

Introduction to World History Fundamentals



- World history examines connected global pasts, not just national or European stories



- A global lens reveals today's interconnected economies, cultures, and challenges



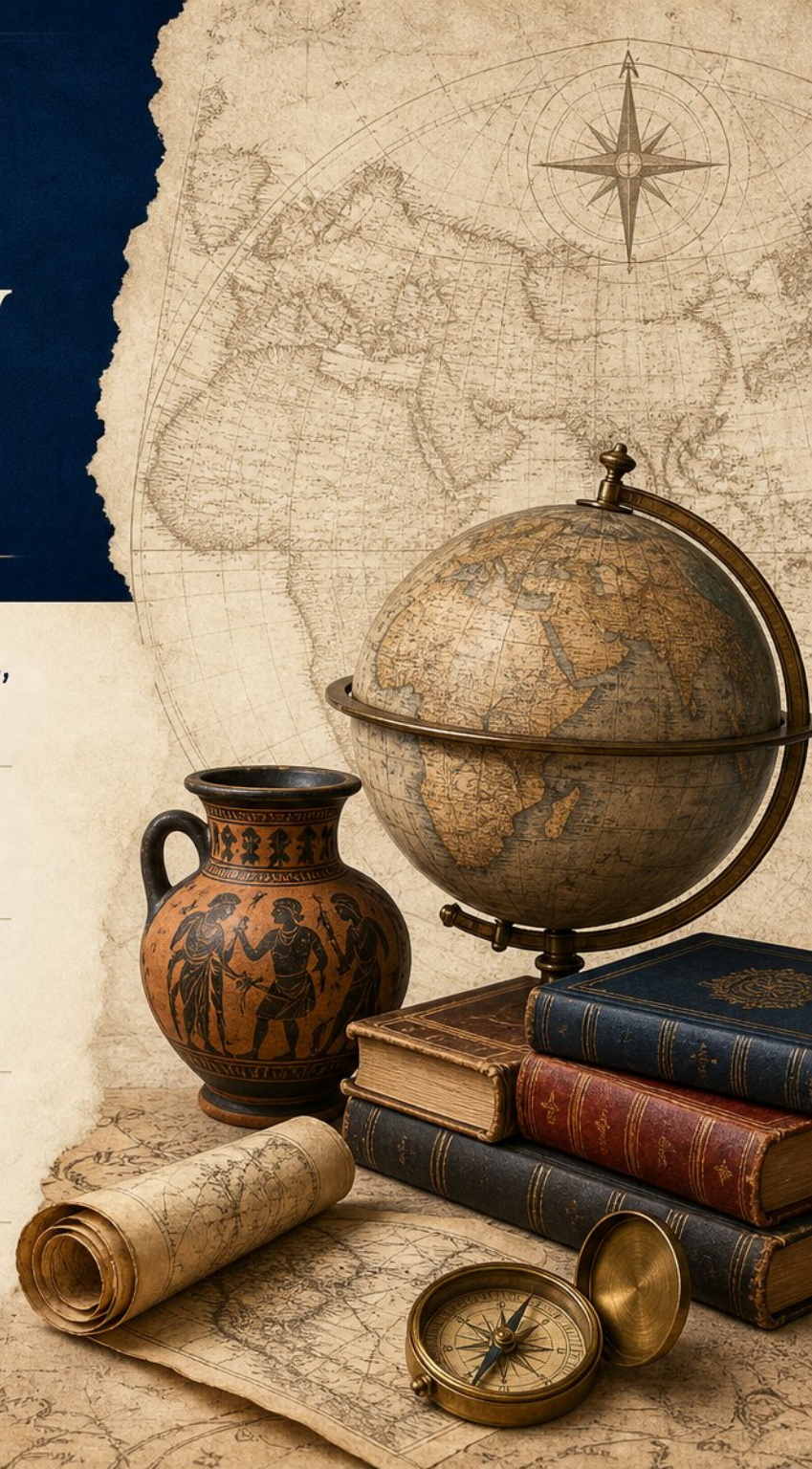
- Periodization organizes time into eras (ancient, medieval, modern) for analysis



- Thematic and chronological approaches frame our journey from origins to 2026



- "Thinking like a historian" means questioning sources, bias, and perspective



Human Origins and the Great Migration

- Early human evolution in Africa and migration patterns that populated the continents
- The shift from foraging lifeways to the Agricultural Revolution and the impact of settled life
- The concept of "prehistory": how archaeologists and anthropologists reconstruct the deep past
- New evidence from Big History refines periodization of the Biosocial Era



The First River-Valley Civilizations

- Complex societies clustered in Tigris-Euphrates, Nile, Indus, and Yellow River basins
- Hydraulic empires controlled water access for irrigation and centralized power
- Shared hallmarks: cities, writing, social hierarchies, and organized religion
- Comparative snapshots: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Harappan Indus Valley, and early China

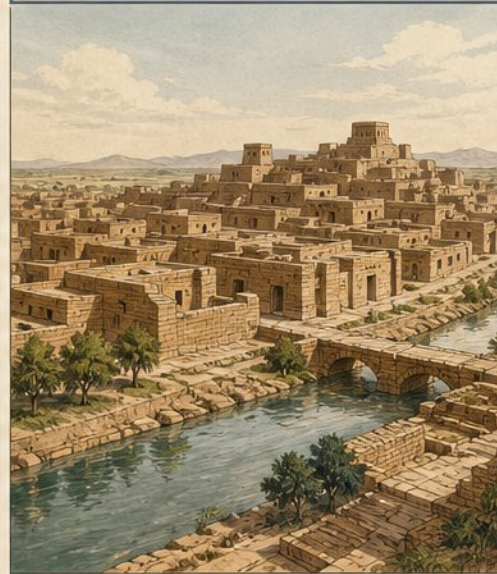
MESOPOTAMIA



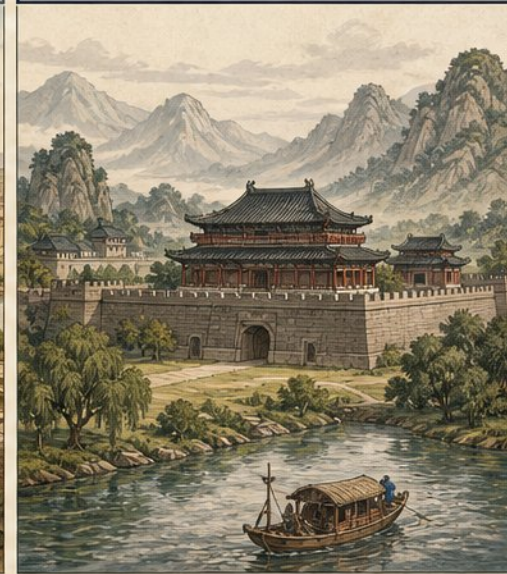
EGYPT



HARAPPAN INDUS VALLEY

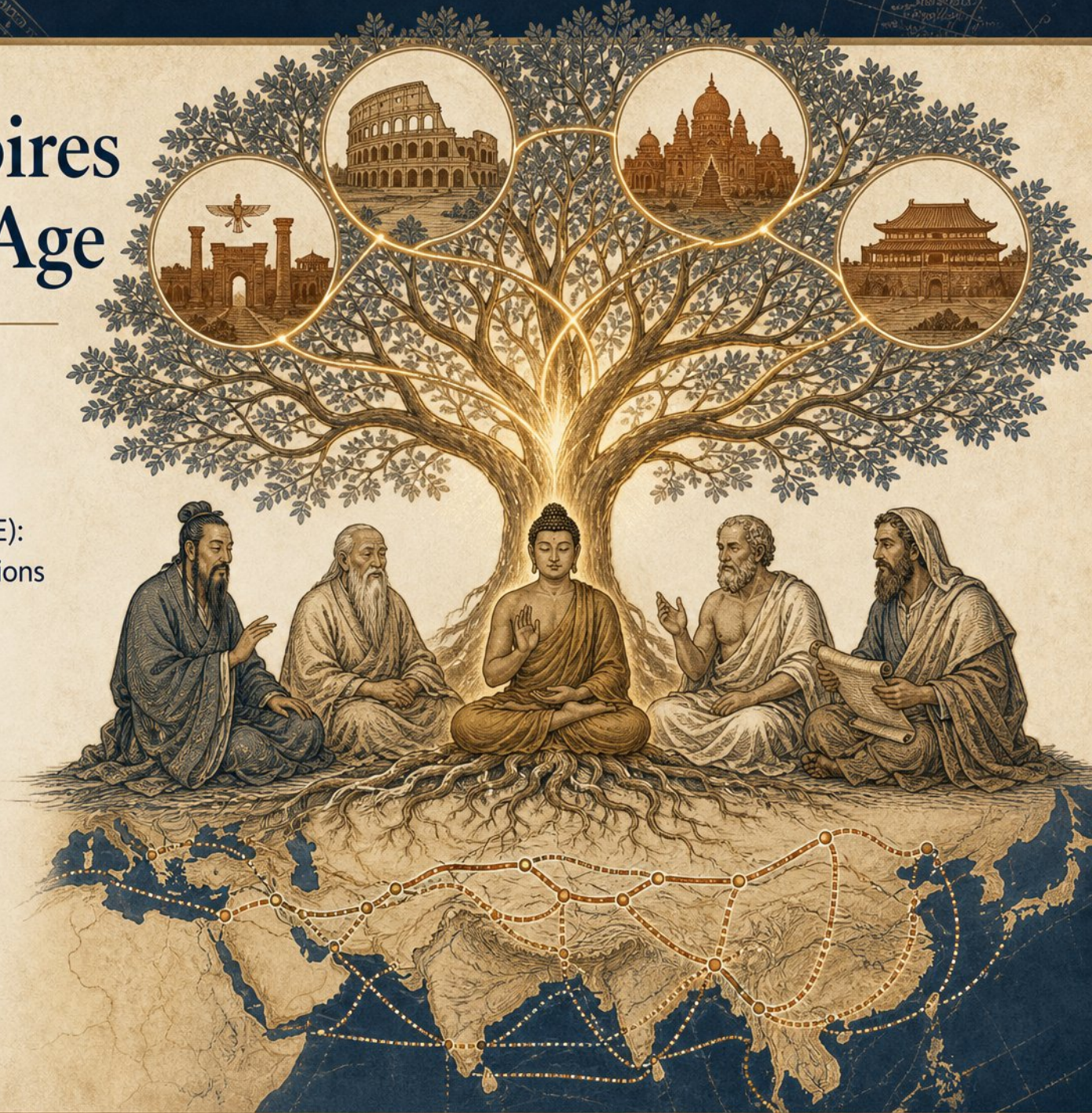


EARLY CHINA



Classical Empires and the Axial Age

- Persia, Rome, Mauryan/Gupta India, and Qin/Han China forged vast classical empires.
- The "Axial Age" (8th–3rd cent. BCE): simultaneous philosophical revolutions across Eurasia.
- Key thinkers: Confucius, Laozi, the Buddha, Socrates, and the Hebrew prophets.
- Emerging trade networks linked the Silk Roads, Indian Ocean, and Mediterranean.



Post-Classical Empires and Expanding Networks



- - Rise of Islam created a new monotheistic, cosmopolitan civilization.
- - Tang and Song China drove innovation, commerce, and statecraft.
- - Medieval Europe: feudalism, the Church, Crusades, and external contacts.
- - The Mongol Empire and "Pax Mongolica" reshaped Eurasian trade and culture.

The Early Modern World: Encounter, Exchange, and Empire

- Enlightenment thought challenged traditional political and religious authority.
- Atlantic Revolutions (American, French, Haitian) demanded rights and sovereignty.
- The Industrial Revolution created factories, mechanized labor, and new fuels.
- Urbanization surged, forming a new working class with harsh living conditions.
- Early reform movements responded to labor exploitation and social inequality.



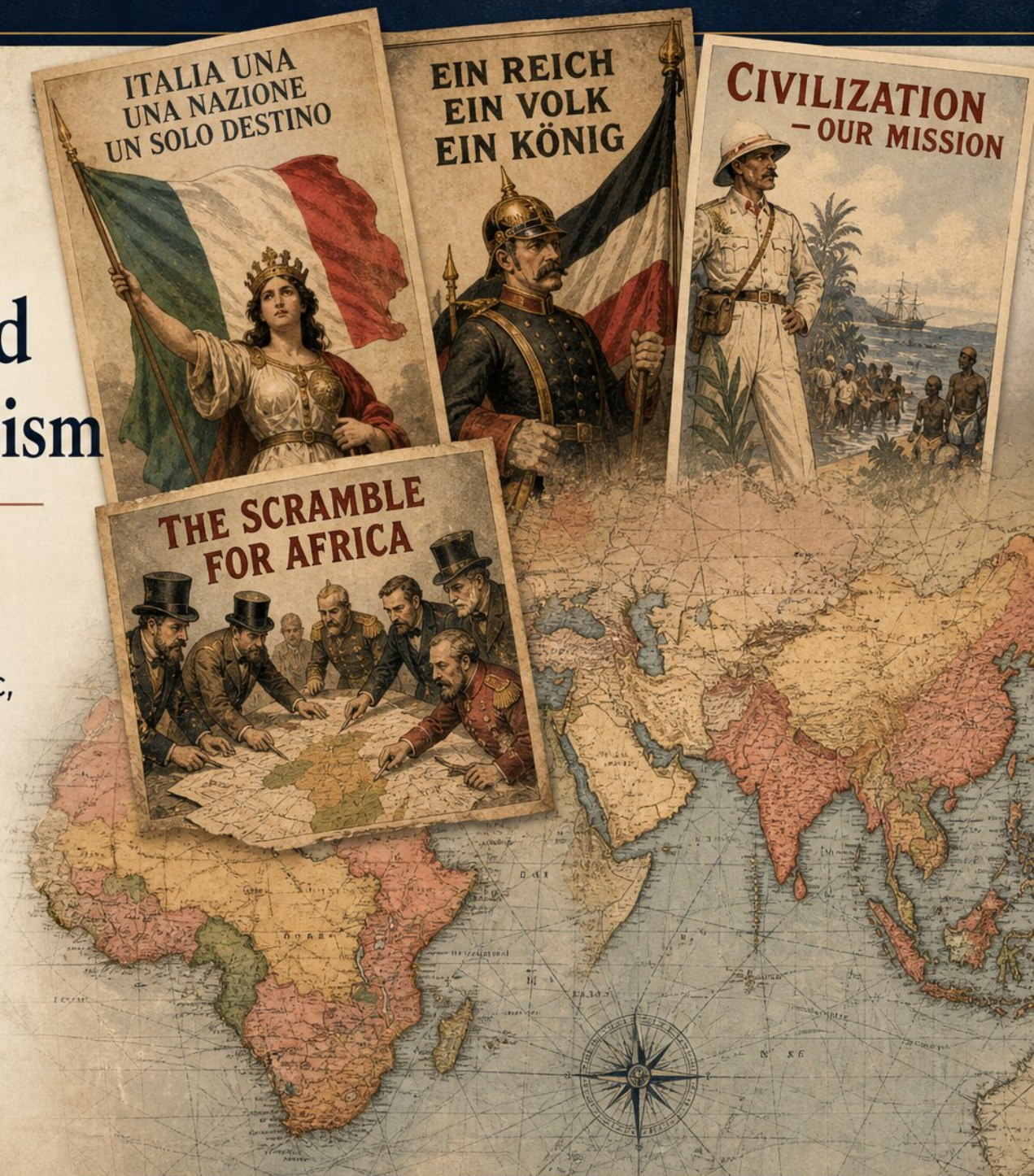
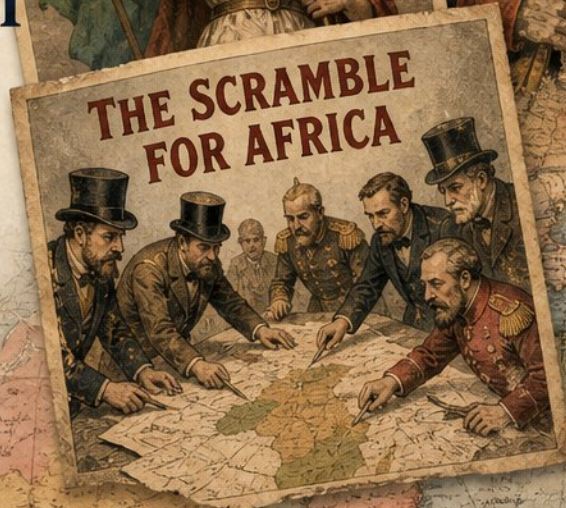
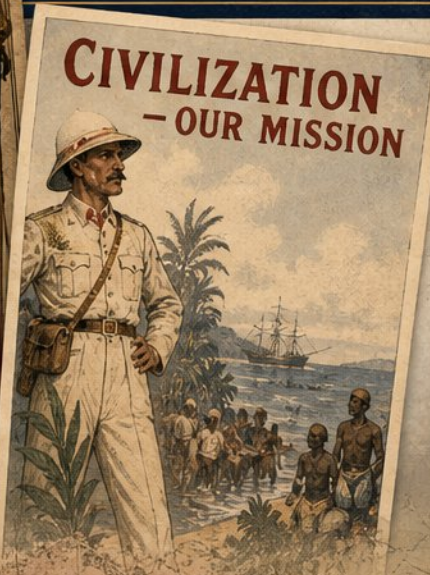
Revolutions: Ideas and Industry Reshape the Globe



- Enlightenment ideas challenged monarchy and traditional authority across the Atlantic world
- American, French, Haitian, and Latin American revolutions overturned old regimes
- Steam power and mechanized factories transformed labor, production, and daily life
- Rapid urbanization created crowded cities, stark inequality, and a new working-class identity
- Reform movements arose in response to factory conditions, child labor, and disenfranchisement

Nationalism, Unification, and the New Imperialism

- Rise of nationalism and the unification of Italy and Germany
- 19th-century imperialism: economic, political, and cultural drivers
- The "Scramble for Africa" and intensified colonization in Asia
- Imperial rivalries setting the stage for global conflict



The Twentieth Century:

GLOBAL CRISIS AND CONFLICT

- Long & immediate causes of WWI; first truly global war
- Interwar Great Depression; rise of fascism, communism
- Failure of collective security; League of Nations weakens
- WWII, Holocaust, atomic age; cost of total war immense
- Post-1945 reshaping of international power and institutions



The Cold War and Decolonization



- Ideological struggle between the U.S. and USSR, marked by a nuclear arms race
- Proxy wars erupted globally: Korea, Vietnam, and the Cuban Missile Crisis
- Dozens of Asian and African nations achieved independence between 1945-1975
- Key leaders: Gandhi, Ho Chi Minh, Nkrumah, and the Non-Aligned Movement



Globalization and the Contemporary Era

- Post-Cold War order and the contested "end of history" thesis
- China's rise reshapes the global economic center of gravity
- The internet revolution and social media's worldwide impact
- Polycrisis: climate change, migration, inequality, and democratic erosion
- By 2026, only 29% live in democracies; autocratization continues (V-Dem)



Recurring Themes Across World History

- Trade routes as engines of connectivity across eras
- Migration and cultural diffusion drive constant change
- Technology transforms and disrupts societies repeatedly
- Empire, class, gender, and racial hierarchies persist
- Climate and geography shape civilizations over millennia





ANNOTATED
ARTIFACTS

Thinking Like a World Historian and Continuing Your Journey

- Critically analyze primary sources and secondary interpretations
- Recognize bias, perspective, and Eurocentrism in narratives
- Use comparative analysis to connect events across time and space
- Apply world history to understand current global citizenship
- Explore gateway books, documentaries, podcasts, and online courses



Different
perspectives
reveal deeper
understanding.



BOOKS



DOCUMENTARIES



PODCASTS



ONLINE COURSES

PersonWise.

PersonWise • AI digital-human course platform



Scan the code or click anywhere to watch this course live, with voice Q&A

personwise.ai/t/4af6ea75/public