



Identification and Localization of the Ilkhani Wintering Grounds of “Siyahkuh” and the Jaghato River Basin

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Abstract

Siyahkuh is a region in Kurdistan whose exact boundaries remain unspecified in historical and geographical sources. However, these sources mention it as a key route for armies traveling from Azerbaijan to Dinavar during the Seljuk period, as a place of residence and passageway, as a battleground and site of peace during the Ilkhanid era, and as a governing region under the Safavid rule and the Ardalan dynasty. Located on or near the shores of the Jaghato River—one of the main Ilkhanid settlements—Siyahkuh is first referenced in sources from the Seljuk period and last mentioned in those from the Qajar era. Despite its historical significance, no independent research—whether books, theses, or articles—has been dedicated to Siyahkuh, and even major Iranian encyclopedias lack an entry on it. Siyahkuh and Jaghato were closely connected, often mentioned together in historical texts. Hamdullah Mostowfi Qazwini, in *Nuzhat al-Qulub*, describes the Jaghato River as originating in the mountains of Kurdistan and flowing near the village of Siyahkuh. Historical sources cite Jaghato as a place of passage, governance, battle, death, coronation, and rest. During the Ilkhanate period, this region held particular importance as one of Hulagu Khan’s favored residences, where he spent much of his time and ultimately passed away in 663 AH. Despite his frequent stays, no remnants of his presence have been found. Contemporary Ilkhanid sources detail numerous events around the Jaghato River and Siyahkuh, including royal encampments, military passages, deaths, consultative meetings, quriltays (Mongol assemblies), mourning rituals, and peace treaties. Besides serving as a winter pasture, Siyahkuh was also a key transit route between Azerbaijan and Iraq-e Ajam, frequently mentioned in accounts of Mongol Ilkhans’ travels.

Siyahkuh served as a key venue for important meetings and agreements among the Ilkhans. During the succession dispute between Baidu and Arghun, an initial covenant was formed in Siyahkuh, with Mongol amirs and princes from Azerbaijan, Kermanshah, and Kurdistan in attendance, each aligning with one of the factions.

In the Turkmen era, amid ongoing conflicts between the Aq Qoyunlu and Kara Qoyunlu, Siyahkuh maintained its own independent ruler and military forces. When the Turkmen amir Qara Yusuf seized control of Tabriz in 904 AH, Siyahkuh remained under separate governance.



During the Safavid period, Siyahkuh was recognized as part of Kurdistan, still retaining its independent ruler. Under Shah Sultan Hussein Safavi, the ruler of Marivan and Siyahkuh was entrusted with a mission to Khorasan, reflecting the region's significance and the Shah's confidence in its leadership.

The history of Kurdistan is deeply intertwined with the Ardalan dynasty. In the account of Kalol Beig, the second Amir of Ardalan, it is stated that upon ascending to the emirate, he expanded his territories by adding the regions of Saqqez, Siyahkuh, Zarinkamar Garus, and Ali Shukr (present-day Esfandabad) to his holdings, even confronting the army of Chengiz Khan.

In the *Hadiqeh-ye Naseri*, it is mentioned that Timur Khan, who came to power in Ardalan in 986 AH, assigned the governance of Marivan, Saqqez, Siyahkuh, Tilako, and Khorkhure to Murad Beig. Other Ardalan sources, including *Masturah*, *Molla Sharif Qazi*, and *Khosrow bin Mohammad Ardalan*, also mention this narrative, although none specifically mention Siyahkuh.

Following the death of Suleiman Khan, Kalbali Khan, under the orders of Shah Abbas Safavi, divided Kurdistan into six parts, assigning each part to one of Suleiman Khan's followers. Saqqez and Siyahkuh were given to his brother, Sohrab Sultan. In *Masturah*, only Saqqez is mentioned, in *Lubb al-Tawarikh*, only Siyahkuh is mentioned, and in *Hadiqeh-ye Naseri*, both Saqqez and Siyahkuh are mentioned.

Khosrow bin Mohammad Ardalan writes in *Lubb al-Tawarikh* that after Sarkhab Beig, the descendants of Baba Ardalan were divided into three factions. One faction ruled the province of Kurdistan, while another governed Saqqez and Siyahkuh. According to the same author, in 1132 AH, Ali Qoli Khan was deposed from ruling Ardalan and appointed as governor of Saqqez and Siyahkuh. This marks the last mention of Siyahkuh in Ardalan sources.

Recent sources have attempted to equate Siyahkuh with Tilako. For example, *Naamnaameh-ye Ilat va Ashayir* (1385), *Shirin Ardalan* (1387), and Esmail Ardalan, the editor of *Lubb al-Tawarikh* (published in 1356), have suggested that Siyahkuh is now known as Tilako. This theory may be the most plausible, but the simultaneous use of both names-Tilako and Siyahkuh-only appears once in the book *Hadiqeh-ye Naseri*.

This article aims to examine the historical cycles and periods during which the name "Siyahkuh" was used. Despite the vast area that Siyahkuh is believed to have encompassed, the historical sequence leads to the conclusion that, based on later documents, the name Siyahkuh was applied to Saqqez and Tilako. However, a problem arises because the name Siyahkuh is frequently mentioned alongside Saqqez, which makes it illogical for a single place to have two names. When considering the equivalence of Siyahkuh and Tilako, the probabilities seem more plausible. These two names are not mentioned together in sources except for one instance. Prior to the usage of the name Siyahkuh in the sources, Tilako is not mentioned, suggesting that the name Siyahkuh was used first. With the entry of the Tilako tribe into the region, their name began to be applied to a larger area. Thus, perhaps the most logical explanation for the location of Siyahkuh is to consider it as a vast region that included parts of Saqqez and



Divandarreh, as well as the entire Tilako region. This hypothesis reconciles the historical references to Siyahkuh with the territorial shifts and the cultural impact of the Tilako tribe.

Keywords: Siyahkuh , Jaghato, Ilkhanid ,Saqqez, Tilako

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