***THE SIGNIFICANE OF THE “SILK ROAD” IN WORLD HISTORY***

***ЗНАЧЕНИЕ ШЕЛКОВОГО ПУТИ В МИРОВОЙ ИСТОРИИ***

***«ЖІБЕК ЖОЛЫНЫҢ» ДҮНИЕЖҮЗІ ТАРИХЫНДАҒЫ МАҢЫЗЫ***

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**Omarbekov T.**

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

Doctor of History science, professor

**Otarbayeva A.B.**

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

1-year Master Student of History, Archeology and Ethnology Faculty

*Summary*

Since the period of formation of the Caravan trade Chinese silk has attracted attention of the neighbor and West Antic countries. Silk fabric was not only in great demand in world trade, but in the ranks of countries silk was considered as official currency, other countries pledged to pay a tax in the form of silk.

During the article authors tried to define the place of origin of silk production and to demonstrate significance and role of silk tissue in the formation of the Silk Road; to define a land of silk production origin; to make a demonstration of using the terms “The Silk Road” and “Silk Roads”; to make an analysis of ways of transportation of goods from the period of the caravan road had formed.

In spite of the fact that on the caravan road which started in China and extended up to the Europe there were hundreds of various goods transported and sold, the silk production always used to be in great demand. As a result, several major caravan roads stayed in the history of the world were named by the name of this marketable commodity and saved in the history called “The Silk Road”.

*Key words:* Silk, Silk Road, China, Trade, Caravan Road.

*The secret of the production and the expansion of silk.* If to speak about the silk production secret, the authentic history of expansion and transportation of silk is represented in documents of European countries and China of that time, in legends and descriptions of journeymen’s. So there is no [consensus of opinion](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%b5%d0%b4%d0%b8%d0%bd%d0%be%d0%b5%20%d0%bc%d0%bd%d0%b5%d0%bd%d0%b8%d0%b5&translation=consensus%20of%20opinion&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) about the history of silk expansion into other countries and about the period of its production. Still and all, if we lean upon information at our disposal, the secret of silk production was first discovered by Chinese 4000 years ago; yet, the famous West-European researchers named Fava and Witt point out that it occurred 7000 years old [1, p.5]. The results of the [archeological dig](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%b0%d1%80%d1%85%d0%b5%d0%be%d0%bb%d0%be%d0%b3%d0%b8%d1%87%d0%b5%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8%d0%b5%20%d1%80%d0%b0%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%bf%d0%ba%d0%b8&translation=archeological%20dig&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) of 1958 in Zhejiang province give very important information about the technology of silk production in China in the 3 millennium B.C. When there were investigations into Liangzhu [cultural heritage](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Translate/en-ru/protection%20of%20cultural%20heritage), there was a [bamboo basket](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%b1%d0%b0%d0%bc%d0%b1%d1%83%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%b0%d1%8f%20%d0%ba%d0%be%d1%80%d0%b7%d0%b8%d0%bd%d0%b0&translation=bamboo%20basket&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) found that contained remains of fabric [2, p.76-85]. The radiocarbon dating method originally made for researches into rice remains indicates the fact that the origin of the fabric dates back to 2750+/-100 year B.C. [3, p.191].

In Tikhomirov’s view, silk production began in the 3 millennium B.C. starting with the previous dynasties. In accordance with the data from China, the imperator Ching Chong «got down to increasing the number of methods of silk production and widening silk plantations and also to updating methods of looking after the [silkworm](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d1%88%d0%b5%d0%bb%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%bf%d1%80%d1%8f%d0%b4&translation=silkworm&srcLang=ru&destLang=en)». As Poyarkov’s opinion goes, silk production home is the Chinese province of Shandong. In the year of 2255 B.C. the province pays the imperator a tribute by silk. Silk got well-known all over the whole territory of China in the 12th century. The professor of the Beijing university Shang Yue Yin-Shan gave the following concepts which were left hieroglyphically on the shell of tortoise and bones found in the city of Yin at that time (1300-1200 years B.C.): “cereals”, “bread”, “[silkworm](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d1%88%d0%b5%d0%bb%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%bf%d1%80%d1%8f%d0%b4&translation=silkworm&srcLang=ru&destLang=en)”, “[mulberry](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d1%82%d1%83%d1%82%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%be%d0%b5%20%d0%b4%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b5%d0%b2%d0%be&translation=mulberry&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) tree” [4, p. 43-44]. As the archeological researches demonstrated, silk production first appeared on the territory of China. The next remarkable point consists in that who was the next in mastering the technology of silk production after the Chinese and what other states and tribes’ attitude towards the silk fabric was.

There’s a supposition that in the 4 millennium B.C. silk production appeared in Japan, then in India, after it came into the world in China. Mukherjee regards that the mountainous areas of India is home for [mulberry](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d1%82%d1%83%d1%82%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%be%d0%b5%20%d0%b4%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b5%d0%b2%d0%be&translation=mulberry&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) tree. As it’s said in his works that came out in 1890-1891, silk production developed not only in one place, but in different places in parallel (perhaps, at the same time). Among the information about silk sourced from ancient [Sanscrit](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d1%81%d0%b0%d0%bd%d1%81%d0%ba%d1%80%d0%b8%d1%82&translation=Sanscrit&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) heritage there is no mention about China at all [4, p.42]. The first facts about India can be fell across in the works of Greek authors, yet, there isn’t a word about silk there. [Rossinsky](http://rossinskyufa.ru/) explains it as follows: “The Indian did take nothing new from the Chinese method of production of silk out of [mulberry](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d1%82%d1%83%d1%82%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%be%d0%b5%20%d0%b4%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b5%d0%b2%d0%be&translation=mulberry&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) tree. Development of silk production consisted merely in using various insects”. The German doctor Rumphius who took a trip to Eastern India in the first half of the 18 century reports about ancient Indian high-quality silk fabrics. He noticed that Indians had a number of silk fabrics that weren’t related to the Chinese sericulture and were of considerably better quality [4, p.115-116]. The information that in India there were silk fabrics dates from the middle of the 2nd millennium [5, p.55-57]. The ancient Indian treatise titled “Arthashastra” (ІV-ІІІ centuries B.C.) shows that a [string](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%b1%d0%b5%d1%87%d0%b5%d0%b2%d0%ba%d0%b0&translation=string&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) (anapatta) made of silk was fabricated on the territory of China (cinabhamija) [6, p. 45].

Investigating into the residue of fabric found in 585 in the ruined ancient fortification named Toprack-Kola, Lehmann-Haupt came to the conclusion that it was fabricated in China. In the surroundings of [Athens](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%90%d1%84%d0%b8%d0%bd%d1%8b&translation=Athens&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) German archeologists found aches in a vessel wrapped around with a fabric. Hundt is of the opinion that the fabric is made with use of the Chinese silkworm [2, p.216]. On the base of the records of Herodotus and Xenophon about the city Median Frankfor demonstrates the fact that the West was aware of silk existence. Frankfor talking about silk production with use of wild silkworm and other ways of its production concludes that silk was well-known in India in the 6-4th millennium [7, p. 213]. It only points out exactly that silk was produced in India, but when it was is impossible to specify. Archeological researches clearly show that the period they began to use silk in India is the 6-4 millennium. As for much earlier periods of it, there is no evidence for that; therefore, it’s quite hard to assert with confidence whether India was the land of silk or not. Nevertheless, the accomplishments of India in the ancient weaving craft – spreading and use of silk products from the earliest time – is an evident thing.

Silk production which originated in the 3 century in Japan spread very widely. However, some facts of Japanese legends say that the Japanese started making silk 1800 years ago. Leaning upon the facts, the Japanese empress Jingū-kōgō preferred levied taxes partly by silk as she invaded Korea. Since then, the Japanese had mastered producing silk [4, p.120-121].

Trusting the information we have at our disposal, in the 4-6th centuries China had no one and only monopoly on silk production, although the secret of the production was strictly kept in; silk was also known in Japan, Korea, the Central Asia and India. Still, there are no facts about whether silk was produced independently in these countries or was just transported here from China [8]. Seeing as India, Japan and Korea were familiar with silk products and use them from previous, people of these states were immensely interested in what the silk production technology is, applying themselves to puzzling out the secret of it, and, after all, began to produce it themselves.

For the Western Greeks and Romans the silk production technology was a real puzzle for years. In Rome silk was called “serks” fabrics. Probably, this name is linked with Chinese “sy” that was brought there by trade intermediates. Nevertheless, Romans were ignorant of what the silk land is. The Roman had an idea that the country named “Ser” was situated at the world’s end. However, the Roman never regarded that the land of silk was China, mysterious lands known as Tinna whose name dated back to the Qing Empire established in the of 211 B. C. [9, p.15]. The Roman [naturalist](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%bd%d0%b0%d1%82%d1%83%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%bb%d0%b8%d1%81%d1%82&translation=naturalist&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) named Plinius Secundus mentions in his records of 70 B.C. that silk grew in an unprocessed form on leaves of trees. The Roman Empire paid gold and silver for silk. According to Plinius, the costs for silk annually amounted a million sesterces. In the 1st century B.C. silk was as much expensive that rich Romans can’t afford buy much of the fabric and had to be satisfied with a small piece of this fabric, then sewing it up to their clothes as a brooch. In Rome people began to wear silk clothes in 46 B.C. Plinius and Seneca criticized silk strongly, demonstrating how much funds are spent to buy silk. Although the Roman senate issued the prohibition against wearing silk clothes, it did not make any effect. Expensiveness of goods out of silk proceeded not only from the secretness of its production; it was also connected with transportation risks, high taxes and extra costs of trader’s additions [9, p.16].

The method of silk production with use of silkworm was known in Greece in the 4th century. In “History of animals” by Aristotle there is some information about silk. Discovering and using waterways in the 1st century A.C. besides the continental road linked up China to Rome and Greece gave a great impact to increase of silk volumes in these countries. Despites, China managed to keep its monopoly on silk; in the West the technology of silk production was discovered only in the 6th century [10]. This time, if we decide to go further into the history of spread of the silk fabric around the states located in the Central Asia, Roma and Greece, this costly fabric went into hands of Huns’ that settled in the northern regions of China, before it got to the Roman. The history narrates as follows: Qin Shi Huang, the founder of the first centralized state of China – the Qin Empire (221-206 B.C.), had a wish to win back the lands occupied by Huns. For this purpose, in 215-212 B.C. Shi Huang built a huge wall along the frontiers on North. In the world history it’s now best-known as the Great Chinese wall.

In the 2nd century imperators of Han dynasty failed to resist Huns’ attacks. Inasmuch as they have no chance to set the problem at rest by military actions, they were obliged to resort to conclude agreements towards making peace through marriages. Han dynasty gave Huns gifts once a year. The volume of the gifts came to tens of thousands of silk cloths. Huns exchanged some of it against something else with nomads that settled the West. Thus, the cloths then reached Rome [9, p.16-17]. This throw a light on that how silk came to Rome and the Ancient Greece.

Han empire efforts weren’t enough to stop the danger and Huns’ attack. Emperor Wu of Han started looking for a support of other nations of the Central Asia in order to widen the empire’s [trading communications](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d1%82%d0%be%d1%80%d0%b3%d0%be%d0%b2%d1%8b%d0%b5%20%d1%81%d0%b2%d1%8f%d0%b7%d0%b8&translation=trading%20communications&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) and conquer Huns. For this purpose, in 138 the imperator sent a caravan heading by his diplomatist Zhang Qian from the capital of Han empire to mysterious lands of the West (to establish a diplomatic relationship with the state of Wusuns that inhabited in the region along Ili river and observed the nomadic lifestyle). During 13 years Zhang Qian went a straight way from the regions of China to the Central Asia for the first time and reached Afghanistan [11, p. 8].

[The ambassador](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%bf%d0%be%d1%81%d0%be%d0%bb&translation=ambassador&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) failed to make a military conjunction with Wusuns, however, he reached his other goals, managing trading communications with the states he had been and gave the Chinese a new view on the world, learned of new trade directions and furthered widening of the Silk route. After the ambassador came back, new trade ways were laid down and China started dealings with the state of Wusuns, the state of Kangly (Zhang Qian saw the state of Kangly, lived in Baktria for a year) and other lands located in the western parts of China (we are going to detail the ambassador’s voyage a bit later).

Thus, the silk fabric which was one of the greatest accomplishments of ancient China both reached Roma and Greece passed a way through states that lied on the territory of modern-day Central Kazakhstan and became a bestseller which were so desired in these lands that they were willing to pay gold and silver for it and very enthusiastic of discovering its production secret.

According Gumilyov’s «Ancient [Turks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkic_peoples)» (1964), the beginning of supplying silk to Europe had commenced since Augustus. Byzantine Empire needed silk a great deal, since, apart from the needs of the court and [aristocracy](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%b0%d1%80%d0%b8%d1%81%d1%82%d0%be%d0%ba%d1%80%d0%b0%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%8f&translation=aristocracy&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) in it, silk was used as a currency in dealings with barbarians, in particular, when hiring additional troops. In Byzantine Empire silk was equivalent to gold and jewels [12]. The artery carrying this precious product to Byzantine Empire pass through Northern Iran; and Sasanian’s government kept the caravan trading in check.  The [Iranian](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%b8%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%bd%d0%b5%d1%86&translation=Iranian&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) took away a very big part of transported filoselle to process it into end goods and they had the opportunity to sell goods of silk they made themselves to their western neighbors at prices they quoted themselves [13, p.128]. However, Byzantine Empire couldn’t be tolerant with the situation, since, their paying higher prices for silk made hostile Iran much stronger. In circa 531 Justinian made an effort to persuade [Ethiopia](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%ad%d1%84%d0%b8%d0%be%d0%bf%d0%b8%d1%8f&translation=Ethiopia&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) to be an intermediate and help organize the transportation of silk through the Indian ocean. But the [Persian](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%bf%d0%b5%d1%80%d1%81&translation=Persian&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) had such powerful influence in the ports of India that [Ethiopian](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d1%8d%d1%84%d0%b8%d0%be%d0%bf&translation=Ethiopian&srcLang=ru&destLang=en)s failed to take away their monopoly on purchasing silk, and the peace agreement concluded in 532 brought the trading to its routine [14].

The new war against Iran that took place in 540 made Justinian lowered the prices for silk by a special edict; yet, there was no possibility of forcing Persian [merchant](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%ba%d1%83%d0%bf%d0%b5%d1%86&translation=merchant&srcLang=ru&destLang=en)s sell silk at these prices. As a result, Syria [silk-weaving](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d1%88%d0%b5%d0%bb%d0%ba%d0%be%d1%82%d0%ba%d0%b0%d1%86%d0%ba%d0%b8%d0%b9&translation=silk-weaving&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) [manufactories](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%bc%d0%b0%d0%bd%d1%83%d1%84%d0%b0%d0%ba%d1%82%d1%83%d1%80%d0%b0&translation=manufactory&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) went bankrupt for the lack of the raw material. In 570 Khosrow Anushiruwan invaded Yemen and, in that way, eventually blocked the [Byzantine](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%b2%d0%b8%d0%b7%d0%b0%d0%bd%d1%82%d0%b8%d0%b5%d1%86&translation=Byzantine&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) an access eastwards through the Red sea and the Indian ocean. At that time a new participant entered this historical situation. It was the Turkic Khaganate. As shown above, Turkic people took away a big volume of silk from China as a levy. Although Turkic khans applied silk to covering their tents, they could not fully use all the volume of silk they gained. It favoured development of the trading through the Turkic Khaganate [12]. It should be pointed out that the Silk route passed through states and confederacies of tribes situated on the territory of modern-day Kazakhstan, it made favourable conditions to involving them into the trading and developing trade communications as a whole. Since the Turkic Khaganate’s territory extended from the Black Sea up to northern China, it had control over trade communications within this region [6, p.48].

As a matter of fact, the Silk route is a close web of different roads, road systems, directions and canals; and its center is the steppe regions of the Central Asia. Goods from China to the western lands very often went through the steppe regions of the Central Asia whose nomads engaged in [cattle-breeding](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%be%d1%82%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%be%d0%b4%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b2%d0%be&translation=cattle-breeding&srcLang=ru&destLang=en), trading and [military art](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%b2%d0%be%d0%b5%d0%bd%d0%bd%d0%be%d0%b5%20%d0%b8%d1%81%d0%ba%d1%83%d1%81%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b2%d0%be&translation=military%20art&srcLang=ru&destLang=en); it furthered development of caravan trading.

The secret of silk production was puzzled out in the Kingdom of Khotan (now it’s East Turkestan) in the 5th century, in Constantinople in the 6th century, in Sicily in the 12th century [9, p.27]. Silk was likely to get to the territory of Spain through the Byzantine Empire and Arab lands. The secret of the production of silk in large volumes had become known in Europe countries since the 13th century. Silk production came to Russia when the reign of Michael I (Mikhail Fyodorovich Romanov, 1596-1645), at that time they began to make plantations on silk production [1, p.6-7].

Using silk as a precious thing in various lands caused increase of interest to silk production in these lands. The interest and demand for silk were both so high that the countries started breeding the silkworm and also mastered the technology of the production of threads and fabrics. As a result, silk fabric became an everyday thing and lost its past value.

*The origin of the name “The Silk route «and the directions of the trading routes.* In the science there are concepts linked with silk and known as “The Silk route” and “The Silk routes”. A part of history scientists of world are of the opinion that the plural-formed name (“The Silk routes”) of the trading route is correct [15]. Modern-day historians taking account of the trading communications through the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and [the Mediterranean Sea](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%a1%d1%80%d0%b5%d0%b4%d0%b8%d0%b7%d0%b5%d0%bc%d0%bd%d0%be%d0%b5%20%d0%bc%d0%be%d1%80%d0%b5&translation=the%20Mediterranean%20Sea&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) use the concept “The Silk routes” [16], whereas French historians traditionally keep to the name “The Silk route” (la route de soie) [17, p.125]. German scientists spare the French ones’ opinion regarding the name of the trading route using the plural form (Seidenstrasse) [18]. The British historian David Christian taking account of the fact that the exchanges by people, animals, goods, ideas and diseases were brought about through both the continental and sea routes of Africa and Eurasia supported the name “The Silk routes” [19, p.7].

To talk about the etymology of the name “The Silk route”, in 1877 the German geographer, geologist and researcher Ferdinand von Richthofen was the founder of the historical term “The Silk route” and “The Silk routes” [20]. Ptolemy’s treatise titled “Geography” (the 2nd century) as well as Marinus of Tyre’s one titled “The Silk route” (the 1st century) pointing to “the land of silk” were used by Richthofen in his works. A that time, in the 100year B.C.-150year A.C. many trading routes chained the Roman Empire and China were known [21, p.1-10]. Richthofen used the concept “The Silk Routes” for pointing out the relationship between political expansion and the trading communications of the Han dynasty, on the one hand, and geographical knowledge, on the other hand. He used the concept “The Silk Route” in its singular form, leaning upon Marinus’s routes, and used the plural-formed concept to show the routes of both the West and East of the Pamirs. He takes pains to emphasize that “it would be a mistake to consider that it [Marinus’ route] was the only one at any given moment or even the most important one” [20].

Thus, the concepts “The Silk route” and “The Silk routes” reflected various roads and routes of trading caravans at different periods which formed and changed under the influence of political events. It gives a clear idea that the Silk route was composed of different routes.

The fact, that the Silk route trading was brought about by different and, at the same time, parallel roads, had decisive influence in favor of accepting the concept “The Silk route”. Some directions of the Silk route (as it’s said in Richthofen’s book) were formed in the 2nd -3rd millennium B.C. [22, p.1].

Also, it was found that there were another part of the Silk route, extended from Japan westwards till Syria, and a sea route from the Southeast Asia to the East Africa and [the Mediterranean](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%a1%d1%80%d0%b5%d0%b4%d0%b8%d0%b7%d0%b5%d0%bc%d0%bd%d0%be%d0%bc%d0%be%d1%80%d1%8c%d0%b5&translation=the%20Mediterranean&srcLang=ru&destLang=en). But only recently the idea about the existence of the steppe part of the Silk route has been accepted. In the north the steppe route passed through the oasis of Eastern Turkestan across the Eurasian steppe corridor, i.e. across the territory of Kazakhstan westwards, to the Central Asia, the Near East and to the north-west through the south Russian steppes to Europe. It should be pointed out that formation and existence of this route or, more likely, webs of routes were connected with the prehistory of nations, settled Kazakhstan many millenniums ago, and their developing the spaces of the Central Asia [23, p.21].

To get to the bottom of the gist of the trading between the West and the Central Asia, knowledge of the political and social history isn’t enough; for it, it’s necessary to know the organization of the trading starting with the 4th millennium B.C., what goods were in dealings, the [administrative](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%b0%d0%b4%d0%bc%d0%b8%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%81%d1%82%d1%80%d0%b0%d1%82%d0%b8%d0%b2%d0%bd%d0%b0%d1%8f%20%d1%81%d0%b8%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b5%d0%bc%d0%b0&translation=administrative%20system&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) and tax system of the states through which the Silk route passed.

Long-distance trade, of course, however we model it, dates back even before “civilization”. The trade, in jade between Khotan and China, for example, is documented at least as far back as 4000 BC. Indeed Mallory and Mair and others have shown, the contact between Central Asia and civilizations to the west began much earlier than that. By around 2000 BC, inner Eurasian exchange networks were well established, and notable institutional shifts in trading occurred in the Near East. Long-distance trade is well documented in the ancient Near East at this time by both land and sea routes. Trade connection, however indirect, were already established between the Harappan civilization in the Indus valley and Oman southern Mesopotamia by the 3rd millennium BC. But by 2000 BC, exchange across wide networks begins to become much better documented in the archaeological and textual records of the Near East [19, p.6-7].

In the 3-2nd millennium B.C., the system of land and water routes Mesopotamia-Harappa formed in the space between the plain of Mesopotamia and the valley of the Indus river, from the deserts of the Central Asia till [the Mediterranean Sea](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%a1%d1%80%d0%b5%d0%b4%d0%b8%d0%b7%d0%b5%d0%bc%d0%bd%d0%be%d0%b5%20%d0%bc%d0%be%d1%80%d0%b5&translation=the%20Mediterranean%20Sea&srcLang=ru&destLang=en). This system connected remote cultures and civilizations. Later on, the system had become one of the main braches of the Silk route [4, p. 42]. To Mr. [John Alden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Alden)’s mind, in the south the caravan road from Mesopotamia reached the centers of cultures of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa situated in the plains of India. In the 4-3nd millennium B.C. the trading was in the control of the ancient cities and urban centers located in the Central East (the lands lied between Mesopotamia and the Indian plains), the trading communications and cultural centers [24, p.613-640]. One of the northward directions reached the Aral Sea. The direction was used for transportation of [lazurite](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%bb%d0%b0%d0%b7%d1%83%d1%80%d0%b8%d1%82&translation=lazurite&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) to the inner regions of Kazakhstan, Ferghana and Tashkent [25, p. 4-9]. In the 2nd millennium B.C., at the time of [the Bronze Age](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%b1%d1%80%d0%be%d0%bd%d0%b7%d0%be%d0%b2%d1%8b%d0%b9%20%d0%b2%d0%b5%d0%ba&translation=the%20Bronze%20Age&srcLang=ru&destLang=en), nomadic tribes that engaged in cattle-breeding have control over trading communications with the nations of the Central Asia, the South Siberian and Uralsk [outlying districts](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%be%d0%ba%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%b8%d0%bd%d0%b0&translation=outlying%20districts&srcLang=ru&destLang=en). Tribes that were interested in the material belong to the system named ‘”[lazurite](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%bb%d0%b0%d0%b7%d1%83%d1%80%d0%b8%d1%82&translation=lazurite&srcLang=ru&destLang=en" \o "Показать примеры употребления) route”. Since previous times Lazurite had been standing high as a jewel in eastern lands. Lazurite had reached China by the 1st millennium B.C.

Trading across the Silk route periodically fluctuated from raisings to downswings because of influence of various factors – nomadic tribes, rise of states and wars – for the duration of the long history of the Eurasian continent. In the 2nd millennium B.C. the world trading integrated; and new [ethnic group](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d1%8d%d1%82%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%87%d0%b5%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b0%d1%8f%20%d0%b3%d1%80%d1%83%d0%bf%d0%bf%d0%b0&translation=ethnic%20group&srcLang=ru&destLang=en)s, which are similar to today’s ones, - so-called “trading diasporas” – originated, they controlled the trading.

The best documentation for the early development of long-distance trade between Central Asia and the Mediterranean/Aegean worlds are the Old Assyrian trade networks from the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1900 BC). This trade is exceptionally well documented from texts discovered at Kanesh, located in central Anatolia some 1,000 km northwest of the Assyrian capital at Assur. Textiles and tin were moved into central Anatolia, and silver and gold were taken back. But these merchants were involved in “a much larger international system of exchange” [19, p. 7].

[Functioning](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d1%84%d1%83%d0%bd%d0%ba%d1%86%d0%b8%d0%be%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%80%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%b0%d0%bd%d0%b8%d0%b5&translation=functioning&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) of the Steppe route started developing in the middle of the 1st millennium B.C. In Herodotus’s works (the 5th century B.C.) there are some information about the Steppe route. This route chained up the West Asia to the Mountainous Altai and the South Siberian. Along this route, extended from the coast of the Black Sea to the Don River, then to the mountains of the South Ural and farther till the Irtysh river and Altai, there were the Sarmatians in ancient times. The Steppe route was actively used for transportation of jewels, [Persian](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%bf%d0%b5%d1%80%d1%81%d0%b8%d0%b4%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8%d0%b9&translation=Persian&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) carpets, cattle, animal skins and so on. In ancient times an exchange of goods was partly [spontaneous](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%85%d0%b8%d0%b9%d0%bd%d1%8b%d0%b9&translation=spontaneous&srcLang=ru&destLang=en): goods passing a way through different tribes and regions were spread via intermediates. As for the formation of the roads, migration of tribes and nations contributed to it a very good deal [6, p.43-44].

The center of silk production formed in the South Ural and Altai, in the Central Kazakhstan, in the regions that shortly became centers of Eurasia-wide production and spread of bronze. The tribe of the so-called Andronovo culture, formed in the 18-16 centuries B.C. in the [forest-steppe](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%bb%d0%b5%d1%81%d0%be%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b5%d0%bf%d1%8c&translation=forest-steppe&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) between the Yenisei and the Ural, played a great part in the history of Eurasia, including in development of trading. The bronze made by melters inhabited in the Central Kazakhstan and Altai and products out of it were spread widely through the trading communications till Dnepr in the West and till Xinjiang in the East. Another center of the fabrication of bronze products was Zhetysu, or Semirechye, occupied the region of the Southeast Kazakhstan and the northern part of Kyrgyzstan. From this place were bronze products (choppers, [sickle](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d1%81%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%bf&translation=sickle&srcLang=ru&destLang=en)s) made by melters in the 10-8th centuries transported to Western China. Researchers have an opinion that routes of spread of bronze was a kind of forerunner to the Great Silk Route [26, p.112].

Yankovsky says in his works that in the middle of the 1st millennium B.C., volume of traffic becomes greatly important, if one takes into account data of written sources. Yankovsky, analyzing the economical state of [Assyrian Power](https://amazingbibletimeline.com/blog/rise-of-assyrian-power-beginning-1700-bc/), bring a very interesting fact: in the 8th century B.C., Tiglath-Pileser III introduces a tax in regions dependent upon Assyria that was equivalent to nine tons of lazurite [27, p. 33]. Such numbers, in our view, can give evidence about both demand for the stone and the well-organized practice of mining and transportation of it to long distances. In ancient times here was the “[nephrite](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%bd%d0%b5%d1%84%d1%80%d0%b8%d1%82&translation=nephrite&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) route” in parallel with the lazurite route”. The literature mentions about [nephrite](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%bd%d0%b5%d1%84%d1%80%d0%b8%d1%82&translation=nephrite&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) [minefield](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%bc%d0%b5%d1%81%d1%82%d0%be%d1%80%d0%be%d0%b6%d0%b4%d0%b5%d0%bd%d0%b8%d0%b5&translation=minefield&srcLang=ru&destLang=en)s from where the stone went to China. One of the minefields was in the region of Baikal and the Eastern Sayan Mountains; in that case, a route of nephrite transportation was likely to go through [Mongolian](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%bc%d0%be%d0%bd%d0%b3%d0%be%d0%bb%d1%8c%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8%d0%b9&translation=Mongolian&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) steppes. The other one, the Khotan minefield, that was situated up the Yarkand River, is mentioned in the Chinese sources of Duanhan time [28].

Zhang Qian, paid a visit to the Central Asia in 140-130 years B.C., mentioned that mining and transportation of the stone to China began long before his trip. The Chinese source “Guanzi” mentions that the intermediates in the trading in nephrite are the Yuezhi that controlled the territories of Eastern Turkestan in the 3 millennium B.C. [2, p.213]. Researches point that in the 2nd millennium B.C. the Khotan nephrite were brought into China. In [burial place](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%b7%d0%b0%d1%85%d0%be%d1%80%d0%be%d0%bd%d0%b5%d0%bd%d0%b8%d0%b5&translation=burial%20place&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) of Fu Hao in Anyang there were about 700 items found, that were fabricated out of the Khotan nephrite dated from the 13-12th millennium B.C. The interesting fact is that most Chinese nephrite finds date back to the Zhou and Early Han periods. Lubo-Lesnichenko points out to the western origin of the Zhou that, evidently, never broke off a relationship with the people of Eastern Turkestan [2, p.212]. Silk had been bringing to Eastern Turkestan and the Central Asia since the middle of the 2nd millennium B.C. Remains of silk dating from 1700-1350 гг. B.C. were found near the city of Sapallitep (early Uzbekistan) [29, p.173-174].

It’s obvious that at the turn of the era s there was the colossal experience of cultural-economic cooperation of representatives of the western [antique](http://www.lingvo.ua/ru/Search/Translate/GlossaryItemExtraInfo?text=%d0%b0%d0%bd%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%87%d0%bd%d1%8b%d0%b9&translation=antique&srcLang=ru&destLang=en) society via Near-Eastern and western-Asian with nations of the Central Asia. However, an analysis of origin of the Great Silk Route is impossible with no taking account of formation of the communication web from the Far East northwards, westwards and southwestwards. This process was realized on establishing contacts between the Chinese and the nomads, inhabited in the steppe regions of the Central Asia and Eastern Turkestan, and also connections between nomads themselves (Yuezhis, Wusuns and Hun, Kankalis).

As it’s been already said before, by the beginning of the Han dynasty reign (202 B.C.), united within the Eastern and Central Asia system of communication routes forms and cover a very spacious area: from Northern China to the Amur, Baikal, Minusinsk Basin, Altai, Tien Shan, Pamir and Tibet. It is known that in 138 BC. The Chinese diplomat Zhang Qian went westwards to the tribe of Yuezhi (Wusuns), in order to persuade them to war with the Hsiungnu / Hsiung tribes. The mission stretched out in time, since the diplomat was captured by the Huns and only ten years later managed to escape and continue his work. By that time the Yuezhi were in Central Asia, subduing Bactria. And although this diplomatic trip ended in vain, for the Chinese’s world view, the information gathered by Zhang Qian became indisputably useful. During his trip, Zhang Qian visited Fergana (Davan), Bactria. The Chinese diplomat wrote about the last country: "Their troops are weak, timid in battles. “The inhabitants are adept at trading ... the capital is called Lanshi. In this city there is a market with various goods ... merchants go to trade in India” [30, p.551]. While communicating with traders, Zhang Qian collected information about India (Shendu), about Parthia (Anxi), he found out that China is known to many peoples as a country of silk. The diplomat returned after his first mission along the path that in the Early Han (202 B.C. - 8 A.D.) was known as the “Qiang road”. New Knowledge significantly expanded the geographical horizons of Chinese rulers, which affected their foreign policy plans.

Since that time, the western trade routes have become a desirable object of Chinese conquests. The interests of trade are a powerful catalyst for foreign policy processes in the region. To the 2nd century BC, Huns dominated in Gansu - a strategically important communication area. Against them in 121 B.C. China undertook a successful campaign, as a result of which the Huns were forced out of Gansu and also cut off from its allies - Qiang (tribes of the Tibetan Highlands). For the Han Empire, the road to Eastern Turkestan was cleared. The construction of a powerful line of defensive fortifications and settlements till Dunhuang began. The trade caravans sent to Eastern Turkestan lay the beginning of the intensive development of the "Western Territory" by the Chinese state. In fact, since the end of the 2nd century B.C. it’s been correct to speak about the emergence of the Great Silk Route as a regular system of trans-Eurasian communications.

According to the famous American scientist Edward Hetzel Schafer: “In the history of the Silk Route, one hundred and sixty-nine kinds of goods were transported, eighteen kinds of a collection of goods through this caravan way”. Among these goods the most important and significant commodity was silk, so the caravan road was named “The Silk Route”, later this name was approved by the international community [4, p.56].

*Analyzing the material given in the article, we can draw the following conclusion:*

1. Based on archaeological data, we can say that the original home of silk was China. The achievement of the ancient civilization of China extended to the tribes and the states of East Turkistan, the Steppe Central Asia, India and the Ancient West. Thanks to the preservation of the manufacture of silk, China was able to retain the silk monopoly in its hands until the 13th century.
2. In the caravan trade, which started from China to India and Rome, hundreds of types of goods were transported, but silk was always in high demand, sometimes silk was used as a currency, and was valued on an equal basis with gold, so the world trade route was called "The Silk Route"
3. In the formation of the silk route we should mention the merits of the emperor of the Han Dynasty and the diplomat Zhan Qian. In addition, the state of the Huns, Wusuns and Kangly also contributed to the development of trade in the Silk Route system.
4. The terms “The Silk Route” and “The Silk Routes” were used to show the land and sea routes of the silk road. However, according to the decision of the international community, the caravan road received the name “The Silk Road”.
5. Acquaintance and use of silk in the states of the Huns, Wusuns, India, Japan, Korea, Ancient Greece, Rome, the Turkic Kaganate, Persia, Babylonia and Spain and other states occurred at different times, and this explains the great period of the formation of the Silk Route. However, all these countries are linked by one thing – they were all interested in silk, and also all the above-mentioned countries sought to reveal silk production technology.
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*Түйін*

Сауда керуенінің пайда болған кезеңінен бастап Қытай жібегі көршілес мемлекеттер мен Антикалық Батыс елдерінің қызығушылығын тудырды. Әлемдік саудада жібек мата үлкен сұранысқа түсіп қана қоймай, кейбір елдерде валюта ретінде саналып, өзге елдерде салық ретінде салынды.

Мақала барысында авторлар жібек өндірудің отанын анықтау және жібек матаның «Жібек жолы» қалыптасуындағы орны мен маңызын көрсетуге; жібек өндірудің отанын анықтауға; «Жібек жолы» және «Жібек жолдары» терминдерін қолдануын көрсетуге; Керуен жолы қалыптасқан кезеңнен бері тауардың тасымалдау бағыттарын талдауға назар аударған.

*Кілт сөздер:* Жібек, Жібек жолы, Қытай, Сауда, Керуен жолы.

*Резюме*

С момента формирования караванной торговли Китайский шелк привлек внимания соседних и Западный Античных стран. Шелковая ткань пользовался не только большим спросом в мировой торговле, но в рядах стран считался официальной валютой, другие страны обязывались, платит налог в виде шелка.

Авторы статьи попытались установить мето зарождения производства шелка и показать значимость и место шелковой ткани в формировании Шелкового пути; установить родину производства шелка; показать использование терминов «Шелковый путь» и «Шелковые пути»; проанализировать пути перевозки товаров с периода сформирования караванной дороги.

*Ключевые слова:* Шелк, Шелковый путь, Китай, Торговля, Караванная дорога