

Exhibit A: Civil Service Exam



The **civil service examination system** was a method of recruiting civil officials to work and maintain a **stable government**. These exams were **based on merit and skill** rather than family or political connections. Passing the rigorous exams, which were based on classical literature and philosophy, offered a highly sought-after status. Any male adult in China, regardless of his wealth or social status, could become a high-ranking government official by passing the examination. They were **tested on their knowledge of the Confucian classics**, their ability to write, and the "Five Studies": military strategy, civil law, revenue and taxation, agriculture, and geography.

Civil service exams still exist today and are one way that government jobs are filled in the state of New York.

Adapted from:

<https://www.princeton.edu/~elman/documents/Civil%20Service%20Examinations.pdf>,

[http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Imperial_Examinations_\(K_eju\)](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Imperial_Examinations_(K_eju))

Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_examination#/media/File:Palastexamen-SongDynastie-Kaiser.jpg

Exhibit B: Silk- A Valuable Product in China and Europe

What is it? How was it made?

Watch this [American Museum of Natural History Video on Silk Making](#)

Where did silk spread? Why?

“The silk that constituted China’s chief export remained a mystery fabric to Greeks and Romans for many years. They heard many possible explanations, such as that it was made from bark on trees. Not until the mid-sixth century did the Byzantine emperor learn from two monks that the cloth was a product of silkworms feeding on mulberry leaves.

“By the first century CE silk clothes were popular on the streets of Rome among its wealthy citizens. Much consumption of silk, at both ends of the Silk Road, was devoted to religious activities. Christian priests used purple silk embroidered with gold silk thread for their vestments. Kings, priests, and saints were shrouded in silks at their burials; even burials from long ago were dug up and shrouded in silk. In the Buddhist areas, yards of silk were used for banners, sometimes tens of thousands at one monastery. Buddhist lay people made donations of silk to monasteries as a reward for the monks’ intercessions and as a way to gain merits for future life. The monks, in turn, traded silk for daily provisions and for the “seven treasures” used to decorate their *stupas*, or shrines: gold, silver, lapis lazuli, red coral, crystal, pearls, and agate. During affluent times, Buddhist monasteries thus became significant economic entities.”

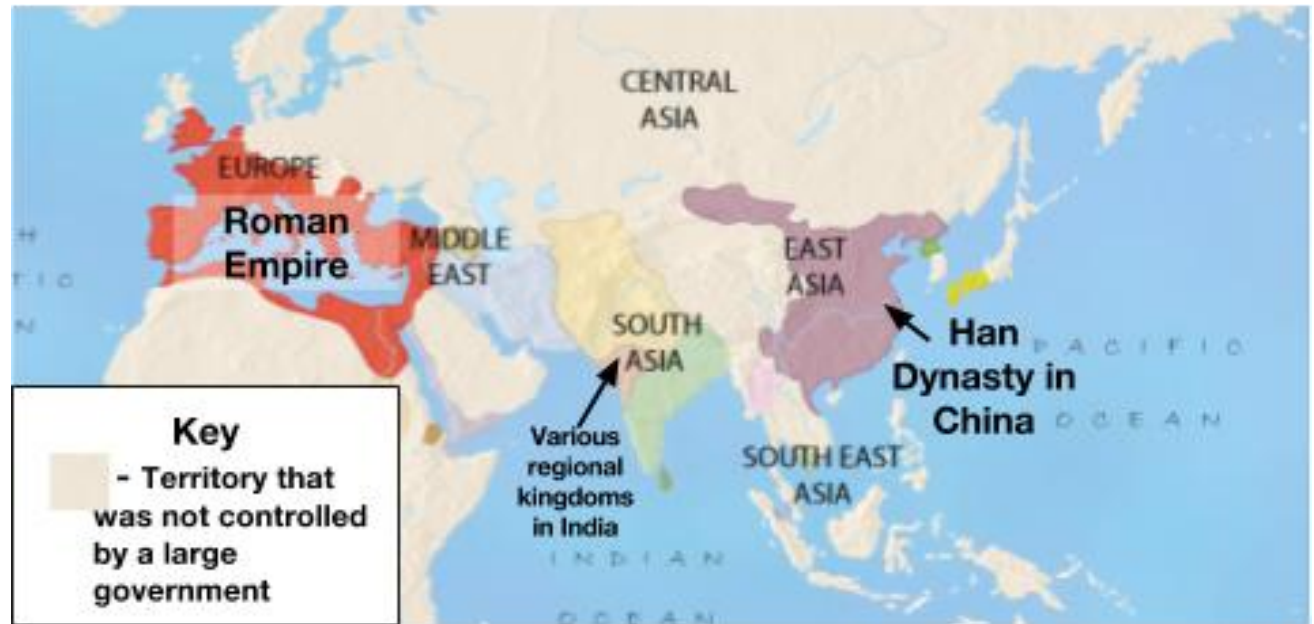
Source: Brown, Cynthia Stokes. *Big History: From the Big Bang to the Present*. New York: The New Press (2007), 129.

What impact did Silk have in Rome?

Quick Facts About The Impact of the Silk Trade on Rome:

- “By the time of the Roman Emperor Augustus (27 BCE – 14 CE), trade between China and the west was firmly established and silk was the most sought after commodity in Egypt, Greece, and, especially, in Rome.”
- Romans valued silk at its weight in gold
- Politicians tried to ban the sale of silk because Romans were spending all of their money on it instead of buying Roman goods and products of more use
- Politicians also tried to ban silk because they thought it was immoral because it was too revealing when worn

Classical Civilizations in 200 CE



Source: Adapted from <http://www.timemaps.com/history/world-200ad>

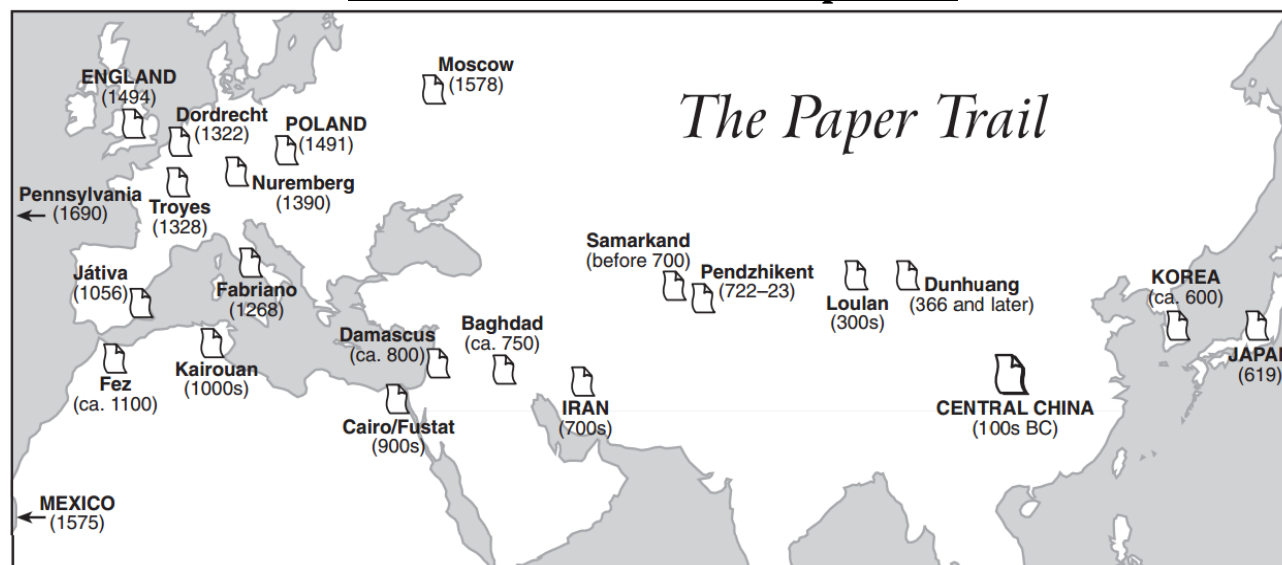
Source: Ancient History Encyclopedia, http://www.ancient.eu/Silk_Road/

Exhibit C: Paper and Paper Making

How was it made?

Watch this [Video Clip from China: The Dragon's Ascent on the process and history of papermaking.](#)

When and where did it spread?



Source: Aramco World, May/June, 1999 (adapted) from the NYS Global History and Geography Regents Examination, June 2005

What impact did it have?

Paper was invented during the Han dynasty, probably just at the time the Silk Road trade was beginning to flourish...paper soon became the writing material of choice throughout China and East Asia. It was found also in the Buddhist temples of China's northwest, but seemed not to make inroads beyond that for a long time, perhaps in part because the Chinese tried to protect the secret of its manufacture, and perhaps because other writing materials, such as parchment and papyrus, were well established in the west.

Under the Mongols in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a group of Chinese workmen set up a papermaking establishment in Samarkand. Their product quickly spread by trade and imitation, and paper soon supplanted other writing materials in most of western Eurasia.

In China, the invention of paper stimulated the invention of printing, sometime during the 6th century CE—a development energetically supported by Buddhism, according to which the duplication of sacred texts was an act of religious merit. The re-invention of printing in Europe centuries later did not employ East Asian-style printing technology, but it may have been stimulated by accounts of Chinese printing that could have circulated in the Middle East.

Source: "Silk Road: Spreading Ideas and Innovation" by John Major

<http://www.asiasociety.org/countries/trade-exchange/silk-road-spreading-ideas-and-innovations..>

Exhibit D: Compass

Watch [Hello China- Compass Video](#) and [Han Dynasty Compass](#) videos and read the information below.

What is it?

A device that uses magnetic forces to help the user determine which direction is North.

Where and when was it invented?

China around 200 BCE during the Han Dynasty

What problem did it solve?

The compass helped travelers more accurately determine which direction they were headed. This was especially difficult at sea and on cloudy nights when one could not use the stars to navigate.



Replica of a Han Dynasty compass.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Model_Si_Nan_of_Han_Dynasty.jpg