

Cross-Cultural Exchange on the Silk Roads



Trade Networks Develop

- ⊙ Long-distance travel increases in Classical Age

 - ⊙ Better roads, large empires that reduced risk

- ⊙ **Sea lanes**

1. Indian Ocean trade

 - ⊙ Discovery of Monsoon wind patterns

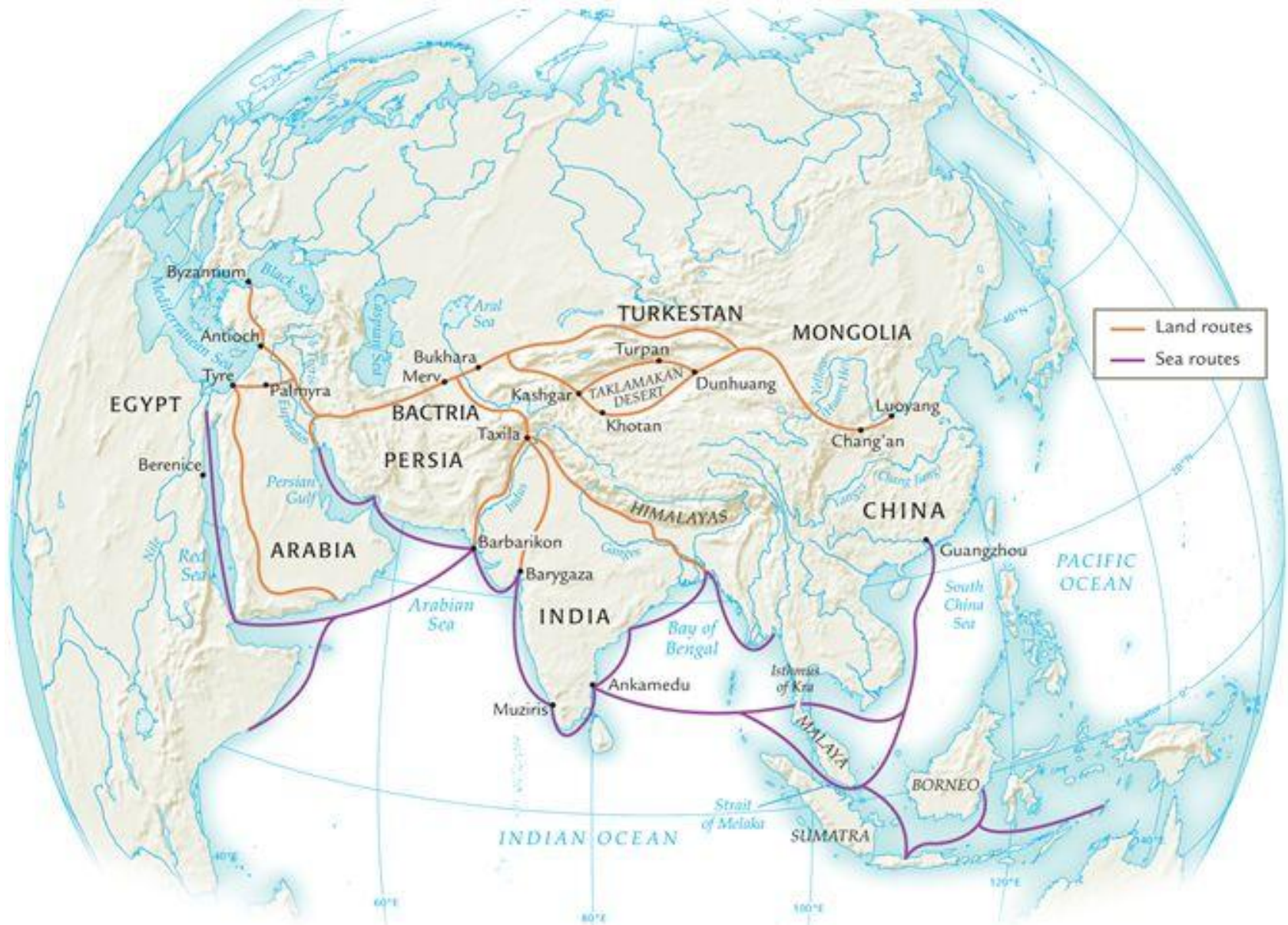
 - Egyptians discovered the patterns that enabled mariners to safely to Indian Ocean basin

 - Winter-Blow from NE

 - Summer- Blow from SW

2. *Mare Nostrum*

The Silk Roads, 200 B.C.E.-300 C.E.

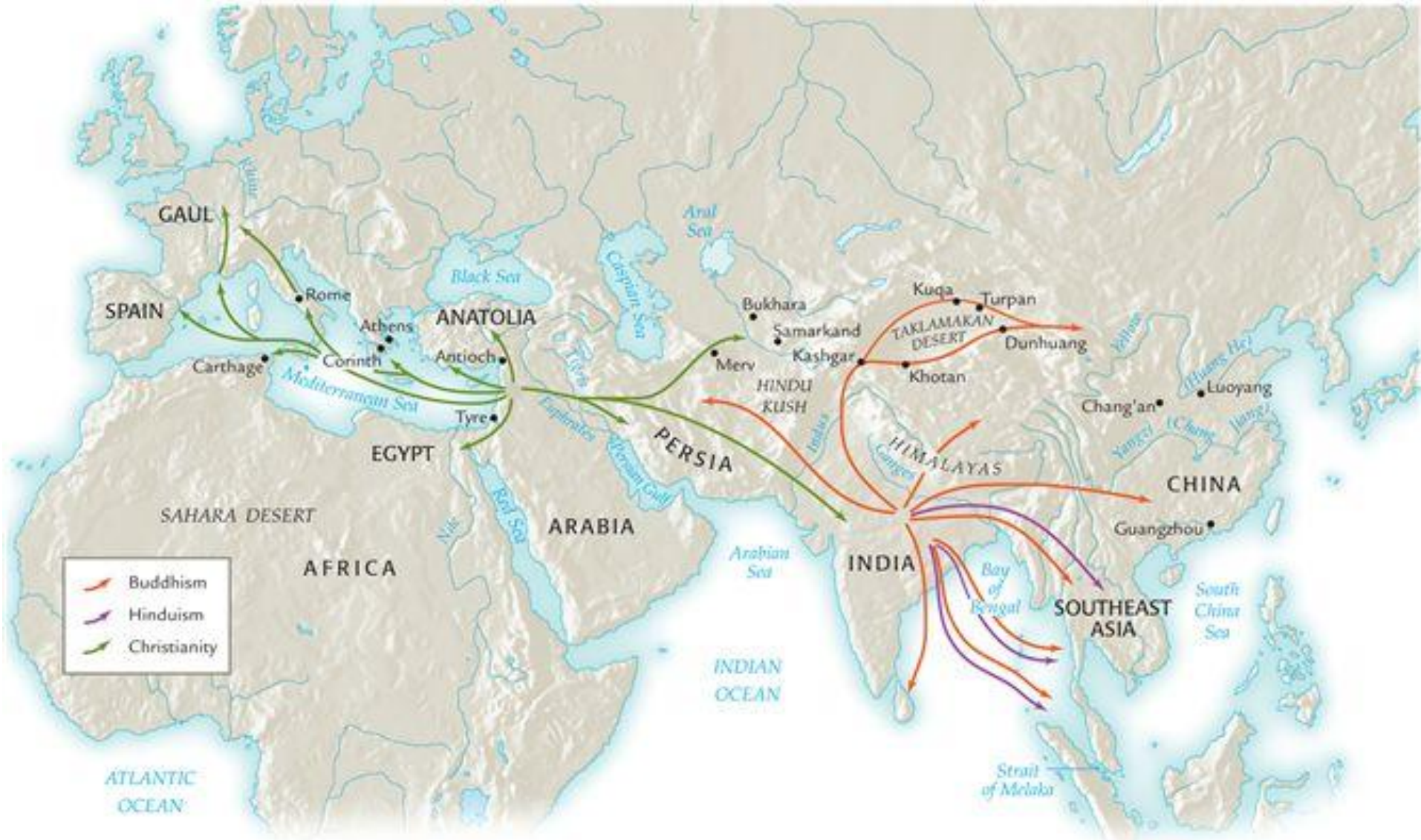


Chinese Silk in Rome

- A mosaic of the second century C.E. depicts a musician playing flutes and a dancer wearing a thin and revealing silk garment.



The spread of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity, 200 B.C.E.-400 C.E.



Spread of Buddhism

- Buddhism becomes the dominant faith of Silk Roads in 200BCE -700 CE
- Merchants carry religious ideas of India through central Asia to east Asia
- Cosmopolitan centers promote development of monasteries to shelter traveling merchants
 - Oasis towns: Merv, Bukhara, Samarkand, Kashgar



Early Buddhist sculpture in Bactria reflected the influence of Mediterranean and Greek artistic styles. This seated Buddha from the first or second century C.E. bears Caucasian features and wears Mediterranean-style dress.

Buddhism in China

- Originally, Buddhism restricted to foreign merchant populations
- Monasteries and missionaries offered Buddhism the potential to attract Chinese converts
- Spreads to larger population beginning 5th c. CE after fall of the Huns
 - Confucianism unpopular after fall

Christianity in SW Asia

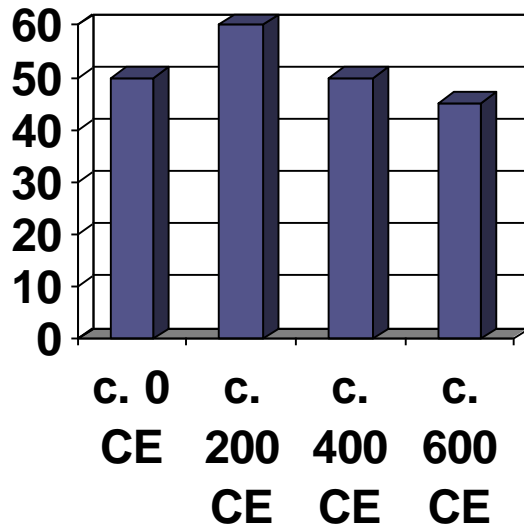
- Influence of ascetic practices from India
 - Abstained from sexual contact, refused fine food, sometimes w/drew from family life and society
- These practices influenced some Mediterranean Christians
 - Desert-dwelling hermits, monastic societies
- After 5th c. CE, most Christians of SW Asia became **Nestorians**
 - Emphasized human nature of Jesus
 - Spread these ideas east across Silk Roads

The Spread of Epidemic Disease

- Role of trade routes in spread of pathogens
- Smallpox, measles, bubonic plague
 - Chinese and Roman populations decline $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ from their highpoint
 - Reign of Augustus, pop. 60 million to 2nd c. CE only 45 million
 - Smallpox in Med. 160-180 CE most destructive
 - By 400 CE, Rome was 40 million
- Effect: Economic slowdown, move to regional self-sufficiency

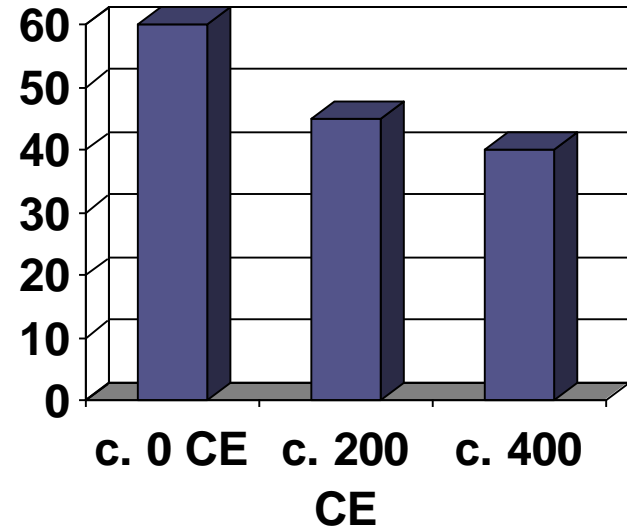
Epidemics in the Han and Roman Empires

Chinese Population, 0-600 CE



■ Millions

Roman Population, 0-400 CE



■ Millions

Fall of Rome

- **Internal political problems**
 1. **The Barracks Emperors**
 - 235-284 C.E., 26 claimants to the throne, all but one killed in power struggles
 2. **Epidemics**
 - Disintegration of imperial economy in favor of local and regional self-sufficient economies
 3. **Divisions and Factions b/c of the size cause problems**



Sculpture of the tetrarchs, or four corulers of the Roman empire, during the late third century C.E.; from left, Galerius, Constantius, Diocletian, and Maximian. Do you think the tetrarchs were really such close companions as this sculpture suggests?

Diocletian (r. 284-305 CE)

- Divided empire into two administrative districts
- Co-Emperors rule each district
 - More efficient
- Currency, budget reform
 - Adjust expenditures to income
 - Price caps to stop inflation
- Army is under imperial control
- Relative stability disappears after Diocletian's death, civil war follows
- **Constantine** emerges victorious
 - Moves capital to Constantinople

Fall of Rome: External Factors

1. Visigoths, influenced by Roman law, Christianity
 - Formerly buffer states for Roman Empire
2. Attacked by Huns under Attila in 5th c. CE
3. Massive migration of Germanic peoples into Roman Empire
 - Fleeing the Huns
4. Germanic tribes sack Rome in 410 CE, established Germanic emperor in **476 Ce**



Germanic invasions and the fall of the western Roman empire, 450–476 C.E. Many different groups invaded the Roman empire following many different routes. ***Why did the Germanic invasions concentrate on the western Roman empire?***

Cultural Change in the Roman Empire

- **Growth of Christianity**
 - **Constantine's Vision, 312 CE**
 - Promulgates **Edict of Milan**, allows Christian practice
 - Converts to Christianity
- 380 CE Emperor Theodosius proclaims Christianity official religion of Roman Empire



The colossal head of Constantine is one of the few remaining fragments from a marble statue that originally stood about 14 meters (46 feet) tall.