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Armenian-Iranian Oikumene and the Turco-Mongolian Order: Cultural Synthesis and the Chronology of the Toponym Qarabagh

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Abstract: *The toponym Qarabagh is traditionally translated as "black garden", yet this interpretation remains debatable and insufficient: the component qara in the Turkic-Mongolian tradition possesses a developed polysemy ("black", "dark green," "dense," "large," "abundant"), and the toponym itself has not until now been examined as part of a unified areal system. The goal of the article is to establish the etymology, semantics, and chronology of the toponym Qarabagh within the context of Turco-Mongolian imperial expansion of the 11th-14th centuries and to reconstruct its semantic evolution among nomadic and sedentary speakers. The toponym Qarabagh represents a structural calque of the Persian model bāgh-e siyāh, which emerged in the Oghuz-Turkic linguistic environment no later than the 11th century in the zone of Turkic-Persian cultural synthesis in Khorasan and Afghanistan; the Mongol expansion of the 13th-14th centuries ensured its transcontinental dissemination and administrative consolidation in the Caucasus. Qarabagh is the result of prolonged interaction among several cultural-historical layers: the ancient Iranian agricultural civilization, the Armenian garden-agricultural substrate, the Kurdish intermediary stratum, and the Turkic-Mongolian nomadic world. The toponymy of the region constitutes a classic case of medieval polyonymy: the Armenian Baghkʿ, the Persian Bāgh-e Siyāh, and the Turkic-Persian Qarabagh represent three territorially separated but semantically parallel embodiments of a single concept – "a place of gardens / dark green viticultural landscape."*

Keywords: Qarabagh, Viticulture of Iran, Turkic-Mongolian expansion, Seljuks, Oghuz, Ilkhanids, Armenia, South Caucasus, Afghanistan

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Introduction

The toponym Qarabagh (Karabakh) is one of the most widely known and yet least systematically studied toponyms of Western Asia and the South Caucasus. For nearly two centuries of scholarly debate, it has remained the subject of etymological controversies, in which three main interpretations can be distinguished: “black garden” (a literal colour interpretation), “dark green, dense garden” (a landscape-agronomic interpretation), and “large garden” (an interpretation based on the extended polysemy of the Turkic *qara*).

The existing literature on the subject suffers from two significant limitations. A considerable portion of research has been reduced to a narrow etymological dispute over the meaning of the single component *qara*, leaving aside the historical-cultural, areal-linguistic, and chronological context of the formation and dissemination of the toponym itself. Furthermore, existing studies are often confined within the frameworks of individual national historiographical traditions – Armenian, Azerbaijani, or Iranian – as a result of which the problem is examined fragmentarily.

This article applies a systemic, interdisciplinary, and transregional approach, combining Armenian, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Iranian, Afghan, and Central Asian material within a unified comparative-historical and areal-toponymic framework.

The main thesis of the article. The toponym Qarabagh should be examined within the broader context of a complex of toponyms with the component *qara-*, the spread and consolidation of which in the regions of Western Asia, the Caucasus, the Armenian Highlands, Iran, and adjacent areas are linked to successive waves of Turkic migrations and conquests, beginning primarily with the Seljuk era of the 11th-12th centuries, and subsequently with the political and demographic processes of the Mongol and post-Mongol periods. This new toponymic network was superimposed upon older Armenian, Iranian, and Georgian toponymic layers and for a long time coexisted with the local autochthonous toponymy.

At the same time, Qarabagh itself represents a special case of cultural-linguistic synthesis: its first component, *qara*, belongs to Turkic lexicon, while the second – *bāgh* “garden” – is of Iranian origin. Thus, the formation of the name should be considered primarily within the context of Turkic-Iranian linguistic interaction, while the Mongol era played a special role in its further spatial dissemination and administrative-geographic consolidation.

The linguistic and cultural prerequisites for the emergence of the toponym Qarabagh appear to have taken shape already in the Seljuk era (11th-12th centuries). One of the earliest known written attestations of the form Qarābāgh is associated with events of the 11th century in the Afghan-Khorasanian area and is preserved in

the *Akhbār al-dawla al-Saljūqiyya*: **قصد نواحي قراباغ** – "he set out for the regions / borders of Karabagh".[1]

For the South Caucasus, the earliest reliably datable evidence is numismatic in nature: the mint Qarabāgh is attested on coinage of the Mongol era in the mid-13th century.[2] The subsequent stable presence of the toponym in the historical-geographical nomenclature of the region is documented by narrative sources of the late 13th-14th centuries, from the Ilkhanid and post-Ilkhanid periods.

Sources and Methods

The study draws upon five main groups of sources.

The first group consists of narrative and historical-geographical primary sources from the Seljuk, Mongol, and post-Mongol eras. The key early source is the Arabic chronicle *Akhbār al-dawla al-Saljūqiyya* by Ṣadr al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn Nāṣir al-Ḥusaynī, which preserves information on events of the Seljuk era in the 11th century. It is in this work that one of the earliest known written attestations of the toponym Qarābāgh (**قراباغ**) in the Afghan-Khorasanian context is found.

To this same group belong *Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh* by Rashīd al-Dīn (early 14th century); *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* by Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī (ca. 1340); the Georgian historical compilation *Kartlis Tskhovreba*; *Ẓafar-nāma* by Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī; and *Gülistān-i Iram* by Abbas-Quli Aġa Bakikhanov.[3]

The second group consists of Iranian lexicography, historical geography, and toponymics. Utilised are the *Loġat-nāma-ye Dehḵodā*; relevant articles from the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (especially materials on the lexeme bāḡ, Iranian garden terminology, and individual geographical names); *Fārs-nāma-ye Nāṣerī*; as well as the *Geographical Dictionary of Afghanistan* (an edition associated with the Afghan geographical tradition of the mid-20th century).

The third group comprises Armenian historical lexicology, dialectology, and historiography. Of primary importance are dialectological materials and Armenian explanatory and historical dictionaries. These are used for the analysis of the lexemes baġ, aygi, aygestan, the historical toponym Baghkʿ, and other terms related to horticulture, viticulture, and the cultural landscape of Armenia and Artsakh.

The fourth group consists of modern toponymic and geographical databases. Official and state toponymic, administrative-territorial, and cartographic materials from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan are utilised.

[1] Bosworth, 2011: 137, n. 109.
[2] Akopyan, 2015a: 6-9.
[3] Bakikhanov, 1926.

The fifth group comprises archaeological and archaeobotanical data. To characterise the deep history of viticulture in the Armenian Highlands, materials from archaeological investigations of the Areni-1 cave complex are employed.[4]

The study applies comparative-toponymic, areal-linguistic, historical-comparative, and lexical-semantic methods. Particular attention is devoted to identifying recurring structural-semantic models, establishing the chronology of their written attestations, and reconstructing possible directions of linguistic and cultural interaction.

The Iranian Institution of the Garden: The Term *bāgh*, Its Etymology and System

Few words of the Iranian cultural heritage have exerted such a profound influence on the historical landscape of Western Asia as the term *bāgh* ("garden"). For more than two and a half millennia, it has denoted not merely a cultivated plot of land, but a particular form of spatial organisation, combining economic activity, irrigation, religious conceptions, and aesthetic ideals. It is precisely for this reason that the word *bāgh* has entered the composition of hundreds of toponyms from Mesopotamia to the Pamirs, from the Armenian Highlands to India.

The question of the origin of this term is of fundamental importance for understanding the toponym Qarabagh. The second component of this name – *bāgh* "garden" – is a direct and indisputable continuation of ancient Iranian agrarian vocabulary, while the first component *qara* belongs to the Turkic linguistic tradition. Therefore, the very formation of Qarabagh should be regarded as the result of prolonged interaction between the Turkic nomadic world and a far more ancient Iranophone system of agrarian conceptions.

Etymology and Agronomic Semantics

Persian *bāgh* (**باغ**) "garden" belongs to the ancient stratum of Iranian agrarian vocabulary. It is a direct continuation of MPers. *bāḡ* and Sogd. *βāγ*, which in turn go back to OIr. *bāga-* "share, allotment, holding." This etymological chain is traceable from Avest. *bāga-* through Middle Iranian languages to NPers. *bāgh* and represents one of the most reliable examples of Iranian cultural-lexical continuity. The semantic shift "share, land allotment" → "cultivated plot" → "garden" is natural and well-documented in Iranian languages.[5]

It is necessary, however, to distinguish between two formally close but semantically distinct Old Iranian lexical lines: *baga-* "god, lord" and *bāga-* "share, allotment." Both go back to a single Indo-European root *bhag-* "to divide, distribute, bestow," yet in

[4] Barnard *et al*., 2011.
[5] MacKenzie, 1971; Eilers, 1988.

Iranian languages their meanings diverged: *baga-* was retained in the sacral sphere ("god, lord"), while *bāga-* developed in an agrarian direction ("share, allotment" → "cultivated plot" → "garden"). This distinction is essential for the correct interpretation of toponyms and derivative lexemes, since the external similarity of the forms *bag-*, *bāgh-*, *bay-* should not mislead as to their divergent semantic evolution.

The earliest known toponymic example of the first, sacral model is OPers. Bagastāna (Behistun), literally "place of gods / divine place" (*baga-* "god" + *-stāna* "place"), where the famous trilingual inscription of Darius I was carved.

The most striking symbol of Persian garden tradition in the early Islamic era was Baghdad. Founded by Caliph al-Mansur in 762 as the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, it quickly became the chief political and cultural centre of the Islamic East. The caliphs' palaces were surrounded by extensive gardens, orchards, artificial reservoirs and canals, transforming the banks of the Tigris into a veritable green oasis. Medieval authors repeatedly noted the wealth of Baghdad's gardens, their complex irrigation systems, and the diversity of fruit crops.[6]

Although the official etymology of the toponym Baghdad goes back to MPers. *bag* "god" + dād "given" – "given by God",[7] already in the medieval Persian and Arabic tradition the name was also understood through *bāg* "garden" + *dād* "given" – "given as a garden" or "created as a garden." Ibn Khallikān in his *Wafayāt al-aʿyān* records this popular interpretation, noting that "some maintain that the name Baghdad derives from bāgh-i dād".[8] Modern scholars, notably J. Lassner, regard this reinterpretation as an indication of how deeply the Iranian concept of *bāgh* was rooted in cultural consciousness.[9]

It was through Baghdad that the classical Iranian concept of *bāgh* achieved its widest dissemination in the Islamic world, becoming a model for palace and urban gardens from Syria and the Caucasus to Central Asia and India.

Significantly, the toponymic model in which Iranian *bāgh* "garden" is combined with a determiner from another language materialised in Western Asia at least twice. In the case of Baghdad, Iranian *bāgh* is understood through an Arabic (or broadly Islamic) cultural perception, and the city becomes a symbol of the "garden" in Islamic civilisation. In the case of Qarabagh, the same Iranian base *bāgh* is combined with the Turkic determiner *qara*, but in the context of the nomadic world of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Thus, Baghdad and Qarabagh represent two parallel embodiments of one and the same Iranian garden model, but in different cultural-linguistic environments: Irano-Arabic (Baghdad) and Irano-Turkic (Qarabagh). Both cases testify that the Iranian concept of *bāgh* was not merely a local agrarian terminology, but

[6] Le Strange, 1900; Lassner, 1970.
[7] Nyberg, 1974: 38-39.
[8] Ibn Khallikān, 1968: 67-68.
[9] Lassner, 1970: 45-46.

a universal cultural matrix that could readily be integrated into various civilisational contexts.

In Armenian toponymy, forms with the base *Bag-* are attested from antiquity: Bagaran, Bagavan, Bagrevand.[10] However, these names should not be mechanically conflated with *Baghkʿ*. In Armenian, բագ (*bag*) and բաղ (*bagh*) are two distinct words, clearly differentiated phonetically and semantically. Bagaran and Bagavan are traditionally associated with the sacral lexicon բագ (bag) "god, Mithra," whereas *Baghkʿ* is formed from բաղ (bagh) "garden" + the Armenian plural suffix -kʿ. This distinction is fundamental: Armenian toponymy attests both Iranian roots – the sacral (*bag-*) and the agrarian (*bāgh-*) – and distinguishes them at the levels of both writing and pronunciation. For the present study, it is precisely the agrarian stratum that is relevant, connected with the garden-viticultural landscape of Artsakh (*Baghkʿ, bagh, aygi, aygestan*, etc.).

Classification of Gardens: The Nomenclature of bāgh

Iranian culture developed an elaborate nomenclature of garden spaces and forms of land use. One of the best-known terms is čahār-bāgh (**چهارباغ**) – "four-part garden," denoting a principle of spatial organisation through axial divisions, water channels, and garden plots.

Of particular importance for the present study is Bāgh-e Siyāh (**باغ سیاه**) – literally "black / dark garden." Toponyms of this type are recorded in several regions of Iran. The very existence of the model Bāgh-e Siyāh demonstrates that the combination of a colour determiner *siyāh* with *bāgh* was possible within the Iranian toponymic system. However, the specific meaning of a given name might depend on the local landscape: *siyāh* could characterise soil colour, the density and visual darkness of vegetation, or some other feature of the locality.

Other formations with *bāgh* are widely represented: Bāgh-e Angur ("vineyard"), Bāgh-e Miveh ("orchard"), Bāgh-e Shāhī ("royal garden"), and numerous anthroponymic and geographic compounds. In parallel, the model with *-estān* is productive: golestān ("rose garden / flower garden"), nārestān ("pomegranate orchard"), tākestān ("vineyard"), etc.

The Lexicon of Dark Grape Varieties: Armeno-Irano-Turkic Stratification

The ampelonymic material of historical Qarabagh demonstrates the multi-layered nature of local viticultural terminology. It exhibits the coexistence of Armenian names,

[10] HayTełBař, 1986: vol. I, 530 ff., 573.

Iranian cultural-lexical elements, and Turkic descriptive formations based on colour, shape, size, taste, or external resemblance of the berry.

The Armenian stratum. Of particular interest is one of the oldest autochthonous Armenian grape varieties – *Xndoghni* (Խնդողնի / Խնդեղնի), traditionally cultivated in Artsakh. The name of this variety is connected with the Old Armenian word *degh* (ղեղ), which, according to the dictionary of H. Ačaryan,[11] designated various plants, including elderberry (Sambucus). Elderberry is characterised by small almost black berries, rich in colouring substances and tannins. It is likely that it was precisely these external features that served as the basis for transferring the name to a new grape variety possessing similar properties: small berries of intense dark colour, high anthocyanin content, and pronounced tannicity.

Together with other ancient Armenian varieties – Sev Areni ("Black Areni") and Voskehat ("Golden Grain," "Golden Seed") – *Xndoghni* reflects a stable tradition of naming grapes according to colour and external appearance of the berries. If Sev Areni designates a dark variety and Voskehat a golden (i.e., white) grape, then *Xndoghni* represents yet another example of nomination based on characteristic colouration and fruit morphology.

A telling example of the resilience of viticultural culture in Artsakh is the village of Xnušinak (Arm. Խնուշինակ; Azerb. Xanoba) in the Martuni (Azerb. Xojavend) district. Apart from its etymological interest (see. below), Xnušinak is of note as one of the traditional centres of viticulture in Qarabagh. The varieties Xndoghni, Msxali, Kakhet, and Garan dmak were cultivated here. The presence in a single micro-region of several old varieties shows that viticulture constituted a stable basis of the local economy.

The Iranian stratum. In Iranian ampelonymy, varieties named by colour and external appearance of the berries are represented: angur-e siyāh ("black grape"), angur-e safīd ("white grape"), angur-e sorx ("red grape"). Also widely found are varieties named by place of origin: Šīrāzī (from Shiraz), Kāšānī (from Kashan), Isfahānī (from Isfahan), Qazvīnī (from Qazvin). The variety Yāghūtī (lit. "ruby," from yāqūt "ruby") designates a dark red grape with a characteristic hue.[12]

The Turkic stratum. In Turkic ampelonymy, descriptive names based on colour, shape, size, or external similarity predominate: Qara üzüm ("black grape"), Qırmızı üzüm ("red grape"), Ağ üzüm ("white grape"), Qaragöz ("black-eyed"), Qara Şiraz (reference to Shiraz). Qara quş ürəyi ("heart of a black bird") is a name based on the resemblance of the berry's shape and colour to a bird's heart. Xan üzümü ("khan's grape") probably indicates high quality or courtly origin.

[11] Ačaryan, 1926: vol. I, 647-651.
[12] Dehkhodā, s.v. angur; *Farhang-e joğrāfiyāʾi-ye Irān*, 1949-1953.

Comparative analysis. In the Iranian tradition, varieties named after toponyms (geographical principle) predominate, whereas in the Turkic tradition descriptive names based on colour and form (phenomenological principle) dominate. The Armenian tradition occupies an intermediate position: Xndoghni contains ancient botanical semantics (connection with elderberry), Sev Areni – colour semantics, Voskehat – descriptive ("golden grain"). At the same time, all three traditions employ the colour principle in one form or another, which confirms the universality of colour nomination in ampelonymy.

Artsakh – Ancient Armenian Land: Garden Culture and Toponymic Tradition

Artsakh (Արցախ) is one of the oldest provinces of Greater Armenia, attested as part of the Armenian state from the pre-Christian era and mentioned in the Armenian Geography (7th century) as the tenth province of the country. In the 10th-13th centuries, the leading role here was played by the Principality of Xačen, under which out-standing monuments of Armenian Christian architecture were created – the monasteries of Gandzasar (1216-1266), Dadivank (1214), and Gtchavank (1241-1248).

For the present study, three circumstances are of fundamental importance.

First, Artsakh and Siwnik' belonged to a single Armenian cultural-geographical space. According to the Armenian historical tradition, going back to Movses Xorenac'i, Artsakh was considered as Lesser Siwnik' (Փոքր Սյունիք). It was in Eastern (Greater) Siwnik' that the gavar (district) of Baghkʿ (Բաղք) – "Gardens" – was located, which formed part of the twelve districts of the province of Siwnik according to the Ašxarhacʻoycʻ (7th century).[13] The very existence of an official administrative district named Baghkʿ testifies that garden-viticultural terminology was an organic part of the Armenian toponymic system long before the appearance of the Turkic toponym Qarabagh. Aygaŕkʿ (Այգաձք), formed from Armenian aygi ("garden," "vineyard"), is semantically identical to Baghkʿ, reflecting the same tradition of perceiving territory as a space of gardens and vineyards in the province of Korčayk'.[14]

Second, Artsakh belongs to the oldest centres of viticulture in Western Asia. Autochthonous grape varieties were preserved here, above all Xndoghni (Խնդողնի), whose name is connected with Armenian xndegh – a designation for dark-coloured

[13] Hewsen, 1992: 102-103, 194, 245.
[14] Hewsen, 1992: 63, 63a.

berries and a variety of elderberry,[15] as well as the variety Sev Areni ("Black Areni"). Archaeological investigations of the Areni-1 cave complex and chemical analysis of winemaking implements testify to the existence of developed winemaking as early as the 6th-4th millennia BCE.[16] Thus, a millennia-old tradition of horticulture and viticulture existed here long before the Seljuk and Mongol periods.

Third, beginning in the 11th century, as a result of the Seljuk conquest, a significant part of the plains of Artsakh came under the domination of Turkic nomadic tribes. The Armenian population gradually concentrated mainly in the mountainous areas, while the lowlands between the Kur and Araxes rivers were increasingly used as pastureland. It was precisely in this zone of prolonged interaction between the Armenian agricultural tradition and Turkic nomadic economy that the toponym Qarabagh subsequently became established.

Artsakh as an Example of Medieval Polyonymy

Artsakh represents a classic example of medieval polyonymy – the coexistence of several toponymic traditions that emerged in different historical epochs and reflect different cultural-linguistic environments.

The Armenian system is represented by the names Artsakh (Urartian layer), Khachen (Armenian layer), Baghkʿ (Armeno-Iranian layer), Aygestan (Armeno-Iranian layer – from *aygi* with the Iranian suffix *-stān*, meaning "place of gardens / vineyards"), as well as numerous oikonyms with the formants -šen, -berd, -jor, -get, -vankʿ, reflecting the long development of Armenian agricultural and Christian culture in the region.

In parallel, there existed an Iranian administrative-geographical tradition, in which the region between the Kur and Araxes was designated as Arrān.[17] Beginning in the 13th century, the Turkic-Persian form Qarabagh appears in written sources, later – Qarabagh-i Arrān, and in the Safavid era – the administrative designation Qarabagh-Ganja.[18]

The emergence of a new nomenclature did not mean the disappearance of the old names. Armenian toponyms continued to be used by the local population and in ecclesiastical tradition, while Qarabagh gradually became established in the language of the Turkic military-political elite, and then entered the official administrative terminology of the states of the Ilkhans, Jalayirids, Qara-Qoyunlu, Aq-Qoyunlu, Safavids, and Qajars. Thus, over several centuries, different systems of geographical names existed simultaneously, reflecting different functions of the same space.

[15] Ačaryan, 1926: vol., I, 647-651.
[16] Barnard *et al.*, 2011.
[17] Khalifa-Zadeh & Maksymiuk, 2023.
[18] Margaryan & Harutyunyan, 2026.

One of the most telling examples of the resilience of viticultural culture in Artsakh is the village of Xnušinak (Arm. Խնուշինակ; Azerb. Xanoba) in the Martuni (Azerb. Xojavend) district. Toponymically, Xnušinak goes back to the Armeno-Iranian model Xn-u-šēn-ak, where the first component Xn- is presumably connected with OIr. hu̯an- "sun",[19] /-u-/ is a connection suffix and šēn means "settlement, inhabited place",[20] which allows the name to be interpreted as "sunny settlement." However, Xnušinak is important not only for its etymology. It is one of the traditional centres of viticulture in Qarabagh, where the autochthonous varieties Xndoghni, Msxali, Kaxet, and Garan dmak were cultivated. The presence in a single micro-region of several old varieties, each with its own name and history, testifies that viticulture constituted a stable basis of the local economy for many centuries. Especially significant is the variety Xndoghni – an autochthonous dark-berried variety of Artsakh, whose name is probably connected with the characteristic features of its fruit: small size, intense colouration, and high tannicity. Xnušinak, thus, represents a micro-model of all Artsakh: the ancient Armeno-Iranian toponymic tradition ("sunny settlement") is combined with a resilient viticultural practice that persisted here for millennia and survived all the political and demographic changes in the region.

In the later Azerbaijani tradition, the ancient toponym Xnušinak followed a completely separate path of development. Having lost transparency for the Turkic-speaking population, it was reinterpreted as Xanoba – a combination of the Turkic words xan "khan" and oba "settlement, encampment," which gave it a new meaning – "khan's settlement." This is not an evolution, but a substitution of an opaque name with a semantically transparent construction, characteristic of cases where a linguistic substratum gives way to new linguistic dominance. Such secondary reinterpretations are repeatedly recorded in the toponymy of the Caucasus and Western Asia and are a classic example of folk etymology, arising when the original meaning of an ancient toponym is forgotten or ignored. The juxtaposition of Xnu-šēn-ak ("sunny settlement") and Xanoba ("khan's settlement") is yet another example of the opposition between the ancient Armenian sedentary tradition and the later Turkic nomadic or military-administrative nomination, analogous to the pair Tsaghkashat (>Arm. tsaghik "flower" + shat "many") "rich in flowers" / Qyshlaq "winter quarters; winter pasture" (see below).

[19] Schmitt, 2016: 108.
[20] Ačaŕyan, 1977: vol. III 513, s.v. šēn.

The Seljuk and Mongol Eras: Emergence and Consolidation of the Toponym

Earliest Attestations of the Toponym

The Ghaznavid era of the 11th century represents the earliest stage at which the toponymic model Qarabagh is documented. In the context of interaction between the Turkic military-nomadic environment and the Iranian sedentary-agricultural culture, it became possible for hybrid nominative models to emerge, in which a Turkic determinative component was combined with an Iranian lexical base. Qarabagh represents precisely such a structure: Turk. *qara* + Pers. *bāgh* "garden."

Of particular significance is one of the earliest known written attestations of Qarābāgh in the East Iranian-Afghan area. In his commentary on the *Akhbār al-dawla al-Saljūqiyya*, C.E. Bosworth locates the corresponding Qarābāgh in the region of Badghis or Garčistan.[21] Since the report relates to events of the Seljuk era, it demonstrates that the name existed in the eastern part of the Irano-Turkic contact zone already in the context of the 11th century. This attestation precedes the Caucasian mentions by no less than two centuries.

Qarabagh in the Mongol Administrative System: The Mints of Qarabagh and Qaraaghaj

The incorporation of Qarabagh into the Mongol administrative system after the conquest of 1236-1237 did not entail the complete dissolution of local political structures. As A. Akopyan has demonstrated, the Mongols, having encountered no sustained resistance in Armenia, preserved the existing feudal elites, who, in turn, recognized Mongol suzerainty while retaining substantial control over their domains.[22] Furthermore, prior to the census of 1254, the Mongols "did not interfere in the internal administration of the conquered countries", limiting their direct presence to the appointment of municipal judges (šahna) from the nomadic elite.[23]

This policy had direct consequences for monetary circulation. The vast majority of Mongol taxes – māl (10% wealth tax), ghiābūr (1% livestock tax), taghār (poll-tax in kind), and terghū (provisions) – were collected in kind, not in coin. The collection of dirhams, Akopyan notes, was "negligible in the overall volume of incoming taxes".[24] Thus, minting was not a fiscal necessity but rather a political prerogative, a visible assertion of authority by the local ruler.

[21] Bosworth, 2011: 137, n. 109.
[22] Akopyan, 2015b: 125.
[23] Akopyan, 2015a: 9.
[24] Akopyan, 2015a: 9.

The mint of Qarabagh (Qarabāgh) provides the earliest securely datable evidence of the toponym's administrative use in the Southern Caucasus. The first coins bearing the mint name Qarabāgh were struck in 1240-1243 (638-640 AH), during the reign of the Great Qa'an Ögedey (1229-1241).[25] These anonymous silver dirhams of the "bow" type represent the initial phase of monetary emission in the region following the Mongol conquest. This was followed by the "mounted archer" type, struck in 1244-1245, possibly at the mint of Lājīn, which was also located in the Qarabagh region.

The mint's operation in this early period was brief – it ceased in 1242-1243, likely due to the political turmoil surrounding Ögedey's death – but it firmly established Qarabāgh as an administrative and fiscal toponym within the Mongol imperial framework.[26] Interestingly, one of the extant dies from the Qarabagh mint bears a tamgha (clan nišan) associated with the Ildegizid rulers, suggesting that local craftsmen and administrative practices were retained during the early Mongol period.[27]

The mint's activities resumed in the mid-14th century, during the decline of the Ilkhanate. Akopyan identifies the issuer of these later coins as Ivane II Hasan-Jalalean, an Armenian prince who ruled Khachen (Arrān) in the 1340s-1350s. The mint was located in Khokhanaberd (or Khoyakhnaberd), the main fortress of Khachen, known to Muslims as Qarabagh.[28] Between 1347 and 1352, this mint struck silver dirhams in the name of the Ilkhanid ruler Anūšīrwān.[29] This pattern – coins issued in the name of the nominal Ilkhanid sovereign but produced under the authority of a local Armenian prince – illustrates the dual nature of power in the region: formal submission to Mongol overlordship combined with de facto autonomy in internal affairs.

Another important mint in the same administrative sphere was Qaraāghāj (Turkic qara aghaĵ – "rich in trees» or «dense woodland"). Akopyan locates this mint "to the north of the Araxes River (in the region of Dizak),"[30] a district in the south-eastern part of historical Artsakh. The coins of Qarāāghāj (1339-1359)[31] appear frequently in hoards found in Artsakh, Siwnik and Vayoc' Dzor, in contrast to the coins of Tiflis, which are almost entirely absent from these finds.[32] This distribution pattern confirms that Qarāāghāĵ was an active mint serving the local economy of Qarabagh, and that its

[25] Akopyan, 2015a: 6-7; coins of "bow" type, Qarabāgh mint, 1240-1241 (638-640 AH).
[26] Akopyan, 2015a: 6-7.
[27] This detail is noted in the description of the Qarabagh mint dies in Akopyan (2015a: 7).
[28] Akopyan, 2015b: 138.
[29] Akopyan, 2015b: 157 (catalogue nos. 8.1-8.3).
[30] Akopyan, 2015b: 140.
[31] The term "Karagach" (or *Karaagach*) in Turkic languages is a collective name for trees belonging to the Elm genus (*Ulmus*). The word is a compound of two Proto-Turkic roots: "kara" (meaning "black") and "agach" (meaning "tree"). It received this name due to its dark bark and dense, dark heartwood. Most commonly, it refers to the Siberian Elm (*Ulmus pumila*) and the Chinese Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*). This term is attested a various Turkic language: Turk. Karaağaç, Kaz. Қарағаш (Qaragash), Uzb. Qorag'och, Azerb. Qaraağac, Tatar: Каравач (Karagach), Kyrg. Карагач (Karagach)
[32] Akopyan, 2015b: 140.

products circulated primarily within the Armenian principalities rather than across the broader Caucasian region.

The numismatic evidence from both mints – Qarabāgh and Qarāāghāj – thus provides concrete, material proof that, despite nominal Mongol suzerainty, the Armenian princes of Khachen retained effective control over monetary emission in their domains. The first coins of Qarabagh (1240-1243) demonstrate that the toponym was already embedded in the Mongol administrative system in the earliest phase of their rule, while the later emissions (1347-1352) confirm the continuity of local Armenian authority. The Mongols, satisfied with the collection of taxes in kind and the appointment of local overseers, did not interfere with this prerogative, leaving the Armenian nobility in charge of one of the most visible symbols of sovereign authority: the right to mint coins.

Qarabagh as an Imperial Winter Camp (Qishlāq)

In the 13th-14th centuries, the Mongol conquests and the formation of the Hulaguid state gave the Caucasian Qarabagh new political and geographical significance. The Qarabagh plain became one of the principal areas of winter encampment for the Mongol and Ilkhanid elite. The fixation of the toponym upon the region between the Kur and Araxes has a specific economic-political rationale: the transformation of the region into the main winter camp (qishlāq) of the Hulaguid state. The nomadic Mongol Empire was built upon a system of seasonal transhumance – summer pastures in the mountains (yaylāq) and winter quarters for the court and troops in the warm lowlands (qishlāq). The Kur-Araxes lowland combined a mild winter climate with minimal snow cover, extensive floodplain pastures for cavalry, and natural protection from the surrounding ranges.

The appearance of the name itself in the early Mongol period is associated by A. Vardanyan and G. Margaryan with the Oirats, who settled in the Kur-Araxes interfluve.[33] The Oirats – a tribal group of Western Mongolian origin, forming part of the broader Western Mongolian confederation from which the Kalmyks and Dzhungars later emerged – used Turkic as their everyday language, like the entire nomadic military milieu of the Hulaguid state.[34] It was precisely this bilingual Turkic-Mongolian nomadic milieu that fixed upon the region the Turkic-Iranian name Qarabagh in its lexical composition.

[33] Vardanyan & Margaryan, 2016/2017: 155, 164.
[34] Vardanyan & Margaryan, 2016/2017: 164, with reference to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū.

From the Oirat clan (of the Aqtachi lineage) came the amir Sutai, whose descendants – the Sutaids – ruled in Qarabagh and adjacent regions in the mid-14th century.[35]

Under Arghun Khan (1284-1291), Qarabagh appears in connection with the movements and winter camps of the Ilkhanid court. In 1295, the region was connected with the events of the consolidation of Ghazan Khan's power, and his coronation took place in Qarabagh on 3 November 1295.[36] The last major Ilkhan, Abū Saʿīd, died in 1335 during a military campaign in the Qarabagh region. Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū transmits qaṣīdas dedicated to Sultan Abū Saʿīd, "whose heart belonged to Qarabagh."[37]

Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī in his *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* (ca. 1340) employs the name Qarabagh in the geographical description of Arrān and the road network of the region.[38] By this time, the name had already become a stable geographical reference point.

Qarabagh as a Centre of Diplomacy and Internecine Struggle

In these winter camps (ordu), the entire imperial apparatus unfolded: the court moved, embassies were received, military councils (qurultays) were held, diplomacy and internecine struggles were conducted.[39]

In the post-Ilkhanid period (after the death of Abū Saʿīd in 1335), Qarabagh became the main prize in the internecine struggle among the heirs of the Mongol military elite – the Chobanids, Jalayirids, Sutaids, and Oirat tribal groups. The high significance of the region is confirmed numismatically: in Qarabagh there functioned its own mint, striking double silver dirhams with the designation Qarabagh – emissions of 1347/8 and 1349/50 are known, in the name of the Ilkhan Anušīrvan.[40] Coinage transformed the toponym into a state-administrative and monetary marker.

In the era of Timur, Qarabagh again acquired exceptional significance as a region of winter camps for large military formations.[41] This function was preserved under the Timurids.

The testimony of the German traveler Johann Schiltberger (ca. 1420) – the first European to visit Qarabagh – is revealing: "Šahrux was accustomed to winter on a great plain called Qarabagh, which was famous for its excellent pastures. The plain was watered by the river Kur, along whose banks the finest silk was gathered.

[35] Vardanyan & Margaryan, 2016/2017: 155, n. 2.
[36] Rashīd al-Dīn, 1946: vol. III, 166.
[37] Vardanyan & Margaryan, 2016/2017: 164, n. 37.
[38] Mustawfī, 1919: 173-174.
[39] Rashīd al-Dīn, 1946: vol. III: 104, 166, 188.
[40] Vardanyan & Margaryan, 2016/2017: 158-159.
[41] Fāsīḥ al-Khawāfī, 1980: 214; Yazdī, 2009: 97ab

Although this plain lay in Armenia, it belonged to the infidels."[42] The wintering of Šahrux in Qarabagh is also reported by the Armenian historian of the 15th century, Tʿovma Metsobetsʿi.[43] This testimony confirms the central thesis of the present work: Qarabagh functioned as a seasonal imperial camp (qishlāq) throughout the entire Turkic-Mongolian period – from the Ilkhans to the Timurids.

Qarabagh as an Administrative-Territorial Institution

This body of evidence allows a generalising thesis to be formulated: throughout the entire space of the Turco-Mongolian oikumene, the toponym Qarabagh (and its associated Qarabay, Qara Bak and others) consistently marks territories that passed through the military-administrative and nomadic system of the Mongol Empire and its successors. Qarabagh in this sense is not a local geographical name, but an administrative-territorial institution of the Mongol and post-Mongol imperial system, realised upon the local Armeno-Iranian lexical substrate.

Under the Jalayirids (14th - early 15th centuries), who originated from the Mongol military-tribal confederation of the Jalayirs, the name Qarabagh finally entered the political-geographical nomenclature of the state. After the fall of the Ilkhanate, the Jalayirids inherited a significant part of its western dominions, including Iranian Azerbaijan, Arran, and Iraq, preserving many elements of the former administrative system. It was precisely in this period that Qarabagh was finally consolidated as one of the most important historical-geographical regions of the area, regularly mentioned in written sources of the 14th-15th centuries.

Qarabagh in the Safavid Administrative System

Important confirmation of the administrative status of Qarabagh in the Safavid period is provided by the "Tadhkirat al-muluk" – a manual of state administration compiled around 1725. This treatise lists the 13 beglarbegis (provinces) of Safavid Iran, among which, under number 6, appears Qarabagh and Ganĵa.[44] The revenues of the beglarbegi of Qarabagh amounted to 24,726 tomans, and at his disposal were 4,287 servitors.[45]

Minorsky notes that the term Qarabagh first appears in Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī's *Nuzhat al-qulūb* (ca. 1340) and that from the time of Šah Tahmasp (1524-1576), the administration of Qarabagh and Ganĵa belonged to the Ziyad-oghlu Qajar family.[46]

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[42] Schiltberger, 1879.
[43] Tʿovma Metsobetsʿi, 1987: ch. XIV.
[44] Minorsky, 1943: 44.
[45] Minorsky, 1943: 101, 107-108.
[46] Minorsky, 1943: 166.

This testifies that by the beginning of the 18th century, Qarabagh represented not merely a geographical region, but a stable administrative unit with its centre in Ganĵa, which completed the process of its institutionalisation that had begun in the Mongol period.

Chronology: From First Mentions to Administrative Institutionalisation

The reconstruction of the history of the choronym Qarabagh requires a strict distinction between the time of the emergence of the toponymic model itself and the time of its documentary attestation. The available sources allow us to trace the gradual transition of the name from a local toponym to an official historical-geographical and administrative designation.

The earliest known evidence for the toponym Qarābāgh belongs to the East Iranian-Afghan area of the 11th century.[47] This allows us to assert that this toponymic model existed in the eastern Irano-Turkic contact zone no later than the 11th century.

For the South Caucasus, the chronology is different. The first reliable Caucasian attestation is numismatic, dating to the mid-13th century.[48] In parallel with Qarabagh, in the same region and the same period, the mint Qarāāghāj ("black tree") (1339-1359/ AH 740-760) is attested,[49] which confirms the systemic character of the Turkic nominative model qara + geographical term in Mongol administrative practice.

Subsequently, narrative testimonies follow: Rashīd al-Dīn (events of the Arghun Khan and Ghazan era), *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* by Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī,[50] *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, as well as later Armenian, Timurid, and European sources.

Thus, the Seljuk era is important for the early eastern existence of the name, while the Mongol and Ilkhanid eras are important for its consolidation and political-geographical institutionalisation in the South Caucasus. In the history of the name Qarabagh, four main stages can be distinguished:

1. 11th century – the first known documentary mention of the toponym in the East Iranian-Afghan area.
2. 13th century – the first indisputable evidence for the existence of Qarabagh in the South Caucasus, represented by coins of the mint Qarabagh from the Ögedei era.[51]

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[47] Bosworth, 2011: 137, n. 109.
[48] Akopyan, 2015a: 8.
[49] The mint Qaraaghāj (قراآغاج) – lit. "black tree" – is located by A.V. Akopyan (2015b: 140) in the same region as Qarabagh, that is, within the territory of historical Arrān / Artsakh (the Kur-Araxes interfluve). The mint of Qara Aghach operated in 1339-1359 AD (740-760 AH). It was located north of the Araxes River, in the Dizak district of historical Artsakh/Karabakh, at a winter pasture (qishlaq) near Mount Tall-Sultan, as described by the 16th-century Persian historian Fazlullah Khunji. The name Qara here means "abundant" (cf. Qarabagh – "abounding in gardens"), not "black."
[50] Mustawfī, 1919: 173-174.
[51] Akopyan, 2015a: 8.

3. 13th-15th centuries – the transformation of Qarabagh into a stable political-geographical concept during the Ilkhanid and Jalayirid periods.
4. 16th-18th centuries – the final administrative institutionalisation of the region within the Safavid state under the name Qarabagh-Ganĵa.

Areal Model: The Irano-Turkic System of Toponyms with the Formants siyāh / qara and bāgh

Areal analysis shows that the toponym Qarabagh belongs to a broad Irano-Turkic system of geographical names united by the components siyāh / qara and bāgh. This system covers an extensive territory from Iran and Afghanistan to the South Caucasus, Central Asia, and the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent.

The Iranian Area

The foundation of the system under consideration is the Iranian model Bāgh-e Siyāh. In Iranian geographical nomenclature, a number of names are attested that directly reproduce the model "garden + black / dark": Bāgh-e Siyāh in Fars province;[52] Bāgh-e Siyāh in the Takestan district of Qazvin province; Bāgh-e Siyāh in Kerman province; Bāgh-e Ahmad Siyāh in Isfahan (Māfarrūkhī, Maḥāsen-e Eṣfahān).

A particularly important example is the history of the city of Takestan. Its historical Tat name Siyāden is usually explained as a combination of siyāh "black" and dāne "grain, berry," that is, "black berry" or "black grape." In 1938, this name was officially replaced by NPers. Tākestān – "vineyard".[53]

East Iranian Distribution: Khorasan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia

The Iranian Garden model was widely distributed within historical Khorasan – from the eastern regions of Iran through Afghanistan to Central Asia. It is precisely in this area that the earliest known written attestation of the form Qarābāgh is found.

The toponym Qarābāgh is mentioned in connection with events of the Seljuk period in the source known as the "Akhbār al-dawla al-Saljūqiyya". C.E. Bosworth located this place in the region of Badghis or Garčistan and rendered the meaning of the name as "dark, verdant garden".[54] Modern Afghanistan preserves several independent localisations of the toponym Qarabagh: the Qarabagh district of Ghazni province;

[52] Dehkhodā, s.v. Bāgh-e Siyāh; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bagh_Safa (Bāgh Ṣafā; also known as Bāgh Seyāh, Bāgh-e Seyāh, and Bāgh-e Sīāh.
[53] Dehkhodā, s.v. Tākestān.
[54] Bosworth, 2011: 137, n. 109.

Qarabagh in the Kabul Kohdaman; Qarabagh in Herat and Ghor provinces.[55] Of particular significance is the form Jar-e Siyāh Bāgh in Daykundi province – "the ravine of the Black Garden".[56]

The Hazara Milieu and the Ethnonym Qarabaghi

The Qarabagh district of Ghazni province is largely inhabited by Hazaras. The formation of the Hazaras occurred as a result of prolonged interaction between Mongol, Turkic, and local Iranian groups, which is reflected in their language – Hazaragi, a variety of Dari with a substantial layer of Mongolian and Turkic lexicon.[57] It was precisely in this mixed environment that the hybrid toponym Qarabagh functioned, consisting of Turkic qara and Iranian bāgh.

Among Hazara tribal groups, the name Qarabāghī / Qara Bāghī is attested – an ethnonym directly formed from the Qarabagh district of Ghazni province.[58] Part of this group later migrated to Quetta in present-day Pakistan, where a Hazara Qarabaghi community still exists today. This is a classic example of the transition "toponym → ethnonym," showing that the name Qarabagh was not merely a geographical label, but a full-fledged marker of identity.

In Hazara tribal nomenclature, the name Jalayir also figures – direct evidence of the presence in the region of people from the same Mongol tribe that created the Jalayirid state in Iran and the Caucasus.[59] This shows that the Afghan and Caucasian Qarabagh were parts of one great Turkic-Mongolian migratory and political system.

Of particular interest is the correspondence between Afghan and Artsakh viticulture. In the Qarabagh district of Ghazni province, the grape variety Šindokhani grows, representing a phonetic adaptation of the Artsakh variety Xndoghni. The initial cluster *xnd-* is regularly adapted to *šind-* (since the cluster *xn-* is uncharacteristic for Dari and Pashto), while the root syllable -ox- is preserved unchanged. Crucially, this variety is absent from Iranian ampelonymy, which excludes Iranian mediation and points to a direct cultural channel between Artsakh and Afghanistan. This confirms that the cultural connections between the two areas were not limited to the military-political sphere but also included economic practices.

[55] Nāḥez, 1338/1959: 126.
[56] According to GeoNames.
[57] Yazdani, 1368/1989: 104, 109; Dupree, 1973.
[58] Yazdani, 1368/1989: 217; Mousavi, 1998: 67-72.
[59] Mousavi, 1998: 67-72.

The Caucasian Area

In the territory of Armenian Highland, the Turkic-Persian toponym existed in parallel with the Armenian terminology – Aygaŕk', Aygestan, Baghkʿ, bagh, aygi.[60] In Georgia, a significant Turkic and Turkic-Persian toponymic layer was formed: Qarabağlı, Qarabağlar, Qarabulaq, Qarayazı, Qarajala.[61]

In the geographical space of historical Artsakh and Arrān, the name Qarabagh is most consistently represented – from medieval written attestations to the present day. It is attested by Rashīd al-Dīn (1284, 1295),[62] in Mustawfī's *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* (ca. 1340), and in *Kartlis Tskhovreba*.[63]

On the territory of modern Azerbaijan, other names with the component *qara* are widely distributed: Qarayazı, Qarajalar, Qaradağ, Qarabulaq, Qaraqışlaq, Qaragöl, Qarabazar, and many others. The Caucasian Qarabagh should be regarded as part of a broader system of *qara*-toponyms that actively developed under Oghuz and Turkic-Mongolian presence.

The Kurdish Factor as an Intermediary Link

Kurdish presence in historical Qarabagh is documented from the 10th century, when the Arab geographer Ibn Ḥawqal mentions the "Kurdish Gate" (Bāb al-Akrād) in Barda – the capital of historical Arrān.[64] In 970-1075, the Kurdish dynasty of the Šaddādids ruled in Ganĵa and part of Arrān – the most powerful Kurdish political structure in the medieval Caucasus.[65] The Kurdish historian of the 16th century, Sharaf-khan Bidlīsī, in his *Sharaf-nāma*, directly testifies: "twenty-four Kurdish clans live in Arran Qarabagh and are known under the general name of Yigirmi-dort."[66]

Important evidence of Armenian-Kurdish military-political cooperation is the information about the district of Kolani (Ծարայ երկիր, Զարուզբիլ) in historical Artsakh. According to the research of A. Aivazyan, no later than the beginning of the 18th century this region was settled by both Armenians and Kurds of the Kolani tribe. The new name of the district first appears in sources in the 1720s, during the period of common Armenian-Kurdish actions against Ottoman and Safavid expansion. During this period, the local Kurds, having allied themselves with the Armenian population and the armed formations ("Sgnaxs") of Qarabagh,

[60] HayTełBaŕ, 1986: vol. I, 226, 229, 568, 579-580.
[61] Geybullaev, 1986.
[62] Rashīd al-Dīn, 1946: 104, 166, 188.
[63] *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, 1959: 240.
[64] Ibn Ḥawqal, 1938-1939: vol. 2: 338.
[65] Minorsky, 1953: 25.
[66] Sharaf-khan Bidlīsī, 1967: 370, n.518.

established in Kolani an independent Armenian-Kurdish military-administrative unit with united Armenian-Kurdish armed forces.[67]

This testimony is of fundamental importance, as it shows that Kurdish presence in Qarabagh was not always the result of Safavid "divide and rule" policy. During certain historical periods (particularly in the face of external threat in the 1720s), Armenian and Kurdish communities could act as equal allies, creating joint structures of self-defence and administration. This episode complements the overall picture of the region's polyonymy, demonstrating that ethnic and confessional boundaries in Qarabagh were fluid and could be overcome for common political and military goals.

Mass Kurdish resettlement in Qarabagh occurred in the 16th-17th centuries as part of the Qizilbash confederations of the Safavids, who pursued the strategic goal of weakening the Armenian meliks of mountainous Qarabagh by separating them from the main Armenian territories.[68] In this period, the tribes of Jalali, Surla, Jibikli, Mahmudli, as well as the Kurdo-Lur Qizilbash groups – Bargushat, Ardalan, Baxtiyari, Dumbuli, Gyarus, Zengene – settled in Qarabagh.[69]

Subsequent waves of resettlement – 1807 (600 families), 1820 (the Maxryzli tribe), after the Russian-Iranian war of 1826-1828 (the Zilan tribe) – completed the formation of the Kurdish ethnic mass in the south-western districts of Qarabagh.[70] In 1923-1929, the Soviet authorities officially recognised this Kurdish compactness by creating the Kurdistan district ("Red Kurdistan") with its centre in Lachin.[71]

The gradual Turkicisation of the Kurdish population is revealing. According to the 1926 census, 37,200 Kurds lived in the Kurdistan district, yet only 3,100 (8.3%) considered Kurdish their native language – the rest had shifted to Azerbaijani.[72] Geybullaev notes: "many Kurdish ethnonyms are formed with Turkic (Azerbaijani) suffixes (-par, -ly), and a number of Kurdish tribes in Azerbaijan are called by Turkic ethnonyms."[73]

Thus, the Kurdish milieu, historically belonging to the Iranian cultural-linguistic world, served as an intermediary between the ancient Armeno-Iranian agrarian substrate and the Turkic-Mongolian military-nomadic system. This explains the spread of Turkic-form toponymy in areas with an originally non-Turkic population. A detailed ethno-toponymic analysis of Kurdish material by districts of historical Qarabagh is presented in the Appendix, Part 3.

[67] Aivazyan, 2022: 73.
[68] Shnirelman, 2003: 199.
[69] Geybullaev, 1986: 100-101.
[70] Geybullaev, 1986: 101.
[71] Yilmaz, 2014.
[72] Bukshpan 1932: 61-62.
[73] Geybullaev, 1986: 102.

Toponyms by Region: A Synoptic Overview

Based on the detailed tables presented in Appendix II, below is a concise overview of toponyms of the Qarabagh, Bāgh-e Siyāh, and Qarabay types by region.

Iran (6 toponyms of Qarabagh): Qarah Bagh (Urmiye), Qarah Bagh (Tākestān), Qarabagh (Fars), Qarabagh (Kerman), Qarabagh (Salmast), Qarabagh (Urmiye);[74] (5 toponyms of Bagh-siyah): Bāgh-e Siyāh (Fars, Dašt-e Murghab), Bāgh-e Siyāh (Abadeh), Bāgh-e Siyāh (Tākestān), Bāgh-e Siyāh (Kerman), Bāgh-e Ahmad Siyāh (Isfahan); varia: Siyāden / Tākestān (Qazvin); Hazār-bāgh (Isfahan). All Iranian localisations gravitate towards the viticultural regions of the country – Fars, Qazvin, Kerman, and Isfahan.[75]

Afghanistan (8 toponyms): Qarabāgh (Ghazni – earliest attestation, 11th century), Qarabāgh (Kabul), Qarabāgh (Herat), Qarabāgh (Ghor), Qarabāgh-e Arq, Qarabāgh-e Zar / Qarabāghzar (Parwan), Qarabāghī (ethnonym, Ghazni), Jar-e Siyāh Bāgh (Daykundi), Hazār-bāgh (Takhar). The Afghan area demonstrates a particularly high density of Qarabāgh-type toponyms and the presence of the Persian parallel Siyāh Bāgh.[76]

Caucasus (5 toponyms): Qarabāgh (Artsakh -Arrān-AR), Qarabağlar (Gojchaj, AR), Qarabağlar (Naxçivan, AR), Qarabağly (Khachmas, AR), Qarabağlı (Tsitsmatiani, Georgia); Baghkʿ (Siwnik, Armenia), Aygestan (Hadrut/Khojavend district). The Caucasian area is characterised by the coexistence of Armenian (Baghkʿ, Aygestan), Iranian (Arrān), and Turkic-Persian (Qarabāgh) toponymic systems.[77]

Turkey (4 toponyms): Karabağ (Kars/Ardahan), Karabağ (Bitlis), Karabağ (Van/Hakkâri), Karabağ (Kars/Kağızman). All four localisations are located in the territory of historical Armenia in Eastern Anatolia.[78]

Central Asia (8 toponyms): Qarabay (Uzbekistan), Karabay (Toktogul, Kyrgyzstan), Kara-Bak (Batken, Kyrgyzstan), Bay Kara-Bak (Batken, Kyrgyzstan), Karabay (Ayagoz, Kazakhstan), Karabay (Aksu, Kazakhstan), Karabay (Bokeyorda, Kazakhstan), Bayanaul (Kazakhstan). The Central Asian area represents a typological parallel: Qarabay (qara + bay) instead of Qarabāgh (qara + bāgh).[79]

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[74] See: HayTełBaŕ I: 521.
[75] Dehkhodā, s.v. Siyāh bāgh.
[76] Nāḥez, 1338/1959; Bosworth, 2011: 137, n. 109.
[77] Qarabāghlar – Turkic plural suffix -lar. The form Qarabāghlīlar (village, Kazakh region) also attested, see. HayTełBaŕ1986: vol. III, 523. In 18th CE has been found by Armenians from Qarabāgh – Karabagly (Карабаглы) in Derbend (Russia), see. https://armeniansite.ru/diaspora-i-armeniya-rossiya/armyanskie-poseleniya-rossii/karabakhskij-ostrovok-v-dagestane.html. All these forms (Karabagly, Qarabaghlar, Qarabaghlilar) indicate that they come from the ancestral homeland of Qarabagh!
[78] HayTełBaŕ, 1986: vol. III, 521-523.
[79] Administrative-territorial division of Uzbekistan 2017; administrative data of KR, RK.

India (1 toponym): Hazaribagh (Jharkhand state) – the eastern frontier of the transcontinental belt of bāgh-toponyms.[80]

Semantics of the Components qara / šām–sēm–šāw / siyāh

The literal translation of the toponym Qarabagh as "black garden" reflects only the most obvious level of its interpretation. In reality, the semantics of the name are considerably more complex and must be examined within a broad historical-linguistic context, encompassing Old Iranian and Middle Iranian agrarian onomastics, New Persian garden-viticultural terminology, and Turkic toponymic tradition.

The designations "black" and "dark" in Iranian and Turkic landscape lexicon could characterise not merely the colour of an object in the narrow sense. Applied to a forest, garden, or vineyard, they conveyed the visual impression of dense, shaded, and richly green vegetation, and also indicated fertility, abundance, and the high degree of cultivation of the territory. Accordingly, the first component of the name Qarabagh must be examined on three interrelated levels: the Turk. *qara*, the Old and MIran. series *šām* / *sēm* / *šāw*, and the NPers. *siyāh*.

qara: The Turkic Colour and Qualitative Characteristic

In Turkic languages, *qara*, while retaining its primary meaning "black, dark," possesses a developed polysemy. In geographical names, it can denote size, strength, supremacy, abundance, density, or intensity of a natural feature.[81] Thus, names such as Qaradağ, Qarasu, Qarabulaq, Qaraçay, and Qaragöl should not always be understood literally. In hydronymy, *qara* can convey meanings such as "pure," "spring-fed," "strong," or "full-flowing." For instance, Qarabulaq may designate "a pure, strong spring," and Qaraçay – "a mighty, full-flowing river."

A similar semantic expansion is observed in Turkic titulature. In the title Qara Qan / Qaraxan, the epithet qara denoted not so much colour as strength, greatness, and the high status of the ruler. Consequently, in the toponym Qarabagh, this component could also characterise not the literal colour of the garden, but its scale, density, abundance of vegetation, and the visual darkness of the garden mass.

In relation to the cultural landscape, *qara* combines at least three meanings:

1. Literal – connection with black grapes and other dark fruits;
2. Visual – dark, dense foliage of a garden or vineyard;
3. Qualitative-intensive – large, abundant, fertile, and densely overgrown territory.

[80] See. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hazaribaġ_district.
[81] Kononov, 1978: 162.

šām / sēm / šāw: The Old Iranian and Middle Iranian Series

A deeper historical layer is represented by the Iranian colour series, going back to the Old Iranian bases s(i)yāma- and s(i)yāva- "black, dark." With these are compared Avest. sāma- and syāmaka-, OInd. śyāma-, and Prakrit sāma.[82]

In East Iranian languages, the continuation of the base s(i)yāva- is represented by Sogd. šāw and Xwarezmian sāw "black, dark."[83] A different but related reflex is represented by Parthian sēm-. Of particular value for the subject under consideration are the economic documents of Old Nisa – the archives of Parthian royal wine-producing estates. In them, a group of vineyard names with the component sēm- "black, dark" is attested: Sēmān, Sēmī / Sīmī, Sēmīkān, Sēmīn / Sēmyān.[84] These names testify that the naming of the vineyard landscape through a component meaning "black, dark" was a stable Iranian agrarian-onomastic tradition already in the Parthian era.

The most expressive toponymic example is Šām-šahr. The toponym Šām-šahr (> Pers. šām "black" > "densely covered with vegetation" + šahr "city") is attested in Dagestan.

For the explanation of the first part of the toponym Šam-šahr, the data of the Irano-Armenian onomastic tradition, recorded in the work of H. Martirosyan, are of particular importance.[85] It presents two names with the same formant – Šamay and Šamanduxt, both going back to the Iranian base Šam-, which, in turn, is a hypocoristic form of S(i)yāma- "black, dark".[86] The name Šamay appears in Armenian sources (particularly in the *Kanonagirkʿ Hayocʿ* and in Movsēs Kałankatuacʿi) and represents a shortened form going back to the Iranian root siyā- "black, dark, green".[87]

Thus, in the toponym Šam-šahr, the first part (Šam-) goes back to the same Iranian root siyā- "black, dark, green." In this sense, the expression Šam-šahr can be translated as "dark city" or "green city," which corresponds to known parallels in Persian toponymy (cf. Qarah-bāgh).

To this same series belongs the Iranian toponym Šām-Ābād, where the second component ābād means "cultivated, well-ordered, flourishing populated place."[88] The toponym is attested in the rural district of Kerbel, Zarkan district, city of Shiraz.

Thus, within the second level, a unified historical-etymological series is formed:

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[82] Mayrhofer, 1979: 234, N 8.1559.
[83] Lurje, 2015: 138-154.
[84] Livshits, 2010: 197.
[85] Martirosyan, 2021: 281, 554-555.
[86] Cf. Siyāmāsp – "he who has black horses"; Mayrhofer, 1973: 234, N 8.1559; Mayrhofer, 1979: 75, N 293.
[87] Martirosyan, 2021: 281.
[88] Murzayev, 1984: 36; cf. Parsi Wiki, s.v. Šām-Ābād.

OIran. s(i)yāma- / s(i)yāva- → EIran. šāw, Khwarezm. sāw, Parth. sēm-, onomastic and toponymic šām / šam.

siyāh: The New Persian Continuation and Garden-Viticultural Semantics

NPers. siyāh "black, dark" represents the literary continuation of the same ancient Iranian colour field. Particularly important are Iranian toponyms of the Bāgh-e Siyāh type. Their localisation in the viticultural regions of Iran permits the interpretation of this name as a designation of a dense garden-vineyard mass rather than a garden of black colour. The example of the city of Siyāden, later renamed Tākestān – "vineyard" – is indicative.[89]

As an additional landscape parallel, MPers. Siyā-razūr – "Black Forest" – may be adduced, attested in the inscription of the Sasanian king of kings Narseh at Paikuli (293), as well as on a Sasanian seal of the 6th century.[90] In Sasanian sphragistics, the toponym Siyāg "black" also occurs as a district in the province of Bishapur.[91]

Conclusion

The material examined allows us to reconstruct a long-standing tradition of naming garden and vineyard landscapes through the colour designation "black, dark." At the Old and Middle Iranian level, this tradition is represented by the bases s(i)yāma- and s(i)yāva-, EIran. šāw, Khwarezm. sāw, Parth. sēm-, and the toponymic-anthroponymic šām / šam. In the New Persian tradition, this model continues in the forms siyāh, Bāgh-e Siyāh, and Siyāden, while in the Turkic-Persian milieu it receives structural reformulation as Qarabagh.

The historical-semantic sequence may be represented as follows:

s(i)yāma- / s(i)yāva- → šāw / sāw / sēm / šām → siyāh → Bāgh-e Siyāh → Qarabagh.

Consequently, the name Qarabagh should be understood not as a literal "black garden," but as a designation of a dense, shaded, fertile region covered with gardens and vineyards of dark greenery.

[89] Dehkhodā, s.v. Tākestān; https://fa.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%AA%D8%A7%DA%A9%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86_(%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%B1).
[90] Gyselen, 2019: 205.
[91] Gyselen, 2019: 5.

The Armenian Tradition: bagh, Baghkʿ, aygi, Aygestan

Armenian garden-viticultural toponymy existed long before the reliable attestation of Qarabagh in the South Caucasus. Indicative is the concentration of toponyms of viticultural semantics in historical Artsakh:

> Baghkʿ (Arm. bagh + pl. -kʿ = "gardens/vineyards," Siwnik, 7th century); Aygestan (Arm. aygi "vineyard, orchard" + Ir. -stān = "place, region"); Qarabāgh (Turk. qara + Pers. bāgh).

According to the Dictionary of the *Qarabagh Dialect of the Armenian Language*, Armenian bagh (Բաղ) denotes primarily a garden, especially a vineyard. Alongside it, Armenian employs the synonymous terms aygi ("garden, vineyard"), partēz ("enclosed garden," going back to Iranian pairidaēza-).[92]

In Classical Armenian, the term aygi (այգի) had two principal meanings: (1) "vineyard" and (2) "vine". The word aygi and its derivatives, including aygestan (այգեստան) "vineyard", are attested already in the Armenian text of the Bible. In Modern Eastern Armenian, aygi has developed the broader meaning "garden", whereas Western Armenian literary usage has preserved its earlier meaning "vineyard".[93]

Baghkʿ and the Sedentary Perception of the Garden

The Armenian toponym Baghkʿ reflects the perception of territory as a "land of gardens" within the framework of the sedentary Armeno-Iranian agricultural culture. The difference between sedentary and nomadic models of nomination is vividly demonstrated by the juxtaposition of Armenian Tsaghkashat and Turkic (Azer.) Qyshlaq ("winter quarters; village").

Armenian Tsaghkashat (Ծաղկաշատ), formed from tsaghik "flower" and shat "much, abundant," literally means "abounding in flowers." This toponym reflects the perception of territory through the categories of sedentary agriculture: cultivated land, gardens, aesthetics, and permanent settlement stability.[94] In contrast, the parallel Turkic name for the exact same locality, Qyşlaq (Gıshlag), literally translates as "winter quarters" or "winter pasture." This dual naming system reflects a completely different system of coordinates used by nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists: pastures, wintering grounds, watering places, and seasonal cycles of cattle grazing.[95]

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[92] Malxasyants', 1944: 74, 90, 319, s.v. bagh (baghča), aygi, partēz.
[93] Ačaŕyan, Hayerēn armatakan baŕaran, vol. I, p. 166, s.v. aygi.
[94] Malxasyants', 1944, 322, s.v. tsaghkashat.
[95] C.f. The regional dualism is vividly illustrated by the contrasting names of the village of **Vank'** (Վանք) and its wider district, **Aghdara** (Ağdərə). In the Armenian tradition, *Vank'* ("1. monastery;2. place of

The same territory could be perceived by a farmer through the categories of garden and vineyard, and by a nomad through the categories of pasture and tribal affiliation. Toponymy functions not only as a linguistic but also as a historical-economic source, recording different models of spatial development. In this respect, Qarabagh occupies a special position between the two traditions. Its first component – Turkic *qara* – in a number of natural-geographical names is connected not so much with the designation of black colour as with the notion of dense dark greenery, natural abundance, and the economic value of the object. Its second component – Iranian *bāgh* – designates a garden, primarily a vineyard and orchard. Thus, the toponym Qarabagh represents a synthesis of two economic-cultural traditions – the nomadic Turkic and the sedentary Irano-Armenian.

Armenian Garden Toponymy

Armenian toponymy demonstrates the exceptional productivity of formants connected with horticulture and viticulture. Particularly numerous are formations with the component ayg-: Aygaŕkʿ, Aygavan, Aygehat, Aygepar, Aygehovit, and others.[96] No less indicative is the group of toponyms with the formant Bagh-: Baghaberd, Baghašen, Baghahovit, Baghabon, and others.[97]

Taken together, the Armenian material demonstrates the high productivity of garden-viticultural terminology and its deep rootedness in the cultural landscape of the South Caucasus. The relationship between Baghkʿ and Qarabāgh reflects two different ways of conceptualising the same space: the agricultural and the nomadic.

Results and Conclusions

The conducted research allows the following reconstruction of the history and semantics of the toponym Qarabagh to be proposed.

1. Linguistic structure. Qarabagh represents a Turkic-Iranian hybrid formation: Turk. *qara* + Pers. bāgh "garden." The Iranian component bāgh belongs to ancient agrarian vocabulary; the Turk. qara possesses a developed contextual polysemy.[98]

2. Chronology. The earliest known evidence for the form Qarābāgh is connected with events of the Seljuk era in the East Iranian-Afghan area.[99] For the South Caucasus, the first reliable

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living") carries a broader connotation of a permanent habitat or dwelling site centered around a fixed ecclesiastical locus, reflecting a sedentary worldview based on structural permanence. Conversely, the Azerbaijani name *Aghdara* ("white valley/gorge") shifts the focus entirely to natural landforms. This emphasis on descriptive topography—valleys and migratory corridors—is highly characteristic of a pastoralist, mobile system of coordinates where territory is identified by its environmental utility rather than fixed architectural structures (see. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vank,_Nagorno-Karabakh).

[96] HayTełBař,1986: vol. I, 225-229.

[97] HayTełBař, 1986: vol. I, 568-571.

[98] Kononov, 1978: 162.

attestation is numismatic, dating to the mid-13th century.[100] In the post-Ilkhanid period, Qarabagh became the main prize in the internecine struggle among the heirs of the Mongol military elite, as confirmed by the minting of coins with the designation Qarabagh.[101]

3. Iranian semantic basis. The key evidence is the Sasanian toponym Syārazūr, lit. "black forest," known from the inscription of Narseh at Paikuli (3rd century) and confirmed by an administrative seal of the 6th century.[102] Qarabagh may be regarded as a structural-semantic parallel to the model of the Bāgh-e Siyāh type.

4. Semantics of qara. The most reliable original meaning of qara is "black / dark." In a specific landscape context, it could evoke additional associations: visually dark dense vegetation; the significance or intensity of the object; the richness of natural resources.

5. Bāgh-e Siyāh and the viticultural hypothesis. Iranian toponyms of the Bāgh-e Siyāh type represent the most important comparative material. Of particular interest is the case of Tākestān / Siyāden, where the modern Tākestān is directly connected with the grapevine, while the older form Siyāden is interpreted as "black berry / black grape."

6. The Armenian agrarian layer. Armenian garden-viticultural toponymy (Baghkʿ, Aygestan, and others) existed long before the attestation of Qarabagh in the South Caucasus. The juxtaposition of Aygestan and Qoçbəyli demonstrates the fundamental difference between sedentary and nomadic models of nomination. The toponymic evolution Xnu-šēn-ak → Xanoba represents a similar example: the ancient Armenian sedentary tradition and the later Turkic nomadic or military-administrative nomination.

7. The Afghan-Khorasanian nexus. The multiplicity of Qarabagh in Afghanistan, together with Bosworth's early attestation, shows that the name cannot be explained exclusively from Caucasian history. The existence of the Hazara group Qarabaghi confirms the mechanism of the transition "toponym → ethnonym." The genealogical connection of the Qarabagh Javanshir tribe with the Afghan Barakzai dynasty (Dost Muhammad Khan) confirms a deep cultural connection between the two regions.[103] The ampelonymic parallel šindoxani / xndoghni indicates a direct cultural channel between the Artsakh and Afghan viticultural traditions.

8. The Kurdish factor. Kurdish presence in Qarabagh is documented from the 10th century (Ibn Ḥawqal, the "Kurdish Gate" in Barda; the Šaddādid dynasty, 970-1075). Mass resettlements of the 16th-19th centuries as part of the Qizilbash confederations of the Safavids, and subsequently after the Russian-Iranian wars, formed the Kurdish ethnic mass in the south-western districts of Qarabagh. The gradual Turkicisation of the Kurdish population (according to the 1926 census, only 8.3% of the Kurds in the Kurdistan district considered Kurdish their native language) and the formation of Kurdish ethnonyms with Turkic suffixes (-ly, -par) demonstrate the mechanism of Turkic-Kurdish hybridisation, parallel to Turkic-Iranian.[104]

9. Polyonymy. The toponymic landscape of the region represents a classic example of historical polyonymy: Arm. Baghkʿ, Arm. Aygestan, Pers. Bāgh-e Siyāh, Turkic-Iranian Qarabagh.

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[99] Bosworth, 2011: 137, n. 109.
[100] Akopyan, 2015a: 8.
[101] Vardanyan & Margaryan, 2016/2017: 158-159.
[102] Gyselen, 2019: 205.
[103] Lee, 2019: 164.
[104] Geybullaev, 1986: 102.

10. Theoretical generalisation. Qarabagh was formed in the zone of interaction among several historical-cultural systems: the ancient and Middle Iranian agrarian and landscape tradition; the Armenian sedentary-agricultural and garden-viticultural culture; the Turkic linguistic and nomadic nominative system; the Mongol and post-Mongol military-political organisation of space; and the later Kurdish and Turkoman intermediary demographic layers.

Final conclusion. Qarabagh is neither a random nor a purely monolingual name. Its structure and history reflect the prolonged interaction of Iranian agrarian terminology with the Turkic nominative system in the multilingual space from Khorasan and Afghanistan to the South Caucasus. The most substantiated model consists in the reconstruction of a multi-level cultural-linguistic synthesis: Iranian (Persian) bāgh + Turkic qara → Qarabagh, against the background of a considerably more ancient Armeno-Iranian cultural landscape and in the context of the subsequent Turco-Mongolian political dissemination.

APPENDIX 1. THE KURDISH FACTOR IN QARABAGH: ETHNO-TOPONYMIC STRATIFICATION

Table 1. Toponymic Stratification of Qarabagh

Layer	Share in Sample	Concentration Zone	Comment
Armenian	~45%	highland central part (**Khachen, Khachenget,** Azer. Khachynchaj), **Dizak** (<Pers. Diz "fortress" + -ak din.suf. > "small fortress"), **Varanda**, **Gulistan (**see.below**)**)	Long-established highland layer associated with the historical Armenian melikdoms.
Turkic	~24%	plain and foothill areas (**Shushi**/**Shusha** (<Arm. Dial. Shosh (or Shushikent, Sgnax Shoshi "fortress") "height, peak"), **Zangilan** (pers./kurd. Zangi "tribe name" + -lan "place"), **Jebrail**)	Concentrated mainly in the plains and foothills; connected with later nomadic and administrative formations.
Hybrid	~12%	contact zones	Mixed formations combining Turkic elements with Armenian, Iranian or other components.
Kurdish	~11%	south-western mountain fringe (**Kashatagh**, **Kelbajar** (< Arm.*K'arvachaṙ "stone bazar"))	Concentrated chiefly in the south-western districts; examples include Kolani/Kelani, Dağ Kolani, Goran, Goran Yurdu and Goran Qışlağı.
Iranian administrative	~2%	scattered (**Gūl(i)stān** (< Pers. Gul "rose" + -stān "place" < "rose garden", **Khudāfarīn** (Pers. Khoda "God" + "prsise"> "praise God"))	Scattered Iranian lexical or administrative formations.
Other	~6%	throughout the region	Pre-Armenian, Soviet-period, neutral or presently unclassified formations.
Methodological note	—	—	Preliminary authorial calculations based on 143 toponyms in twelve districts; percentages remain subject to verification against the full corpus.

Source: *Preliminary authorial calculations based on a sample of 143 toponyms in twelve districts; the percentages remain subject to verification against the full corpus.*

Table 2. Tribal Stratification of Qarabagh (19th century)

Category	Share	Comment
Kurdish tribes (including Kurdo-Lur Qizilbash)	~65%	Developed clan-tribal structure; the sources also record composite unions such as İgirmi Dörd ("Twenty-Four") and Otuz İki ("Thirty-Two").
Turkic tribes	~22%	Javanshir, Kengerli, Qajars, Afshars and other groups; political confederative designations must not automatically be treated as ethnic labels.
Armenian melik clans	~11%	Five clans of the melikdoms of Khamsa.
Methodological note	—	Shahsevan was a political-confederative designation rather than a homogeneous ethnic name; Kurdish, Kurdo-Lur and Turkic-speaking groups could be incorporated into Shahsevan formations.

Source: *Aristova 1966; Geybullaev 1986: 100–102; Chopin 1852: 528, 971, 1130; Sharaf Khān Bidlīsī 1976, II: 370; Bakikhanov 1991: 83, 155, 189; Tapper 1997.*

Table 3. Kurdish Tribes with Proper Kurdish Ethnonyms

No.	Tribe	Origin	Period of Appearance	Trace in Toponymy
1	Jalali	Kurd. Sunni tribe; sub-tribes: Biryuki, Radikyanli, Azizanli, Sheikh-Bizanli	16th–18th c.; major settlement in Qarabagh	villages Jalaly / Jalali in Lachin
2	Milli	Kurd. tribe	16th–19th c.	villages bearing the ethnonym Milli
3	Zilan	Kurd. tribe; sub-tribes: Buriki, Jalali, Milaya, Irady, Zabug, Junuk, Chakmanly, Arizanly, Khalisanly	1826–1828, Erivan Governorate (Nakhchavan district)	villages founded by Hüseyn-khan Zilanly
4	Mahmudly	Kurd. tribe; east of Lake Van, later in Transcaucasia	16th–17th c.	a number of villages in Transcaucasia
5	Jibikli	Kurd. tribe; east of Lake Van, later in Transcaucasia	16th–17th c.	oikonym Jibikli
6	Mahryzli	Kurd. tribe; resettled in the Qarabagh Khanate	1820	villages Mahrizli in Qubadli district
7	Kobadli	Kurd. tribe; homeland in Iran	16th–17th c.	Qubadli (centre of Qubadli district)
8	Surla	Kurd. tribe within the Qizilbash	16th–18th c.	villages bearing the ethnonym Surla
9	Biryuki	Kurd. sub-tribe of the Jalali	19th c.	villages of Qarabagh and Armenia
10	Bayramly	Kurd. tribe	18th–19th c.	Azizpeyesi, Damly, Zorkeshish, Iskenderkhanasi, Govushug, Ashagi-Ulukhan
11	Kurdgadzhi / Gasim-ushagi	Kurd. tribe	mid-19th c.	Erikli, Alanchi, Sham (modern Shamkend)
12	Kolani / Kelani	Kurd. tribal confederation; semi-nomadic and semi-settled groups	documented in the 19th c. in Qarabagh, Shirvan, Erivan Governorate and the Sevan region	Kolani, Dağ Kolani, Aralıq Kolanlı, Kolani Qışlaq and related names
13	Goran	Kurd. tribal and linguistic group; also recorded within larger confederations	18th–19th c., Qarabagh and Shirvan	Goran, Goran Yurdu, Goran Qışlağı, Goranboy
14	Pusyan / Pesyan	Kurd. tribal union; branches Babaly, Potanly, Sultanly and Zodanly	19th c., Göyçə and adjoining areas	tribal oikonyms derived from its branches
15	Saadlu / Saatly	branch of the Kurd. Pazuki	Chukhur-Saad and adjoining regions	Saatly / Saadlu
16	Muradi	Kurd. group within the Jaf confederation; Muradkhanly in Caucasian sources	18th–19th c., Shirvan–Mughan	Muradkhanly
17	Shekak / Shakkak	Kurd. tribe	Iranian Azerbaijan and adjoining Caucasian regions	ethnonymic names
18	Jabraillu	Kurd. tribe; Arab. p.n. Jabrāʾīl + Turk. -lu	Qarabagh	Jabrayil / Jabraillu
19	Ferikhani	Kurd. tribal group	20th c. ethnographic record, Kelbajar district	settlements and seasonal sites in Kelbajar
20	Janiki / Juniki	Kurd. tribal confederation	Garmsir / Arranian plains	Qarabaghi recorded as one of its branches
21	Qarabaghi	Kurd. tribal name recorded within Janiki and Lur formations	Iranian and Caucasian tribal contexts	ethnonym derived from Qarabagh
22	Choban / Shebankara / Khanchoban	Kurd. tribal group in the tradition used by the author	Fars, Iranian Azerbaijan and Shirvan	Khanchoban

Source: *Geybullaev 1986: 101; Aristova 1966; Chopin 1852: 528, 971; Sharaf Khān Bidlīsī 1976, II: 370; Bakikhanov 1991: 155, 189; Svod statisticheskikh dannykh o naselenii Zakavkazskogo kraia 1893; Lerch: 118; Sovremennyi Iran 1957: 633; Mammad, "On the Kurdish Tribes of Transcaucasia."*

Table 4. Kurdish Tribes with Turkic (Azerbaijani) Suffixes

No.	Tribe	Kurdish Core	Turkic Suffix	Localization / Trace
1	Dilkheyrimli	Kurd. dilxeyr	-li	Kelbajar (<Arm.K'arvachaṙ "stone bazar") district
2	Babaly	Kurd. ethnonym baba	-ly	villages of Transcaucasia
3	Radikyanli	Kurd. sub-tribe of the Jalali	-li	within the Jalali
4	Azizanli	Kurd. sub-tribe	-li	villages
5	Arizanli	Kurd. sub-tribe of the Zilan	-li	villages of Transcaucasia
6	Khalisanli	Kurd. sub-tribe of the Zilan	-li	villages of Transcaucasia
7	Chakmanly	Kurd. sub-tribe of the Zilan	-ly	villages
8	Zilanly	Kurd. zilan +ly	-ly	villages founded by Hüseyn-khan Zilanly
9	Qarachorlu	hybrid: Turk. qara + Kurd. Çor "four" + -lu	-ly	villages of Transcaucasia
10	Jabraillu	Arab. Jabrāʾīl +lu	-lu	Qarabagh; associated with the name Jabrayil
11	Saadlu / Saatly	Arab. Saʿad	-lu / -lı	Chukhur-Sa'ad and adjoining regions
12	Muradkhanly	Arab. Murād + Turk. Khan+ly	-lı	Shirvan–Mughan
13	Gara-oglanly	Kurd. p.n. tradition; Turkicized form	-lı	branch of the Kolani
14	Osally	personal or clan name	-lı	branch of the Kolani
15	Khazili	personal or clan name	-li	branch of the Kolani
16	Lolaily	Kurd. p. n. Lola / Lolo	-lı	branch of the Kolani
17	Tureni	Kurd. p.n. tradition; Turkicized form	-i	branch of the Kolani
18	Akhsagly	Turk. Aksak "lame; limping or studling" +-ly	-lı	branch of the Kolani
19	Kurdbeklu	Kurd + bek+ -lu	-lu	within Shahsevan formations
20	Zargarlu	Pers. zargar "goldsmith" + -lu	-lu	within Shahsevan formations
21	Demirlu	Turk. demir "iron" + -lu	-lu	within Shahsevan formations
22	Kozatlu	personal name Kozat (?)	-lu	within Shahsevan formations

Source: *Geybullaev 1986: 101–102; Aristova 1966; Chopin 1852: 528, 1130; Sharaf Khān Bidlīsī; Bakikhanov 1991: 189; Toponimika iugo-vostochnoi chasti Bolshogo Kavkaza 1993: 74–77; Sovremennyi Iran 1957: 629; Mammad, "On the Kurdish Tribes of Transcaucasia."*

Table 5. Kurdo-Lur Tribes within the Qizilbash

No.	Tribe	Category	Origin	Trace in Toponymy
1	Bargushat	Kurdo-Lur Qizilbash	south-western Iran (Bakhtiari, Luristan)	villages of Transcaucasia
2	Ardalan	Kurdish Qizilbash	western Iran (Kurdistan; centre Senneh/Sanandaj)	villages in Transcaucasia
3	Bakhtiari	Lur-Kurd. Qizilbash	south-western Iran (Bakhtiari)	oikonym Bakhtiarly in Qubadli district
4	Dumbuli	Kurd. Qizilbash	western Iran	villages
5	Gyarus / Gerug	Kurd. Qizilbash	western Iran; Gerus district in Shirvan (18th c.)	Sulut, Nuran, Zargova; villages in Geokchay and Javad districts
6	Zengene	Kurdo-Lur Qizilbash, < root ir. zang “bell, ring”	south-western Iran; related to the Bakhtiari	oikonym Zengene (Sabirabad district); Zangilan
7	Zangi	Kurdo-Lur-Bakhtiari, < ir. root “black” > “big, influential, main”.	south-western Iran	quarters of Kurdish villages in Qubadli; Zangilan
8	Shadlu	Kurd. group recorded within the Zengene confederation	western and south-western Iran	tribal branches in Iranian and Caucasian contexts
9	Qarabaghi	Kurd. tribal name recorded within a Lur confederation	Iran	ethnonym derived from Qarabagh

Source: *Geybullaev 1986: 100–101; Bakikhanov; Sovremennyi Iran 1957: 632–633; Mammad, “On the Kurdish Tribes of Transcaucasia.” Shahsevan is treated here as a political-confederative designation, not as a homogeneous ethnic group.*

APPENDIX 2. TABLES OF TOPONYMS BY TYPE AND REGION

Table 1. Toponyms of the Qarabagh Type

No.	Toponym	Country	Region	Latitude	Longitude	Chronology	Notes
1	Qarabāgh (Artsakh–Arran)	Azerbaijan	Artsakh–Arran	40.0	47.0	1284	Historical core; winter quarters of the Ilkhans
2	Qarabāghlar (Goyçay)	Azerbaijan	Goychay District	40.63294	47.69216	Modern	Village
3	Qarabāghlar (Nakhçivan)	Azerbaijan	Nakhchivan	39.21	45.41	Modern	Village
4	Qarabāghly (Khaçmaz)	Azerbaijan	Khachmaz District	41.48238	48.87246	Modern	Village / municipality
5	Qarabaghli (Tsitsmatiani)	Georgia	Tsitsmatiani (Kakheti)	41.5	45.5	19th–20th c.	Village
6	Karabagly (Derbent)	Russia	Tarumovsky District, Dagestan	44.011	46.592	1797–modern	Village historically associated with Armenian settlers from the Derbent area
7	Qarabagh (Kars / Ardahan)	Turkey	Western Armenia	41.1	42.7	Medieval–modern	Armenian settlement
8	Qarabagh (Bitlis)	Turkey	Western Armenia	38.4	42.1	Medieval–modern	Armenian → Kurdish
9	Qarabagh (Van / Hakkâri)	Turkey	Western Armenia	38.0	44.0	Medieval–modern	Armenian → Kurdish
10	Qarabagh (Kars / Kağızman)	Turkey	Western Armenia	40.1	43.2	Medieval–modern	Armenian settlement
11	Qarabāgh (Urmiye)	Iran	Western Azerbaijan	37.6	45.1	Safavid–modern	Viticultural region
12	Qarabāgh (Tākestān)	Iran	Qazvin	36.0	49.7	Safavid–modern	Near the town of Takestan
13	Qarabāgh (Fārs)	Iran	Fars	29.5	52.8	Safavid–modern	Viticultural region
14	Qarabāgh (Kerman)	Iran	Kerman	30.3	57.1	Safavid–modern	Viticultural region
15	Qarabāgh (Salmast)	Iran	Western Azerbaijan	—	—	—	Oikonym
16	Qarabāgh (Urmiye)	Iran	Western Azerbaijan	—	—	—	Oikonym recorded separately in the source
17	Qarabāgh (Ghazni) ★	Afghanistan	Ghazni	33.6	68.4	11th c. (earliest)	Hazara district; Qarabaghi tribe
18	Qarabāgh (Kābōl)	Afghanistan	Kabul	34.6	69.2	18th–20th c.	~180,000 people; viticulture
19	Qarabāgh (Herāt)	Afghanistan	Herat	34.0	62.3	18th–20th c.	Viticultural region
20	Qarabāgh (Ghor)	Afghanistan	Ghor	34.0	65.0	18th–20th c.	High-mountain district
21	Qarabāgh-e Arq	Afghanistan	Kabul	34.5	69.3	18th–20th c.	Specific village
22	Qarabāgh-e Zar	Afghanistan	Parwan	35.0	69.0	18th–20th c.	bāgh + zār
23	Qarabāghī (Khoja-Umari)	Afghanistan	Ghazni	33.5	68.5	18th–20th c.	Ethnonym derived from the toponym

No.	Toponym	Country	Region	Latitude	Longitude	Chronology	Notes
24	Qarabagh (Qorabag‘ish, Marhamat)	Uzbekistan	Marhamat district, Andijan Region	40.50467	72.38044	Modern	Urban-type settlement; local derivative in -ish
25	Qarabagh (Qorabog‘, Qamashi)	Uzbekistan	Qamashi district, Qashqadaryo Region	38.91161	66.43420	Modern	Village; postal code 180511
26	Qarabagh (Qorabog‘, Muborak)	Uzbekistan	Muborak district, Qashqadaryo Region	39.23685	65.13139	Modern	Hamlet

Source: *Rashīd al-Dīn; Mustawfī 1919; HayTeghBar I, 1986: 521–522; geographical and administrative data of Azerbaijan; Akopyan 2002; Law of the Republic of Dagestan No. 6 (2005); Encyclopaedia Iranica; Dehkhoda; Bosworth 2011; Nahez/Nahid 1338/1959.*

Table 2. Toponyms of the Bāgh-e Siyāh Type

No.	Toponym	Country	Region	Latitude	Longitude	Meaning	Notes
1	Bāgh-e Siyāh (Fārs)	Iran	Fars	29.5	52.9	‘dark, dense garden’	Original model; viticultural region
2	Bāgh-e Siyāh (Ābāde)	Iran	Fars	31.1	52.5	‘dark, dense garden’	Adjacent oikonym
3	Bāgh-e Siyāh (Tākestān)	Iran	Qazvin	36.0	49.7	‘dark, dense garden’	Near former Siyāden
4	Bāgh-e Siyāh (Kermān)	Iran	Kerman	30.3	57.1	‘dark, dense garden’	Viticultural region
5	Bāgh-e Ahmad Siyāh	Iran	Isfahan	32.7	51.7	‘Ahmad’s dark garden’	One of the čahār bāgh
6	Siyāden → Tākestān	Iran	Qazvin	36.0	49.7	‘black berry’ → ‘vineyard’	Replaced in 1938
7	Jar-e Siyāh Bāgh	Afghanistan	Daykundi	33.7	66.3	‘ravine of the dark garden’	Hydronym

Source: *Dehkhoda; Fārs-nāma-ye Nāṣeri; Farhang-e joġrāfiyā-ye Īrān; Mafrukhi; Nahid 1338/1959; GeoNames.*

Table 3. Toponyms of the Qarabay / Карабай Type

No.	Toponym	Country	Region	Latitude	Longitude	Meaning	Notes
1	Qarabay / Qoraboy	Uzbekistan	Bostanlyk District	41.46	69.61	‘dark wealth’	qara + bay model
2	Карабай (Toktogul)	Kyrgyzstan	Toktogul District	41.5	73.0	‘dark wealth’	Pasture
3	Карабай (Ayagoz)	Kazakhstan	Ayagoz District	48.0	80.0	‘dark wealth’	qara + bay model
4	Карабай (Aksu)	Kazakhstan	Aksu District	52.0	76.0	‘dark wealth’	qara + bay model
5	Карабай (Bokeyorda)	Kazakhstan	Bokeyorda District	50.0	51.0	‘dark wealth’	qara + bay model
6	Кара-Бак	Kyrgyzstan	Batken District	40.0	70.5	‘dark garden’ (bak < bāgh)	Turkic adaptation of bāgh
7	Бай Кара-Бак	Kyrgyzstan	Batken District	40.0	70.6	‘rich dark garden’	Three-component model
8	Баянаул	Kazakhstan	Pavlodar Region	51.0	75.0	‘abundant settlement’	Reflex of baga-

Source: *Administrative data of Uzbekistan (2017), the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Kazakhstan; Tamga.kg.*

Table 4. Toponyms of the Hazār-bāgh Type

No.	Toponym	Country	Region	Latitude	Longitude	Meaning	Notes
1	Hazār-bāgh (Isfahan)	Iran	Isfahan	32.7	51.7	‘a thousand gardens’	Safavid period
2	Hazār-bāgh (Takhar)	Afghanistan	Takhar	36.7	69.5	‘a thousand gardens’	Village
3	Hazaribagh	India	Jharkhand	24.0	85.4	‘a thousand gardens’	Eastern frontier

Source: *Encyclopaedia Iranica; Nahid 1338/1959; Census of India 2011.*

Table 5. Other Toponyms with the Formant bāgh / bog

No.	Toponym	Country	Region	Latitude	Longitude	Meaning	Notes
1	Baghkʿ	Armenia	Siwnik	39.5	46.5	‘gardens’ (Arm. -kʿ)	7th century
2	Aygestan	Azerbaijan	Askeran District	39.8	46.9	‘place of gardens’ (aygi + -stan)	Armenian garden toponymy
3	Zarbog	Tajikistan	Lakhsh District	39.0	71.0	‘golden garden’	Eastern Iranian area
4	Bogi Bolo	Tajikistan	Ghafurov District	40.2	69.7	‘upper garden’	Eastern Iranian area
5	Bogi Qozi	Tajikistan	Ghafurov District	40.2	69.7	‘judge’s garden’	Eastern Iranian area
6	Боғи Калон	Tajikistan	Istaravshan District	39.9	69.0	‘big garden’	Eastern Iranian area

Source: *Acharyan; Hewsen 1992; Hakobyan, Melik-Bakhshyan and Barseghyan 1986; Lurie 2015.*

Table 6. Toponyms with the Formant qara- + Another Substantive (not bāgh)

No.	Toponym	Country	Region	Latitude	Longitude	Meaning	Notes
1	Karajala	Georgia	Kakheti	41.5	46.0	‘dense floodplain glade’	Large village
2	Karayazi	Georgia	Kvemo Kartli	41.5	45.0	‘vast fertile plain’	Gardabani steppe
3	Qarabulaq (Zemo-)	Georgia	Dmanisi Municipality	41.3	44.1	‘powerful spring’	Upper Karabulak
4	Qarabulaq (Kvemo-)	Georgia	Dmanisi Municipality	41.2	44.0	‘powerful spring’	Lower Karabulak

Source: *Geybullaev 1986.*

Table 7. Chronology of Written Attestations of Qarabagh

No.	Date	Form	Region	Notes
1	11th c.	Qarābāgh	Badghis / Gharčistan	Earliest known written attestation in the present corpus, it predates the recorded Caucasian occurrences of the toponym.
2	1240–1242	Qarabāgh (mint name)	Arrān /Artsakh (Caucasus)	Earliest known Caucasian attestation, preserved in a mint name on coins of the Mongol period.
2a	1339–1359	Qaraāghāch (mint name)	Arrān /Artsakh (Caucasus)	Contemporary parallel mint name associated with the same monetary and geographical context.
3	1284	قَرابَاغ (Qarābāgh)	Arrān /Artsakh (Caucasus)	Rashid ad-Dan records the death of Death of Qonqurtay at Qarabagh, demonstrating that the name was already established in Ilkhanid historical usage.
4	1295	قَرابَاغ اران (Qarabāgh-ī Arrān)	Arrān /Artsakh (Caucasus)	Ghazan Khan was enthroned at Qarabagh; the passage explicitly associates the locality with Arrān.
5	1316–1318	Qarabāgh	Arrān /Artsakh (Caucasus)	Independent attestation in the Georgian chronicle *Kartlis Tskhobreba*, which identifies Qarabagh as a wintering place (kishlaq).
6	1335	Qarabāgh	Arrān /Artsakh (Caucasus)	The death of Abū Saʿīd at Qarabagh confirms its continuing importance as an Ilkhanid winter residence.
7	c. 1340	Qarabāgh of Arran	Arrān /Artsakh (Caucasus)	Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī explicitly places Qarabāgh within Arrān in his Persian geographical work.
8	1401–1402	Qarabāgh-i Arrān	Arrān /Artsakh (Caucasus)	Fasiḥ al-Khwafī records Qarabāgh-ī Arrān in connection with Timur's winter encampment and the restoration of Baylaqān
9	15th c.	Gharabāgh	Arrān /Artsakh (Caucasus)	Armenian historiological attestation connected with Shāhrukh's winter encampment in the region.
10	16th–18th c.	Qarabāgh-Ganja	Arrān /Artsakh (Caucasus)	The name became an official provincial designation in Safavid administrative and documentary usage.

Source: *Bosworth 2011; Akopyan 2015; Rashīd al-Dīn 1946; Kartlis Tskhovreba 1959; Ilkhanid chronicles; Mustawfī 1919; Fasih al-Khavafi 1980; Tovma Mecopetsi 1987; Safavid documents.*

Table 8. Toponyms with the Formant bāgh / bog‘ in Uzbekistan

No.	Toponym	District / Region	Type	Meaning / Structure	Notes
1	Tozabog‘	To‘rtko‘l district, Karakalpakstan	settlement	toza “new, clean” + bog‘ “garden”	—
2	Tazabog‘yap	To‘rtko‘l district, Karakalpakstan	canal / hydronym	Tazabog‘ + yap “irrigation canal”	—
3	Ullubog‘	To‘rtko‘l district, Karakalpakstan	settlement	ullu “great, large” + bog‘ “garden”	—
4	Bog‘ot	Bog‘ot district, Xorazm Region	settlement / district centre	bog‘ “garden”; supplied interpretation: “create a garden”	Etymological interpretation requires separate verification
5	Gulbog‘	Yangiariq district, Xorazm Region	settlement	gul “flower” + bog‘ “garden”	—
6	Yangi Hazorbog‘	Denov district, Surxondaryo Region	settlement	yangi “new” + hazor “thousand” + bog‘	—
7	Yangibog‘	Denov district, Surxondaryo Region	settlement	yangi “new” + bog‘ “garden”	Duplicate occurrence consolidated
8	Hazarbog‘	Denov district, Surxondaryo Region	settlement	hazār “thousand” + bog‘ “garden”	Iranian–Turkic compound
9	Zarabog‘	Sherobod district, Surxondaryo Region	settlement	zar “gold” + bog‘ “garden”	—
10	Navbog‘	Sherobod district, Surxondaryo Region	settlement	nav “new” + bog‘ “garden”	Iranian compound
11	Bog‘i Iram	Sariosiyo district, Surxondaryo Region	settlement	bog‘i “garden of” + Iram	Persian izafet construction
12	Bag‘dod	Bag‘dod district, Fergana Region	settlement / district centre	Bag‘dod / Baghdad	Historical Iranian toponymic model
13	Bog‘ishamol	Bag‘dod district, Fergana Region	settlement	bog‘i “garden of” + shamol “wind”	—
14	Qorabag‘ish	Marhamat district, Andijan Region	urban-type settlement	qora + bag‘ + derivative -ish	Also Karabagish
15	Qorabog‘	Qamashi district, Qashqadaryo Region	village	qora + bog‘	Postal code 180511
16	Qorabog‘	Muborak district, Qashqadaryo Region	hamlet	qora + bog‘	—

Source: *Geographical and administrative data supplied by the author; map and gazetteer data*

Distribution of Qarabagh-Type Toponyms

From Central Asia through Afghanistan and Iran to the Caucasus and Asia Minor

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† Regional location where exact coordinates are unavailable.

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List of Qarabagh-Type Toponyms Represented on the Map

No.	Map Label	Country	Region	Latitude	Longitude	Map Category	Coordinate Status
1	Qarabagh (Artsakh–Arran)	Azerbaijan	Artsakh–Arran	40	47	Caucasus	exact
2	Qarabaghlar (Goychay)	Azerbaijan	Goychay District	40.63294	47.69216	Caucasus	exact
3	Qarabaghlar (Nakhchivan)	Azerbaijan	Nakhchivan	39.21	45.41	Caucasus	regional
4	Qarabaghly (Khachmaz)	Azerbaijan	Khachmaz District	41.48238	48.87246	Caucasus	exact
5	Qarabaghli (Tsitsmatiani)	Georgia	Sagarejo Municipality, Kakheti	41.5	45.5	Caucasus	exact
6	Karabagly (Derbent)	Russia	Tarumovsky District, Dagestan	44.011	46.592	Caucasus	exact
7	Qarabagh (Kars/Ardahan)	Turkey	Eastern Anatolia	41.1	42.7	Turkey	exact
8	Qarabagh (Bitlis)	Turkey	Eastern Anatolia	38.4	42.1	Turkey	exact
9	Qarabagh (Van/Hakkari)	Turkey	Eastern Anatolia	38	44	Turkey	exact
10	Qarabagh (Kagizman)	Turkey	Eastern Anatolia	40.1	43.2	Turkey	exact
11	Qarabagh (Urmiye)	Iran	West Azerbaijan	37.6	45.1	Iran	exact
12	Qarabagh (Takestan)	Iran	Qazvin	36	49.7	Iran	exact
13	Qarabagh (Fars)	Iran	Fars	29.5	52.8	Iran	exact
14	Qarabagh (Kerman)	Iran	Kerman	30.3	57.1	Iran	exact
15	Qarabagh (Salmast)	Iran	West Azerbaijan	38.2	44.77	Iran	regional
16	Qarabagh (Urmiye)	Iran	West Azerbaijan	37.55	45.07	Iran	regional
17	Qarabagh (Ghazni) ★	Afghanistan	Ghazni	33.6	68.4	Afghanistan	exact
18	Qarabagh (Kabul)	Afghanistan	Kabul	34.6	69.2	Afghanistan	exact
19	Qarabagh (Herat)	Afghanistan	Herat	34	62.3	Afghanistan	exact
20	Qarabagh (Ghor)	Afghanistan	Ghor	34	65	Afghanistan	exact
21	Qarabagh (Arq)	Afghanistan	Kabul	34.5	69.3	Afghanistan	exact
22	Qarabagh (Zar)	Afghanistan	Parwan	35	69	Afghanistan	exact
23	Qarabagh (Khoja-Umari)	Afghanistan	Ghazni	33.5	68.5	Afghanistan	exact
24	Qarabagh (Qorabag‘ish, Marhamat)	Uzbekistan	Andijan Region	40.50467	72.38044	Uzbekistan	exact
25	Qarabagh (Qorabog‘, Qamashi)	Uzbekistan	Qashqadaryo Region	38.91161	66.4342	Uzbekistan	exact
26	Qarabagh (Qorabog‘, Muborak)	Uzbekistan	Qashqadaryo Region	39.23685	65.13139	Uzbekistan	exact

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