

The Silk Road In World History

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the silk road was the contemporary name for a complex of ancient trade routes linking east asia with central asia south asia and the mediterranean world this network of exchange emerged along the borders between agricultural china and the steppe nomads during the han dynasty 206bce 220ce in consequence of the inter dependence and the conflicts of these two distinctive societies in their quest for horses fragrances spices gems glassware and other exotics from the lands to their west the han empire extended its dominion over the oases

around the takla makan desert and sent silk all the way to the mediterranean either through the land routes leading to the caravan city of palmyra in syria desert or by way of northwest india the arabian sea and the red sea landing at alexandria the silk road survived the turmoil of the demise of the han and roman empires reached its golden age during the early middle age when the byzantine empire and the tang empire became centers of silk culture and established the models for high culture of the eurasian world the coming of islam extended silk culture to an even larger area and paved the way for an expanded market for textiles and other commodities by the 11th century however the silk road was in decline because of intense competition from the sea routes of the indian ocean using supply and demand as the framework for analyzing the formation and development of the silk road the book examines the dynamics of the interactions of the nomadic pastoralists with sedentary agriculturalists and the spread of new ideas religions and values into the world of commerce thus illustrating the cultural forces underlying material transactions this effort at tracing the interconnections of the diverse participants in the transcontinental silk road exchange will demonstrate that the world had been linked through economic and ideological forces long before the modern era

during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries chinggis khan and his heirs established the largest contiguous empire in the history of the world extending from korea to hungary and from iraq tibet and burma to siberia ruling over roughly two thirds of the old world the mongol empire enabled people ideas and objects to traverse immense geographical and cultural boundaries along the silk roads in mongol eurasia reveals the individual stories of three key groups of people military commanders merchants and intellectuals from across eurasia these annotated biographies bring to the fore a compelling picture of the mongol empire from a wide range of historical sources in multiple languages providing important insights into a period unique for its rapid and far reaching transformations read together or separately they offer the perfect starting point for any discussion of the mongol empire s impact on china the muslim world and the west and illustrate the scale diversity and creativity of the cross cultural exchange along the continental and maritime silk roads features and benefits synthesizes historical information from chinese arabic persian and latin sources that are otherwise inaccessible to english speaking audiences presents in an accessible manner individual life stories that serve as a springboard for discussing themes such as military expansion cross cultural contacts migration conversion gender diplomacy transregional

commercial networks and more each chapter includes a bibliography to assist students and instructors seeking to further explore the individuals and topics discussed informative maps images and tables throughout the volume supplement each biography

examines the history of the silk road the name given to a series of three major trade routes and hundreds of smaller side roads by which goods were transported from china to countries and empires around the mediterranean sea and discusses the importance of the silk road in the exchange of information and ideas

this gorgeously illustrated oversized book brings the history and cultures of the silk road alive from its beginnings to the present day covering more than 5000 years

the silk road conjures up an image of a traveler carrying silk as he sits atop a camel and moves along a desert highway this book offers concrete evidence for what he was really carrying and where he was heading looking at the key sites along the multiple silk roads using newly discovered documents preserved in the sands of the taklamakan desert

classic travel writing linking east and west asia with europe the silk road was once the most important trading route in the world a conduit for the exchange of prized silks spices and jewels as well as philosophies cultures and religions the silk road was a catalyst for the rise and fall of some of the greatest civilisations in history from the empires of alexander the great to genghis khan today as waves of tourists tread its abandoned routes and explore its ruined caravanserais they follow in the footsteps of this original silk road explorer sven hedin was one of the world s greatest explorers this is the first paperback edition of this classic book the popularity of the silk road continues to rise people love to read about it

this volume explores human migration communication and cross cultural exchange on the silk road a complex network of trade routes spanning the eurasian continent and beyond it covers thousands of years of human history from the 3rd millennium bce to the early 2nd millennium ce consolidating archaeological discoveries historical analyses and linguistic studies in one comprehensive volume the world of the ancient silk road brings to light diverse perspectives from scholars who have lived and worked across this vast region many of which are published here in english for the first time it contains extensive references of primary and

secondary sources in their original languages and scripts from early bronze age cultures to the rise of regional islamic empires from the mediterranean to the yellow river basin this multidisciplinary volume seeks to offer new insights and expand silk road studies to the anglophone world the world of the ancient silk road provides an essential reference work for students and scholars of world history particularly those studying the regions cultures and peoples explored in this volume

international bestseller far more than a history of the silk roads this book is truly a revelatory new history of the world promising to destabilize notions of where we come from and where we are headed next a rare book that makes you question your assumptions about the world the wall street journal from the middle east and its political instability to china and its economic rise the vast region stretching eastward from the balkans across the steppe and south asia has been thrust into the global spotlight in recent years frankopan teaches us that to understand what is at stake for the cities and nations built on these intricate trade routes we must first understand their astounding pasts frankopan realigns our understanding of the world pointing us eastward it was on the silk roads that east and west first encountered each other through trade and conquest leading to the spread of ideas cultures and religions from the rise and fall of empires to the spread of buddhism and the advent of christianity and islam right up to the great wars of the twentieth century this book shows how the fate of the west has always been inextricably linked to the east also available the new silk roads a timely exploration of the dramatic and profound changes our world is undergoing right now as seen from the perspective of the rising powers of the east

celebrating the cultural heritage of the countries along the silk route this text explores the ancient trade route between europe and the far east more specifically between rome and the old chinese capital of xian it examines the beautiful works of art discovered in each country and sets them in their historical and geographical context the author provides a comprehensive history of the silk road drawing freely on anecdotes and literary and historical sources he examines the lives of the merchants and other travellers who used this route vignettes and poems from the heyday of the great trading route punctuate a lively and colourful text which also features antonia tozer s evocative photographs

the phrase silk road evokes vivid scenes of merchants leading camel caravans across vast stretches to trade exotic goods in glittering oriental bazaars of pilgrims braving bandits and frozen mountain passes to spread their faith across asia looking at the reality behind these images this very short introduction illuminates the historical background against which the silk road flourished shedding light on the importance of old world cultural exchange to eurasian and world history on the one hand historian james a millward treats the silk road broadly to stand in for the cross cultural communication between peoples across the eurasian continent since at least the neolithic era on the other he highlights specific examples of goods and ideas exchanged between the mediterranean persia india and china along with the significance of these exchanges while including silks spices and travelers tales of colorful locales the book explains the dynamics of central eurasian history that promoted silk road interactions especially the role of nomad empires highlighting the importance of the biological technological artistic intellectual and religious interchanges across the continent millward shows that these exchanges had a profound effect on the old world that was akin to if not on the scale of modern globalization he also disputes the idea that the silk road declined after the collapse of the mongol empire or the opening of direct sea routes from europe to asia showing how silk road phenomena continued through the early modern and modern expansion of the russian and chinese states across central asia millward concludes that the idea of the silk road has remained powerful not only as a popular name for boutiques and restaurants but also in modern politics and diplomacy such as u s secretary of state hilary clinton s silk road initiative for india pakistan and afghanistan

the silk road was the most traveled trade route for over 1 000 years until it was eclipsed by maritime trade whitfield presents composite stories of merchants soldiers artists and princesses who traveled the route and presents its history through their personal experiences

for more than 1500 years across more than 4000 miles the silk roads connected east and west these overland trails and sea lanes carried not only silks but also cotton textiles dyes horses incense spices gems glass and ceramics along with religious ideas governing customs and technology for this book xinru liu has assembled primary sources from ancient china india central asia rome and the mediterranean and the islamic world many of them difficult to access and some translated into english for the first time liu s thoughtful introduction

considers the many ways the peoples along the silk roads interacted and helps students understand the implications for economies and societies as well as political and religious institutions over space and time

the romance of the journey along the silk road with its exotic locales and luxury goods still excites the popular imagination the trade route between china and central asia that flourished from about 200 bce to the 1500s the silk road can provide great insight for contemporary higher education curricula indeed with people plants animals ideas and beliefs traversing it the silk road is now considered both a metaphor of globalization and an early example of it teaching the silk road highlights the reasons to incorporate this material into courses and shares resources to facilitate that process it is intended for those who are not silk road or asian specialists but who wish to embrace a global history and civilizations perspective in teaching as opposed to the more traditional world history view that shows impacts of other societies on europe the work explores both classroom and experiential learning and is intentionally interdisciplinary each essay focuses on pedagogical strategies or themes that teachers can use to bring the silk road into the classroom

from roman times until the age of exploration the silk road carried goods and ideas across central asia between two major centers of civilization the mediterranean sea and china in the silk road explore the world s most famous trade route readers ages 9 12 will learn about the history geography culture and people of the silk road region marco polo was just one of many who set out on the silk road in search of wealth power or knowledge these adventurers braved vast deserts towering mountain peaks warring tribes and marauding bandits silk garments wool rugs and fine glass were the prizes for those who survived the trip activities using everyday materials bring the silk road to life young readers will see how ideas in math science religion and art were spread by travelers along with the treasures they found the silk road takes readers on an exciting interactive adventure to a faraway place and celebrates its important role in human history and development

in the recent years trade cultural exchange and transfer of knowledge in the indian ocean have come increasingly into the scope of various scholarly disciplines the previous perception that the exploitation of this sea did only start with the european colonial expansion at the

end of the 15th century had to be abandoned the europeans absorbed the long existing structures rather than creating new ones this concept of the indian ocean as a coherent space of transfer is also adopted in this volume some of the articles were presented at a conference held in vienna while the others were supplied independently the contributions are arranged around the two poles represented by the western and the eastern part of the indian ocean especially iran and china but also other cultures and the manifold relations with the land based silk road are discussed the time frame ranges from the 14th to the 17th century

stretching from the ancient chinese capital of xian across the expanses of central asia to rome the silk road was for 1 500 years a vibrant network of arteries that carried the lifeblood of nations across the world along a multitude of routes everything was exchanged exotic goods art knowledge religion philosophy disease and war from the east came silk precious stones tea jade paper porcelain spices and cotton from the west horses weapons wool and linen aromatics entertainers and exotic animals from its earliest beginnings in the days of alexander the great and the han dynasty the silk road expanded and evolved reaching its peak during the tang dynasty and the byzantine empire and gradually withering away with the decline of the mongol empire in this beautifully illustrated book which covers the china section of the silk road from xian through loulan korla turfan and khotan to kashgar and onwards to india jonathan tucker uses travellers anecdotes and a wealth of literary and historical sources to celebrate the cultural heritage of the countries that lie along the silk road and illuminate the lives of those who once travelled through the very heart of the world

the silk road which has been understood as a generalized route of trade between the east and the west is different from european north african and near eastern trade routes because until recently it has been understood as solely being a land route in fact it was believed to be the longest overland trade route in human history

the silk road we have a hazy mental image a lone traveler carrying silk on a camel moves along a desert where exactly is he going and what goods is he carrying this book offers concrete answers based on newly discovered documents preserved in the sands of the taklamakan desert it is amazing what has been dug up and how the new materials both documents and artifacts radically challenge our understanding of the silk road historians have

only recently begun to piece together and make sense of these materials which give a far clearer picture of actual silk road placing these documentary finds at the heart of the narrative this book also tells the story of the different explorers who found these documents and it teases out the implications of these documents for our understanding of the silk road we learn for example that the silk road was not really a road and that no one used the term silk road in the past the book focuses on the seven most important silk road sites that have produced document and objects from the silk road six niya kucha turfan dunhuang khotan and xi an are located in northwest china the seventh samarkand is in modern uzbekistan this college edition includes a selection of excerpted primary sources in each chapter the range is enormous memoirs of medieval chinese monks and modern explorers letters written by women descriptions of towns language learning materials for traveling monks and contracts among others instructors can select the documents they find most interesting to discuss in class students can use these materials write papers many of these are difficult to find and the author has checked all the translations to enhance their readability the college edition also includes a new final chapter that examines the silk road during the period of mongol rule to c 1400 ce

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Introduction

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