



MAY 19, 2025

NETWORKED MINDS:
OPINION DYNAMICS AND COLLECTIVE
INTELLIGENCE IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

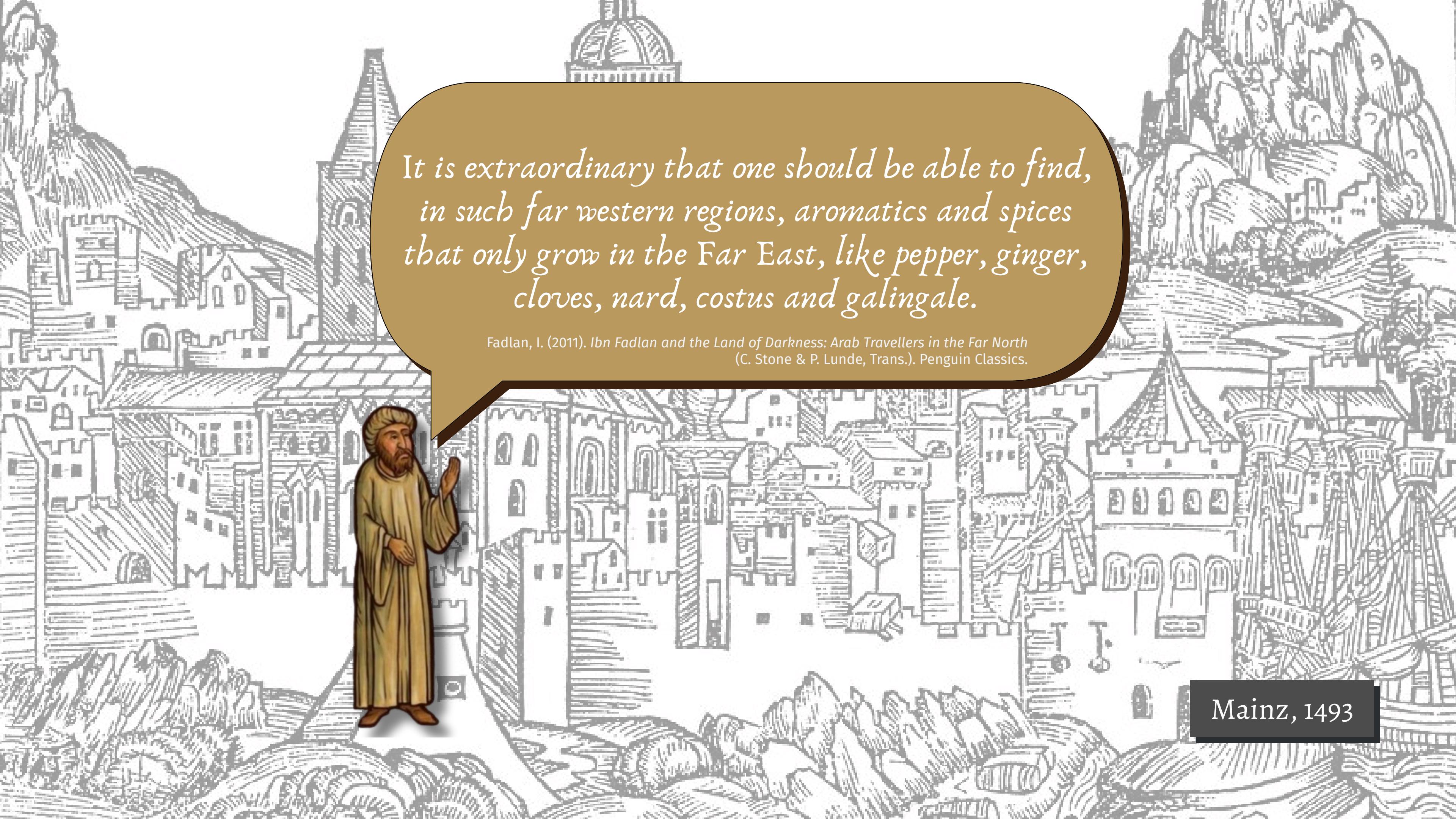
THE NETWORK OF MEDIEVAL TRADE ROUTES

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Social networks are important!

In 965 AD, Ibrâhîm ibn Ya'qûb, a Jewish merchant from Muslim Spain, visits Mainz.

In 965 AD, Ibrâhîm ibn Ya'qûb, a Jewish merchant from Muslim Spain, visits Mainz. He is amazed by the things he can find in the marketplace.



*It is extraordinary that one should be able to find,
in such far western regions, aromatics and spices
that only grow in the Far East, like pepper, ginger,
cloves, nard, costus and galangale.*

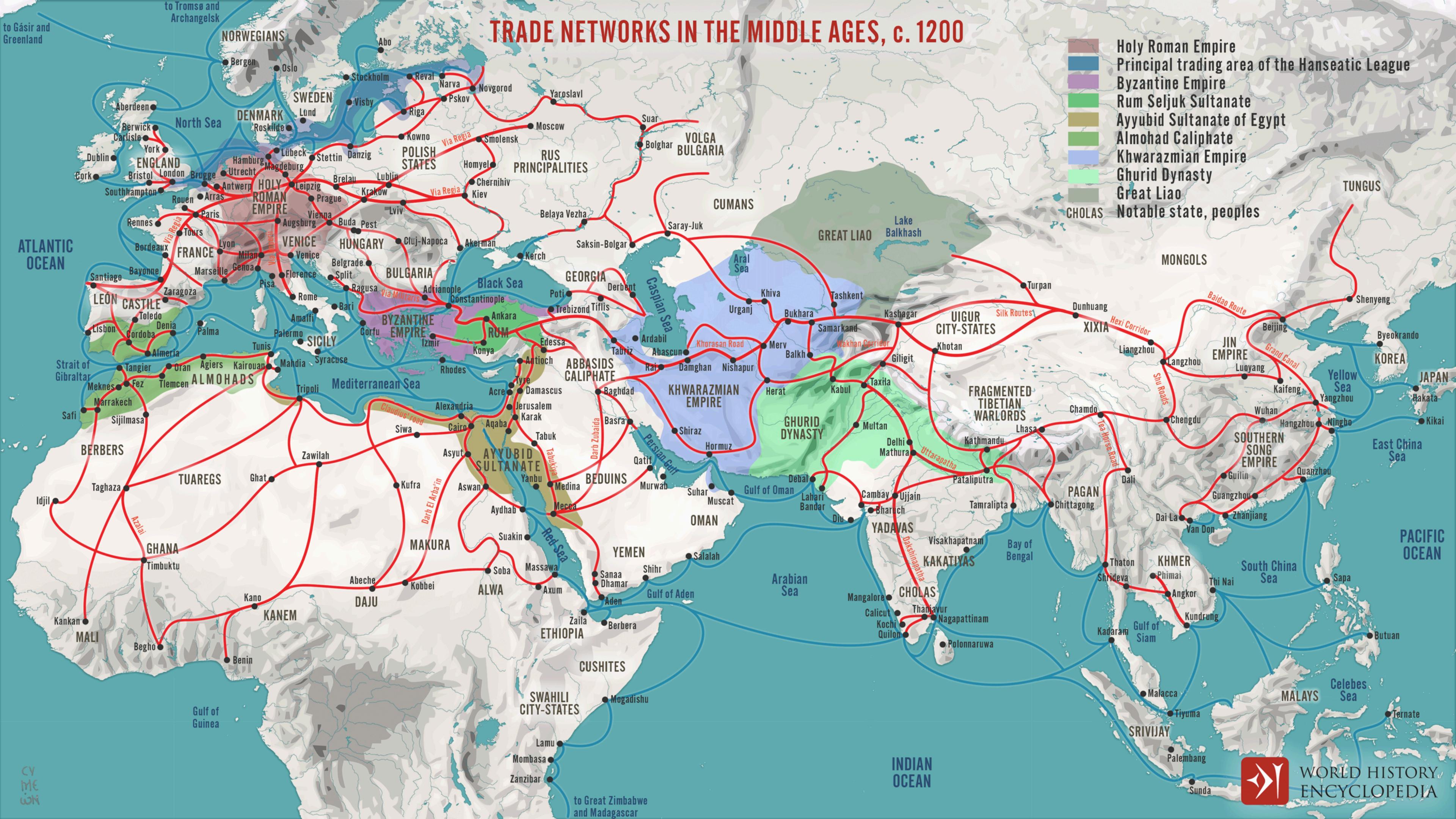
Fadlan, I. (2011). *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness: Arab Travellers in the Far North* (C. Stone & P. Lunde, Trans.). Penguin Classics.



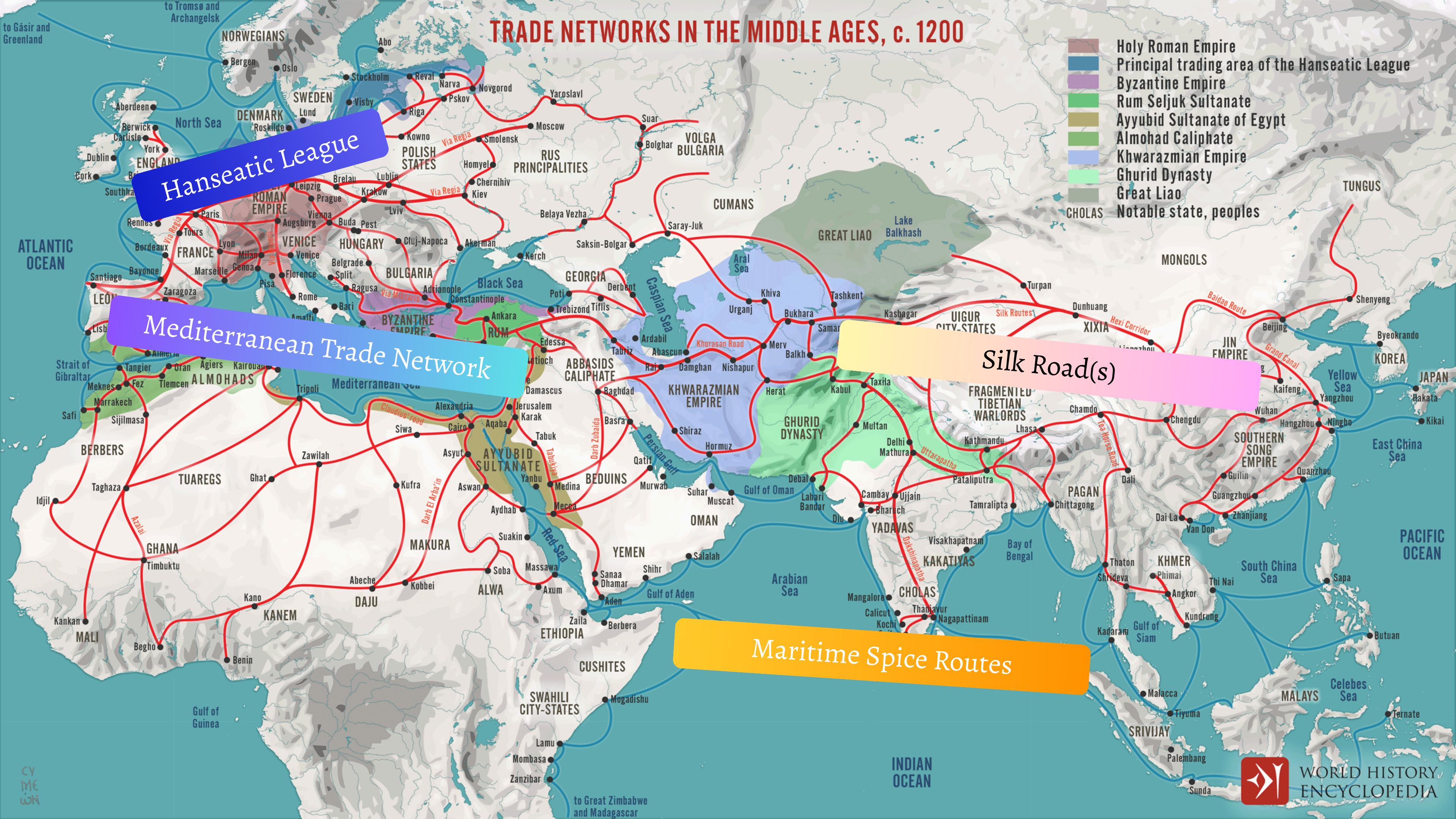
Mainz, 1493

By the 12th century, the world is already deeply interconnected via trade.

TRADE NETWORKS IN THE MIDDLE AGES, c. 1200



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Hanseatic League

Mediterranean Trade Network

Silk Road(s)

Maritime Spice Routes



WORLD HISTORY
ENCYCLOPEDIA

It's not just goods traveling along these routes. It's also ideas and beliefs.

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In 1453, the Ottomans take Constantinople.

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Venice and Genoa, which rely on the flow of goods (e.g., spices) from the East, see their positions threatened.



The fall of the old, overland trade routes
launches a search for alternatives.



VASCO DA GAMA

This is going to sound crazy, but...

What if we try to go around Africa?

In 1498, Vasco da Gama reached India by traveling around the Cape of Good Hope. This launches a shift from a Mediterranean-centric world economy to an Atlantic one.

Venice and Genoa decline. Lisbon, London and Amsterdam rise.



This is a story about networks.

This is a story about networks. And there is probably a network-based history of the world to be written...



JANET ABU-LUGHOD
Yeah I did that.

Abu Lughod, J. L. (1991). *Before European Hegemony: The World System AD 1250-1350*. Oxford University Press.



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Me too!

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Argues that a world system already existed before the rise of Western Europe, linking China, India, the Middle East, and Europe.

Discusses hubs, trade circuits, and interdependencies

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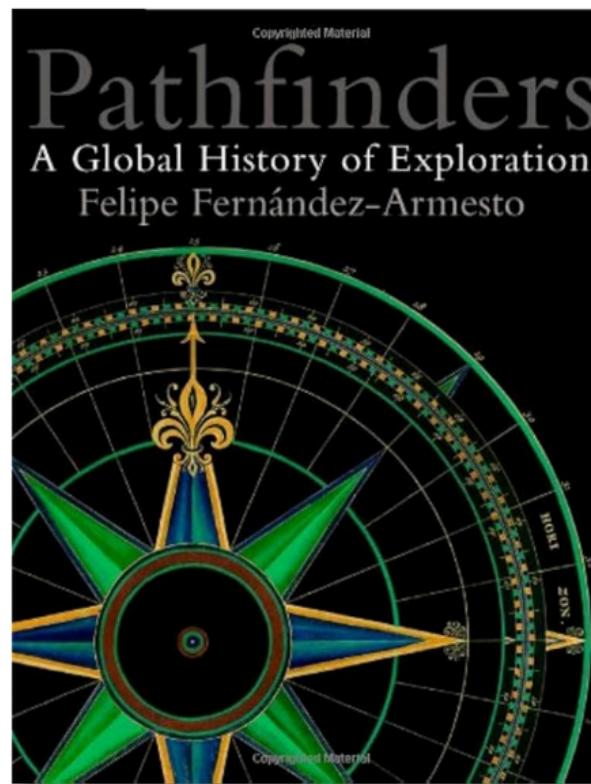
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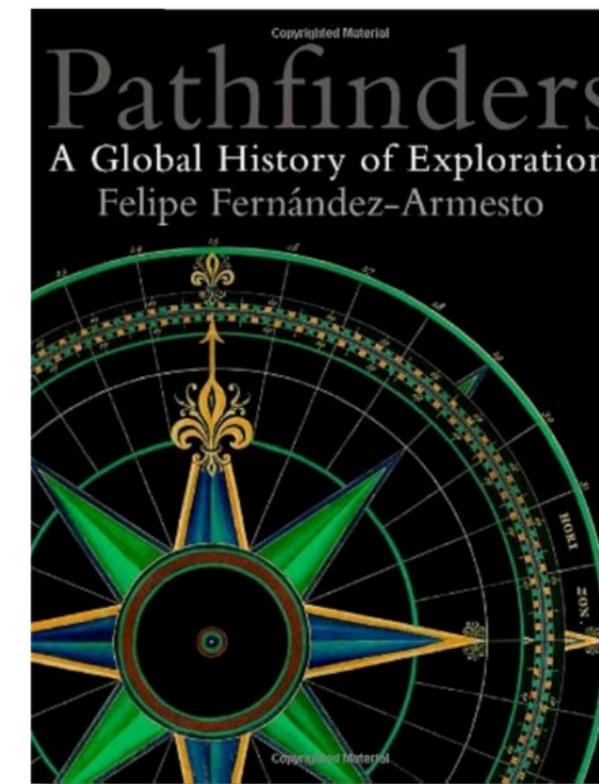
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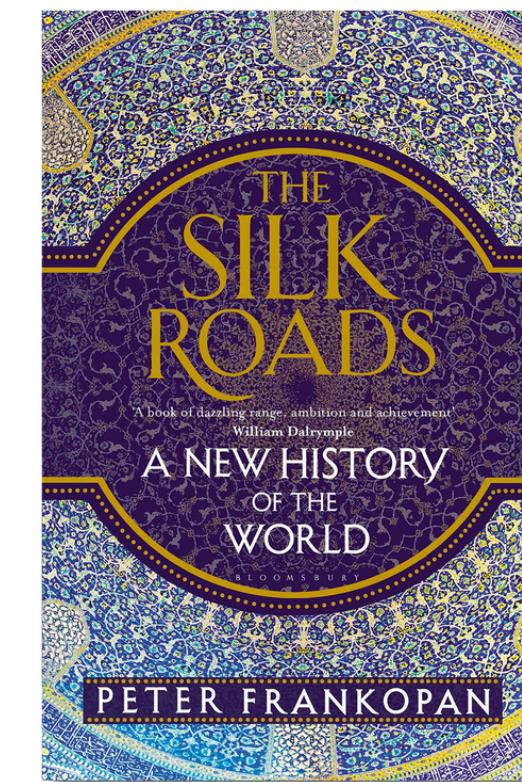
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The Silk Roads: A New History of the World

Bloomsbury
2015

World history through the lens of East-West trade.

Central players: Constantinople, Venice, and the Islamic world.