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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