

## **Chapter One - Silk Along the Silk Roads: Diversity and Eclecticism**

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### **Chapter Keywords:**

Byzantine, Silk Roads, diversity, eclecticism, contemporary, fashion, culture, East meets West, imagination, hybrids.

### **Chapter Abstract:**

Here, the civilization and culture of Byzantium is appraised in the light of understanding and appreciating its significance in contemporary design, particularly the world of fashion. The span of over 1,100 years is testimony to an enduring legacy that has appeal and relevance today. Trade in silk took place via the terrestrial and maritime Silk Roads enabling diversity and eclecticism where cultures borrow aesthetics and techniques. This resulted in an international fusion that resonates with postmodernist 'collage' and global approaches. The structure of woven silk samite was able to hold rich and varied imagery/patterns that celebrated the imagination, frequently depicting fabulous hybrids. East meets West where cultures symbiotically influence and learn from each other and where mutual appreciation and desire between them are evidenced. Academic and literary/poetic sources are drawn from in discussion of the impact and influence of Byzantine silk samite on contemporary fashion designers.