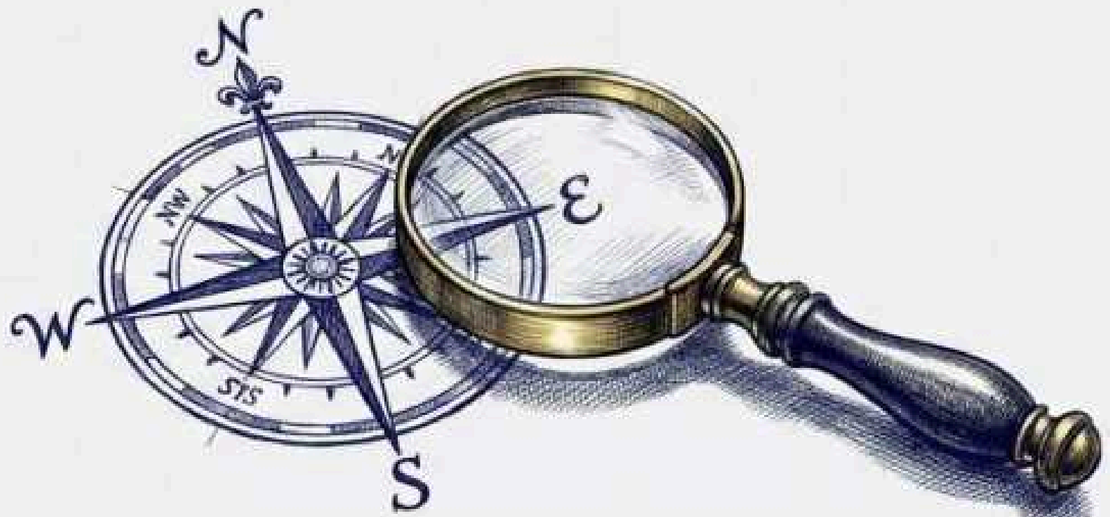
# Lecture 6: The World in 1500

Welcome to Lecture 6.

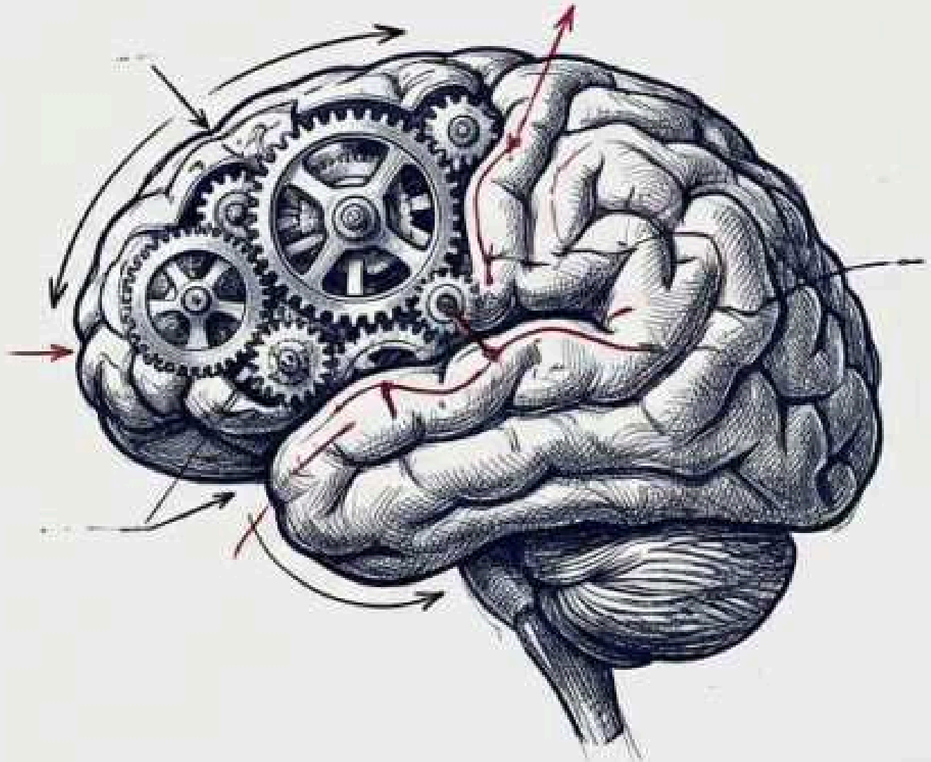


## Part I: The World in 1500




Surveying global contact on the eve of a new era.

## Part II: The Historian's Mind

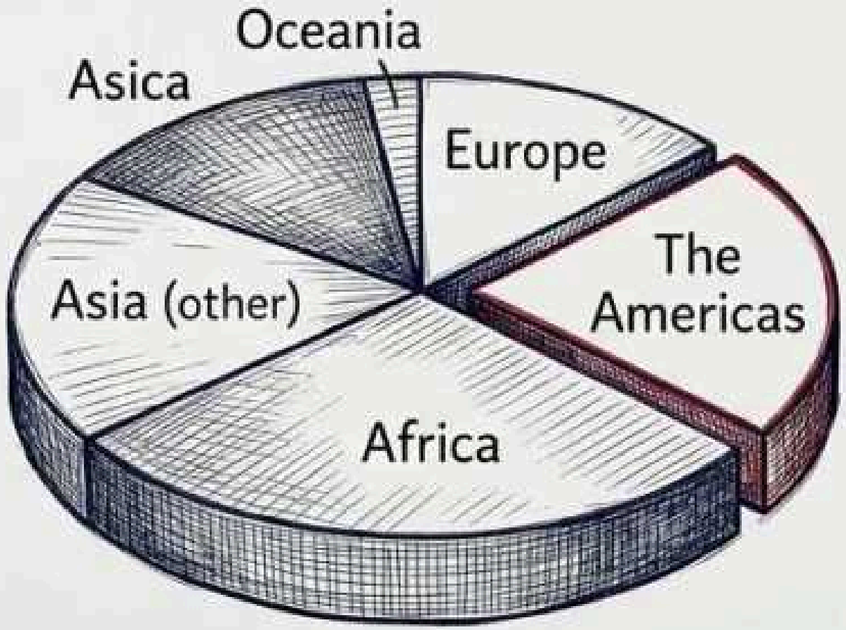


How historians know what they know.

¶6.3

$$P_{Total} \approx 450{,}000{,}000$$

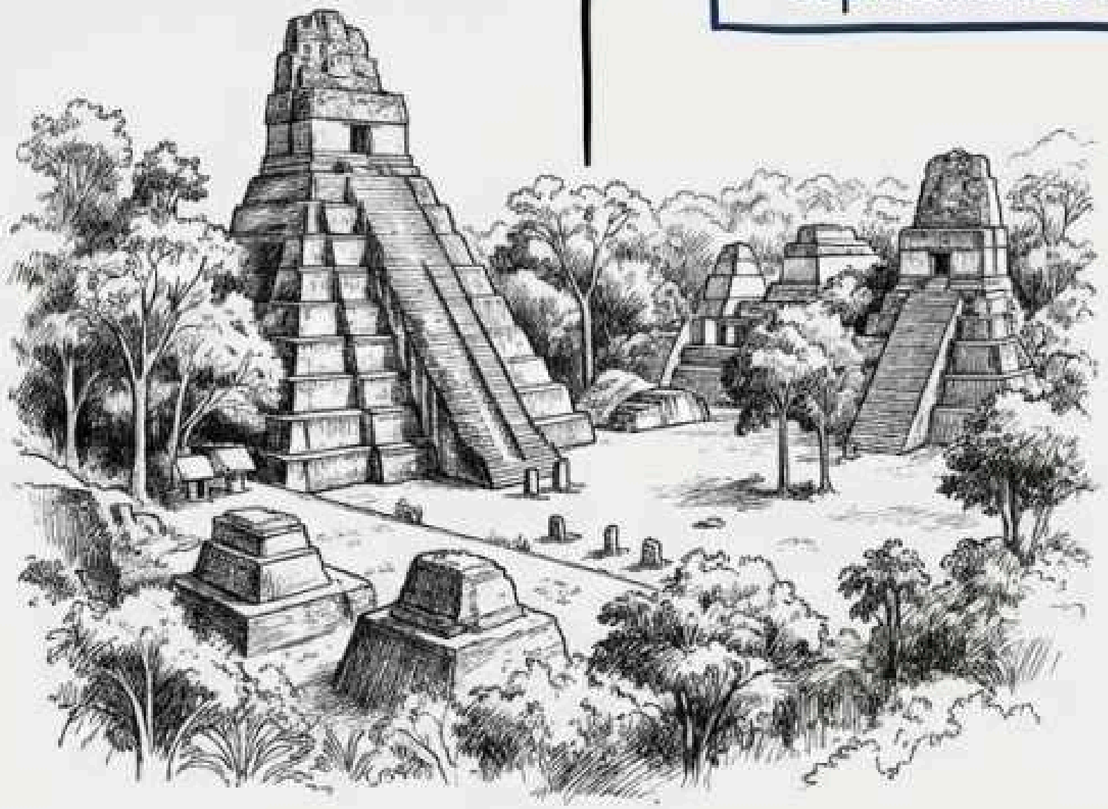
$$P_{China+India} \approx \tfrac{1}{2} P_{Total}$$

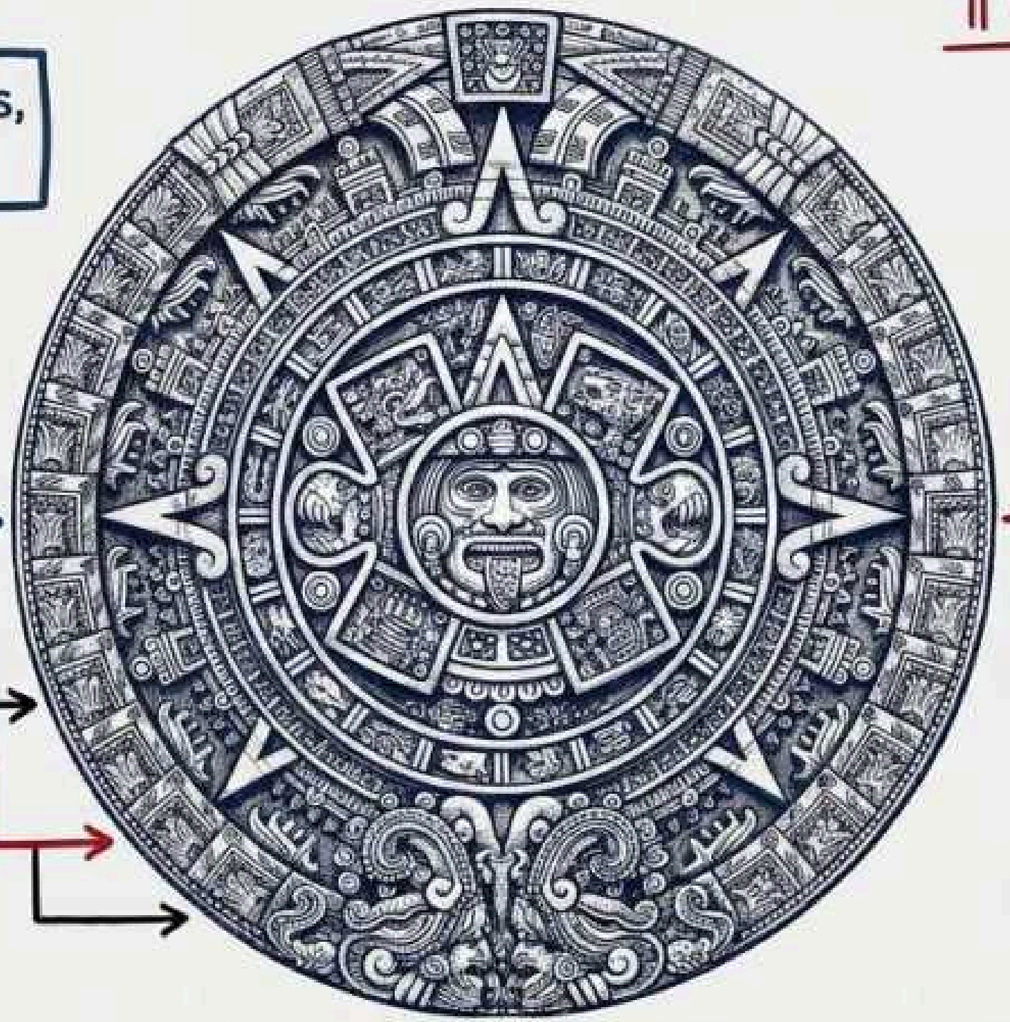



Complex, separate societies developing apart from Eurasia for thousands of years.

¶ 6.4

Stone cities, observatories, sophisticated writing.





800–900 CE: Classic lowland decline (drought/war)

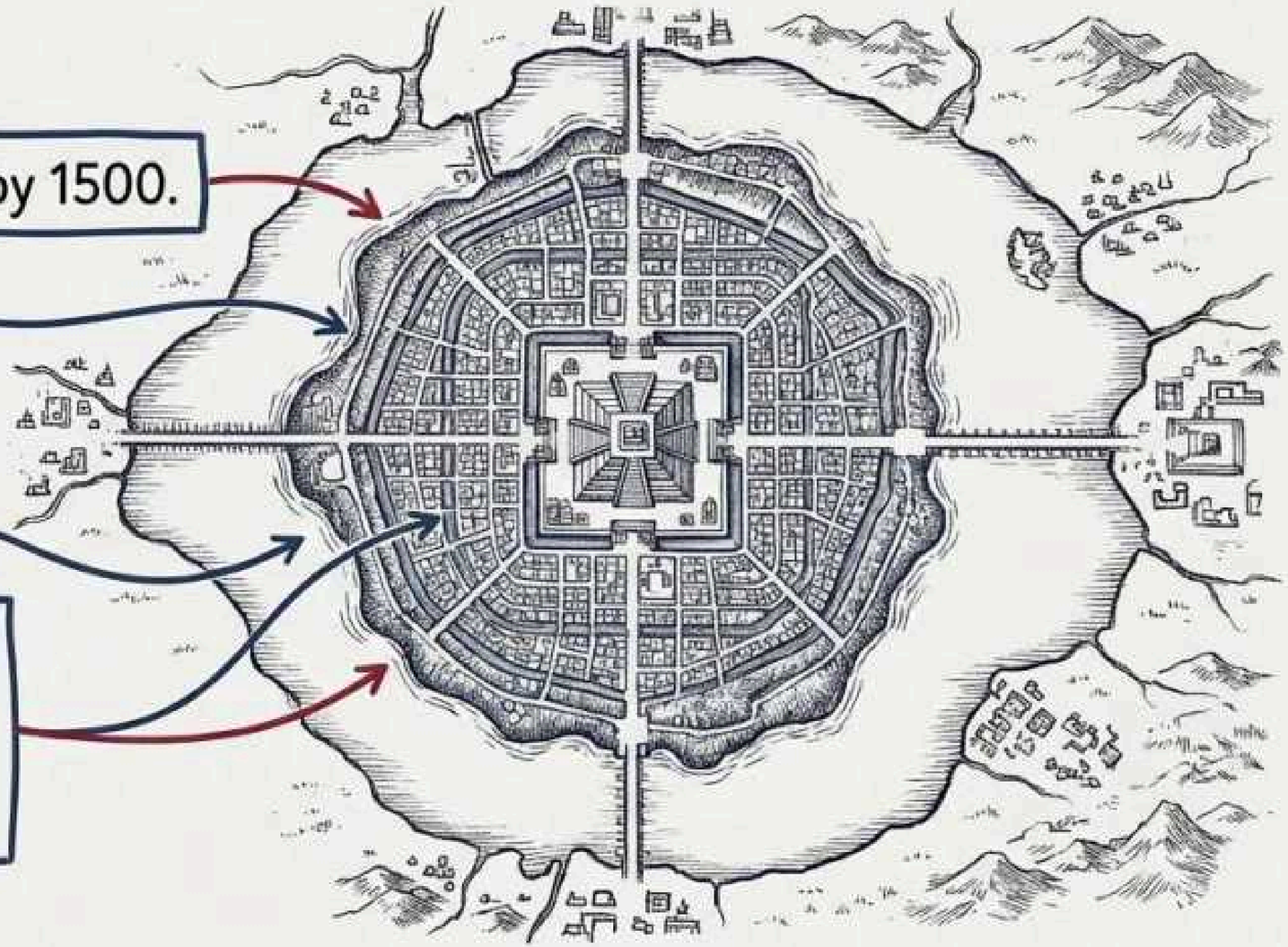
Millions of descendants live in Mexico/Guatemala today, speaking Mayan languages.

¶6.5

$$P_{Aztec} = Arrival_{1325} + Alliance_{1428} + Tribute_{Conquered}$$

Population: 200,000 by 1500.

Maintained dominance through tribute and religious ceremonies (human sacrifice).



# The Inca Empire & The Quipu

¶ 6.6



1438: Ruler Pachacuti begins rapid expansion from Cusco.

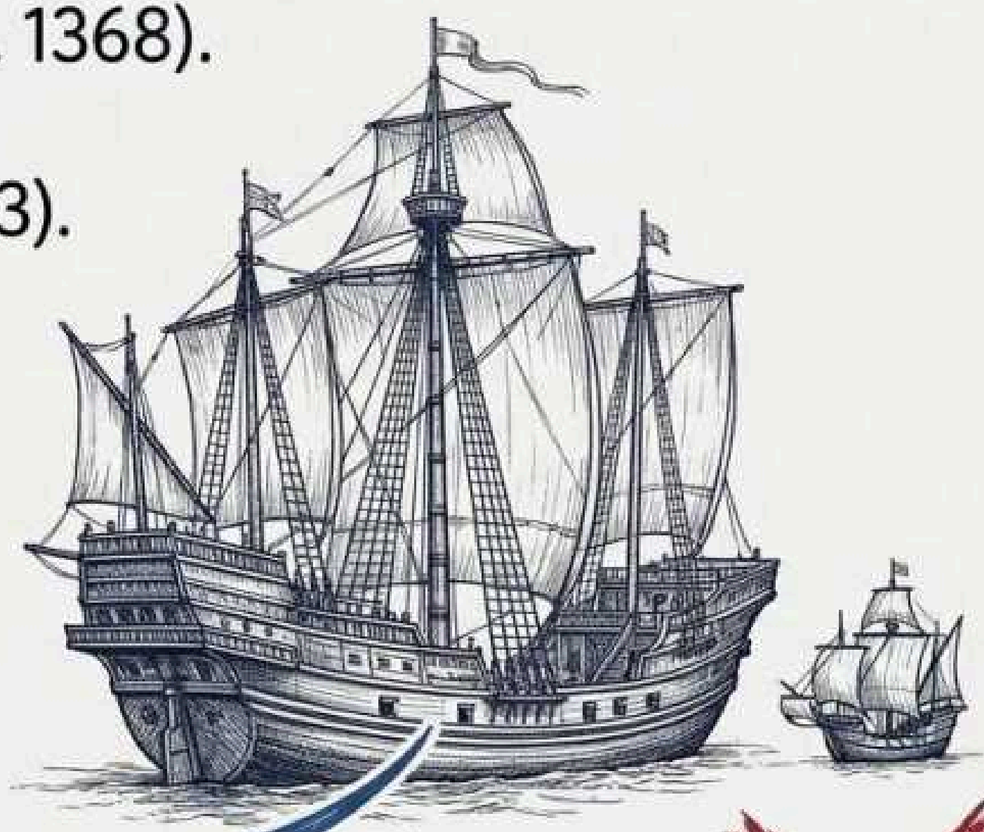
2,500 Miles: Largest empire in the Americas, stretching along the Andes.

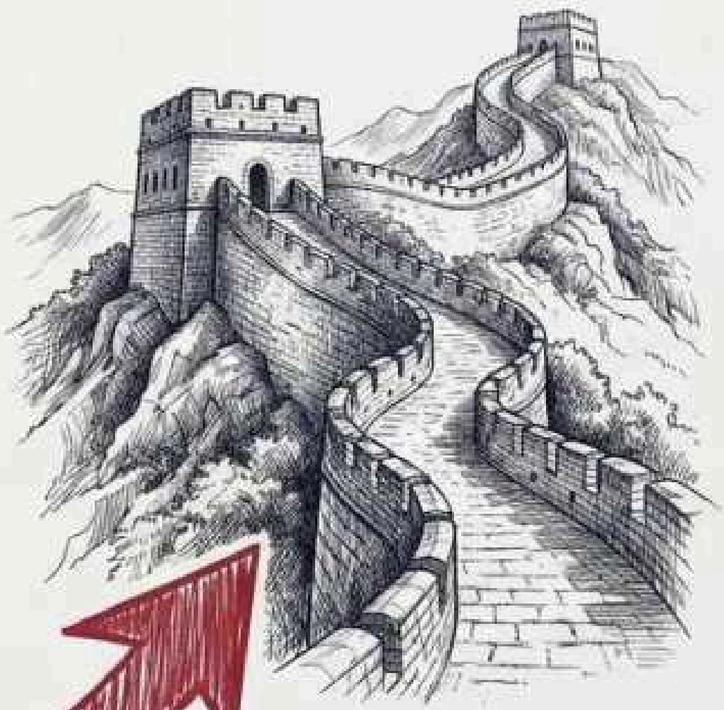
Infrastructure: Roads, storehouses, and the Machu Picchu estate.

*No written language; complex records kept on knotted quipu cords.*

¶6.7

Ming Dynasty (est. 1368).
Admiral Zheng He
voyages (1405-1433).



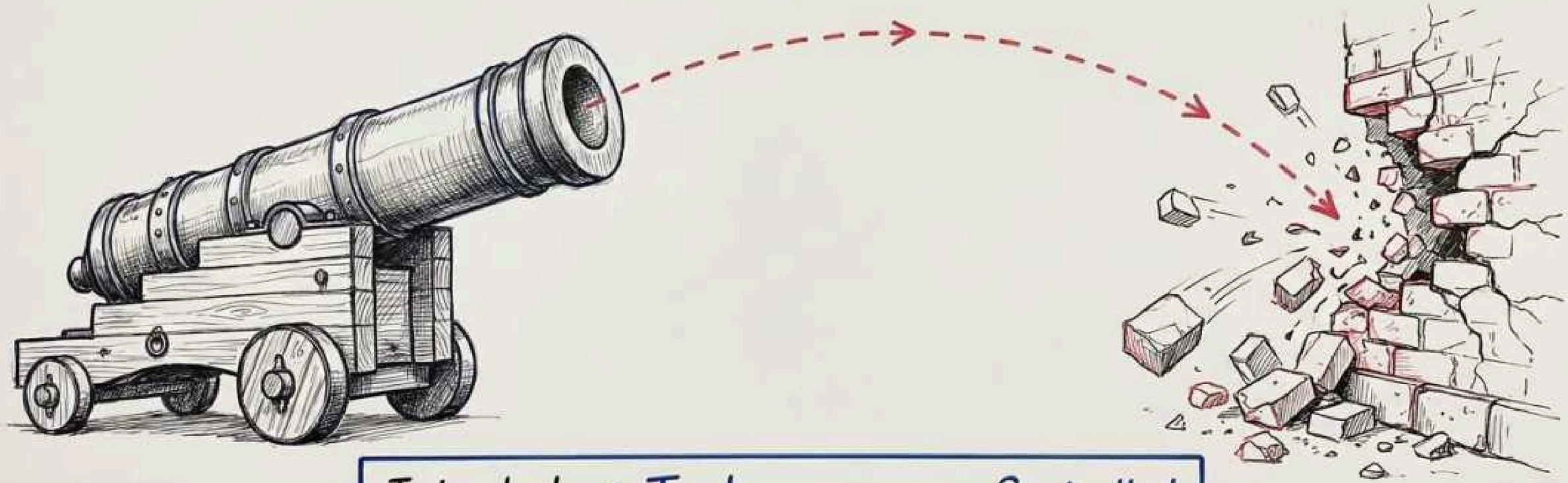


Power & Tribute: SE Asia,
India, Arabia, East Africa.

Halted: Costs grew;
focus shifted to
defending the
northern frontier.

¶ 6.8

# 1453: Sultan Mehmed II captures Constantinople, ending the 1,000-year Byzantine Empire.

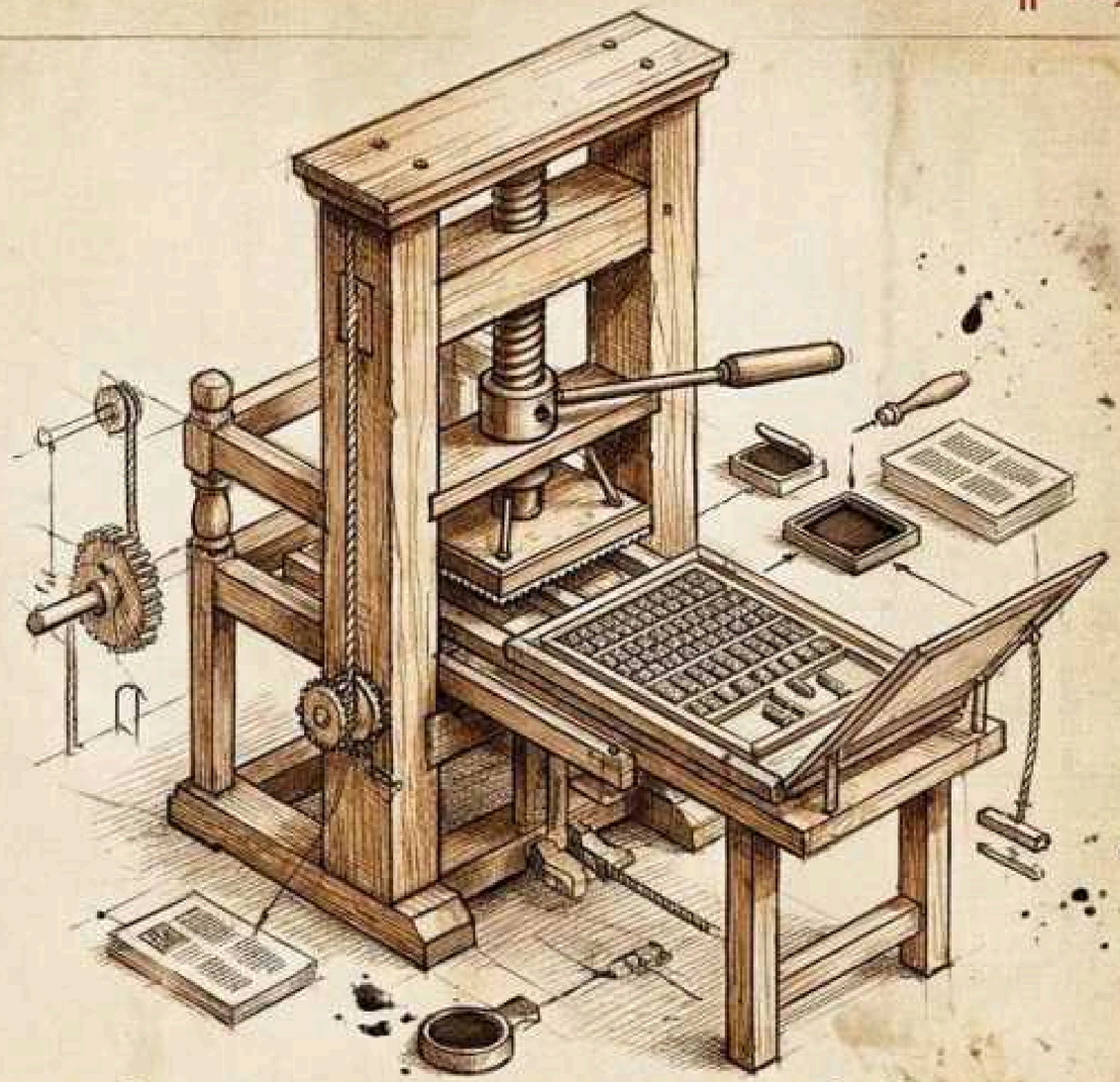


$$\text{Istanbul} \rightarrow \text{Trade}_{\text{Asia} \rightarrow \text{Europe}} = \text{Controlled}$$

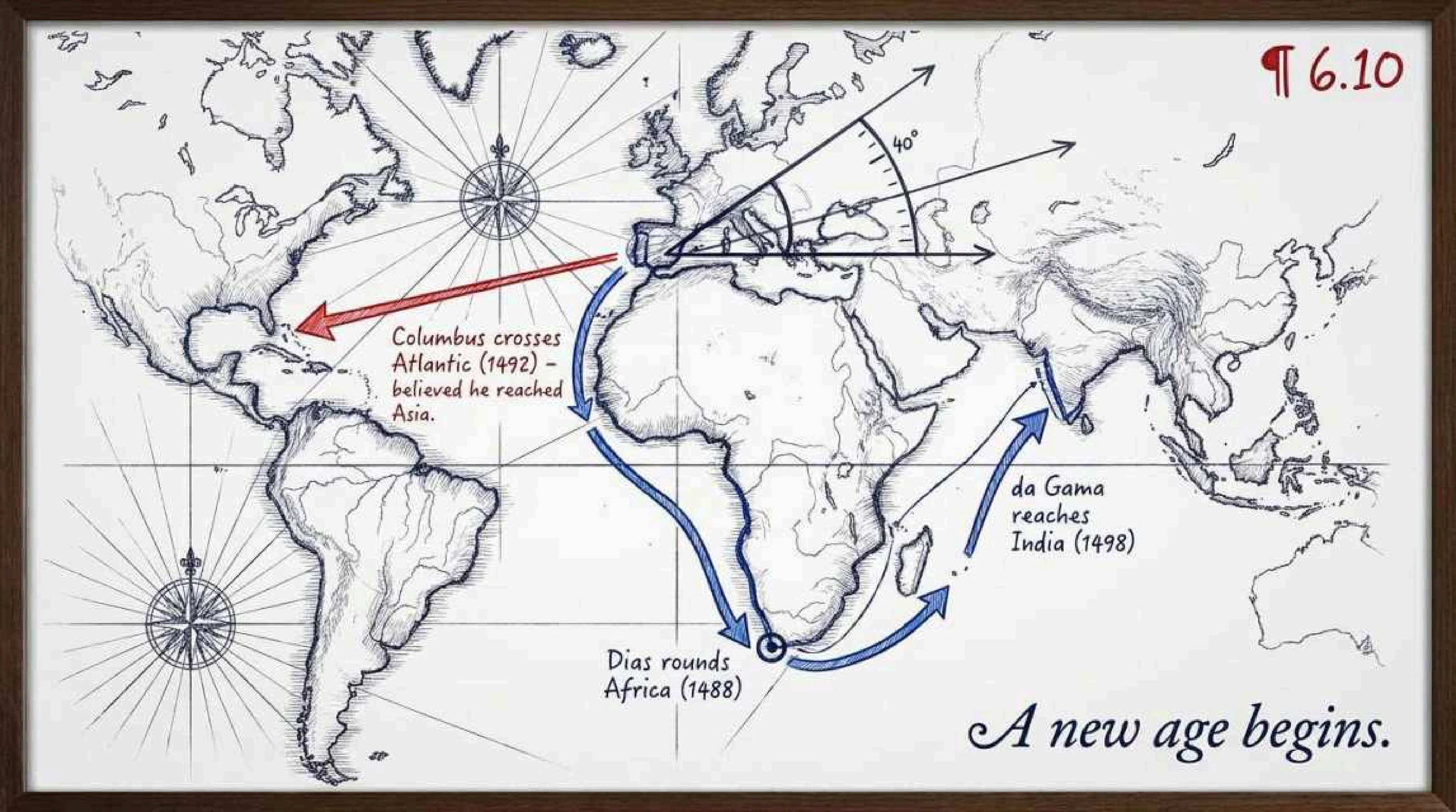
The Ottomans built a powerful state ruling SE Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.



*Florence/Medici: Artists & humanist scholars reviving classical texts.*



*The Information Engine: Books become cheaper, ideas spread exponentially faster.*

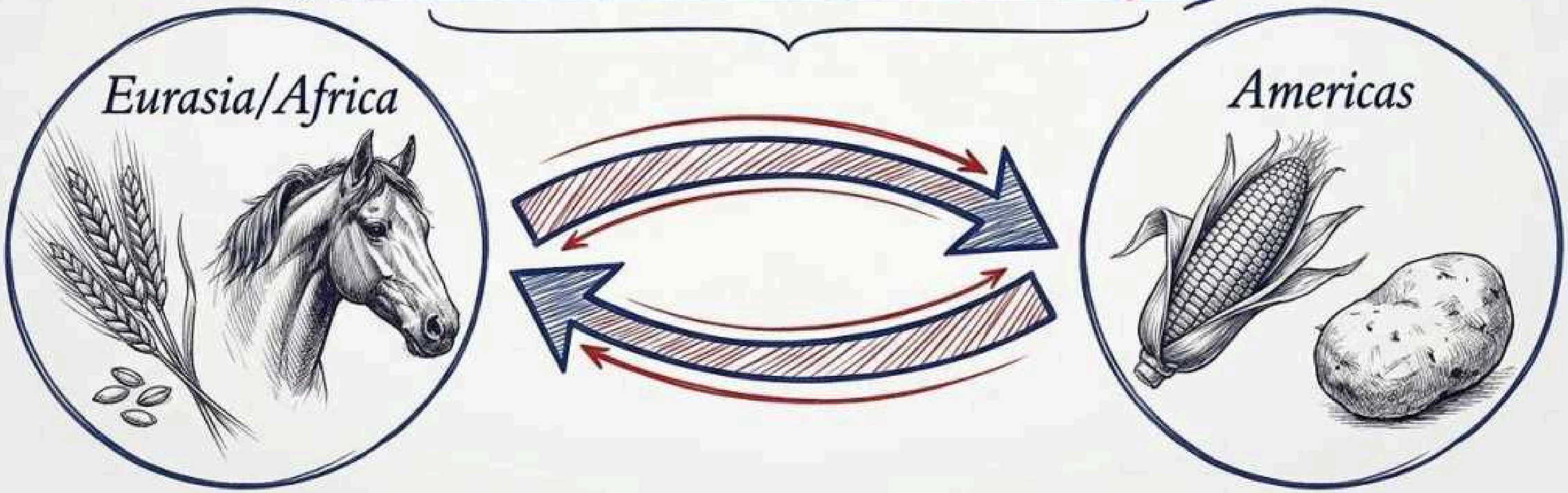

¶ 6.10
40°
Columbus crosses Atlantic (1492) – believed he reached Asia.
Dias rounds Africa (1488)
da Gama reaches India (1498)
A new age begins.

¶ 6.11

$\Delta\,Population_{Americas}$ = *Catastrophic Decline*

Population

(due to lack of immunity to smallpox, combined with conquest and forced labor)




*The Columbian Exchange: The world of 1500 remade, and not fairly.*

¶ 6.12

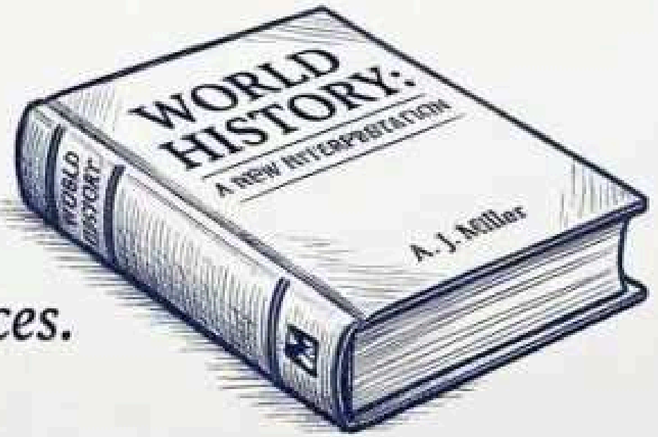
$f(x)$ *The Past*

$f'(x)$ *Primary Sources:*
*Come directly from the time.*



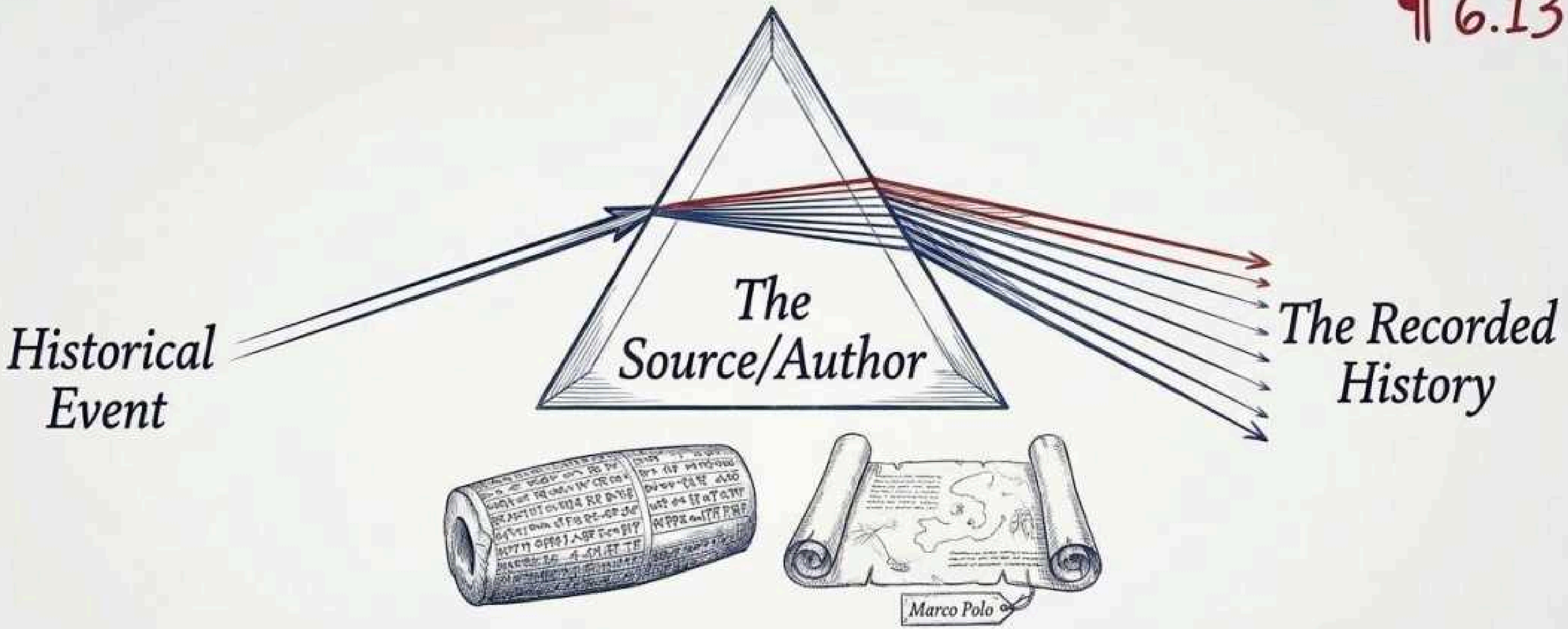



$f''(x)$ *Secondary Sources:*
*Written later by someone interpreting primary sources.*




*Good historians ask:*
*Who made it?*
*Why?*
*For whom?*
*What is left out?*

¶ 6.13




*No source is neutral. Kings boast, chroniclers flatter, travellers misunderstand. Compare conflicting sources, seek physical evidence, and state when evidence is thin. A claim is only as strong as its evidence.*

¶ 6.14

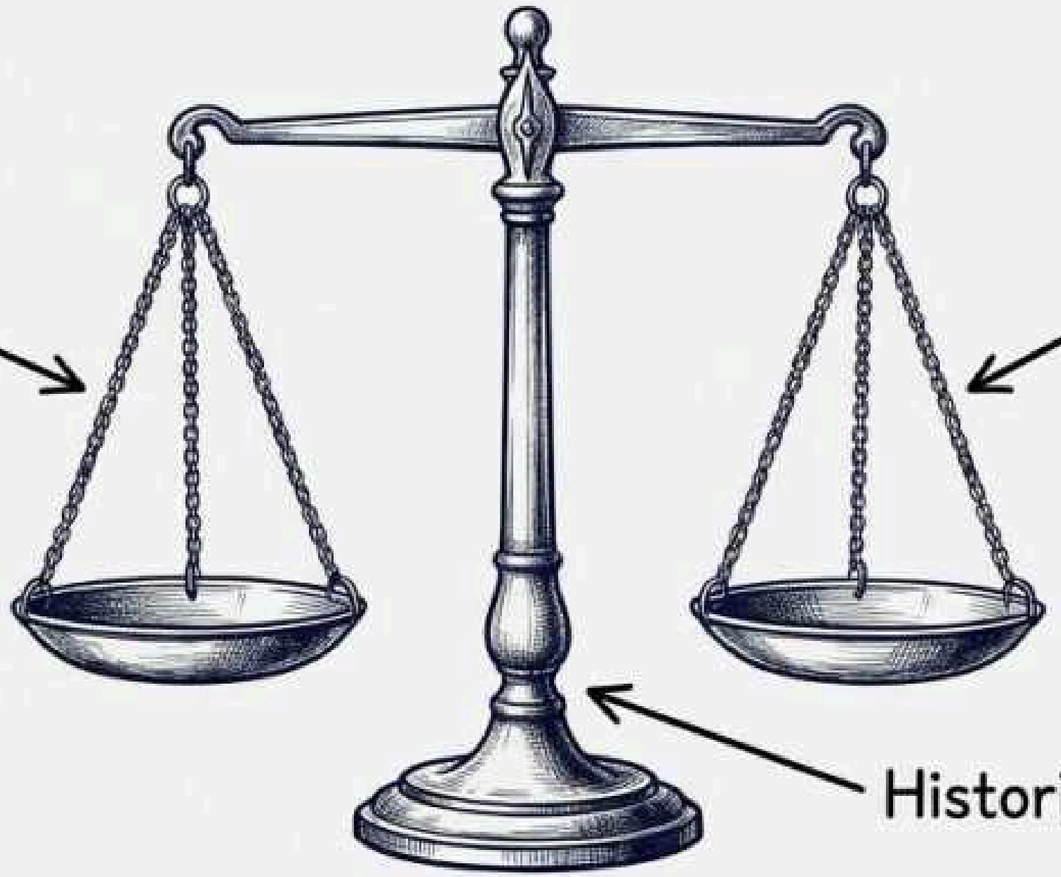
$$E = (C_L + C_S) \times K$$

$$\begin{cases} E = \textit{Historical Event} \\ C_L = \textit{Long-term Conditions (climate, technology)} \\ C_S = \textit{Short-term Triggers (a murder, a battle)} \\ K = \textit{Contingency (chance, human choice, character)} \end{cases}$$

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*Inevitability is an illusion. People living through events did not know the outcome. Beware of single causes.*

Presentism: Judging the past only by today's standards.

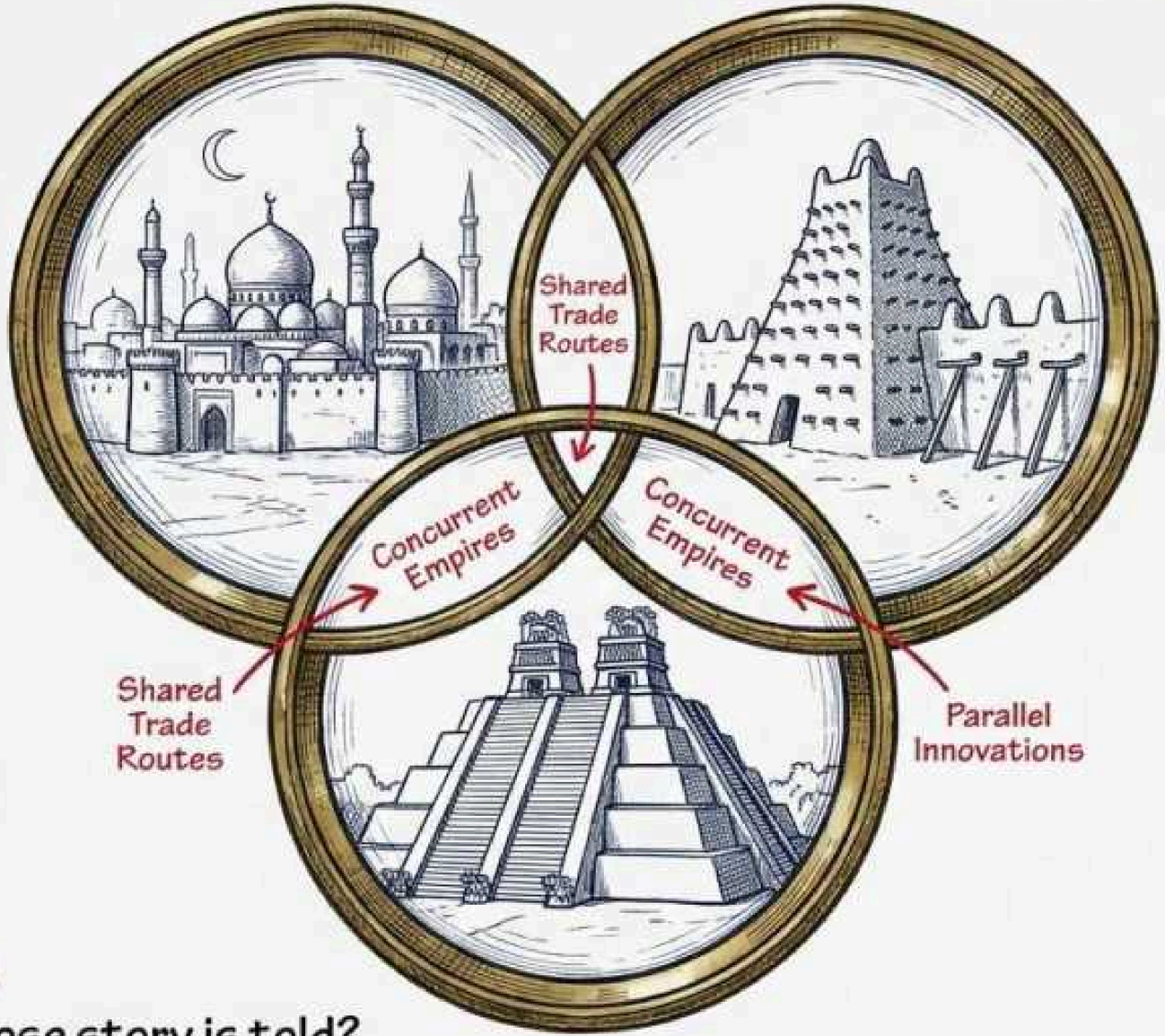


Total Excusal: Ignoring suffering because it was "normal then".

Historical Understanding

A fair historian explains why people acted as they did, while still acknowledging that slavery, massacre, and conquest caused real suffering. Understanding ≠ Approval.

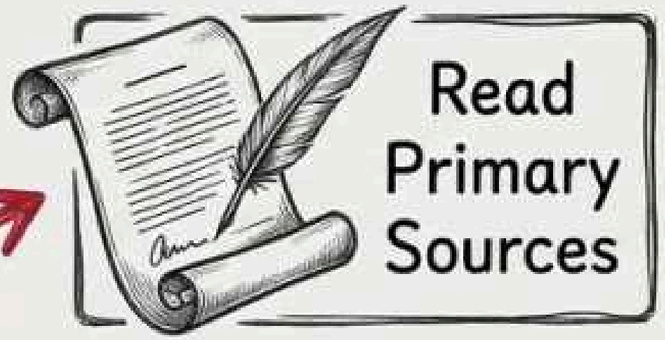
¶ 6.16






**Whose story is told?**

The same events look entirely different from Baghdad, Timbuktu, or Tenochtitlan than from London or Rome. Multiple centers of invention and power.



Read Primary Sources

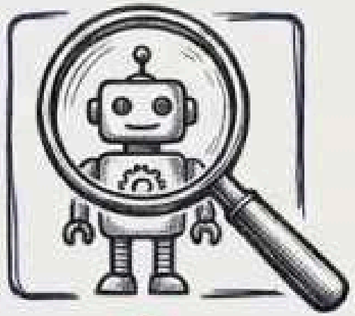
Ask: What is missing?

Compare multiple explanations





Place on timeline & map (look for connections)



AI Check: Ask for sources & verify.

**History is a skill that improves with use.**

Q: Pick one event from this course.
Write Explanation A vs. Explanation B.
Define Evidence E required to decide between them.
Identify the Unknowns (U).

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Thank you for taking History 101 B.
Questions or feedback: garyanderson@mail.grokbot.com | X: @garyanderson
Anderson Academy