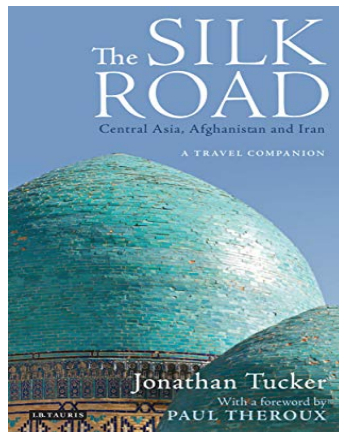


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Stretching from the ancient Chinese capital of Xian across the expanses of Central Asia to Rome, the Silk Road was, for 1,500 years, a vibrant network of arteries that carried the lifeblood of nations across the world. Along a multitude of routes everything was exchanged: exotic goods, art, knowledge, religion, philosophy, disease and war. From the East came silk, precious stones, tea, jade, paper, porcelain, spices and cotton; from the West, horses, weapons, wool and linen, aromatics, entertainers and exotic animals. From its earliest beginnings in the days of Alexander the Great and the Han dynasty, the Silk Road expanded and evolved, reaching its peak during the Tang dynasty and the Byzantine Empire and gradually withering away with the decline of the Mongol Empire. In this beautifully illustrated book, which covers the Central Asian section of the Silk Road - from Lake Issyk-kul through Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, the Kyzyl Kum Desert, Khiva and Merv to Herat, Kabul and Iran - Jonathan Tucker uses travellers' anecdotes and a wealth of literary and historical sources to celebrate the cultural heritage of the countries that lie along the Silk Road and illuminate the lives of those who once travelled through the very heart of the world.

Jonathan Tucker is a specialist in Indian and Southeast Asian art and the author of 'The Silk Road: Art and History' (Philip Wilson Publishers), 'The Silk Road: Asia, Afghanistan and Iran' (I.B. Tauris), and 'The Troublesome Priest: Harold Davidson, Rector of Stiffkey'. He lived in Asia for many years and has explored the entire length of the Silk Road with the exception of Iraq.