

Oldest evidence of patterned silk loom found in China

The technology fed the Silk Road trade



LOOM ROOM Excavation of a roughly 2,100-year-old tomb in southern China uncovered four small-scale models of pattern looms, including these two shown where they were found alongside several wooden figurines. These discoveries represent the earliest clues to a weaving technique that transformed silk production.

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The oldest known textiles found in the Americas are remnants of six finely woven textiles and cordage found in Guitarrero Cave, Peru. The weavings, made from plant fibres, are dated between 10100 and 9080 BCE; however, there is indirect evidence from an archaeological site in Moldavia that weaving is at least 27000 years old. Fine silk weaving, developed in China over 4000 years ago, eventually spread to Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, and along the Silk Road to Europe.



silk looms in Italy (above), France (right), and Thailand (below)



