

# The Han Empire

In Comparative Perspective with the Roman Empire



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# Timeline

Han Empire	Roman Empire
c. 500-221 BCE: Warring States Period	509-27 BCE: Roman Republic
221-206 BCE: Qin Dynasty	27 BCE-235 CE: Principate (early imperial monarchy)
206 BCE-9 CE: Western/Former Han	284-602/641 CE: Later Roman Empire
9-23 CE: Xin Dynasty (Wang Mang Interregnum)	395 CE: Roman Empire divided into west and east
25-220 CE: Eastern/Later Han	476/480 CE: Fall of the Western Roman Empire

# The Roman Empire at Its Height, c. 117 CE





The Han Empire at Its Height, c. 100 BCE

# The Warring States of China c. 260 BCE





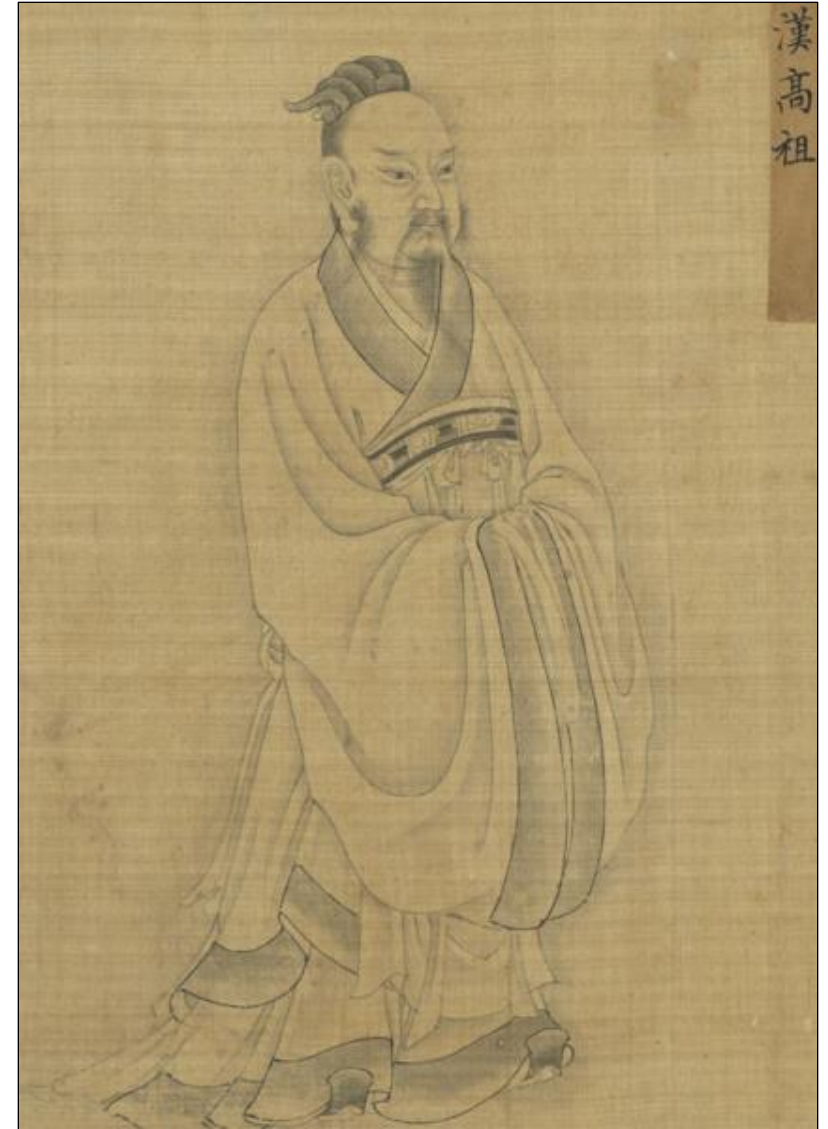
Qin Shi Huang  
(r. 221-210 BCE)



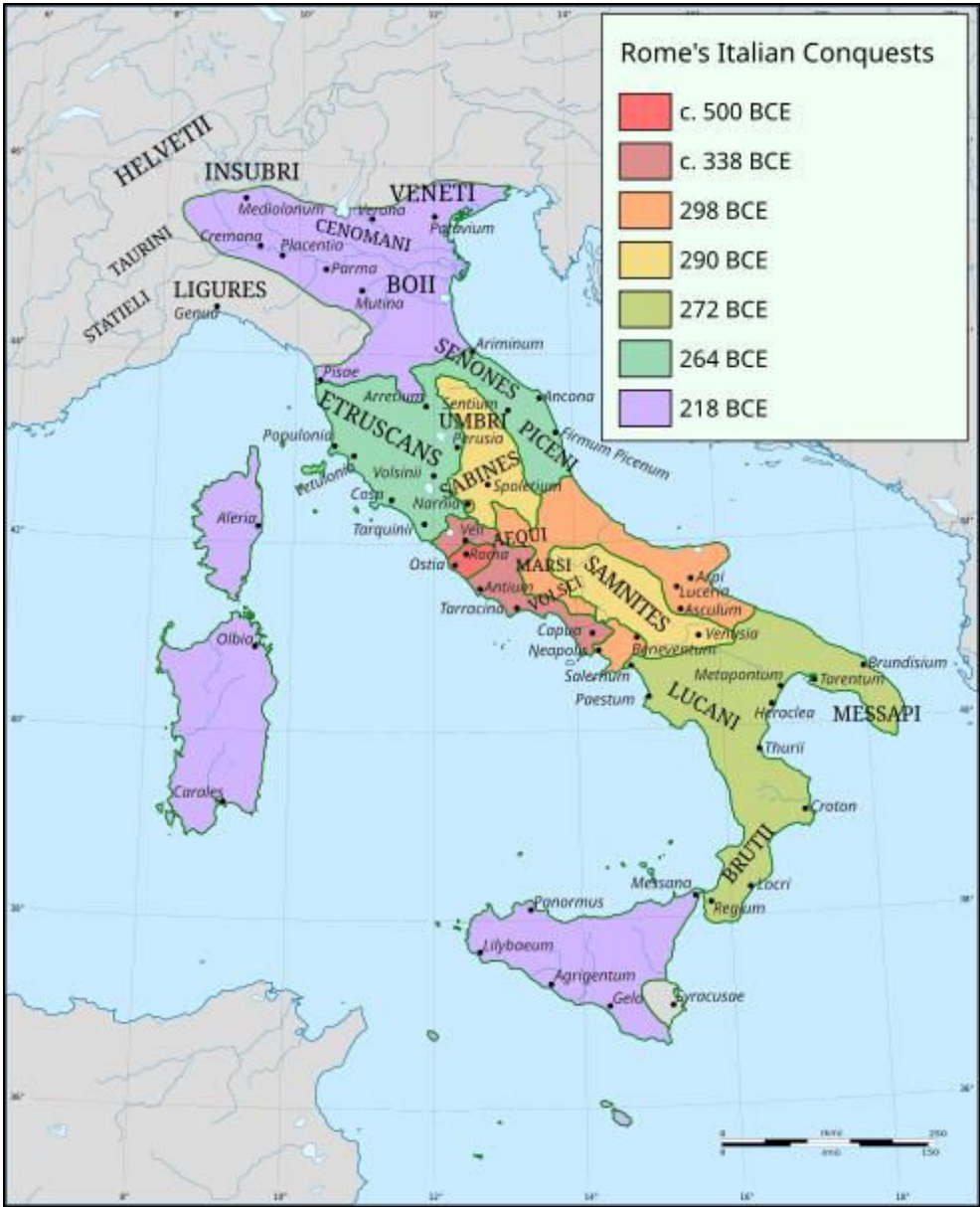
The First Emperor of Qin's Terracotta Army

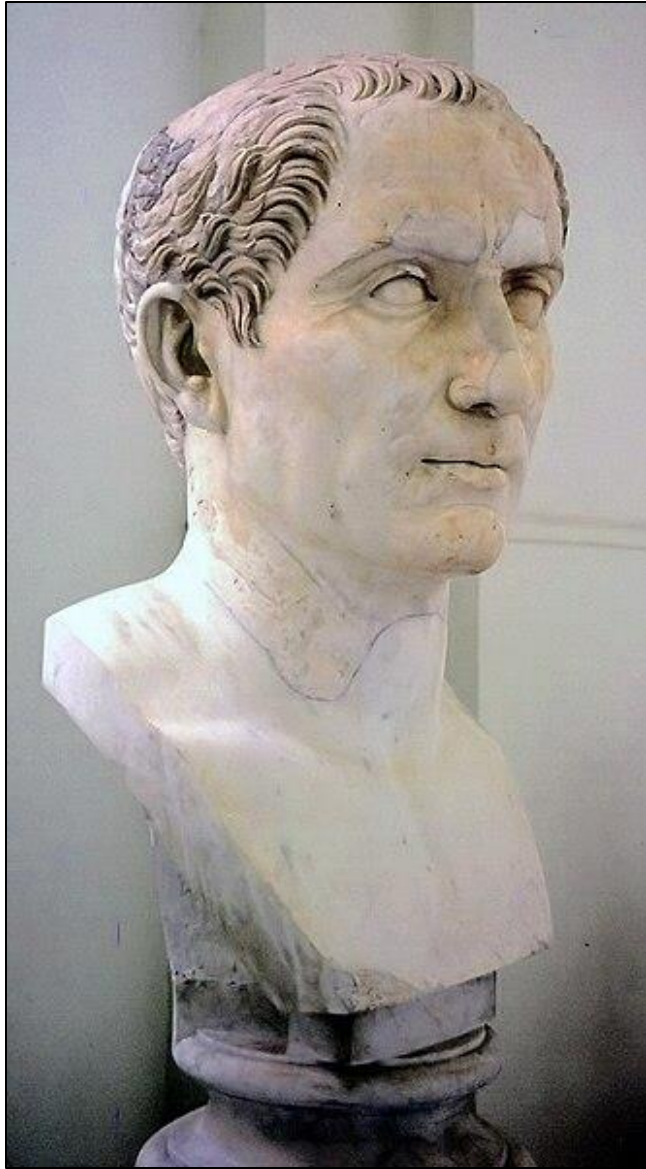


Han soldier terracotta figures



Liu Bang (Emperor Gaozu of Han)  
(r. 202-195 BCE)





Julius Caesar  
(100-44 BCE)



Augustus  
(r. 27 BCE-14 CE)

# Commanderies (Prefectures, the Jun) of Qin Dynasty

1. Handan
2. Hens
3. Yingchuan
4. Dang
5. Xue
6. Jiaoxi
7. Lingping
8. Guangyang
9. Yunchong



221 BC - 206 BC

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Qin\\_Dynasty.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Qin_Dynasty.png)

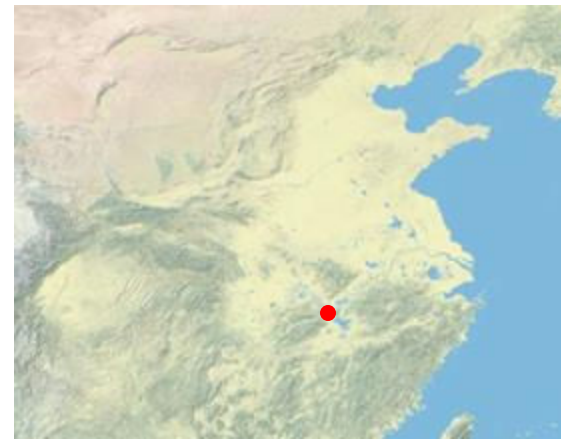
## Han Dynasty, 195 BC

- YAN Kingdom
- Liaodong Commandery
- CHANG'AN Capital
- 卹 Kingdom Capital
- Xiangping Commandery Seat

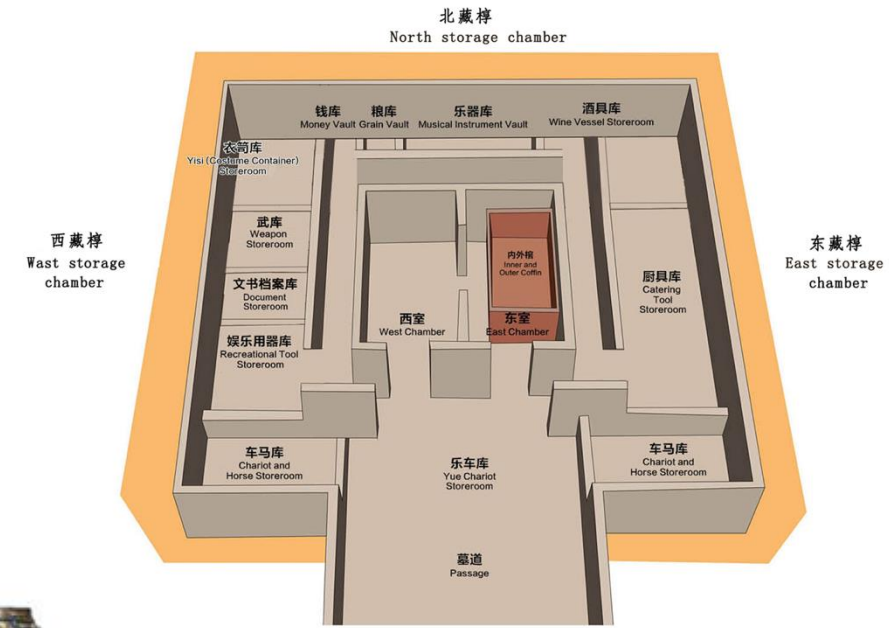
1. Dingxiang
2. Julu
3. Qinghe
4. Jiaoxi
5. Chengyang



# Tomb of the Marquis of Haihun (d. 59 BCE)



墓室平面示意图  
Plan Of The Tomb Chamber



# GOVERNMENT OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

## VOTING ROMANS



### PATRICIANS

8–10% of Rome  
wealthy landowners  
from old families  
roots to the  
founding of Rome



### PLEBEIANS

the rest –  
ordinary Romans  
farmers, soldiers,  
shopkeepers,  
builders, artisans...

## LEGISLATIVE BRANCH POPULAR ASSEMBLIES

### ROMAN SENATE

600 magistrates and ex-magistrates  
served for life (could be expelled by censors)  
governing and advisory assembly  
controlled public finances, state administration  
and foreign affairs



### COMITIA CENTURIATA

assembly of ALL citizens  
(voters divided in "centuriae",  
groups of 100, according to wealth)  
decided on war and peace, passed laws,  
reviewed appeals of capital convictions  
elected senior magistrates



### COMITIA POPULI TRIBUTA

assembly of ALL citizens  
(voters divided in 35 "tribes"  
according to geographical district)  
conducted minor trials,  
elected the minor magistrates  
held legislative power

### COMITIA PLEBIS TRIBUTA

subgroup of Comitia Populi Tributa  
principal PLEBEAN voting assembly  
called at least once a year,  
passed legislation (plebiscites),  
tried judicial cases  
elected Tribunes & Aediles

## EXECUTIVE BRANCH



### 2 CONSULS

elected for a one-year-term  
commanded the army,  
managed governance &  
foreign affairs



### DICTATOR

occasional position  
appointed by the consuls  
for a 6-month term



### 2 CENSORS

elected once every 5 years  
maintained the census  
(registered citizens & property)



### JUDICIAL BRANCH

#### 8 PRAETORS

elected for a one-year-term  
law officers & civil administrators



### 20 QUAESTORS

custodians of the state treasury,  
conducted audits

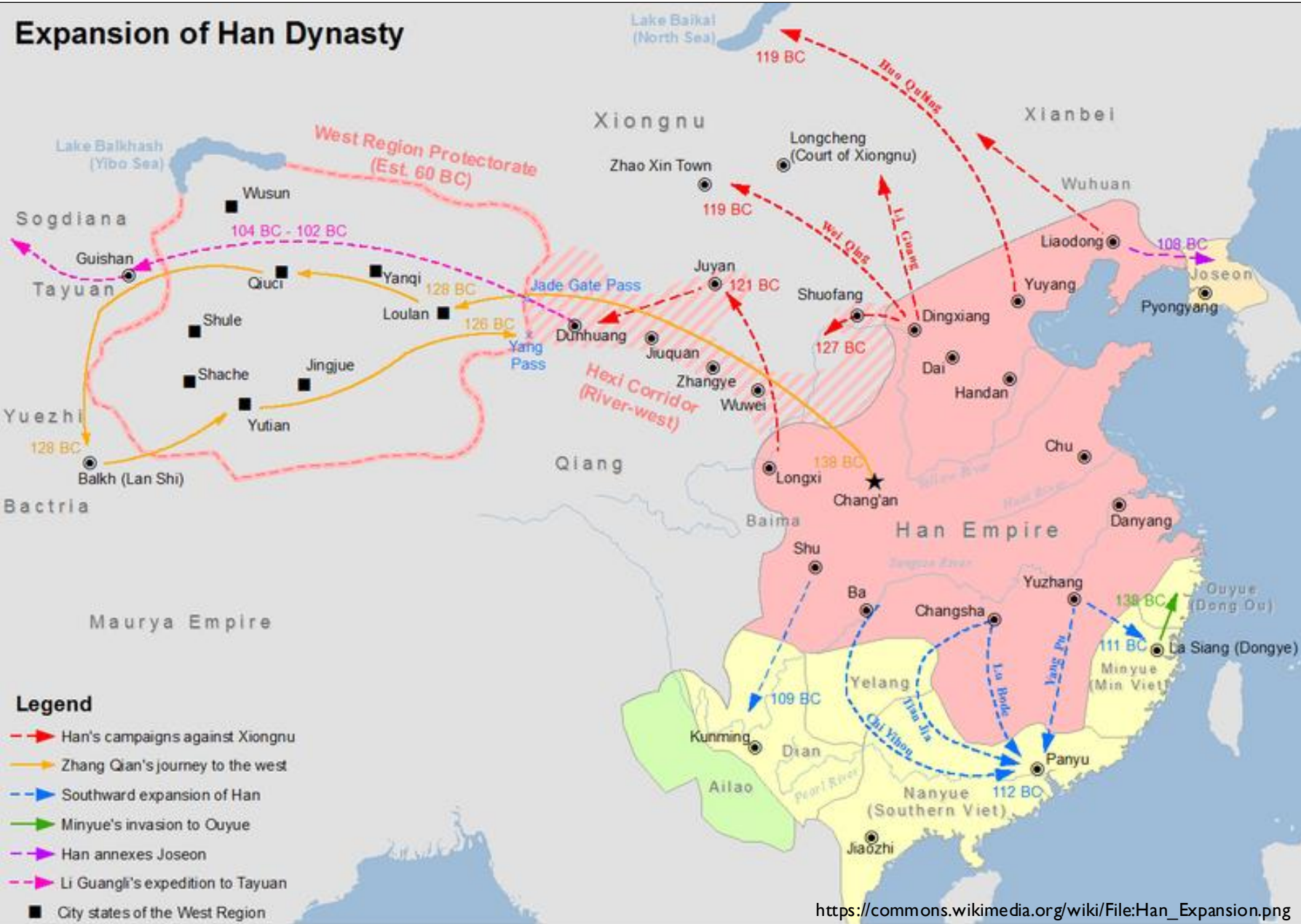


### 10 TRIBUNI PLEBIS

plebeian, sacrosanct  
could summon the Senate,  
proposed legislation,  
could veto acts of Consuls  
and magistrates



# Expansion of Han Dynasty



Emperor Wu  
(r. 141-87 BCE)



Xiongnu plaques (2nd-1st century BCE)  
Metropolitan Museum of Art



Embroidered carpets  
from Xiongnu burials at Noin-Ula  
(1st century BCE-1st century CE)

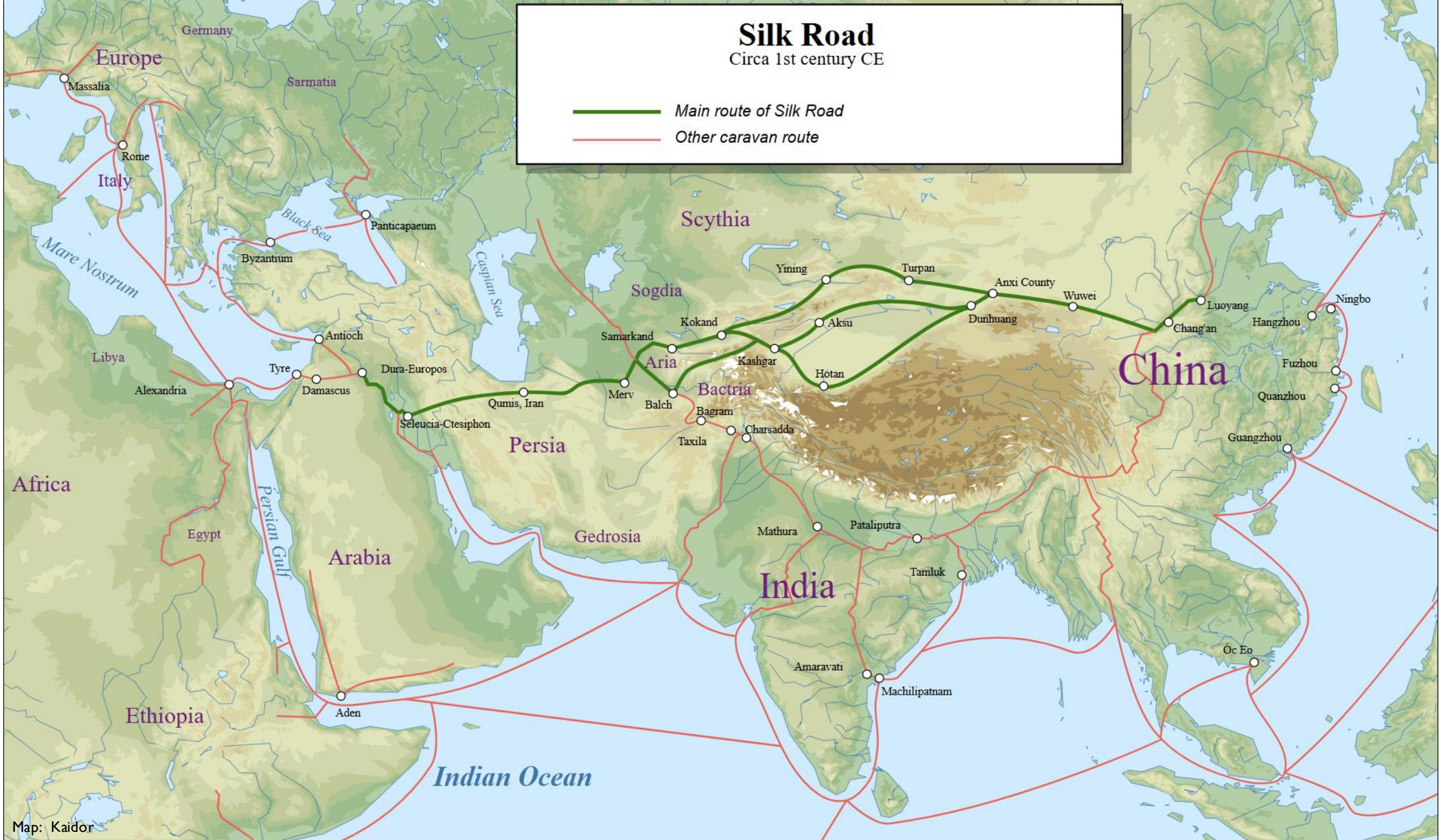




Emperor Wu dispatching Zhang Qian,  
depicted on a Tang Dynasty wall fresco in Dunhuang

**Silk Road**  
 Circa 1st century CE

— Main route of Silk Road  
 — Other caravan route



# Begram Treasure



# The Gathering of Kings (c. 650 CE)



Yarkand  
(Xinjiang)



Malaysia



Sri Lanka



Korea (Silla)



Persia

Map: George Tsiagalakis



Beyond these places, the fierce winters and great ice formations make travelling hard, and by the powers of the gods, these places are unexplored

### Periplous of the Erythraean Sea

Περίπλους τῆς Ἐρυθρᾶς Θαλάσσης

1st century AD

Beyond these places, the unexplored ocean curves around towards the west and mingles with the western sea



Coin with Roman ship  
c. 206-210 CE



Coin with Indian ship  
2nd century CE

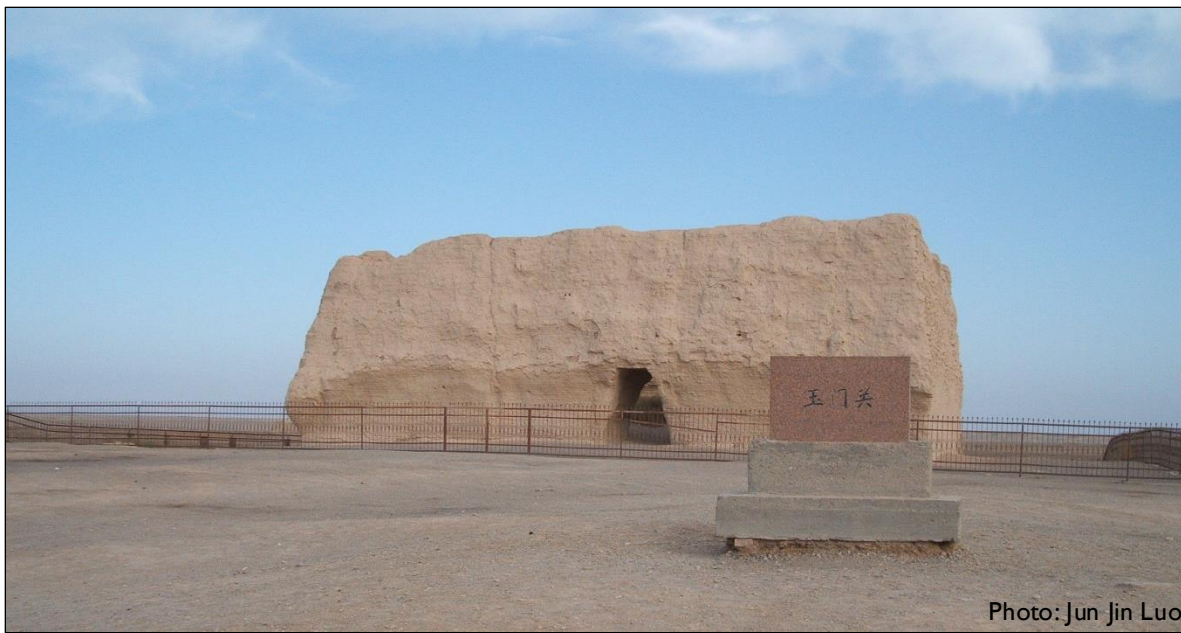
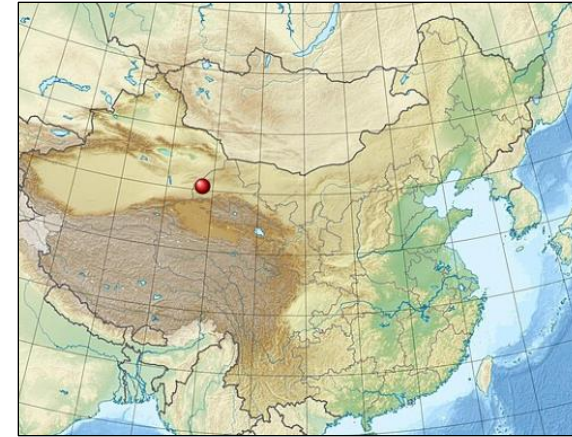


Photo: Jun Jin Luo

## Yumen Pass, Dunhuang



## Textiles and gold camel discovered in Xinjiang (Han Period)



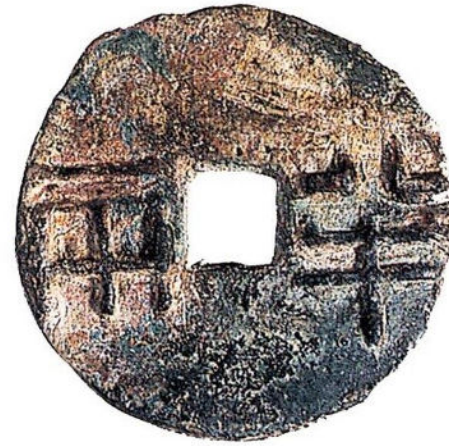
Zhongguo Lishi Bowuguan, *Tianshan gudao dongxi feng: Xinjiang Sichou zhi lu wenwu te ji* (Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 2002).



Silver denarius of Augustus, 15-13 BCE



Gold aureus of Marcus Aurelius, 161 CE



Western Han *banliang* coin



Western Han *wuzhu* coin  
and coin mold



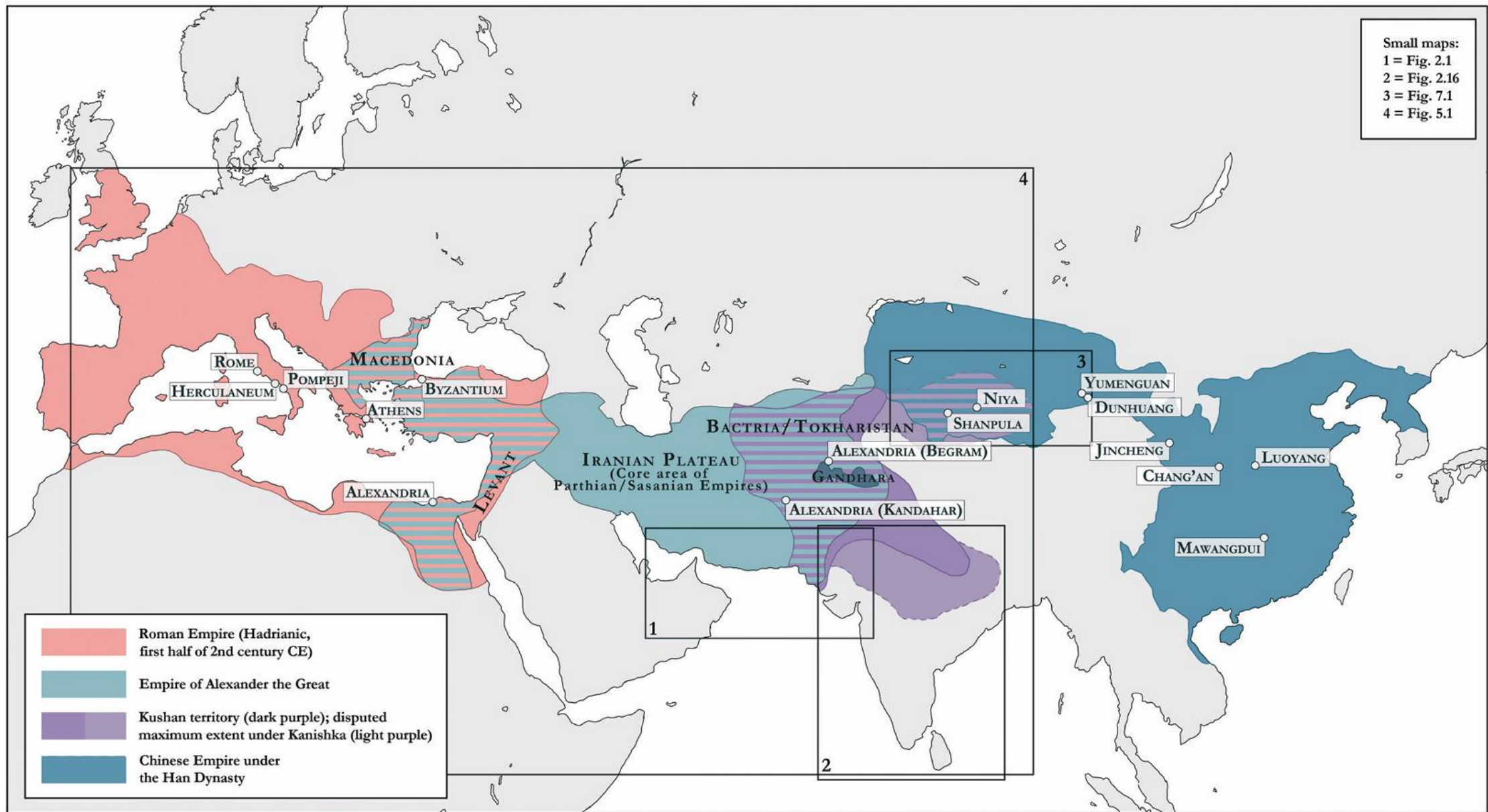


Bilingual Sino-Kharosthi coin from Khotan  
British Museum

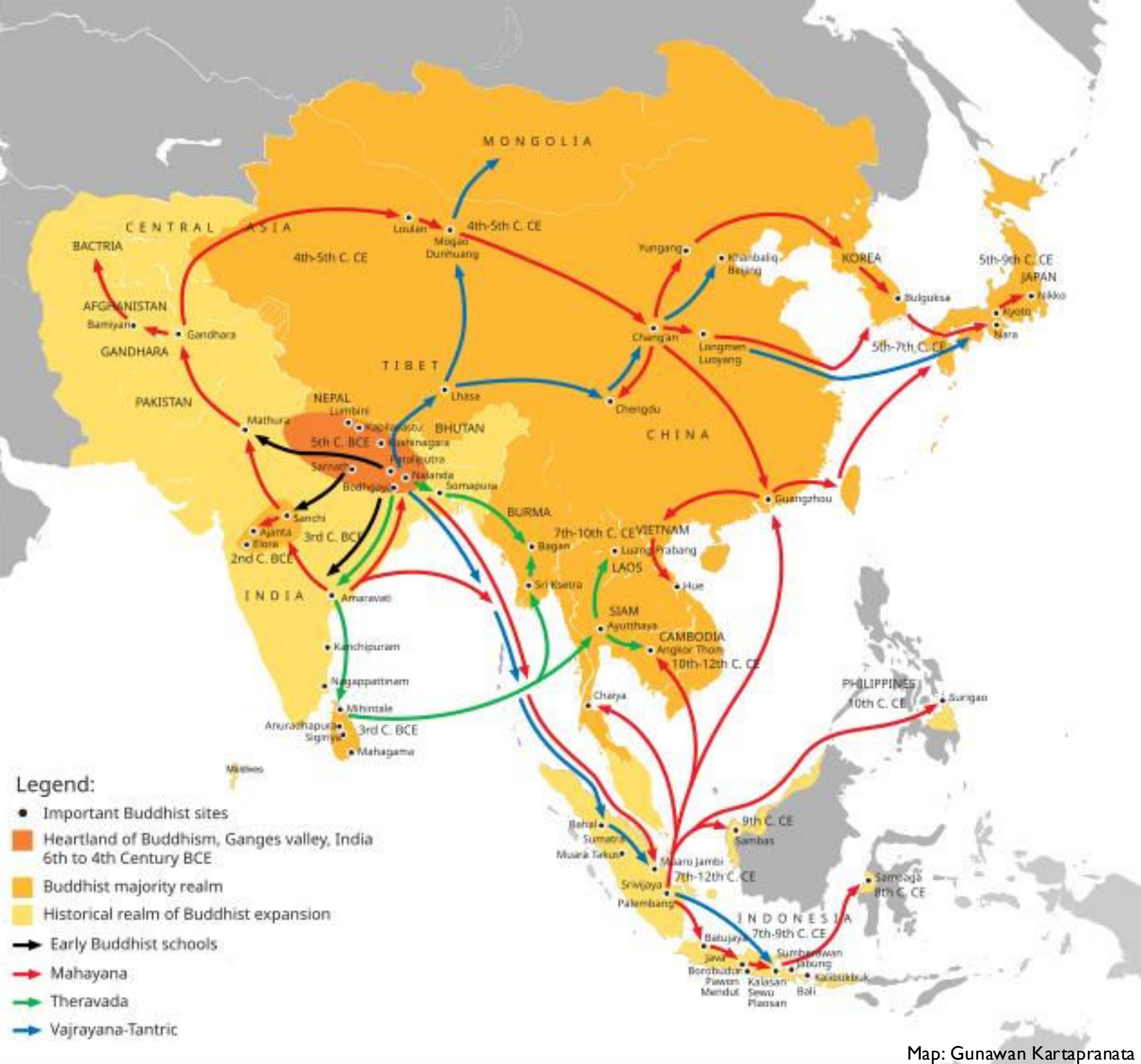


Bilingual Greek-Kharosthi coin  
of Kushan ruler Kujula Kadphises (c. 50-90 CE)  
American Numismatic Society





General map showing approximately the empires, territories and major cities mentioned in the volume along and around the Silk Roads (map by Berit Hildebrandt, with the kind support of Kasper Grønlund Evers and Lillian Lan-ying Tseng, drawing: Sidsel Frisch).



Buddha wall painting  
Kaladun Site no. 61, Khotan  
c. 220-420 CE

Zhongguo Lishi Bowuguan, *Tianshan gudao dongxi feng: Xinjiang Sichou zhi lu wenwu te ji* (Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2002).



Silk funerary banner  
Mawangdui Tomb No. 1  
(Lady Dai's Tomb)  
2nd century BCE

Lady Dai and attendants



Stone relief of mythical deities and creatures  
Wu Liang Shrine  
2nd century CE

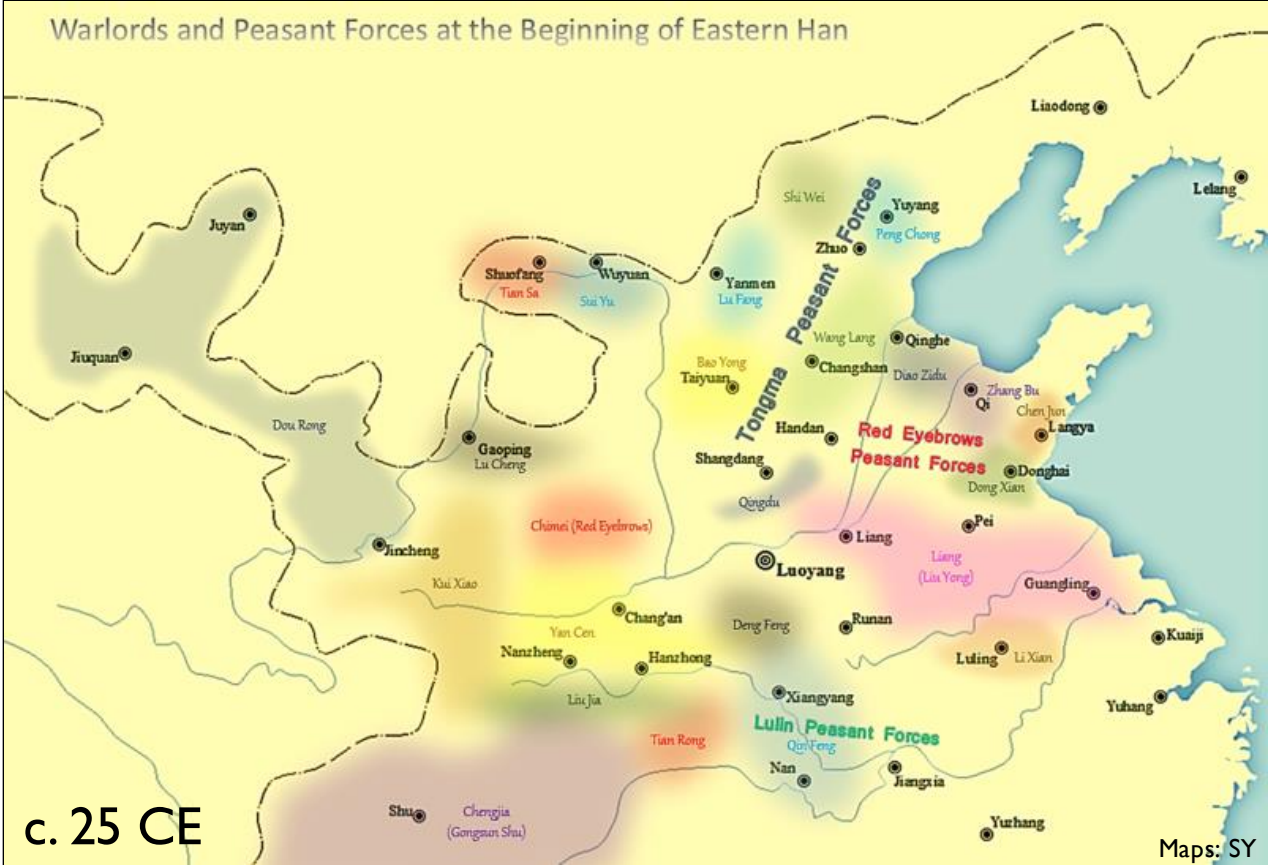


9th century CE depiction of Emperor Constantine's dream  
before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (312 CE)



Wall painting with Christian symbols  
Roman Villa at Lullingstone, Kent  
4th century CE

Warlords and Peasant Forces at the Beginning of Eastern Han



c. 25 CE

Maps: SY

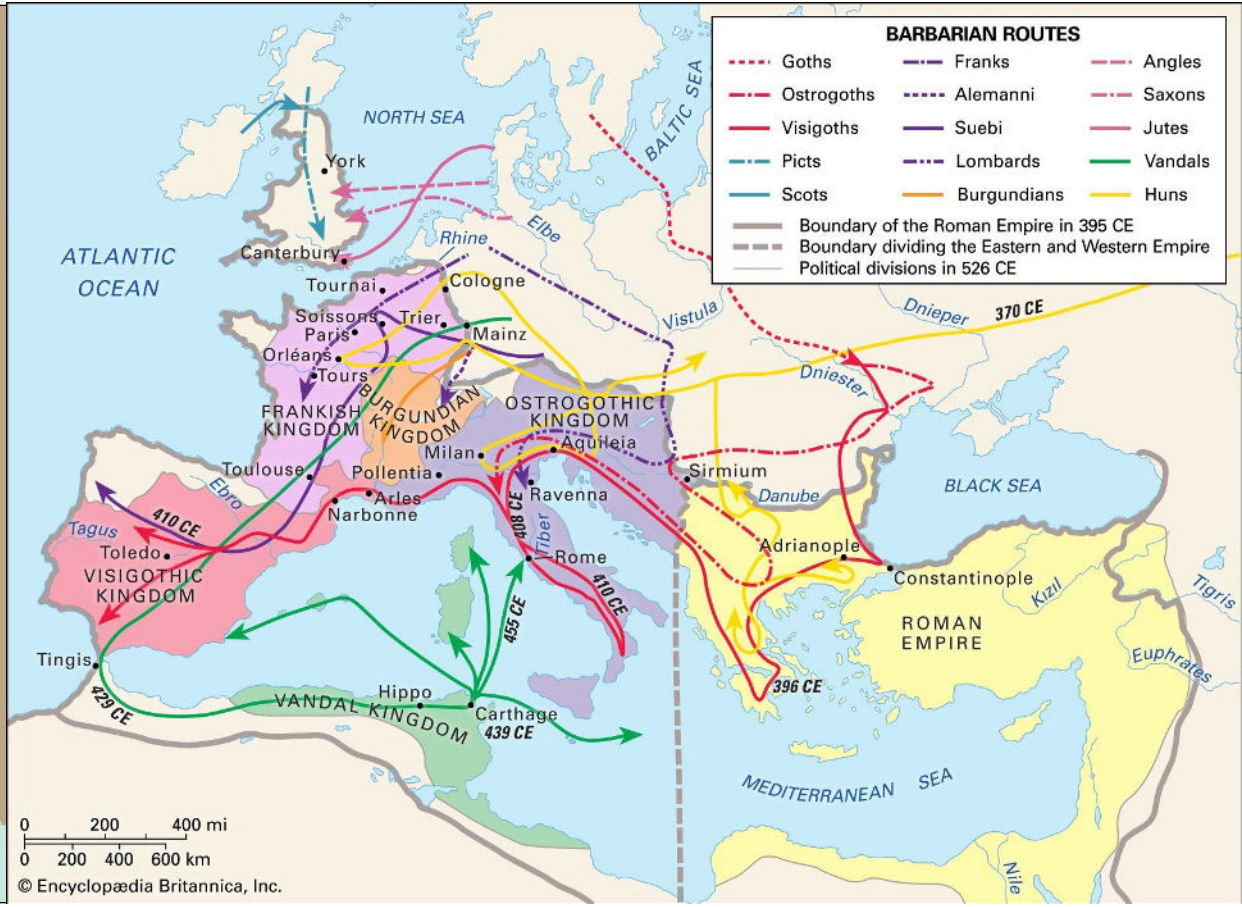


c. 190 CE

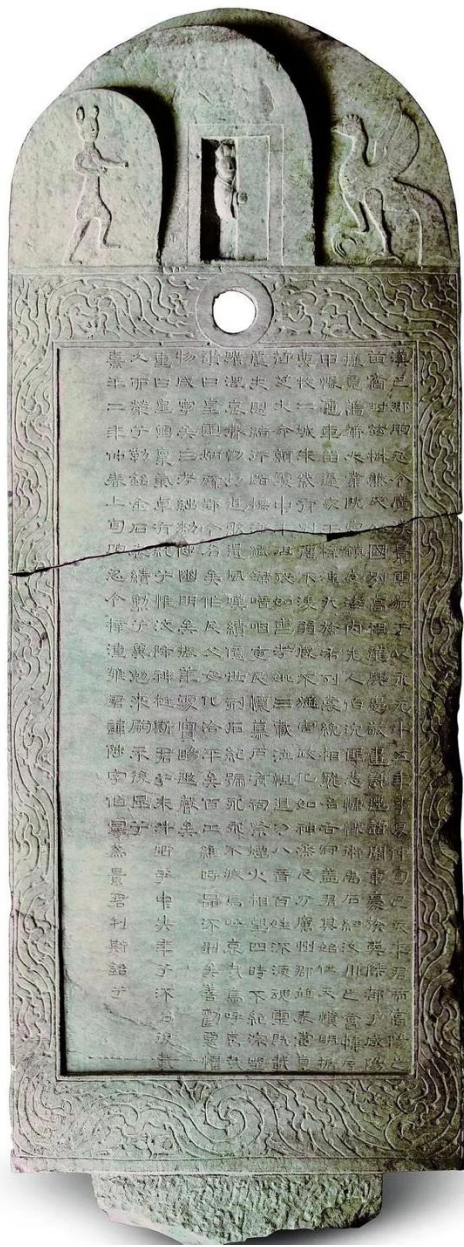
Warlords in the End of Han Dynasty



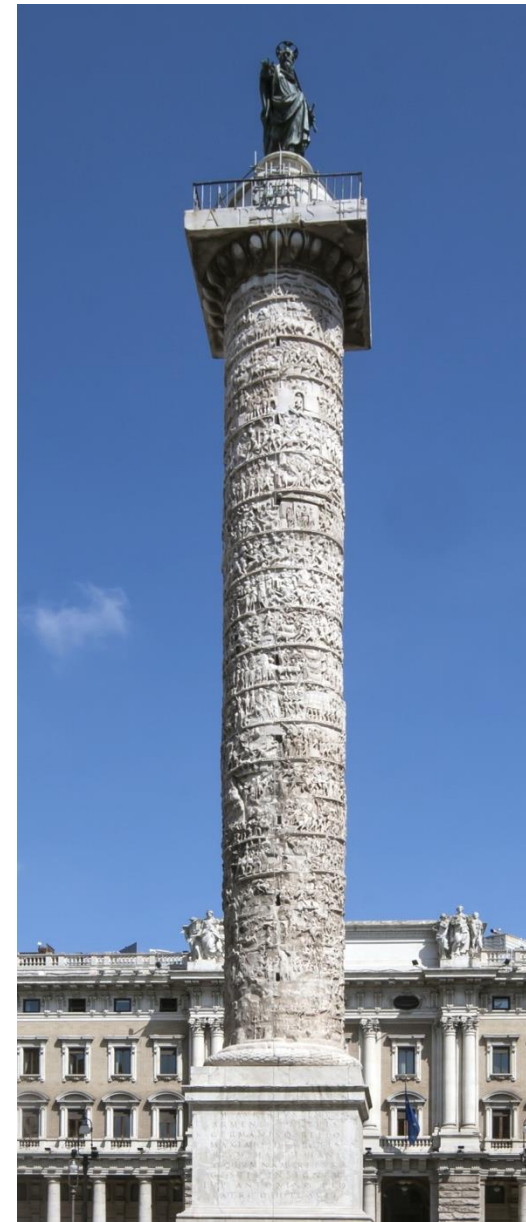
Emperors of the Third Century CE Crisis



Migrations of the Later Roman Empire



Stele for Magistrate Jing Yun (173 CE)



Column of Marcus Aurelius (193 CE)