



The Abbasid Flag

And yet the Battle of Talas had a truly historic impact on the world. Though militarily and politically unimportant, were it not for the battle, the Middle East, and the West too, might have developed along very different lines. Victory at the Battle of Talas won the Arab world knowledge of paper.

The legend goes that a number of skilled Chinese artisans were taken as prisoners of war, and through these individuals the knowledge of paper production (hitherto a closely guarded secret) became widespread. Whatever the truth of the matter, dedicated paper factories soon sprung up in the Middle East, and amongst the texts translated into Arabic were the teachings of ancient Greece and Rome.

Were it not for this preservation of classical knowledge, the defining epoch of European history – [the Renaissance](#) – might not have been the defining cultural movement that it was. But, with so many Arabic versions available, translations back into Latin soon reached Europe. Their dissemination was further spurred by the latest technological advancement: the printing press – an evolution of the Chinese paper making method.

Considering how vastly the Renaissance moved European Culture forward – leading to the equally important Scientific Revolution of the 17th Century – it's fair to say that the Battle of Talas was a fairly significant event. Its repercussions have been felt throughout history, and its effect on the creation of the modern world has been profound.

And its importance certainly goes beyond proving that Abbasid Islam could beat Tang China in a fight.

Why is the interaction between the Abbasids and Tang significant?