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Sommario/riassunto	In ancient times there were several major trade routes that connected the Roman Empire to exotic lands in the distant East. Ancient sources reveal that after the Augustan conquest of Egypt, valued commodities from India, Arabia and China became increasingly available to Roman society. These sources describe how Roman traders went far beyond the frontiers of their Empire, travelling on overland journeys and maritime voyages to acquire the silk, spices and aromatics of the remote East. Records from ancient China, early India and a range of significant archaeological discoveries provide further evidence for these commercial contacts. Truly global in its scope, this study is the first comprehensive enquiry into the extent of this trade and its wider significance to the Roman world. It investigates the origins and development of Roman trade voyages across the Indian Ocean,

considers the role of distant diplomacy and studies the organization of the overland trade networks that crossed the inner deserts of Arabia through the Incense Routes between the Yemeni Coast and ancient Palestine. It also considers the Silk Road that extended from Roman Syria across Iraq, through the Persian Empire into inner Asia and, ultimately, China.
