## Contents

Tote on spellings	7
1 'A ceaselessly flowing stream of life'	9
2 Coiled dragons and filmy fleeces: jade and silk	26
3 From Greece and Rome to China - and back again	36
4 A people abandoned by Heaven: the Xiongnu and trade during the Han dynasty	48
5 The spread of trade and religions: Tocharians and Sogdians	61
6 The fashion for all things Central Asian	75
The Caves of the Thousand Buddhas: Buddhism on the Silk Road	88
8 Tanguts, Mongols, Nestorians and Marco Polo	III
9 A parterre of roses: travellers to Ming China and Samarkand	130
The Great Game and the Silk Road	147
Asia held them captive in her cold embrace: explorers on the Silk Road	165
Trophies and tiger entrails: hunting and theorising on the Silk Road	180
Securing specimens: Aurel Stein	191
14 An end to excavation: Pelliot, von Le Coq and Warner	208
15 The Baby General: travel on the Silk Road in the 1930s	223
Epilogue: The Silk Road today	243
References	247
List of Illustrations	25
Acknowledgements	259
Index	26