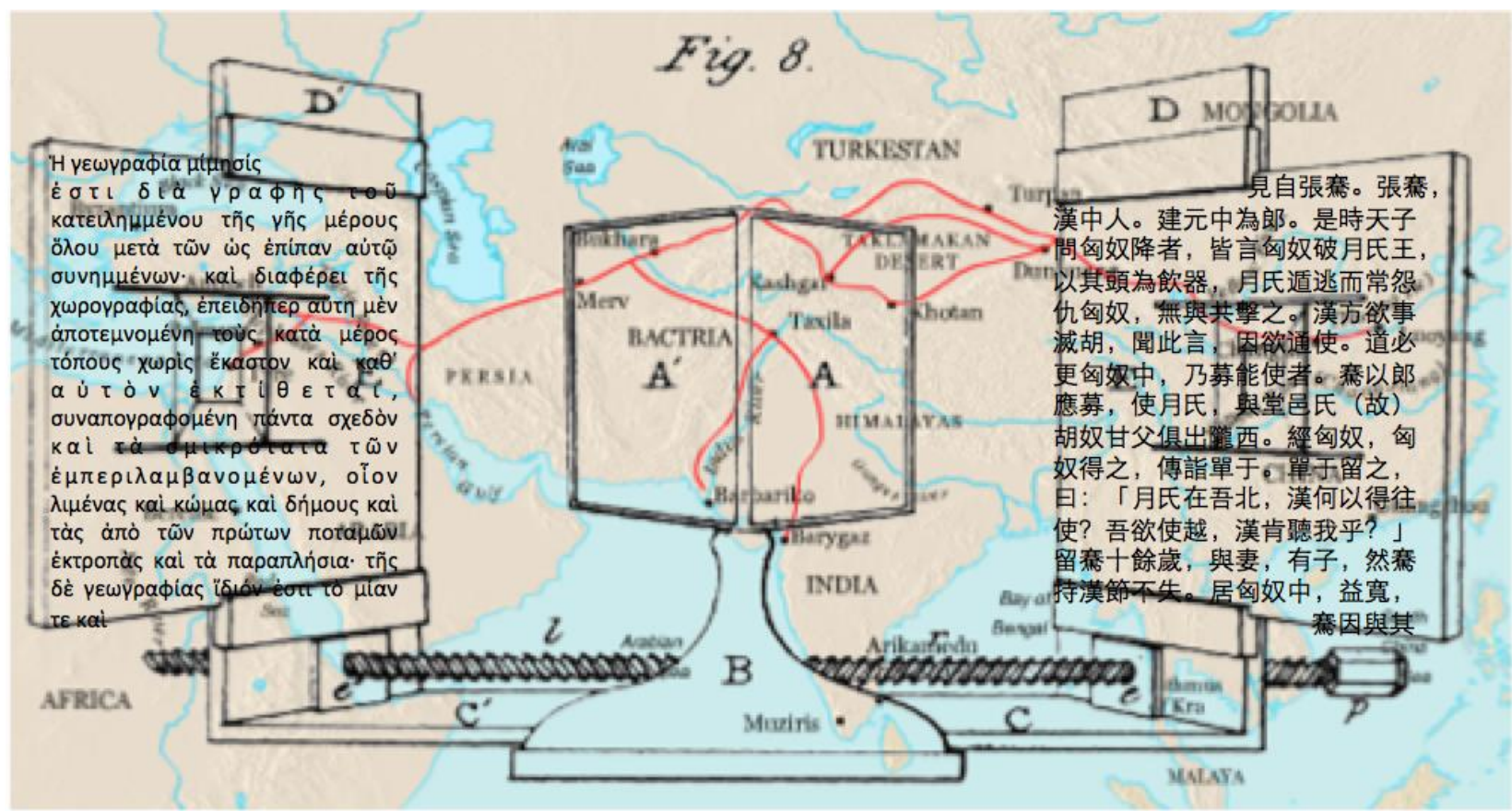




The Modern Idea of the Silk Road, 1877-1971



Tamara Chin Brown University

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Palazzo Paolo Prodi, Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia – via Tommaso Gar 14

Today, we invoke the Silk Road as an interconnected antiquity before globalization. Tamara Chin's talk approaches the Silk Road as a modern idea—as a term that was first coined by a German geographer in 1877, but whose significance lies within a more global history of competing narratives about antiquity. During the Cold War, China resignified the Silk Road 丝绸之路 as the ancient precursor of its non-aligned diplomacy with the decolonized world. China's Afro-Asian Silk Road differed from the Euro-Asian Silk Road of the West and Japan.

Tamara Chin, BA from Harvard College in Classics and Literature and PhD from UC Berkeley in Comparative Literature, is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and East Asian Studies at Brown University. She works on comparative approaches to the ancient world and to historical narrative, with a focus on early Chinese texts, the Afro-Eurasian 'Silk Road,' and the modern politics of antiquity. She is currently completing two books: a monograph on the modern historiography of ancient contact and exchange entitled *The Silk Road Idea*, and a sourcebook of original translations, *Readings in Early Chinese Economic Thought*. Her first book, *Savage Exchange: Han Imperialism, Chinese Literary Style, and the Economic Imagination* (Harvard, 2014) received the American Comparative Literature Association Harry Levin Prize; Honorable Mention for the Association of Asian Studies Joseph Levenson Pre-1900 China Book Prize; International Convention of Asia Scholars Ground-Breaking Subject Matter Accolade.



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