

# Long distance trade for the roman and han empires

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Pragmatically speaking, it was the Han Dynasty that could be labeled as the real empire forming ruling dynasty in China, which extended the Han rule, at a scale that was never emulated by any previous ruling dynasty in China. The sway of the Han Empire lasted in the period 206 BCE to 220 CE. If on the one side the Han commanded dominance over an expansive land mass extending over a large continent, the Romans constituted a vast empire over the land mass surrounding the Mediterranean. There is no denying the fact that long distance trade did play a pivotal role in consolidating and augmenting the prosperity of both the Roman and the Han Empire.

The much famous Silk Road route was properly established during the Han Dynasty (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2014, p. 133). The continually soaring demand for silk from the Roman Empire did intensify the commercial traffic in Central Asia. The Roman traders sailed as far as the Western ports of India to purchase the Chinese silk (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2014, p. 118). When the Han Empire conquered the territories in Southwest China, this did give impetus to the long distance trade extending as far as Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2014, 135). There existed much demand for the silk and gold produced by the Han Empire. Going by the commercial importance and power of the Han Empire, the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius did send a trade mission to China to bolster the trade relations between the two Empires (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2014). The Han merchants also carried silk as far as to India and traded it for the Indian spices, gems, gold, silver, cotton, perfumes, incense, pearls, and any array of other

commodities. Long distance trade did play a major role in strengthening the Han Empire and enhancing its prosperity and affluence.

The Roman Empire happened to be a big source of goods that were manufactured and mined along the Mediterranean Basin. To carry on the trade with Central Asia and Europe, the Romans built an extensive network of roads which gave an impetus to the long distance trade in the Roman Empire (McNeill & McNeill, 2003, p. 114). The Romans were also good at drafting detailed maps which happened to be quite accurate. The ingenuity of Roman business acumen could be noticed by the fact that the Romans did make efforts to connect the road networks with the important sea routes in their domain to assure smooth and hassle free trade (McNeill & McNeill, 2003). The Silk Road happened to be an important bridge that connected the Han and the Roman Empire. The Romans mostly traded gold, silver, agricultural, mined and manufactured goods. In return they imported a range of goods like silk, spices and gems from China, Central Asia and India. The traders in those times felt very safe while carrying on trade on the road networks lying within the Roman Empire.

There is no denying the fact that long distance trade did play a major role in shaping the Han and the Roman Empire.

#### References

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