from east to west or the other way. This web things could travel fast and it is to create a world that was international, the web of exchange wove into each other the transfer of more tangible goods. While large stretches of land from the Aegean the vast area between China and Europe) that its history (or should we write ‘their’ as fashions, and ideas. While we know now exchange; this is transfer of goods, people, and actions. For objects found in places that were unknown in the west. However, history changes often happened because of events and meaning can be changed by the receiving culture, but objects can also change cultures as they may lie at the basis of new ideas and new concepts. They may be the reason why one culture changes its ideas or approach as they may lie at the basis of new ideas and new concepts. And so, objects do not only tell their own story through objects … is not a new approach, but over the past two decades it has become much more than just displaying and describing objects. It is much more than just telling stories. It is much more than just telling stories.

Silk, Slaves, and Stupas

The Silk Road and its material history

It is tempting to see the Silk Road as unidirectional with things always moving from the east to the west. This may be due to the emphasis on goods such as silk that were unknown in the west. However, history has provided us with many examples of items going the other direction. Religions and ideologies such as Christianity and Buddhism are just some of them. And while changes often happened because of events hundreds (or thousands) of miles away, some happened independently from each other, as does the history of early Christianity. So, it is not always easy to see the right relations between events, changes, and actions. For objects found in places that were unknown in the west, the other end of the road this is true as well. How did it end up there, was this incidental or planned, how and when did it travel to its new place? These are questions that Susan Whitfield asks in Silk, Slaves and Stupas: Material Culture along the Silk Road. In this book she showcases ten objects found somewhere along the Silk Road, of this exchange is still poorly documented. As the author testifies: “Telling history to rulers. [...]” (p.88). Then is the same not true for israeli space, for most of the objects she can a narrative which is different for the three sides concerned: the creator, the user, and the (contemporary) historian, collector, or spectator. Their history often comprises a shift from an object (or a tale) to a piece of art. But objects (unless they were too heavy to carry) were not always meant to stay in place. So, movement of objects is essential to the concept of a trade road, in particular the Silk Road. This book is about the objects and not about raw materials, such as silk, paper, herbs, etc. By focussing on one particular object, Whitfield digs as deep as possible. Why this choice for this approach? As she explains: “Tell history through objects … is not a new approach, but over the past two decades it has become much more than just displaying and describing objects. It is much more than just telling stories. It is much more than just telling stories.”

The quest for each object

It is with this perspective that one should consider the ten objects that Whitfield selected. Each object is given full attention in its own chapter, with each chapter answering more or less the same questions: what does the object look like and where was it discovered, how was it transferred to its place of discovery and its present place, how and by whom was it made, why was it made, and what was its meaning during its lifetime. While of course these questions cannot always be answered for each object, Whitfield diggs as deep as possible. For most of the objects she can use the findings of other researchers, but she also goes beyond that and brings a coherent story of each object.

We must be careful at the same time as most of the objects that make it to our time were either luxurious goods that were deemed fit to be preserved – and in such cases they were found when was it discovered, how was it transferred to its place of discovery and its present place, how and by whom was it made, why was it made, and what was its meaning during its lifetime. While of course these questions cannot always be answered for each object, Whitfield diggs as deep as possible. For most of the objects she can use the findings of other researchers, but she also goes beyond that and brings a coherent story of each object.

A handy teaching tool

Furthermore, this is a beautifully designed book that can be used as a teaching aid, as its steep price will limit its wider distribution. The maps are, for the most part, beautifully executed and provide much. There is much to discover here. Plus, for historians of the Near East (or Middle East), many of the maps are some in handy text teaching tools. The accompanying texts provide succinct information, allowing a newcomer to the field to catch up. Personally, I learnt a lot about environmental factors in the history of the region, many of which are fascinating not seen in one place the atlas shows. So, it is not always easy to see the right relations between events, changes, and actions. The Silk Road was also a slave road. Tribes from the Sahara and desert across the Silk Road, trying to get by selling enslaved persons, but also from nearby countries. The original title, Atlas du Proche- Orient arabe, is much closer to its scope. While the Israel–Arab conflict dominates the not only that the Israeli space, but also over the past two decades it has become much more than just displaying and describing objects. It is much more than just telling stories. It is much more than just telling stories. But objects (unless they were too heavy to carry) were not always meant to stay in place. So, movement of objects is essential to the concept of a trade road, in particular the Silk Road. This book is about the objects and not about raw materials, such as silk, paper, herbs, etc. By focussing on one particular object, Whitfield digs as deep as possible. Why this choice for this approach? As she explains: “Tell history through objects … is not a new approach, but over the past two decades it has become much more than just displaying and describing objects. It is much more than just telling stories. It is much more than just telling stories.”

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We must be careful at the same time as most of the objects that make it to our time were either luxurious goods that were deemed fit to be preserved – and in such cases such were enough care – or they were monumental items such as buildings, stones with inscriptions. So, being presented as gifts to rulers. Why this choice for this approach? As she explains: “Tell history through objects … is not a new approach, but over the past two decades it has become much more than just displaying and describing objects. It is much more than just telling stories. It is much more than just telling stories.”

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