

A Race Through Time: General Humanity Edition

Introduction

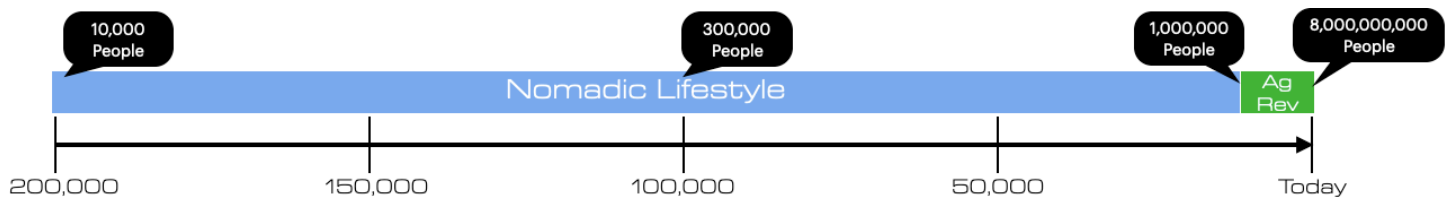
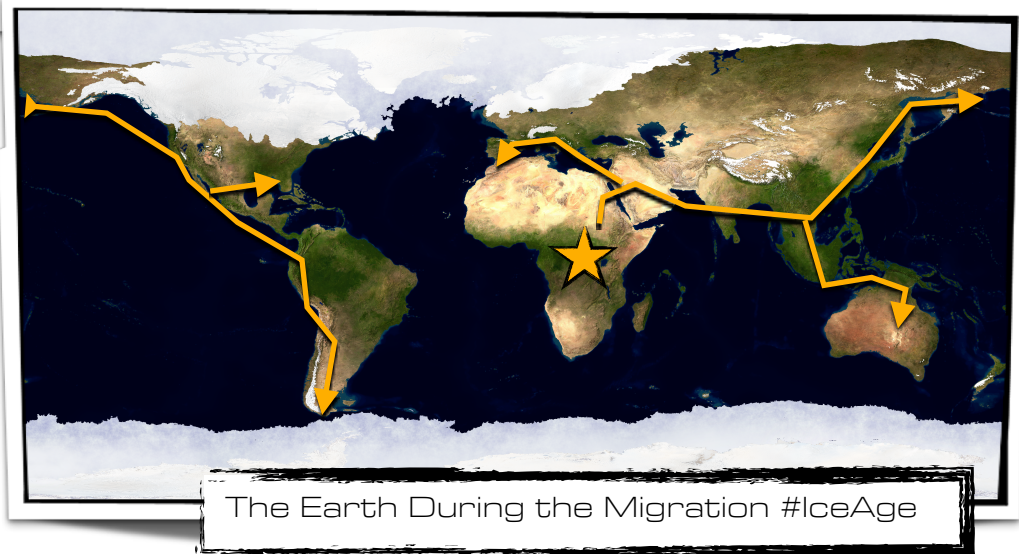
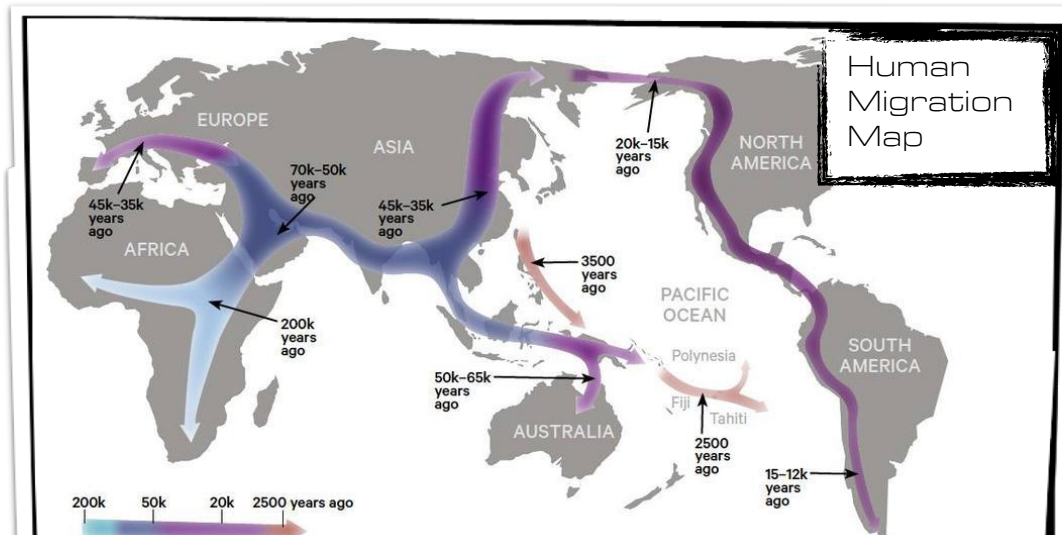
In 2020, College Board changed AP World History from teaching the WHOLE history of the human species to just 1200 CE to Present Day. While this drastically reduced the amount of content students need to master for the test, there are still many topics students need to know for Unit 1 and Unit 2 that happen BEFORE 1200 CE. Thus, the purpose of "A Race Through Time" is to quickly summarize around 199,200; highlighting the key features of the human story that are relevant to being successful in AP World History. This first document - the General Humanity Edition - gives a generalized overview of the entire human story. The second document - Regional Profiles - will provide a quick region-by-region breakdown, with more society-specific information that will be critical to not being overwhelmed at the start of the course.

On the Move: Humanity's Nomadic Beginnings [Begin taking notes]

In the Beginning...

The human story begins around 200,000 years ago. *Homo sapiens* evolved in Central Africa as a middle of the food chain animal that waited for the lions and hyenas to finish eating their kill, while also gathering nuts and berries. Around 100,000 years ago, humanity left Africa and began to migrate around planet earth; making their final stop at the tip of South America ~20,000 years ago.

For the first 188,000 years, humans lived a nomadic or transhumance life style. This means that people lived on the move, constantly migrating in pursuit of food. One type of nomadic group were hunter-gatherers. Hunter-gatherers followed their food in seasonal patterns. They had a high quality of life. Hunter-gatherers lived along fresh water rivers, eating from a wide variety of nuts, berries, fish, and other animals. They worked for ~20 hours a week, using the remaining time for recreation activities like art, music, and dance. The nutrient rich diet allowed the average human to be ~6'2" tall, with toned muscles. The average life expectancy was around 28 years old. Digging deeper into the numbers: For every 100 people born - 43 people died before 15 years old, with 29 people living past 45 years old (if you could make it to 15 years old, you had a 2/3rds chance of making it past 45 years old. Most people died from disease or child birth.) The role of women was highly valued. Women provided 70-80% of daily food, plus gave birth to children; giving them equal-to-greater importance in their communities.



Nomadic Pastoralists



A second type of nomadic existence were pastoralists - many of whom will play a key role in the early part of the course. Pastoralists are nomadic, like hunter gatherers, but they manage and care for a collection of animals. This could be a collection of domesticated animals like sheep, goats, cattle, or (as will be relevant soon) horses and camels. To domesticate means to tame for human use. The fate of the group is tied to the fate of the animals. The humans live with the animals, guiding them to water, food, healing wounds, scaring away predators, and helping deliver babies. In return, the animals provide milk, hides/furs, and warmth. In the case of horses and camels, they also provide speed.

Humanity 101

Here are a few basic traits that applied to human societies:

- **Goldilocks Zone:** Geography shapes destiny. The resources and climate determine where people live and how they live; also known as environmental determinism. Humans need conditions to be “just right” to be able to survive. If it is too hot or cold, too wet or dry, too high or low... humans die.
- **Weak & Vulnerable:** Compared to other animals humans are vulnerable. Humans have soft skin, poor teeth, no claws, weak muscles and jaws
- **Sloooooow:** Humans can walk an average of 10-15 miles a day. Thus, a 30 mile trip (the distance from Raleigh to Durham), would take 2-3 days walking to arrive. A 400 mile trip would take 40 days (the distance from Raleigh to Washington DC). If a group had access to horses, they could cover 20-30 miles in good conditions.
- **Small Body, Big Brains:** It was the human brain that gave humanity its advantage to be successful. Humans can problem solve complex problems. We innovate, developing tools and other technologies to help overcome our weaknesses. We have the ability to imagine - to “see” in our mind things that have never existed in real life. Our brains allow for us to develop language and communicate complex ideas (note: speaking/singing/dancing are natural to humanity, writing was only developed 5,000 years ago).
- **Isolation & Uniqueness:** The default for humanity is creativity. This means that 5 different groups of people will develop 5 different and unique solutions to the same problem. It is when communities interact that they share/copy from the other groups. For most of human history, there were over 15,000 unique languages and cultures. Groups were small and lived in general isolation from each other
- **Religions:** Humans ability imagine led to the abstract concept of religion. Many groups developed gods/goddesses to help explain the world around them, to ask for help, and to help cope with the difficulties of death. Amongst nomadic groups, many held animist and ancestral faiths. Animists believe everything in the world has a spirit or is divine. Ancestral faiths believe that when people die, their spirits “stay” with their families. The families can speak to the spirits and can perform rituals to help take care of their ancestors.



Nomadic Societies



Taking Root: Transitioning to Settled Communities

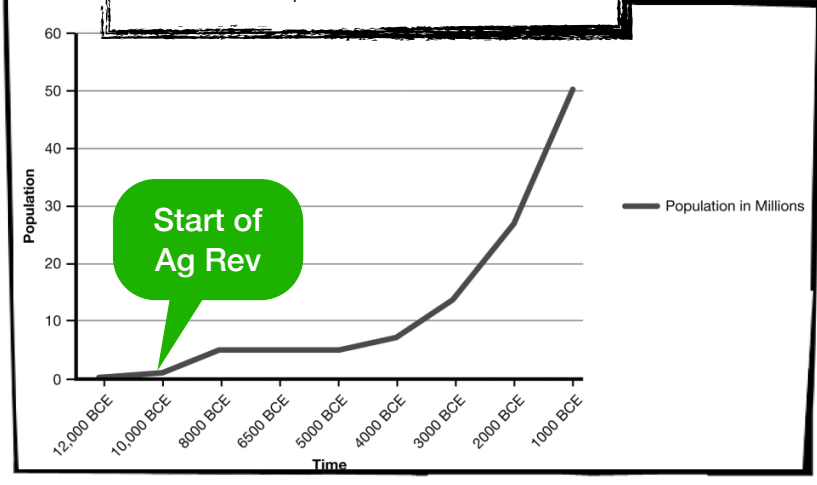
The Agricultural Revolution

Around 12,000 years ago, humanity undertook a drastic change: the Agricultural Revolution (also referred to as the Neolithic Revolution). As the ice age was warming up, the glaciers were melting; resulting in fresh bodies of water and fertile lands. A small percentage of humans slowly began to setting around river valleys, in areas that experienced all four seasons; due to their plants having seeds. Utilizing the seasonal planting of seeds, people started to farm. This took place in Mesopotamia (Iraq), the Yellow River (China), the Nile River (Egypt), the Indus River (India), and MesoAmerica (Mexico).



It is impossible to overstate the risk of this decision. Farming required 60-80 hours of work per week, relying on a much smaller variety of plants to eat. 100% of the community's survival depended on the weather, rain, and soil to create an adequate to good harvest. As a result, the average height fell from 6'2" to 5'3". Infant and maternal mortality rates increased. The number of deadly infections diseases increased due to people living close to their animals. Wars were fought over the best land, water access, and other finite resources. Inequality increased, as the people with the better lands prospered, while the people with the worst land fell into poverty.

World Population Growth



Despite these struggles, agriculture persisted. These sedentary farmers started to produce large quantities of grain. This required a massive amount of labor, which in turn encouraged families to birth more children. Populations exploded. This created the need for more farm land, which meant the farming settlements needed to expand. The expansion of settlements started to create tension with the nomadic hunter-gatherers and pastoralists. Each farm was taking away pasture/grazing lands and disrupting migration patterns that were thousands of years old; gradually pushing nomadic peoples off of the world's most fertile lands. This caused tremendous tension and conflict between nomadic and settled societies, as the nomadic peoples were pushed into the harshest climates with the scarcest food supplies.

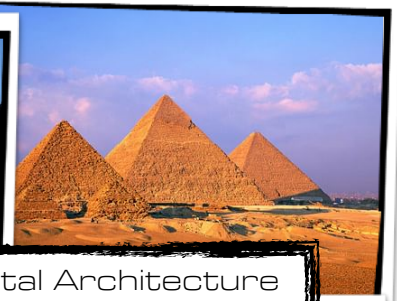
The development of agriculture produced negative results for women, as societies became increasingly patriarchal. The man's role as a hunter evolved into that of a farmer; relying on physical strength to plow the fields and harness the animals. The role of women became more centered around the home, especially giving birth to more children at a faster rate. Eventually, the role for males expanded to include government positions and skilled labor. The role for women... stayed in the house. Men became increasingly controlling of women and their fertility. Many societies placed strict rules governing women's freedom of movement, dress, speak, receive an education, and pursue job opportunities. Some forced policies that required women's bodies to be physically mutilated, like foot binding or genital mutilation.

The expansion of settled populations began to reshape human societies. Areas that had larger groups of farmers began to work together to form city-states. Each city state had its own government and regional identity. The city dwellers worked together on large scale projects like constructing walls, designing elaborate buildings, digging irrigation trenches and large canals. The surplus of food allowed people to transition from farming to specialized labor, like being a carpenter, metal worker, musician, or governing official.

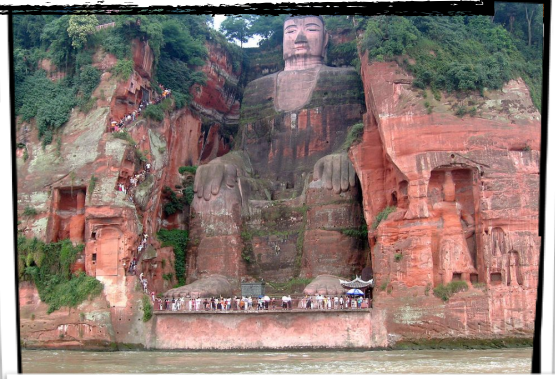
State Building & Collapsing

As cities became overcrowded and reached their carrying capacity, people from one city would be sent to go start a second city. As one society began to rule over multiple cities, it became a kingdom with one centralized government. As populations continued to increase, societies began to look at their neighbor's land and resources; desiring it for themselves. Kingdoms began to conquer and rule over their neighbors; creating empires. As kingdoms and empires expanded, governing leaders had to find ways to strengthen their control. In AP World History, this process is called State Building. Here are key elements of State Building:

- **Conquest:** Leaders would use their military to conquer regions and keep them under control.
- **Religion:** Leaders would utilize religious practices to justify their power. They would claim to be blessed by the gods, or to a living god in human form. Some leaders would force everyone to their religious beliefs. Others would allow people freedom to keep their beliefs, as long as they paid their taxes and demonstrated their loyalty.
- **Monumental Art & Architecture:** Leaders would plan/organize/fund massive building projects to demonstrate to the people their wealth and power. This included massive temple complexes to the gods, large protective walls, giant tombs for the leader's bodies, or oversized statues stationed around the empire. It would also include public works like aqueducts to bring water into crowded cities and sewer systems to move feces away from drinking water.
- **Roads:** To speed up movement across the empire and to help centralize power, leaders built roads. Roads found the most efficient transportation routes, while proving a smooth/sure surface to move carts of goods. Empires would sometimes plant trees or dig wells along the roads to help travelers along their way. Roads were also critical for the rapid deployment of troops to bring rebellious regions under control.
- **Taxes & Money:** Governing an empire is expensive. Leaders setup tax systems to collect money to fund the government, army, and building projects. Leaders also put their faces on coins or paper money as a symbol of who was in control.
- **Literacy:** To keep track of all the money, contracts, and laws, societies developed systems of writing. Literacy was for the elite, mainly used by government or religious officials. As literacy began to be for entertainment purposes (like poems or plays), kings used literacy to tell grand stories about their own awesomeness.



Monumental Architecture



Roads

As empires expanded, the conquered and absorbed people groups of different ethnicities and religious beliefs; raising the question - "What to do with these outsiders?" Some governments forced the conquered people to divide up and move to different parts of the empire (referred to as a Diaspora). Others chose to enslave their enemies, giving the conquered people as "gifts" to the soldiers or selling them to far away places. Another strategy was to force mixing and intermarriage; blending the new people into your society. A final strategy was allowing them the freedom to keep their language/culture/religion, as long as they remained loyal.

One continuity of history, every state system has collapsed. In history, it has not been a question of “if it will collapse” but “when it will collapse.” Societies collapse for a number of reasons:

- **Too Large:** While empires enjoy expansion, they would become too big to manage. The slow speed of communication and transportation made it difficult to manage the complexity of empires that spanned hundreds to thousands of miles (a 1,000 mile empire could take 200 days to get a message from one end of the empire to the other and back). Managing such an empire also became too expensive and the people feel “disconnected” or “isolated” from the leadership at the capital..
- **Corruption:** The leaders in power will do anything to keep their power and improve their own position. Leaders make choices to preserve themselves instead of what is best of “the people.”
- **The Desire for Power:** Those close to power will fight for power. The lure and desire to have absolute power is an overwhelming force. Most often, this would be the brother or nephew of the leader. Threats would also come from powerful nobles (rich people), who want the glory for their family.
- **Conquered:** A neighboring group develops a new technology or military strategy and conquers your people.



About Government Styles

As societies developed in size and complexity, governments developed bureaucracies to support. Bureaucracies are officials that help run the government, making and enforcing key decisions. As the government taxes in more taxes, they will setup state officials to oversee tax collection. As the government undertakes building projects, they will setup state officials to plan and manage the building projects. These officials will report to the government leader, but will have the power to oversee and manage their assigned aspect of society.

Governments have to decide who will fill these bureaucratic roles. Some societies will give these positions as rewards to family members or close friends. This method had a greater potential for loyalty, as it was a reward to people that stayed close and loyal to. Other societies will develop a meritocracy, where positions are earned based upon the qualities and the abilities of the person. These systems will have people either take a test or perform a demonstration of their skill sets. The individuals who perform the best will earn the position, no matter what family they come from nor their rank in society.

Governments had to determine their method for making and enforcing decisions.

- **1 Person Rule.** The most common structure of governmental power in human history is 1 Person Rule, where one person has absolute power. These forms of autocracy can be categorized as a Monarchy (where power passes through the family bloodline) or a dictatorship/tyrant (where power is gained by force). Autocracies are quick to setup, efficient, and can act quickly. On the negative, autocracies are prone to corruption and can be unstable if many people are competing to be the one person in charge.
- **Multi-Person Rule.** Similar to an autocracy, multi-person rule shares power amongst a few people. These can be categorized as aristocracies (a few rich people share power) or theocracies (where the religious leaders share power.) While multi-person rule does have a few more voices involved in making decisions, they do not tend to last for very long... because those few people compete for absolute power.
- **Rule of the Masses.** Democracy is when the people share the power. In a direct democracy, every eligible citizen gets to vote on every decision. The side that gets 50.1% of the vote wins. In a Republic or Representative Democracy, people vote for one person from their region to represent their interests at the State Government (often called a Parliament or Congress). On the positive side, democracies allow every person to have a say in shaping the state’s leadership and policies. On the down side, this can be a painfully slow (and messy) process. Also, states can be exclusive as to who “counts as a citizen.” People have been eliminated from being a voting citizen because of their gender, race, age, or religion.

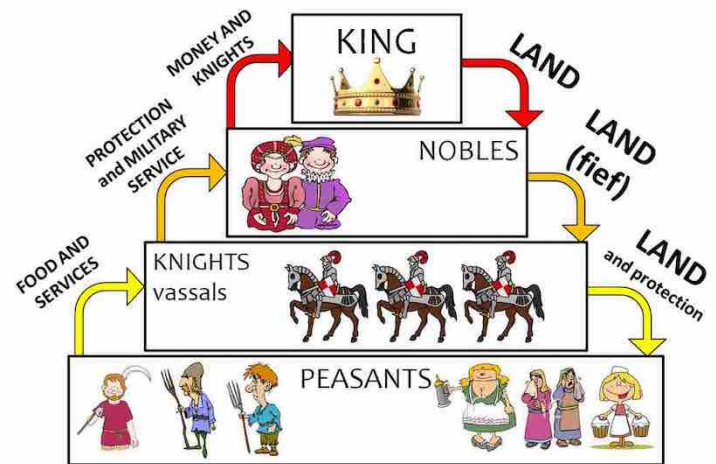
About Social Structures

As societies become more complex, they develop social hierarchies or social structures. Social Hierarchies are a system of organizing people into ranks, classes, or castes; with each level having more access to wealth, power, and opportunity. Social mobility is the ability for people to move from a lower rank in society to a higher rank. It is important to note, for most of human history 95-97% of people were categorized into the lowest/poorest classes in society. The top positions were held by the top 2-3% of society.

Common ways of structuring a society include:

- **Birth/Family:** A person is born into their level/rank and it is traced through the family bloodline. In this system, there is little-to-no social mobility.
- **Job:** A person's occupation determines their level/rank in society. Certain jobs are perceived as having greater value in society than others. This offers the chance at greater social mobility... but it is not promised.
- **Citizenship:** A citizen is a legally recognized member of the state. Social structures based on citizenship give privileges and opportunities to those who are citizens, while denying those opportunities to non-citizens (referred to as: foreigners, immigrants, refugees, illegal aliens). Citizenship based societies typically have a second stratifying quantity, like job or birth, built in as well. For example: citizens who come from rich families have even greater opportunities than citizens from poor families.
- **Religion:** Simply put, those who belong to the official state religion have greater access to opportunities than those who are outside the religion. These can range in their levels of strictness, from "you cannot have certain jobs if you are not a religious member" to "you will be killed if you are not a religious member." Like citizenship, religious based social structures tend to have a second stratifying quality.

A very specific structure that will be seen early in the course is Feudalism. Feudalism is a system based upon a series of agreements and exchanges. The King (technically) holds absolute power. The Kings make an agreement with the Nobles, where the King gives the rights to land ownership in exchange for the Nobles providing warriors for military service along with annual tax money. The Nobles make an agreement with the warriors, where the Nobles promise housing/food/wealth in exchange for the warriors military service. Finally, Nobles make an exchange with the peasants, where the Nobles promise protection and food in exchange for the peasant's labor and taxes. In Feudalism, technically the King is "in charge." But, because of the slow speed of transportation and how isolated/dispersed the communities were, the real power was in the hands of the Nobles. The Nobles controlled the warriors. The Nobles controlled food access and collected the taxes. Kings had to make sure to keep the nobles appeased; constantly fearing rebellions or uprisings from powerful Nobles.



Feudal Pyramid of Power

Trade Networks

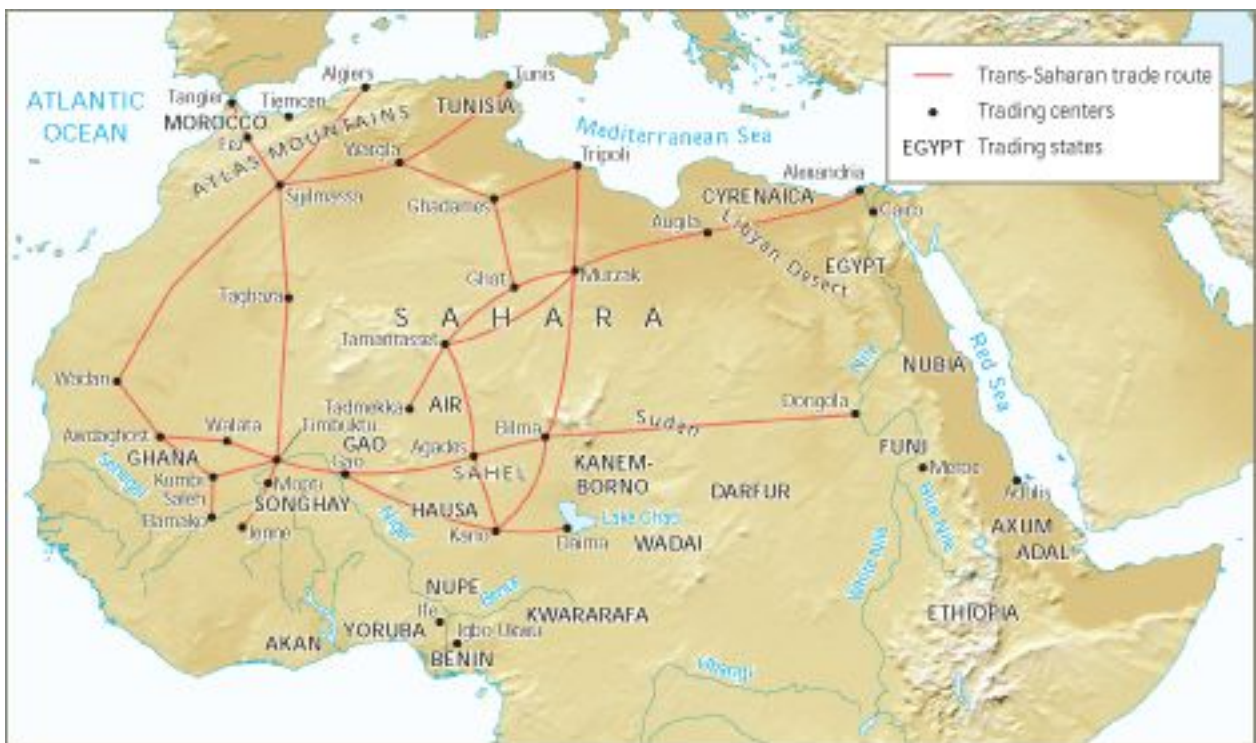
As societies settled, the States were faced with resource shortages. Where nomadic peoples could migrate to areas that had the necessary resource, settled states were bound within the territory they controlled. Over time, trade routes developed, where merchants from one city traveled to nearby cities, looking to purchase needed resources. For example: the city of Toledo, Spain had access to iron ore. A nearby town grew grains. Toledo would trade metal tools in exchange for grains. As trade routes grew and became more complex, merchants needed places to stop along their route. Cities grew up along these routes, providing food, shelter and protection to the traveling merchants. These trade cities grew in wealth, power, and influence. Nomadic Pastoralists, especially horse and camel herders, became important merchants along these trade routes. Pastoralists became key to connecting cities, because of their speed, mobility, and carrying capacity.

By 1200, 3 key trade routes had developed:

- **Silk Road Trade:** The Silk Road was a land based set of trade routes that started in China and connected South Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe. Merchants walked on foot or used horses/camels. Trade was slow, consisting of mostly expensive goods like silk and porcelain. China was considered the largest producer of goods on the Silk Road. Nomadic horse and camel groups were essential for moving goods over long distance.



- **Trans-Saharan Trade:** The Trans-Saharan Trade was another land based trade network that connected Western, Northern, and Eastern Africa to the Middle East. Key commodities were traded like gold, salt, copper and people who had been enslaved. Nomadic camel groups were essential for moving goods across the Saharan Desert.



- **Indian Ocean Trade:** The Indian Ocean Trade was a shipping based trade route. Using the monsoon winds, ships connected East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and East Africa. Ships were able to carry larger goods - like timber and stone, travel faster, and further than walking based trade. Important city-states developed along the coast lines of Africa and Asia, where these ships came into port to load and unload their goods. Nomadic Sea People in Southeast Asia were also critical merchants on this trade route.



World Religions

As societies became more complex, their religions also became more complex. By 700 CE, all the major world religions had been developed and were spreading through trade, conquest and missionary evangelism. Here are brief snapshots of each of the major religions of the world that will be encountered in Units 1 & 2:

Pantheon Faiths

Early agricultural societies began to evolve their religions to match the complexity of their society. Where animists worshipped the nature around them, pantheon faiths gave the gods names, powers, and a social structure amongst their other divine beings. This is seen in the Greek, Egyptian, Roman, and Nordic pantheons. It is important to note: these early faith systems were focused around the idea of "Please gods, do not kill us." People were less concerned about individual actions or "morals," and more concerned about making the right offering to appease the gods so they would send a famine or plague to kill everyone.

Abrahamic Faiths

According to religious texts, there was a man name Abraham who grew up in the Middle East. Abraham believed there was one divine being named Yahweh (he has over 600 names in the religious texts, this reading will use Yahweh to stay consistent). Abraham grew up in the city of Ur, but then transitioned to being a pastoral sheep herder. Yahweh promised Abraham's descendants land, wealth, and political power. Abraham had two sons: Ishmael - born to a servant girl, and Isaac - born to Isaac's wife. The religious texts attribute each son to the development of three major religions:

- **Judaism:** From Isaac's bloodline came the religion of Judaism. Judaism has a holy book called the Torah that has Yahweh's laws (the Ten Commandments), moral codes, histories and prophecies. The Jewish people conquered land on the coast of the Middle East, establishing the kingdom of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. Judaism was an ethnic faith, believing that only those born to Jewish families were apart of the Jewish faith. Other empires conquered the Jewish people, creating the Jewish Diaspora - as the Jewish people were spread across the Middle East and parts of Europe.
- **Christianity:** Around 3 CE, Jerusalem was conquered by the Romans. A Jewish man by the name of Jesus preached a message of equality, love, and a more personal relationship with Yahweh. Many attributed to Jesus that he was the son of Yahweh. Religious texts state that Jesus was crucified, with his followers believing Jesus was raised from the dead; returning to Yahweh in heaven, preparing to come back in the future. Jesus' followers spread his message across Europe, the Middle East, East Africa, and parts of South Asia.

In Europe, Christianity became the dominant religion. By 400 CE, there were two main branches of Christianity - the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek/Eastern Orthodox Church. The Roman Catholics were based in Rome, Italy, with the Pope as its religious head. The Roman Catholics believe the Pope to be Jesus' #1 most important person on earth, with the "keys to the Christian Kingdom." The Greek Orthodox church had strong disagreements with the Pope and broke away. The Greek Orthodox had Constantinople as its religious headquarters.

- **Islam:** In 610 CE, an Arabian merchant named Muhammad received a vision from Allah (Yahweh translated into Arabic). The Arabians were believed to descend from Abraham's first son, Ishmael. Muhammad was instructed the Jews and the Christians had received Allah's message, but had corrupted it. Muhammad was to write down the corrections in a book called the Quran, to correct these errors. This gave birth to the Islamic religion, with its most important city being Mecca. Muhammad built an empire, uniting the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of Spain. Islam quickly spread through conquest and being involved extensively in the Trans-Saharan, Silk Road, and Indian Ocean trade routes.

Over time, Islam divided into two branches: Sunni and Shia. They disagreed over who should have political power in Islamic Caliphates (Arabic word for Kingdom), along with how to best understand the Quran.

Dharmetic Faiths

The Dharmetic faiths started in South Asia (modern day Pakistan and India). These faiths are diverse and complicated - with over 30 million recognized gods and goddesses. This is a super brief summary of key points:

- **Hinduism:** Considered the oldest organized religion in the world, based on the religious texts called the Vedas. Hinduism believes in the Samsara Cycle: people live, die, and then are reincarnated based upon the actions they took in their lives. The Caste System creates levels for people based upon their job. People are born into their caste and must fulfill their job to society. If they do a good job, they will be reincarnated into a better caste in their next life. Hinduism spread through trade and migration through South and Southeast Asia.
- **Buddhism:** Around 550 BCE, Siddhartha was a Hindu prince who rejected the Caste System. He meditated on ways to end human suffering; achieving enlightenment and being called "the Buddha." The Buddha's followers went along the Silk Road trade routes and shared the Buddha's teaching. Buddhism spread rapidly across South Asia, East Asia, and South East Asia.

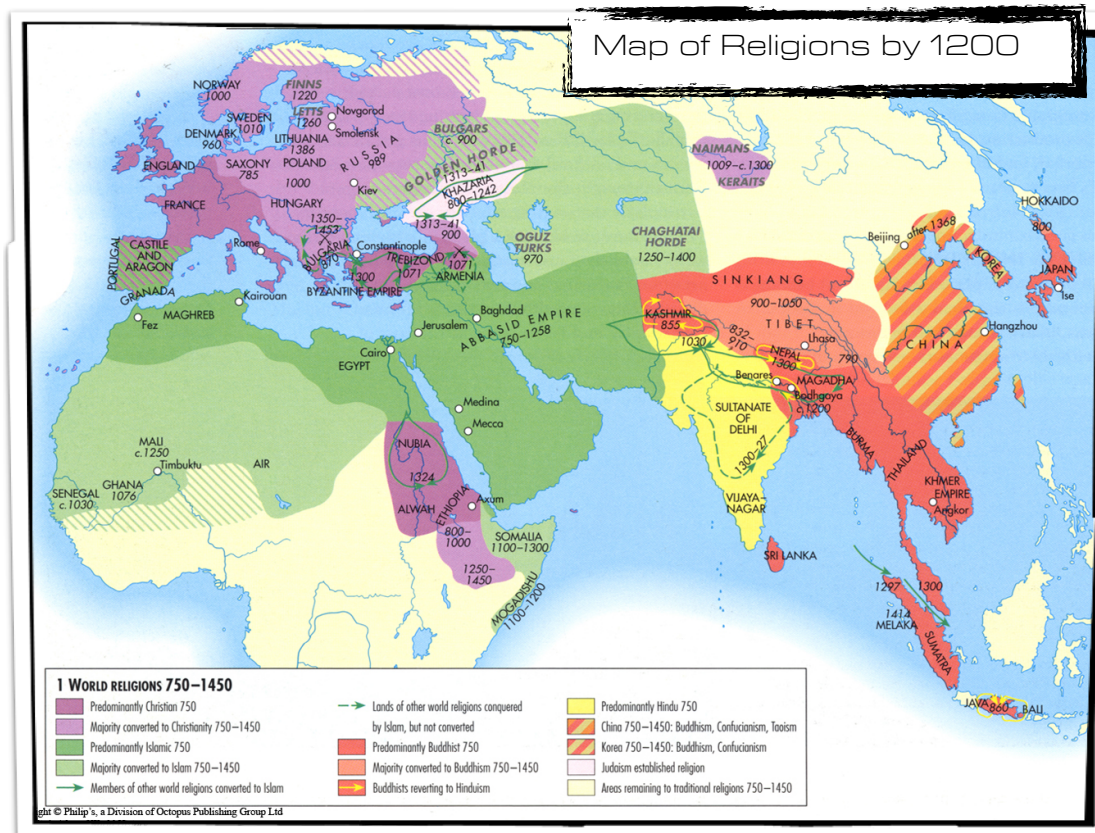
Over time, Buddhism divided into three branches: Tibetan, Theravada, and Mahayana. They disagree over how to achieve enlightenment, and whether there is an afterlife (paradise and place of torment).

Chinese Faiths

- **Confucianism:** While technically not a "religion," Confucianism had a strong impact upon the social structures across East Asia. Confucius promoted personal ethics, morality, and knowing one's place in society. Confucius also promoted having a State Exam to allow anyone who has talent to earn a place in the State Bureaucracy (#SocialMobility).

Confucianism eventually mixed with Buddhism to create "Neo-Confucianism."

- **Daoism/Taoism:** A Chinese faith system that promoted rejecting organized society. People should live simply and in harmony with nature.



A Quick Note About 1200 CE: Units 1 & 2

As you prepare to approach Units 1 & 2 (Years 1200-1450CE): The readings will focus on 7 key regions of the world. These regions are generally isolated from each other, aside from a little trade route connection. There will not be a “theme” that connects all the regional stories together, as all these events are happening at the same time. Think of these units as: “What were each of these regions doing just before they all become highly interconnected and forced to work together.” If it feels like a confusing mess, that is ok because... it is. In class, we will work together to sort it out (plus, it will be reviewed again in later units when we look at continuity and change).

