



# Big Era Five

Patterns of Interregional Unity  
300 – 1500 C.E.

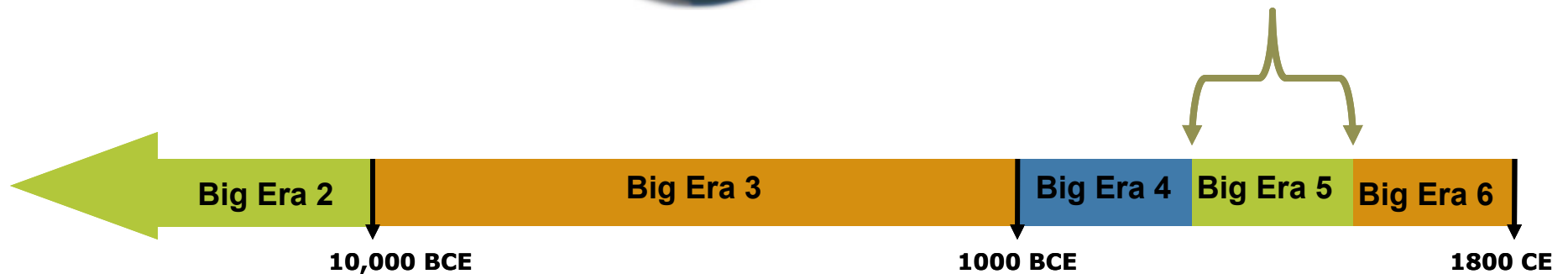
# Patterns of Interregional Unity

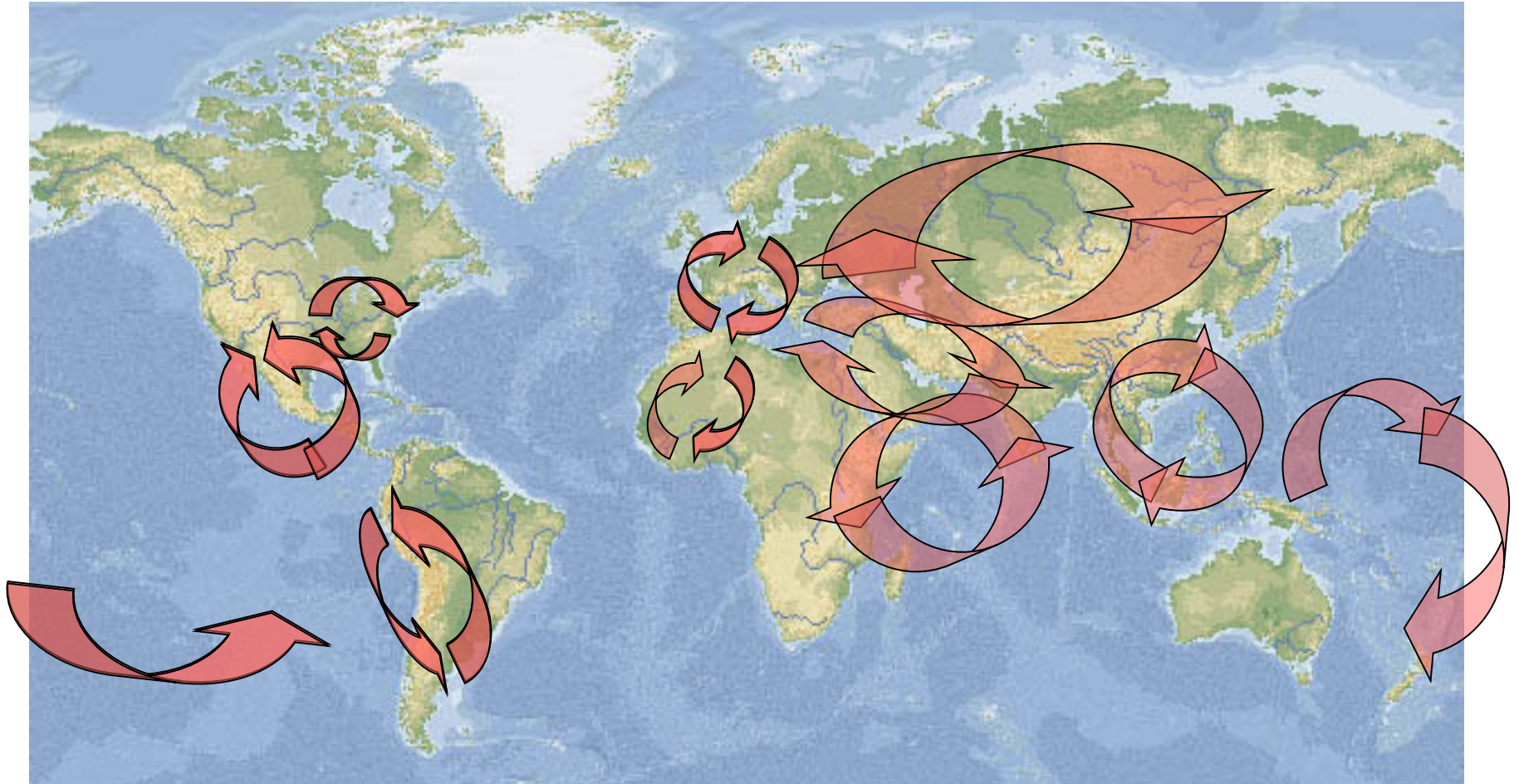
Welcome to  
**Big Era  
Five!**

Big Era Five  
lasted from 300  
CE to 1500 CE.



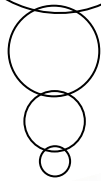
**300 CE – 1500 CE**





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**During Big Era Five, many connections were established among regions. These formed *interregional* patterns of unity.**



At the start of Big Era Five, numerous inventions, trade goods, ideas, and religions were starting to spread from their regions of origin.

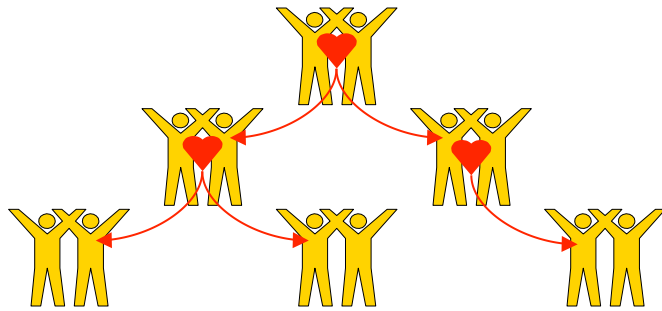
By the end of Big Era  
Five, many of these  
important ideas and useful  
things had spread all  
across Afroeurasia...

...That spread of  
ideas and things is  
part of *cultural  
exchange*.

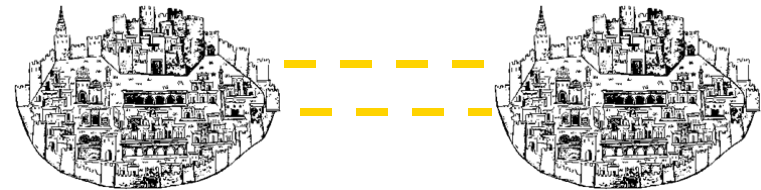


# Cultural exchange had many aspects.

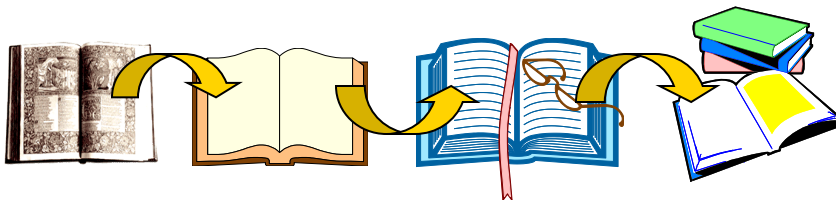
Population increased and people migrated.



Trade networks expanded and cities grew.



People shared ideas across regions.

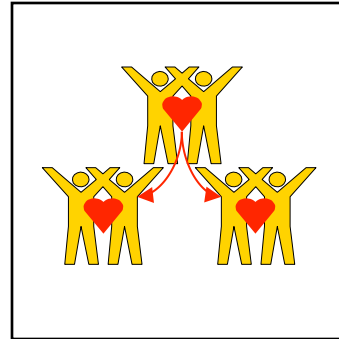


Huge empires brought many different groups of people together.





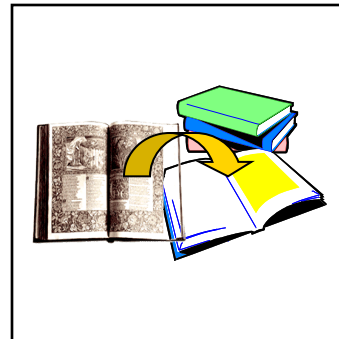
Let's take a closer look at each of these causes of cultural exchange.



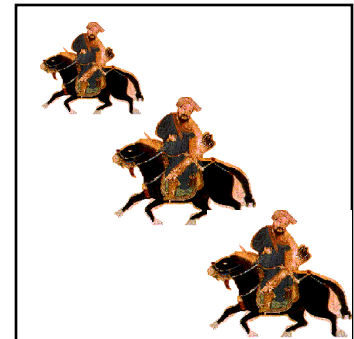
**Population**



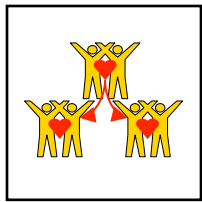
**Trade**



**Ideas**

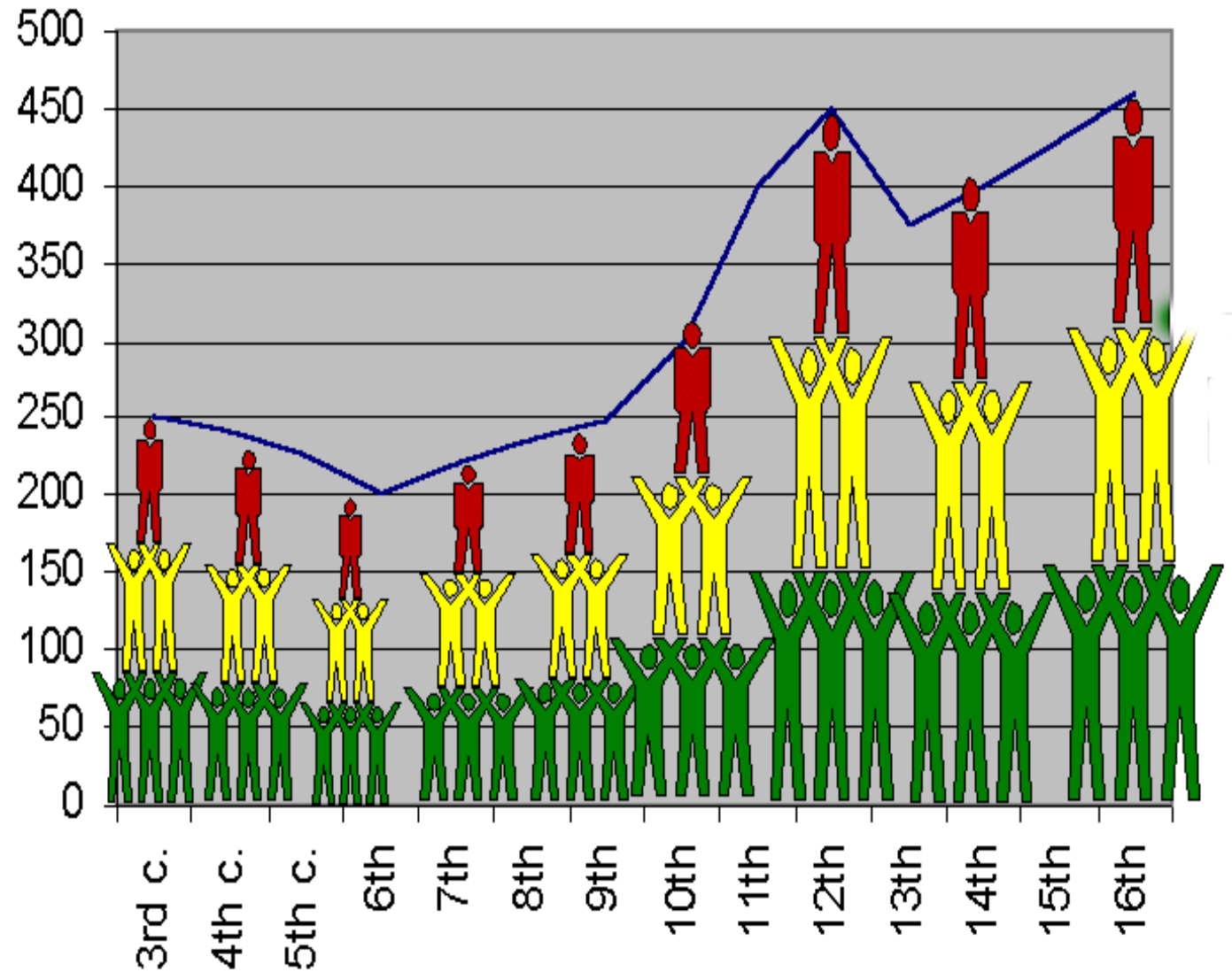


**Empires**

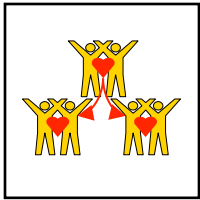


Population

**World population grew from about 250 million to 460 million between 200 CE and 1500 CE.**







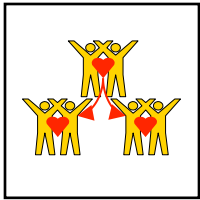
Population

## Were there billions of people living on the earth then as there are now?

No, then people were counted only in the millions.

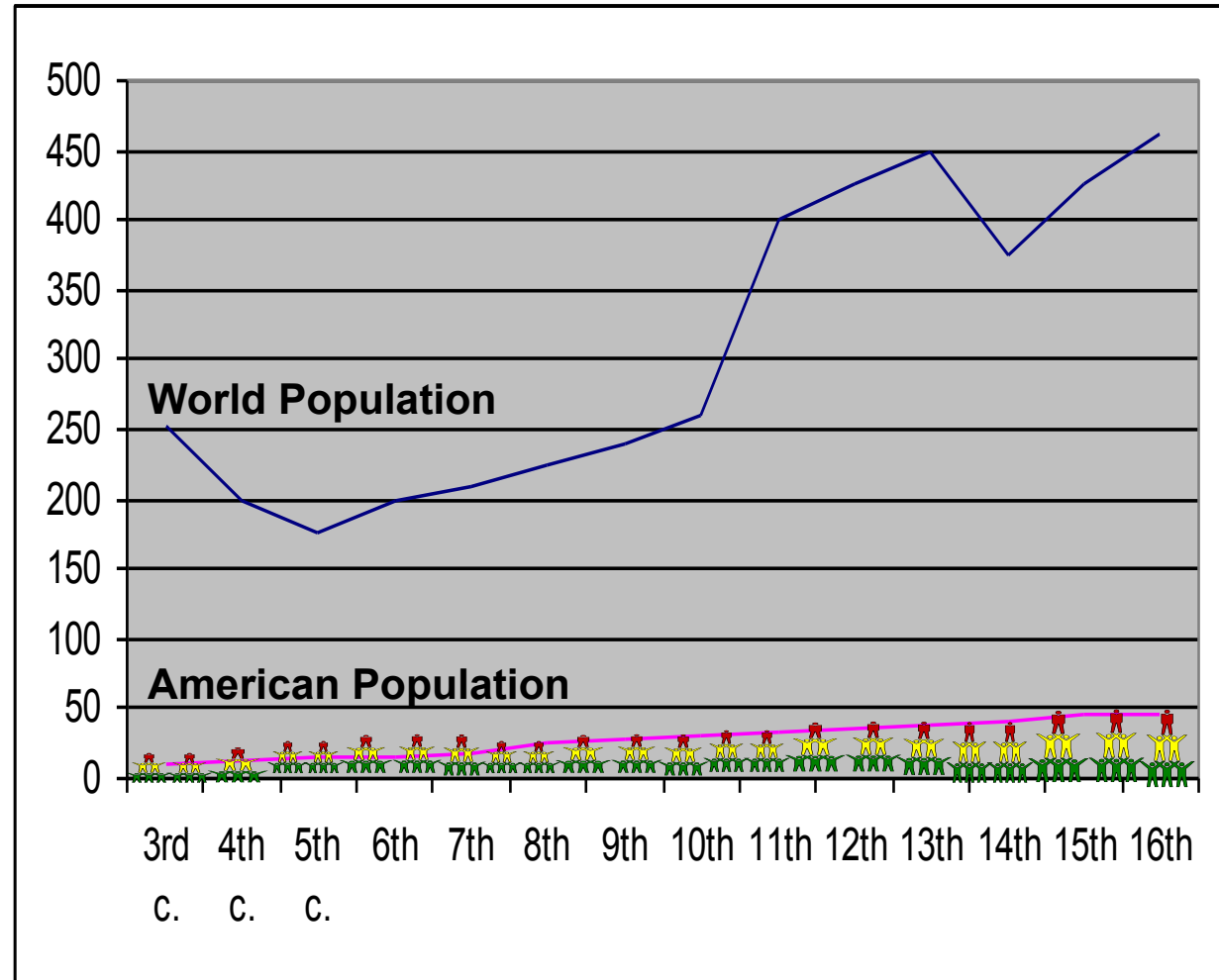
A world population of 460 million in 1500 CE is about the same as the population of North America today!

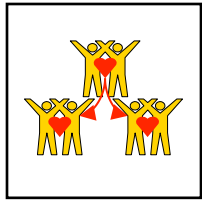




Population

**The population of the Americas was much smaller than the population of Afroeurasia.**





Population

40 million equals the population of Spain or Colombia today!

Less than 40 million people were spread over two huge continents.

As a result, cultural exchange in the Americas was less extensive than in Afroeurasia.

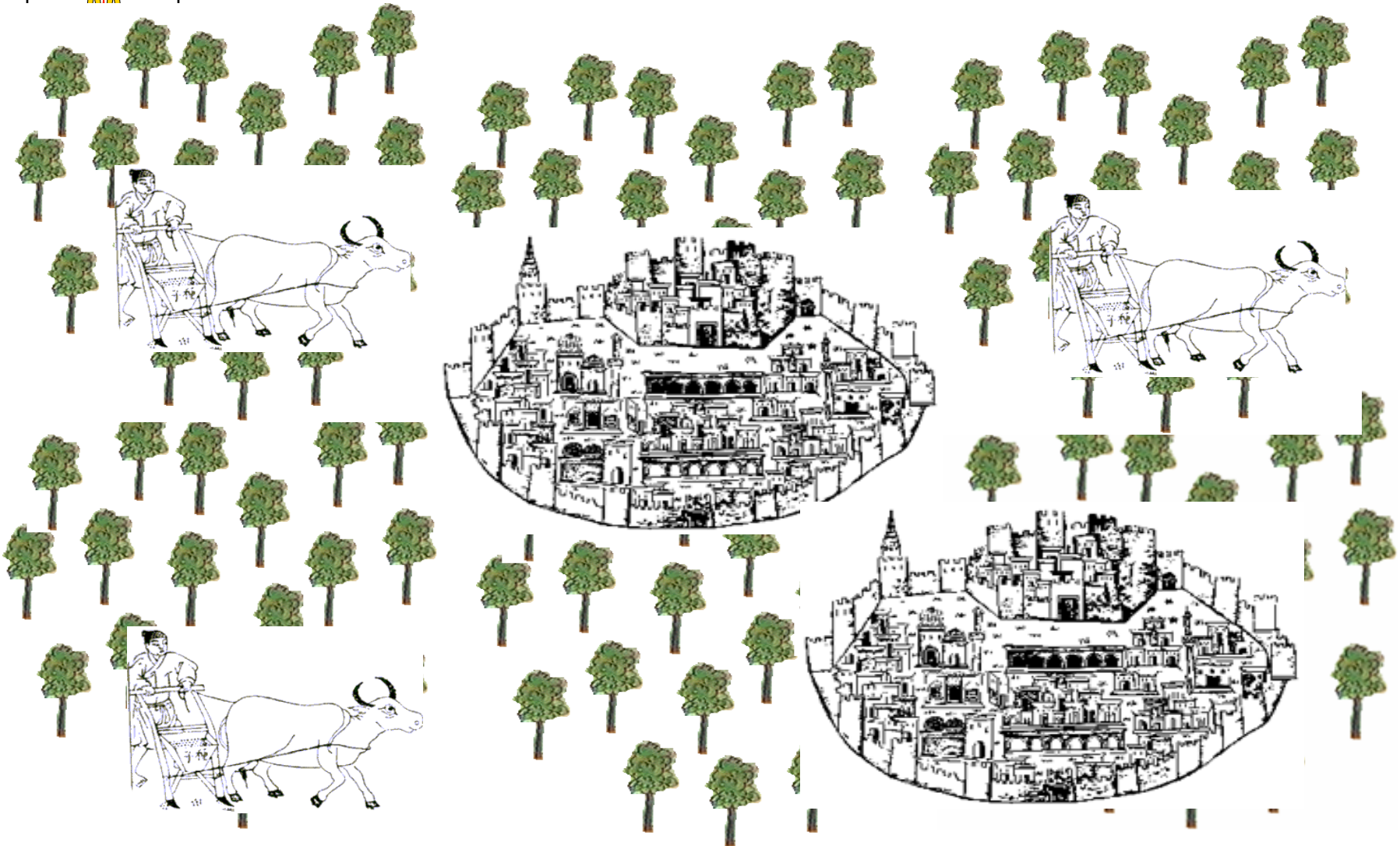


So, we'll look at cultural exchange in Afroeurasia, and then return to the Americas later.

**Afroeurasia**

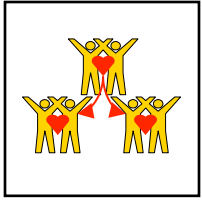


# Population growth in Afroeurasia affected *the environment*.



**Deforestation happened when cities and farming expanded.**





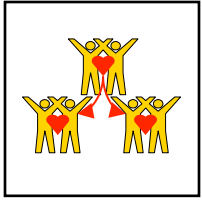
Population

Human impact on the environment had serious effects!

- **Wood was insufficient for heat, construction, and metal-working.**
- **Soil eroded and degraded.**
- **River flooding devastated villages, farmlands, and cities.**
- **Famines meant people didn't get enough to eat.**





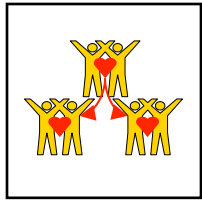


Population

Population increases affected the environment. Sometimes, people got up and moved on to new lands.

Large groups of people moved around, or *migrated*.

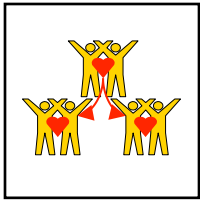




Population



**People migrated to new places in (and out) of Afroeurasia.**



Population



وَعَلَيْكُمْ السَّلَام

- **Migrating groups moved into other groups' territories, forcing them to go elsewhere.**
- **Migrating groups introduced new plants and animals into their new homes.**
- **Migrations diffused technologies for farming, warfare, and crafts.**
- **Migrations diffused languages, styles of living, and arts.**

Migrations encouraged more cultural exchanges across Afroeurasia.





Empires

Building states and empires involved cultural exchanges in Afroeurasia.

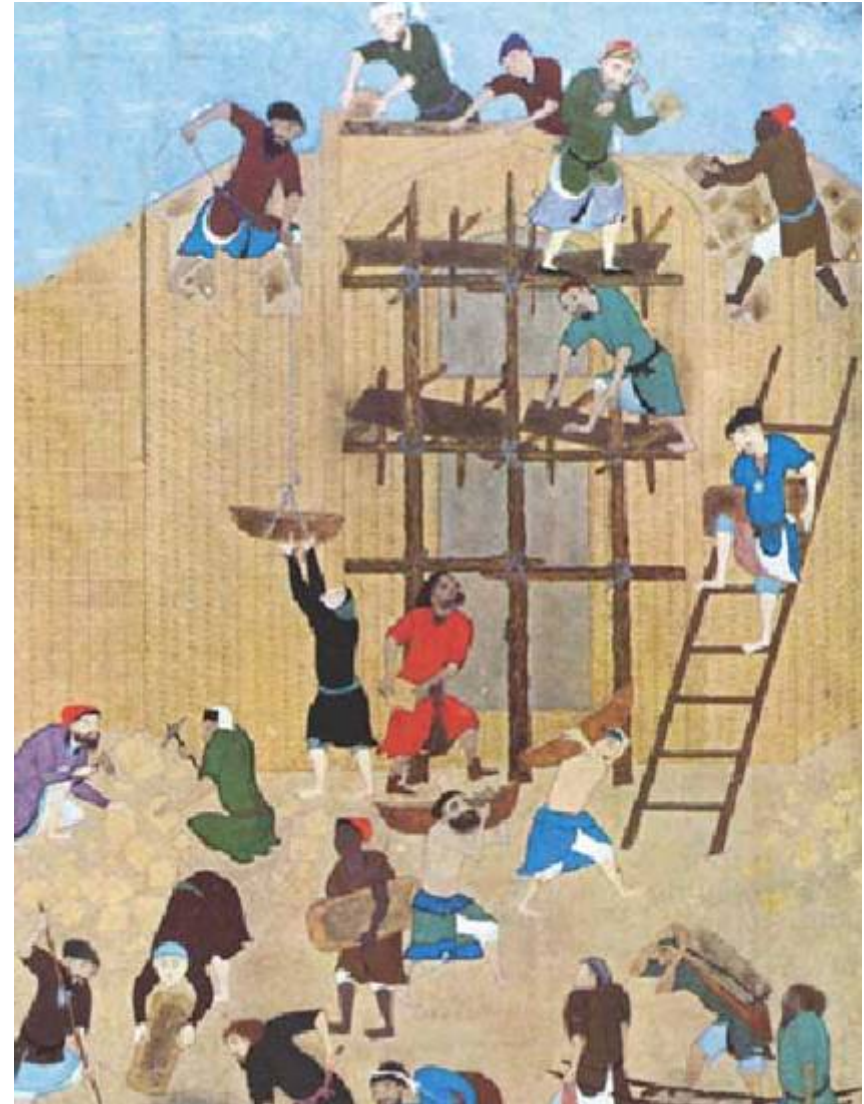
During Big Era Five, many, many states and empires came... and went.



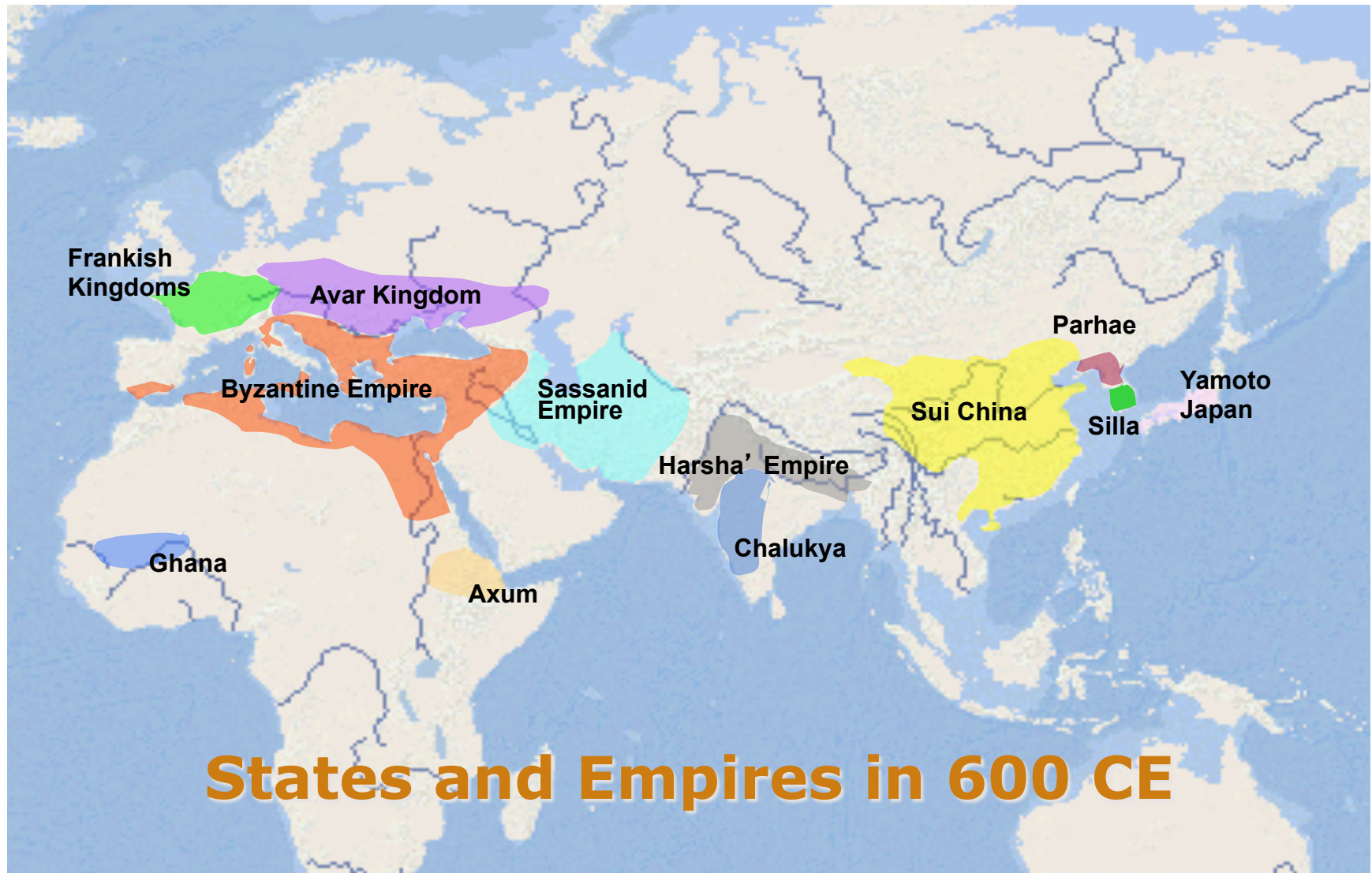


Empires

**New ruling groups  
built on the  
foundations of  
earlier states and  
empires.**







Frankish Kingdoms

Avar Kingdom

Byzantine Empire

Sassanid Empire

Harsha' Empire

Chalukya

Sui China

Parhae

Silla

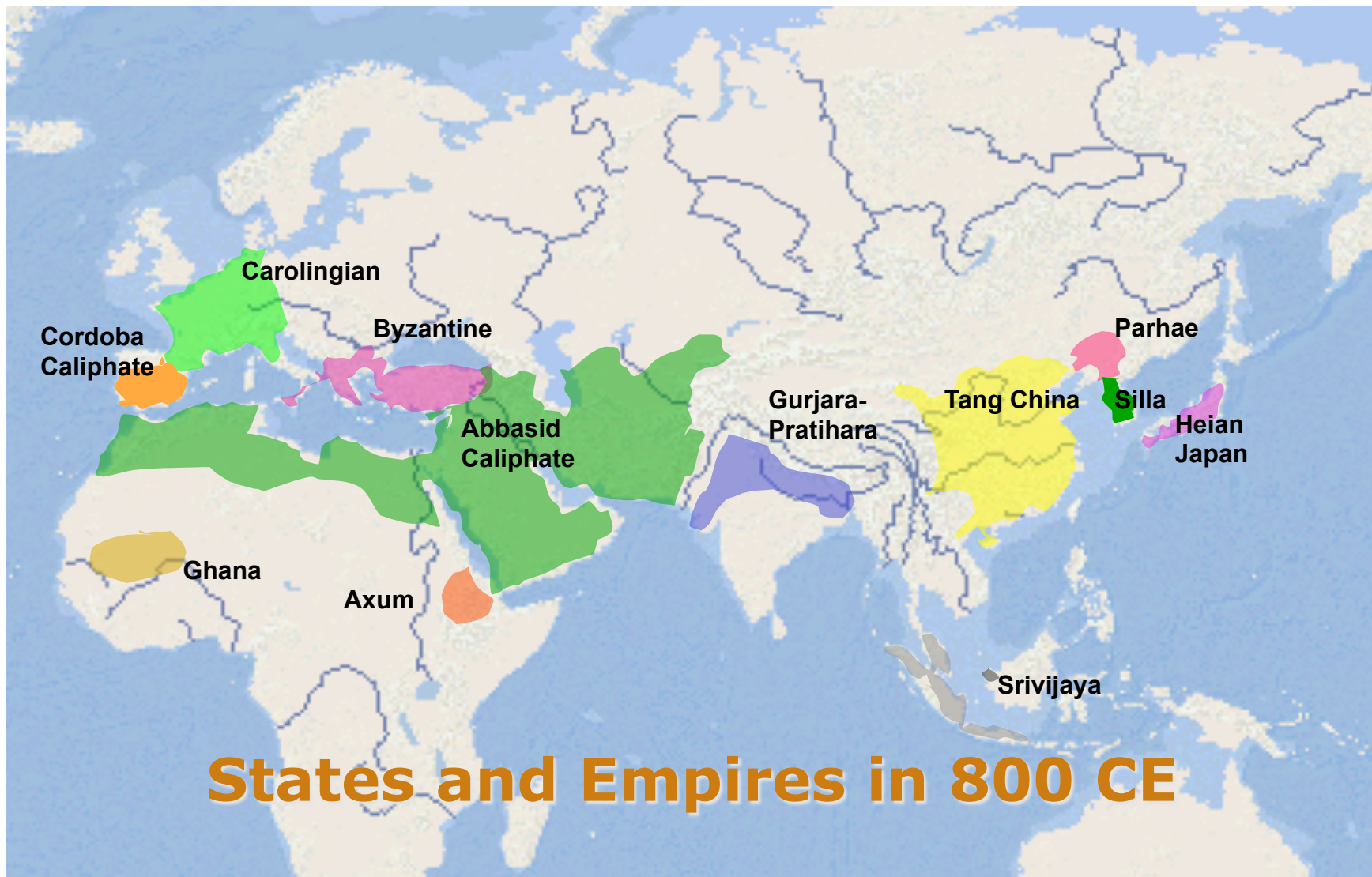
Yamato Japan

Ghana

Axum

# States and Empires in 600 CE











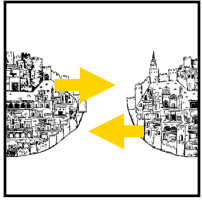


Empires

How did states and empires stimulate cultural exchanges in Afroeurasia?



- **Wars led to destruction but produced new inventions.**
- **Strong governments protected trade routes and stabilized currencies.**
- **Royal courts were patrons of science, religious institutions, and arts.**
- **Large states brought together many ethnic, language, and religious groups.**

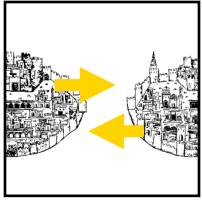


Trade

Trade was also closely linked to cultural exchange.

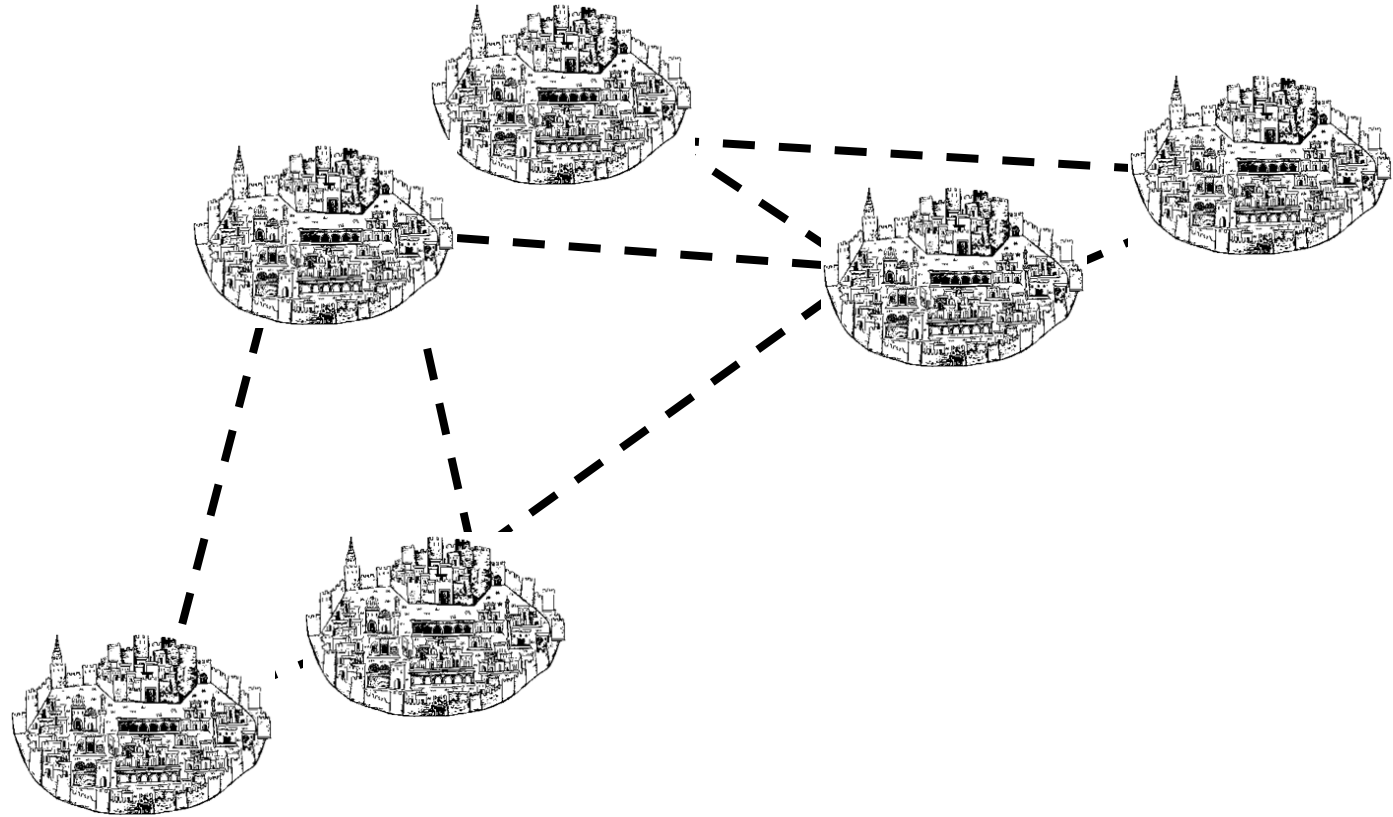
Empires supported trade in Afroeurasia. Merchants traveled great distances in search of wealth.





Trade

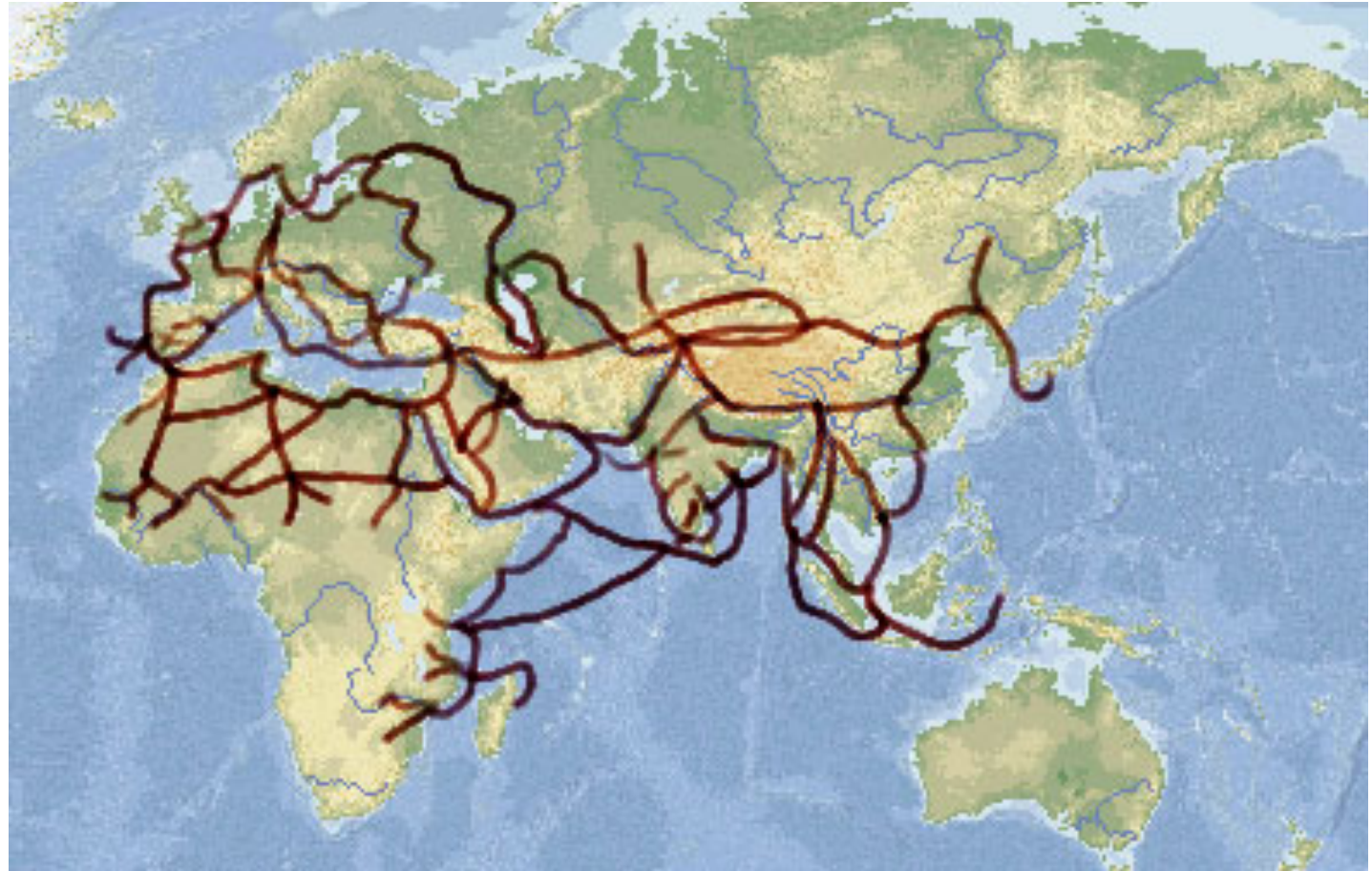
**The number of cities grew, as well as trade networks between them.**





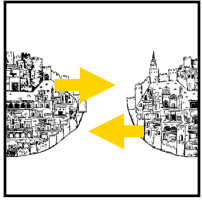


Trade



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From 300-1500 CE, trade routes extended farther and were used by more travelers.

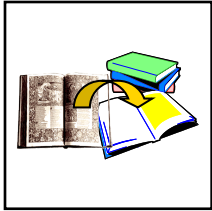


Trade

How did expanding trade networks bring about cultural exchanges in Afroeurasia?



- **Trade helped spread religions, languages, ideas, and arts.**
- **Trade stimulated use of natural resources.**
- **Cities and manufacturing centers grew bigger.**
- **Banks, credit, and money systems encouraged regional and long distance trade.**

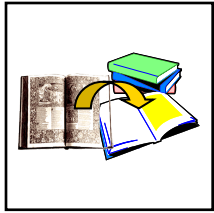


Ideas

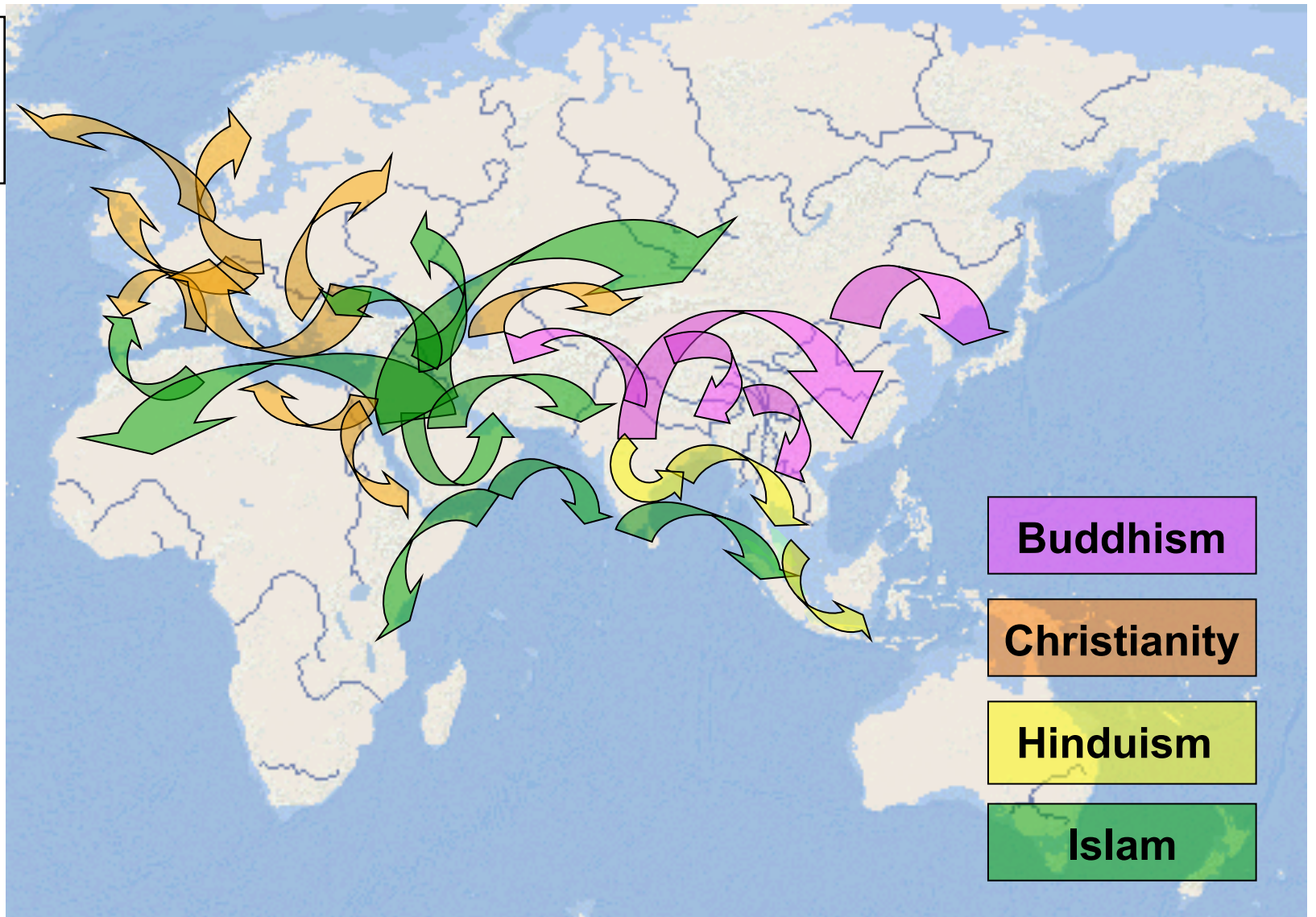
During Big Era Five, universal religions spread across Afroeurasia

Universal religions are belief systems that anyone can join – they're not limited to any one group.



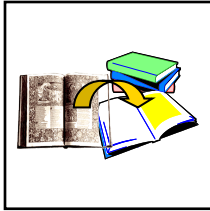


Ideas



**The spread of universal religions  
from 300-1500 CE**





Ideas

## Who spread these universal religions across Afroeurasia?



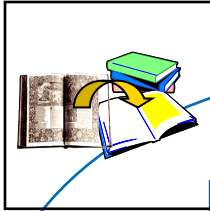
**Monks spread Buddhism.**



**Traders and Sufi orders spread Islam.**



**Missionaries spread Christianity.**



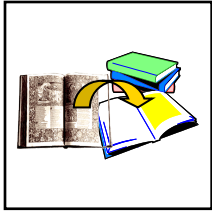
Ideas

How did the spread of religion encourage cultural exchange in Afroeurasia?



- **Universal faiths gave members a sense of community beyond political, class, or ethnic identities.**
- **Religious scholars gathered and recorded knowledge and founded institutions of learning.**
- **The spread of religions stimulated production and exchange of arts, literature, philosophy, and the sciences.**



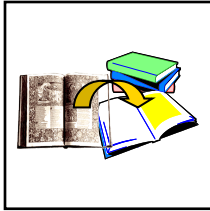


Ideas

What inventions,  
technologies,  
products, and ideas  
were exchanged  
across Afroeurasia?



# Scholars studied and spread knowledge in many institutions of learning.



Ideas



**Korean library**



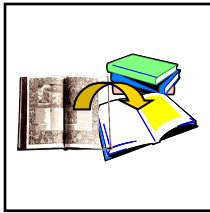
**European astronomer**



**Sung scholar**



**Muslim astronomer**  
s



Ideas

# Natural sciences developed in many places.



Chinese



Indian

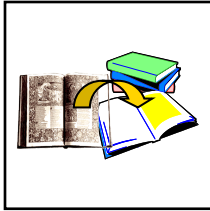


Muslim



European

# Transport and communication technologies improved.



Ideas



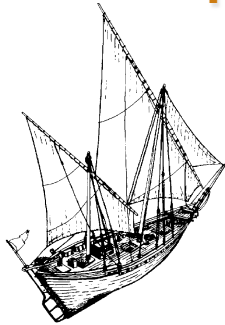
Stern-rudder



Books & paper



Mapmaking



Lateen sail



North Arabian camel saddle

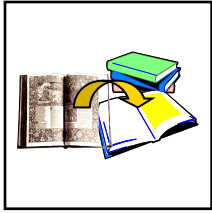


Stirrup



Astrolabe

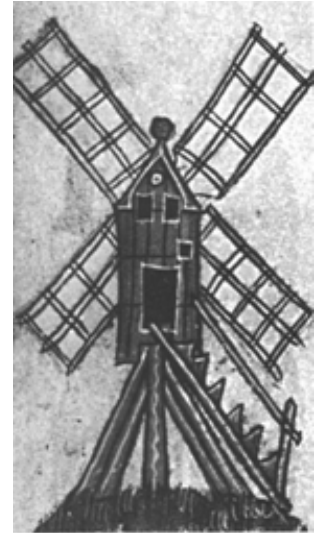




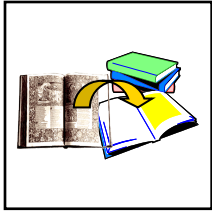
Ideas

## Water & energy technologies were transferred across Afroeurasia.

- **Hydraulic systems carried water where expanding cities needed it.**
- **Wheels lifted water to irrigate crops and drain swamps.**
- **Waterwheels, windmills, and trip-hammers provided energy for pumping, grinding, milling, and pounding.**



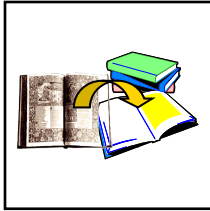




Ideas

*Crops* also diffused across Afroeurasia. Travelers and migrants introduced plants into new regions. People began to grow, eat, and sell these crops.

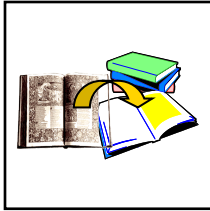




Ideas



- **Sorghum fattened up folks when this cereal crop spread from eastern Africa to China.**
- **Citrus fruits rolled from Southwest Asia to Spain, celebrated in garden and song.**
- **Cane sugar sweetened a path from India to the Mediterranean.**
- **Cotton wove its way from India to North Africa, Central Asia, and China.**
- **Veggies like spinach, asparagus, and broccoli stirred vitamins into meals across the hemisphere.**



Ideas

- **The pace of innovation increased.**
- **Knowledge accumulated more quickly.**
- **Manufacturing and farming productivity increased.**
- **People's diets and health improved.**
- **Sea travel and transport webs became thicker.**

How did transfers of technology and products change people's lives in Afroeurasia?

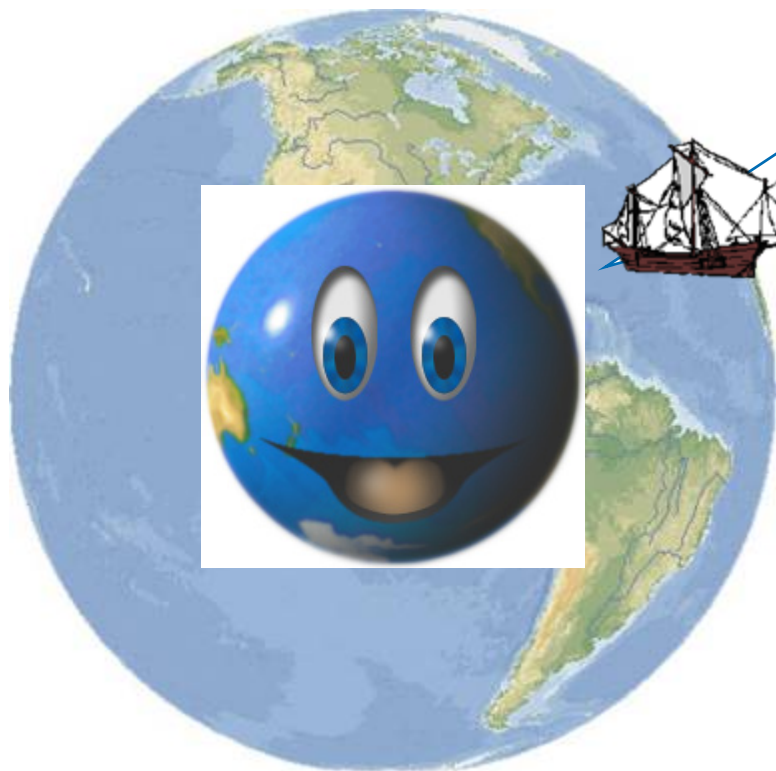


If you had to put  
the changes in  
Big Era Five into  
*one* sentence,  
what would it be?

You might say  
that by 1500 CE  
the world was  
connected, right?



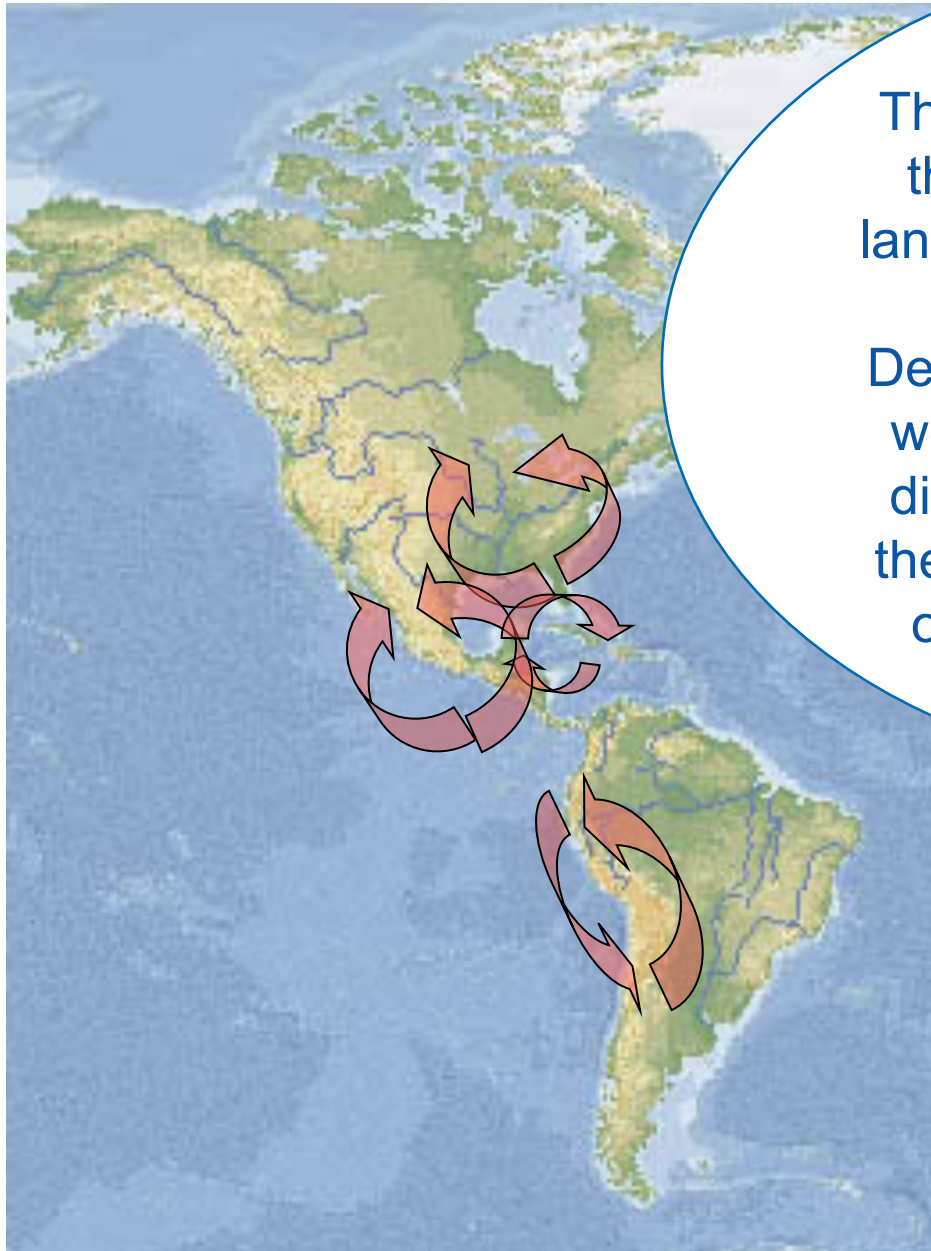
**But wait! You still haven't said much  
about the Americas!**



Well...the Americas  
and Afroeurasia  
were not yet  
*permanently* linked  
together.

...not until  
1492 . . .  
When Columbus  
set sail across the  
Atlantic . . .





The Americas had fewer people than Afroeurasia, and the two land masses were geographically isolated from each other. Developments in the two regions were similar in some ways and different in others. In any case, the Americas were also a region of active human interchange.



# Cultural development and exchange in the Americas: The Maya, Inca, and Aztec Empires

- **Sciences** like astronomy, mathematics and engineering were developed.
- **Trade routes** connected regions.
- **Mining, irrigation, and agricultural technologies** developed.
- **Crops** like potatoes, maize, tomatoes, cotton, and chocolate were grown.



Moche Ceramic



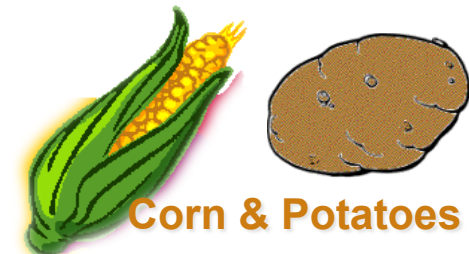
Inca Gold



Mississippian Mica



Mayan Calendar



Corn & Potatoes

# States and Empires in the Americas in 1500 CE



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At the very end of  
Big Era Five,  
European mariners  
set out on trans-  
oceanic voyages to  
the Americas.

Those voyages linked  
the Americas with  
Afroeurasia for the first  
time since the migrations  
of people over 13,000  
years earlier!



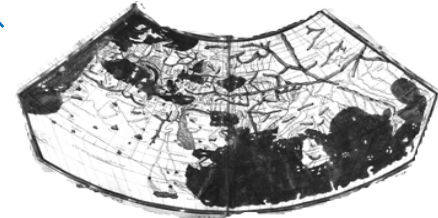
**It had to happen sooner or later!**



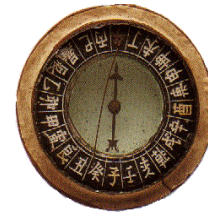
Cultural exchange in Afroeurasia before 1500 CE made possible the technologies that in turn permitted transoceanic voyages.



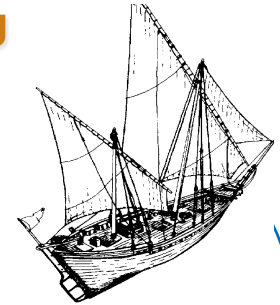
**Stern-rudder**



**Mapmaking**



**Compass**



**Lateen Sail**

Is that why people from Afroeurasia discovered the Americas, and not the opposite?



In Big Era Six, we'll see learn about the explosive things that happened when migration, empires, trade, and ideas started moving around the entire globe.

**End of Big Era Five**

