

## Empires of Ancient Eurasia

The Silk Roads are *the* symbol of the interconnectedness of ancient Eurasian civilizations. Using challenging land and maritime routes, merchants and adventurers, diplomats and missionaries, sailors and soldiers, and camels, horses and ships carried their commodities, ideas, languages and pathogens enormous distances across Eurasia. The result was an underlying unity that traveled the length of the routes and that is preserved to this day, expressed in common technologies, artistic styles, cultures and religions, even disease and immunity patterns. In words and images, Craig Benjamin explores the processes that allowed for the comingling of so many goods, ideas and diseases around a geographical hub deep in central Eurasia. He argues that the First Silk Roads Era was the catalyst for an extraordinary increase in the complexity of human relationships and collective learning, a complexity that helped drive our species inexorably along a path toward modernity.

Craig Benjamin is Professor of history at Grand Valley State University in Michigan. He is the author of several books and numerous chapters and articles on ancient history, including Volume 4 of the *Cambridge History of the World* (Cambridge 2015). Craig has filmed programs and courses for the History Channel and The Great Courses. He is a past President of the World History Association and Vice President of the International Big History Association.

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# Empires of Ancient Eurasia

*The First Silk Roads Era, 100 BCE–250 CE*

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## Contents

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	<i>page</i>
<i>List of Figures and Maps</i>	<i>ix</i>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Naming the Silk Roads	3
Conceptualizing the First Silk Roads Era	6
The Silk Roads from the Perspective of Big History	6
The Silk Roads as a World System or Human Web	9
The Silk Roads as an Ancient Globalization	12
Conclusion	14
Selected Further Reading	15
<b>1 Pastoral Nomads and the Empires of the Steppe</b>	<b>16</b>
Origins of Pastoral Nomadism	16
The Steppe and Pastoral Nomadic Lifeways	18
Bronze Age Pastoralist Migrations	21
Evolution and Domestication of the Horse	25
Flourishing of Militarized Nomads	29
Ancient China's Powerful Nomadic Neighbors: The Xiongnu and the Yuezhi	33
Migration of the Yuezhi	36
Conclusion	40
Selected Further Reading	40
<b>2 Early China: Prelude to the Silk Roads</b>	<b>42</b>
Pre-dynastic China	43
Early Dynastic China: Xia and Shang (c. 2100–1046 BCE)	46
Zhou Dynasty (1045–221 BCE)	50
Qin Dynasty (221–206 BCE)	53
Early Han Dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE)	57
Wudi and the “Triumph of Confucianism” (141–87 BCE)	60
Interregnum: The “New Dynasty” (9–23 CE)	66
Conclusion	67
Selected Further Reading	67
<b>3 Zhang Qian and Han Expansion into Central Asia</b>	<b>68</b>
Expedition of Zhang Qian	69
The Heavenly Horses of Dayuan	72

vi	Contents	
	Zhang Qian in Bactria	74
	Return to Han China	76
	Subsequent Missions of Zhang Qian and Outbreak of Hostilities with the Xiongnu	77
	Continued Han Military and Diplomatic Expansion into Central Asia	80
	Campaigns of 119–105 BCE	80
	Campaigns to Dayuan: 104–102 BCE	85
	Campaigns of 99–59 BCE	85
	Significance of the Mission of Zhang Qian to the Silk Roads	88
	Conclusion	89
	Selected Further Reading	90
4	The Early Han Dynasty and the Eastern Silk Roads	91
	Early Chinese Material Exchanges with Pastoral Nomads	93
	Han Diplomatic Missions and the Export of Silk	94
	Geographical Challenges of the Eastern Silk Roads Routes from China	98
	Departure from Chang'an, the Imperial Capital	100
	From Chang'an to Dunhuang	103
	From Dunhuang to Kashgar	104
	Routes beyond Kashgar	108
	Role of the Sogdians	110
	Role of the Bactrian Camel	112
	Silk: The Major Han Export Commodity	114
	Conclusion	117
	Selected Further Reading	118
5	The Roman Empire and the Western Silk Roads	119
	Roman Expansion: From City-State to Empire	120
	Punic Wars	121
	Expansion into Asia	125
	Political and Social Unrest in Late Republican Rome	125
	Civil Wars	126
	Augustus and the <i>Pax Romana</i>	127
	Evidence of Overland Trade Routes from the Mediterranean	129
	Parthian Stations	130
	Evidence from Palmyra	133
	Marinus of Tyre and a Journey to the Stone Tower	137
	Cultural Diffusion and Attitudes toward Silk in Rome	141
	Conclusion	146
	Selected Further Reading	147
6	The Parthian Empire and the Silk Roads	148
	Achaemenid Persian Empire	149
	Alexander of Macedon and the Hellenistic Era	151
	Constructing and Administering the Parthian Empire	155
	Parthian Expansion to the East and Conflict with the Saka	157
	Parthian Expansion to the West and Early Conflict with the Romans	160
	Parthian–Roman Relationship in the First and Second Centuries CE	162
	Parthian Role in Silk Roads Exchanges	168
	Second and First Centuries before the Common Era	168

Contents	vii
First and Second Centuries of the Common Era	170
Conclusion	174
Selected Further Reading	175
<b>7 The Kushan Empire: At the Crossroads of Ancient Eurasia</b>	<b>176</b>
Evidence for the Kushans	176
Yuezhi in Northern Bactria	181
The Early Kushans: Kujula Kadphises Constructs an Empire (c. 25–c. 85 CE)	183
Relations between the Early Kushans and the Roman and Han Empires	185
The Early Kushans: Kings Vima Takhtu and Vima Kadphises (c. 85–c. 126 CE)	188
The Great Kushans: King Kanishka (c. 127–153 CE)	190
Kanishka and Religion	192
Gandharan and Mathuran Art under the Great Kushans	193
Last of the Great Kushans: Huvishka and Vasudeva (c. 152–c. 225 CE)	197
Kushans and Sogdians	199
The Begram Treasure: Kushans and the Silk Roads	200
Conclusion	202
Selected Further Reading	203
<b>8 Maritime Routes of the First Silk Roads Era</b>	<b>204</b>
Geography of the Indian Ocean Basin	205
Early Trade in the Indian Ocean Basin	208
Discovery of Monsoon Winds	210
The <i>Periplus of the Erythraean Sea</i>	212
Roman Involvement in Indian Ocean Trade during the First Two Centuries CE	213
Principal Roman Ports	214
Principal Roman Exports	216
Principal South Asian Ports	217
Barygaza and Connections with the Kushan Empire	221
The <i>Muziris Papyrus</i> and the Value of Roman Trade with India	224
The Arabian Peninsula and Indian Ocean Trade	226
The Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean Trade	228
Han China and Maritime Trade	232
Conclusion	236
Selected Further Reading	236
<b>9 Collapse of Empires and the Decline of the First Silk Roads Era</b>	<b>238</b>
Imperial Disintegration across Eurasia	239
Collapse of the Later Han Dynasty	239
China during the “Age of Disunity”	241
Collapse of the Kushan Empire	245
Collapse of the Parthian Empire and Rise of the Sasanians	249
Rome and the “Crisis of the Third Century”	254
Reinterpreting the “Crisis of the Third Century”	257

viii	Contents	
	The Silk Roads and the Diffusion of Religions	260
	Spread of Buddhism into East Asia	260
	Spread of Christianity in the Eastern Mediterranean and Central Asia	265
	Spread of Zoroastrianism in Central Asia	267
	Spread of Manichaeism in Central and East Asia	269
	Spread of Hinduism into Southeast Asia	269
	The Silk Roads and Disease Epidemics in the Second and Third Centuries	271
	Antonine Plague (165–180 CE)	272
	An “Antonine Plague” in Late Han China? (151–185 CE)	273
	Plague of Cyprian (250–270 CE)	273
	Conclusion	274
	Selected Further Reading	275
	Conclusion	276
	<i>Bibliography</i>	284
	<i>Index</i>	298



## Figures and Maps

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### Figures

1.1 Mongolian steppe nomads scene: <i>gers</i> ( <i>yurts</i> ) and grazing animals	<i>page</i> 20
1.2 Horses grazing on the Mongolian steppe	28
1.3 Modern Mongolian archer with composite bow and arrow	31
1.4 The Amu Darya flowing through the Wakhan Corridor in modern Afghanistan	38
2.1 Shang Dynasty bronze wine container ( <i>pou</i> )	47
2.2 Shang Dynasty oracle bone inscription	49
2.3 Terracotta warriors in the tomb of the first Qin Dynasty emperor, Shi Huangdi (reigned 220–210 BCE)	56
2.4 Modern statue of Early Han Dynasty emperor Wudi (reigned 141–87 BCE)	61
3.1 Han Dynasty horses, carriages and riders (stone inscription)	73
3.2 Remains of the Han Dynasty Great Wall extension in Gansu Province, Western China	81
3.3 Remains of the Han Dynasty fortified gate at Yumen Pass, Gansu Province, China	82
4.1 Bactrian camels and religious figures, depicted on the walls of a cave at Mogao, near Dunhuang, Gansu Province, western China	95
4.2 Underground <i>qanat</i> irrigation system, Kerman Province, Iran	99
4.3 The Tarim Basin and Taklimakan Desert from space, with the snow-covered Tien Shan Mountains to the north, the Kunlun Massif to the south and the Pamirs to the west	106
4.4 Remains of the ancient Silk Roads town of Jiaohe, located on the northern route through the Tarim Basin, Xinjiang Province, China	107
4.5 The M41 (“Pamir Highway”) just below the 4,655-meter-high Ak-Baital Pass in the Pamir Mountains, modern Tajikistan	109

x	List of Figures and Maps	
4.6	A high pass through the Karakorum, Khunjerab National Park, Pakistan	111
4.7	Close-up of the head and shoulders of a Bactrian camel	113
4.8	The silk moth, or <i>Bombyx mori</i>	116
5.1	Illustration of Carthaginian general Hannibal and his forces crossing a high pass in the European Alps	123
5.2	Bronze statue of Julius Caesar in the Forum, Rome	128
5.3	Statue of Roman ruler Augustus (reigned 27 BCE–14 CE)	130
5.4	Ruins of the major commercial city of Palmyra, which thrived during the First Silk Roads Era, located in modern Syria	134
5.5	Roman female deity wearing silk, painted fresco discovered in the ruins of Pompeii	143
6.1	Ruins of Persepolis, one of the capitals of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Iran	151
6.2	Artist's rendering of Alexander of Macedon during the Battle of Gaugamela, drawn from a mosaic discovered in the ruins of Pompeii	154
6.3	Bronze statuette of a mounted Scythian warrior	158
6.4	Parthian silver <i>drachm</i> of Parthian king Mithridates II (r. c. 121–91 CE)	160
6.5	Bronze sestertius depicting Emperor Trajan (r. 98–117 CE)	166
7.1	Gold coin of Kushan king Kanishka I (r. 127–153 CE), showing the king sacrificing at a fire altar	191
7.2	Standing Gandharan Bodhisattva Maitreya (The Future Buddha), second century	195
7.3	Mathuran bust of a crowned Bodhisattva, second century CE	196
7.4	Gold coin depicting Kushan king Huvishka (reigned c. 152–c. 190 CE)	198
7.5	Reverse of gold coin of Kushan King Vasudeva (reigned c. 191–c. 225 CE)	199
7.6	Circular medallion depicting Aphrodite and Eros, discovered as part of the Begram hoard	202
8.1	Fragment of scene representing the expedition to the land of Punt organized by Queen Hatshepsut (1507–1458 BC), the Temple of Hatshepsut, western Thebes, Egypt	209
8.2	The Indus River flowing through Sind Province in modern Pakistan	223
8.3	Dhow sailing near the East African island of Madagascar	227
8.4	Aerial view of two islands in the Maldives, the source of cowrie shells that were traded with the Shang Dynasty in China	233
9.1	Gold coin depicting Gupta king Chandragupta II (r. 376–414) as an archer, influenced by Kushan coin design	247

List of Figures and Maps	xi
9.2 Drawing of a rock relief at Naqsh-e Rostam, depicting Sasanian king Ardashir I (r. 224–242 CE) receiving the kingship ring from Ahura Mazda. The horses are trampling the last Parthian king, Ardavan, and the evil Zoroastrian spirit Ahriman. Artist: Luft Ali Khan (1797–1869)	250
9.3 Illustration of the ruins of the arch built by Sasanian king Khusro I (reigned 531–579 CE), Ctesiphon	252
9.4 Marble bust of Roman emperor Alexander Severus (r. 222–235 CE)	256
9.5 Ruins of the Buddhist monastery complex at Takht-i-Bahi, near Mardan in modern Pakistan. The complex dates to the first century CE.	261
9.6 Buddhist sculpture, Longmen Grottoes, near Luoyang, China	264
9.7 Inside an ancient Zoroastrian <i>dakhma</i> (Tower of Silence), Yazd, modern Iran	268
9.8 The temple complex at Angkor Wat in modern Cambodia, which blends Buddhist and Hindu architectural styles	271
<b>Maps</b>	
1.1 General Direction of the Migration of the Yuezhi	39
2.1 Map of Warring States Era (400–220 BCE), Late Zhou Dynasty	51
2.2 Han Dynasty empire	65
3.1 Map of Han campaigns against the Xiongnu	87
4.1 Map of major Silk Roads land routes	101
6.1 Map of the Roman Empire during the reign of Trajan (r. 98–117 CE)	165
6.2 Parthian Empire in the second century CE	172
7.1 Kushan Empire in the second century CE	178
8.1 Indian Ocean monsoon patterns	207
8.2 Map of the Indian Ocean Basin during the First Silk Roads Era	218
9.1 Three Kingdoms period in post-Han Dynasty China, 230–280 CE	243

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