

A Better Place to Be- Reclaiming History for Political Theory

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Abstract:

This paper analyzes the periodization of Western history, broadly construed. It first divides the Old World (Asia, Africa, and Europe) into three macro-civilizations (or Civilizations), that are further broken down into micro-civilizations, or civilizations. The West covers the modern Middle/Near East, North Africa, Europe, and Central Asia. The East covers East Asia, including Mongolia, as well as Singapore and Vietnam. The Central Civilization covers South Asia and the rest of Southeast Asia. After making this division, the paper then breaks down Western history into basic periods, specifically for the purposes of Political Theory. Western history is broken up into nine basic periods, which form four ages, three epochs, and two eons. Ancient time is divided from Medieval-Modern time into two eons. Ancient time is then broken up into seven periods, forming three ages and two epochs, the latter group corresponding to the Bronze/Iron Age dichotomy. This system is devised specifically for Political Theory, and to a lesser extent, the rest of Political Science, in order to avoid biased from looking backwards at history, specifically those that divide the Greater Mediterranean world (a.k.a. the West) by modern religion.

Keywords:

Periodization, Political Theory, History and Politics, Theory of History, Western Civilization

I. Introduction

Periodization in History is a difficult project because it is so easy to contest. However, when viewed in the political perspective, the perspective important to Political Science, there is an objective periodization of Western Civilization. The attempt to find objective periodization, non-culturally contingent with respect to Western Civilization is part of a larger project to periodize the major civilizations of the world, particularly those of the Old World. For the purposes of this article, the goal is to define a proper periodization of the Western Civilization for Political Theory.

This article argues for a broad understanding of Western Civilization and an argument that “the West” can be objectively understood as interlocking and related categories. In other words, “the West” objectively exists as a set of different “Wests” that are historically, culturally, and politically related. The various definitions of the West are thus compatible if understand as all under one broad umbrella.

By defining “the West”, there is a risk of creating a mirror image of “the East”. However, this project, which is part of a larger project, acknowledges that “the East” does not exist like “the West” does. In fact, “the East” is composed of two Civilizations as distinct from each other as they are from “the West”. This paper, and the larger project of which it is a part, acknowledges three Civilizations of the Old World.

This paper understands that the word “civilization” can mean an individual civilization or a collection of civilizations. The author here uses capitalization and the lack of it to distinguish

between Civilizations in the macro-sense and civilizations in the micro-sense. For example, the Romans are a civilization and “the West” is a Civilization.

There are Civilizations other than the three detailed below, however, these are the only three Civilizations of the Old World. All three Civilizations need to be discussed in order to explain the author’s concept of “the West” and the periodization of said Civilization. Also, eventually, the broader project requires all three Old World Civilizations to be periodized, but this paper periodizes only “the West”.

II. Review of Literature

In order to understand the periodization and number of Civilizations in the Old World, one needs to define “Civilization”. There are many, almost infinite cultures. Some of these cultures are complex societies as understood by archaeologists (Fowler, 2014, 4802-4806). Some of these complex societies are linked to each other culturally and politically. Here the author refers to this as a complex society complex (CSC).

Some CSCs achieve writing, the building block of Political History. When a CSC gains writing, it becomes a Civilization and the individual complex societies within them become civilizations. Anthropology and other fields are useful to get this definition, but the perspective once we get there is completely different. This is what makes this Civilizational theory one of Political History and Political Science, for use with Political Theory.

In the Old World, the purview of this article, there have only ever been three Civilizations. Since writing is a necessary part of a Civilization, the number of Civilizations is delimited by the number of unique evolutions of writing. In the Old World, writing evolved independently three or four times. The Indus Valley ‘civilization’ may or may not have had real writing. If it did, then the number of totally unique, independent creations of writing out of nothing in the Old World would have been four. If it did not, then the answer would be three (Singh, 2009, in its entirety).

Civilizations (in the macro-sense) do not split up. They can form sub-Civilizations, which are large, coherent sub-units that form over time. However, Civilizations do not simply break down into totally independent Civilizations. Thus, the Western Civilization is still united by its “Westernness”, even as it evolves numerous distinct sub-Civilizations. As a result, the largest number of Civilizations in the Old World theoretically would be four; however, three is the number supported here (Singh, 2009, in its entirety).

“The West” formed from a fusion of two distinct literate civilizations- Mesopotamia and Egypt. However, this fusion happened so early on in Political History that it would be foolish to view them as distinct Civilizations that fused but rather distinct civilizations that very early on fused into one Civilization. As a result, once this fusion occurred, as early as the late Fourth-Millennium BC, there has only been one true “West”, though with an increasing number of sub-divisions (Sasson 1995, viii).

The West is a massive Civilization originating in the ancient Near East (roughly comparable to the modern Middle East). The West did not first evolve in Europe, but in Africa and Asia. It began as the region between and including ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, with cultures such as the Western Semitic complex (which led to the Hebrews, Phoenicians, Arameans, and Arabs) being a major part of the early Civilization (Sasson 1995, vi-xx).

The West expanded over time and sub-divided into sub-Civilizations, but all of these sub-Civilizations are still fundamentally Western. At some point, the Latin West arose, in contrast with the Greek East, and later also the Islamic World. The Latin West would eventually expand and colonize large portions of both the Old and New Worlds. This led to further new sub-Civilizations, including modern Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America (Sherrard 1995, in its entirety). This theory thus has major political and cultural consequences in the United States and beyond, because it questions the racial, ethnic and Civilizational categories that have been used since the 1960's, if not longer (Hasse 2021). The borders of Western Civilization have changed over time, but the ancient border settled at one point between Iran and India. (Sasson 1995, front map inside cover).

Naming the next Civilization is important. Simply calling it Indian or South Asian Civilization would be easy, but historically inaccurate. It also is not "Eastern", despite the many, many scholars, often Orientalists, who simply clumped it in with the true Eastern Civilization, which will be covered shortly. When the author was teaching World History, he began using the term "Central Civilization". However, another scholar had already used the term (Wilkinson 1987, 31-59).

The two concepts, though, are very different. The scholar thought India to be a secondary part of Central Civilization, while present author views India as central to the Central Civilization. The other author views Mesopotamia as "Central" rather than Western while the present author views Mesopotamia as central to Western Civilization. Thus, the two concepts are quite distinct. However, the influence of the first scholar on this field must be acknowledged.

That author's theory is still felt in the field and ultimately similar to the concept of Central Civilization in this article, because it posits a third, distinct Civilization between "the West" and "the East". His attempt is similar to the attempt here- to deorientalize the lands outside of the "West". However, the center of gravity politically and culturally in his model is the Middle/Near East and in this paper, it is India/South Asia. One major difference is that he says that Central Civilization engulfed the rest of the world, and his Central Civilization sounds a lot like my Western Civilization. In my version however, the Eastern Civilization and the Central Civilization were never fully engulfed by the Western Civilization (Wilkinson 1987, 31-59).

The Central Civilization did not stay in South Asia alone. It is most prominent outside of South Asia in Southeast Asia. Many authors write about the Indosphere and "Indianized" kingdoms. However, it would be better to view Southeast Asia as one or more sub-Civilizations of Central Civilization (Munoz 2007, in its entirety and Singh 2009, in its entirety).

"The East", or Eastern Civilization, is best understood as a product of Chinese political and cultural imperialism. Eastern Civilization is the product of usually one-way cultural and political demands by China. China was and is historically expansionist and the Eastern societies that have developed independently of China developed because they were lucky enough to withstand political and cultural assimilation and annexation (Hui Fang 2015, 9224-9229).

To complicate this tri-Civilizational view a little bit, some countries are clearly bi- or -tri-Civilizational themselves. Mongolia is usually viewed as "the East" but both Western and Central influences are strong there. The old script of Mongolia, which is making a comeback, has origins in the edge of Western Civilization (Central Asia), while its currently predominant script, Cyrillic, is clearly from Russia and is thus Western. Its predominant religion is Tibetan Buddhism, from the Central Civilization.

There are numerous other examples of countries that are more than mono-Civilizational. Indonesia is not misnamed, for it is both Central and Western (influenced by India and Islam). Islam is a fundamentally Western religion, no different than Judaism or Christianity. Thus, Western influence has spread not just by “Europeans” but by Muslims as well. Rather than view these bi-Civilizational and tri-Civilizational countries as hybrids of part-this, part-that, it is better to view them, for the most part, as wholly of two or more worlds (Munoz 2007, in its entirety and Harris accessed 2022).

Thus, the Western Civilization today encompasses most of the World, due to expansion and conquest by both Christian and Muslim explorers and armies. The Americas, Sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania, and Maritime Southeast Asia became part of the West in this way. Also, the rest of Africa, Europe, and much of Asia were always Western, or had no Civilization at all before Westernness. Obviously, having no Civilization has no moral consequences nor does it suggest the lack of a culture (Wilkinson 1987, 31-59, interpreted as Western rather than Central).

The West today is the sole Old World Civilization in most of the countries outside of South, Southeast, and East Asia. Eastern Civilization is confined to East Asia, Vietnam, and Singapore, while Central Civilization includes South Asia, the rest of Southeast Asia, and some countries of the Indian and Indonesian diasporas. The three Old World Civilizations and their sub-Civilizations are summarized in the below table (Wilkinson, 1987, 31-59, with my own interpretation and Binetti 2019, 39-49 and the dataset used for its formulation).

Table 1. The Three Old World Civilizations and their Sub-Civilizations			
Basic Sub-Civilization	Civilization	Primary Sub-Civilization	Secondary Sub-Civilization
Anglo-North America	Western	The Latin West	Northern Eurosphere
Latin America	Western	The Latin West	Southern Eurosphere
The Caribbean	Western	The Latin West	Northern Eurosphere
Oceania	Western	The Latin West	Northern Eurosphere
Northern Europe	Western	The Latin West	Northern Eurosphere
Southern Europe	Western	The Latin West	Southern Eurosphere
Central Europe	Western	The Latin West	Central Europe
Sub-Saharan Africa	Western	The Latin West	Post-Colonial Africa
Eastern Europe	Western	The Greek/Byzantine East	Eastern Europe
Orthodox Western Asia	Western	The Greek/Byzantine East	Orthodox Western Asia
Armenia	Western	Non-Chalcedonian East	Armenia
Christian Horn of Africa	Western	Non-Chalcedonian East	Christian Horn of Africa
Greater Somalia	Western	The Islamic World	Islamic Africa
The Swahili Coast	Western	The Islamic World	Islamic Africa
North Africa	Western	The Islamic World	Islamic Middle East and North Africa
West Africa	Western	The Islamic World	Islamic Africa
Islamic Western Asia	Western	The Islamic World	Islamic Middle East and North Africa
Central Asia	Western	The Islamic World	Central Asia
South Asia	Central	South Asia	South Asia
Southeast Asia (Indosphere)	Central	Southeast Asia	Southeast Asia
Sinosphere (East Asia and Vietnam)	Eastern	No sub-Civilizations	No sub-Civilizations

III.Result and Discussion

Traditionally, the historiography has divided Western history into three large epochs, sometimes called periods. These three epochs are familiar to just about everyone in the West-ancient, medieval, and modern (they can also be capitalized).

This paper, and its wider project, strongly take issue with this classical trichotomy. There is no equality of units here, the ancient “period” lasts thousands of years, and is much more internally diverse than either the medieval or modern periods. Also, the medieval period is in many ways closer to the modern than to the ancient period. There does not seem to much objectivity in this trichotomy.

However, discarding the ancient-medieval-modern division that has been around since at least the Renaissance is not something to taken lightly. For example, the medieval period was conceived of as a dark age between the glory days of the Romans and the Renaissance, ancient and modern, respectively. However, the Middle Ages is more than a useful “construct”, it has objective legitimacy (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1998, Machiavelli 1996, in its entirety and Machiavelli 2015, in its entirety).

The Fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the expansion of the West in 1492 and afterwards are two milestones in the transition from Medieval to Modern West. In broader terms, the fall of the last Muslim state in Western Europe, Granada, in 1492 and the rise of the very-modern Ottoman Empire are key indicators of the onset of Modernity (Hudson 2019 and Highfield 1998).

The Modern Period is often sub-divided into the Early Modern and Modern periods, and often sub-divided. However, this paper argues against sub-dividing the Modern Period. We are still dealing, on a daily basis with the events of “Early Modernity”. Thus, we are not really in a distinct period. I do not want to divide periods into sub-periods that have no relevance to the entire Western world., Instead, I working with bare-minimal, large, board periods with objectively universal significance to all of the lands within the Western world. Thus, the Modern Period begins sometime during the Renaissance events and continues to this day. 1492 is a convenient starting date, for Columbus is both blamed and credited with so much of the making of the modern western world (Highfield 1998 and Strathern 2018, 317-344).

If the Middle Ages, or Medieval Period, have an objective end, they might also have an objective beginning. There is no consensus in the historiography about when the Medieval Period starts. While, just like with the Modern Period, one exact beginning date is not possible to find objectively, a range of objectively-defensible dates is possible to find. In fact, it is possible to see in the Middle East three distinct epochs, but not in the ancient-medieval-modern trichotomy. In this view, the ancient world is divided into two broad epochs, one called Ancient and the other called Hellenistic, with the third epoch being Islamic times. The Medieval and Modern periods are brigaded together in this Islamic epoch (Pregill 2018, 3-17 and Sasson 1995, in its entirety).

The rise of Islam in the early 7th-century AD fundamentally changed the Western world. It led to fall of an independent pre-Islamic Persian/Iranian civilization and it led to the conquest of many Western lands by a new and imperialistic religion. If the Modern Period is the story of Christian imperialism and the native reactions to it, then the Medieval Period is largely the story of Muslim imperialism and the native reactions to it. Like with the Modern Period, there is no

objectively-defensible need to sub-divide the Medieval Period (Howard-Johnston 2010, 436-460 and Howard-Johnston 2010, in its entirety).

If we consider the Medieval Period to start roughly around 632, the time of the death of Muhammad and ending around 1492, we are not far off. The Medieval and Modern Periods are clearly distinct, but they also form a clear and distinct epoch, together. We could name it many names, such as the Islamic epoch, as it is seen from the Middle Eastern perspective. However, this author prefers more universalist language like the Medieval-Modern epoch or the Post-ancient epoch. The Post-ancient epoch is probably the most illustrative of the change in perspective from the traditional historiography to this approach. Traditional historians clump the older periods together into indistinct “ancient times”. Objectively, though, ancient history is more important in shaping the West than more modern times, thus “ancient time” needs to be the focus of the proper perspective of Political History and the more recent periods need to be brigaded together. Rather than an “Ancient Period” that precedes Medieval and Modern periods, these periods are post-ancient periods (Davis 1988, 43-60, Highfield 1998, Howard-Johnston, in its entirety, and Pregill 2018, 3-17 and Strathern 2018, 317-344).

However, the Post-ancient epoch can be called the Medieval-Modern epoch just as easily. The important part is that ancient time needs to be sub-divided much more than post-ancient time does. The Modern Period has only lasted roughly 530 years and the Medieval Period only lasted roughly 860 years. I call this concept “the equality of units”. The idea is to try to get each period, age and epoch to be roughly similar to each other in terms of development, but not exactly in terms of time. However, the traditional definition expects us to assume that ancient time was one period of 4000 years! This is preposterous (These numbers of extrapolated from Highfield 1998, Howard-Johnston 2010, in its entirety, Pregill 2018, 3-17, Davis 1988, 43-60, Howard-Johnston, in its entirety, and Pregill 2018, 3-17 and Strathern 2018, 317-344).

The equality of units principle is especially important here. This is the author’s commitment that periods should largely resemble each other in importance and fundamental distinctness, if not in time, and that epochs do the same. The fundamental units of Political History in terms of time are four in number. In the current author system, eons are sub-divided into epochs, which are sub-divided into ages, which are ultimately sub-divided into objectively-defensible periods that are applicable to all of Western Civilization (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1998, Geologic Time, last edited 2020 (geologic time inspired my system, but it is not an exact analogy).

These units should be defensible both from back-tracking through history and going forwards through history. So far, we have sojourned backwards, but forwards would also work. Let us continue on this journey. “Ancient time” is simply all of the time before the rise of Islam divided up the Roman and Persian worlds. The Western world was largely divided up into Roman and Persian parts, almost halves, for hundreds of years. This was the main political fact of the time from the 1st century BC until the early 7th-century AD.

The continuity of the Romans from when the Hellenistic world was first definitively partitioned into Roman and Persian (technically Parthian) spheres in the 1st-century BC after the Battle of Carrhae is clear. On the other side of the border, the Persians/Parthians/Iranians also had a clear era of continuity, in fact going back into the mid-2nd-century BC (Sarris 2011, 226-274, Encyclopaedia Iranica 2012, 525-546, and Howard-Johnston 2010, 436-460.)

Almost every other major state or people in Western Civilization had to choose sides, align with or fight with one of these two super-powers. The West was a classic bipolar system for over six hundred years. The coherency and political stability of the period is almost always overlooked or denied, because everything is seen from the micro-political rather than the macro-political or macro-historical perspective (Tobi 2017, Howard-Johnston 2010, 436-460, and Encyclopaedia Iranica 2014).

The Roman-Persian Period which set the stage for the rise of Islam itself originated from a period in which Greek political and cultural imperialism was extreme. This is the Hellenistic Period, which is wrongly ascribed to “the Ancient Epoch”. The Hellenistic Period, along with the Roman-Persian Period, makes up a larger Hellenistic Age or Hellenistic Epoch, again showing the wisdom of the Middle Eastern trichotomy of Ancient, Hellenistic, and Islamic (Medieval-Modern).

The Hellenistic Period has a clear beginning and a clear end, if only approximately. The conquest of Achaemenid Persia in the 330's BC or the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, or even soon after this, are all fine starting points. The fall of the Roman Republic or the division of the Hellenistic world after the Battle of Carrhae are both suitable endpoints for the period (Martinez-Sève 2012, 156-164 and Binetti 2016, in its entirety).

The next period going backwards across time is the Classical Period. However, the dates and content for it have changed in the current periodization scheme. The Classical Period is based on a periodization of Greece that excludes the rest of the Western world. Instead, the current periodization scheme looks at all of the classical cultures of the Greater Mediterranean. The Classical Period as here defined still ends with the rise of the Hellenistic states. However, it starts with the fall of the Assyrian Empire (Neo-Assyrians) around 612 BC. The so-called Archaic Period is now part of the Classical Period, as is the Post-Assyrian Period and all of the Achaemenid Persian Period (Boatwright 2004, in its entirety, with an emphasis on 111-190, Beaulieu 1995, 969-980, Brentjes 1995, 1001-1021, Greenewalt 1995, 1173-1184, Leichty 1995, 949-958, Roberts 2009, and Sasson 1995, in its entirety).

The Classical Period is the period in which the Western world expands to Western Europe for the first time in a thorough way, although there were advanced cultures on the edge of Western Civilization in parts of Italy before this time. This is when a lot of “Classical Antiquity” developed and where the intersection of Europe, Africa, and Asia for the first time became as dynamic as it is today. The Classical Period is an excellent concept, but it simply needed to incorporate all of the post-Early Iron Age classical cultures, not just the Greeks (Roberts 2009 and Parrott-Sheffer 2009).

The Early Iron Age clearly precedes and is related to the Classical Period, forming an epoch with it. The Early Iron Age, or more properly, the Early Iron Age Period, is easily defined as all of the time in Western history from the end of the Late Bronze Age Collapse (about 1085 BC or so) to the fall of Assyria around 612 BC.

The Early Iron Age is a well-established period, both archaeologically and historically. This period sees the expansion of Western Civilization well beyond its Bronze Age borders. Rather than being a predominantly Western Asian and Egyptian Civilization, it now became a tri-continental Civilization, including much of Europe and Africa as well as Western Asia (Hawkins and Weeden 2016, 46-91, Bondi 1999, 30-46, Sasson 1995, vi-xii, and xxvii, and Adams 1995, 775-790).

The Early Iron Age Period and the Classical Period clearly form an age together. It could be claimed that there are really just two eons of Western history, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. Archaeologically and anthropologically-speaking, this might even be correct; however, the terms the Bronze Age and the Iron Age for historical and political-scientific reasons do not correspond exactly to their uses in archaeology and anthropology. (Bryce 2012, 9-32, Cline 2014, 1-13, Middleton 2022, 186-191, and Sasson 1995, xi).

The Ancient Iron Age has the word “ancient” in it. This brings us back to the problem of “ancient time” or “antiquity”. If the Ancient Iron Age should not be brigaded with the rest of the “Iron Age”, then should we not also avoid brigading with the Bronze Age as “an ancient eon”? Also, if we do this successfully, by calling this age ancient and placing a fourth epoch before it, are not then creating a “pre-ancient” age? And if we avoid both of these problems, are we not then getting rid of the concept of “ancient history”?

Ultimately what saves us is the simple concept of degrees of antiquity, of “ancientness”. Let us simply rely of the idea of ancient, more ancient and most ancient. Thus, the Bronze Age, the Ancient Iron Age and the Hellenistic Age are all part of the Ancient Eon, but the Bronze Age is the most ancient and the Bronze Age and the Ancient Iron Age together form a more ancient epoch, the Foundational Epoch. The recent age is the Medieval-Modern (or Islamic) Age.

With this major theoretical problem resolved, we can now continue on backwards through historical time to the beginning. The Bronze Age as an age composed of three distinct periods is well established in the historiography. It is defined by the beginning of writing and the Late Bronze Age Collapse. The Late Bronze Age Period has an obvious end, but its beginning is slightly different in different regions of the Ancient Near East. The Middle Bronze Age Period is defined by the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period in Egypt and by the Isin-Larsa and Old Babylonian “periods” in Mesopotamia. The Middle Bronze Age in Mesopotamia begins at or around 2004, with the sack and fall of Ur and around 1800 BC in Egypt, with the reunification of Egypt by the 11th Dynasty (Sasson 1995, viii-ix).

The Late Bronze Age is traditionally seen as the culmination of the Bronze Age of Ancient Near Eastern Civilization, and the present author does consider it the culmination of the Bronze Age of Western Civilization (or of the Western Civilization). The Middle Bronze Age is a period of rebuilding, much like the Medieval Period in our current Age. The Early Bronze Age Period, which has been extended a little to include all of early antiquity, is the over-1000 years of the earliest foundations of Western Civilization history (Sasson 1995, viii-ix).

IV. Conclusion

Turning from the backwards-flow of history to a forward-looking perspective, the Early Bronze Age Period was the first period of Western Civilization history. It set the core foundations of the Foundational Epoch of the Ancient Eon and of course was the first period of the Bronze Age. The Old Kingdom fell over time, but Ur III died screaming. The Middle Bronze Age saw a resurgence of Western Civilization, even spreading to places like Anatolia that had seen Civilization but not as thoroughly as it would in this period. Not only did Civilization recover from the destruction at the end of the Early Bronze Age, but it began to both expand and deepen (Bryce, The Kingdom of the Hittites 2005, 8-95, Encyclopaedia Britannica 1999, Klein 1995, 843-858, and Sasson 1995, vi-ix).

The Late Bronze Age saw these processes of expansion and deepening continue and intensify. The international system of the Late Bronze Age connected three continents for the first time with writing, international politics, and economics. Writing spread beyond a narrow band of cultures and regions and the first written lingua franca- Akkadian- reached its height. However, all of this activity led to a very deep depression in terms of Western Civilization with the Late Bronze Age Collapse (Vita 2020, 355-372).

The Early Iron Age saw the rebuilding of Western Civilization and more expansion and deepening. Western Europe and North Africa west of Egypt became definite parts of the Western Civilization in this period. However, the most problematic civilization of the ancient West- the Neo-Assyrian Empire established itself in the international political vacuum of the Early Iron Age. The fall of this horrendous state around 612 BC set free many people and led to the Classical Period (Sasson 1995, x-xii).

The Classical Period saw Europe and Africa become further integrated into the tricontinental West. What had begun in the Early Bronze Age as two main clusters of complex society complexes- Egypt and Mesopotamia- and which had fused into one Western Civilization now spread to many parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia. The alphabetic system, which had first become prominent in the Early Iron Age, now became naturally predominant in many places, although it would become dominant unnaturally with the Hellenistic Conquest (Rollston 2020, 65-81).

The Ancient Iron Age ended with the Hellenistic Conquest, which led to the rise of the Hellenistic Period of the Hellenistic Age. Hellenistic imperialism went through two distinct Periods, one directed by the Greeks and Macedonians themselves, and the second by the Romans and the latter-day Persians in the Roman- Persian Period. The Roman-Persian Period ended with the Islamic Conquest and massive Islamic colonization and imperialism. This led to the Medieval Period, the beginning of the recent eon, epoch, and age, or the Medieval-Modern Age. The consequences of this singular event are still with us. Our own Modern Period however began when the “Europeans” began to break out of their once-besieged homelands.

We are still in the Modern Period, dealing with the consequences of the reaction in this period to the conquests of the preceding period. All told, we have two eons, three epochs, and four ages, divided in to the nine periods, the basic building blocks of Western historical time. The table below summarizes the Periodization of Western Civilization History.

The periodization scheme in this article is meant to help teach students at the college and perhaps at the high school level. It is meant to be objectively-defensible, common-sensical, simple to memorize, and to show the great internal diversity of the Western Civilization. It also serves as the basis of a large project of systemizing history into a rational order that obeys the equality of units and treats all cultures with the same respect. It is important to treat “European”, Hellenistic, and Islamic conquerors the same way, rather than the current fashion, which stigmatizes “modern Western” people as opposed to others. After all, they are all truly Western.

Table 2. Periodization of Western Civilization History

Period Name	Early Bronze Age (Period)	Middle Bronze Age (Period)	Late Bronze Age (Period)	Early Iron Age (Period)	Classical Period	Hellenistic Period	Roman - Persian Period	Medieval Period	Modern Period
Age	Bronze Age	Bronze Age	Bronze Age	Ancient Iron Age	Ancient Iron Age	Hellenistic Age	Hellenistic Age	Medieval-Modern (Islamic) Age	Medieval-Modern (Islamic) Age
Epoch	Foundational Epoch	Foundational Epoch	Foundational Epoch	Foundational Epoch	Foundational Epoch	Hellenistic Epoch	Hellenistic Epoch	Medieval-Modern (Islamic) Epoch	Medieval-Modern (Islamic) Epoch
Eon	Ancient Eon	Ancient Eon	Ancient Eon	Ancient Eon	Ancient Eon	Ancient Eon	Ancient Eon	Medieval-Modern (Islamic) Eon	Medieval-Modern (Islamic) Eon
Simple Name for Age	Most Ancient Time	Most Ancient Time	Most Ancient Time	More Ancient Time	More Ancient Time	Ancient Time	Ancient Time	Recent Time	Recent Time
Simple Name for Epoch	More Ancient Times	More Ancient Times	More Ancient Times	More Ancient Times	More Ancient Times	Ancient Time	Ancient Time	Recent Time	Recent Time
Simple Name for Eon	Ancient Time	Ancient Times	Ancient Times	Ancient Times	Ancient Times	Ancient Times	Ancient Times	Recent Times	Recent Times
Rough Time-Span	about 3300 BC-2004 BC (around 1300 years)	2004 BC-1520 BC (484 years)	1520 BC-1085 BC (425 years)	1085 BC-612 BC (473 years)	612 BC-322 BC (290 years)	322 BC-31 BC (289 years)	31 BC-632 AD (662 years)	632 AD-1492 AD (860 years)	1492 AD-today (530 years so far)

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