

Ilkhanid Settlements on Silk Road in Qazvin Plain Survey

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Abstract

Following the Mongol invasion, in the 7th century and 8th centuries AH, to the countries on the great Silk Road, insecurity and the destruction occurred across this highway. This insecurity started from Xi'an, the old capital of China, and after crossing through the Taklaman desert descendant through central Asia and take the way to Baliq and Almaliq and reach Samarqand and Bukharah. The main part of Silk Road, in Bukharah came through Marv, Sarax, Nishabur, GorganBām and Safiābād toward Ray. And continuing the path it went from Qazvin, Zanzan and north Hamedān from the side of Kabudar- Ahang toward Ardebil, Tabriz and following it went toward Trabuzan and finally ended in one of the Shām harbors. The most important goods would be traded through Iran and Qazvin plainov thousands of years was Silk. Concurrency of the Ilkhanidgovernment in Iran in this period, along with the changes, was accompanied with great transformation and development in commerce network. Given to the above progress on the way of the silk road and the existence of trading bases in this commercial routes, reveal the strategic importance for Ilkhanid dynasty. The performed studies showed that many of these archaeological sites which were settlements businessmen in this geographical range and this part of Silk Road was so far unknown. But during the archaeological survey of this mission was identified. The result of this lately mission which reveals the impact of silk trade and other commercial goods are the subject study of this article.

Keywords: Survey, Qazvin plain, Settlement, Ilkhanid, Silk Road

Introduction

The importance of communicating roads has been directly related to the progress and growth of the millennia in the process of human life from the prehistoric period to the present; such a significance can be used to indicate the extent of the development of cultural structure and in every geographical region in which people have come and gone,

military forces and the premises where business activities are carried out. The mentioned process has provided the context for transferring the intellectual and cultural achievements of humans over the course of thousands of years. Silk Road is one of the most ancient routes and means of communication used for conducting business and commerce in the past. It's a road that has

begun in the east for thousands of years from the shores of the Pacific and has spread to the Mediterranean in the west. It has been called Silk Road by the historians; part of this communication road passed through Iran. According to archaeological research in Iran, thought and culture have been exchanged for thousands of years through this specific road (1).

Cultural Iran in Silk Road

Cultural Iran refers to intangible boundaries of Iran which covers a geographically broad area and can be considered as the frontiers of the geopolitical region of Iran, in the sense that although there is a country with a specific geographical name and boundaries known as Iran, the invisible borders of this country are far more extensive than geographical, legally allocated boundaries (2); many sections of the Silk Road have crossed through Iran. This road begins from main cities along the Silk Road, including Xi'an, Khatan, Kashgar, Turfan in China, Samarkand, Bukhara and Marv in Central Asia, Tus, Damghan, Gorgan, Ray, Qazvin and Tabriz in Iran. This road was divided into branches in Qazvin, some of which joined Azerbaijan and Erzurum or Trabzon, and some others to Hamadan, Baghdad, Mosul and Antioch, or Cappadocia and Sardis. This was the main route, with six sub-branches attached to it (3). The use of these branches has a long history. These branches have always been the means of cultural communication between Iran, Mesopotamia and East Anatolia in different times; this makes the road highly vital in economic significance, commercial, political and military dimensions; military bases, commercial docks and caravansaries were built along this road. The main bedding of these roads and roads in historical times was the same ancient natural background as before, and no major change happened in these roads for a long time; however, a slight shift has been made alongside the old roads

in recent decades (1). It is worth pointing out that this link between east and west Asia created a business relationship in China with the Roman Empire. The role of Iran in these trade relations was very important as a linker between these two empires and, in spite of the efforts made by the Roman Empire and Byzantium over the years, Iran's dominance over this commercial road has been maintained and strengthened. At the end of the Sasanian Empire, the Silk Road was transported by the Caspian Turks in collaboration with the Byzantine Empire from eastern Iran to the north of the Caspian Sea, imposing huge political and economic impact on the Sasanian Empire. During the Islamic era, this road, which became increasingly vital, was used to conduct trade relationships; as described by Ibn Khordadbeh, this dirt road regained its importance since the 3rd century AH. The German geographer, Ferdinand von Richthofen, used the term "Silk Road" for this Asian highly and trade route in 1877, due to the transportation of the most important merchandise at that time through this road, namely silk (4)(Fig-1).

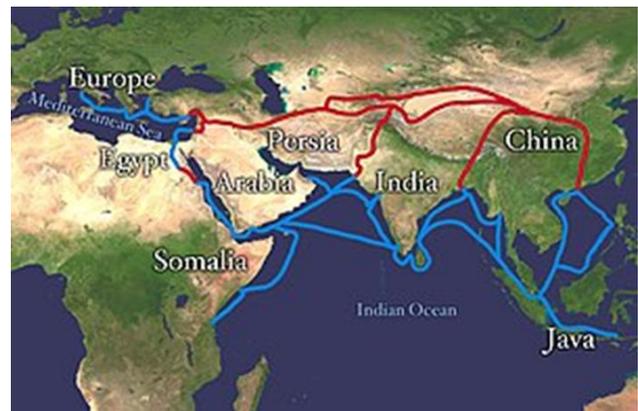


Figure 1: Land and sea roads of Silk Road Passing through Iran.

Perspective on Geographical Situation and Historical Studies of Qazvin Plain

The sedimentary plain of Qazvin is located in the northwestern corner of Iran's Plateau and south of the mountains of Alborz. Permanent rivers of Kharrood, Abharrud, Haji Arabs,

Karaj and Shur are located in this plain. Ancient archaeological studies have shown that there were many settlements, from prehistoric times, historical periods and Islamic era in this geographical area. One of the most important reasons for the establishment of settlements is the use of these ecosystems in this geographic area and its being located on important communication paths that have already become an important transit route, such as Polye Mesopotamia which is extended through West to the Northeast of Iran, Afghanistan, and eventually Central Asia. The same road was one of the most important communication and commercial routes in the country, known as the Great Khorasan Road in the Islamic era. Diakonov writes states that Qazvin is considered to be a major milestone during the Median rule, as the great north-east road extends from Hamadan towards Qazvin and Raha. On the other hand, another road has passed through Qazvin; this road way divided into two branches in Qazvin, one towards the Caspian Sea and the other, that was the main road, passing through the west of Tabriz and reaching the plains around the Uremia Lake and, after connecting the narrow rangers to the, Assyrian. Thus, Qazvin Plain and related branches have played a significant role in the center of the land of Mud from a communal point of view. This road, with an approximate length of 2500 km, was known as *the king's road* during Achaemenid dynasty. Herodotus, the Greek historian, states that this road, which began in the Achaemenid period from Western Anatolia, passed through Ferriga, the Halis River, the Cappadocia, the Cilician, the Erbil, the Zab River and Pol Dokhtar to Susa; there was a road to Ekbatan (Hamadan) and, after passing Ramhormoz and Organ (Arjan), Pasargadae. There was a caravanserai every 5 miles on this long route, where the caravans stayed at nights in those places (5). This road continued from Pasargadae and Persepolis (Persepolis) to

Susa and from there to Sardis of Asia Minor and Aphrodite towns along the Aegean Sea; then, during the Parthian period, the Silk Road connected the Far East to the Mediterranean Sea; after crossing Iran, this road came to close proximity of Qazvin plain. During the Sassanid era, the great highway that started from the Teshfun, the Sassanid capital, which was beside the Tigris, began after passing through Hellen and Kangavar to Hamadan; then, one of these routes was drawn from there in the direction of Qazvin towards Alborz Mountains and the banks of the Caspian Sea; it retained its position and increased its importance during the post-Islamic era. In his book, *Mesalk al-Mamalik*, Ibn Khordadhas stated that Qazvin's fortress has been called the Persian Ghetto (6), in which Imam Rafai calls Qazvin as "Kesvīn", which seems to be the border to be guarded. Naser Khosrow's reference to Qazvin's markets in the fifth century is testimony to the strategic position of Qazvin in connection with the commercial activities of this geographic area along the road linking China and India, on the one hand, to the Black Sea and Mediterranean, on the other side. In this regard, Silk Road has continued to be divided into the following roads in Iran: from Marv to Sangabad (Mashhad), Neyshabur, Bastam, Damghan, Semnan, Deh Salt, Khar, Aprin, Rey, Alishahoz, Pelangi Abad, Boyinzahra, Shal, Asfarin, Nahavand, Takestan, on the side of Changuleh, Tartar, Lushan, on the southern side of the Sefi Greetings to Tarom, from the Ghezel Ozan trail, towards the cafeterias and the Sarab, following the Cider River towards Tabriz, from there to Sufis, Khamenei, Shabestar and Van. Although other cities such as Kashan, Hamedan, and Esfahan were on the road, none were as strategically significant as Qazvin and had no special position because the roads were all separated in Qazvin.

Exploring and recognizing the enclosures of the Ilkhanate era in Qazvin plain

The archaeological surveys carried out in Qazvin plain in 2005 provided the opportunity to identify the regional status of a part of the establishment of the Islamic era and evaluate the new perspective of these sites. It is worth pointing out that the communication significance of Qazvin depends more on the location of the plain rather than the city, because the most important western and northwestern routes crossed the southern or central parts of the plain. Recognition of the settlements of the Ilkhanate era was carried out by studying the surface of the plain in southern parts Bouyin Zahra, Takestan, and Abgarm. The materials and data provided by this study made it possible for us to identify the number of deployments in these courses; by having this information, there is almost a complete picture of the distribution of ancient sites in the regional and biological context. The environment has been built at various cultural periods, especially the Ilkhanate. Therefore, by recognizing the deployments and using historical sources, we could analyze and evaluate the path of this road with regard to the social, political and economic organization of this part of Qazvin plain. However, it should be noted that large parts of Qazvin plain still require a systematic and intensive study, which we hope to be conducted in close future (7). Ancient sites identified during this survey include hills and temporary settlement sites that examine the archaeological remains of the archaeological site and cover a range from the early Ilkhanate era to the end of their rule, sites such as Ghadim Abad, DakanRadkan, Shazar, Shal, Aqbali, Zulikha, Shahrak, Sayf Abad, Kuchar, FiroozabadLayar, Marmara, Kekin, Dolat Abad, PelangAbad; these passageways are located on the way fromShahrerytowards Ali Shah Avaz, PelangAbad, Bouyinzahra, Shal, Asfarin, Nahavand, and Takestan, indicating

that the Qazvin Plain has been located on Marginal capital of the Mughal Empire during the Middle Ages. So, the most important historical, cultural and socioeconomic processes could have taken place in the center of these sites and in this geographical area. Remnant handicrafts, which are cultural findings, including pottery, tiles, etc., is one of the most important evidence of such a claim; these handicrafts have been studied in the surface survey of the sites of these courses according to their construction quality. In most cases, they turn out to be quite similar to each other, and in most cases it indicates that these findings have reached or have passed through to the destination along this long road. The above process illustrates the importance of these sites during this period. Analysis of these findings and historiography allows us to identify the main directions of business communication that we identified during this period in Qazvin plain. Therefore, the significance of Qazvin plain and the attention of the ruling powers to the capital like Soltanieh became more strategic during the Mughal Empire. The above process illustrates the large number of archaeological sites studied in this area. According to these findings, the historical role of Qazvin plain and its special position in this corridor shows a significant relationship (Table.1)(Fig. 2).



Figure 2: The location of the Ilkhani sites studied on the Silk Road track in the cultural district of Qazvin plain.

Table 1: Chronology of the Qazvin plain areas from prehistoric to Islamic era, focusing on the Ilkhanate period.

No	Name area	Geographical coordinates	Geographical location	Above sea level	Breadth (m2)	Height (m)	Period
1	Garakan area	N: 503646 E:353725	Vorabad-Akhtarabad Main Road	1325	190	-	Sassanid, early Islam, Ilkhanate
2	Haj Hassan Hills	N:5029055 E:3577722	Buin Zahra - Eshtehard dirt Road	1210	280	2	Sassanid, early Islam, Ilkhanate
3	KolahDareh Hills	N:426114 E:3956944	Along the road of Buin Zahra	1207	900	5	Sassanid / early Islam, Ilkhanate, Safavid
4	Hill valley hat	N: 417622 E:3958580	Eshtehard-Buin ring road	1235	724	6	Prehistory, Parthian, Sassanid / early Islam, Seljuk, Ilkhanate, Safavid
5	Dolat Abad hill	N: 417464 E:3962103	Buin Zahra-Qazvin road	1210	740	10	Parthian, Sassanid, early Islam, Ilkhanate
6	Abbas Abad hill	N:417409 E:3963869	Buin Zahra-Mohammad Abad road	1223	412	6.5	Prehistory, Parthian, Sassanid / Sadr-Salam, Ilkhanate
7	Hussein Abad hill	N: 412845 E:3966796	Buin Zahra-Qazvin road	1236	866	13.5	Bronze Age / Iron, Sassanid / early Islam, Seljuk, Ilkhanate
8	Meshkin hill	N:408630 E:3985466	Along Qazvin-Buin road	1210	322	3.5	Iron Age, Parthian, Sassanid / early Islam, Seljuk, Ilkhanate, Safavid
9	ShisheGhale (Glass Castle) Hill	N:499808 E:3599444	Along Qazvin-Buin road	1217	350	6	Iron Age, Parthian, Sassanid / early Islam, Ilkhanate
10	Kakin Hill	N:4992555 E:360075	Along Qazvin-Buin road	1225	675	7	Prehistoric, Ilkhanate
11	BazmJerd hill	N:399895 E:3983523	Along Qazvin-Buin road	1247	210	6	Iron Age, Parthian, Sassanid / early Islam, Ilkhanate
12	KachleGerd hill	N:398647 E: 3985049	Along Qazvin-Buin road	1246	390	3.5	Iron Age, Sassanid / early Islam, Ilkhanate, Safavid
13	Jouin hill	N:395690 E:3987257	Along Qazvin-Buin road	-	277	6.5	Parthian, Sassanid / early Islam, Seljuk, Ilkhanate, Safavid
14	Saeedabad	N:412548 E:3990262	Along Qazvin-Buin road	1227	570	15	Iron Age, Parthian, Sassanid, Sassanid / early Islam, Seljuk, Ilkhanate
15	Zilikha hill	N:413567 E:3992253	Along Qazvin-Buin road	1216	290	4	Iron Age, Parthian, Sassanid / early Islam, Seljuk, Ilkhanate
16	Marmara Hill	N: 414925 E:3995232	Along Qazvin-Buin road	1221	627	11	Prehistory, Iron Age, Parthian, Sassanid / early Islam, Ilkhanate, Safavid
17	Kuchar hill	N:4975722 E:35853	Along Qazvin-Buin road	1306	280	12	Iron Age, Parthian, Sassanid / early Islam, Seljuk, Ilkhanate, Safavid
18	Shal hill	N:4995555 E:360451	Along Qazvin-Buin road	1243	290	13	Sassanid, early Islam, Ilkhanate
19	Agha Baba hill	N:406898 E:3993697	Along Qazvin-Buin road	1231	600	6.5	Bronze Age / Iron, Iron Age, Sassanid, Seljuk, Ilkhanate
20	Shahrestanak Hill	N:406227 E:4004447	Along Qazvin-Buin road	1271	1180	20	Prehistoric, Iron Age, Sassanid, Seljuk, Ilkhanate, Safavid
21	Ghadim Abad hill	N:401933 E:4003221	Along Qazvin-Buin road	1263	273	8.5	Parthian, Sassanid, early Islam, Ilkhanate, Safavid
22	Janat Abad hill	N:495947 E:3598722	Along Qazvin-Takestan road	1344	486	15	Iron Age, Sassanid / early Islam, Seljuk, Ilkhanate, Safavid
23	Dakan hill	N:369049 E:3982005	Along Qazvin-Takestan road	1346	390	8.5	The Bronze Age, / Iron, Parthian, Sassanid / early Islam, Seljuk Ilkhanate

24	Saif Abad hill	N:49575 E:3584833	Along Qazvin- Takestan road	1346	400	16	Iron Age, Sassanid, Seljuk, Ilkhanate, Safavid
25	Radkan hill	N:357690 E:3962175	Along Qazvin- Takestan road	1566	580	21	Prehistoric, Iron Age, Parthian, Sassanid / early Islam, Ilkhanate

Conclusion

Surveying Qazvin plain showed that the cultural structure of this plain has led to the desolation of some settlements after the collapse of the Seljuk regime and the coming of the Mongols to Iran. Following the concentration of power, security and coherence established by the Ilkhanate in Iran, business became quite prosperous and the urban economy grew in important domains. Considering the important position of the business during Ilkhanate era, they tried to establish security throughout trade routes; thus, they specified a huge geographical area for cultural exchanges and communications in cultural areas of Central and the West Asian countries. The description of the location of the sites examined in this study indicates their special importance; accordingly, given the findings of different studies, Qazvin has been located in the intersection of a four-way cultural exchange and trade actions in this time.

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