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## **Analysis and Investigation of the Naming of the Silk Road Based on Economic Geography**

### **Abstract**

*The road that is known as silk today has been the longest and one of the most used trade routes throughout the history of East. A large part of this road, which connected the westernmost regions of China to the easternmost shores of the Mediterranean, passed through Great Khorasan (from Qoms to Jayhun). In the 19th century, in European studies, the name "Silk Road" was used for this road and soon it became popular. Even today, everyone, from the east and the west, knows and calls this historical road by the same name. This naming is due to the fact that according to these researchers, silk was the main and most important commodity that was exchanged along the road. In this research, the question of correctness or incorrectness of this naming has been investigated. Based on the findings of this research, this naming cannot be based on historical and objective facts for two main reasons. The first is that until before the 19th century, none of the Islamic, Afghan and Iranian geographical sources mentioned the name of silk, and most of it was called "Khorasan Road." It has been mentioned and the second is that the study of economic geography and traded goods was carried out. Look, it shows that silk is only one of the hundreds of traded goods and has no special advantage over other goods.*

**Keywords:** *Silk Road, Khorasan Road, Economic Geography, Geographic Resources, Exchange Goods*

## İpek Yolu'nun İsimlendirilmesinin Ekonomik Coğrafya Temelinde Analizi ve İncelenmesi

### Öz

*Bugün ipek olarak bilinen yol, Doğu'nun tarihi boyunca en uzun ve en çok kullanılan ticaret yollarından biri olmuştur. Çin'in en batı bölgelerini Akdeniz'in en doğu kıyılarına bağlayan bu yolun büyük bir kısmı Büyük Horasan'dan (Kum'dan Jayhun'a) geçiyordu. 19. yüzyılda Avrupa'daki çalışmalarda bu yol için İpek Yolu'adı kullanıldı ve kısa sürede popüler oldu. Bugün bile doğudan ve batıdan herkes bu tarihi yolu aynı isimle biliyor ve adlandırıyor. Bu isimlendirme, araştırmacılara göre yol boyunca değiş tokuş edilen ana ve en önemli malın ipek olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu araştırmada, bu isimlendirmenin doğruluğu veya yanlışlığı sorusu araştırılmıştır. Bu araştırmanın bulgularına dayanarak, bu adlandırma iki ana nedenden dolayı tarihi ve nesnel gerçeklere dayandırılmaz: Birincisi, 19. yüzyıl öncesine kadar İslam, Afgan ve İran coğrafi kaynaklarının hiçbirinde ipek adından bahsedilmemesi ve çoğunun Horasan Yolu'olarak adlandırılmasıdır. İkincisi ise ekonomik coğrafya ve ticareti yapılan mallar üzerine çalışmalar yapılmış olmasıdır. Bakınız, ipeğin ticareti yapılan yüzlerce maldan sadece biri olduğunu ve diğer mallara göre özel bir avantajı olmadığını göstermektedir.*

***Anahtar Kelimeler:** İpek Yolu, Horasan Yolu, Ekonomik Coğrafya, Coğrafi Kaynaklar, Takas Malları*

### Introduction

Silk is the traditional and common name of one of the most historical and important commercial and trade routes in the history of mankind. This is a caravan route that extended from China to Mesopotamia from ancient times to the 8th/14th century and continues to connect the two continents of Asia and Europe. This road has always been used for business, pilgrimage and tourism, and a large part of it passed through historical Iran and today's Afghanistan. This road from east to west, started from Touang Huang city in China and reached Kashgar through "Turfan" and Taklamakan Desert, and from there it went to Ozkand and Ferghana.

They sell the goods in Ferghana, or you can go to Baghdad with another caravan from Samarkand to Bukhara and Merv and through Tos, Neyshabur, Damgan, Semnan, Rey, Saweh, Hamdan, Kermanshah and Helwan. This road used to be the main road; but there were many branches along the way (Ibn Khardazba, 1991, multiple pages; Ibn Roste, 2001, p. 192-203; Lestrangle, 1994, p. 9). Today, the general opinion is that this important and historical Silk Road did not have a name until the 19th century, and one of the German world leaders and geographers in the 19th century, considering its importance Important - "Silk" as one the main commodity exchanged on both sides of this road, for the first time, it is known as the Silk Road. Since then, everyone has known this great historical road as the Silk Road. (Frank and

Brownstone, 1997, p. 12). The name silk, also, has more Chinese essence for this way; because the westerners mainly consider the origin of silk to be the land of China. In fact, this not very accurate naming was contrary to reality for two reasons; first of all, as it can be seen, large parts of this great and long road pass through the Islamic world, historical Iran and modern Afghanistan, especially the vast region of Khorasan, and all of the importance of this road they have been exposed to it for a long time, they were aware of it; but in none of the Iranian and Islamic geographical sources, the name of Silk Road is not mentioned; however, in many sources, this entire long road or at least a major part of it is called "Khorasan Road". Secondly and most importantly, the economic geography survey of this road and the traded goods along its long route shows that silk was only one of the hundreds of traded goods. Therefore, calling this road as silk cannot have a historical basis based on the objective facts of this great road.

With this description, the main research question is why naming this big and historical road as "Silk" is not accurate and correct? And is it possible to find a name for it by searching in Iranian and Islamic historical-geographic sources? There are two ways to find the answer; first, searching in the most important Islamic geographical sources to find the historical name of this road; second, an examination of the economic geography and types of goods traded along this road to show the great variety of these goods. Based on this, the main hypothesis of the research is also based on the fact that silk was only one of the hundreds of goods traded on this route and it has no special advantage over other goods. Therefore, the name of silk cannot have a valid reason. Also, the search in the most important geographical-historical sources proves this issue that the name of silk has never been a historical record and at least a large part of it is called by another name, that is, it has been called "Khorasan Road". Therefore, by generalizing this name, we can call the whole road as "Khorasan". Of course, it is necessary to point out that although to prove the main hypothesis of the research and to find substantiated and documented answers to the main question of the research, it is possible to act in both of the above ways; but since it does not fit to deal with both methods in the form of a research paper, in this research, including a brief review of the first way, the main reliance will be on the economic geographical survey of this way.

## **2. Historical period**

### **2.1 Trade between East and West**

It seems that the campaigns and conquests of the Achaemenians, as well as the creation and development of various trade and marketing routes by them, are the first steps in opening a section of the so-called great trade, pilgrimage and tourism route. It has been "Silk". Dariush Achaemenid (521-486 BC) in his three inscriptions in the role of Rostam and Shush, in addition

to Persia, mentions the countries he conquered and the people he ruled over (Sharp, 1967, p. 85 and 93). Most of these countries are on this path. Therefore, the formation of the Achaemenid Empire in a wide geographical area (from beyond the river to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea) and also the popularization of the single currency "Derek" during the time of "Darius I" the economic and political situation of the east and west and the cities along this path helped a lot. Also, after the campaigns of Alexander the Great, the Greek merchants and businessmen who followed Alexander's army in search of profit, settled in the new cities named Alexandria next to the mighty cities, built, settled and new lines of work, they started business and industry in them.

Since the time of Mehrdad I (171-137 B.C.) when the land under his rule was neighboring India on one side and Mesopotamia and Asia Minor on the other side, the Parthians took this part of this great road. (Mahmoud Abadi, 2004, p. 5), but from a historical point of view, we find the first contact between China and the West during the reign of Mehrdad II Parthian (124-76 BC). This Parthian king was contemporary with the dynasty of Khaqan Wuti (87-141 BC) in China and was from the Han Dynasty. At this time, since the second century BC, the Chinese have been watching to open a way to the west. In 138 BC, by the order of the Han Dynasty, a warlord named "Chang Ki-yin" was sent to Balkh province to find a way to destroy the Heung Nu tribe, the ancestors of the Huns, so that China could remove its trade caravans from the land.

This warlord, after a long trip to Ferghana (Tuvan/Tova), Kangqiu (an area in Samarkand) and Balkh, returned to China in 126 BC and based on his observations, he proposed a direct route to the west of China and to Balkh (Bactria) to enjoy the various goods there<sup>1</sup>. Following these proposals, from 115 BC, the king of China personally organized China's friendship with Western countries. (Mazaheri, 1993-1994, p. 2/598). Around 105 or 115 BC, the Chinese opened the trade and caravan route to the West in search of the rare products of the West of China and advanced to half of Asia. (Frank and Brownstone, 1376, p. 13-12). According to the report of a Chinese historian named "Pan Yung", the Chinese tried to establish institutions for the administration and security of the roads until about 105 AD (Mazaheri, 1993-1994, p. 2/601-602). Until the 6th century AD, the development process of the Silk Road continued; until the Muslims took control of a part of this road in the first decades of the sixth century.

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<sup>1</sup> One of the important and pioneering research sources on the Khorasan Great Road in the ancient period and Iran-China relations in this period is the following source: Laufer, Berthold, Sino-Iranica; Chinese contributions to the history of civilization in ancient Iran, Publication Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, 1919.

Immediately after the fall of Madain in the 637th AD, on the banks of the Tigris, and then with the fall of Nahavand in the 640th or 641st AD, they conquered another part of this road. Ahnaf Benqis, during the time of Uthman (644-656) and during the governorship of Abdallah Benamir in Khorasan, he advanced to Balkh and opened it, and a long road through Rey, Beyhaq, Tous, Merv and Samarkand was completely at his disposal. This great road, later on during the Abbasid period (656-132), the period when the domain of Muslim leadership reached its greatest extent and unity, especially in the field of trade and commerce, got a new look. It was established as a great and reliable transit route.

### **3. Naming of the road**

But since when was the great road described above called silk? Apparently, because the most important transit goods of this route was Chinese silk, this great route was first discovered in the middle of the 19th century by Ferdinand von Richthofen (1833-1905), a German geographer. It was called Silk Road and became famous. (Frank and Brownstone, 1997). This nomenclature soon became popular and was considered as a definitive and Muslim name, and it has continued in this way until today. But the historical reality was something else; in fact, this way was mistakenly called "silk" and became famous. Of course, this fame did not cause some researchers to point out some aspects of this non-historical and unrealistic naming; especially where they have emphasized that the name of silk has no historical basis; for example, Strathern writes: "Although the Silk Road was used by regular poultry for over 1,600 years, it was never known as the Silk Road during that time and, in fact, had no name.

About a hundred years ago, the German explorer, Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen, called this road Seiden Strasse die, which means Silk Road in German. This name was gradually accepted by everyone. "(Strathren, 1997, p. 10). Also, Bastani Parizi archeologist believes: "This road has become known as the Silk Road based on a famous mistake; but of course, trade was not only silk, all goods originating from East and South Asia must pass through this route; Even the goods of India that pass through the spice route and reach this route." (Bastani and Parizi, 1997, p. 316). But in Iran, one of the first researchers who tried to draw attention to this misnomer was praised by Manouchehr. Sotodeh seriously believed: "If there was a Silk Road, we have more than three hundred geographical texts, one of which is better than the other (ibid). We have geography, because it is sacred. When he reached Neyshabur, he said that the people of this city tie their turbans from the left instead of the right. Such a man has written the geography of our country with such precision, but he has not mentioned the Silk Road. Other Muslim geographers and travel writers did not mention this issue until the 16th century. Europeans do not know how and why they invented this name. Or he writes in another place:

"We have had (dragons) that started from the east and went to the west. It can be called a transit road in today's terms. The protection of these roads and the palming of these roads have been the responsibility of the Iranians. We have documents that show the caravans entering and leaving Iran (ibid). Silk Road is not mentioned in any of these documents. In my opinion, if a map from the Achaemenid period, a map from the Parthian period, a map from the Sassanid period and four/five maps from the Islamic period are prepared and the roads are identified, it will be clear that we have had roads that have changed due to changes governments, little change has been achieved in them.

On these roads, people travel from east to west and vice versa, and all kinds of spices and other goods are transported, one of which is silk, and all these roads were under the supervision of Iran. What is the meaning of giving the name of a product to all these roads throughout history. This name has not been seen in any of the Islamic geography books and there is no record of a road in the world being named after one of the goods that pass through it. Europe should get rid of self-centered thinking and allow the world to remain as it was and not change the name of a country, river, mountain, or region every day." (Sotodeh, 2004, p. 95). But these efforts and signs, mostly inconsistent and scattered, have never been able to make a dent in the comprehensive and Islamicized name of the Silk Road; but in any case, it is a sign of this fact that accurate researchers such as Sotodeh, Bastani Parizi and Strathran have also mentioned this historical mistake. With this historical moment, we will first briefly search for the geographical sources to find the historical and real name of this road, and then we will find out the main discussion in the economic geography of this road.

#### **4. The way known as "silk" in Islamic geographical sources**

The road, which today is known as silk, according to the report of Islamic geographical sources, started from Darwaz Khorasan in eastern Baghdad and after a long distance, it reached Helwan. In Helwan, it entered the province of Jabal and crossed it diagonally and went to the east, and after passing through Kermanshah and Hamedan, it reached Rey. Then it continued to the east and passed through Qoms. This road, with the mountains of Tabarstan on the left and the salt desert on the right, enters Khorasan province near Bastam, passes Neyshabur and Tous, reaches Merv, and enters the desert from there. It could be done in the limits of Amal or Chaljoi it reaches the shore of Jayhun River and from there it leaves Bukhara and Samarkand behind and reaches the land in the east of Samarkand.

In this place, the road split into two branches: the left side road went to Chach (Tashkant) and from there it led to Utarar on Seyhun Sufla beach, and the other road turned to the right

from Zamin and went to Ferghana province and Seyhun Ulia. After passing through the seat of that area, it would end up in Ozkand on the border of the Chinese desert (Ibn Khardazba, 1991, several pages; Ibn Roste 2001, p. 192-203; Lestrangle, 2004, p. 9). The fact is that in Islamic geographical sources, despite the detailed description of this long and wide road, from Baghdad to Tunhuang in the west of China, there is no mention of the name "silk". So with this description, does this long road have a name? Probably yes. Just as Lestrangle guessed correctly (Lestrangle, 1994, p. 92), in the Islamic geographical sources, at least most part of this road is called "Khorasan Road"; the truth behind the announcement of the name Silk Road is hidden.

The most important evidence that confirms this issue is the existence of the "Khorasan Gate" or the Khorasan Road Gate in most of the important cities of the eastern lands of the Islamic Caliphate. The most famous of these gates is the Khorasan gate in the two cities of Baghdad and Isfahan. According to Ibn Rashte, Baghdad had four gates, one of which was "Khorasan Gate" in the eastern part of the city (Ibn Roste, 2001, p. 125). Also, Isfahan had four gates, the eastern gate of which was called Khor or Khorasan. (Ibid.: 189) It will not be difficult to guess that the gates of Khorasan in the big cities of Arab and Ajam Iraq were the starting point of the Khorasan road. So, from now on, the Silk Road can be called "Khorasan Road"

## **5.Economic geography of Khorasan; From Baghdad to Tun Hwang**

### **5.1Iraq and Jabal**

As it was said, the road to Khorasan started from west to east, from Baghdad and the Khorasan gate of this city. Baghdad was one of the commercial, economic and product production centers. The streets of Baghdad were famous for the existence of rare goods that were collected from other blood there.

Among the export products of Baghdad, it is said that cotton clothes, silk, cone-shaped aquamarine, oil, wine, and potions are obtained from this city and exported to all over the world. (Hadud, Al-Alam, 1983, p. 151). Muqadasi has also mentioned beautiful products and types of silk clothes and two types of Ibadani and Samani mats. (Muqadasi, 1982, p. 178-179), the Khorasan road started from Baghdad as an important economic center and continued to the east.

According to the report of Muslim geographers, the route from Baghdad to Helwan was like this: Nahran Bridge, Descara Al-Mulk, Tararstan, Jalula, Khanaqin, Qasr Shireen, Helwan. In this way, Khorasan road leaves the Suad area near Helwan and enters the mountains. Yaqut Hamvi writes: Helwan is near Jabal at the end of Suad borders and there are five houses between it and Baghdad. (Hamoui, Yaqut, 1968, p. 67). Muqadasi described Helwan as a small town in the mountains and the plains and near the mountains, which is surrounded by gardens and has grapes and figs. He pointed to the small road, the small stream and its old fort. Muqadasi, 1982,

p. 1/171). In *Hudud al-Alam*, it is mentioned in the description of Helwan: "It is a city of many blessings, and a river passed through it, and figs grew from it to be dried and taken everywhere." (*Hudud al-Alam*, 1983, p. 153). After Helwan, the most important city is Kermanshah. Kermanshah is one of the four districts of Jabal province, which is also known as "Qormasin" in the historical geography of this region. In his picture of the land, Ibn Huqal considered Qurmisin to be a beautiful city where water flows, trees and fruits abound, and goods are cheap, and "abundant grass, camels and camels graze in it." He writes that business in this city is very prosperous. (Ibn Huqal, 1987, p. 103). On the way from Kermanshah to Hamedan, there is Dinur (Mah al-Kufah), whose main products are grain and fruit (Istakhari, 1968, p. 164; Mustofi 1957, p. 128). Khorasan road will reach Hamdan after Dinur. According to Istakhari, a river driver from Hamadan, "the places of Abadan, Purnamat and Zaafran are better than other places, and they will go anywhere from there." (Istakhari, 1968, p. 165). But about Hamadan itself, Ibn Huqal described it as a big and beautiful city with fields, trees, and grains, and prices are cheap there, and dairy, cheese, and various types of commercial goods are available from Qobi. Hamedan, "The city is big and it was built by the hands of Muslims, and it has a fence, a rampart, and four iron gates. It has abundant water and gardens, and water and semi-arid crops. It is bountiful and blessed, and it has a common and profitable trade." (Ibn Huqal, 1966, p. 102 and 105). Also, according to Ibn Huqal, the saffron of Rudravar came to Hamdan. Rudravar is from Hamedan area and "it is a large and spacious village, its agriculture and saffron, it is famous for its abundance, and it has water and various fruits and crops." The saffron there is abundant and good, and it is unique in all the cities of Jabal, and for this reason, they send it to other areas." (Ibid.: 112). The last big city of Khorasan highway before Ri is Saveh. This city is located halfway between Hamdan and Ray, and there is another city called "Awe" near it (Hamoui, Yaqut, 1968, Q: 3/179) Muqadasi mentioned about the products of Sawah, its good grain and grapes, and mentioned the good baths of Sawah and the Jame mosque and its street. Qazvini, Anar called it excellent; in a way that there is nothing like it in the whole of Iran and the region, and Ibn Hoqul pointed out the fame of the camel and its shetraban, which is the need of the travelers and pilgrims of Makkah. (Ibn Huqal, 1966, p. 103; Muqadasi, 1982/2, p. 545; Qazvini, 1994, p. 459). Qazvini also says that there was a treasury of books in the middle of the mosque, which contained all kinds of books. In addition, there were astrolabes and spheres for studying astronomy, and there were also hospitals, schools, and associations in that city. (Qazvini, 1994, p. 459). This big trade route reaches Rey after Sawah. Without a doubt, Rey has been one of the most important cities along the Khorasan road. In the 10th century, this city was the biggest

center of the four provinces of Jabal. Ibn Rasteh, who has provided the most comprehensive description from Baghdad to Rey, has written about five gates named: "Batan", "Blisan", "Kohak", "Hsham" and "Sin Gate". It is from the first goes to Baghdad, the second to Qazvin, the third to Tabarstan, the fourth to Qoms and the fifth to Qom (Ibn Roste, 2001, p. 1985). In his travelogue, Abu Dulaf mentions the iron gates, the Great Gate, the Jami Mosque, the fortress built by Rafe bin Harthameh, and a nearby mountain named Tabrak, as well as the coffins. He mentioned stone and gold and silver mines. He has named some of the threads known as "secret" which is specific to Rey and cannot be woven anywhere else. (Abu Dulaf travel in Iran, 1975, p. 72-75). This is one of the most important commercial products on the Khorasan route. They also weave wool and linen in Rey Niko; but its main products are cotton, oil and wine (Jamalzadeh, 1964, p. 513). The Great Khorasan Road goes from east to west, through Batan Gate, towards Jabal and Iraq, and reaches Hamadan. A branch was going to Isfahan and Shiraz from the Sin Gate. All the caravans that carried merchandise from Greece, Rome, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and Levant on one side, and China, India, and Central Asia on the other side, had their destination on Rey.

In the meantime, silk, raw paper, camphor, cinnamon, spices, spices and precious stones were brought here from the east, and pearls, textiles, carpets, red sea corals, furs and dyes were brought here from the west. And Rome textiles were exported to the East. (Krimian, 1975, p. 552/1). In addition to these many gates, there are also large and diverse roads that show the commercial importance of this city on the way to Khorasan. The most important of these streets are: Al-Jabal Gate, Sin Gate, Hisham Gate, Belisan, Chaharsouk or Chahar Bazar Rey, Dehk Naw and Rooda Bazar, which is the most popular and prosperous of all the streets, as well as Sarbanan and Narmeh. (Ibid.: 214). The most important of these roads are Sarbanan and Rooda roads, where most of the trade and transactions are done there. According to Istakhari, Rey-Rooda is "the most beautiful of all, and there are many caravanserais and merchants there, and they deal in gold and gold." (Istakhari, 1968:170). Bazar Rooda can be considered as the oldest markets of Rey (Karimian, 1975, p. 1/220). Istakhari also writes about the importance of Rey's commercial products: "And soft linens are made from the goods, which are taken to Afaq from there, and cotton is brought to Baghdad and brought to Azerbaijan, and soft clothes are made." (Khary, 1968, p. 171). In addition to textiles, Qazvini mentioned other products as well. According to Qazvini's report, they used to make the door of the bowl and the cup from solid and beautiful wood that they brought from Tabarstan. It is also famous for its fruits, melons and peaches (Qazvini, 1994, p. 465). In addition to this, from the products and productions that show the commercial importance of Ray along the Khorasan road, we can mention gold and

silver mines, lead, sandblasting and cement mines. Also, such arts as: pottery, tile making, metal and glass products, silk weaving, making containers and wooden tools were mentioned. Cereals, cotton, fruits, Rey's special drink, saffron and dairy products can also be mentioned (Krimian, 1975, p. 552/1 onwards). Big commercial caravans, after traveling along their route, would enter Qoms. Qoms state is located at the foothills of Al-Barz mountains and Al-Barz heights are its northern limit. The Khorasan highway, which came from the mountain region and went to Neyshabur in Khorasan, passed through Qoms province and all the important cities of Qoms were located on this road. This road reaches Khar after going through three houses. After Khar, the first residence was the palace or the village of Al-Maleh, which is called "De Namak" in Persian. After that, you will reach the residence of Ras al-Kalb, then Semnan and then Damgan, the seat of Qoms state (Lestranj, 1994, p. 392-393). But the most important city of this section of Khorasan road was Damgan. Yaqoubi and Istakhari have considered Damgan as a city and a town in Qoms province. (Yaqoubi, 1975, p. 52). Muqadasi has also counted Damgan as Qosbe Qoms, and Semnan, Bastam, Zaghneh, Bayar and Maghoun among its cities (Muqadasi, 1982, p. 518-519). Yaqoubi has described the Qumsi people as the most skilled people in making expensive Qumsi woolen clothes, and he has specified that it is exported from Qums to Gorgan and Tabarstan in the world (Yaqoubi, 1975, p. 52). Abu Dulaf as he calls it ruby mentioned about the apple that is obtained in Qoms and exported to Iraq through Khorasan road (Abu Dulaf's travel book: 1975, p. 82). Ibn Huql's report from Damgan is representative of the commercial importance of this city: "A lot of its fruit was taken to Iraq. From Kumsh, a well-known garment is obtained that goes to other countries and is famous everywhere." (Ibn Huql, 1987, p. 122). Among other products of Damgan, we can refer to rare fruits, dastar, cotton, bags, tilsan, fine woolen threads and white handkerchiefs. (Hadud al-Alam, 1362, p. 146; Moqdasi, 1982, p. 2/543). The second city of Qoms province in terms of size is Bastam city. In the description of this city, geographers have described it as a small city with moderate weather, small population, many gardens, good fruits and abundant grains. Muqadasi called Jame Bastam as beautiful as a fort in the middle of the roads, and in terms of exports, he named it after the rose that is exported to Agra (Muqadasi, 2011, p. 521/2). Yaqut is also considered one of Bastam's apples and praised for its quality. Yaqut has also learned about Bastam's business and trade routes (Hamoui, Yaqut, 1968, p. 435/2).

## 6. Great Khorasan

Before starting to discuss the economic geography of Khorasan, it will be necessary to explain the geographical limits of this large region, as it will be a sign of its breadth in comparison with other geographical areas along this route.

In fact, this vast area was divided into four regions, which became known as four quarters in the Islamic era, from ancient times and even from the Sassanid era. Cities: Merv, Neyshabur, Herat and Balkh were the centers of these four quarters of Khorasan. (Elton, 12:1988), the distribution of these four cities is a representation of the considerable extent of Khorasan. In spite of this, the geographical location of Khorasan throughout history has been such that no specific boundary can be defined for it; but in general, Khorasan can be considered a long land; it extends from near the south-eastern shores of the Caspian Sea to the heights of the fence like Pamir and Hindukush, which in another theory and in a section of history, its borders have been extended from Helwan to the east. In fact, Khorasan sometimes includes the fertile land south of the Aral Sea (Khwarazm) and its areas on the Jeyhun side (Mavaralanhâr).

And a lot of Iran's plateau has become, its eastern border reaches to China; however, in practice, this border did not go beyond Balkh and the well-known part of Takharstan (Ancient West), and in the Maghreb, in the same way, Khorasan border reaches the border of Zagros; But sometimes it included: Qoms, Jurjan, Rey and parts of Tabarstan, and it was often taken as one with Khorasan; but practically, Amu Darya was known as the northern border of Khorasan, and sometimes you don't even reach this border. (Ibid.: 8-11). But the first big city of Khorasan, through which the Khorasan highway passed, was the city of Neyshabur, the center of the quarter of Neyshabur, one of the four quarters of Khorasan. Neyshabur is also called "Om-e-Blad Khorasan", "Abarshahr" and "Little Damascus". (Istakhari 1968:270; Mustofi 1967:181, Ibn Ibn Battuta, 1958, p. 396), geographers have written a lot about the products and mines of Neyshabur.

Istakhari has considered Neyshabur Mountains as a turquoise mine. (Istakhari, 1968, p. 272). Muqadasi wrote in the discussion of the market of this region: "From Neyshabur, silk, ornaments, fine spun cotton, iron and other things are exported." (Muqadasi, 1982, p. 474-475/2). Ibn Battuta learned about the silk threads woven in Neyshabur and wrote that they are sent to India for sale. (Ibn Battuta, 1957, p. 397), referring to the commercial and merchant location of Neyshabur, Ibn Huql writes in *Sarasar Khorasan*, a city in trade and many travelers and caravans, "the foot of Neyshabur does not reach and from there all kinds of clothes Cotton and silk fabrics are obtained to Other Islamic lands and some of the disbelief lands and kings and great men wear these clothes; From any city or region, such a desirable dress cannot be

obtained." (Ibn Huql, 1987, p. 168). In the streets of Neyshabur, they also sometimes sell slaves like in Samarkand and Herat. From simple workers to artisans, war slaves, musicians, singers, dancers, and singers were put up for sale. Albatkin and subkatkin of Ghaznavi were bought in Barde-Forshan market of Neyshabur (Greeley, 1995, p. 227). Ibn Faqih Hamadani, where he spoke about the beauties of Balad, writes that the most beautiful places in terms of [turquoise] mining is Neyshabur. He also writes in the commercial importance of Neyshabur that the weavers and weavers of this city are well known. Melhem clothes, a type of white and pure silk, knitted, woven and sewn (a kind of delicate fabric) are produced in this city, and these clothes are taken to other provinces (Ibn Faqih Hamadani, quoted from the same 228). The next destination for commercial caravans on the Khorasan road is Tous. Abu Dulaf considers Tous to be four cities, two of which are big and the other two are small. According to his report, between Tous and Neyshabur, there is a very big mountain palace. (Abu Dulaf Travel, 1354, p. 84-85). Muqadasi also considered Tous as a great and ancient treasure, which is among the villages of Neyshabur, where there are properties, fields, fruits and mines (Muqadasi, 1982, 467-468/2), according to Mustofi's report, among the fruits there, grapes and figs are very sweet. (Mustofi, 1957, p. 185-186), geographers such as the anonymous writer of *Hudud Al-Alam*, Qazvini and Istakhari mention the existence of minerals: turquoise, copper, lead, vermilion, silver, green marble and others in Tous Mountains. have done (Hadud al-Alam, 1983, p. 90; Qazvini, 1994, p. 480; Istakhri, 1968, p. 205), in addition to this, according to Ibn Huql's report, there is a Qador al-Bram mine (stone for making heavy boilers) in "Kuh Noghan" Rasan and besides that, there are other mines such as copper, iron, turquoise, Khamahan, and Dhanj (green larch) and I have heard from someone that there is also a gold mine." (Ibn Huql, 1987, p. 169). After Tous, Khorasan road will reach Merv after going through Sarkhs and Dandangan. Sarakhs was also of commercial importance on the way from Tous to Merv. According to Istakhari's report, in Sarkhs, there were many raccoons in the area and their (people of Sarkhs) were camel traders.

Muqadasi also writes that the top of the mosque and the street are decorated, and its people have special skills in making embroidery and embroidered masks, and its products are exported to other places (Muqadasi, 1982, p. 2; Mustofi, 1957, p. 187). Merv was the second quarter of Khorasan. Merv is also called "Moroshahjan" because Merv was big so as not to be confused with small Merv.

Yaqut Hamoui named the two cities as "Merv Rod" and "Merv Shahjan", and he called the first one "Little Merv" and the second one as "Big Merv" (Hamoui, Yaqut, 1968, Q 112/5),

the author of Surah Al-Arz writes, In the past, it was at the gate of the city, next to the Jame Mosque, and Abu Muslim transferred it to Majan, and it is a very clean market, and it has everything you need during the day and night" (Ibn Huql, 1987, p. 170). The author of Hudud al-Alam also writes that there is no city in Khorasan as good as Merv. And then, he mentioned the products of Merv such as: good cotton, asafetida, vinegar, and others. (Hadud al-Alam, 94:1983), it is also reported about Merv products that "its fruits are healthy and good; because they cut and dry the melon there and carry it to many areas.

In the desert of Merv, it is ash that is taken to many places, and silk and silk cocoons are obtained in abundance, and also good and very soft cotton and clothes are obtained, and these clothes are taken to other lands as well." (Ibn Huql, 1978, p. 171). In his detailed description of the commercial importance of Merv products, Istakhari writes: "Khorasan is the best city, and Merv fruits are better than other fruits of Khorasan cities; to the extent that they dry the melon there, they take the melon pulp (dried fruit) to the horizon, and I have not heard of any other place where the melon can be preserved without spoiling (ibid). And bread is well-known. And the structure and order of the buildings and streets, the cleanliness of the people, and the order of the streets of the professionals, such that each profession has a separate street, and the asafetida are taken to all over the world from the desert. And those who get silk in Marv will not get it anywhere else. And I heard that the original silk came from Merv to Tabarstan, and the seeds from Merv were taken to Tabarstan, and Merv's cotton and good linens grew from Merv. (istakhari, 1968, p. 208).

### **7. Transoxiana (Mawarannahr)**

After passing through Merv, which is one of its most important settlements, the Great Khorasan road passes through Amal and reaches the shore of Jayhun river. By crossing the Jayhun river, Khorasan highway enters beyond the river; A land that was very important from a commercial point of view for the development of this road; because "on the other side of the river, clothing is also plentiful; Because they need wool, silk, high quality linen.

In this land, there are many iron mines and there is a lot of trade, and gold, silver and mercury mines are abundant, and none of the blood of Islam compares to it in terms of abundance, and the mines of Panj Hir Ham, which is known for many of these mines, belongs to Transoxiana (Mawarannahr) and from its outskirts." (Ibn Huql, 1366, p. 144). Ibn Huql also mentions: noshadar, paper, Turkish slaves, musk, saffron, otter skin of squirrel and fox, and there are other exports in this area. (Ibid.: 195) In Amal and after Jayhun river, Khorasan road reaches Bukhara through Rabat Ali (Farbar) and Bikand. This city was considered one of the most prosperous and important cities in Transoxiana (Mawarannahr). According to Ibn Huql's

narrative, "Inside and outside the city, there are interconnected streets that are opened at certain times, and in them they sell hats, clothes, and other goods such as silk, copper, etc.

Cotton clothes, known for Bukhara, which are heavy and tightly woven, are the focus of Arab attention, as well as carpets (carpets or Jajim) and woolen clothes for bed, which are extremely beautiful, as well as altar mats, are produced in Bukhara and other areas. And they are exported to Iraq." (Ibid.: 217) .Bukhara had many towns and villages, but Tawais became more important than other areas. (Muqadasi, (1361). 2/386), according to Ibn Huql's report, "Tawais is a big city and it has a big street and a large community that people from the Khorasan region rush to at a certain time of the year."

From this city, a lot of cotton clothes are obtained and exported to Iraq. Many people from all over the world used to go there to trade goods. (Nareshkhi, 1984, p. 185; Jihani, 1989, p. 185). In addition to this, there is a river inside the fence of Bukhara and in the east, which Nareshkhi writes about: "In the olden days, there was a river that used to come from distant provinces every year in the middle of winter.

And what used to come from there was mostly halva, and sticks, salted fish, fresh fish, and sheep skins. And there were many merchants, but today, there is every Friday market where merchants go from the city and the districts. And what grows from that day that the merchants take to the provinces today, will be flax." (Ibid.: 21-22). During the Samanian era, Zandane was known as "Zandaniji" and the workshops of the region used special taste and taste in weaving this fabric. This product was sold outside of Iran, even to India, and its price was equal to silk, and the kings wanted it a lot. (Ibid.: 21). Tawais cotton clothes were also exported to Iraq (Ibn Huql, 1987, p. 216). The exquisite products of Bukhara are taken to Syria, Egypt and even Rome. In all historical periods, Bukhara was an important city for the supply of goods from China and West Asia, and the caravans that passed Transoxiana (Mawarannahr) used to stop in this city. The trade relations of people Transoxiana (Mawarannahr) with China expanded more during the period of the Kushan Empire, and the religion of Buddha reached the land of China as a result of these links.

The ability of Sogdian and Chinese merchants at the end of the 5th century AD was a great blessing; because when they ruled over a large part of Trans-Nor, the security of the caravan routes (transit for commercial goods from distant regions) and the commercial importance of Bukhara increased. (Fry, 1969, p. 25). Bukhara had many markets, the most important of which is the well-known "Makh" market. This market used to open twice a year and idols were bought and sold there. Nareshkhi writes in the history of Bukhara: "There has

been a market in Bukhara, which is called Makh, twice a year; [only for one day] and every time there was a market, idols were bought and sold [in it], and every day one would made more than 50,000 dirham. One of the most important small multi-day markets was Ten Days market in Shargh (one of the villages of Bukhara) which was opened in the middle of winter and most of its goods were sheep skins and wood. (Ibid.: 52). Industrial works, especially weaving, were also prosperous in Bukhara. The silk, linen and wool yarns that were produced in this city and its suburbs were among the most important commercial goods. Shadorvan, which had a lot of demand, was one of the most important industrial works of Bukhara, and many merchants paid a lot for its sale. These textiles are exported to Iraq and other places (Ibn Huql, 1987, p. 216). After Bukhara, the Khorasan road will reach Samarkand after going through Dabusiya and Kishaniya. Ashtikhen, Kishaniya (Kashani) and Wazar are located in the north of Samarkand. Kishaniya or Kisaniya, which was called the heart of the blood of Sogd, was of special importance for the city of Abad. Also, the important cities of Kerminiyeh, Dabusiye and Rabinjan, between Samarkand and Bukhara, Kish and Nakhshab were in the southern regions of Samarkand. It is suspected that the most important factors of its greenness and development were the suitable weather and the productivity of the region and the passing of the Sughd River by the side of Samarkand. The diverse weather and the benefits of this land lead to the prosperity of agriculture and after that, the cultivation of various products; Because all the people of Transoxiana (Mawarannahr) benefit from the agricultural products of Samarkand. Fandaq and almonds were among the exports of Samarkand villages, and various types of grain and fruit were produced in this area. But they know Samarkand by its paper. Paper was one of the precious products found on the Great Khorasan road and the result of the art of the people of this country, which for years went to the farthest parts of the world and made everyone admire it.

Qazvini writes about this in Athar al-Blad: "From Samarkand, strange things were taken to the provinces; Among them, there is a paper that is called Samarkandi, and it is not as good anywhere; except in China." (Qazvini, 1994, p. 617). The author of Hudud al-Alam writes in the description of the paper of Samarkand: "And from him is the paper that is taken to all the world." (Hudud al-Alam, 1983, p. 108). According to historical accounts, the Samarkand region was full of natural and mineral resources and there was abundant coal and in addition to that, white plaster, alum, noshadar and building stone were also found. Gold panning was also common in the course of the Zarafshan river. In spite of this, Samarkand is more important than anything, its strategic, geographic position; that is, this city was located on the route of merchant caravans from India, Khorasan, China and Turkic lands, and various goods from different parts

of the world were found on the roads of this city. Ezainro, Samarkand is called the great commercial port in Transoxiana (Mawarannahr). (Ibn Huql, 1987, p. 221), the proximity of the Trans-Anhal region to Qalam and China is one of the most important factors for the development of trade and commerce in this land, especially Samarkand; because the merchants of Samarkand mostly traded with the Chinese. The author of *Hudud al-Alam* writes about the business conditions of Samarkand: "Samarkand is a big city and it is Abadan with many blessings and it is a place for merchants from all over the world." (*Hudud al-Alam*, 1983, p. 107), the commercial port in Transoxiana (Mawarannahr) reads: "Samarkand, it is assumed that it is Transoxiana (Mawarannahr) and the merchant group and all the goods are brought there and from there they go to the cities. For this reason, Samarkand is known as "the gathering place of slaves from Transoxiana (Mawarannahr) and the breeder of the best slaves". (Ibid.: 187) Of course, buying and selling Turkish slaves and slaves was more popular and important than other slave trades, and they also produced velvet clothes, silk bags, copper pots, saddles and horse legs, and glass. It was Samarkand's exports.

Also, according to Chinese sources, between the years 627-647 AD, only 20 Ilchigiri delegations went to China from Samarkand and its surroundings and went to buy and sell with trade caravans (Mir Abdini, 2001, p. 126). In addition to the city of Samarkand, the villages and surrounding areas were also located on the route of the Great Khorasan Road and they exchanged their commercial products. Ibn Huqal has obtained an extensive report of the commercial products of these areas; "Benjikth is a village with abundant fruits and trees and it is distinguished by having good products, both dry and wet. Shawhar is known for having healthy air and good agriculture and good fruits.

Dargham village has green fields and grapes that are superior to the grapes of other villages and are transported to other areas. Kash is a city whose fruit ripens earlier than other regions Transoxiana (Mawarannahr) and they bring it to Bukhara. In Kash, they extract salt, which is exported to many areas from Khorasan, and in its mountains, agakir is abundant, and mangroves are also found in this area, as well as Khondam and Khoraman esters. Transoxiana (Mawarannahr), it is from this place that it is sent to different areas of Khorasan (Ibn Huql, 1987, p. 228-225). This spectacular business boom in Bukhara and Samarkand (before the Mongol invasion) was one of the main factors of the commercial and commercial importance of the Great Khorasan Road. Because a large part of the trade exchanges on the Khorasan road was done in these areas. Commercial caravans used to enter Ashrushne area on the Khorasan road after leaving Samarkand. According to Istakhari's report, iron was one of the commercial

products of Ashrushna; "And from Marsmande (one of the villages of Ashrushna) and Ferghana, a lot of iron is transported on the horizon. And in Marsmande, there is a market and there is a large gathering where once a month, people from far away cities gather there for transactions. He writes: "In Manik area And Marsmande, they make iron tools that are sent all over Khorasan and Iraq. Marsmande has a famous street where people come from far away places and this street is formed once at the beginning of every month.

In this way, the route of Khorasan Road in Ashrushna, passing through Zamin and Sabat (Blash Abad), entered Jal Bezerg and Sargsebz of Ferghana. Ferghana is also the same as Ashrushna, "the name of a region and includes wide areas, large cities and villages." Its seat is Akhsikhet, which is a city on the edge of Chach (Sihun) river, in the north of it and on a flat land. The roads of Ferghana are located in the city and Rabz, and most of them are in the city." (Ibid.: 237). Jalga Ferghana is surrounded by high mountains from the north and south.

Sogdian immigrants settled in Ferghana, and Qum merchants used to travel to China and Mongolia through this valley (Fry, A passage in the historical geography of Central Asia: 16). In Ferghana, there are gold and wire mines, and from the mountains of Sukh, mercury, and from the Upper Nesaya region, bitumen, lamp stone, gold, wire, turquoise, iron, zinc, and lead are obtained. (Ibn Huql, 1987, p. 240). Istakhari also reports in this context: "There is a mine of gold, wire, and mercury in the Farganah border, rising from the mountains of Sukh, and in the remote area of Zebrin, there are springs of oil." And there is an oil well in Mount Esbra. And the gold mine, copper, lead, and iron were all in the territory of Ferghana." (Istakhari, 1968, p. 267). That year, in Ferghana region, Khorasan road would pass through the cities of Osh, Qoba, and after passing Sayhun, it will finally reach Ozkand. Ozkand was located next to the areas of Kafarnshin. Khorasan highway, after Ozkand, entered Kafarnshin area and passing by Esi Ghol lake (Tson Kariya/Junghariyeh), to Kashgar, one of the main axes of the Great Khorasan road, and the westernmost point of Tarim basin (Frank and Brownstone, 1997, p. 17). You will arrive. In Kashgar, the road was divided into two branches; One is towards Khattan and the main road of Khorasan towards Kol Jay, and after passing through Teklemkan desert, to the wide and flowing watershed of Turfan city, which is located about one hundred meters below the sea level (Frank and Brownstone, 1997, p. 31-32 and 36). The remains of the ancient city (Kiao-Hu/Kyu-She, Barkoto/Yar-Foto), belonging to the Han period (252 BC-225 AD), in the west of the current city of Turfan, and the remains of the ruined quadrangle city. Guchen/Gaochang, With a size of 1.5 square kilometers, it was built in 640 AD (which was the capital of the Uighurs from the 3rd/9th century) near the east of Turfan, and it shows the antiquity of the area and the road. (Dräege and Bèuhrer, 1989, p. 106-104). Finally, the Great Khorasan Road, after

traveling thousands of kilometers and exchanging hundreds of commercial goods, finally reaches Tunhuang, which means the gateway to China.

### **Conclusion**

Considering the extensive discussion that came in the economic geography of the cities on the so-called "Silk Road" and also the brief search of this research in the Islamic geographical sources, we can now address the main question. His research gave a reasoned and documented answer. Why is it not accurate and correct to name this big and historical road as "Silk"? And is it possible to find a name for it by searching in Iranian and Islamic historical-geographic sources? Regarding the first part of the question, it should be emphasized that the naming of the Silk Road was mainly due to the importance of the superiority and importance of silk goods in the course of commercial exchanges between the East and the West along this route. is But a careful examination of the economic geography of the cities located along this road and the traded goods along its long route, shows that silk was only one of the hundreds of traded goods. Therefore, we are witnessing an unparalleled variety of goods exchanged along the path of this road; it is clear that silk goods are not superior to other goods. Therefore, calling this road as silk, could not have a historical basis and according to the objective facts of this great road. Regarding the second part of the main question of the research, it should also be stated that large parts of this great and long road pass through historical Iran and Great Khorasan and all of the importance of this long road. to be aware, to be aware; However, in none of the Islamic-Iranian geographical sources, the name "Silk" is mentioned, and based on several clues, it can be guessed that the majority of this long route is called It is called "Rah Khorasan"; However, according to this inaccurate opinion that the main commodity exchanged along the Khorasan route was silk, it has been mistakenly known as the Silk Road. So, there is no logical, historical and economic justification for this road to be called ‘‘Abrisham’’ and also considering that long sections of this road pass through the Khorasan area and for the same reason, Iranian-Islamic historical and geographical sources, this The part of the road is called Khorasan Road, we can generalize this name to the whole road and call it "Khorasan Great Road". Apart from what was said, another logical reason can be stated for this new naming. In fact, from the very distant past and even to the present day, the big and small roads of communication mean more in connection with cities and geographical regions than goods and exchange items. The so-called Silk Road was a wide and long network that connected the westernmost regions of China to the easternmost shores of the Mediterranean. The commercial and marketing data of the statistics mentioned in the text of this research show the position and importance of the cities located on

the path of this great road. In fact, it was the existence of these cities that basically provided the possibility of the emergence of the Great Khorasan Road. Bishkek, if there were no big cities such as: Baghdad, Qormisin, Ri, Neyshabur, Mero, Bukhara, Samarkand, Fergana and Kashgar on the route of this road, it is very likely that this road could not reach importance. and play such an irreplaceable role. The so-called Silk Road, thanks to the presence of these big cities and their diverse and diverse products, was able to turn into a big international and effective road in the field of commercial exchanges. With this description, if we list all the big and small cities along this road, we will see that more than half of them are located in the geographical area of Greater Khorasan. This issue clearly shows why most of the cities in the east and west of Khorasan have gates of Khorasan Road. So, the name "Khorasan Road" which is not a commodity, but a geographical one, is probably closer to the historical truth.

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