



Editorial: Welcome to the First Issue

EDITORIAL

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We are delighted to be able to launch this new journal of Silk Roads Archaeology and Heritage. We believe that it fills a long-standing need for a forum for debate and discussion.

Our aim is to provide a platform for the dissemination of current research and thinking on the archaeology and heritage of the Silk Roads. The Silk Roads have sometimes been narrowly defined, but recent exploration and debate have challenged and extended both the temporal and spatial scope of the Silk Roads: from desert to grassland, from land to sea, from ancient to modern, recognising the complexity of the networks that were developed, connecting civilizations in Asia, Europe, and Africa.

The diverse landscapes and ecologies along the Silk Roads - including steppe, grasslands, deserts, piedmont, high mountains, fertile river valleys and deltas, and coastal margins - have supported diverse societies and cultures. Issues of migration, cultural exchanges, technological innovation, ideological change, urbanization, and conflict have been major factors in Silk Roads narratives. We are keen to see the debates continued and enlivened.

The intention of Northwest University of China and University College London in establishing this open-source journal is to build a platform for cross-academic exchanges, timely publication, sharing new archaeological discoveries, and discussing theories, methods, and new paths for the protection of Silk Roads heritage. The ***Journal of Silk Roads Archaeology and Heritage*** will publish high-quality research work from fieldwork, material culture studies, environmental evidence, theoretical approaches, and computational investigations of the Silk Roads, both overland and maritime. We will primarily publish peer-reviewed research articles, but we also encourage shorter fieldwork updates/interim reports, news/short communications, and book chronicles.

While submissions in all pertinent areas are welcomed, the focus of the journal will largely be on:

- Archaeology, including the results of fieldwork, the analysis of environmental data, and material culture research, and wider thematic research;
- History of the exploration of the Silk Roads;
- Anthropology and ethnography of the Silk Roads, including intangible heritage, and interpretations of past societies;
- Architecture, including building materials, such as earthen architecture, or styles of building;
- Theoretical issues pertaining to the Silks Roads, such as exploring movement, exchange, or populations;

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- Heritage management and conservation of Silk Roads heritage, including issues around sustainable tourism;
- Public and community archaeology, including examples of approaches and case studies along the Silk Roads;
- The environmental, social, and economic impacts of the Silk Roads on contemporary societies and communities.

The journal is here to encourage debate and provide a home for the latest research by those studying the Silk Roads. We are especially interested in contributions from scholars from the Silk Roads countries, providing an international open-access outlet for their work, while at the same time encouraging the integration of humanities, natural sciences and social sciences, and multi-field and multi-regional collaborations.

To reiterate, the journal takes a wide geographic and chronological scope, and is a platform for the study of all facets of the overland Silk Roads and the Maritime Silk Routes. Please get in touch if you have ideas or directions you would like to see developed.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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