INTRODUCTION: THE HUMAN STORY SINCE 1500

In the years after 1500, the whole human family came into contact for the first time in thousands of years. For millennia Amerindians, Eurasians, and Polynesians had developed separately from one another with no knowledge of the existence of other members of the human race. Then in a few decades around 1500 long-lost peoples rediscovered one another. Amerindians and Europeans who had existed independently for at least 14,000 years suddenly came into contact. This same encounter occurred at many points throughout the world.

Within decades Europeans, Americans, and Asians were involved in a gigantic exchange that forever affected their menus and their agricultural life. Mineral and agricultural products crossed both the Atlantic and the Pacific in massive quantities, transforming production methods and daily consumption. From the Americas, Europeans imported turkeys, cranberries, potatoes, tomatoes, and tobacco. Asians obtained maize, peanuts, chili peppers, and most important, silver and gold in exchange for porcelain, silk, and tea. From Europe, Amerindians learned about horses, apples, barley, coffee, and wheat. Not all exchanges were productive. Crab grass comes from Europe as well as measles, malaria, cholera and bubonic plague, while smallpox devastated previously unexposed populations of the New World and Asia. From America came syphilis and hepatitis.

The sudden presence of new visitors from distant continents exposed both natives and newcomers to new diseases and increased mortality. Many Europeans succumbed within months of arrival. But in the end, in most of the world, the European diseases proved far more murderous than the American. In most places Europeans perished from new diseases, but the Eurasian Plain had already introduced many diseases to its inhabitants, who had developed immunities. Areas with smaller populations and less intimate contact lacked such wide exposure and died in catastrophic numbers. In North America whole Indian tribes were wiped out and dazed survivors had to consolidate with other groups in order to preserve any collective life at all. Massive deaths among native populations were the typical results of the age of discovery.

The exchange of foods and livestock that followed the landing of Europeans in the Americas reminds us that globalization has never been a one-way process. Globalization occurs when actions, events, and relations at an increasingly greater distance from the locality affect community life. The expansion of diseases across continents is an example of globalization. Contrary to some common usages, globalization does not mean that a process encompasses the entire globe. It refers to the *expanding* of processes and movements across territory. Deglobalization is its opposite: It refers to the *shrinking* geographic influence of processes and movements.

In the case of the encounter between Europeans and Amerindians, sometimes referred to as the Columbian Exchange, at any given time and place globalization and deglobalization were usually happening simultaneously. The utter devastations among Amerindian peoples and the destruction of Amerindian cultures that forced peoples to reorganize their collective life on a smaller scale is deglobalizing. To decide whether a region is globalizing or deglobalizing, it is the net balance that counts. Is the society globalizing *more* than it is deglobalizing? Is it territorially expanding? Do distant groups or happenings increasingly influence important events or actions?

If somehow we could measure the geographic frequency and territorial consequences of all these decisions in any one period for a given region and add them up we would be able to provide a definitive response to the question of whether globalization or deglobalization was occurring. Alas, we can seldom provide a precise answer to this question but informed estimates of main trends are possible.

The so-called Columbian Exchange should also remind us that there is nothing intrinsically good or bad about globalization. The great deaths in the Americas and elsewhere that followed European contact involved a catastrophic loss of life and human culture and the European rule that followed was murderous and oppressive. European settlers saw a land of hope and promise but others had different perspectives. Africans suffered a huge expansion in the slave trade, while Chinese and Indians gained enormous supplies of silver to fuel their commercial economy. Globalization never hits all peoples equally.

Humans connect in many different ways. For example, they can kill each other, trade with each other, or have sexual relations with each other. They can dance and sing together, worship the same gods, or build monuments together. Each kind of connection creates a different kind of relationship, and on the collective scale, a different kind of social process. As the philosopher Karl Marx put it, "Society does not consist of individuals but expresses the sum of inter-relations [between them]."

Our story features the development of politics, exchange, and social life and the changing relationships among them. In war, the most extreme form of political domination, for example, one group of human beings tries to exert power over another group through the threat of force. In less extreme form, unequal power relations pervade societies at all times. Even in peaceful times, political elites dominate their subjects first of all by threatening them with punishment. For better or worse, on our planet some people have always exercised power, military or political, over others. Coercion is one central theme of human history; it seems unlikely to disappear soon. You will read about a lot of wars in this book. Unfortunately, they mattered.

And yet, humans also contact each other on more equal terms. When one person exchanges what he doesn't need for something he wants, both sides gain. As the economic theorist Adam Smith said, "The propensity to truck, barter and exchange one thing for another . . . is common to all men, and to be found in no other race of animals." Markets, where humans gathered to exchange their goods, probably began as soon as humans learned to speak. Over time, they expanded in scale from small trading centers to large continental networks. Small markets could link themselves to larger markets in a hierarchy, bringing the products of farmers and herders from the countryside into towns and from there into large urban centers. The products of the cities likewise flowed downward through the market hierarchy into the countryside, tying producers and consumers together with continuous flows of goods.

In theory, these exchanges were equal: if no one interfered, no one had to sell anything except at a price that gave him what he needed. Real markets, however, had fewer equal exchanges. Rulers "sold" their product – protection of life – to their subjects in return for taxes and tribute, but usually the subject had no choice of whom to serve. This monopoly market in protection supported the state and protected the subject, but the ruler set the price. Sometimes, subjects could run away, look for another ruler, or revolt against unjust rulers: then they had more leverage over the terms of their trade. Still, most markets never really created truly equal relationships. They, too, never escaped the effects of power.

It was the same for merchants: some were always richer than others. The perceptive Adam Smith also said, "People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some contrivance to raise prices." Powerful merchants tried to control markets by excluding competitors,

fixing prices, or selling shoddy goods. At the same time, their rivals tried to find new customers, new sellers, and new products. The drives of consumers looking for cheaper goods and merchants looking for new sources of profit kept the engine of commercial expansion going. The expansion of commerce around the globe is our second central theme. Like war and political power, trading routes connected people across large expanses of land and sea. They did not have to speak the same language, or have very much in common; they did not even have to like each other. They could still see the advantage of selling what they had for what they wanted.

If all humans were clones, we might have no war, no political structures, no trade, and no cultural clashes. Life would be peaceful, but very boring. Human difference created the inequalities of power, possessions, and beliefs that have generated both our highest triumphs and our most terrible tragedies. Since we are not all the same, and very few of us can live entirely alone, we work with others to help us survive. Humans have always formed groups in order to devote their varied talents to a common cause. Men and women marry and raise families because few of them can do it on their own. Farmers, herders, artisans, traders, and even scholars join together to produce food, shoes, markets, and ideas. These communities are the core of social life, our third central theme. In these groups, from the families to great civilizations, humans have defined who they are, what they care about, and where they direct their most intensive efforts.

Communities ranged in size from families of two to five people to the hundreds of millions who shared one of the great world religions, like Christianity, Confucianism, or Islam. These communities expanded and contracted by different methods: families grew by reproduction or adoption, craft guilds brought in new members by recruiting apprentices, while religions spread by converting new believers. Each of them constructed rituals, like marriage, initiation, or baptism, to single out those who belonged from those who did not.

Communities rested on both similarity and difference, on equality and inequality. Most of the time, people tended to join with those like themselves, in language, religion, social status, or wealth. Yet even families contained people of different ages and genders, with different statuses. Usually, the eldest male ran the household. The domination of men over women has been a central fact of world history, which has not disappeared today.

Also, the larger a collective group grew, the more varied its members became. As communities expanded and linked with each other, they faced the challenge of keeping their members attached to shared values while accepting the inevitable diversity of human experience. The great religious traditions tried to distill out a few simple truths – the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, the Islamic or Christian professions of faith – that summed up the essence of their creed for all believers. And yet, millions of believers in one religion did not practice their faith identically. The gap between universal ideals and diverse social practice is a constant theme of our story.

Each of these themes serves as a short description of a major global process. *Politics* describes the formation and breakdown of states, empires, and federations; *commerce* or exchange indicates the expansion and contraction of trading networks; *social life* means the formation and dissolution of communities. These processes could go in different directions at the same time. We are not describing a single, linear evolution from simple to complex societies. The world suffered major periods of catastrophic breakdown as well as growth. Even today, we have certainly advanced in our ability to control nature and improve the standard of living of many fortunate people, but have we advanced morally, aesthetically, or spiritually too? Let's leave this question open for now.

Politics, exchange, and social life did not develop in isolation from each other. Each of these processes affected the others, sometimes in concert, sometimes in contradiction. Warriors

invoked religious ideals to justify their battles, and many priests supported them, but other religious figures attacked warfare and promoted peace. Local communities resisted state efforts to extract taxes and people as often as they supported state-builders. Merchants gave loans to rulers, and patronized monks and saints, but often did business in violation of moral injunctions, like those against lending money at interest, or avoided the taxes they owed to the state. This three-way tug of war between political power, private interest, and social solidarity often defined how civilizations and societies developed.

Two other central themes join with the three outlined above: technology and gender relations. Technology is the use of human power augmented by animal and mechanical forces over the non-human world, for human ends. Humans have always had to get their food, clothing, and shelter from the natural world, and they have constantly tried to improve the conditions under which they live. Superior productive power created goods that were profitable for trade, and often (in the form of weaponry) superior in war. How people gain their living from nature defines a significant portion of their culture, uniting them around a common mode of existence and separating them from others.

The use of technology thus shapes relations of power, exchange, and community, but it does not totally determine them. Although the environment has strongly affected how humans live, we should avoid assuming that natural changes directly determine their development: human social decisions have always inflected the way in which the natural world's processes make an impact on the collective whole.

Of all the ways of acting on nature that humans use for their benefit, communication and transportation technology deserve special attention. The movement of messages and goods between peoples separated by large distances is the key theme of this story of interconnections. Whether by speech, smoke signals, writing, the telegraph, or the internet, people have always sent information to each other in order to co-ordinate their activities for mutual gain, to warn their enemies, or just to express their love for each other. How fast the messages travel, how far, how often, and in what medium (oral or visual, handwritten or printed) certainly affect the density and quality of communication, but all express the underlying, irrepressible urge to tie one person to another. Contrary what you might have heard, global communication did not begin with the internet; networks of trade and information have covered the globe since the human story began. Likewise, the movement of commodities over distances short and long, on human backs, on animals, on carts, railroads, or airplanes, serves the goals of commerce and community. All things have social lives.

Gender relations have shaped the human story in the most intimate way. Humans, like other mammals, belong genetically to two biological sexes, but gender, which means the social expression of biological sex, has varied greatly over time and space. Men and women have taken on highly diverse roles depending on their relationship to hierarchies of power, relationships of exchange, and social structure. Still, in general, men have dominated power hierarchies through all of human history, as they still do. Males originally dominated because of their superior physical strength, but ideologies of rule that justified male supremacy through reference to divine power, and the fact that men wrote nearly all the histories, kept domination going over the long term.

In commercial relations, women had more nearly equal positions. Although they did not become the richest people in a society, they often controlled small-scale trade, and as artisans or textile producers they took on important economic roles within the household. In small communities like the family, women usually held subordinate but vital positions: they did the cooking, the housekeeping, and childrearing that made it possible for human social life to continue.

We cannot avoid the fact that during most of human history, men have had more social and political power than women, and they have written most of the sources historians rely on. One reason why men's activities dominate this story is that the lives of most women are nearly invisible to us. Sometimes powerful women emerged in the historical records at the top of their societies; then we can tell their stories in more detail. Until recent times, most individual women have remained nearly invisible, but they were an essential part of the processes that enable humans to survive. We can tell their collective story even if we cannot find out much about their individual lives.

Recently, historians have made great efforts to recover the lives of women, reconstructing the size of families and the life experience within them, while paying tribute to the few women who have held positions of high social power. Women often were key parts of maintaining political power, as wives and mothers of powerful men; they often ran important business operations; and most important of all, they held societies together by carrying on the crucial work of reproduction of the family. One of the most revolutionary developments of the modern world, beginning in the nineteenth century, was the entrance of women in large numbers into active political life, as voters, demonstrators, fighters, agitators, and world leaders. Whenever possible, we highlight the significant role of women and relations of gender in directing the major processes we describe.

In sum, from the migration of humans out of Africa and the spread of agriculture across the Eurasian Plain to contemporary transnational migration and the spread of electronic communication, rock, rap, and "world" music, human history has always been world history. Of these global processes, three stand out: demography, economic production and exchange, and armed conflict. Here are a few examples of how they affected regional change around the world during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.

Human population growth, like every other global process, varied by region. Until very recent times, more people meant more power. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the high death rates of indigenous American populations exposed to European diseases, combined with the migration of Spanish, Portuguese, and British peoples to the Americas, gave the new colonists great control over the natives. At the same time, Chinese who migrated into Southeast Asia changed social arrangements in that region not by taking political control, but by dominating the economy. The devastation of Central African populations paved the way for a massive restructuring of societies by both provoking armed conflicts and migration within Africa as well as opening the continent to European conquest and colonization. Around the late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century, the connection of high population to strong power began to reverse itself. Just at this time, the political economist Thomas Malthus and the Chinese statesman Hong Liangji both predicted that societies with rapidly growing populations would soon doom themselves to endless famines, disease, and poverty. As it turned out, they were only half right. European nations and North America kept on growing, but they also industrialized, allowing them to gain wealth and power. The non-European world, except for Japan, did not industrialize in the nineteenth century, and found itself backward and poverty-stricken in the twentieth century. Population growth, in short, worked in different ways in different parts of the world, in interaction with technology and economic development.

In every epoch new techniques of production have fundamentally transformed social relations, from chipping stone for tools or arrowheads to the smelting of iron right up to the Industrial Revolution and the most recent development in electronic communications. The development of new processes of production continually increased human control over the environment. The expansion of commerce likewise linked and transformed regions. Throughout the Eurasian continent the growth of inter-regional trade put pressure on

established regional social institutions and provoked intra-regional conflicts. In Southeast Asia, growing mercantile links helped the spread of Islam, which in turn undermined the claims to legitimacy of traditional rulers and favored those who converted. In sixteenth-century China, scholars lamented that commercial expansion had eroded moral values, remarkably echoing our own concerns. As one of them said:

> *Human disposition is such that people pursue what is profitable to them, and with profit in mind they will go up against disaster. They gallop in pursuit of it day and night, never satisfied with what they have, though it wears down their spirits and exhausts them physically. Since profit is what all people covet, they rush after it like torrents pouring into a valley: coming and going without end, never resting day or night, never reaching the point at which the raging floods within them subside.*

In other parts of the world, like the vast spaces of Central Eurasia, Russia, and Central Africa, commercial networks spread more slowly and sparsely. In the densely populated cores of India, China, Japan, and Western Europe, commercial and technological relations acted differently from the ways they acted in less densely populated regions with more difficulties of transportation and communication.

Finally, innovations in warfare affected the destiny of contested marginal regions on the edges of world regions, while also altering political and social life within regions and relations between them. Europe, the Ottoman empire, China, and India frequently had to respond to military threats from their neighbors. Each region had borderlands that generated powerful military threats: for Europeans, the border could be in Scotland, Spain, Russia, or the Balkans; China saw its most powerful enemies arise in the Mongolian steppes; the Ottomans faced incursions from Russia, Europe, and Persia; Turkish invaders from Central Eurasia founded the Mughal empire of India. Each region also expanded into the borderlands with military, economic, and cultural power, causing its neighbors to respond in kind. The sixteenth to eighteenth centuries were a time when many borderlands across Eurasia filled up with advancing armies, merchants, and missionaries. This global process left little space for smaller, mobile, tribal peoples in between the great empires. Preparation for war drove state-making across the Eurasian continent. As Charles Tilly has pithily put it: "States made war, and war made states." These powerful "Gunpowder Empires" needed to pay for their new technologies; in response, rulers pressed for cash developed more efficient methods for raising taxes and encouraged revenue-yielding trade. They paved the way for the nation-state system of our modern world.

Although war, trade, and religious conversion were the most common styles of large-scale intercultural contact, it's actually hard to separate these phenomena from each other, since trade, war, and religion often went hand in hand. Islam spread to both Central Eurasian and Southeast Asian regions along with the caravans of the Silk Road and the ships of the Indian Ocean. Trade routes also followed patterns of conquest. When Chinese rulers led great military campaigns, or the Mongols swept across the entire Eurasian continent, they opened the way for merchants to develop vast commercial networks in their wake. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the slave trade, based on alliances between European money, local West African power holders, and European colonists in the New World, carried Africans across the entire Atlantic world. The slave-based economies of the African diaspora in the Mediterranean, the Americas, and the Caribbean also became nodes of cultural exchange.

Clever religious entrepreneurs linked their belief systems to existing power structures. Jesuit missionaries in China, in order to attract imperial support, demonstrated their ability to cast good cannon, while also trying to bend the Catholic doctrine to accommodate local Chinese beliefs in ancestral rituals. Subject peoples often tried to preserve elements of their

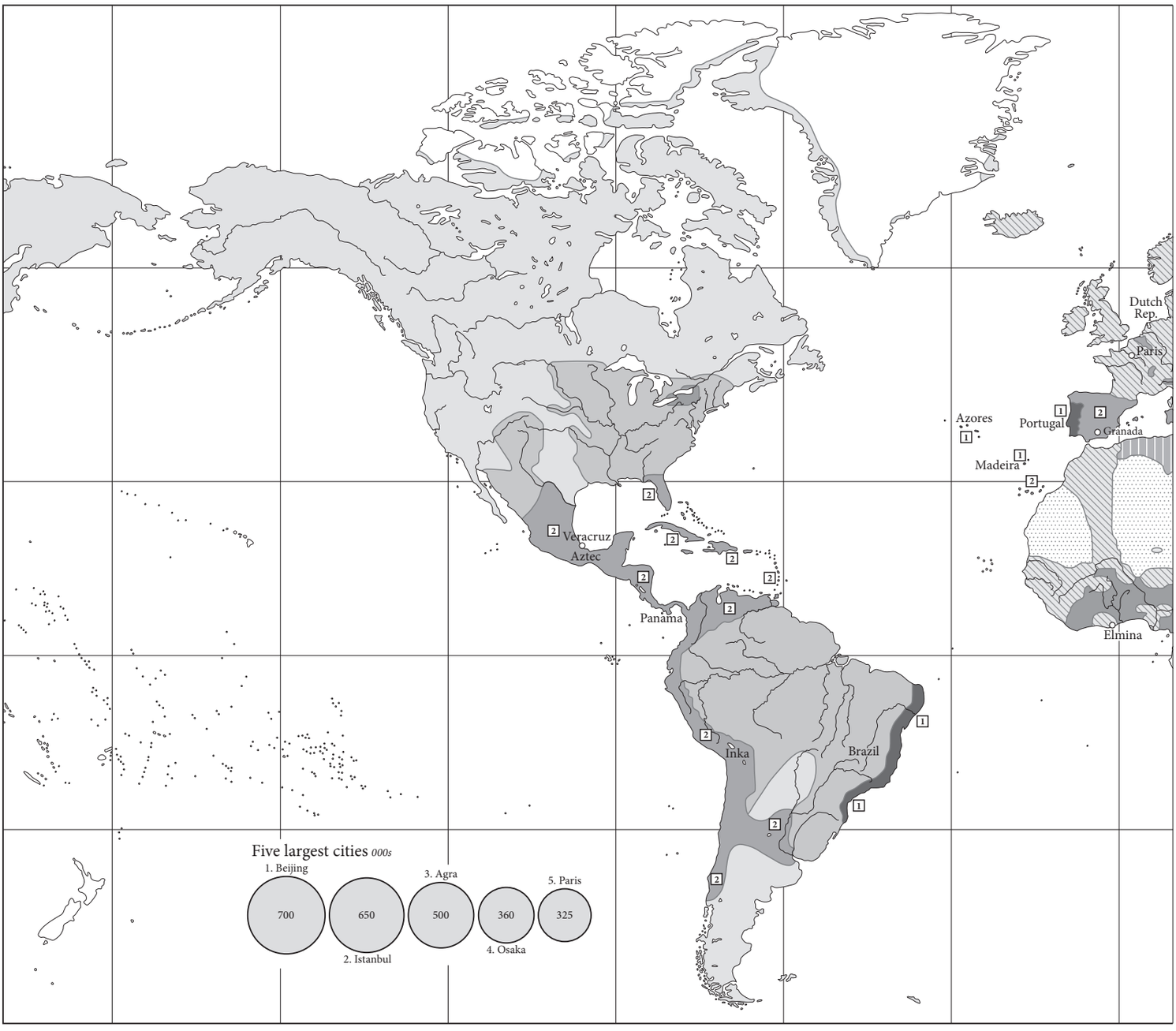
own cultures while adopting elements from colonial cultures that could be used to combat or resist them. Mesoamerican Indians, after the Spanish conquest, sought to blend Catholic imagery with their own traditional religious practices. On other hand, religious convictions often gave conquered peoples the passion to rebel against their oppressors. Religious beliefs could serve established power relations or resist them.

Military successes in one geographic region had an impact on trade and commerce in other regions. Ottoman rulers fought with Venetian merchants for control over the slave trade in the Caspian Sea as well as for dominance of the trade routes to China and India. All of them wanted to seize control of the trade in the precious spices of Southeast Asia. The success of the Ottomans in gaining control over these trade routes set the West on its fateful quest to circumvent Islamic domination by sailing around the Horn of Africa and, eventually, due west across the Atlantic.

Wars always changed power relations, but seldom did civilizations clash as neatly opposed wholes. Some rulers even built their empires on the basis of combining different cultures. In sixteenth-century India, the tolerant Mughal ruler Akbar sought to synthesize elements of Islamic and Hindu culture and religion to accommodate his diverse subjects. The Ottoman rulers claimed to be militant defenders of Islam, but they allowed Christian and Jewish communities within their empire to survive by practicing their own laws. The Manchu rulers of China tolerated and even encouraged diverse faiths, including Confucian rituals, Tibetan Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, and, for a time, Christianity.

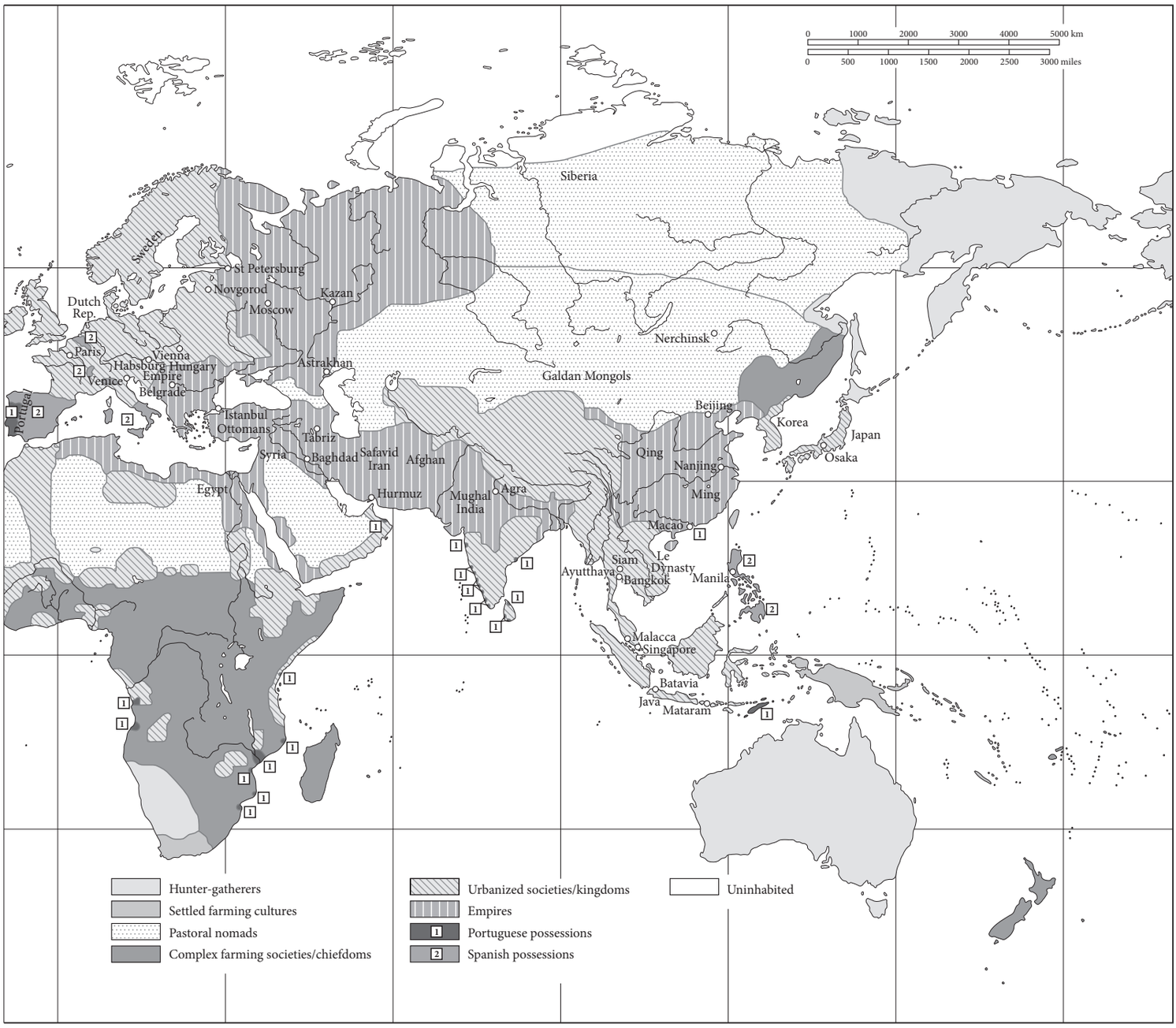
In many ways, then, the connections between coercion, commerce, and community created the world we live in today. Different parts of our modern world come from different depths of historical time: We have pretty much the same bodies as our Paleolithic ancestors, only somewhat bigger; we grow the same plants, eat most of the same foods, and live in cities as post-agricultural transformation people did; whenever we write a letter, a novel, or a history, we do what scribblers of five thousand years ago did, even if we use computer screens and they used clay tablets. But our industrial civilization, based primarily on the use of underground organic energy (coal and oil) to drive machinery, is only two hundred years old, and our ability to alter the human genome, thus fundamentally changing the species, has only developed in the last decade. Our ability to destroy all life on the planet, since the invention of the atomic bomb, is very recent, as is our global environmental awareness that we share responsibility for all living things, not just ourselves. (Although even here, Buddhists anticipated the ideas, if not the technology, of universal destruction and compassion.) Sorting out what is really new and what is old is a historian's central task. In this story, we point to revolutions, crucial turning points, and conceptual breaks as well as continuities and structural constraints. Our goal is to help the student place her personal experience alongside millions of other ordinary people who lived through great changes, so as to better understand herself and the world.

Global map, 1600



PART I

1500–1700: The early modern world



Middle East	
1453	Ottomans conquer Constantinople.
1501	Shah Isma`il conquers Iran and establishes Safavid state.
1520–66	Reign over Ottoman empire of Suleiman the Magnificent.
1526	Babur conquers India and establishes Mughal empire.
1556–1605	Reign of Akbar in Mughal India.
1571	Venice defeats Ottoman navy at Lepanto.
1596–1610	Celali peasant revolts in Ottoman empire.
1658–1707	Reign of Awrangzeb in Mughal India.
1683	Ottoman siege of Vienna defeated.
1722	Fall of Safavid Iran to Afghan tribal armies.
China	
1368–1644	Ming dynasty.
1557	Portuguese permanent settlement at Macao.
1582	Jesuit mission in China begins under Matteo Ricci.
1592–93,1597–98	Japanese invasions of Korea repelled.
1636	Manchus declare Qing dynasty at Mukden (but it does not succeed the Ming dynasty in China proper until 1644).
1644	Conquest of Beijing by Manchus.
1644–1912	Qing dynasty.
1697	Kangxi emperor defeats Galdan.
1722	Yongzheng emperor ends Jesuit mission.
Russia	
1547	Ivan IV is crowned tsar.
1552, 1556	Muscovy's conquests of Kazan and Astrakhan open a door to the East.
1565–72	Time of oprichnina.
1582	Yermak begins conquest of Siberia.
1598–1613	Time of Troubles.
1613	Michael Romanov elected tsar by zemsky sobor.
1649	Law code enforces serfdom.
1670–71	Stepan Razin revolt.
1682–1725	Reign of Peter the Great (b. 1672).
1689	Treaty of Nerchinsk with China.
1703	St. Petersburg founded.
1709	Battle of Poltava breaks Sweden.
Japan	
1543	First arrival of Portuguese, with firearms, in Japan.
1600	Battle of Sekigahara defeats rivals to Tokugawa Ieyasu.
1603	Ieyasu claims shogunate.
1637	Shimabara Rebellion; final suppression of Christianity; restriction of foreign trade.
The Americas and Africa	
1487	Bartolomeu Dias rounds the Cape of Good Hope; first Portuguese traders arrive in Indian Ocean in 1497.
1492	Granada captured by Castile, completing the Reconquest of Spain from the Moors; Columbus sails toward Asia, finds the Caribbean, and returns.