



First World System, about A.D. 600 to 1450. This period began with disruptions in Europe and included invasions from the Eurasian steppes and saw the development of new empires outside the previous world systems, including the Americas. Some regions experienced important trade and wealth accumulation.

side the implements that brought new life. China combined a rising population, unity, and expanding trade. The Qin conquest and west by 300 B.C. and all China by 221 B.C. under whom the Chinese empire became unified in the world, succeeded the Qin. This was the Roman Empire reached its greatest extent by A.D. 100, Buddhism entered China, Confucianism and Taoism. The combination of internal factions and child emperors, incursions from the north, and poor harvest led to a breakdown and division of the empire in phase III.

Third World System: Medieval to 1450

The term *medieval* is applied mainly to Europe, it is a phase in the development of world systems and modern eras. It involved interruption of trade. The classical world was for much of succeeding world history and was called by "Dark Ages" with invasions from central Asia in Rome, Greece, northern China, Persia. Western Europe remained disorganized and the result of continuous invasions from the east. The rise in Byzantium (centered on Constantinople), northern India, China, Indo-China, Korea,

and Japan. The Muslim expansion from the A.D. 600s out of southwestern Asia to Persia and North Africa—one of the most important events in history—was followed by Arab traders penetrating across the Sahara in northern Africa and taking a major role in the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean. In western Africa, the kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai followed each other. In the Americas, the Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas established military-economic control over large areas (Figure 1.14).

Mass Migrations

Huge movements of peoples were set off by invading hordes from the steppe grasslands of central Asia. Mounted archers with light armaments were mobile and effective, attacking crucial centers of power. As they moved out of central Asia, they often pushed other groups ahead of them into southern China, India, and northern Europe. They spread Turkish languages westward but were seldom able to govern settled peoples for long. In the westward movements caused by such pressures during the 300s to 500s, German and Slavic tribes moved on to former Roman Empire lands, often pushed westward from present-day Ukraine by Goths and Huns. Further disruption and resettlement followed the Magyar invasions of Hungary in the late 800s. The Great Wall of China, however, proved an effective defense frontier for the Chinese. Other nomad groups followed throughout Phase IV, with the most significant and final invasions in the 1200s and 1300s by the Mongols, who conquered and ruled China for 200

years. In India, Muslims gained political control of the north by the 1200s, setting up the Sultanate of Delhi, which lasted until European conquests.

From the late 700s to the 1100s, the Vikings of northern Europe set out by sea to raid and settle lands from Iceland, Greenland, and the British Isles in the west, through France and northern Europe and down the Volga River valley in present-day Russia—where they traded furs and slaves with Muslims.

New Geographic Patterns

Toward the end of this phase, the future cultural and territorial patterns of European and other powers began to emerge. The Christian church, previously confined to the Roman Empire, sent missions to northern Europe, resulting in the conversion of most of the region by A.D. 1000. With Roman power diminished by invasions, the eastern (Orthodox) church centered in Constantinople spread its influence northward and eastward. Muslim advances, however, swamped the church in southwestern Asia, India, and northern Africa. Muslim armies conquered the Balkan peninsula, southern Italy, and Iberia (Spain and Portugal), as well as northern Africa.

China again became the world's most prosperous empire with extensive sea power. Hangzhou was the world's greatest city, with 1.5 million inhabitants. China's visual arts, literature, philosophy, science, technology (first printing), and education were in advance of the rest of the world. Rich merchants and a growing middle class emerged through the increasing numbers of trained state officials, bankers, and independent peasants. The basics of Chinese culture (language and political organization) were adopted by surrounding states in Korea, Japan, Manchuria, and Yunnan (southern China). Southeastern Asia became a world crossroads between India and China, later influenced by Muslim trading and military missions.

In northern Europe, the Franks of central Germany established control over modern France and Germany by A.D. 800, while the Saxons moved into England and fought off the Vikings. Slavic states emerged in eastern Europe, including the first Russian state in the mid-800s. Throughout Europe, slavery gave way to a feudal economic system in which local lords held land from a king or prince. Peasants, or serfs, had to provide the lord with farm labor or military service for part of the year. In Russia, such serfdom continued until the 1800s.

Further Changes

By the 1100s, Europe was climbing out of political and economic dislocation. The population rose from around 30 million in A.D. 1000 to 42 million some 150 years later. The increases were concentrated mostly in France, Germany, and England. New lands were opened for farming by cutting woodland and draining marshes. In western Europe, the feudal system was breaking down by the 1400s as serfs changed into freeholders or wage workers. Peasant farmers gained more independence, and towns expanded with craft industries and markets, some of which had international significance.

Toward the end of phase IV, the attacks of Genghis Khan and his Mongol hordes, the expansion of the Ottoman Turks, the Black Death, and a worsening climate resulted in economic recession and population decimation (up to one-third in some parts of western Europe). Trade across Eurasia was once again reduced.

Phase V. Fourth World System: Modern Times, Capitalism, Industrialization, and Socialism, A.D. 1450 to the Present

This phase, building on previous phases, resulted in most of the detailed geographic differences among places at the end of the 1900s. Some historians restrict a discussion of world systems and global orders to this phase, when the growth of capitalism paralleled the centralization of economic and political power in western Europe. The new form of wealth accumulation spread outward—through trade and colonization—to the Americas, Africa, the South Pacific, and parts of Asia. By the late 1800s, much of the world was ruled from European countries and incorporated in dependent trade relations as part of a major expansion of the world system. Although the United States rose to become the world's most productive industrial country during the 1800s, it remained mostly aloof from overseas involvements (except for Cuba, the Philippines, and other former Spanish colonies that it took over at the end of the 1800s). Following the disruptions of two world wars, decolonization after 1945, and the Cold War, the 1990s initiated a new global order by involving virtually the entire globe in the capitalist world economic system.

Capitalism is a mode of production in which goods and services are produced and sold by private individuals, corporations, or governments in competitive markets. Most of the means of production (e.g., land, machinery) are owned by a few people or corporations. The producers, or workers, own neither the means of production nor the products: they sell their labor. Capitalism is linked to notions of individual freedom—at least for those who own the means of production—together with private property ownership and limited government interference in decisions about production, distribution, and consumption. This type of capitalism is often termed "free-market." Capitalism's emphases on individual enterprise, industrial corporations owned by individuals, and making profits encourage its own expansion. Such emphases also lead to uneven levels of wealth over time and geographic space. When governments, rather than individuals or corporations, control production and distribution, as, for example in the Soviet Union up to 1991, the socialist ideals result in a centrally planned economic system that treats capitalism as an opposed system. The outcome is termed **state capitalism** because of the way socialist states function in an essentially capitalist world.

Capitalism, now the dominant world economic system of wealth accumulation, developed when technologies of