HIST 101 B: Lecture 3

Rome, China, and India

¶ 3.1



Welcome to Lecture 3.
Three classical empires. Three legacies.

Three Empires at the Ends of Eurasia

¶ 3.2



Shared Dynamics: Rise → Governance → Fall

Rome: Republic and Representation

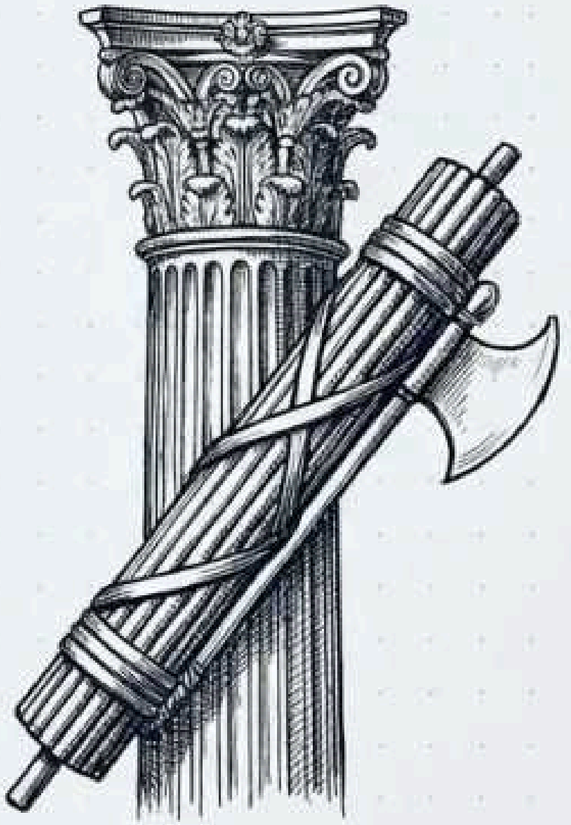
¶ 3.3

Aristocratic Senate + Elected Consuls + Popular Tribunes = The Roman Republic

753 BCE: Legendary Founding

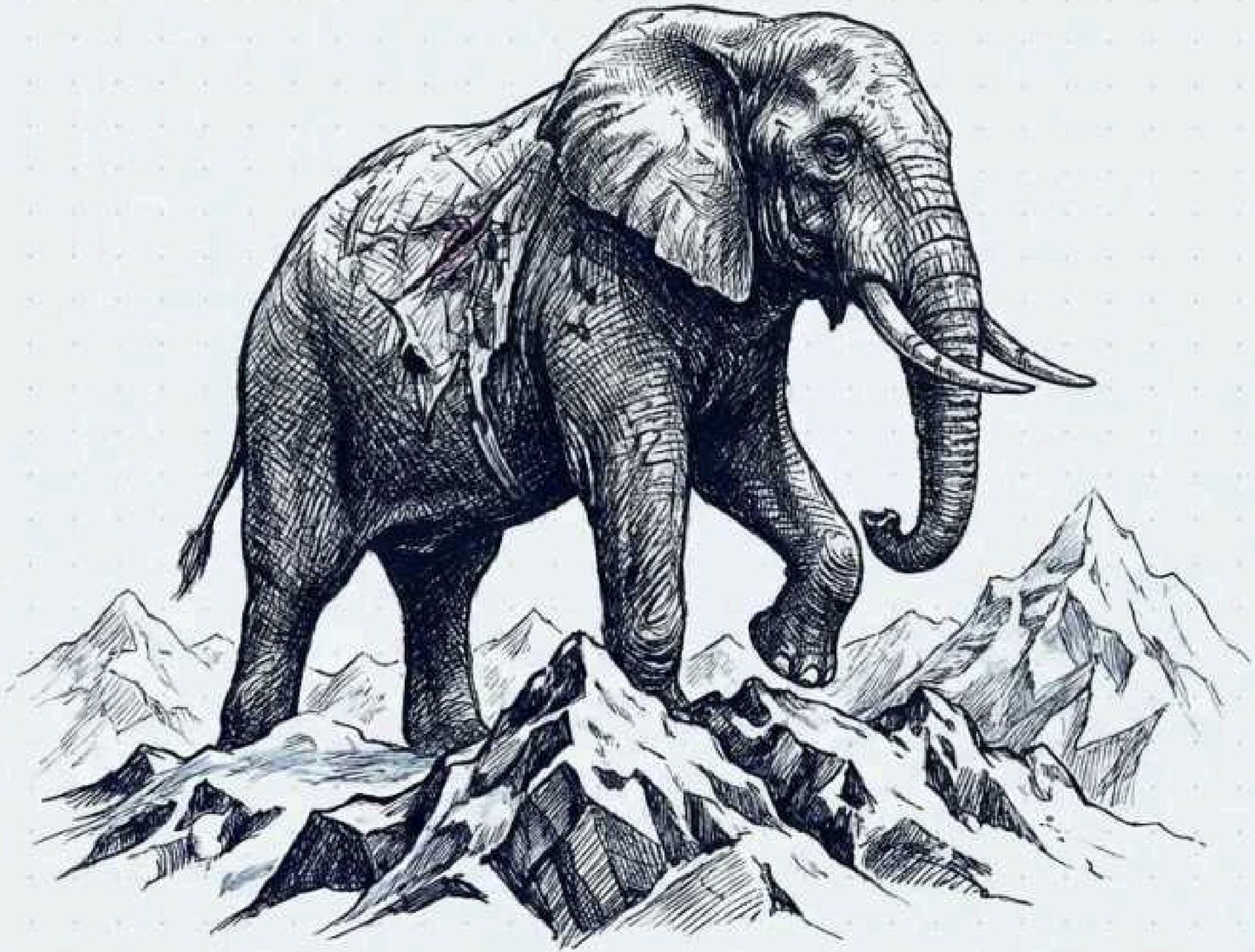
509 BCE: Kings expelled

The Genius of Rome:
Conquered peoples + Path to citizenship = Stake in the system.



The Expansion of Rome (264 - 146 BCE)

¶ 3.4



Adversary: Carthage (Rich Phoenician city in North Africa)

The Conflict: Three Punic Wars

The Result: Destruction of Carthage (146 BCE) → Conquest of Greece, Spain, Near East.

Status: Mediterranean Dominance.

The Cost of Conquest

¶ 3.5

Conquest → Wealth + Slaves → Small Farmers Landless → Loyal Armies → Civil War



49 BCE: Caesar crosses the Rubicon → Dictatorship.

44 BCE: Assassination.

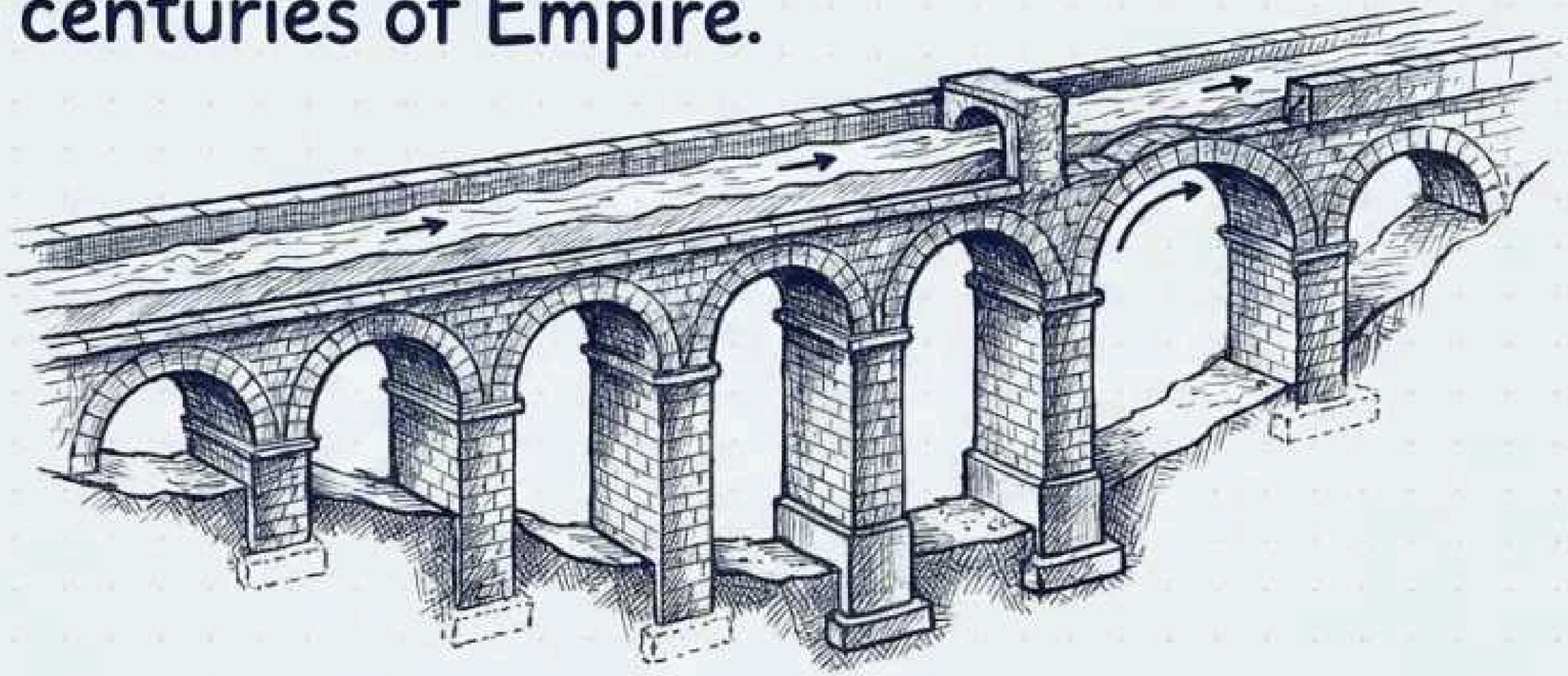
27 BCE: Octavian wins the final war, becomes Augustus.

The Republic becomes an Empire.

The Roman Peace (Pax Romana)

¶ 3.6

First two centuries of Empire.



Total Population (117 CE) ≈ 50M – 70M

Infrastructure: Safe roads, sea lanes, aqueducts, baths, arenas.

Culture: Spread of Latin and Roman law.

The Shadow: Reliance on mass slavery.

Qin Shi Huang and Legalism (221 BCE)

¶3.7





221 BCE: Warring States period ends. First Emperor reigns.
Philosophy: Legalism (Strict laws, harsh punishments).
Infrastructure: Roads, canals, linked older walls, terracotta army.

Standardization System: Writing + Weights + Measures = Unification

The Han Dynasty Softens the System (202 BCE)

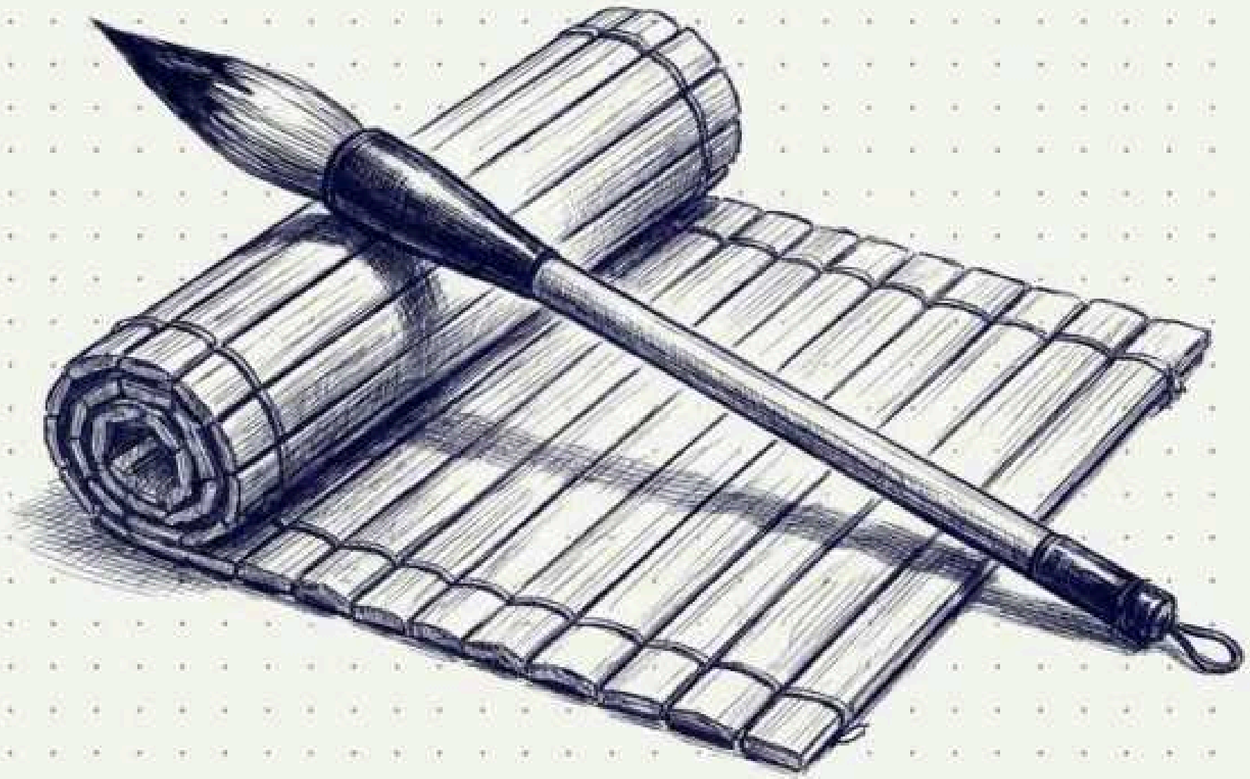
¶ 3.8

$f(\text{Han}) = \text{Qin System} - \text{Harshness} + \text{Confucianism}$

- Founded by Liu Bang (former peasant). Lasted four centuries.

- Emperor Wu's Innovation: Confucian texts as the basis for training officials.

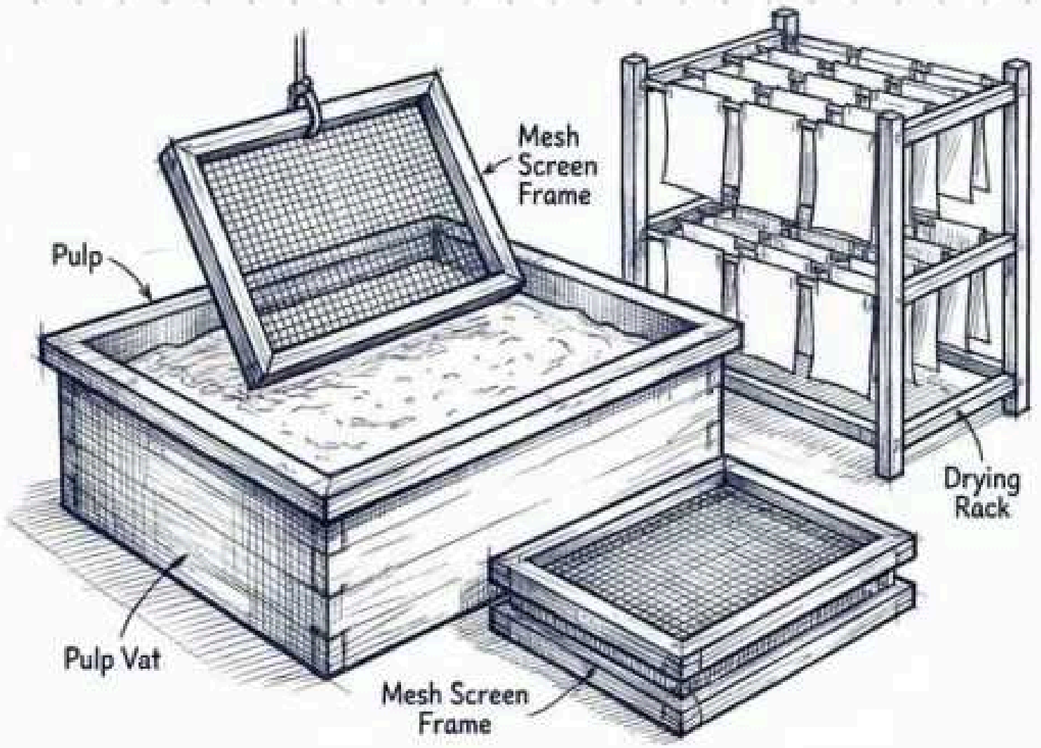
- Result: Early form of the civil service examination.



The Han Beyond Borders

¶ 3.9

[Zhang Qian, 138 BCE] → [Central Asia] → [Silk Road] → [Persia & Rome]



The Silk Road: Opened by Emperor Wu's envoy; Chinese silk travels West.

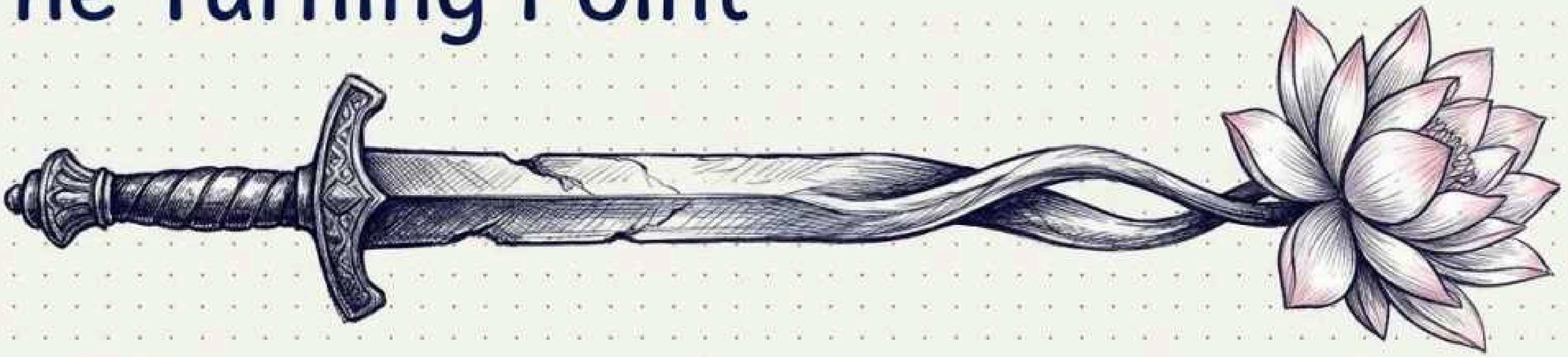
Information Tech: Paper (credited to court official Cai Lun, 105 CE).

Impact: Changed how information was stored permanently.

End of Era: 220 CE.

India: Mauryan Empire & The Turning Point

¶ 3.10



321 BCE: Chandragupta Maurya builds empire.

268 - 232 BCE: Reign of Ashoka.

The Turning Point: The bloody Kalinga War.

The Pivot: Horrified by suffering -> turns to Buddhist nonviolence and public welfare.

The Voice of a King

¶ 3.11



Messages carved on rocks and pillars across the land.

The Edicts:

- Tolerance & respect for all religions.
- Care for animals and travellers.

Outreach: Missions to spread Buddhism to Sri Lanka and beyond.

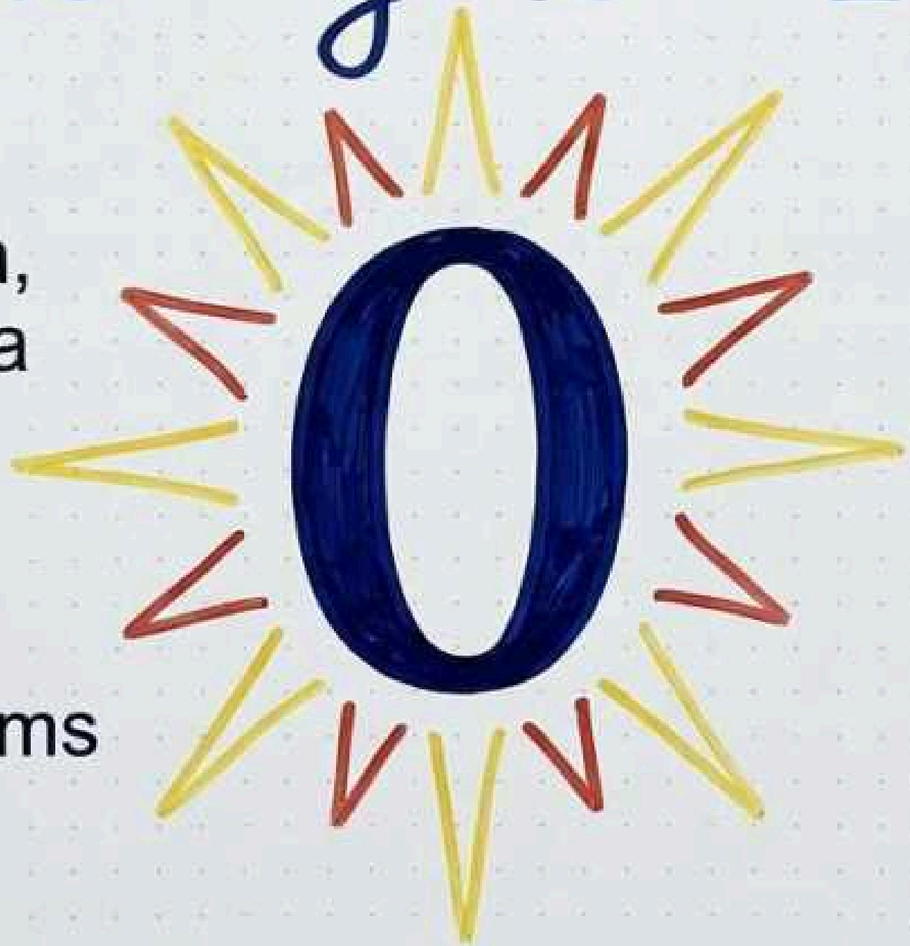
Post-Ashoka: Empire declines, India divides.

The Gupta Golden Age (320 - 550 CE)

¶ 3.12

$$x \times 10^2 + y \times 10^1 + z \times 10^0$$

Mathematics:
Place-value system, ten digits, zero as a number.



Astronomy & Arithmetic:
Aryabhata.

Literature:
Sanskrit plays/poems (Kalidasa).

Religion:
Royal support for Hindu temples & Buddhist universities.

Classical Empires: A Comparison

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Rome	Han China	Mauryan India
Law, roads, citizenship, state-paid soldiers.	Bureaucracy trained in Confucian texts.	Moral persuasion, officials, spies.

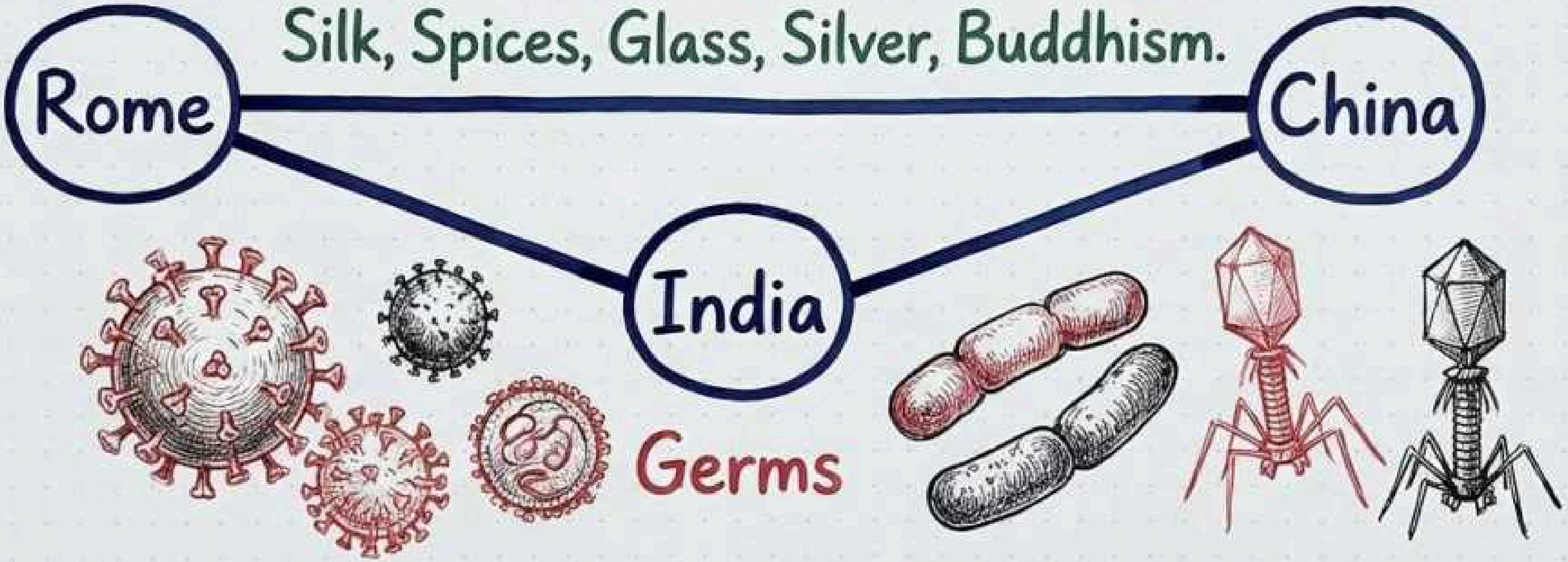
Shared Commonalities:

Base = Farmers' Taxes

Threat = Nomadic Northern Frontiers

Trade, Ideas, and Plagues

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Commerce: Middlemen moved luxury goods.

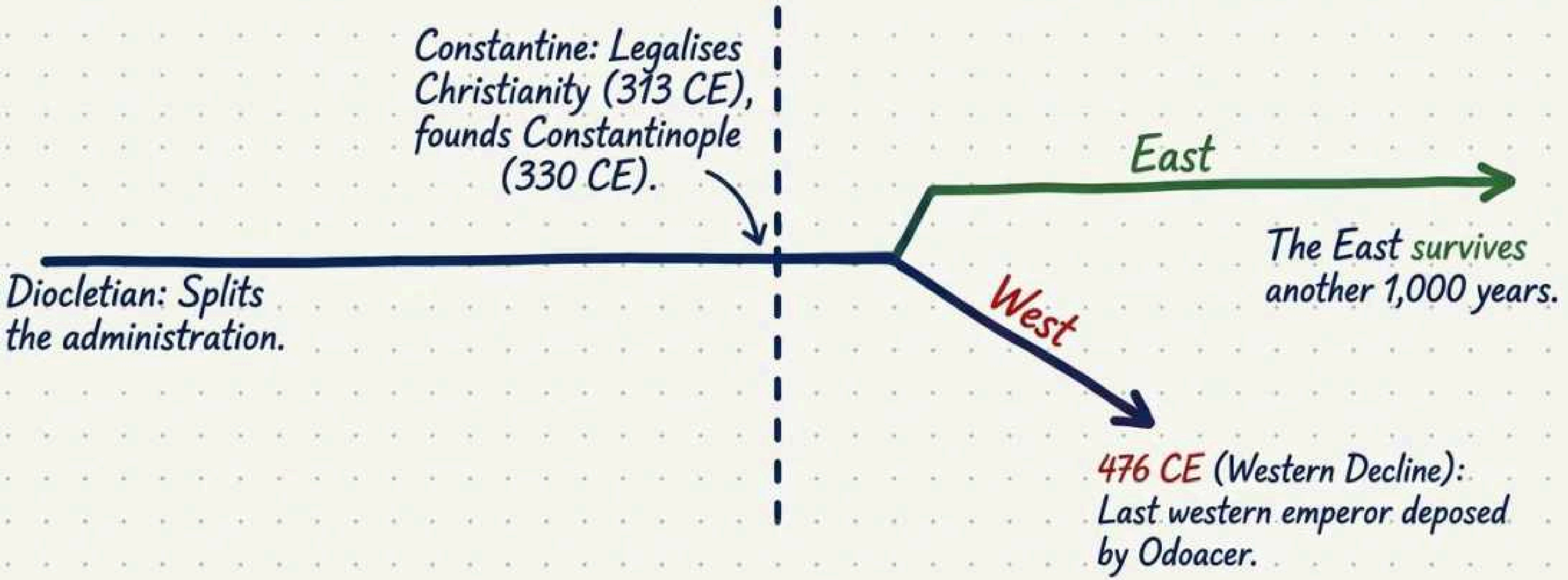
Culture: Buddhism travels from India to Central Asia and China.

Catastrophe: The Antonine Plague (165 CE in Rome) and Han epidemics severely weaken states.

The Long Crisis (3rd Century CE)

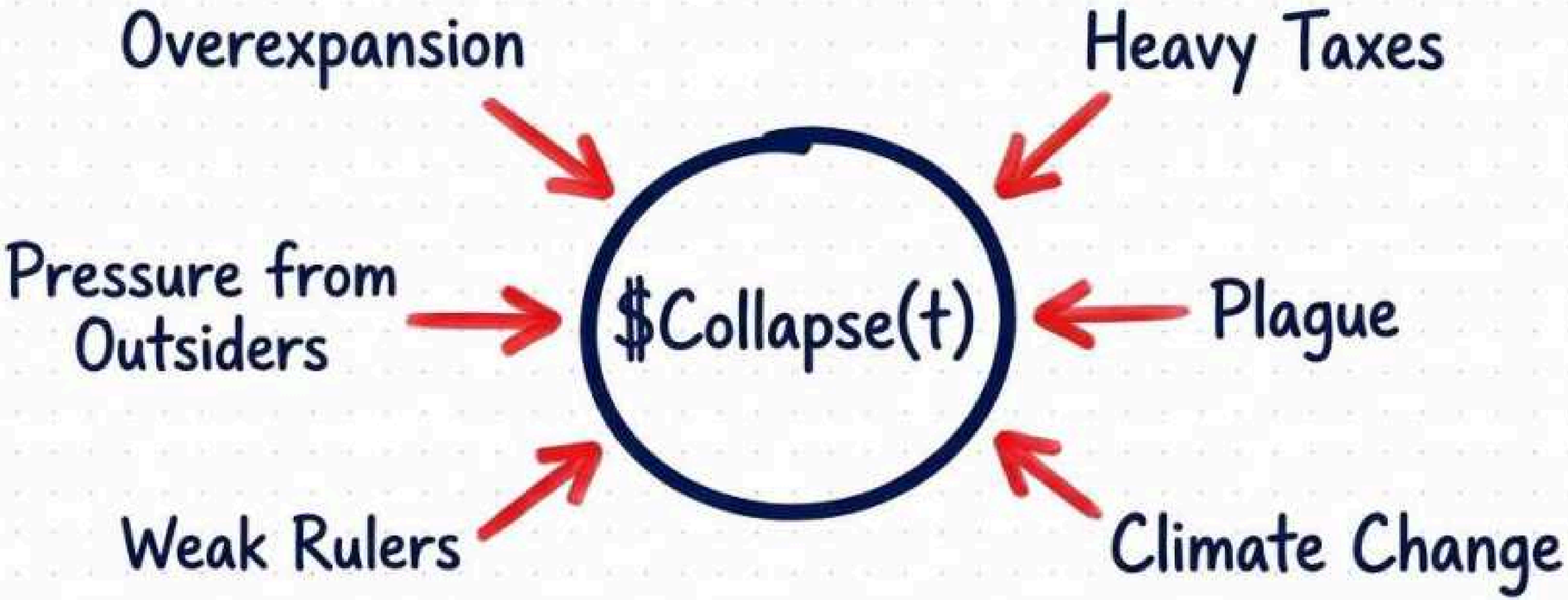
¶ 3.15

Crisis Elements: Civil wars + Inflation + Invasions.



Theories of Imperial Collapse

¶ 3.16



Historians disagree on the primary cause.

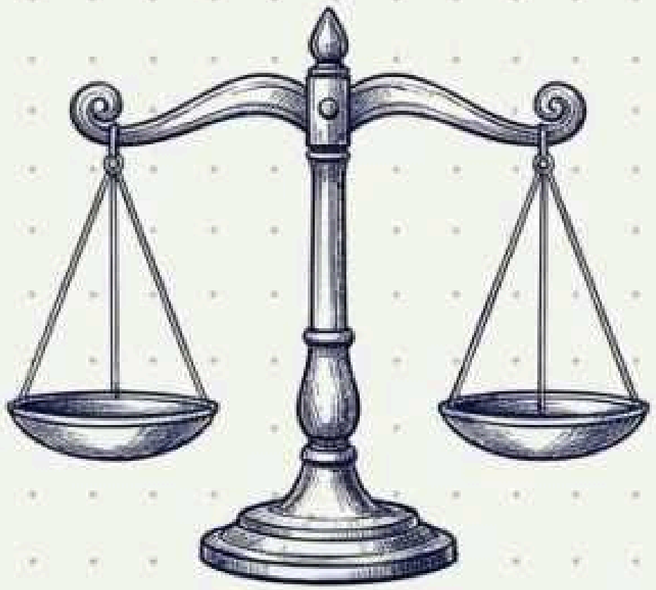
Crucial Insight: Empires do not die in a day.

Rome's western fade took generations; many citizens may not have noticed the end of an age.

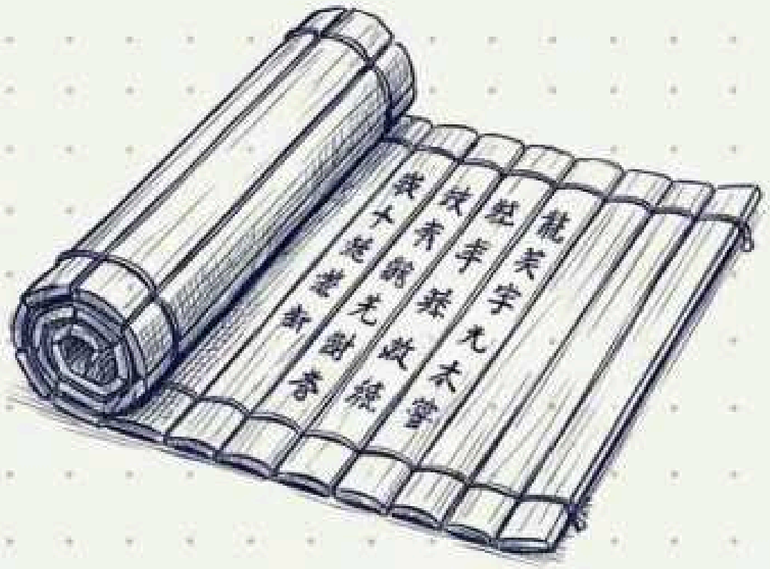
The Echoes of the Classical Age

¶ 3.17

All created lasting systems of administration and learning.
All were vulnerable to plagues and frontiers.



Enduring Gift:
Roman Law



Enduring Gift:
Chinese Examinations



Enduring Gift:
Indian Numerals

The Core Question

¶ 3.18

Ashoka turned away from conquest after seeing its human cost.



Qin Shi Huang and Rome relied on force.

Consider: What makes rulers change course?

Debate: Is lasting unity better built by persuasion or by power?

Next Time...

¶ 3.19

Lecture 4 Focus:

- ☐ The Great World Religions
- ☐ The Rise of Islam



