Valerie Hansen, *The Year 1000. When Explorers connected the World and Globalization began*. New York: Scribner, 2020. 320 pages, US$30.00. ISBN 978-15-01194-11-5 (pb)

Even before you open this volume written by the renowned Sinologist and global historian Valerie Hansen, the first questions spring to mind, prompted by the book's subtitle: that globalisation began in the year 1000, when explorers and travellers connected the globe. All in one year? And the whole world? Even if the "year 1000" is taken to include the decades around it, the argument remains a daring one, and the reader is curious to see the underpinning evidence.

After a first chapter that is more of an introduction and overview of the whole work, Chapters 2 and 3 address a theme and a region that seem to support the claim made by Hansen. Chapter 2 describes the Vikings' voyages of exploration in the North Atlantic and their settling on Newfoundland as well as (possibly) in Maine. Both the voyages and the settlements can reliably be dated to the 11th century. This is complemented with a wall painting from Chichen Itza in Mexico depicting strange-looking, fair-haired warriors, who may also be identified as Vikings (see Illustrations 6 and 7). Hansen then extensively discusses their possible route from Canada southwards, either by boat along the coast or via a "pan-American highway" running through what is now US territory.

Chapter 4 shifts the focus to northeastern Europe and the empire of Kievan Rus', which acted as an intermediary between Central Asia, the Byzantine Empire and northern Europe. The chapter also highlights the importance of religious conversion, exemplified by Vladimir I's introduction of Orthodox Christianity into the empire. Another topic addressed here is the increasing importance of silver bullion, which was used for coinage. Silver coinage transformed the Rus' empire economically, as its rulers began to rely on taxation instead of plunder.

The Near East and North Africa, whose contribution to global trade consisted mainly of slaves and, more importantly, gold, are the focus of Chapter 5. Before ca. 1500 CE, some two thirds of the gold circulating on the global markets came from Africa (p. 114), especially the southern part of the continent. The significance of the African gold deposits for international trade can be seen from the shards of Chinese celadon pottery found in Zimbabwe, which date from the period 900 to 1200 CE. This connection across the Indian Ocean leads over to Chapter 6, which deals with North and Central Asia. This chapter, in light of the size of the region under consideration, appears somewhat brief in length and heterogeneous in content. Besides trade and political developments, it once again highlights the importance of religious change, this time the spread of Islam and Buddhism, which eventually divided Central Asia into two distinct spheres.

The two chapters concluding the book are devoted to those three regions whose importance for the medieval world and its trade has been demonstrated repeatedly: India and Southeast Asia, as well the "most globalized region in the world", China. Hansen's expertise in Chinese history and an exceptionally broad range of available sources provide the author with an opportunity to widen the time frame of the chapter considerably. On p. 179, we find the Borobudur stupa (late 8th century) mentioned alongside Angkor Wat (around 1150 CE). More generally, the spread of Indian culture to Southeast Asia (from ca. 400 CE?) marks the lower end of the timescale, whilst the shipwreck of Burmese monks in 1467 (correct: 1476; p. 189) and, in the final chapter, the maritime expeditions under Cheng-he, the Chinese Emperor during the fifteenth century (pp. 225–26) provide an upper range. The host of information found in the sources and the expanded timescale also allow further themes to be considered, although many of these are merely listed without much explanation or coherence, and topics highlighted in previous chapters are omitted. For instance, in discussions of religious change in the region, Hinduism and Buddhism are not distinguished from one another, whilst the rise of Theravada to the most popular belief system on the Southeast Asian mainland – curiously, occurring around the middle of the eleventh century and hence very close to the author's favoured year 1000 – is mentioned only in passing (p. 179).

In light of the above, certain points of criticism need to be raised. First of all, a deeper knowledge of and better informed approach to the subject matter would have been welcome here and there – particularly in relation to regions such as the Near East, India or Southeast Asia, where the decades before and after the year 1000 were eventful and have led to some controversy among scholars. Quite often, the individual paragraphs of Hansen's narrative follow a single book, which is summarised or quoted without comment or further note. The selection of the literature is limited, unsystematic and often ignores the latest research in the field. The reading list (a bibliography as such is lacking; the bibliographic data is embedded in the endnotes) concerning the Chola state, for instance, includes the work by George Spencer from 1983, explaining Chola expansionism, and the volume edited by Hermann Kulke et al. in 2009, which addresses the maritime campaign against Southeast Asian ports launched by king Rajendra I in 1025 CE. The criteria that led to the choice of these two works is left unexplained.

That the reading list is random and patchy can also be seen from the omission of a number of relevant studies and publications produced in the context of the millennium year 2000. An excuse for this could be that some of these works, e.g. the themed issue of the *Periplus. Jahrbuch für Außereuropäische Geschichte* (Volume 10, Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2000) on "Asia in the Year 1000" (Asien im Jahr 1000), were written only in German and have therefore remained outside the scope of the English-speaking scholarly world. However, this cannot hold for the publications that emerged from the project directed

by Franz-Josef Brüggemeier and Wolfgang Schenkluhn entitled "Die Welt im Jahr 1000", as the resulting publication was published in English as well (James Heitzman / Wolfgang Schenkluhn (eds), *The World in the Year 1000*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2004). More generally, the substantial and still growing body of works dedicated to presenting the medieval world as interconnected and global, for which the volume edited by Catherine Holmes and Naomi Standen (*The Global Middle Ages*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) is a recent example, has also been virtually ignored.

One could argue at this point that such omissions and superficialities, annoying as they are, hardly threaten to disprove the main argument of the book, that globalization commenced in the year 1000 as travellers and explorers began to connect the regions of the world. As demonstrated, this is certainly true for the (North) Atlantic, which the Vikings traversed to reach Newfoundland, Maine and perhaps even Mexico. But this transcontinental connection remained episodic and ended with a full retreat of the Vikings from all their American settlements before 1100 CE. Apart from a few whalers and sporadic missionaries bound for Greenland, the American-Atlantic world remained mostly outside the global system until its reintegration by Columbus and the later Spanish conquerors after 1492.

In contrast to the western Atlantic, the Eurasian continent and particularly its eastern parts were interconnected by long-standing, complex and multilayered networks of exchange and interaction. These networks were travelled not by explorers and discoverers but by traders, pilgrims, envoys and warriors, who knew the routes and destinations. They visited established port cities and market towns, which provided the commodities of their respective hinterlands and were often home to a cosmopolitan population. We cannot determine the exact time when these networks began to develop, but clearly economic, political and religious interaction across eastern Eurasia had been well under way by the author's "snap year" 1000, possibly pre-dating it by several centuries in some cases. By calling China the "most globalized place on earth" and vastly expanding the time frame of her investigation to almost a millennium, Hansen acknowledges the exceptional position of the region, but at the same time this seems to weaken her central argument that places the emphasis on a single year (or at least a much shorter period of time, if we take the "year 1000" with a pinch of salt). It may not seem entirely unreasonable to team up two regions that are as different as the Atlantic world and eastern Eurasia in order to distil a plain and simple argument that aims to highlight a key moment in global history. But as the argumentation lacks a certain depth, so does the evidence, the presentation of which is beset with superficialities, omissions and a lack of contextualisation. Ultimately, this fails to render the argument any more plausible, let alone convincing.

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