
The Role Of Silk Roads In The Ancient World

To raise the issue of globalization how linked we are in our present culture and where it comes from, one of the primary ways that has evolved over time is through trade routes and the concept of all trade paths is the Silk Roads. Evidence indicates that some of these paths existed during the foundation age, but during the Classical era, when strong empires served as manufacturers, customers and protectors, they would achieve a fresh level.

As a kind of relay system, the Silk Roads evolved over time, it is essential to remember that no group of travelers made the entire trip, instead they would travel back and forth through a specific section trading as they moved.

Eurasian landmass home to the bulk of the world's population and many of its most economically productive fields are split by geography and historical growth in India, China, the Middle East, and a series of economically diverse urban centers, countries, and empires. These countries were on the outskirts of the continent or called outer Asia between them laid the cooler plains and steppes of Inner Asia, these territories were home to nomadic pastoral communities of cattle animals, these nomadic pastoralists of Inner Asia bred cattle and traded animal products with the individuals of the outer zone.

They also started transporting products from one region to another, thus serving as goods transport over Eurasia. These pastoralists worked as an indirect approach of communication between the outer zone empires, for instance during the classical era a Roman never directly met a Han Chinese, but through the indirect links that nomadic travelers formed over time, they taught each other. System created in which travelers on the Silk Road, the journey of days away stop to rest and remain overnight at a caravanserai type of tourists in these Inns dotted the paths of the Silk Roads as well as the post-classical era across the Sahara Desert.

Because of the price of long-distance travel, staples and other foodstuffs were too heavy to perform on the Silk Roads, the trade network thus carried lightweight, low-cost products, particularly silk, spices and porcelain from the East and wine gold and other Western products.

Chinese silk has been manufactured by Chinese women peasants for centuries and consumed by Chinese top women, progressively top males such as public officials and religious figures in China and elsewhere have started to request silk. For clothing and wall hangings, Europeans used soap. For millennia, China enjoyed a monopoly on its manufacture of silk, but the understanding of how to manufacture soap spread to the Byzantine Empire and numerous sites in Asia by the sixth century of the Common Era. As supply improved so did the different kinds of

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silk as well as the different uses for it.

Of course, along the Silk Roads, religions in general were transported more than products, but Buddhism in specific also spread. It acquired converts among pastoral peoples and in Oasis cities as Buddhism spread. There were many monasteries that became centers of wisdom and learning and served financial functions. The Universal message of Buddhism had a powerful attraction to inner Asia's cosmopolitan merchants. As the doctrine shifted from Buddhism to India, the branch of Mahayana became the most predominant. Mahayana Buddhism saw the Buddha as a god-like figure, promoted Bodhisattvas veneration, and emphasized different rituals. Wealthy monasteries have started to engage along the Silk Roads in political and economic affairs. Buddhist art and culture have affected Greek culture in Bactria. Not all that spread, however, had also spread beneficial pathogens or disease-causing microbes. In the Classical era, on either end of Eurasia, smallpox and measles triggered different epidemic outbreaks.

These epidemics triggered decreases in the population in both instances and led to the empires' collapse. Between 534 and 750 of the Common Era bubonic plague broke out in different locations around the Mediterranean at different moments, sometimes these outbreaks could kill thousands in a day, as in Constantinople's 40-day epidemic in 534. The most renowned case of epidemic illness, though, was black death, spread from China to Europe and the Middle East during the mongol control of the Silk Roads. Between 1346 and 1350 one-third of the European population was murdered.

As crucial as trade was on the Silk Roads, it can be created a powerful case that trade in the Indian Ocean was at least equal if not more important to the Eastern Hemisphere's economies. Evidence indicates that some trade took place in the Indian Ocean during the foundation period, for instance the Indus Valley Civilization had trade contact with Mesopotamia and traded up and down the Red Sea with Egypt. The periodic wind patterns of the Indian Ocean monsoons enabled the Classical era to travel relatively easily and consistently. These patterns enable the Romans, for instance, to trade indirectly for Southeast Asian black pepper. Toward the end of the era Malay sailors began to make long-distance travels across the oceans bringing various crops such as bananas and coconuts as far as East Africa.

The development of new shipbuilding and navigation techniques has enabled sailors from different places around the Indian Ocean to participate in seagoing trade. These techniques included boats known as dows that used late-teen sails to enable boats to tackle the wind, Chinese changes referred to as junks using stern rudder for greater accuracy, and instruments such as the astrolabe and compass for better navigation.

Thanks to its main geographical place as well as its vibrant economy, India became the

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centerpiece of trade in the Indian Ocean Basin. Access to riches connected with trade in the Indian Ocean enables to clarify why Southern India has never really been integrated into the multiple empires centered in northern India. The financial resurgence in China during the Tang and Song periods gave the Indian Ocean trade enormous financial boost. China has manufactured a range of export products to the remainder of the globe, increasing the amount of trade on these ocean paths. China has also served a range of Indian and South-East Asian products as a market.

The increase of Islam had a beneficial effect on trade for a number of reasons, first of all because the Prophet Muhammad was a merchant who served as a favorable role model for other merchants as opposed to China, where merchants were considered of questionable moral value, secondly as the realm of Islam expanded quickly, the Dar al-Islam notion, incorporating a number of distinct financial centers, established a single political system. Islam has developed an global maritime culture in the Indian Ocean.

Although India prospered as the Indian Ocean's centerpiece traded, it is also the case that this trade helped boost change on the Indian Ocean basin's eastern and western sides. This has resulted to the increase of several new nations in Southeast Asia. The first of these was a sumatra-based buddhist kingdom, possessing its authority to regulate the flow of trade through the Malacca straits. Sri Vijaya became a fabulously rich and cosmopolitan location with the taxes gathered from vessels passing through this vital shock point in trade between the Indian Ocean and East Asia.

The second was a Hindu state focused on what is now Cambodia, the Khmer had a powerful agricultural base but also traded with Chinese and Indian merchants forest products. They also created a way of managing monsoon rains to generate fresh water reservoirs for a increasing population. However, the population eventually outstripped the water supply and the Empire would be dissolved.

Islam had spread to Southeast Asia by the end of the post-classical era and an Islamic state was formed at the Malacca Straits. For exactly the same reasons that Sri Vijaya did previously, it grew prosperous.

While Islam penetrated comparatively later into the eastern part of the Indian Ocean basin, it spread soon into the western side, producing a distinctive hybrid culture that would become a main characteristic of Indian Ocean commerce. This was the Swahili people's civilization on the eastern coast of Africa, while initially a Bantu descent, through their involvement, this civilization developed a fresh identity. The networks of trade in the Indian Ocean. While the Swahili Coast had for centuries traded with northern merchants, Islam's increase marked a drastic turning point in the fortunes of the region. Swahili merchants exported African interior products and

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sometimes slaves to India, Southeast Asia, and China markets.

In contrast, products such as Indian art and Chinese porcelain were imported. The Swahili culture was an urban culture made up of perhaps 2 to 20, 000 autonomous city-states. These societies had intense social stratification between elites and commoners, despite a common language and culture, there was no political unity. There was a wealthy fusion of different cultures from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia in the Swahili city-states. For instance, the Swahili language is of a Bantu origin, but it utilizes Arabic script, and has many Arabic loan words that it would become the lingua franca of Indian Ocean trade, that is, it was the unofficial official language of trade across the Indian Ocean. Thus, traders would learn Swahili as the prevalent language of trade throughout.

With the spread of Islam, Africa's east coast was home to a big population of Muslims who did not trace their origins back to the Arab Peninsula but saw themselves as part of the bigger dar al-Islam Islamic community. They saw fellow black Africans as Muslims who didn't practice Islam as outsiders, that is, if you weren't a Muslim even if you were in Africa they thought you were distinct from them. They therefore thought that they had more in common with Arabs and Persians than among the Africans many of whom continued to practice animism. The Swahili merchants forged connections with individuals inside the continent as well as further south to south and inland from the coast lay the amazing Kingdom of Great Zimbabwe, with big stone structures in its capital showing a great deal of riches and social organization.

So there was another instance in West Africa besides the Indian Ocean, the trade system there permitted West African people to plug into a bigger network. The origins of Western African trade go back to the classical age, but it is essential to note that distinct settings exist in and around the Sahara, each creating a distinct collection of products. To the north on the Mediterranean coasts where communities generate products like guns, instruments, books, clothes, and glassware. The Sahara itself had copper and salt deposits as well as a date-palm oasis. There were savanna grasslands to the immediate south in the Sahel, millet and sorghum farmers as well as huge gold deposits. Further south, root and tree crops like yam and Kola nuts grew in the forests.

The advent of the camel altered the course of trade in Africa now in return for gold and other products in the west, huge caravans of hundreds and thousands of camels could carry salt and other products from the north across the hazardous Sahara. The news of Islamic revelations would soon be brought to West Africa by Arab merchants. There were a number of urban centers along the Niger River that were important commercial hubs during the Classical era. These towns created the foundation of the civilization of the Niger River.

With Islam spreading in the post-classical era, Arab tourists knew the lands south of the Sahara

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as Sudan, which was the term they used that meant black soil. Unlike the lighter-skinned Berbers who were indigenous to the Maghreb of North Africa. As the network started expanding its wealth, it would have both social and political and economic implications. Due to their monopoly power over the sarin train rats and their access to abundant gold deposits, several empires such as Ghana, Mali, and Songhai have evolved into rich states.

While males usually enjoyed patriarchal power positions, females played significant roles in court and in the workforce as farm workers and craft products manufacturers like pottery. Gender roles in West Africa were generally more egalitarian than in dar al-Islam elsewhere. As elsewhere in the globe, multiple types of slavery existed, slaves were usually taken further south from stateless societies, and many slaves were exported to the northern Islamic slave markets. However, it is essential to remember that most slaves were mainly domestic servants, as opposed to difficult workers we associate in subsequent periods with chattel slavery.

In other words, they were still treated as human beings, especially if they had converted to Islam, before they died they would have to be set free. Their kids were not automatically born into slavery, so many of the things we associate with slavery do not really apply during this time span, yet they are still being caught and purchased and sold as a kind of property. West African cities' wealth created them commercial and manufacturing centers, but also cultural education and religion. Cities such as Jenay, Timbuktu, and Gao would become major places that attracted merchants and academics from all over dar al-Islam.

So Strayer returns to this concept of globalization of interconnectedness in the reflection chapter and looks at how this word is a little distinct in ancient times than in contemporary times and he points out a few contrasts.

In the ancient world comparatively light luxury goods dominated the ancient financial networks because of transportation expenses, by comparison in the industrialized modern world beings could ship commodities for mass consumption. The more ancient trade networks concentrated more on luxury products, whereas the more contemporary trade networks concentrate on mass-consumption products. Another distinction in the ancient world is a comparatively balanced system with no dominant core if you believe about the Classical era, especially when you have Han China on the one hand of the Silk Road trade paths and the Roman Empire on the other. You will have the tang dynasty and the Abbasid kind of in the middle and Byzantine Empire on the other side later on. So in the modern era, in comparison, it kind of spread out, Western European civilizations came to dominate the worldwide system. And this is indeed evolving in our lives, but it is still more or less the case that Western Europe and the United States are very strongly influencing international trade.

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