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Every story must begin somewhere: for us, that point is roughly 1500. Generally, this point in World History marks the beginning of the Early Modern Period; an era in which features of human life and society became more recognizable to us. - In order to understand why we see this era as separate from ~~those~~ that have preceded it; let us embark on a brief world tour and see what has occurred, or is occurring at this critical juncture. † (page 4)

* It is critical to recognize that the period after 1500 sees the emergence of the first truly international economy in human history; over the next several centuries, people on every continent will be drawn into an international network that differs fundamentally from previous economic systems -

① new commercial relationships emerge that transform ~~international~~ ^{both} national and ~~not~~ regional political structures, ~~and~~ as well as the lives of ordinary people in permanent ways. Simply put, commercial activity becomes more frequent and pervasive than ever before - by 1750, it is no longer possible for most people to ignore or avoid contact with the new global economic system.