

The Power Configurations of the Central Civilization/ World System in the Twelfth Century

DAVID WILKINSON
Department of Political Science
University of California, Los Angeles
dow@ucla.edu

ABSTRACT

This paper is the fifteenth in a series in which the political careers of civilizations/world systems receive snapshot codings of their overall power structures at feasible intervals. The narratives are produced by collating histories with large frames of reference. The codings are done using a nominal variable, polarity, with seven available values: nonpolarity, multipolarity, tripolarity, bipolarity, (nonhegemonic) unipolarity, hegemony and empire. Previous articles in the series have examined the Indic system 550 BC-AD 1800, the Far Eastern 1025 BC – AD 1850, the Southwest Asian c 2700 – 1500 BC, the Northeast African c. 2625-1500 BC. The Northeast African and Southwest Asian systems and sequences merged c. 1500 BC to form the Central system. A previous article has coded this system from 1500 BC to 700 BC, and previous papers have examined the system from AD 1200 to date. In the current paper, the Central system's power structure is coded at 10-year intervals 1100-1200.

The century is entirely multipolar, although there is significant turnover among actors and churning of borders.

The Power Configurations of the Central Civilization/ World System in the Twelfth Century

This paper is the fifteenth in a series in which the political careers of civilizations/world systems receive snapshot codings of their overall power structures at feasible intervals. The narratives are produced by collating histories with large frames of reference. The codings are done using a nominal variable, polarity, with seven available values: nonpolarity, multipolarity, tripolarity, bipolarity, (nonhegemonic) unipolarity, hegemony and empire. Previous articles in the series have examined the Indic system 550 BC-AD 1800, the Far Eastern 1025 BC – AD 1850, the Southwest Asian c 2700 – 1500 BC, the Northeast African c. 2625-1500 BC. The Northeast African and Southwest Asian systems and sequences merged c. 1500 BC to form the Central system. A previous article has coded this system from 1500 BC to 700 BC (Wilkinson, 2004), and previous papers have examined the system from AD 1200 to date. In the current paper, the Central system's power structure is coded at 10-year intervals 1100-1200. The century is entirely multipolar.

This paper continues work in the making and analysis of data sequences for the power structures of world systems which has been previously published or presented to WHS sessions at ISA. The concept of the civilization/world system as fundamentally a politico-military network of cities (hence also a “civilization”), containing a plurality of cultures, polities and “identities,” and contained in a wider, more loosely linked world-economy or “oikumene,” has been previously developed (1992, 1993) and will not be elaborated here. Similarly, the “Central” world system, the specific target of this study, has been elsewhere (1987) identified and bounded, and thereby distinguished from its neighbors (with which it converged and merged in the modern era), such as the West African, East Asian, Indic and other world system; accordingly, only a brief discussion of boundary-drawing and of the 12th century boundaries of the Central system will be provided here

SPATIAL BOUNDARIES OF THE CENTRAL CIVILIZATION/WORLD SYSTEM DURING THE 12TH CENTURY

For the purposes of power structure analysis, which necessarily focuses upon politico-military networks (PMNs) and the interactions of the Powers therein, the spatial boundaries of a “world system” must be determined by the intensity of politico-military interactions between nodal points. Given that we begin examination of a PMN at the western fringe of the northwest sector of the continental Old World (e.g. Britain, France, Iberia, Morocco), it will readily be seen when we construct (below) a narrative of politico-military transactions that in the 12th century all of “Europe” --the northern fringe (Norway, Sweden, the Baltic lands), Central Europe, Italy, Eastern Europe with the Slavic lands, the Balkans—is part of the same system. So are North Africa and Egypt, Anatolia and Syria, the Caucasus, Mesopotamia, northern Arabia, Iran, and even western Central Asia east of the Caspian Sea (spoken of here as the “East End” of the Central system during the period under study).

THE CODING PROCESS

Power configurations in the Central system were coded at 10-year intervals from AD 1100 to 1200. A narrative of political-power behavior was first constructed, and broken down by decades, so that the information provided for each decade describes such power behavior during that time period, and implies the coding, or change of coding, of the systemwide structure of power at the end of the decade; the coding applies, not to the entire decade, but to the single year by which it is dated.

The codings employed were: nonpolarity, multipolarity, tripolarity, bipolarity, unipolarity (non-hegemonic), hegemony, and empire. A "nonpolarity" coding would be rejected for any period in which no "great power" behavior is detected. An "empire" coding is rejected for any period in which the vast majority of the system's territory and population is not under the control of a single centralized state. The historical narratives of great power interaction provide the evidence for distinguishing the other five "intermediate" codings of multipolarity, tripolarity, bipolarity, unipolarity and hegemony. A "hegemonic" coding would be produced by e.g. a single state making a claim that the rest acknowledged its supremacy, but only if such a solitary claim were combined with tributary, placatory, submissive, followership behaviors on the part of other states, especially former great powers. Where two or more states assert and evince such spheres of influence, of comparable dimensions, bipolar, tripolar and multipolar codings are appropriate, depending upon the numbers of such states and spheres. Evidence of non-hegemonic unipolarity would be found where e.g. only a single state makes supremacy claims, and manages to extend its sphere of influence disproportionately to that of any other state, but its claims are nonetheless resisted or ignored by many other states. Even without any explicit diplomatic or monumental claim, the recorded sphere and results of politico-military operations provides significant evidence of the relative status of states at various moments in the system's history.

States become relevant to the power-structure coding process when they appear in the histories, ordinarily first in the histories of already established great powers, especially their neighbors, and cease to be relevant when they disappear from such histories, even their own. This is especially true of the "great powers" upon whose existence and relations the "intermediate" codings most depend.

The general procedure adopted in this section is to provide a decade by decade historical recapitulation of the power politics of the Central world system (wars, domination, rivalry, rebellion). This narrative is used to derive a coding for the system's power structure at intervals of a decade.

THE FIELD OF ACTION AND SYSTEM STRUCTURE OF THE CENTRAL SYSTEM IN AD 1100



(T.A. Lessman; not to scale)

Numbered Countries	
1. Navarre	26. Unknown
2. Aragon	27. Zeta (Montenegro)
3. Saragossa	28. Rashka (Serbia)
4. Valencia	29. Perejaslawl
5. Anjou	30. Kartli
6. Flanders	31. Dzoragets
7. Blois	32. Kanzag
8. Gwynedd	33. Zangezour
9. Deheubarth	34. Ani
10. Leinster	35. Kars
11. Meath	36. Erzerum
12. Oriel	37. Erzincan
13. Uliad	38. Edessa
14. Amalfi	39. Antioch
15. Venice	40. Jerusalem
16. Zeitz	41. Sassun
17. Meissen	42. Shah Armen
18. Lusatia	43. Moks
19. North	
20. Abodrites	
21. Liunians	
22. Pomerania	
23. Pomerelia	
24. Bosnia	
25. Ragusa	

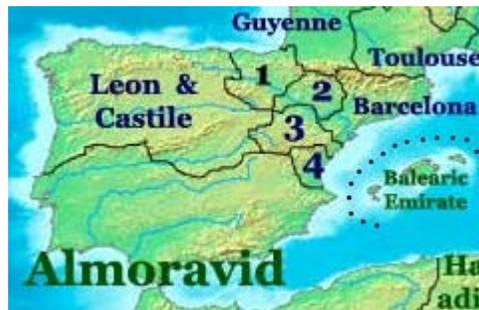
AD 1100 is in two ways idiosyncratic. There is a remarkable number of small powers worth mentioning because a few (Aragon, Venice, Serbia) will rise to greater stature, while many others will become targets of expansion or objects of contention (e.g. the Anatolian emirates and Levantine Crusader states). And there are a fair number of large states which will pass through rapid cycles of strength and weakness, into and out of great power status, by reason of intermittent paralysis caused by succession struggles and civil strife.

The Small Powers

Following are the small powers that are numbered countries in the AD 1100 map:

Iberia:

1. Navarre 2. Aragon 3. Saragossa 4. Valencia



France, Netherlands, Britain, Ireland:

5. Anjou 6. Flanders 7. Blois 8. Gwynedd 9. Deheubarth
10. Leinster 11. Meath 12. Oriel 13. Uliad



Italy and the Balkans:

14. Amalfi 15. Venice 24. Bosnia 25. Ragusa 26. Name unknown
27. Zeta (Montenegro) 28. Rashka (Serbia)



Germano-Polish Borderlands:

16. Zeitz 17. Meissen 18. Lusatia 19. Nordmark
20. Abodrites 21. Liunians 22. Pomerania 23. Pomerelia



Russia:

29. Peryaslavl (not shown on a small map)

Anatolia-Caucasia:

30. Kartliu 31. Dzoragets 32. Kanzag 33. Zangezur 34. Ani
35. Kars 36. Erzerum 37. Erzincan 41. Sassun 42. Shah Armen
43. Moks

Levant Crusader States:

38. Edessa 39. Antioch 40. Jerusalem



The Anatolian, Caucasian and Levantine states were revolted or Crusader-conquered fragments of the decaying Great Seljuk Empire.

The (Occasionally) Great Powers

The states of larger extent in 1100 may be styled “occasionally” or “intermittently” Great Powers.” They were prone to civil strife that, intermittently, weakened them as powers in the Central system. More or less in order, East to West, the larger states of 1100 that were internationally capable were: the (Great) **Seljuk Sultanate, Cumania, Volga Bulgaria**, the **Byzantine** (aka “Roman”) **Empire, Hungary, León & Castile**, and the **Almoravid Empire**. As of 1100, in eclipse as powers were the **Kara-Khanid Khanate**, the decentralizing Great principedom of **Kievan Rus’**, **Poland**, the Fatimid Caliphate of **Egypt**, the “**Holy Roman**” (**German**) **Empire, France and England**. On the rise, but not yet a great power, was Norman **Sicily**.

The Western branch of the Turkish-Muslim **Kara-Khanid Khanate** had been brought under the control of the Seljuk state toward the end of the 11th century.

The Muslim **Seljuk Turkish Sultanate**, which in 1092 had stretched from Anatolia to Transoxiana, was divided that year, on the death of Malik-Shah I, into a number of pieces, the larger being the Eastern Sultanate of Khorasan or Merv, the Sultanate of Baghdad, and the Sultanate of Rum, in central Anatolia. There emerged also a chaos of emirates and beyliks, the most notable being the Danishmendids, the emirates of Damascus and Aleppo, and the beylik of Mosul. The Crusader states of Edessa, Antioch and Jerusalem had also been established during the Seljuk chaos, and an Armenian barony had grown into the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia (Lesser Armenia).

Cumania, the Cuman-Kipchak confederation of the nomad tribes of the westernmost steppes, lay between today’s countries of Kazakhstan and Romania, and generally lacked political cohesion except for raiding expeditions. Nevertheless, the disunited Cumans were relentless and formidable enemies to all the neighbors, and occasionally useful allies to some.

North of Cumania lay **Volga Bulgaria**, an Islamic state with a populous capital at Bolghar, supported as a mainstay of trade with China, Baghdad, Constantinople and, Russia and the Vikings.

Northeast of Cumania and west of Volga Bulgaria were the **Russian** principalities—Novgorod, Rostov-Suzdal, Chernigov, Smolensk, Polotsk, Pereyaslav, Galicia—all more or less under the nominal leadership of Sviatopolk II, Grand Prince of Kiev..

West of the Russian principalities, the kingless Kingdom of **Poland** was in a process of division between its Duke and his two sons.

To Poland’s south, the Kingdom of **Hungary** was in relatively good order under king Coloman, but a third of the kingdom was in appanage to his brother Álmos, a situation that would soon be nullified.

West of Seljuk Anatolia lay the **Byzantine Empire**, under the capable Alexius I Comnenus, who had cooperated sufficiently with the Crusaders of the First Crusade to recover territories in western and southern Anatolia that had been lost to the Seljuks in the late 11th century.

The Shi'ite Muslim Fatimid Caliphate of **Egypt**, once possessor of Palestine, Syria, Libya, Tunisia and Sicily, had by 1100 lost all to independence or to Normans and Crusaders, and lay paralyzed by a dynastic succession struggle that had become sectarianized as well.

Emperor Henry IV of the **German Empire** was nearing the end of an ambitious reign that had provoked or faced internal chaos: power struggles with sons who wished to succeed him prematurely, with popes resentful of his control over the German church, with Italian towns, and with anti-kings.

Normans of the d'Hauteville family had by 1100 seized **Sicily**, as well as Apulia and Capua in southern Italy, and was pressing on the nominally Byzantine Duchy of Naples.

Philip I Capet was "King of the Franks" in **France**, and mainly concerned with rebellious vassals.

In 1100, William II Rufus, Norman King of **England**, was shot dead with an arrow, under circumstances never clarified, and succeeded by his brother Henry I, who would spend the next twenty years struggling to control England and Normandy against challenges by his brother Robert, Robert's son William Clito, and the Continental rulers of France, Flanders and Anjou.

Alfonso VI had united the kingdoms of León & **Castile**, ruled Galicia as well, and had absorbed the **taifa** of Toledo, one of the 33 independent fragments that succeeded the former Caliphate of Cordoba. The survivors had called for help, and received it from the Almoravids.

In the Iberian Peninsula and Morocco, a strong **Almoravid Empire** under Emir Yusuf ibn Tashfin had, especially since 1090, acquired control of Muslim-ruled southern Iberia, Morocco, Western Sahara, Mauritania and Western Algeria, and had temporarily halted the Reconquista of Spain by the Christian kingdoms of northern Iberia such as Alfonso's León & Castile.

The Occasions and Failures of Great-Powerdom

The Western **Kara-Khanid Khanate** became a vassal of invading Kara-Khitai in 1141 after being defeated at Khojand in Fergana on the Jaxartes in 1137 and at Qatwan in 1141; it was not a great power in the 12th century.

The **Seljuk Turkish Sultanate** reunified much of its former eastern territory under Ahmed Sanjar c. 1119, but was seriously weakened by the Kara-Khitai and Qatwan in 1141 and destroyed by a tribal rebellion in 1153.

Throughout the century **Cuman** elements raided and fought the Russias, Volga Bulgaria, Hungary, the Byzantine Empire and Poland, never settling down but ever formidable; ever restless and predatory, never truly imperialist nor imperial, never truly conquering but ever unconquerable.

Volga Bulgaria was a great trading state and status-quo power, which maintained itself despite raiding pressure in the last half of the 12th century from the Russian principality of Vladimir that forced it to resite its capital.

The federative Grand Principality of **Kievan Rus'** recovered strength and coherence under Grand Prince Vladimir II Monomakh (r. 1113-1125) and his son Mstislav II the Great (r. 1125-1132); with Mstislav ended united Rus'. During the 12th century, a great Russian power emerged in the northeast of the former Kievan dominions, in what would become the Grand Principality of Vladimir-Suzdal, which fought Kiev, the other post-Kievan principalities, and Volga Bulgaria.

Poland was in a feudal-inheritance division in 1100; reunited under Bolesław III Wrymouth 1107-1138; his inheritance was again divided on his death, and remained so through the century.

Hungary was significant and aggressive power, acquiring Croatia formally in 1102. In the 12th century, Hungary fought Bohemia, Venice (in Dalmatia), Austria, the Byzantine Empire, Kiev, and Conrad III of Germany, on more or less equal terms.

The **Byzantine Empire**, profiting from the "Comnenian Restoration" under the Comnenos dynasty (1081-1185), possessed the Central System's largest and wealthiest city, Constantinople, and after a military and economic reorganization slowly extended their Balkan and Anatolian domains. However, after the death of Andronikos I in 1185, the Empire fell into disarray.

Egypt began the century as a trading empire under the Fatimid Caliphate, which had just fallen into a succession struggle and sectarian division. Over the 12th century, Egypt slowly lost its control of Palestine and Syria to Crusaders, against whom however Egypt proper repeatedly held out. Under the Ayyubids of Syria from 1171, Egypt was secure, but a province rather than a power.

The **Holy Roman (German) Empire** under the last Salians, Henry IV (r. 1084-1105) and Henry V (r. 1111-1125), under Lothair II/III (r. 1133-1137), and the first Hohenstaufens, Frederick I Barbarossa (r. 1155-1190) and Henry VI (1191-1197), stretched from the North Sea to mid-Italy. It was prone to civil wars and power struggles with the Popes of Rome which usually rendered it internationally inactive. Nonetheless it was able to operate from time to time against its eastern neighbors Poland and Bohemia and its south-Italian Norman neighbors, did not show tempting weakness to such neighbors, and even mustered a Levantine Crusade.

Sicily under the Norman Counts (1071-1130), the Norman Kings (1130-1194/8), and the Hohenstaufen Kings (1194/8-1266), was a source of wealth and strength that allowed its rulers to take control of southern Italy.

France under the Kings of the Franks Philip I (r. 1060-1108), Louis VI (r. 1108-1137), Louis VII (r. 1137-1180), and the first “King of France” Philip II Augustus (r. 1180-1223) slowly moved from paralysis because of feudal revolts to significant power, resisting encroachments by the Empire and, especially, England.

England under the last Normans Henry I (r. 1100-1135) and the Anarchs Stephen and Matilda (1135-1154), and the first Plantagenets Henry II (1154-1189), Richard I (1189-1199) and John (1199-1216), alternated between civil strife and formidable encroachments in France.

The north Spanish Christian Kingdoms of **León & Castile** were united and expansive against the Muslim south of Iberia under Alfonso VI (1077-1109), and Alfonso VII (1126-1157), but divided thereafter until 1230.

The **Almoravid Empire** of western North Africa and southern Iberia under its last strong ruler, Ali Ibn Yusuf (r. 1106-1143) fought back and forth against the Iberian Christian kingdoms on more or less equal terms. It was destroyed and displaced by the rival Almohad Caliphate 1147-1172; the Almohads likewise held their Iberian ground against the northerners during the rest of the 12th century.

New powers would emerge in the 12th century, and will be noted as they make their marks: Kara-Khitai, Transcaucasian Georgia, and Balkan Bulgaria.

We shall next inspect these great-power vicissitudes in somewhat more detail, and offer a decennial coding of the Central system power structure, using the decadal power narratives as the source from which changes in the Great Power roster are drawn.

Great Power Moments and Decadal System Narratives for the 12th Century

AD 1100. As of 1100, the Seljuk Sultanate, the Russian principalities, the Fatimid Caliphate of Egypt, the kingless Kingdom of Poland, England, and Frankland-not-yet-France, for different reasons in each case, but with civil and regional balanced strife an overarching taxon, seem to fail the Great Power test.

The (Eastern) Kara-Khanids, the Byzantine Empire, the Kingdom of Hungary, the German/Holy Roman Empire, León & Castile, and the Almoravid Empire all—at this moment of AD 1100—manifest strength in resistance or aggression. Volga Bulgaria is prosperous and unthreatened. Accordingly,

AD 1100: Multipolar. Great Powers: Eastern Kara-Khanids, Cumania, Volga Bulgaria, Byzantine Empire, Hungary, Holy Roman Empire, León & Castile, Almoravid Empire.

The first decade of the 12th century saw the beginnings of the rise of **Georgia** under King David IV the Builder, who had stopped tribute to the Seljuks in 1099 and began to take territory from them and their vassals in the southern Caucasus (1101-1103).

Hungary acquired Croatia (1102) and conquered Dalmatia by 1105, there however facing Venetian and Byzantine competition for the rest of the century.

A new Crusader statelet, the County of Tripoli, was founded in Lebanon.

Poland grew stronger under Boleslaw III Wrymouth, who became Prince of all Poland in 1107 (to 1138), coerced Pomerania and repelled a punitive expedition of German Emperor Henry V (1109).

Alfonso VI of **León & Castile** died in 1109, and his realms fell into division and local war.

AD 1110: Multipolar. Great Powers: Eastern Kara-Khanids, Cumania, Volga Bulgaria, Byzantine Empire, Poland, Hungary, Holy Roman Empire, Almoravid Empire.

In the 1110s, **Georgia** further expanded against the Seljuks of Rum (1115), whom the **Byzantines** also defeated (at Philomelion, 1116). In the same decade, Ahmed Sanjar temporarily restored the unity of the (Eastern) **Great Seljuk Sultanate**.

Poland, rebuffed in an attempt to install a proxy in Bohemia, embarked upon the conquest and Christianization of Pomerania.

Vladimir II Monomakh led the Russias as Grand Prince of Kiev 1113-1125. His rule temporarily arrested the process of disintegration and state-formation within the corpus of **Kievan Rus'**.

AD 1120: Multipolar. Great Powers: Eastern Kara-Khanids, (Eastern) Great Seljuks, Cumania, Volga Bulgaria, Kievan Rus', Byzantine Empire, Poland, Hungary, Holy Roman Empire, León & Castile, Almoravid Empire.

In 1121, **Georgia** repelled an invasion by Seljuk Sultan of Baghdad (subordinate to the Eastern Great Seljuks) at Didgori, and acquired Tbilisi. David the Builder died in 1125, leaving Georgia as a great power. His successor Demetrius I (1125-1156) maintained it as such, but followed a status quo policy.

The **Byzantine Empire** reconquered southwestern Anatolia from the Seljuks of Rum(1121). The Byzantine recovery of the coasts of Asia Minor continued until 1176.

German Emperor Henry V died in 1125, ending the Salian line. His successor Lothair of Saxony became embroiled with the Staufen family and the anti-king Conrad III.

C. 1121, Bolesław III Wrymouth of **Poland** succeeded in resubjugating Pomerania.

Mstislav II the Great was the last unifying Grand Prince of **Kiev**, fighting Cumans (1129), the Russian principality of Polotsk (1129), Estonians (1130), and Lithuanians (1131).

Alfonso VII of **León & Castile** reunited León, Castile and Galicia (1127).

AD 1130: Multipolar. Great Powers: Eastern Kara-Khanids, (Eastern) Great Seljuk Sultanate, Cumania, Volga Bulgaria, Georgia, Kievan Rus', Byzantine Empire, Poland, Hungary, Holy Roman Empire, León & Castile, Almoravid Empire.

In 1130, the Norman Roger II ruled Sicily, Apulia and Capua as King of **Sicily**.

The 1130s saw a brief (1130-1138) papal schism, won by Pope Innocent II, lost by (therefore) Antipope Anacletus II.

“The Anarchy” (1135-1154) began in **England**, with a struggle over the succession to Henry I.

The **Kara-Khanids** lost the Fergana Valley in 1137 to the nomadic-Buddhist Kara-Khitai dynasty, a refugee remnant of the East Asian Liao Dynasty that had been destroyed by Jurchens in 1125.

Holy Roman Emperor Lothair died in 1137, to be succeeded in Germany not by his “Welf” kin but by Conrad III of Hohenstaufen, opening a period of Welf-Hohenstaufen civil war that was represented in Italy by cities that became “Guelf” or “Ghibelline” and fought each other under those banners.

Bolesław III of **Poland** died in 1138, and Poland fragmented into feudal duchies, remaining divided and contested for 200 years.

AD 1140: Multipolar. Great Powers: Kara-Khitai, (Eastern) Great Seljuk Sultanate, Cumania, Volga Bulgaria, Georgia, Byzantine Empire, Hungary, Holy Roman Empire, Sicily, León & Castile, Almoravid Empire.

The **Kara Khitai** decisively defeated **Seljuk** Sultan Ahmad Sanjar and the Western **Kara-Khanids** in 1141, acquiring control over Transoxiana. Maintaining a loose control over vassal states, including the Kara-khanids, the Kara Khitai themselves belong mostly to East Asian system history, tending to be passive recipients of tribute, but active collectors when defied. Their more-nominal **Khwarezmian** vassals slowly expanded at Seljuk expense. The Seljuk Empire continued to fragment, with sporadic attempts at recovery of authority in its rump territory balked by civil and dynastic strife.

In the 1140s, the tide begins to turn against the Crusader states, with the fall of the County of **Edessa** to Zangi, first of the **Zangid** Atabegs of Mosul, a successor fragment of the Seljuks. The Zangid Empire repelled the Second Crusade’s response (1147-1148).

In 1143, the energetic and aggressive Manuel I Comnenus, last of a trio of strong leaders, succeeded to the **Byzantine** throne and began a policy of active expansion of territory and influence. He was hostile to Hungary and Norman Sicily and helpful to Conrad III of Germany.

In 1143, the county of **Portugal**, having seceded from the Kingdom of **León**, was recognized as a Kingdom in its own right.

Roger II of **Sicily** conquered Tunisia from the local Zirids in 1146-1148 and sent a looting expedition into Byzantine Greece in 1147.

In 1147, the **Almohads**, a new Berber power with a puritanical Islamist ideology, took **Almoravid** Morocco. Almoravid fragments persisted for a while in eastern Spain, Tunisia and the Balearic islands.

AD 1150: Multipolar. Great Powers: Kara-Khitai, Khwarezm, (Eastern) Great Seljuk Sultanate, Cumania, Volga Bulgaria, Georgia, Zangid Empire, Byzantine Empire, Hungary, Holy Roman Empire, Sicily, Almohad Caliphate.

In 1152, Frederick I “Barbarossa” succeeded Conrad III as **German King**, and in 1155 succeeded Lothair III as **Holy Roman Emperor**, ending an epoch of paralysis. Frederick placated his Welf rivals and proceeded to organize six expeditions into Italy (1154-1184), seeking to establish his authority there.

In 1152-1160, the **Almohads** conquered Zirid Algeria, Norman Tunisia, and Tripolitania.

Ahmed Sanjar was captured by rebels in 1153 and died in captivity in 1156, ending the reunion period of the **Great Seljuk Sultanate**. The eastern Great Seljuk territories became chaotic. In the west, Muhammad II, heir of the formerly subordinate Sultans of Baghdad and **Hamadan**, aspired to restore the Great Seljuk Sultanate, but instead faced dynastic struggles and revolts by the reviving Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad, and by the **Zangid** Atabeg Nureddin, who in 1154 captured Damascus and controlled Syria. Muhammad II died in 1158 and was succeeded by Suleiman Shah, deposed in 1160 after 8 months.

Henry II of **England** succeeded in 1154, holding the west of France by inheritance or marriage, and, using the great wealth this “Angevin Empire” provided, began a process of restoring and expanding English power. Louis VII of **France** undertook a policy of diplomatic resistance and economic reconstruction.

Baronial and familial rebellion, the hostility of Pope Adrian IV and **German Emperor** Frederick Barbarossa, and attacks by **Byzantine Emperor** Manuel Comnenus, troubled the rule of lordship of William I, Norman King of **Sicily** (r. 1154-1166), in southern Italy. However, the Pope settled with William and recognized his rule in 1156.

Frederick Barbarossa did not recognize Pope Alexander III (1159-1181), against whom he set up a succession of “antipopes” until 1177. William of **Sicily** supported Alexander.

Under Kilij Arslan II, the **Seljuk Sultanate of Rum** began a policy of slow expansion in Anatolia against Byzantium as well as against other fragments of the Seljuk Empire

George III succeeded Demetrius I in **Georgia** and maintained an aggressive and successful foreign policy until his death in 1184.

In 1157, Andrei Bogolyubsky (Andrew the Pious) became lord of the Russian principality of **Vladimir-Suzdal**, and set out to displace Kiev and establish Vladimir as the leader of the Russias.

From 1158, **Byzantine Emperor** Manuel Comnenus financed resistance by north Italian cities of the Lombard League to the attempts of Frederick Barbarossa to establish his authority there.

In 1158, the **Khwarezm-Shah** II-Arslan fought the **Karakhanids** to a stalemate; peace was arranged by outsiders, including their suzerain Kara-Khitai

On the death of Alfonso VII (1157), **León & Castile** were once again divided.

AD 1160: Multipolar. Great Powers: Kara-Khitai, Cumania, Volga Bulgaria, Vladimir, Georgia, Zangid Empire, Byzantine Empire, Hungary, Holy Roman Empire, Sicily, Almohad Caliphate, France, England.

Arslan-shah was a puppet Seljuk Sultan of Hamadan until 1175 or 1176.

In 1161, the Seljuk Sultan of **Rum** made a compliant peace with the **Byzantine** Empire under Manuel Comnenus (r. 1143-1180). Stephen III of **Hungary** did the same, accepting vassal status, after a military defeat in a war of 1164-1167.

1168-1172, the **Almohads** advanced in eastern Spain (Valencia), but their advance then stalled in the face of the united front of the north Iberian Christian kingdoms of Portugal, Leon, Castile and Aragon.

In 1169, Shirkuh, general for Nureddin, the **Zangid** Atabeg of Mosul, took Egypt from the Fatimids, but died and was succeeded by Saladin.

AD 1170: Multipolar. Great Powers: Kara-Khitai, Cumania, Volga Bulgaria, Vladimir, Georgia, Zangid Empire, Byzantine Empire, Hungary, Holy Roman Empire, Sicily, Almohad Caliphate, France, England.

In 1171, Saladin displaced the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt and established his own new Ayyubid dynasty. Nureddin died in 1174 and Saladin conquered Syria 1174-1182, establishing the **Ayyubid** power in Egypt and Syria.

The **Byzantine Empire** fell into a dispute with Venice in 1171 in which Hungary, Stefan Nemanja of Serbia, and the Holy Roman Empire sided with Venice, but disease and death ended the coalition, and Serbia submitted.

In 1172, the **Khwarezm-Shah** Il-Arslan stopped tribute to **Kara-Khitai** and fought instead, but was defeated and died. His sons Tekish and Sultan Shah disputed the succession until the death of the latter in 1193.

By 1172, all the Islamic territories in Iberia were under the rule of the **Almohad** Caliphate.

Despite the (unsuccessful) “Great Revolt” of 1173-1174 by the family of Henry II, aided by France and Scotland, in 1174, **England** enforced overlordship upon Scotland and in 1169-1175 upon Ireland.

The defeat of the German Emperor Frederick Barbarossa by the Lombard League of Italian cities at the battle of Legnano in Italy in 1176 led to the independence of the

Italian cities and a compromise peace between **Holy Roman Emperor** Frederick I Barbarossa and Pope Alexander III, whom Frederick now accepted.

1176 also saw a disastrous defeat of the **Byzantine Empire** by the **Seljuks of Rum** under Kilij Arslan II (r. 1156-1192) at Myriocephalon, confirming Seljuk retention of central Anatolia and forcing the Byzantines onto defense.

In 1177, Vsevolod “Big Nest” (so styled as being father of 14 children) became Grand Prince of **Vladimir** and began a reign that would endure to 1212 and a program of raids against Volga Bulgaria and of vassalization of other Russian principalities.

AD 1180: Multipolar. Great Powers: Kara-Khitai, Cumania, Volga Bulgaria, Vladimir, Georgia, Ayyubid Empire, Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, Byzantine Empire, Hungary, Holy Roman Empire, Sicily, Almohad Caliphate, France, England.

Emperor Manuel I Comnenus of the **Byzantine Empire** died in 1180 and a succession struggle ornamented by massacre, assassinations, state terrorism, mutiny, usurpers and pretenders, and loss of territory to Hungary, Venice and the Seljuks of Rum, ensued.

Béla III of **Hungary** reacquired Croatia, Dalmatia and Sirmium from the Byzantine Empire.

Stefan Nemanja, grand prince of **Serbia**, declared independence from Byzantium.

Kilij Arslan II of **Rum** made gains on the south coast of Anatolia.

William II of **Sicily** (r. 1166-1189) made major inroads into Byzantine Greece, but was defeated by the Emperor Isaac II Angelus (r.1185-1195, 1203-1204), who had come to terms with Serbia and Hungary.

Bulgaria rebelled against the exactions of the Byzantine Empire in 1185, and Isaac Angelus fought the Second Bulgarian Empire without success for the next ten years.

In 1180, Philip II Augustus succeeded to the throne of **France** and began a lifelong campaign to destroy the Angevin Empire. He befriended the sons of Henry II of **England** and joined them to defeat Henry 1186-1189.

In 1184, Queen Tamar became “King” of **Georgia**, succeeding her father George III. She ruled to 1213, and resumed a policy of aggressive and successful expansion against the successor fragments of the Great Seljuk Empire. Small neighboring states became vassal tributary states.

In 1187 the **Ayyubid** Saladin defeated the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem and acquired control of most of Palestine. Henry II of England having died in 1189, to be succeeded

by his rebellious son Richard (r. 1189-1199), Philip Augustus initially joined Richard on the Second Crusade (1189-1192), seeking unsuccessfully to recover Jerusalem.

William II of **Sicily** died in 1189 with no heir, and his kingdom fell into disorder.

AD 1190: Multipolar. Great Powers: Kara-Khitai, Cumania, Volga Bulgaria, Vladimir, Georgia, Ayyubid Empire, Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, Byzantine Empire, Bulgaria, Hungary, Holy Roman Empire, Almohad Caliphate, France, England.

The Third Crusade, a major cooperative undertaking by **Germany, England** and **France**, led by their kings and aimed at rescuing the Crusader states from Saladin, dissolved when its leader, German Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa, accidentally drowned enroute.

Saladin died in 1193, and the **Ayyubid** succession was contested until 1200.

In 1190, Toghrul III, puppet Seljuk Sultan of **Hamadan**, revolted and was subdued, but gained independence when Qizil Aslan, his Atabeg overlord, died in 1191. In 1193, Sultan Shah, a **Khwarezm** claimant, died, and his territories fell to the other claimant, Ala ad-din Tekish. In 1194 Tekish as Khwarezm-Shah destroyed Toghrul III, the last **Seljuk Sultan of Hamadan**, and seized Iraq, bringing Khwarezm into the great power ranks.

Frederick I's successor as **German Emperor**, Henry VI (r. 1191-1197), acquired the wealth of Sicily in 1194, becoming for a moment Europe's richest and most powerful ruler; he had hopes of acquiring the Byzantine Empire as well. He failed to assure the succession, and Germany went to a Welf rival, Otto of Brunswick, while Sicily was retained by Henry's widow Constance, on behalf of their minor son, the future Emperor Frederick II.

Bulgaria defeated the **Byzantine Empire** at the battles of Tryavna in 1190 and Arcadiopolis in 1194, taking or looting territory. In 1195, Alexius III Angelus overthrew his brother and was defeated by the Bulgarians at Serres in 1196.

Richard I of **England** was seized on his return from the failed Second Crusade by German Emperor Henry VI and held for ransom. During Richard's captivity (1193-1194), Philip Augustus of **France** attached Angevin holding on France and made gains, which Richard recovered on his return until his death in 1199.

AD 1200: Multipolar. Great Powers: Kara-Khitai, Khwarezm, Cumania, Volga Bulgaria, Vladimir, Georgia, Ayyubid Empire, Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, Bulgaria, Hungary, Holy Roman Empire, Sicily, Almohad Caliphate, France, England.

THE FIELD OF ACTION AND SYSTEM STRUCTURE OF THE CENTRAL SYSTEM IN AD 1200



(T.A. Lessman; not to scale)

Great Power turnovers in the 12th century. The 12th century power narrative is notable for the rise of new powers and the revival of enfeebled old powers: Kara Khitai, Khwarezm, Georgia, Bulgaria, France. The Seljuk fragmentation becomes final. There is a turnover of Caliphates: Ayyubids displace Fatimids in Egypt, Almohads displace Almoravids in Iberia. Vladimir displace Kiev in the Russias. The Holy Roman Empire churns itself endlessly, never enfeebled, occasionally aggressive.

Small powers of AD 1200. Following are the small powers that are numbered countries in the AD 1200 map:

- | | | | | |
|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Navarre | 2. Toulouse | 3. Provence | 4. Flanders | 5. Brabant |
| 6. Holland | 7. Blois | 8. Genoa | 9. Sorabs | 10. Vychna Slaska |
| 11. Venice | 12. Bosnia | 13. Jersika | 14. Novgorod-Seversk | |
| 15. Tmutorakan | 16. Eastern Saltukides | 17. Western Saltukides | | |
| 18. Mangujakides | 19. Sassun | 20. Shah Armen | | |
| 21. Moks | | | | |

The turnover is substantial, and suggests that a separate study of “small-state turnover” would be a useful supplement to our focus, standard for the study of international relations, upon the great powers of each age.

The 12th century Central System: Multipolar or Nonpolar? Each decennial coding assigned to the 12th century central system power structure is “Multipolar.” This might

be questioned. Throughout the 12th century, there were many great powers, and most of their power-projections were against contiguous states. This invites the speculation that the system was in fact nonpolar rather than multipolar, i.e. that there were no true systemic great powers, and that the system itself lacked the “systemness” that would have been provided by states with systemwide concern.

Against this speculation we may raise three points. 1) States repeatedly reached beyond their immediate neighbors in search of allies. 2) States sent forces long distances from their territories in pursuit of systemic policies. And, 3) there was an actor with unquestioned systemwide interests—the Papacy of the Roman Catholic Church.

1) The Byzantine Emperors sought distant allies. Alexius I continued in the 12th century his relations with West European Crusaders whom his appeals had brought to the aid of the Empire against the Turks. Manuel I, who invaded both Italy and Egypt, allied with the Russian princes Yuri Dolgoruki of Suzdal, Rostislav I of Kiev and Volodymyrko and Yaroslav of Galicia against Hungary.

Dynastic marriages could also overleap neighbors to form more remote links: such links existed between, e.g.: Manuel I Comnenus of Byzantium and Conrad III of Germany; Henry IV of Germany and Vladimir I Monomakh of Kiev; Henry V of Germany and Henry I of England; Richard I of England and Sancho VI of Navarre; Louis VII of France and Alfonso VII of León; Philip II of France and Valdemar I of Denmark; Coloman of Hungary and Roger I of Sicily; Béla III of Hungary and Louis VII of France; Roger II of Sicily and Alfonso VI of Castile; William I of Sicily and García Ramírez of Navarre; William II of Sicily and Henry II of England; etc. And Henry VI of Germany wed Constance, Queen of Sicily.

2) Two Crusades of the 12th century drew Western monarchs into long-distance operations in the Levant, the Second Crusade (1147-1149: Louis VII of France and Conrad III of Germany) and the Third Crusade (1189-1192: Philip II of France, Richard I of England, and German Emperor Frederick I).

3) The Roman Popes concerned themselves with the systemic power structure, as well as with their near neighbors the German Emperors and the Normans of Sicily. Paschal II (r. 1099-1118) negotiated with Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081-1118) and sought to bring the Greek Orthodox Church under papal control. Honorius II (r. 1124-1130) and his successors took a diplomatic part in the internal conflicts of France, England, and the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Honorius exercised diplomacy in the external conflicts of Henry I of England, and promoted crusading in Spain against the Moors. Eugenius III (r. 1145-1153) successfully called for the (unsuccessful) Second Crusade, which drew the Kings of France and Germany. Adrian IV (r. 1154-1159), assisting the campaign of Byzantine emperor Manuel I Comnenus against the Normans of Sicily in southern Italy, sought Manuel’s recognition of papal supremacy over himself as emperor and over the Eastern Church; Manuel sought recognition of his secular supremacy over the West. Alexander III (r. 1159-1181) both punished Henry II of England and confirmed his rule over Ireland, and supported the claim to kingship of

Afonso II of Portugal. Gregory VIII (r. 1187) and Clement III (r. 1187-1191) successfully called for the half-successful Third Crusade (1189-1192), which failed to recover the fallen Kingdom of Jerusalem but retook much of the Levantine coast. Celestine III (r. 1191-1198) sought to terminate the war of Alfonso IX of León against Alfonso VIII of Castile. And Innocent III (r. 1198-1216) vigorously asserted the authority of the Pope over all the kings of the world.

Conclusion. The Central system power structure in the 12th century was consistently multipolar, with an uncharacteristically large number of great powers present throughout. A few powers exited the system, a few others entered. Monarchic states were divided via inheritance or appanage and reassembled by war or matrimonial alliance, exiting or entering great-power status in the process. Most interpower activity linked neighbors, but overleaping alliances, the systemic projects of crusading, and the systemwide visions of Popes yielded larger-scale undertakings.

REFERENCES

Several *Cambridge Histories* have been consulted in the preparation of this paper, namely those for Inner Asia, Iran, Islam, Russia, and Poland, as well as both the *Cambridge Medieval History* and the *New Cambridge Medieval History*.

Wilkinson, David. (2004) "The Power Configuration Sequence of the Central World System, 1500-700 BC." 10 *Journal of World Systems Research* no. 3 (Fall), 654-720.