

Silk Roads. Contacts and exchanges, 500–1000 (London, 5–6 Dec 24)

BP Lecture Theatre, British Museum, London, Dec 5–06, 2024

Zumrad Ilyasova

Silk Roads. Contacts and exchanges across Afro-Eurasia, AD 500–1000.

Join a two-day international conference exploring new discoveries and perspectives on the far-reaching contacts and exchanges that took place across Afro-Eurasia in the pivotal period from AD 500 to 1000.

Since the early use of the term in the 19th century, the 'Silk Roads' have come to mean so much more than a route for trading silk from East to West. Coinciding with the British Museum special exhibition Silk Roads, this two-day conference brings together 18 scholars and chairs from various disciplines to explore an expanded understanding of the Silk Roads. Presenting new discoveries and perspectives, this conference highlights the many instances and contexts in which people, objects and ideas moved and contacts and exchanges took place across Afro-Eurasia, from East Asia to Britain, Scandinavia to Madagascar, in the period AD 500 to 1000.

The conference will be accompanied by the Sir Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art Annual Lecture. The keynote speaker is Susan Whitfield, Professor in Silk Road Studies at the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures, University of East Anglia.

// Programme //

I Thursday, 5 December

10.00 h

Registration/ Coffee and Tea

10.30 h

Welcoming Remarks (TBC)

10.40 h

Introduction to the Silk Roads Exhibition

Sue Brunning, Yu-Ping Luk, Elisabeth R O'Connell, British Museum

I Session 1. Interwoven Worlds: Politics, Culture and Economy

11.00 h

Beyond Silk and Roads: Conceptualizing Premodern Transregional Interactions

Tansen Sen, Center for Global Asia, New York University Shanghai

11.25 h

Margin or Pivot? Byzantium in the World of Afro-Eurasian Connectivities

Claudia Rapp, University of Vienna

11.50 h

Economic Connections and Regional Development along the Silk Roads, by Land and Sea

Chris Wickham, University of Oxford emeritus

12.15 h | Q&A

12.30 – 14:00 h | Lunch

I Session 2. New Archaeological Discoveries

14.00 h

Silk Roads Textiles (AD 500–1000) in Recent Archaeological Excavations in Northwest China

Zhao Feng, Zhejiang University

14.25 h

Medieval Cities of the Chüy Valley on the Great Silk Road

Valerii Kolchenko, Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnology of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic

14.50 h

New Material on Late Sogdian History, Art, and Religion from the Excavations at Sanjar-Shah

Michael Shenkar, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

15.15 h | Q&A

15.30–16:00 h | Coffee and Tea break

The Sir Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art Annual Lecture

18.00 h | Welcome

Colin Sheaf FSA, The Sir Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art

18.05 h

The Horse in Chinese Life and Art: a Temporary Visitor?

Susan Whitfield, Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures, University of East Anglia

I Friday 6 December

10:00 h | Coffee and Tea

10.30 h | Welcoming Remarks

I Session 4. Expanded Networks

10.35 h

Nara to Norwich: Art and Belief at the Ends of the Silk Roads

Simon Kaner, Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures, University of East Anglia

11.00 h

Traces of Contacts Between the Silk Roads and the Viking Age North

Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson, Centre for the World in the Viking Age, Uppsala University

11.25 h

Suffolk to Syria: The Anglo-Saxons Who Fought in the Byzantine Army?

Helen Gittos, University of Oxford

11.50 h | Q&A

12.05-13:30 h | Lunch

I Session 5. Reconsidering Visual Material Culture

13.30 h

The 'Christian Saint' Painting from Dunhuang in the British Museum and Its Identification as a Manichaean Image of Jesus, the Guide for the Afterlife

Zsuzsanna Gulacsi, Northern Arizona University

13:55 h

Reconstructing, Restoring and Reconsidering an Astrological Scroll from Turfa

Lilla Russell-Smith, Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin

14.20 h

Pottery and Poetry: Glazed Ceramics on the Silk Roads

Djangar Ilyasov, Institute of Art Studies, Tashkent

14.45 h | Q&A

15.00–15:15 h | Coffee and Tea break

I Session 6. Local and Global Histories

15.15 h

Along the Hindukush in Afghanistan: How People Communicated and Conducted Their Business in the 'Land of the Snowy Mountains'

Arezou Azad, Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales, Paris

15.40 h

Persia(n) in Egypt: How People, Practices and Products Moved from East to West in the Early Islamic Empire

Petra Sijpesteijn, Leiden University

16.05 h

The Caliphate and the Silk Road

Hugh Kennedy, SOAS University of London

16.30 h | Q&A

16.45 h | Concluding Remarks

Please note: programme subject to change

Reference:

CONF: Silk Roads. Contacts and exchanges, 500-1000 (London, 5-6 Dec 24). In: ArHist.net, Nov 27, 2024 (accessed Jul 2, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/43227>>.