

## GLOBALIZATION BEFORE COLUMBUS

**Coordinators:** Charles Troob and Ken Witty

We think of globalization as a modern phenomenon. In fact, long distance travel and trade have been part of human life for millennia. This study group explores the history of globalization—the exchange of products, ideas, and people—focusing on the period around 1000 AD, when modern globalization first began. It will examine the lead up to the events of 1000 AD and then spend time on global interconnections afterwards when Arabs and Asians dominated world trade.

The period around 1000 AD was a time when the Indian Ocean was the center of the web of economic and cultural exchange. Chinese, Indians and Arabs traded extensively by sea and overland via the Silk Road. These great civilizations are our major focus. At a time when Europe was a marginal player, we also consider the Viking “discovery” of America and the substantial trade in North America, Mesoamerica and the Andes fostered by this connection.

**Charles Troob** has led many study groups on a wide range of topics, including one in Spring 2022 on ancient civilizations. He studied economic development at London School of Economics.

**Ken Witty** is a former television documentary and news producer. He has coordinated many study groups on a wide range of subjects such as American economic history, forecasting the future, masculinity, North American Indians and the changing American family.

**Type of Study Group:** Lecture and discussion

### **Readings and other Materials/Online Services**

*The Year 1000: When Explorers Connected the World—and Globalization Began* by Valerie Hansen ;

*A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Changed the World* by William J. Bernstein;

Other materials will be distributed by email.

\*\*\*\*\* SYLLABUS - A WORK IN PROGRESS \*\*\*\*\*

## LP<sup>2</sup> STUDY GROUP PROPOSAL FOR SPRING 2022

### WEEK 1

**TOPIC:** Globalization: a definition and when it began

**READING:**

*A Splendid Exchange* pp. 1-53;

and by email:

*The World That Trade Created*, Chap 1 pp. 3-5;

*Globalizations and The Ancient World*, pp. 22-23.

**QUESTIONS:**

When we talk about globalization what do we mean? What does the term globalization embrace? When did the first globalization take place, where and what kinds of goods were exchanged over long distances? How extensive were the trade routes during the height of the Roman Empire? What were the principal goods exchanged and why were they in such demand? What role did the Phoenicians play in the development of long-distance trade?

### WEEK 2

**TOPIC:**

The world in the year 1000 and the Vikings

**READING:**

*The Year 1000*, pp. 1-52;

and by email:

*The Vinland Sagas*, pp. XXVI-XXVIII; XXX-XXXVII; 6-8, 10-11, 15-17, and 40-48.

**QUESTIONS:**

What was happening in the world in 1000 AD that set in motion globalization in various parts of the globe? Who were the major players in the globalization in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and what were their roles? What brought the Vikings to North America and what did they find there? What was the long-term impact of the Vikings explorations in North America vs other long-distance contact and trading routes?

### WEEK 3

**TOPIC:** The Americas

**READING:**

*The Year 1000*, pp. 53-79;

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and by email:

*The World That Trade Created*, "Aztec Traders" pp. 30-31.

### **QUESTIONS:**

Could Viking sea voyagers have reached Mesoamerica? What evidence is there that that might have happened around 1000 AD? How extensive were the trade routes in North and Central America and what kinds of products were traded over thousands of miles? What were some of the important centers of long-distance trade in North America in the 11<sup>th</sup> century? What kinds of trade routes existed in the Andean region around 1000 AD and what kinds of trade was taking place there?

### **WEEK 4**

**TOPIC:** The wandering Rus

#### **READING:**

*The Year 1000*, pp.81-111

#### **QUESTIONS:**

Who were the Rus and where did they wander? What was the impact of the Rus on Eastern Europe and Central Asia? What were the consequences of Vladimir's conversion to Byzantine Christianity for the future of Eastern Europe? What were the reasons for all the conversions of European rulers in the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD? How has that shaped those countries future histories?

### **WEEK 5**

**TOPIC:** African trade – gold and slaves

**READING:** *The Year 1000*, pp. 112-142

### **WEEK 6**

**TOPIC:** Central Asia splits in two

**READING:** *The Year 1000*, pp.143-169

### **WEEK 7**

**TOPIC:** Asian journeys

**READING:** *The Year 1000*, pp.171-197

### **WEEK 8**

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**TOPIC:** China, the most globalized place in 1000

**READING:**

*The Year 1000*, pp. 198-226; Epilogue pp.227-240;  
*A Splendid Exchange*, pp. 95-103.

### WEEK 9

**TOPIC:** Global commerce under the Caliphate

**READING:**

*A Splendid Exchange*. pp. 54-95;  
and by email:  
*The World That Trade Created*, pp. 16-21.

### WEEK 10

**TOPIC:** The Baghdad - Canton Axis / the Portuguese arrive

**READING:**

*A Splendid Exchange*, pp. 103–129; 152-192

### WEEK 11

**TOPIC:** Disease and globalization

**READING:**

*A Splendid Exchange*, pp. 130-152;  
other material by email.

### WEEK 12: Review