Jared Diamond: Explaining European Advantages

Why were a few hundred Spaniards under Cortez and Pizarro able to conquer the two largest empires in the Americas (the Aztecs and the Incas)?

FIRST, GIVE ME THE PROXIMATE FACTORS . . .

GUNS GERMS AND STEEL

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OK, Why did the Spaniards have the proximate advantages?

See Jared Diamond's "ULTIMATE FACTORS"

What were they?

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-Landmass

-Animal and plant species available for domestication

-Axis argument

-Domestication of plants first happened where?

-Domestication of animals first happened where?

-How did plant and animal domestication contribute to the Proximate factors we've discussed? That is . . . How did the Agriculture and domestic animals lead to guns, germs, and steel?

GUNS GERMS AND STEEL

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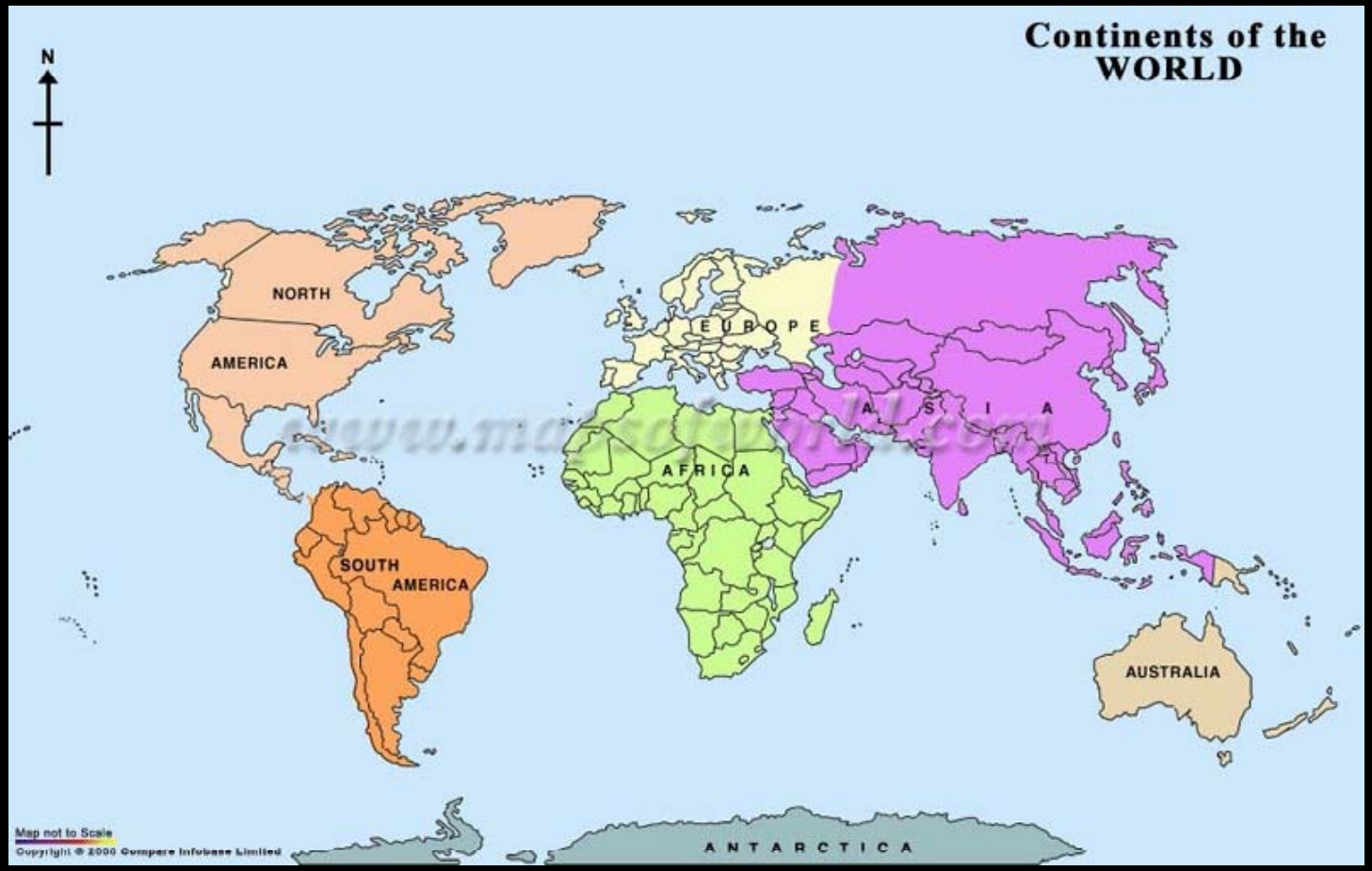

Landmass

Plants and animals available for domestication

GUNS GERMS AND STEEL

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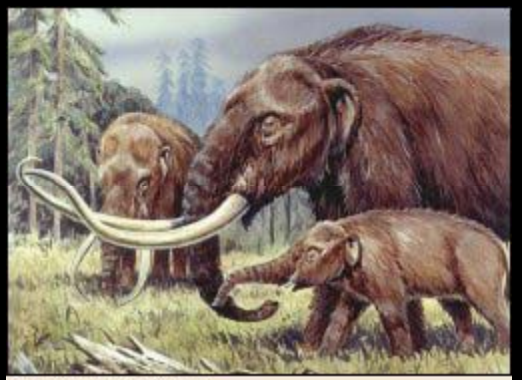
Giant armadillo


Saber-toothed tiger


Cave bear


Giant paleo bison


Toxodon, rhinoceros-like mammal


American mastodon

Few animals available for domestication in the Americas because of pleistocene die off

What does it take to domesticate an animal?

See Diamond, page 4.

Domestic Animals –

What do they contribute to Human societies?

TABLE 11.1 Deadly Gifts from Our Animal Friends

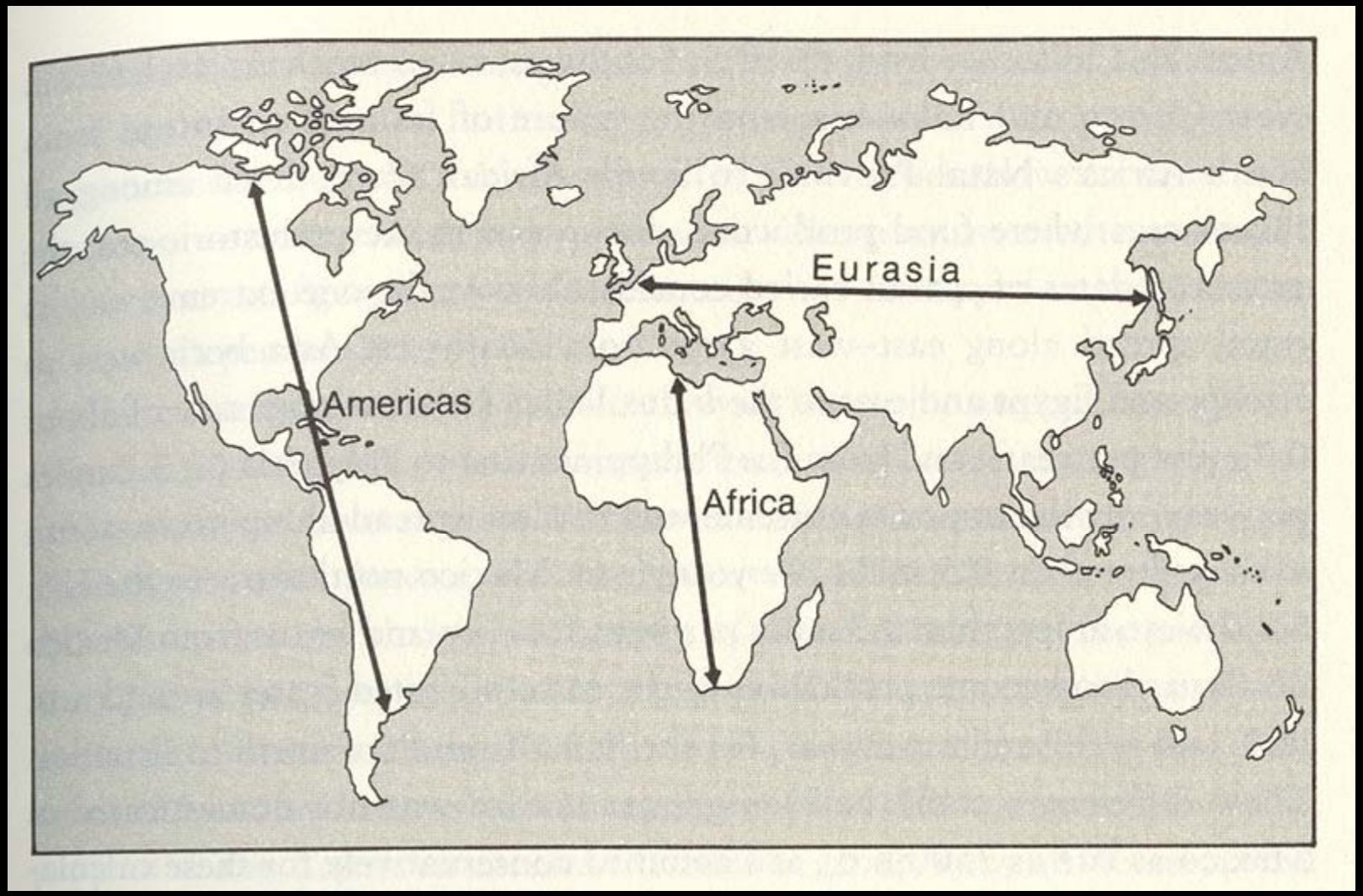
Human Disease	*Animal with Most Closely Related Pathogen*
Measles	cattle (rinderpest)
Tuberculosis	cattle
Smallpox	cattle (cowpox) or other livestock with related pox viruses
Flu	pigs and ducks
Pertussis	pigs, dogs
Falciparum malaria	birds (chickens and ducks?)

TABLE 18.1 Historical Trajectories of Eurasia and the Americas

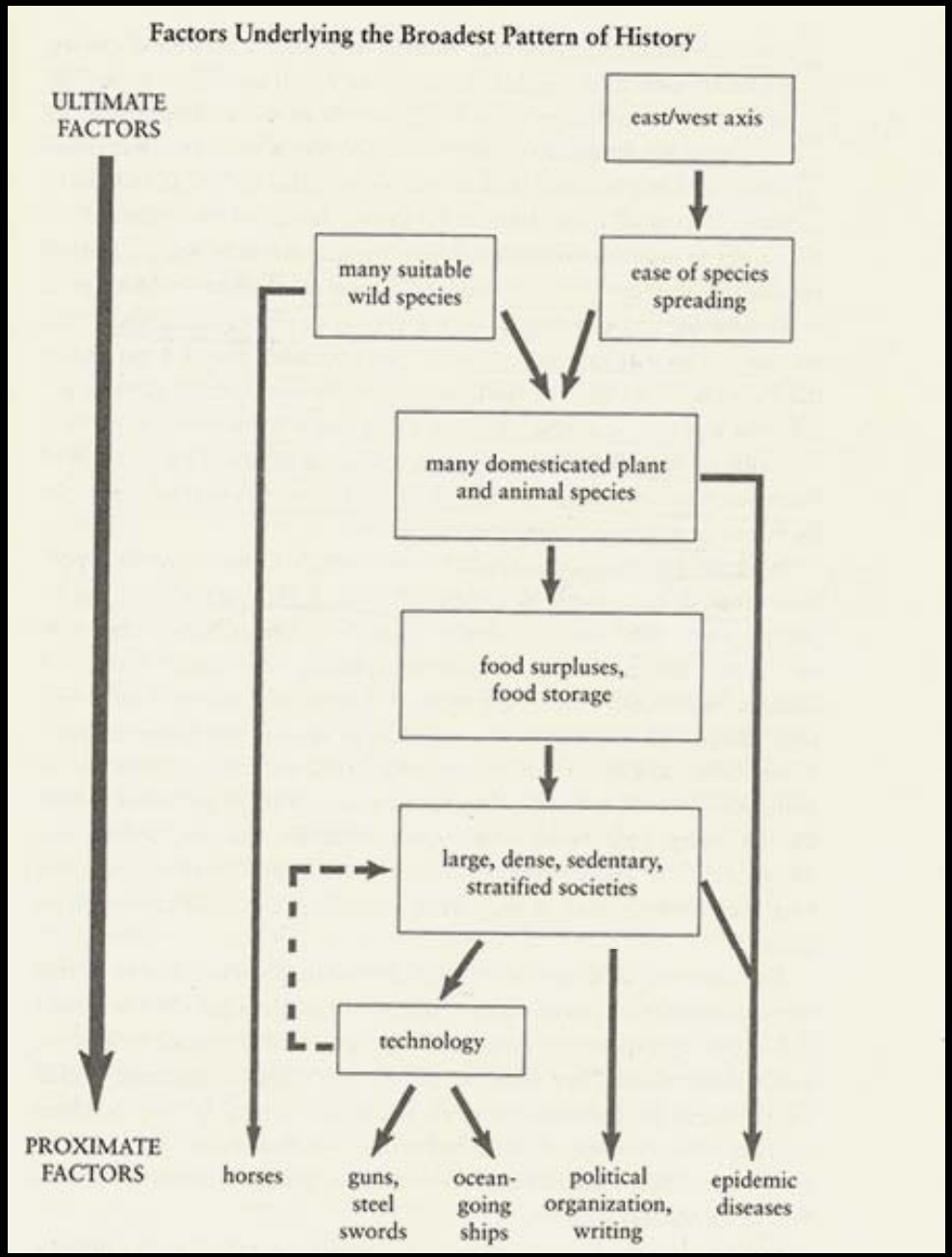
Approximate Date of Adoption	*Eurasia*			*Native America*			
	Fertile Crescent	China	England	Andes	Amazonia	Mesoamerica	Eastern U.S.
Plant domestication	8500 B.C.	by 7500 B.C.	3500 B.C.	by 3000 B.C.	3000 B.C.	by 3000 B.C.	2500 B.C.
Animal domestication	8000 B.C.	by 7500 B.C.	3500 B.C.	3500 B.C.	?	500 B.C.	—
Pottery	7000 B.C.	by 7500 B.C.	3500 B.C.	3100–1800 B.C.	6000 B.C.	1500 B.C.	2500 B.C.
Villages	9000 B.C.	by 7500 B.C.	3000 B.C.	3100–1800 B.C.	6000 B.C.	1500 B.C.	500 B.C.
Chiefdoms	5500 B.C.	4000 B.C.	2500 B.C.	by 1500 B.C.	A.D. 1	1500 B.C.	200 B.C.
Widespread metal tools or artifacts (copper and/or bronze)	4000 B.C.	2000 B.C.	2000 B.C.	A.D. 1000	—	—	—
States	3700 B.C.	2000 B.C.	500 A.D.	A.D. 1	—	300 B.C.	—
Writing	3200 B.C.	by 1300 B.C.	A.D. 43	—	—	600 B.C.	—
Widespread iron tools	900 B.C.	500 B.C.	650 B.C.	—	—	—	—

This table gives approximate dates of widespread adoption of significant developments in three Eurasian and four Native American areas. Dates for animal domestication neglect dogs, which were domesticated earlier than food-producing animals in both Eurasia and the Americas. Chiefdoms are inferred from archaeological evidence, such as ranked burials, architecture, and settlement patterns. The table greatly simplifies a complex mass of historical facts: see the text for some of the many important caveats.

Time of Domestication



Axis argument


Factors Underlying the Broadest Pattern of History
ULTIMATE FACTORS
east/west axis
many suitable wild species
ease of species spreading
many domesticated plant and animal species
food surpluses, food storage
large, dense, sedentary, stratified societies
technology
PROXIMATE FACTORS
horses
guns, steel swords
ocean-going ships
political organization, writing
epidemic diseases