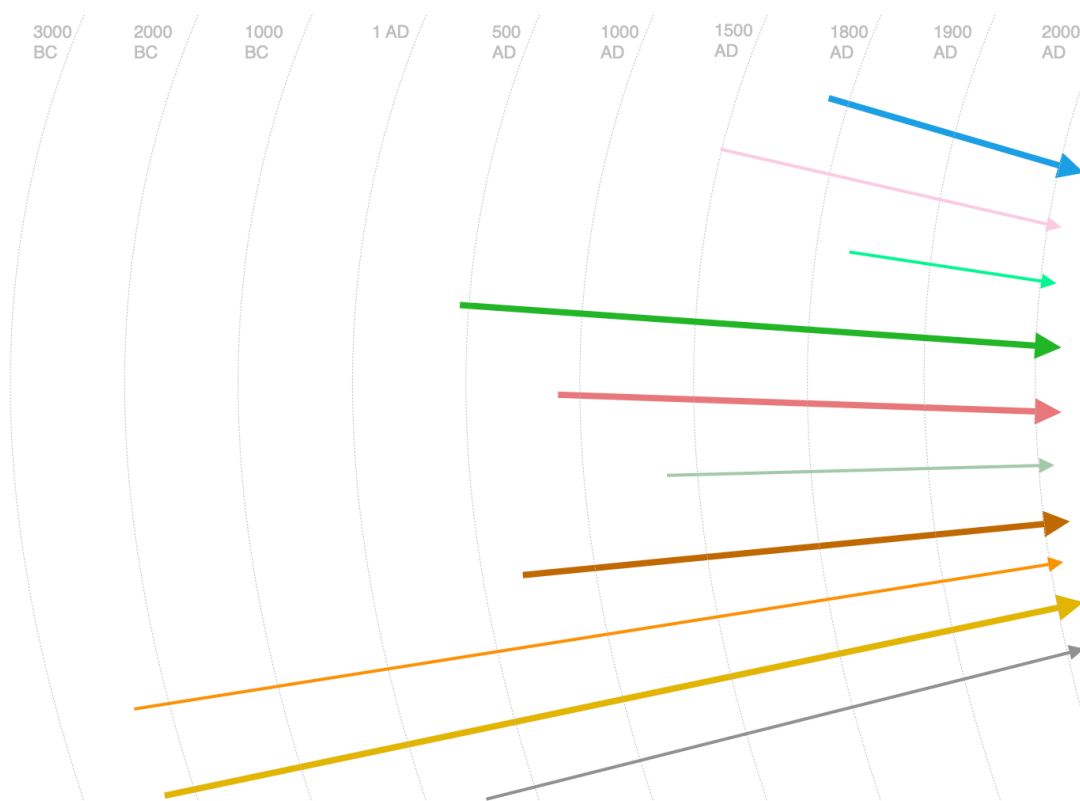


AMERICA AND ITS NEIGHBORS

I. Western Civilization

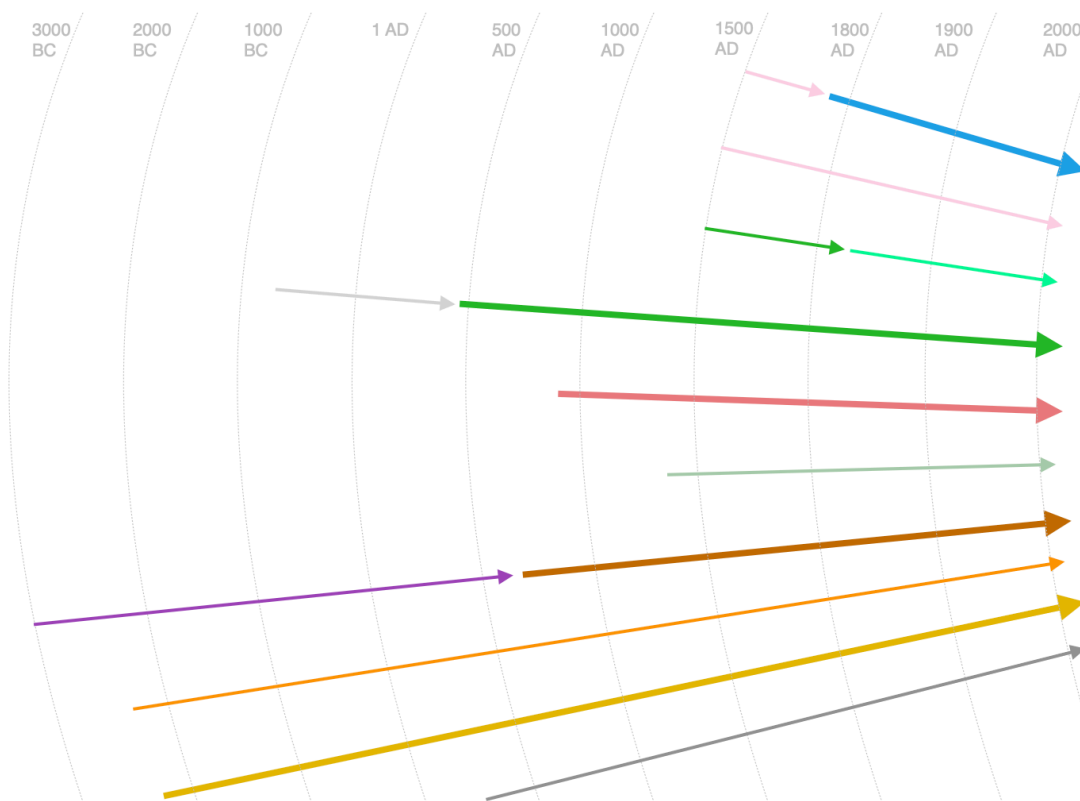
A. A Family of Four

1. Earlier this year, we saw how helpful it is to organize the world into “cultural blocks,” of which five are major nations—the United States, China, Russia, India, and Japan—and five are groups of related cultures—the European Union, the Islamic world, the Anglosphere, the Ibersphere, and Sub-Saharan Africa.
2. In keeping with the color scheme used on our map from page 2 of the notes, it is possible to plot the histories of the ten major cultural blocks on a timeline such as follows:



3. From top to bottom, the order on this diagram is: the United States, the Anglosphere, the Ibersphere, Europe, Russia, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Islamic world, India, China, and Japan.
4. The length of the lines, in keeping with the dates indicated at the top, shows how long the story of a particular cultural block is—the most ancient being China and India, the youngest being America and the Ibersphere.

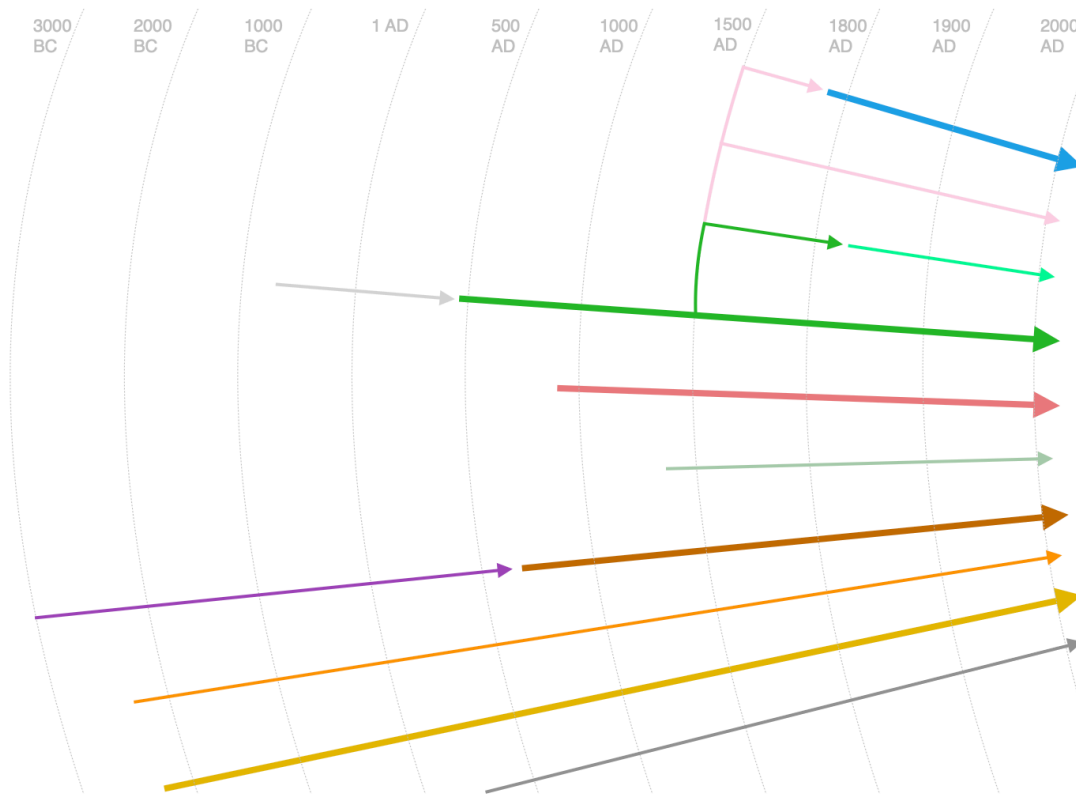
5. The thickness of the lines on the diagram is used to show the difference between *cardinal* cultures (thicker) and major cultures (thinner).
6. One final element worth mentioning is the convergence of the lines in the diagram. The purpose of diagraming this way is to relate the fact that, because of what is called “globalization,” the cultures of the world have been gradually getting “closer” together, at least in the sense that they have more and more interactions over time—especially in modern history.
7. Building on this basic representation, we can also add lines to represent the background stories of the cultures that have one.



7. What this view captures is the fact that America was once part of the British Empire, that the Iberosphere was once a set of colonies belonging to Europe (Spain & Portugal in particular), that European civilization was preceded by Greco-Roman civilization (light gray) and the Islamic culture was preceded by a cluster of cultures including ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia and Israel (grouped together in purple).
8. To make this timeline complete, however, requires another step. It requires including a way to represent the fact that America, the Anglosphere, and the Iberosphere are all *derivative* cultures. They would not exist were it not for the actions of European civilization, which, starting during the period known as the *Age of Discovery*, followed

by a colonial period, took control of the Americas and of other lands (including Australia and New Zealand), thus spreading its own culture across the globe.

9. If we include the actions of European explorers, then the timeline can be improved as follows:



10. What this representation allows us to see is that within the world’s configuration of ten major cultures, four of them are connected to a degree not exhibited by any others. They are, in effect, a family of cultures. This family, including its ancient precursors (Greece & Rome) is a historical collection known as “Western civilization.”