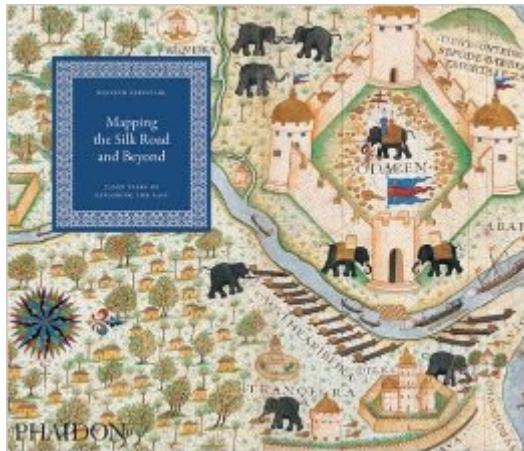


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Mapping The Silk Road And Beyond: 2,000 Years Of Exploring The East



Synopsis

Today the world is focusing unprecedented attention on Asia and the Middle East - rediscovering a cultural, political, and geographical landscape that has fascinated and frustrated Westerners since the time of Alexander the Great. *Mapping the Silk Road and Beyond* traces the history of the European age of exploration and its lasting effects on these regions through an extensive series of beautifully rendered and imaginative maps drawn by explorers, merchants, and colonial administrators of the time. The book focuses on both maritime exploration and overland discovery via the ancient Silk Road: a network of trading posts that encompassed China, Tibet, Pakistan, India, Kurdistan, Iraq, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and dozens of other places known in ancient times by fabled names, including Abyssinia, Malacca, Macassar, Siam, and Cathay. The maps provide detailed visual keys to the fascinating history of Asia and the Middle East: altogether they illuminate a cast of historical figures ranging from great leaders (the Queen of Sheba, Mohammed the prophet, King Charles V) to legendary explorers (Marco Polo, Columbus, Magellan, Sir Francis Drake, Capt. James Cook) and influential cartographers. *Mapping the Silk Road and Beyond* depicts over eighty maps organized in clear chronology - from Alexander the Great's map of the world, first created in 323 BC and reproduced in a sixteenth-century atlas, to maps from the nineteenth century by French and Dutch explorers that detail the growing interaction between Europeans and Eastern cultures. These maps represent the finest examples in existence in museums, libraries, and archives around the world, chosen because they depict the most important milestones in the mapping of Asia.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

With apologies to Charles Dickens: this is the best of atlases; this is the worst of atlases. Let's start with the best. This atlas is laid out exactly the way you would want an atlas to be laid out. Each right hand page contains a well-written and detailed account of the map illustrated for you in the facing left hand page. No flipping back and forth is required. Also, the pages are in a landscape format, which better fits the format in which most maps are actually printed. Also, the selection of maps is well thought out, with very little repetition and much of interest in each selection provided. And the topic itself is of interest and tends to unify the whole, covering the changing perceptions of Europeans as they gradually came to discover the various peoples and landforms of Asia. So far, so good, and if it were just for that, I would give it five stars. But it is not what it advertises itself to be in its title. This book has very little to do with the Silk Road, say perhaps 3 percent. Seriously. This is a book predominantly about the maritime discovery of Asia, and the few maps devoted to the interior of the continent mainly revolve around the Middle East. I know the Silk Road is in vogue these days, perhaps too much so if you ask me, but just to slap the name on the title in order to sell more books, without delivering anything in the content, borders to me on false advertising. Perhaps most viewers of this atlas would not be so put off by this, but for me it was like a slap in the face. Because I have done quite a bit of research into Central Asian history, and what I was specifically looking for, and hoping to find here, was precisely what the title implies, a series of maps presenting the evolving perception of Central Asia, and not the Asian shoreline. I was hoping to find some maps, or at least sketchy diagrams, from the Asian perspective itself, i.e. early sketches from India, China, and Central Asia itself. Maybe such a selection does not even exist, or at best would be very difficult to compile, but I think a book that advertises itself as "mapping the Silk Road" should actually present maps which map the Silk Road, or at least focus on the areas in Central Asia through which the Silk Road(s) traversed. But this atlas does not. There is only one map of Asian origin, a Chinese map of China proper, which does not even cover the area of the Silk Road(s). And for this sleight of hand, no, for this outright deception, I would give this book only one star. And yes, I know the average of one plus five should be three, but I will actually give it four, because it is probably the finest atlas of the European discoveries, i.e. maritime discoveries, that you will ever come across. Just be aware of what you are actually getting.

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