



The Silk Roads: A Brief History with Documents (Bedford Cultural Editions Series)

Xinru Liu

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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. Court histories, geographies and philosophical treatises, letters, travelers' accounts, inventories, inscriptions, laws, religious texts, and more, introduce students to the complexities of cultural exchange. 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. Maps, document headnotes and annotations, a chronology, questions for consideration, and a selected bibliography offer additional pedagogical support.

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