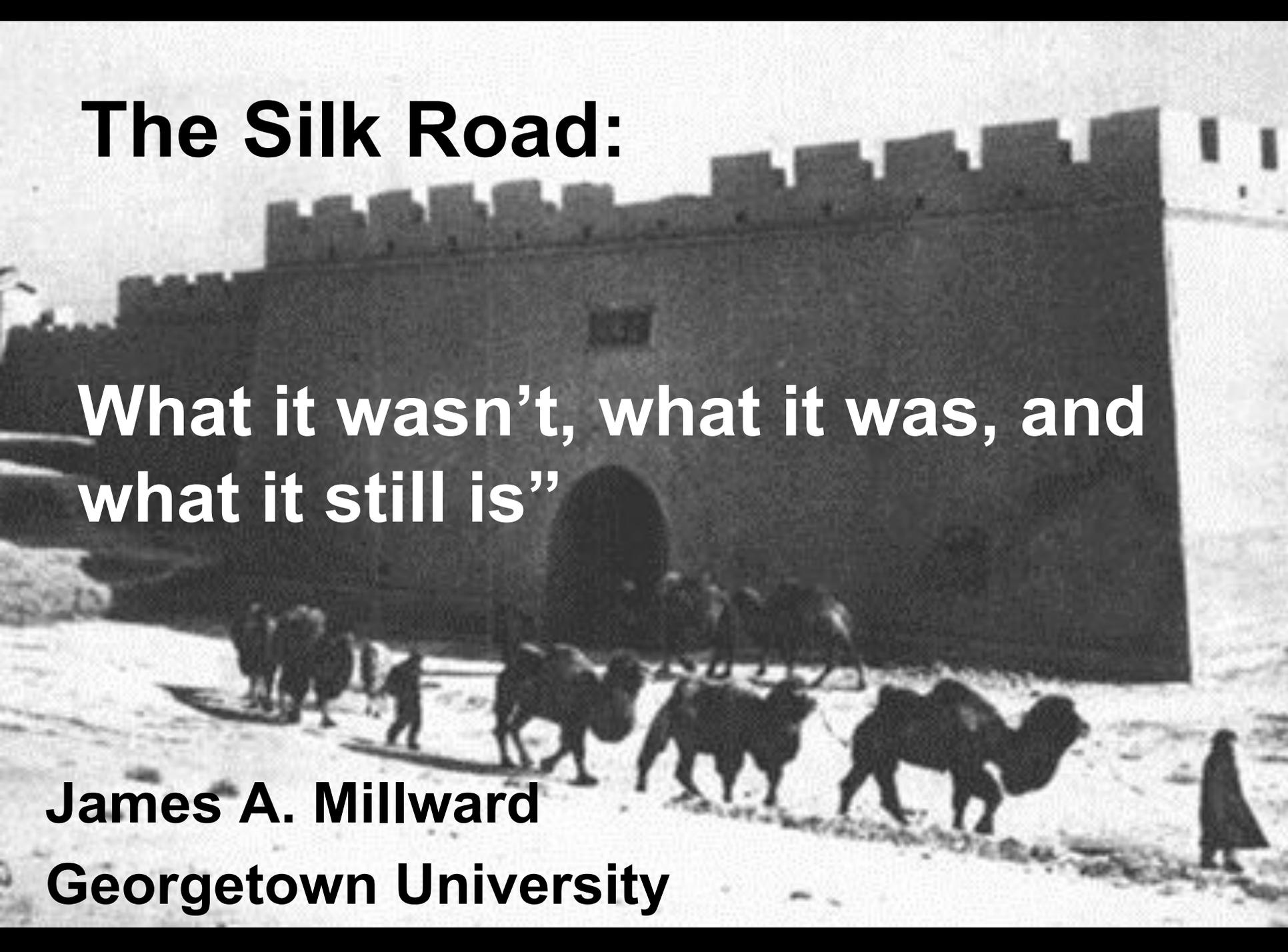


The Silk Road:

**What it wasn't, what it was, and
what it still is”**

**James A. Millward
Georgetown University**



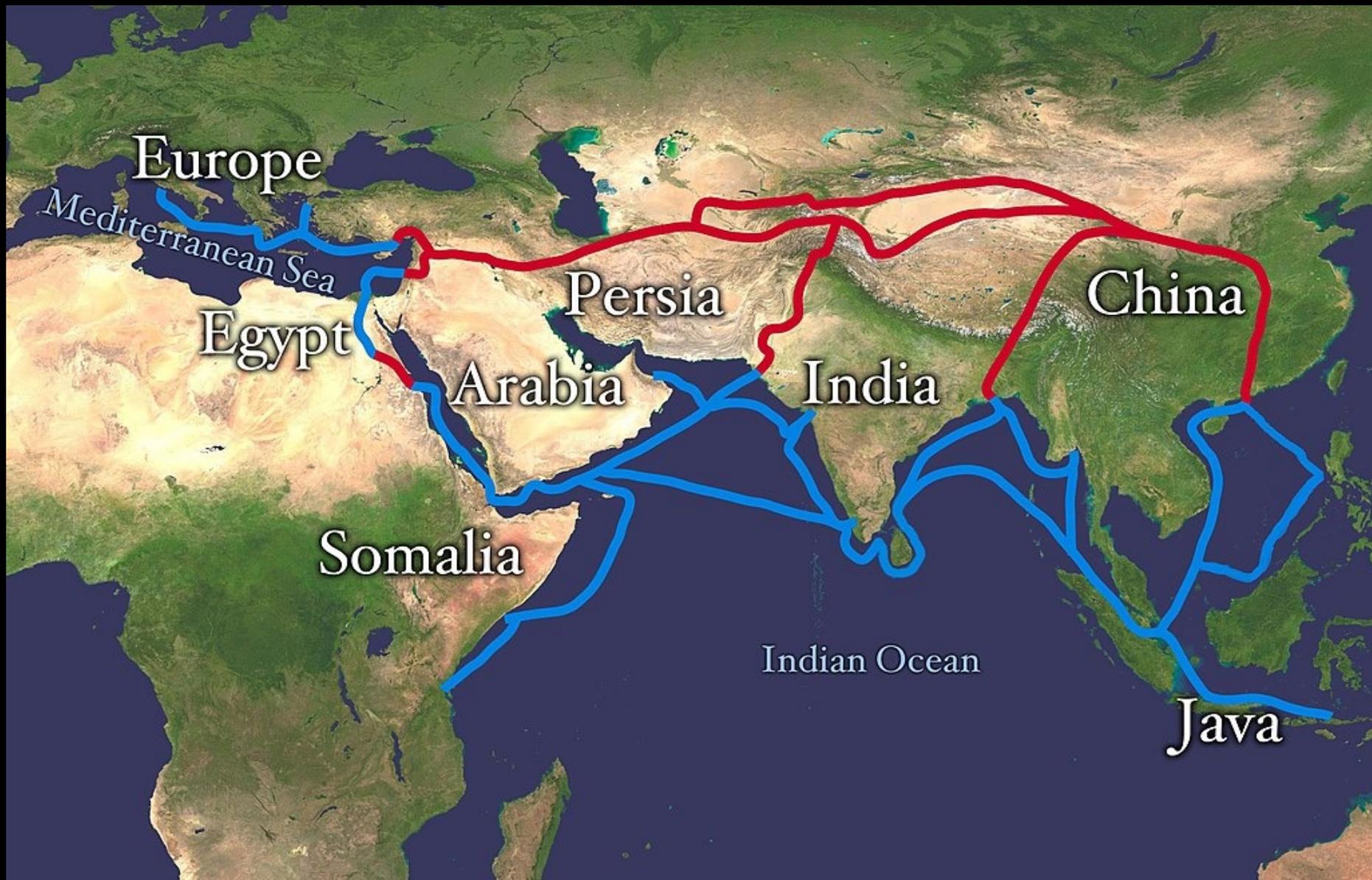
I. What the silk road was not

II. What we *do* mean what we talk about
“the silk road”

III. The Silk Road today

I. Silk Road Myths

- That it was a highway across the continent
- That it went from China to Rome
- That merchants were in charge
- That it's about Thing X moving from Point A to Point B
- That the Silk Road died c. 1500



Europe

Mediterranean Sea

Egypt

Persia

Arabia

India

China

Somalia

Indian Ocean

Java



I. Silk Road Myths

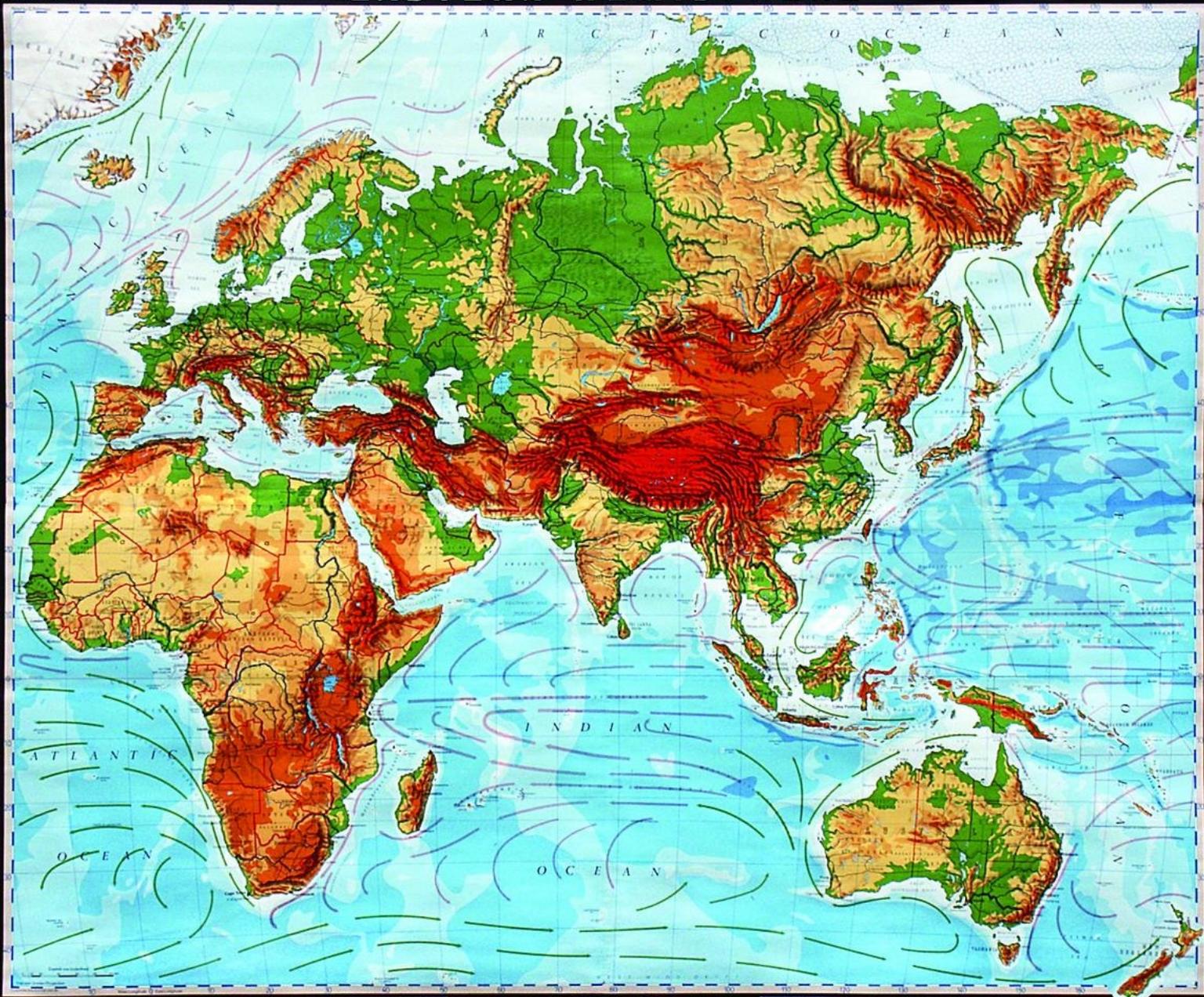
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EASTERN HEMISPHERE



1:10 000 000



KLETT-PERTHES

II. What we mean when we talk about the silk road:

The history of trans-Eurasian exchange, from prehistoric to contemporary times

Complex cultural exchange and transculturation

- Things (are) moved--**exchange**
- The concept of a thing is moved, and the thing reproduced elsewhere — **technology transfer**
- The concept moves, but is misinterpreted – **game of telephone**
- Things are created / occur independently in different places (possibly due to a common cause) – **convergence, integrated history**
- The thing is reimagined in a new locale, without the thing itself -- **Dürer's Rhinoceros**



But: things have “social and cultural lives,” they exist in networks of associations, clouds of meaning. What happens to this “baggage” that they travel with?

- The meaning conveys with the thing
- The meaning gets left behind
- The meaning changes, or develops in different ways in a new place
- **Transculturation** happens with silk road exchange

Examples

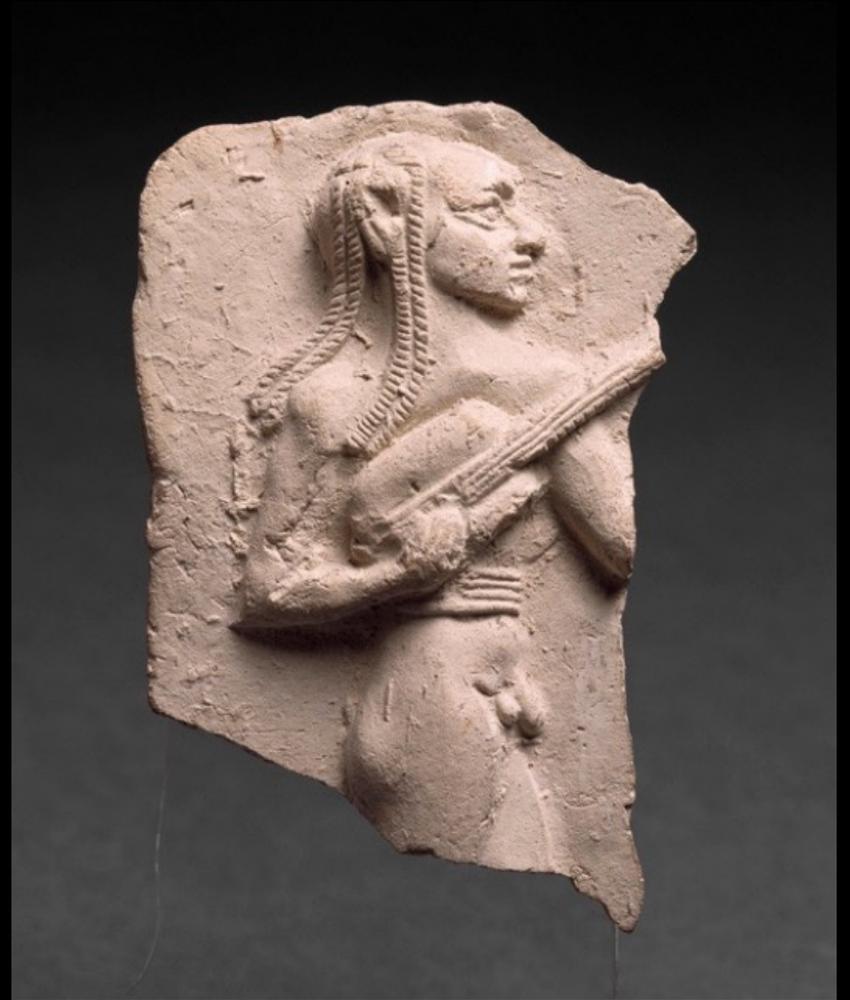
- Religions
- Ancient lutes, from Mesopotamia and Anatolia to Egypt
- Gandharan Indo-Greek sculpture
- Blue and White ware 青花瓷
- Dumplings (*manti*)

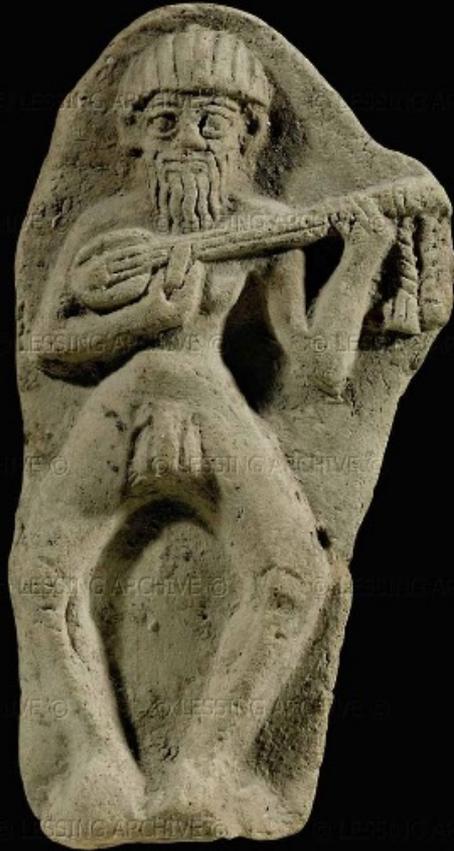


Walking player of long-necked lute. Hair dressed, formal robe, beard.

**Uruk. (IM 46588) Iraq
Museum, Bagdad -2900-
2370 B.C.E.-**

Stamped terra
cotta of lutenist
with shaved head
and braids,
Eshnunna (Tell
Asmar, Iraq),
2334-2000.
Louvre, AO
12457.





Molded terra cotta figurine
of a bearded "dwarf"
lutenist, Susa, Southwest
Iran, middle Elamite
period (1500-1100 BCE,
fl. ca. 1350-1150). 8.6 x
4.5 cm. Louvre Sb 6579.



Bas-relief from walls of the Sphinx Gate at Alaca Höyük (image of the original, now housed in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara). Ca. 15th century BCE.

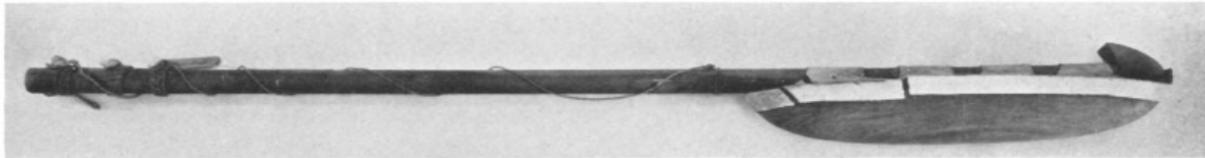
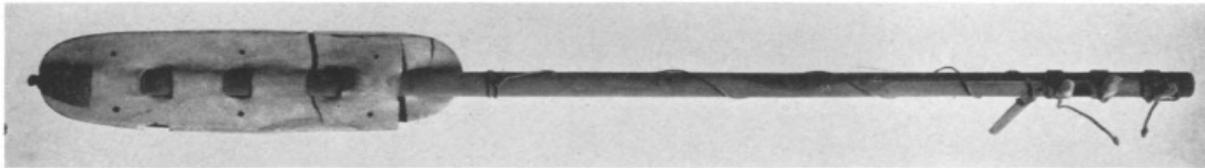
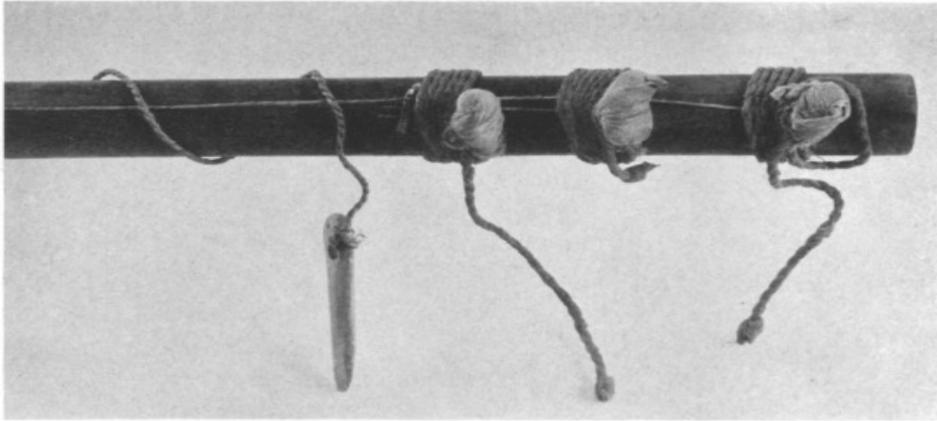


Detail of lute player and figures in lion-skins, from Triumphal March frieze, from northwest palace of Ashurnasipal II, Nimrud, ca. 870 BCE, room B, panel 6 (top). British Museum WA124550.

New Kingdom Egypt
From c. 16th century BCE

Following invasion by the
Hyksos





The lute of "the singer Har-mosē," about 1490 B.C. Found by the Museum's Egyptian Expedition and now in Cairo

Lute of the singer Harmose, ca. 1490, from a secondary tomb in Senemut's burial complex, western Thebes, Egypt.

Note plectrum, secured on a string now wrapped around the neck.



Detail of lower register of a polychrome painting from the Tomb of Nebamun, Thebes (18th Dynasty, ca. 1350 BCE) depicting seated musicians, including two female lute-players. Width 50 cm. British Museum EA37984.



Faience drinking bowl with female lute player, monkey, lotus flowers and grape vine. Egypt, ca. 1400-1300 BCE. 4.5 x 14 cm. In the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden, Netherlands. Object number AD 14.

Ostrakon painting of a recumbent woman and a lute on a limestone fragment from 19th Dynasty (1292-1189), found in Deir el-Medina, near Luxor. 10.5 cm. Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, Cairo, FIAO 3000.





Frieze from a temple in Gandhara (modern Afghanistan) c. 1st c. CE (?), now in British Museum

What story is this illustrating?

Hercules / Vajrapani
As protector of the Buddha

Hercules' club becomes a Vajra
(lightning bolt)



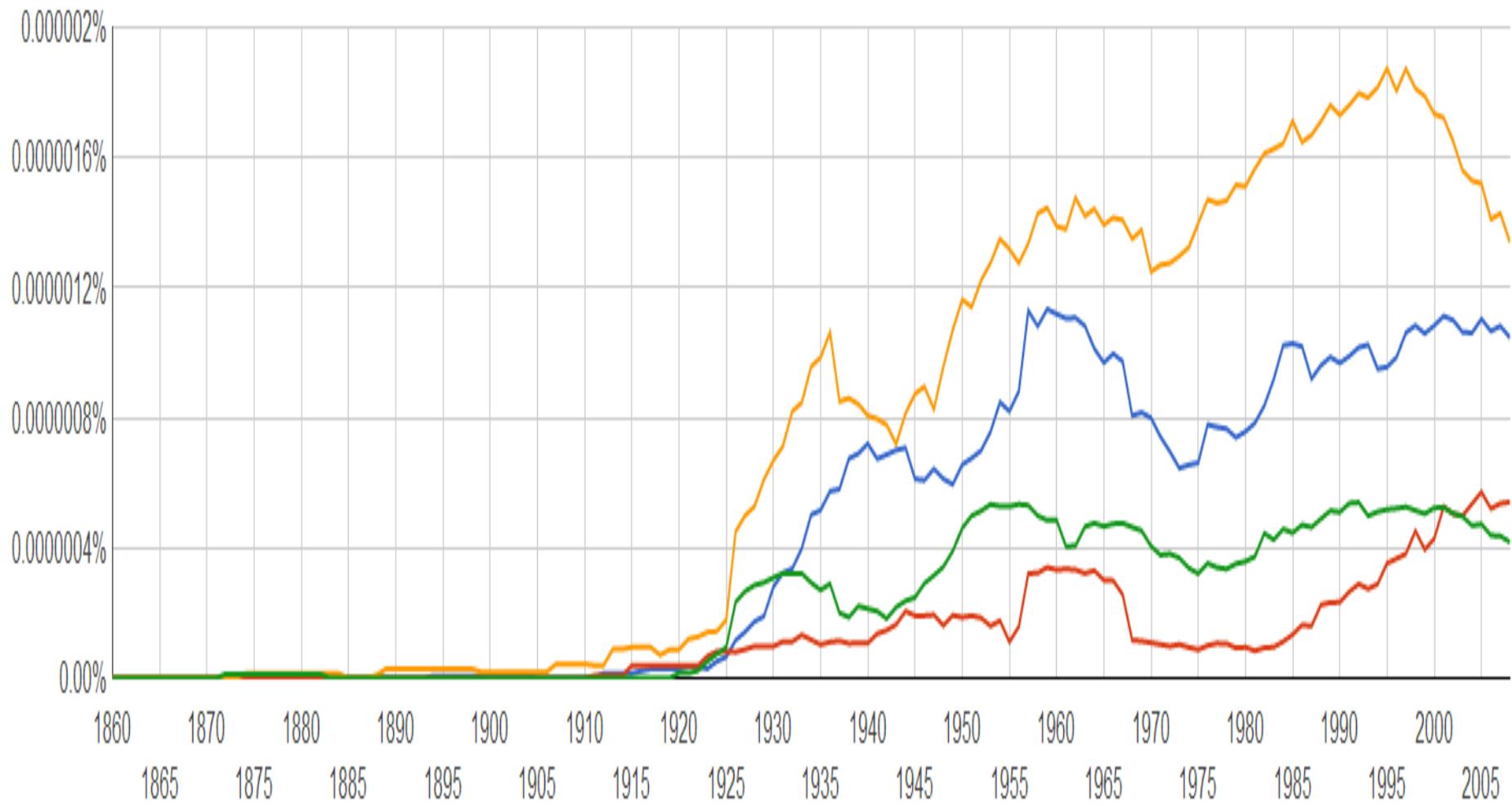




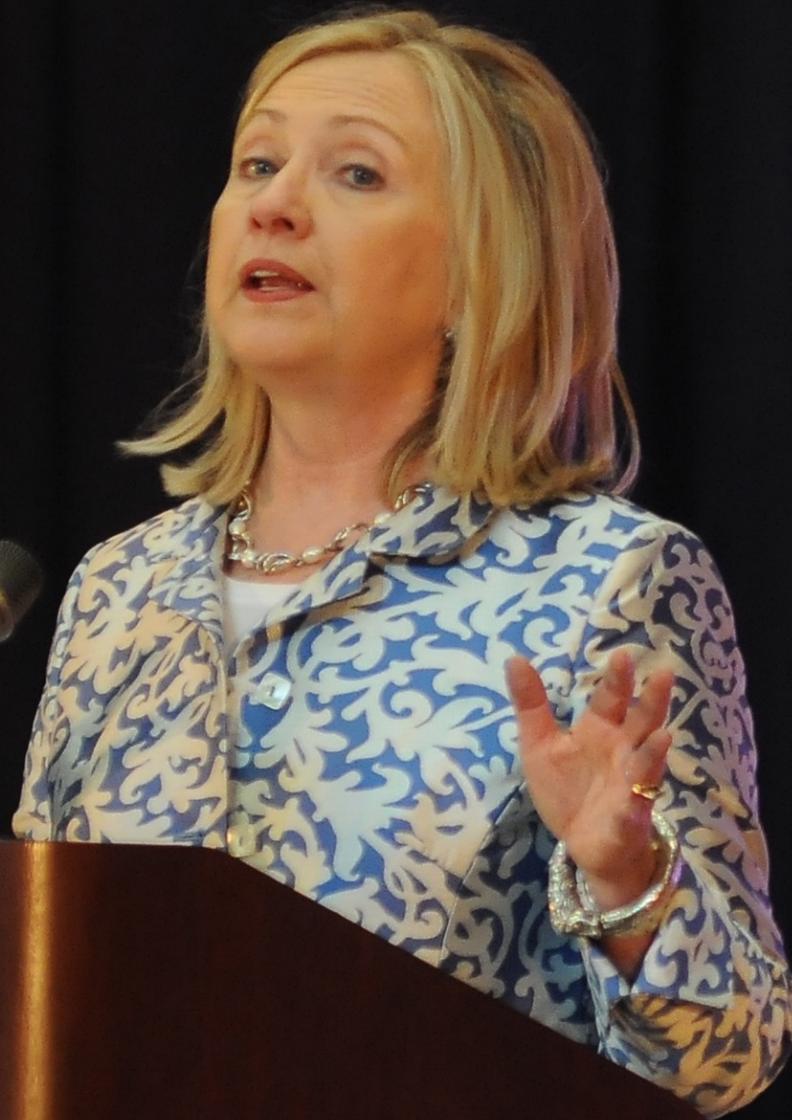


Ferdinand von Richtoven

■ silk road ■ silk roads ■ silk route ■ silk routes



“Let's work together to create a new Silk Road.”



India and the United States

A Vision for the 21st Century



Chennai, India



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Chinese President Xi Jinping and the Belt and Road Initiative



“Xi Jinping expressed that more than 2,100 years ago, during China's Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24), imperial envoy Zhang Qian was sent to Central Asia twice to open the door to friendly contacts between China and Central Asian countries as well as the transcontinental Silk Road linking East and West, Asia and Europe.”

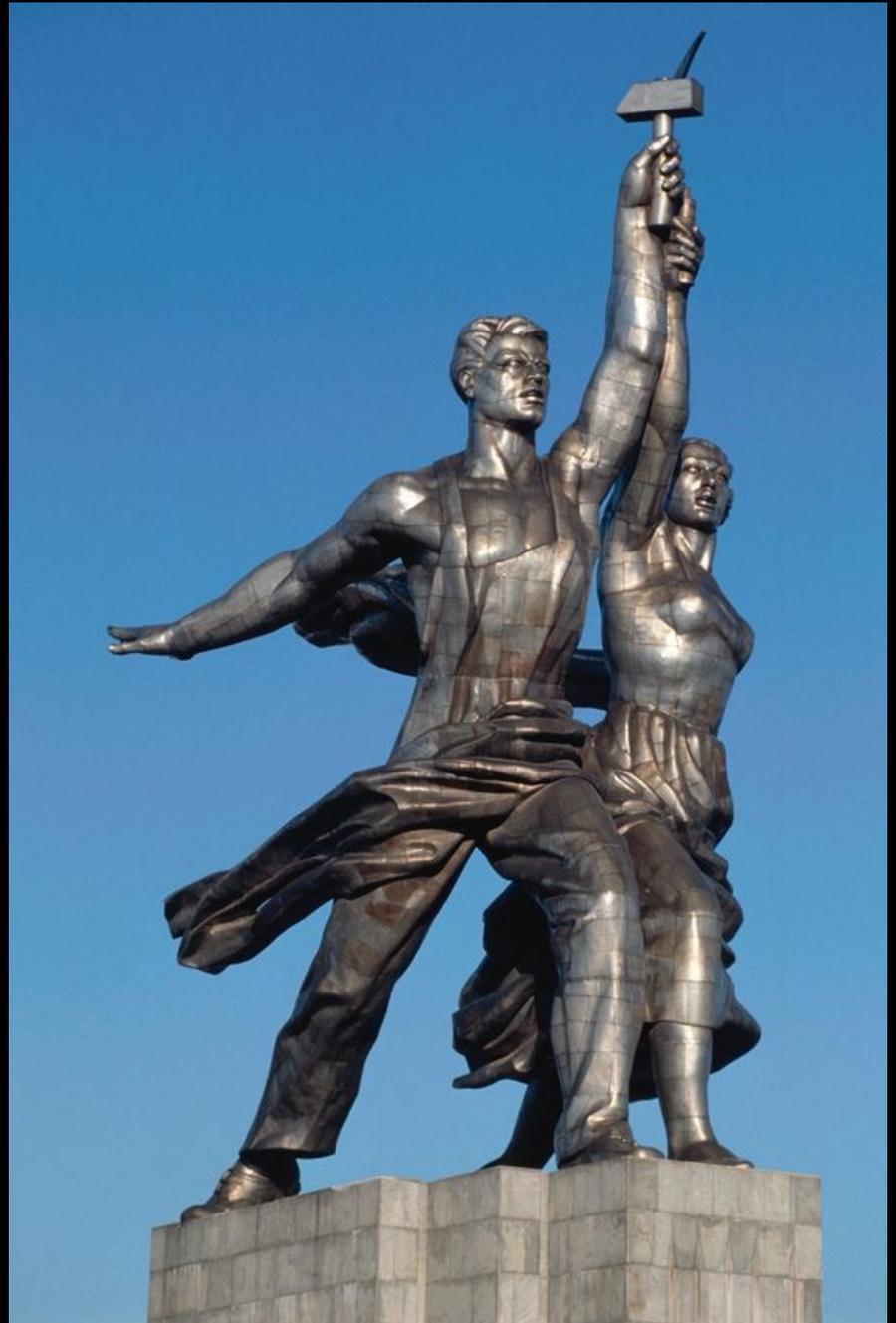
--Xi Jinping, “Promote Friendship Between Our People and Work Together to Build a Bright Future,” speech delivered at Nazarbayev University, Astana, Kazakhstan, 7 September 2013.

“In the early 15th century, Zheng He, the famous Chinese navigator in the Ming Dynasty, made seven voyages to the Western Seas, a feat which still is remembered today. These pioneers won their place in history not as conquerors with warships, guns or swords. Rather, they are remembered as friendly emissaries leading camel caravans and sailing treasure-loaded ships. Generation after generation, the silk routes travelers have built a bridge for peace and East-West cooperation.”

--Xi Jinping, Keynote address, opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, Beijing, PRC, 14 May 2015



Vera Mukhina, Worker and
Collective Farm Worker.
Sculpture for the Soviet
Pavilion, Paris Exposition,
1937. Stainless steel, approx.
78' high.





Monument to the People's Heroes, Tian'anmen Square, Beijing 1958



Martin Luther King, Jr. “Rock of Hope” statue, Washington, DC (2011)

Lei Yixin
雷宜铎



