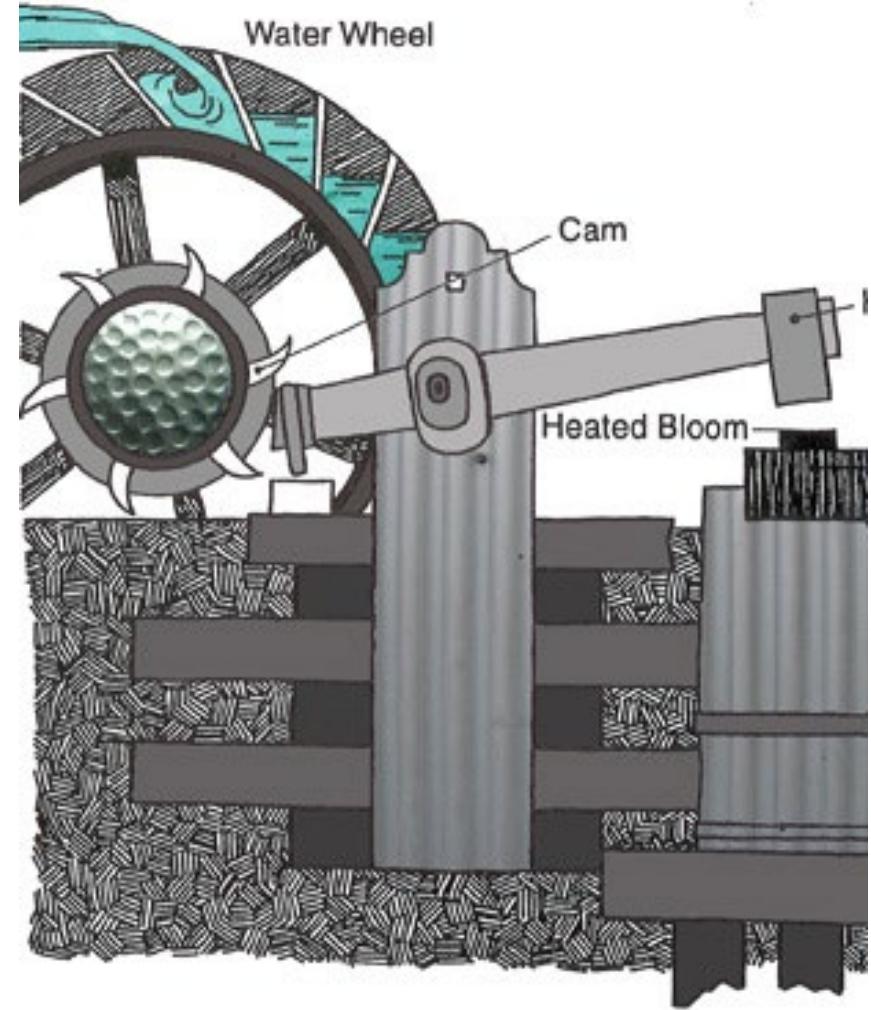


Fig. 4 Diagram of a forge trip hammer.

The Indian Subcontinent

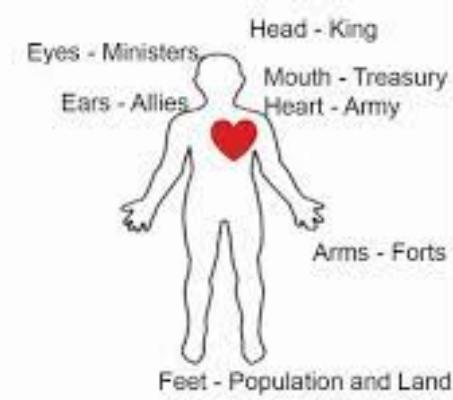
Administration

Tax

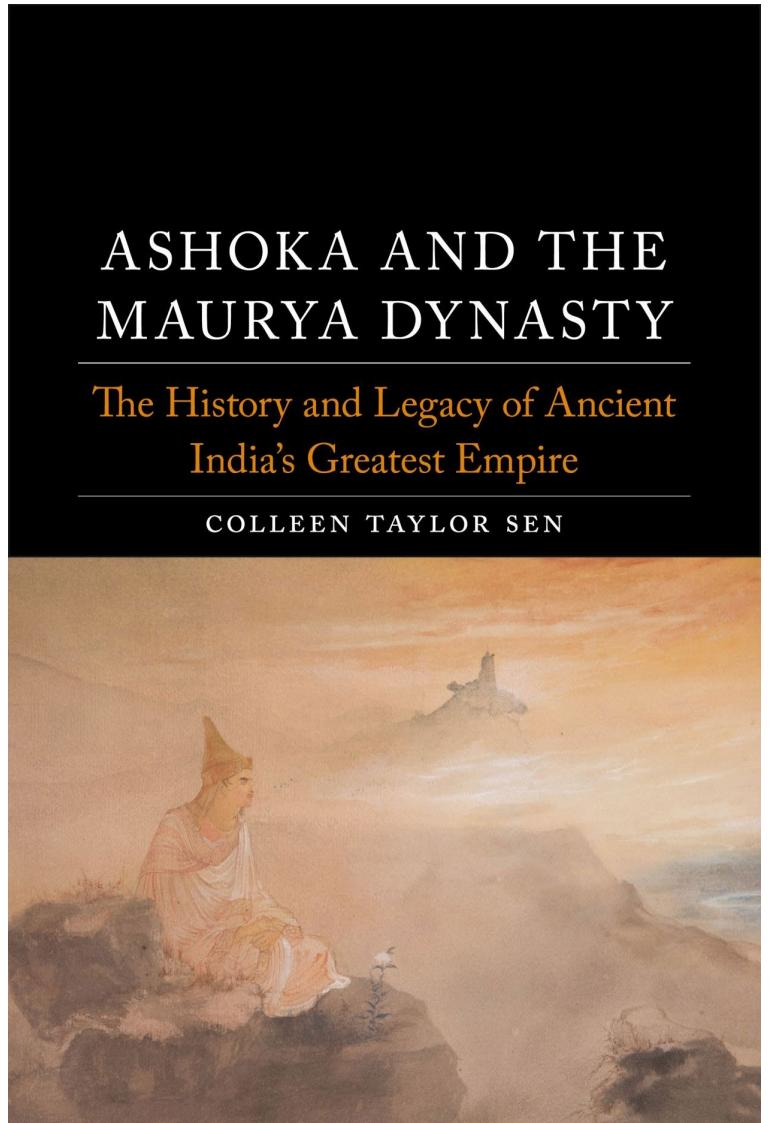
Trade

Defense

Low taxation rate to attract labour
and population



Prakritis as organs of the body



ASHOKA AND THE MAURYA DYNASTY

The History and Legacy of Ancient India's Greatest Empire

COLLEEN TAYLOR SEN



A wind of change....

Great Empires of the Steppes: Xiongnu- GokTurk- Tocharian Confederacy





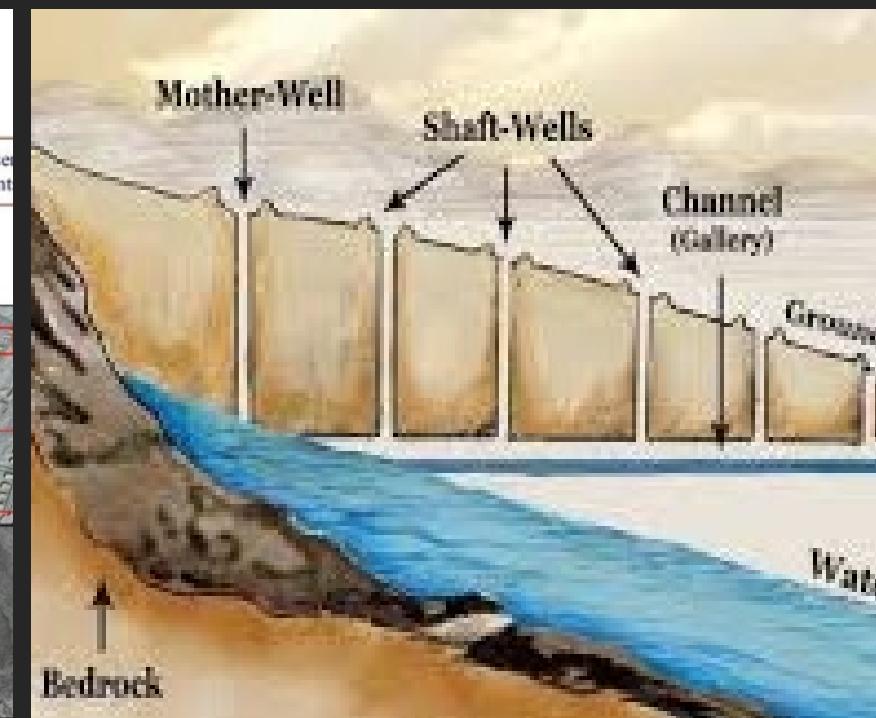
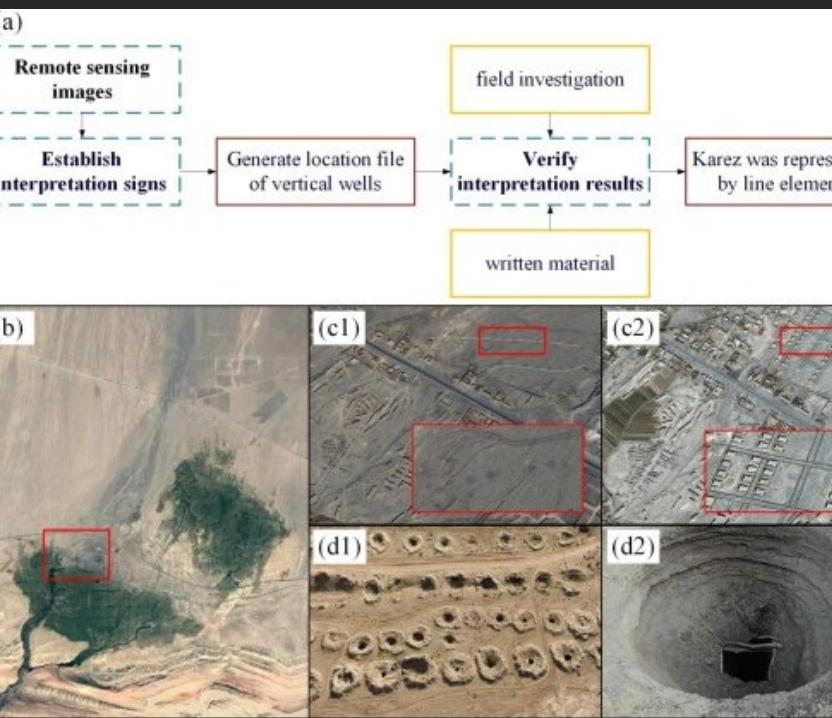
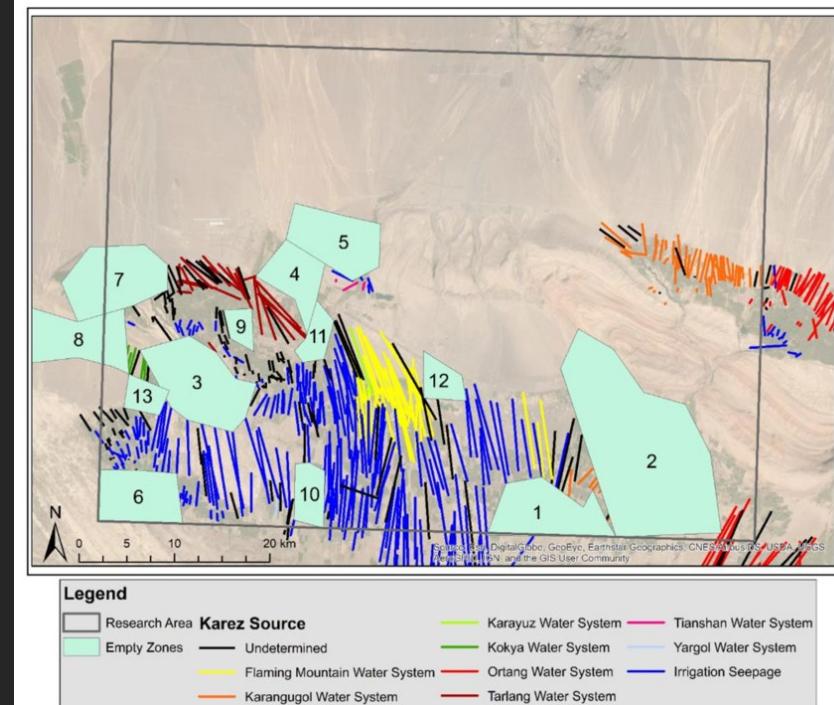
Pastoralism

- Syncretic Culture
 - Influenced by Tengrism, Persian religions, Buddhism, and Christianity
- Mobile Economy
- Nomadic pastoral agriculture
- Intermediary Dynamics
- Strong-man cultural politics
- Connected to networks of Western Asian cities in the Ural Basin and Tarim Basin
 - Tocharians and Sakas
 - Control over Gold and Salt network

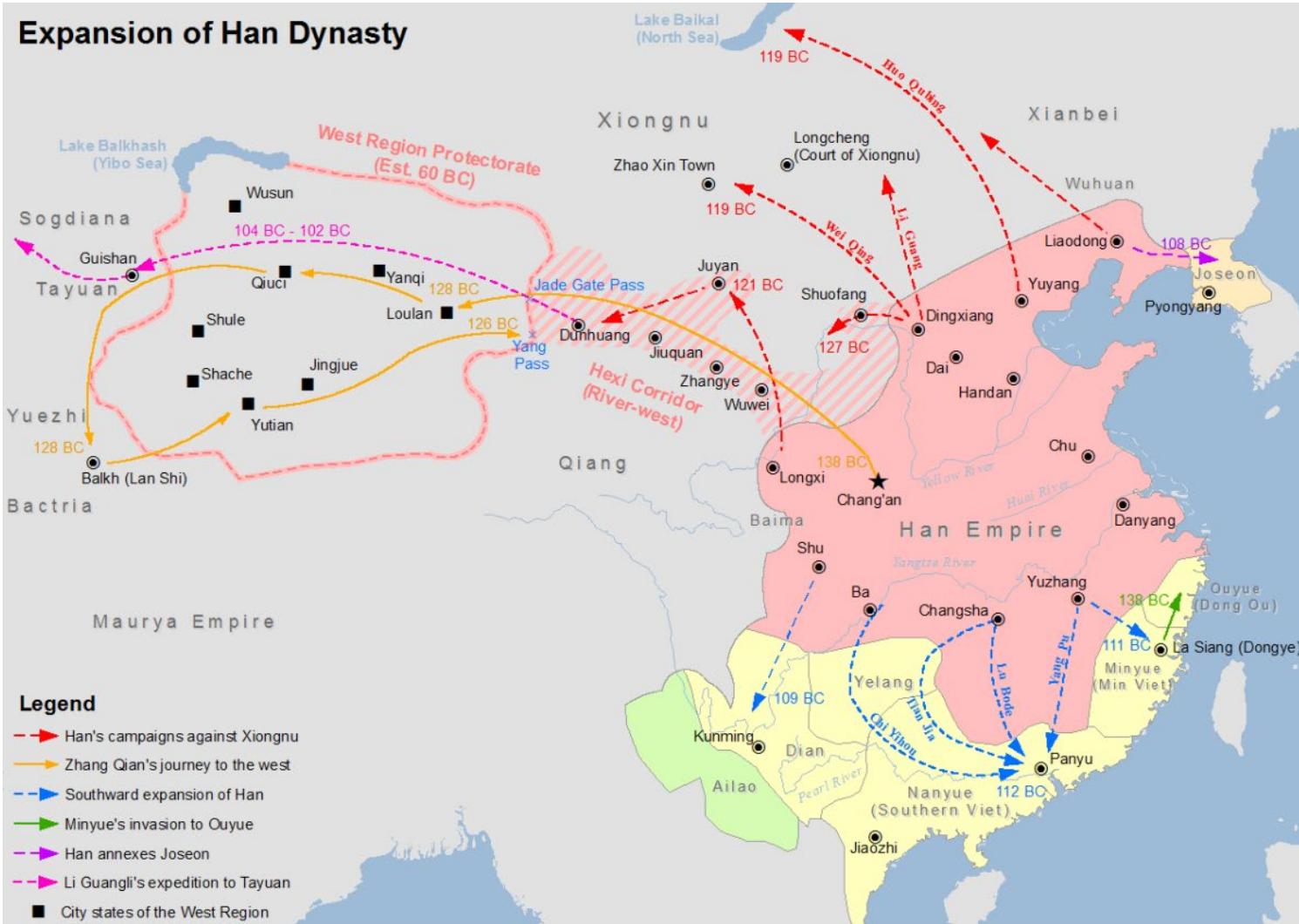


Terraforming

Karez/



Expansion of Han Dynasty





鄧至 *Dengzhi* Qiang



Wind from the East

The Qiangs

- A group of shepherds who are semi nomadic
- Tibeto-Burman group with potential Indo-European links
- Formed Tubo Kingdom
- Occupied areas in Shaanxi-Henan and expanded in Yangtze Plateau (SW of China) and into present day Myanmar
- Related to contemporary Qiang and Tibetan

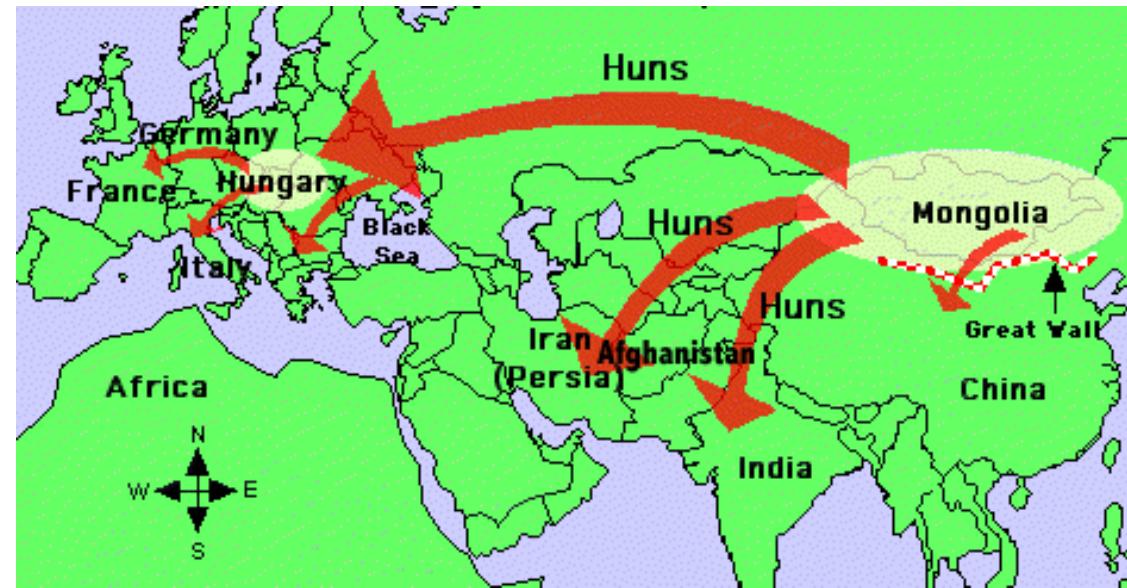
Factors Attributing to Empire Collapse

- Over Expansionism and Centralisation of Bureaucracy
- Nomads and the Silk Road
- 89 CE end of Xianbei
- Warlordism and Fragmentation
- Climate destabilisation

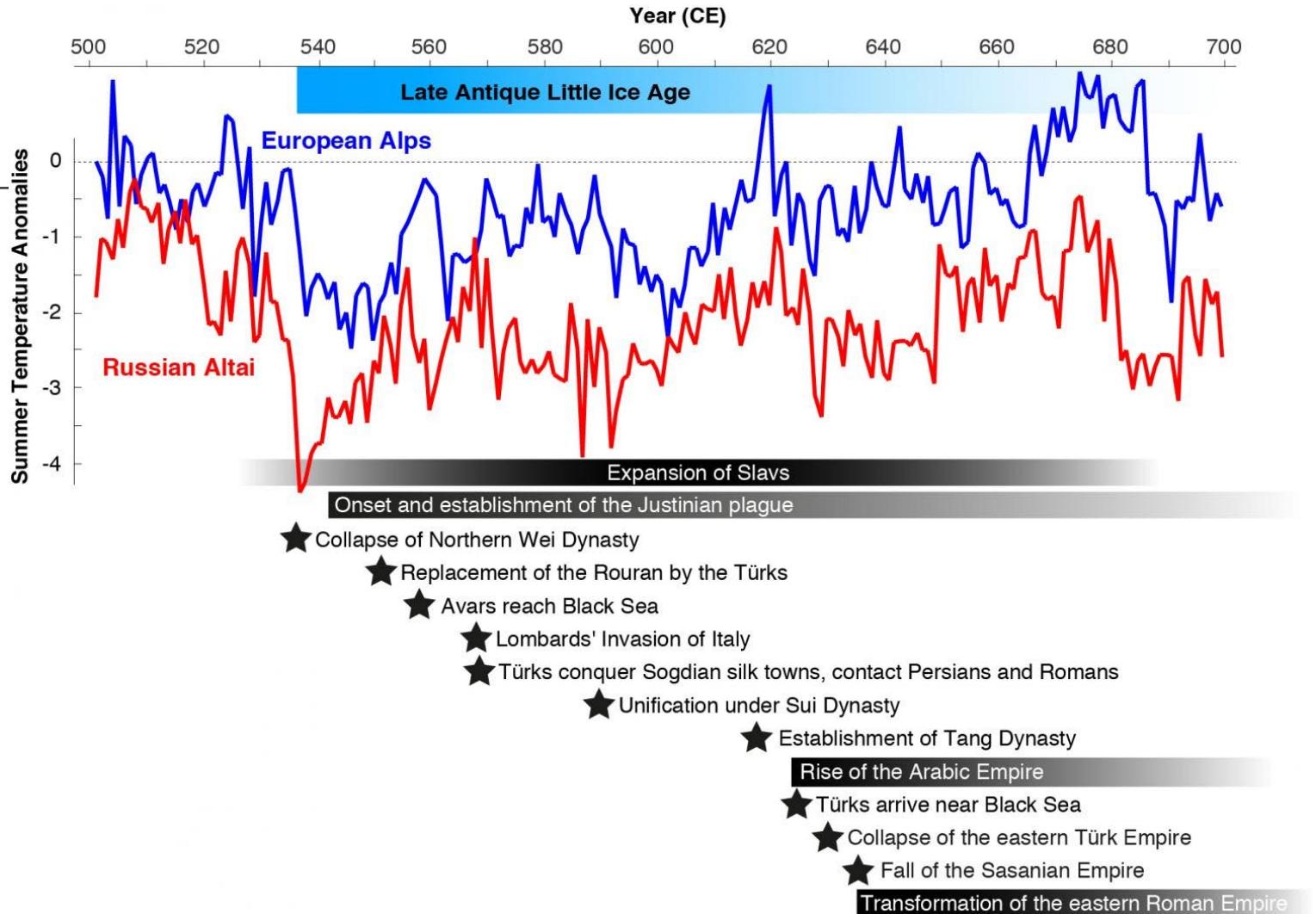
6th century portrait of Qiang envoy from Dengzhi

THE ROMAN TRADE NETWORK (1ST - 3RD CENTURIES CE)





Climate, Resilience and Collapse?





The brightest light of the whole world is extinguished; indeed the head has been cut from the Roman Empire. To put it more truthfully, the whole world has died with one City. Who would have believed that Rome, which was built up from victories over the whole world, would fall; so that it would be both the mother and the tomb to all peoples. (St. Jerome, 410CE)

The conventional Eurocentric approach

Roman Population 4th century CE: approx. 55 million

“The Barbarians”

Germanic: Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Anglo-Saxons, Lombards, Suebi, Frisii, Jutes, Burgundians, Alemanni, Scirii, Franks

Huns

Slavs

Bulgars

Vikings, Norman, Varangian

Hungarian

Moorish, Turkic, and Mongols

Empires and Power

- Repertoires of Power: flexible, pragmatic, and diverse with mix strategies for governance
- Politics of Difference: A recurring challenge for empires was how to govern heterogenous populations → leveraging of local elites as intermediaries
- Layers of sovereignty: non-unified sovereignty (more inclusive or can also be more exclusionary)
- Inter-Imperial Interactions: Competition, conflict, and cooperation



NEXT WEEK....The
Medieval World
