



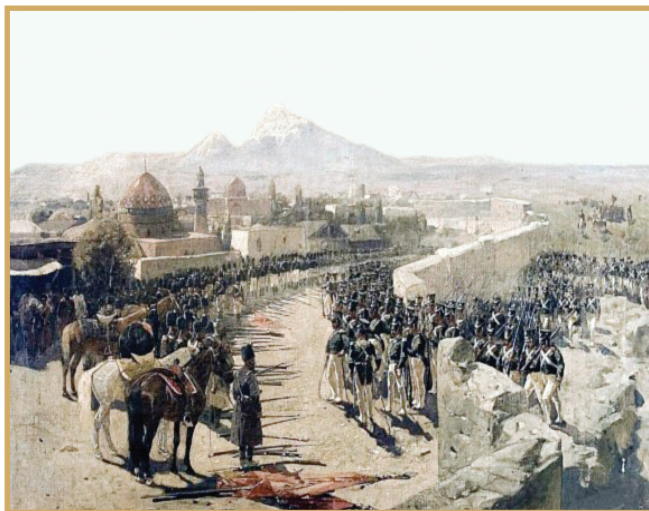
The Council of State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan



Historians of Azerbaijan
Public Union



THE *Iravan* KHANATE



IRAVAN FORTRESS - THE FORTRESS OF HEROISM

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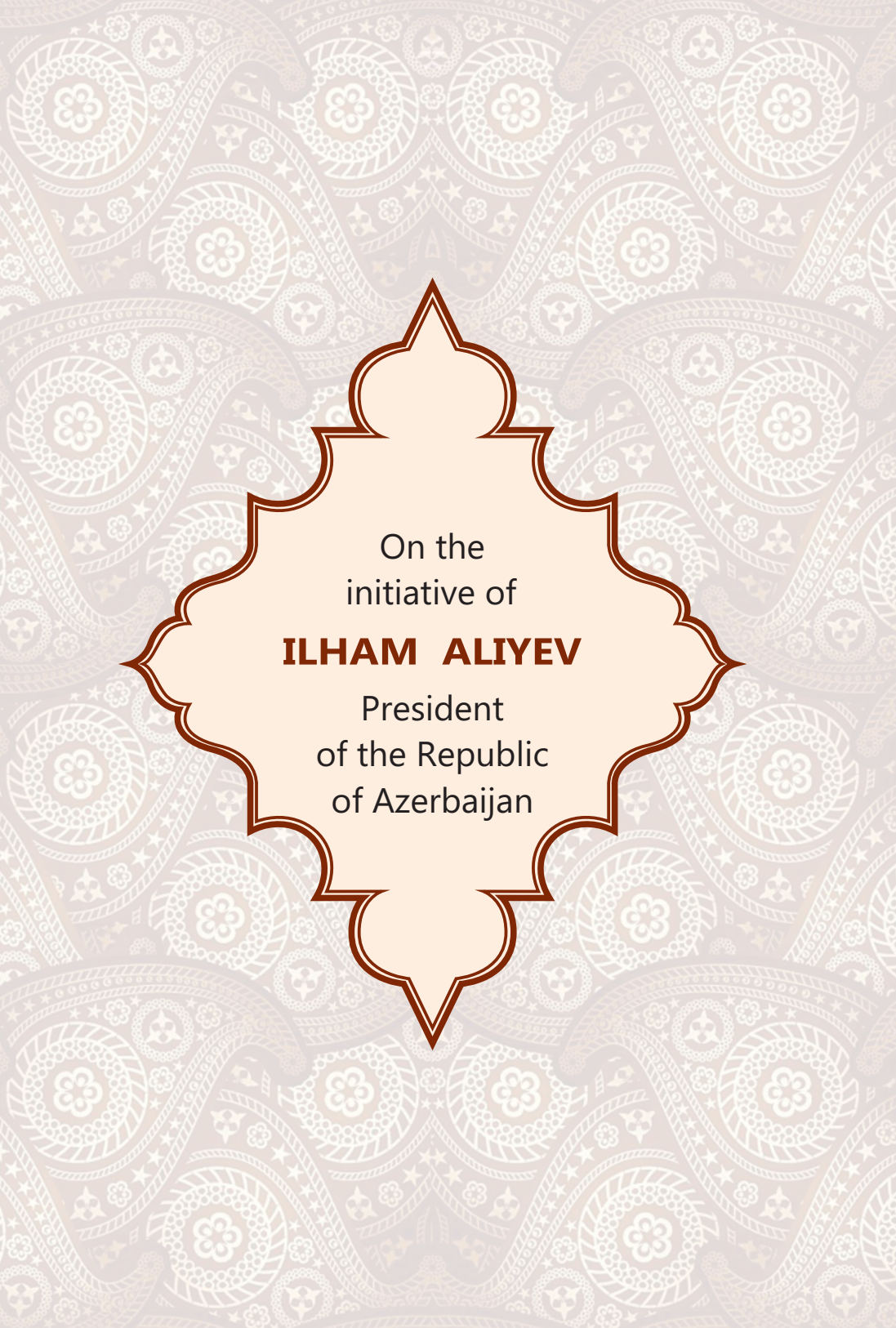
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On the
initiative of
ILHAM ALIYEV
President
of the Republic
of Azerbaijan

As you know,
our scientists have created
a voluminous research work about the khanate
of Iravan on my initiative.
This is of great importance.
But, this work reflects more factual and
scientific issues.
I think that small booklets
shall be issued as well for wider readership.

ILHAM ALIYEV
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

*From the speech at the fifth
conference of the heads of diplomatic
service bodies of Azerbaijan.*

July 7, 2014





To the readers

The territory of modern Armenia is the historical Azerbaijani land. Before the establishment of the Armenian state **on May 29, 1918**, in all historical periods, these lands have always belonged to Azerbaijan. **Hurries, Kimmers, Scythians, Saks, Huns**, numerous **Oghues** and **Qipchaq Turks** who took part in the formation of the Azerbaijani people lived namely in this region, especially in the lands around Lake Goycha * and they have left a rich historical and cultural heritage after them.

Very important historical events and processes described in “Kitabi-Dede Gorgud” - the heroic epos of the Azerbaijani and other Turkic peoples took place in this region of Azerbaijan. Oghouznameh - Abu Bakr Tehrani’s “Kitabi Diyarbekriyye”, written at the request of the great Azerbaijani ruler Uzun Hassan (1468-1478) informs us that Oghouz khagan standing in the root of Oghouz Turks lived, died and was buried just here –in Azerbaijani lands, in the vicinity of **Lake Goycha**. Khan of khans Bayandur khagan and many other Oghouz Turk warlords also lived, died and

* Following the creation of an Armenian state on the former territory of the Iravan khanate which was Azerbaijani land Goycha Lake was renamed by Armenians to “Sevan” in 1930.



were buried in this region, in the homeland of their ancestors.**

Primary sources maintain that since ancient times, with the exception of ruling periods of various hostile empires, the territory of the present Republic of Armenia have always been a part of the Azerbaijani states. At different times the area was part of the Azerbaijani states governed by Azerbaijani dynasties of the **Saji**, **Salari**, **Shaddadi** and **Eldaniz**. These lands ruled in the Middle Ages by the Chukhursad emirs and khans of Iravan was one of the regions most densely populated with the Azerbaijani-Turkic tribes.

One of the historical sites of ancient Iravan city was the famous Iravan fortress. Iravan fortress was built in early sixteenth century (1509-1517) by the Safavi warlord Ravan Qulu Khan on the order of the founder of the Azerbaijan Safavi state Shah Ismail Khatai.

There were a great number of ancient historical monuments and rare architectural complexes in Iravan fortress. *Khan's Palace or the Palace of Sardar* was one of the masterpieces of Azerbaijani architecture.

After the conclusion of Turkmenchay (1828), and Adrianople (1829) peace treaties tsarist Russia relocated Armenians from the Qajar Iran and the Ottoman Empire in

** For extensive information see: Əbubəkr Tehrani. *Kitabi-Diyar-bəkriyyə*. Translation from Persian, author of the foreword and the indexes by Rahila Shukurova. Baku, 1998, p.46-47.



the South Caucasus and began the ethnic cleansing, forced deportations and genocide against the Azerbaijani people. And on May 29, 1918 in Northern Azerbaijan - on the territory of the former Iravan khanate was established an Armenian state.

Over the 180-200 years past, Armenian vandals having carried out ethnic cleansing on the historical Azerbaijani lands - the territory of Iravan khanate and Zangazur created a mono-ethnic state with exclusively Armenian population. However, Armenians supported by Tsarist Russia and the Soviet-Bolshevik regime not satisfied with this, changed names of all the historical monuments. Hundreds of settlements, historical monuments, including castles, architectural complexes, mosques, minarets and cemeteries were destroyed.

Armenian vandals, pursuing a policy of changing the historic view of Iravan, transforming it into “an Armenian city” destroyed all the historical monuments in this ancient Azerbaijani city.

One of the monuments subjected to genocide of Armenian vandalism was the brightest, most glorious symbol in the history of heroic struggle of Azerbaijani people - the Iravan fortress.

This booklet, presented to readers, is about the heroic defense of Iravan fortress, which had over four hundred years of history, which had repeatedly resisted foreign campaigns and which is one of the centers of the glorious struggle of Azerbaijani people against the invaders of tsarist Russia in the first half of the nineteenth century.



During the wars (1804-1813; 1826-1828) waged for Azerbaijani lands between Russia and the Qajar Iran, the seizure of the Iravan Khanate locating on the border with the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Iran was an important part of invasive plans of the Russian Empire. The capture of the Iravan fortress was very necessary for the Russian Empire to keep the peace in Georgia, and mainly to mitigate the influence of the Ottoman Empire and Iran in the South Caucasus. For this reason, Iravan fortress was attacked repeatedly by the Russian invaders and bravely fought against them.

The heroic fight of Iravan fortress against invaders (for four times –July 2- September 3, 1804; October 3- November 30, 1808; April 27- June 23, 1827 and September 24-October 1, 1827), noteworthy feat and resistance to the invaders demonstrated by the brave sons of Azerbaijan for the sake of freedom of their native land are the most brilliant pages of glorious history of the Azerbaijani people.

This booklet called *“Iravan Fortress—the Fortress of heroism”* is dedicated to dear memory of the defenders of Iravan fortress who had fought for life and death against the invaders of tsarist Russia.

Yagub Mahmudov

Honored man of science,

Corresponding member of ANAS

State Prize-winner



IRAVAN FORTRESS – THE FORTRESS OF HEROISM

HEROIC DEFENSE OF THE IRAVAN FORTRESS

Being destroyed by the Armenian vandals, Iravan fortress was the most glorious and vivid symbol of the history of the heroic struggle of Azerbaijani people. **Iravan fortress** erected in 1509, by order of the great Azerbaijani ruler Shah Ismail, heroically resisted the foreign invaders more than once.

The fight of Iravan fortress against the invaders of tsarist Russia during the Russian-Persian war in the first



View of the Iravan Fortress from the bank of Zangi River. Aghri Dagh is seen in the distance. Painted by Dubois de Montpereux XIX (century)



quarter of the nineteenth century is one of the glorious pages in the history of Azerbaijan.

According to primary sources, the fortress was square-shaped (790 x 850 m), and covered an area of 7 hectares. The length of the double fortress walls was 4.5 km. The area was enclosed in the north-east, south-east and south-west by 10.5-12m high outer walls of the fortress. The other side of the area rested on the precipitous Zangi River. Double walls of the fortress were built at a 36-42m distance from each other. On the fortress walls, the outer and internal protective walls of which were thick enough, there were semi-circular towers. There were approximately 2450 gun slots on the towers. It could be placed 53 guns along the protective walls.¹

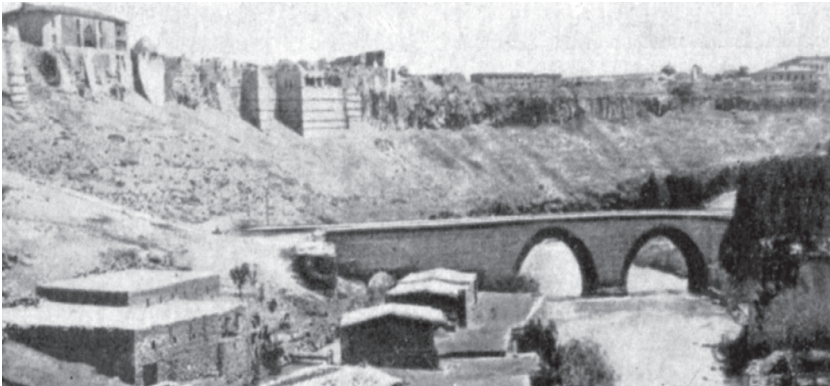


View of the city of Iravan according to French traveler Sharden. The year 1672. Arutönən V., Asratən M., Melikən A. Erevan. M., 1968, s.62.

¹See: İrəvan xanlığı. Rusiya işğalı və ermənilərin Şimali Azərbaycan torpaqlarına köçürülməsi. Bakı, 2009, s.191.



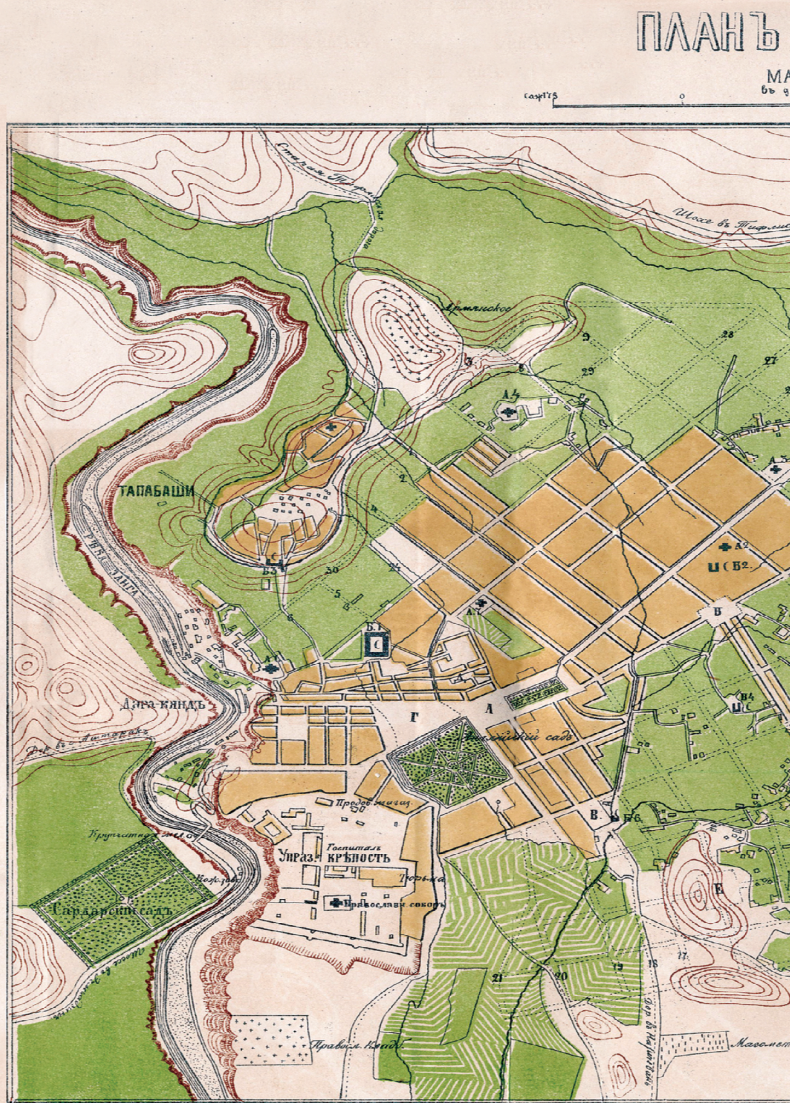
Iravan fortress located on the left bank of the Zangi River was further fortified at the end of the eighteenth century. The fortress was surrounded by deep ditches from the three sides, and by two high walls built on the steep left bank of Zangi River. There were two gates of the fortress: the **Shirvan gate** on the north and the **Tabriz gate** on the south. There was also an outlet to the Zangi River to use its water during the siege.²



View of the Iravan Fortress from the Zangi River.

Arutönən V., Asratən M., Melikən A. Erevan. M., 1968, s.66.

² Обзорение российских владений за Кавказом в статистическом, этнографическом, топографическом и финансовом отношениях (ОРВЗК) (Составил Лекгобытов). ч. IV. СПб., 1836, с.290; Bournoutian G.A. The khanate of Erevan under Qajar rule 1795-1828, Mazda Publishers in association with Bibliotheca Persica, Costa Mesa, California and New York, 1992, p.41.

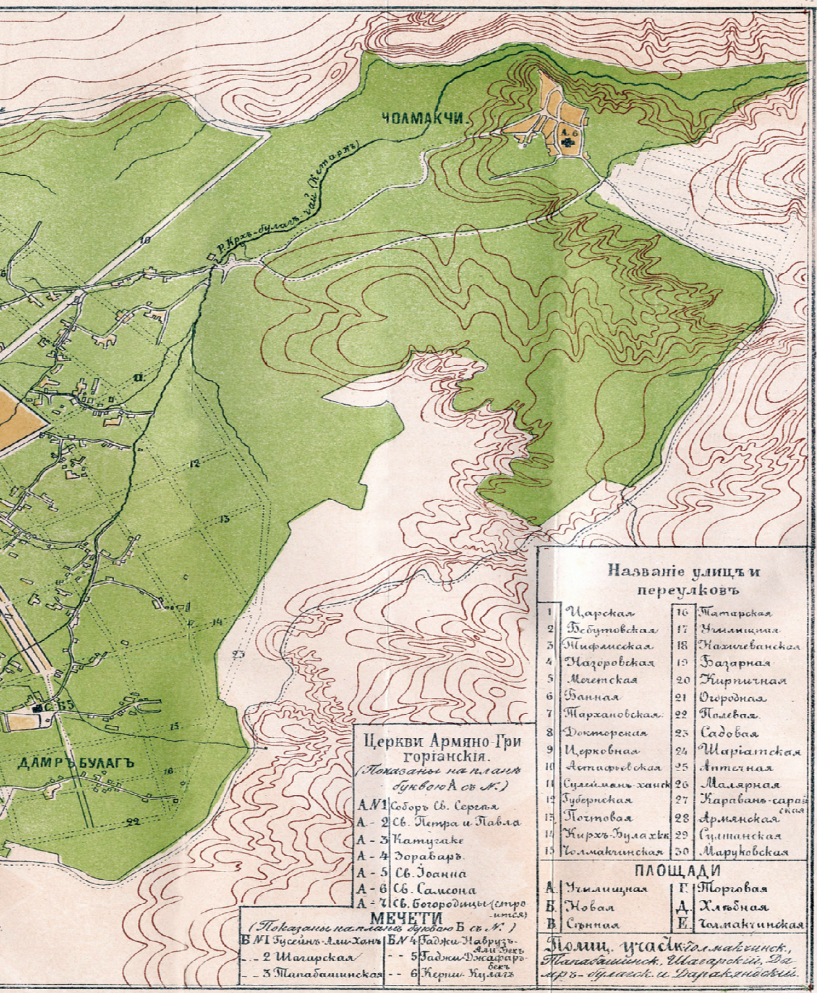


Plan of the city of Iravan.

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INSTITUTE OF HISTORY

ЭРИВАНИ

ШТАБЪ
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Церкви Армяно Григорянския.
(Показаны на плане буквами от А до И.)
 А - I Соборъ Св. Серафим
 А - 2 Св. Петра и Павла
 А - 3 Католик
 А - 4 Зорабаръ
 А - 5 Св. Занна
 А - 6 Св. Самсона
 А - 7 Св. Бессородимы (центр)

МЕЧЕТИ
(Показаны на плане буквами Б до Ж.)
 В - I Бисийно-Алиханъ
 - 2 Шаирская
 - 3 Шапаваинская
 Б - 4 Баджи-Набрузъ
 - 5 Баджи-Джафаровъ
 - 6 Керимъ-Курали

Название улиц и переулковъ

1 Царская	16 Татарская
2 Вебутаевская	17 Чилимци
3 Мирнская	18 Намиванская
4 Назаровская	19 Базарная
5 Мелетская	20 Зиринная
6 Банная	21 Овердина
7 Мархановская	22 Пяевая
8 Дюкаторенка	23 Садовая
9 Церковная	24 Шариятская
10 Астаповичская	25 Английская
11 Сулейманъ ханъ	26 Маларская
12 Зубернская	27 Караважно-сарай
13 Потривала	28 Армянская
14 Киркоз-Булакъ	29 Грузинская
15 Толмакинская	30 Маруковская

ПЛОЩАДИ

А Чилимциная	Г Пирюваная
В Новая	Д Хлебная
В Сирная	Е Толмакинская

Доли, улицы и переулки.
(Показаны на плане буквами А до В.)
 А - Дамр-Буаагъ
 Б - Арцах-Сулакъ
 В - Дамр-Буаагъ

СМОМПК, вып. I, Тифлис, 1881

AZERBAIJAN NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
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IRAVAN FORTRESS—THE FORTRESS OF HEROISM

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, there was **the Khan's Palace (*Sardar Palace*)**, military barracks, shops and two mosques inside the Iravan fortress. Water into the fortress was drawn from two sides – underground water supply from the Zangi River and the Girkhbulag River on the south-east. Until the Russian invasion there were 800 houses in Iravan fortress. There were **1736** houses, **5** squares, **8** mosques, **6** caravansaries, **1670** shops, **9** public bath-houses, **1470** vineyards and orchards, 40 mills and 6 hulling mills around the Iravan fortress - in the outside city.³



The layout of the Iravan Fortress. Iravan History Museum. Iravan

³ OPB3K, ч.IV., с.290-291.



In the early nineteenth century the period of bloody tragedies began in the history of the South Caucasus. Trying to seize the region, Russian Empire began to wage wars against the Azerbaijani khanates. Soon the South Caucasus became an area of bloody wars of the Russian Empire against the Qajar Iran and the Ottoman Empire.

The seizure of the Iravan fortress located on the border with the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Iran was an important part of the invasive plans of Russian Empire. The Russia's foreign policy offices paid particular importance to the occupation of the Iravan khanate which was contiguous with Iran, Turkey and Georgia, and "especially the



*View of the Sardar Palace located inside the Iravan
Fortress from Zangi River*



importance of the occupation of the Iravan fortress located on the Tbilisi-Tabriz transit route” was hotly debated. Along with approaching to the Iravan khanate as strategically important area, the Russian Empire also considered this region of Azerbaijan as a strategic foothold in order to reduce the political influence of Iran and Turkey in the South Caucasus and to restore the peace in the territory of Georgia. So, in the decree of the Tsar Alexander First the Iravan khanate was in the first place among the territories that would be dependent on Russia.⁴

First siege of the Iravan Fortress by invaders of Tsarist Russia and its heroic defense (July 2- September 3, 1804)

The Iravan fortress underwent the heavy attack of the Russian troops twice during the first Russian-Iranian war waged for the invasion of Azerbaijani lands in 1804 - 1813 years. The population of the Khanate led by brave statesman **Mahammad Hussein Khan Qajar** rose to defend their native land (1784-1805).

Having seized Gumru and Uchkilsa, Russian troops led by the Georgian-born tsarist general Pavel Tsitsianov, who despised Azerbaijanis, on July 2, 1804 besieged the Iravan fortress.⁵

⁴ Потто В.А. Утверждение русского владычества на Кавказе. т. I, Тифлис, 1901, с.38.

⁵ Акты, собранные Кавказской Археографической Комиссией (АКАК), т.II. док.1668, с. 810.



**Mahammad Hussein
Khan Qajar (1784-1805)**
*G. Alishan. Ayrarat (in
Armenian). Venice,
1890, p.308.*

Troops of the khan of Iravan were well armed and the defense of the fortress was organized properly. Even Armenian authors could not hide this and also wrote about the strong resistance of the Iravan khan: “All-round attack of the Russian troops began on July 24, 1804. The fortress garrison with 60 cannons and 7,000 soldiers started persistent defense against the Russians.”⁶

Authors, based on archive documents, give very interesting information about the Iravan fortress and its defense garrison. The data reveals that, **“the Iravan fortress was built on the highest eminence near the Zangi River. The fortress wall from the river-side was relatively weaker compared to the others. Unlike this, other sides of the fortress had double walls. Being built of bricks and stones, the fortress walls were high and thick. The distance between the first and second walls of the fortress was 15 or 20 sazhen (1 sazhen is 2,134 m – ed-**

⁶ Парсмян В.А. История армянского народа 1801-1900. Ереван, 1972, с. 21.



itor). The ditch between the walls was filled with water. The fortress had 17 towers. Only 20 out of 60 cannons installed on the walls of Iravan fortress were in good order. There were also placed three artillery mortars (a short-muzzled cannons –ed.) on the Iravan fortress. The garrison defending the fortress consisted of 7,000 men”.⁷

Not only the heroic defense of the Iravan fortress against the Russian invaders, but also the sudden attacks of the fortress defenders on the Russian troops from several directions by leaving the fortress as they got chance, is confirmed by the sources of the period.⁸ As a result of such at-

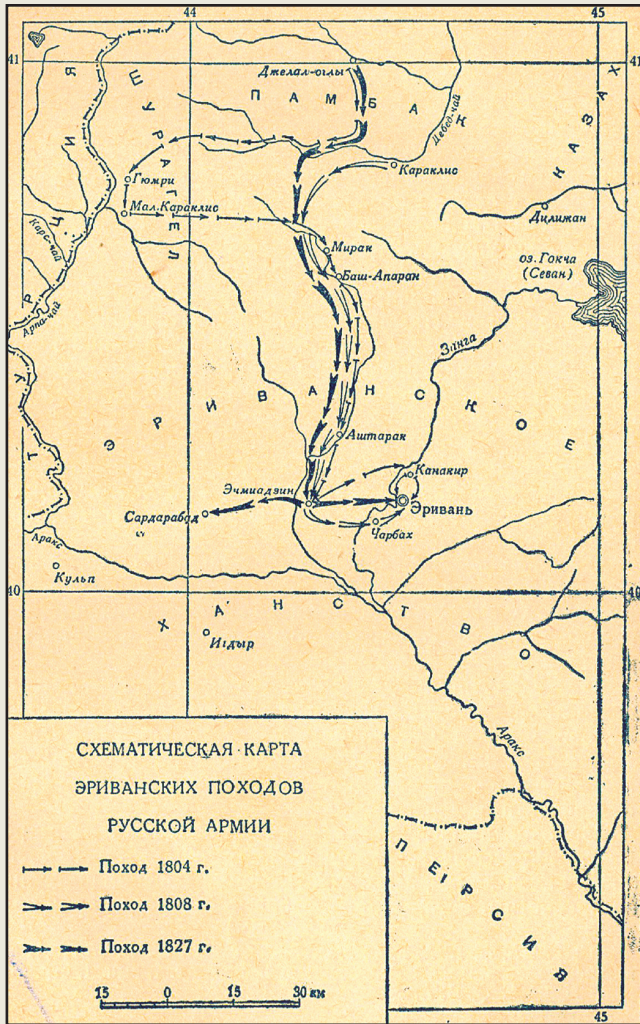


View of the Iravan Fortress.

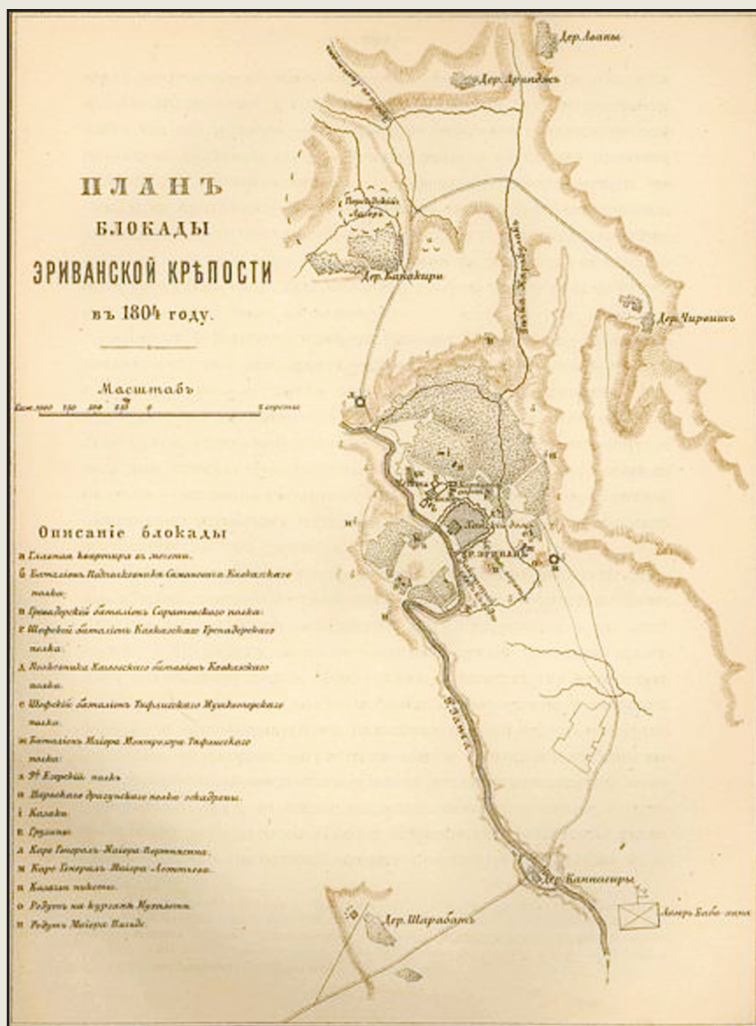
G.Alishan. Ayrarat (in Armenian). Venice, 1890, p.455.

⁷ See: İrəvan xanlığı. Rusiya işğalı., s.299.

⁸ АКАК, т. II, док.1672, с. 811; , док.1673, с. 812; Дубровин Н.Ф. За-кавказье от 1803 до 1806 г. СПб., 1866, с.325.



Invasive marches of Russian troops on the Iravan khanate.
 Григорян З.Т. Присоединение Восточной Армении
 к России в начале XIX в. Москва, 1959, с.83



*The siege plan of the Erivan Fortress.
The year 1804.*



tacks by the Iravan population who were besieged, an officer and 173 soldiers of the invaders were killed.⁹ Archival documents inform us that 3 officers and 120 soldiers of the Russian troop were killed, and 6 officers and 200 soldiers were wounded during the battle between the Russian troops and the defenders of the Iravan fortress which lasted for 8 hours.¹⁰

Being in desperate situation P. Tsitsianov wrote letters to the Iravan khan trying to solve the problem without loss. However, nothing has resulted from his 6-month-long correspondence with the Iravan khan. Major Montrezor being besieged at Qarakilsa was almost destroyed with his troop.¹¹

The council of war which was called at the end of August, 1804 decided to lift the blockade and to withdraw the troops. On September 1 of the same year, P. Tsitsianov demanded Mahammad khan Qajar for the last time to yield up the Iravan fortress. Rejected again by Mahammad khan Qajar, on September 3, P. Tsitsianov ordered the Russian troops to retreat.¹²

⁹Потто В.А. Утверждение русского.., с.147; Ковалевский П.И. Завоевание Кавказа Россией. (Исторический очерк), СПб., (без выходящих данных), с.100.

¹⁰Присоединение Восточной Армении к России. т.І. (1801-1813). (сб.док. под ред. Ц.П.Агаян), Ереван, 1972, s.269-270.

¹¹ Записки Сергея Алексеевича Тучкова (1766-1808). СПб, 1908, с.241.

¹²See: İrəvan xanlığı. Rusiya işğalı.., s.302-303.



Though Russian troops gave up the siege of Iravan fortress, the occupation of the Iravan khanate's territory of strategic significance had remained as the main goal of the Russian military circles.

According to the agreement signed between France and Iran in 1807, a group of engineers led by General Garda came to Iran from France. Taking into account the strategic importance of Iravan, the shah of Iran was rendering military aid to the Iravan khanate. Therefore, a group of the engineers came to Iravan by the order of the Shah and began to strengthen the defense of the fortress. General Gudovich writes about a considerable fortification of the Iravan fortress by French military engineers: **“The Iravan fortress has double walls strengthened after the fashion of the Eu-**



*Views of the Iravan Fortress, Greater and Lesser Aghri Dagh.
Painted by Dubois de Montpereux (XIX century).*



ropean military rules, a ditch and a soil barrier. On the top of the eminence, cannons working with grapeshot not used previously by the local militaries were placed. The population of Iravan uses fougasse which is the result of the French engineers's work."¹³

Not wanting to cede the South Caucasus, the Qajar Iran did not accept Russia's peace proposal. Using this as an excuse, in the spring of 1808 Russian troops led by General Gudovich, commander of Russian military forces attacked Iravan again. Gudovich who for long time had prepared to seize Iravan, at the beginning of September 1808 moved with 6 thousand troops and 12 cannons from Pambak towards Iravan. There were more than **500 Armenian horsemen** in the Russian troops.¹⁴

Second siege of the Iravan fortress and the shameful defeat of the Tsarist Russian troops (October 3 - November 30, 1808)

On the eve of the attacks of the Russian troops to Iravan, Hussein Qulu khan Qajar (1806-1827) took prompt actions. Trenches were dug outside the thick fortress walls and cannons were placed inside these trenches. **Hussein Qulu khan Qajar** left his younger brother Hassan khan Qajar in the

¹³ АКАК, т. III. Тифлис, 1869, док. 467, с.254.

¹⁴ See: İrəvan xanlığı. Rusiya işğalı., s.306.



*Hussein Qulu khan Qajar
(1806-1827)*

fortress together with 2 thousand soldiers, and went to fight with Russian troops with 4 thousand infantries to defend the Fortress.

However, being defeated at Ashtarak, the Iravan khan was forced to retreat. On September 30, 1808, Russian troops that occupied Uchkilsa were welcomed here with great joy by Armenians.¹⁵

The troop led by Gudovich took position at Garabagh village near Iravan after Uchkilsa. Though Hussein Qulu khan Qajar camped on the banks of Garnichay against the enemy, he was defeated in the first battle. By order of General Gudovich, Gen-

¹⁵ AKAK, T. III, ДОК.453, с.243.



eral-Major Portnyagin followed the Iravan khan and thus diverted his attention away, while he encircled the Iravan fortress with his corps by crossing the Zangi River on October 3. Hussein Qulu khan tried to enter the fortress by attacking on direction to Iravan. However, Gudovich frustrated his plans.¹⁶ So, Hussein Qulu khan's brother **Hassan khan** Qajar headed the defense of the Iravan fortress.

Giving serious losses, ruling circles of the Russian empire made a seducing offer to seize the Iravan fortress. General Gudovich promised Hassan khan Qajar on behalf of the Russian Emperor that if he surrenders the fortress voluntarily, they will leave him free and appoint him as *the ruler of the entire khanate, except the Iravan fortress and the town.*¹⁷

Hassan khan Qajar rejected the offer given by the Russian Emperor decisively. Being able to isolate the Iravan fortress from the outside world, Gudovich again demanded the commandant of the town Hassan khan Qajar to surrender the fortress.

At this time, Hussein Qulu khan was trying to enter the town by breaking the siege of the fortress and from time to time delivered blow on the enemy. In this case, Gudovich temporarily stopped the attack on the fortress and sent a big military detachment to fight with Hussein Qulu khan.¹⁸

¹⁶ See: AKAK, T. III, док. 450, c.244; İrəvan xanlığı. Rusiya işğalı.., s.308.

¹⁷ AKAK, T. III, док. 447, c.239-240.

¹⁸ AKAK, T. III, док. 458, c.459; İrəvan xanlığı. Rusiya işğalı.., s.309.



The population of Iravan was defeated in the battle with this military troop headed by Lieutenant-Colonel Podlustsky. Khan was forced to withdraw his troop to the other side of Araz River in order to protect the rest of the forces. After this victory, Gudovich demanded Hassan khan, brother of the Iravan khan, who headed the defense of the Iravan fortress for several times to surrender the fortress to the Russian troops. However, his demands were rejected every time. In response to the demands of Gudovich to surrender, Hassan khan Qajar wrote to the tsarist officer: *“No matter what, we are ready to fight not only inside the fortress (this is not so difficult!), but in the open field as well. That’s for sure, the garrison of the fortress has already made its decision”*.¹⁹

Additionally, the messenger who was sent from the Iravan fortress to deliver the letter to Gudovich decisively stated that *“the fortress garrison will fight to the last drop of blood”*.²⁰

Despite the occupation of Nakhchivan by Russian troops, Gudovich did not dare to attack the Iravan fortress, still kept on corresponding with Hassan khan demanded him to yield the fortress. Taking opportunity from corresponding with Russian troops, Hassan khan Qajar gained time and strengthened the defense of the fortress.²¹

¹⁹АКАК, т. III, док. 460, с.249-250; Потто В.А. Утверждение русского.., с.301.

²⁰Дубровин Н.Ф. История войны и владычества русских на Кавказе. т. V, СПб., 1887, с.222;Потто В.А. Утверждение русского.., с.301.

²¹РГВИА, ф. ВУА док. 4266, л. 1-2;Потто В.А. Утверждение русского.., с.301.



Further prolongation of the siege, the cold and lack of food gradually aggravated the condition of the Russian forces. Finally, Gudovich decided to seize the fortress by an attack. The attack on the Iravan fortress was planned at five o'clock in the morning on November 17, 1808.²²

The Russian troops were divided into five columns. Four columns should attack the fortress from various directions, while the fifth should be waiting in the reserve. The number of troops attacking the Iravan fortress was about 3 thousand men. As soon as the attack started, the dwellers of Iravan began firing from the cannons and forced the Russian soldiers to retreat. Ladders made by the Russian forces were not enough to access the fortress. In the end, having lost about 1000 soldiers the Russian forces had to stop the attack. Assured that he would not be able to enter the city, General Gudovich gave up the siege of Iravan early in the morning on November 30, and ordered to retreat towards Tiflis.²³

Defeated Russian troops suffered heavy losses during the attack on Iravan fortress. In his report to the tsar, Gudovich had reduced the number of losses and had stated as if in total 17 officers, 269 soldiers were killed, 64 officers and 829 soldiers were wounded.²⁴ N.Dubrovin's report also confirms the great victory of the Iravan dwellers over the Russian troops in this battle. He writes, "the regiments (regiments

²²AKAK, т. III, док. 895, с.509.

²³Ibid, p.509-510.

²⁴AKAK, т. III, док. 467.



of the Russian army – *ed.*) were in such a condition that it was pointless to think about another attack.” As a result of attacks by **Azerbaijani patriots** and a heavy snowfall, Russian troops having lost about 1000 people retreated.²⁵

Despite of the bloody invasive marches and help of the Armenians to the invaders Russian Empire was not able to bring the Iravan khanate into subjection.

Third siege of the Iravan fortress and unyielding stand of the fortress’ heroes against the invaders (27 April-23 June 1827)

Focusing on the occupation of the Iravan khanate during the second Russian - Iranian war (1826-1828), Tsar Nicholai I (1825-1855) considered the military-strategic importance of the Iravan and Sardarabad fortresses and reminded about this to General Yermolov very often. In his letter to Yermolov dated on October 21, 1826, the Russian emperor writes: *“If it is possible to occupy Iravan either by force of arms or by bribing the Iravan Sardar (viceroy), or by establishing a secret relationship with him, then do not miss this opportunity.”*²⁶

In his order to Yermolov from August 1, 1826, Nicholai I charged him: Urgently, march on Iravan Sardar. I am loo-

²⁵АКАК, т. III, док.467, с.256; İrəvan xanlığı. Rusiya işğalı., s.311.

²⁶Шербатов М. Генерал-фельдмаршал князь Паскевич. Его жизнь и деятельность, т.II, СПб., 1890, с.122.



king forward to hear such an answer from you as soon as possible: *“We have defeated the Sardar with help of God and Iravan province has been occupied completely.” You and the Russian troop of 15 thousand people is enough to win.*²⁷

Nicholai I suspected Yermolov in relation with the Decembrists, so soon dismissed him from the position of the Commander in Chief of the Russian troops in the Caucasus. At the end of March 1827, General I.F.Paskevich who was loyal to the tsar was appointed as the Commander in Chief of the Russian troops in the Caucasus. The new commander under-



Road leading to the Iravan Fortress through the Red Bridge over the Zangi River.

²⁷ Записки Алексея Петровича Ермолова (1816-1827), ч.II, Москва, 1868, с.214.



standing strategic importance of Iravan khanate, decided to deliver the first blow on this khanate.²⁸

On 26 March 1827, Baron Dibich announced about the launch of military operations against the Iravan khanate. Russian troops moved on Iravan khanate. In early April, troops of Benkendorf started to move from Borchali with the accompaniment of Archbishop Nerses Ashtarakli who had authority among the Iranian Armenians.²⁹ On 11 April, Benkendorf approached Sudakand which was located at 40 versts distance from Uchkilsa.

Realizing the intension of the Russian troops, the Iravan khan Hussein Qulu khan Qajar had been prepared well for the defense of the Iravan fortress. Khan laid in a supply of grain from the surrounding villages in the fortress, and further strengthened the fortress garrison. Only in Iravan fortress the number of the garrison soldiers was 5 thousand and there were 26 cannons on the fortress walls.³⁰ Hussein Qulu khan commissioned his brother Hassan khan with the defense of the Sardarabad and Iravan fortresses, and he was protecting the surrounding areas with his troop.

Occupying the Uchkilsa Monastery on April 13, Benkendorf left there 2 detachments led by lieutenant colonel Voldzenski, and by passing the Zangi pass on 24 April captured elevations in the southeast of Iravan. From

²⁸ See: İrəvan xanlığı. Rusiya işğalı., s.332.

²⁹ Шербатов М. Генерал-фельдмаршал., с.222-223, 229-230, 233; İrəvan xanlığı. Rusiya işğalı., s.332.

³⁰ Кавказский сборник (КС), т. XXII. Тифлис, 1901, с.28.



24 to 27 April, several bloody battles took place between the defenders of Iravan for-tress and the occupation Russian army and Armenians who betrayed the Iravan khan. After a fierce battle, on 27 April, troops led by Major Voldzenski seized the place called *Shaharatrafi* (the outskirts of the town) on the east side of the Iravan fortress. Thus the siege of the fortress ended.³¹



*Khan of Iravan
Hussein Qulu khan Qajar*

Although being besieged from all sides, the defenders of the Iravan fortress fought bravely. Therefore, the General Benkendorf was obliged to negotiate with Hussein Qulu khan Qajar through the Fortress Commandant - his nephew and son-in-law Subhangulu khan. At first the general tried to entice the khan with bribe, having failed in this he promised the khan that, if he voluntarily surrendered the fortress the Russ-

³¹ Шербатов М. Генерал-фельдмаршал., с.256-258;Потто В.А. Кавказская война в отдельных очерках, эпизодах, легендах и биографиях, т.III, вып.1-4, СПб., 1886, с.308-310.



ian government would keep him in power and return his previous incomes. However, Hussein Qulu khan Qajar did not accept the general's proposal; on the contrary, he preferred to continue the fight again. On the night from April 29 to 30, the Iravan cavalry breaking encirclement of the fortress, attempted to enter the Iravan fortress. Suddenly by attacking the enemy's guard divisions that were watching the bridge over the Zangi River, they put them in the lurch.³² On April 30, *Hassan khan Qajar* who was returning from Sardarabad side, tried to enter into contact with the defenders of the fortress, but the Russians did not give him a chance.³³

Heroic defense of the fortress defenders and the prolongation of the siege forced the Commander in Chief I.F.Paskevich to lead a *crusade* over Iravan. Thus, the military units led by General I.F.Paskevich launched an attack on Iravan on 12 May, accompanied by the Armenian and Georgian forces. On 17 May, the first Armenian cavalry regiment formed with the consent of Emperor Nicholai I followed I.F.Paskevich into the territories of the Iravan khanate. Their number on the borders of Iravan had reached a certain thousand men.³⁴

Moving from Uchkilsa towards the Iravan fortress on June 8, I.F.Paskevich began collecting intelligence data about the Iravan fortress. He wrote in his diary of military

³² Потто В.А. Утверждение русского., с.309-312.

³³ Шербатов М. Генерал-фельдмаршал., с.256-258.

³⁴ Потто В.А. Кавказская война в., с.323-324.



operations: **“The Iravan fortress has tall double walls with towers surrounded by a deep ditch. A narrow strip between the walls serves as a barrier like the ditch. Cannons are placed in the closed towers of the internal walls, while the outer wall is protected by the fires of falconets (small-caliber cannons - *ed.*) and rifles on the gun-ports and towers. The fortress garrison consisted of 2 thousand sarbazes and irregular riflemen approximately of the same number.”**³⁵

Having arrived at the vicinity of Iravan fortress, Paskevich sent a message to the Fortress Commandant Subhangulu khan about his arrival and noted that he would like to meet him, but the respond came not from the Fortress Commandant, but from *Hussein Qulu khan Qajar*. In his response the khan stated unequivocally: **“If the matter is not the surrender of the fortress, I will allow the Fortress Commandant to meet with Paskevich. Otherwise, it is pointless, as I will never surrender the fortress to you”**.³⁶

After this, Paskevich stopped all negotiations with the khan of Iravan. General Krasovski with his 20th infantry division and two Cossack regiments came to the vicinity of Iravan. Here he was supposed to replace the siege troop of Bekendorf who should start attack with Paskevich.³⁷

Realizing the impossibility of occupying the Iravan fortress, General Paskevich decided to attack Nakhchivan,

³⁵ Шербатов М. Генерал-фельдмаршал., с.262-263.

³⁶ Ibid, с.256-258.

³⁷ Потто В.А. Утверждение русского., с.309-312.



and assembled his troops in the camp near Garnichay located at 25 versts distance from Iravan. However, he did not forget to strengthen the siege of the fortress before attacking Nakhchivan. Lieutenant-general Krasovski was appointed as the Chief of the Siege Detachment of Iravan to replace Bekendorf. There were approximately **3200** infantries, **1200** cavalries, **16** cannons in the Siege Detachment of Iravan, and **4800** infantries, **800** regular and **3000** irregular cavalries in the composition of the main forces.³⁸

Russian troops set off on June 19, entered to Davali village on June 21. Strong resistance by the Iravan population, heat of the weather and diseases spread among the soldiers were aggravating the condition of the Russian troops who surrounded the Iravan fortress. Finally, Krasovsky saying to General Paskevich that the siege of the Iravan Fortress was senseless requested him to raise the siege.³⁹

Krasovski wrote in his diary that this plan was carried out in secret and the joined forces besieging the fortress were withdrawn towards Uchkilsa at midnight on June 23.⁴⁰ The next day the fortress residents heard of the Russian troops' retreat and breathed freely again after 2 months siege. They were overjoyed. Following the Russian troops' retreat, Hassan Khan Qajar was concerned about the strengthening of the fortress and did his best to this end. There were some ru-

³⁸Шербатов М. Генерал-фельдмаршал., с.267-273; Вах: İrəvan xanlığı. Rusiya işğalı., s.339.

³⁹Потто В.А. Кавказская война в., с.449-451.

⁴⁰Кавказский сборник, т. XXII, Тифлис, 1901, с. 6.



mors saying that khan had attempted on creating a cannon that would destroy more than half of the Russian corps with one shot, but there had not been enough melted metal.⁴¹

Fourth siege, Armenian betrayal and the fall of the Iravan fortress (September 24 - October 1, 1827)

Though the khan of Iravan *Hussein Qulu khan Qajar* and his brother *Hassan khan Qajar* defended valiantly the Sardarabad fortress from 14 to 20 September 1827, it was seized by the invasive army of Russia. Despite the defeat troops of the Iravan Khan continued to resist the invaders. Main focus was the defense of the Iravan fortress. Having broken the siege of the Sardarabad fortress Hassan khan Qajar was fortifying the Iravan fortress.⁴²

Canons were installed behind the walls of Iravan fortress which had two towers and surrounded with wide and deep ditches. The fortress garrison consisted of 2 thousand soldiers and 2 thousand riflemen. The food supply in the fortress was considered for half a year.⁴³

On September 23, troops led by Paskevich camped at 2 versts distance from the Iravan fortress, seized the Mугanlı-tepe eminence located at 750 sazhen distance from the fort-

⁴¹ Потто В.А. Кавказская война в., с.453-454.

⁴² Үенә орада, с.505.

⁴³ Шербатов М. Генерал-фельдмаршал., с.263; Вах: İrəvan xanlığı. Rusiya işğalı., s.345.



IRAVAN FORTRESS—THE FORTRESS OF HEROISM



Plan of capture of the Iravan Fortress.* (September 25-October 01)

Потто В.А. Кавказская война в отдельных очерках, эпизодах, легендах и биографиях. т. III, вып. 3, СПб., 1887, с. 502 об.

* Armenian Church noted in the plan was the Rajab Pasha Mosque turned into the church a day after the invasion. Being of the church a pravoslavich one was confirmed by I. Chopen as well. [See: Шопен И.И. Исторический памятник состояния армянской области в эпоху её присоединения к Российской империи. СПб., 1852., с. 686-687].



ress walls. Collecting intelligence data about the Iravan fortress, general Paskevich wrote: **“Along with gardens, minarets and towers of the Iravan fortress buildings are exposed from the steep bank of the Zangi River. On the top of the bank, at 200 sazhen distance are extended the fortress walls with the loopholes and the towers on the flanks. The riverside shelters of the fortress were neglected and some places have been fallen to the ground. The steep bank and the river flow do not allow attacking the riverside shelters directly, and also impede the siege. The remaining three sides of the fortress are equipped with 50 cannons, surrounded with deep ditches filled with water, the double fortress walls being defended both from the towers and the flanks show that the fortress garrison is going to defend the fortress persistently”**.⁴⁴

The fall of Sardarabad fortress could not weaken the struggle of Hassan khan Qajar, who had assumed responsibility on leading the defense of the fortress. Having broken the siege of the Sardarabad fortress Hassan khan Qajar was strengthening the Iravan fortress.⁴⁵

The Iravan fortress, with two towers, surrounded with large and deep ditches and the cannons were installed behind the walls. The fortress garrison consisted of 2 thousand soldiers and 2 thousand riflemen. The food supply in the fortress was considered for half a year. The gunpowder, cannon-balls and grain store were enough to provide the de-

⁴⁴ Шербатов М. Генерал-фельдмаршал., с.321-322.

⁴⁵ Потто В.А. Кавказская война в., с.505.



fense of the fortress and to meet the need of the garrison's food supply only for few months. Taking all these into account, Paskevich decided to attack the Iravan fortress from the south-east.⁴⁶

Assuming the impossibility of defending the fortress since being isolated from all the sides, Hussein Qulu khan



*Heroic defender
of the Iravan Fortress
Hassan Khan Qajar*

Qajar retreated towards Turkey with his cavalry. His brother Hassan khan Qajar led the defense of the fortress.⁴⁷

On September 24, 1827, began the fourth siege of the Iravan fortress by Russian troops. On the same day, Paskevich installed batteries to the right side from Mughanlitepe and the whole night fired guns on the fortress. The city was fired by 2 batteries without a break for three days. Not standing the fires from the heavy cannons any longer, the towers of the fortress collapsed. The underground water pipes

⁴⁶ Шербатов М. Генерал-фельдмаршал., с.263.

⁴⁷ Потто В.А. Кавказская война в., с.492.



below the fortress walls were filled with stones on Paskevich's order to deprive the fortress defenders of water. At the same time, Paskevich demanded Hassan khan to surrender the fortress. However, ignoring his demand, Hassan khan Qajar who had the title of the Head of Lions, repairing the towers got ready for the next battle. Although the fortress garrison fired Russian troops heavily, the siege corps of the invaders was able to bring the cannons closer. Not receiving a positive response to his next demand for surrender, Paskevich commanded to fire the Iravan fortress with over 1000 cannon-balls from 40 cannons. The city was in flames.⁴⁸

The population of Iravan was also firing the enemy with cannon. But the betrayal of Armenians* in the fortress and their contact with the enemy exacerbated the situation. The Armenian spies were contacting with Paskevich again, as they did previously, and giving him military secrets about the position, including the number of the defenders and location of the cannons and so on.⁴⁹

Besides, the Armenians outside the fortress were also helping to Russian troops to seize the Iravan fortress. Even an Armenian priest, Nerses made a special appeal to the vil-

⁴⁸ See: İrəvan xanlığı. Rusiya işğalı.., s.347.

* Faced with Armenian betrayal more than once during the defense of the fortress Khan had placed the Armenians living in the territory of the khanate isolated from the Azerbaijanis while moving the residents of the city to the fortress in April 1827.

⁴⁹ СМОМПК, вып. IV, Тифлис, 1884, с.36; Ениколопов И. Грибодов и Восток, Ереван, 1954, с.85-86.



lagers of Uchkilsa on September 27-28, to help the Russian troops.⁵⁰ Moreover, some Armenians in the city also assisted the Russian troops during the defense of the Iravan fortress. When they gave signals to the invaders about their capitulation by waving their caps on the top of the fortress walls⁵¹, the Azerbaijani population of the city continued to defend their ancient homeland heroically.

On September 30, the siege of the fortress got tightened even more. The cannons were brought to closer positions. Walls of the fortress were fired from all positions. On the night to October 1, Hassan khan ordered the defenders to open fire on the Russian troops again. However, it did not give the expected result.

On October 1, the Armenians in the fortress acting in concert with invaders rebelled and demanded Hassan khan to surrender the fortress to the Russian troops.⁵² Despite the wasted efforts of the khan they opened the north gates of the fortress for the Armenians, betraying the country they lived, and as a symbol of their capitulation they raised a white flag over the gates.⁵³

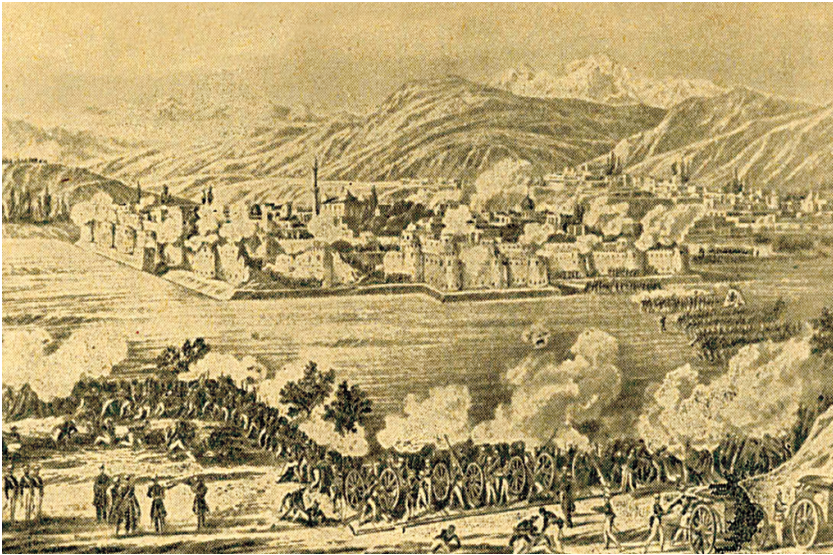
Taking opportunity, the troops of lieutenant colonel Gurko and Shepelev seized the south-east tower of the fortress. Then, approaching to the north gates of the fortress

⁵⁰ Парсамян В.А. История армянского народа 1801-1900 гг. Ереван, 1972, с.44.

⁵¹ Галоян Г.А. Россия и народы Закавказья. Москва, 1976, с.164.

⁵² АКАК, т. VII, док.523, с.566.

⁵³ Потто В.А. Кавказская война в., с.512-513.



The invasion of Iravan Fortress by Russian invaders.

(October 1827)

*Григорян З.Т. Присоединение Восточной Армении
к России в начале XIX в. Москва, 1959, с.115*

Krasovski commanded Belov who knew Tatar language well (Azerbaijani Turkish – ed.) to tell them to open the gates immediately. As soon as Belov uttered these words, fire opened from the fortress and a large copper falconet ball blew his brain to smithereens. This was the last bullet fired by Hassan Khan from the Iravan fortress. A minute later, the gates opened and the Russian troops entered the fortress. This brave defender of Iravan had set a fuse in the tower where gun powders were stored in order to blow up



the fortress at the last moment and destroy the fortress which would be better than to surrender. However, lieutenant Lemyakin having seen the danger in time took the burning fuse with his hands.⁵⁴

A bloody battle took place between the defenders of the fortress and the Russian troops that were able to enter



The invasion of Iravan Fortress by Russian invaders.

Покоренный Кавказ (очерки исторического прошлого и современного положения Кавказа с иллюстрациями) Книга I-V, СПб., 1904.

⁵⁴ Потто В.А. Кавказская война в., с.512-513.



the fortress due to the Armenian betrayal. Having seen that the resistance will give no result Hassan khan Qajar and 200 courtiers taken cover in one of the mosques in the fortress defended themselves. By the evening the fortress was seized by the invaders. Besides Hassan khan, Gasim khan, Jafargulu khan Marandli, Alimardan khan Tabrizli, Aslan khan, Fathali khan and others were also captured. In addition, 4 flags of the Fortress defenders, all the cannons, weapons and food supplies in the tower were taken by invaders.⁵⁵

V.Potto writes about the destructions in Iravan committed by the Russian invasive troops and the damages caused in the city, from the words of eye-witness as is: *“I was astonished by the destruction of walls and towers when I reached the south-east corner of the fortress. I think, what was done by the Russian siege artillery in four days, could not have been done by fortune in four centuries”*.⁵⁶

The commander in chief of the Russian troops **I.F.Pask-evich**, who invaded the Iravan fortress and occupied the khanate using the Armenian betrayal, was awarded the title of count for this **“victory”**,⁵⁷ **Second Class Cross of St. George, money prize amounting 1 million and the title of “Erivanski” for occupation of the Iravan fortress.**⁵⁸

⁵⁵ See: İrəvan xanlığı. Rusiya işğalı., s.349-350.

⁵⁶Потто В.А. Кавказская война в., с.516.

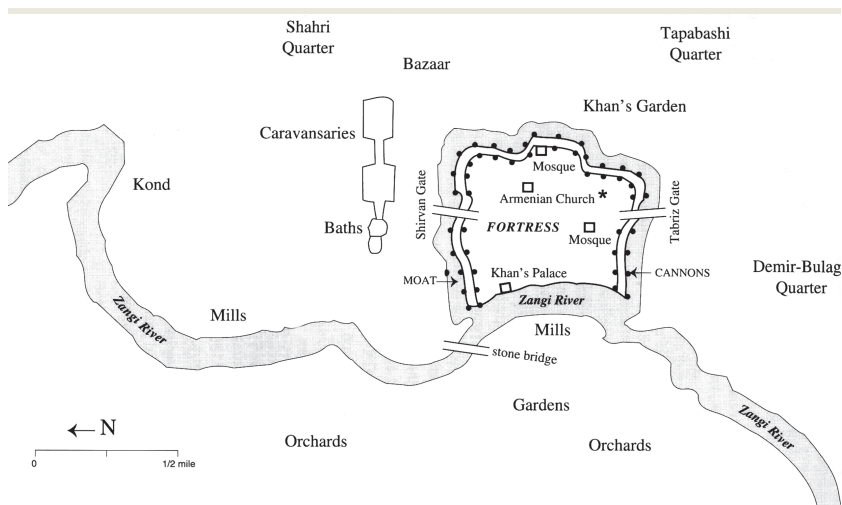
⁵⁷Шербатов М. Генерал-фельдмаршал., с.330.

⁵⁸Потто В.А. Кавказская война в., с.591.



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A day after the seizure of Iravan fortress by the Russian troops on October 1, the half-moon and star on the dome of Rajab Pasha Mosque was replaced with cross and church bell and transformed into pravoslavic church. Being of the church a pravoslavic one was confirmed by I.Chopen as well.⁵⁹ G. Bournoutian, the USA historian with Armenian origin, falsifying the historical truth, introduces this church in his work as an “Armenian church” in the description of plan of the Iravan fortress.



Plan of the Iravan Fortress.

Bournoutian C.A. The khanate of Erevan under Qajar rule 1795-1828, Mazda Publishers in association with Bibliotheca Persica, Costa Mesa, California and New York, 1992, p. 41

⁵⁹ Шопен И.И. Исторический памятник., с.686.



During the seizure of Iravan khanate an expensive sword which belonged to Hassan khan Qajar was also taken by Russians. This sword, the handle made of gold and decorated with precious stones, formerly belonged to Amir Timur, the great Turkish commander and ruler, then obtained by Fathali shah Qajar, later for his courage after the victory over the Turks was given to Hassan khan Qajar. Hassan khan requested General Krakovski to find the sword lost by him while lowering down from the Iravan fortress by a rope. The sword was sent to Nikolai I as a present after it was found.⁶⁰



The valuable sword belonging to Hassan Khan Qajar.

⁶⁰ Кавказский сборник, т. XXII, Тифлис, 1901, с. 61-62; Потто В.А. Кавказская война в., с.515-516.



IRAVAN FORTRESS—THE FORTRESS OF HEROISM

Seizure of the Iravan fortress was celebrated in St. Petersburg and a special official event was organized on this occasion. Besides, special medals were instituted on the occasion of capture of the Iravan fortress.



Medal instituted by Nikolai I (1825-1855) on the occasion of occupation of the Iravan Fortress. (Minted in December 1827 in Tabriz)



*Medal instituted by Nikolai I (1825-1855) on the occasion of occupation of the Iravan Fortress. (Minted in 1829)**

Арзуманян. Око Бюракана. Ереван, 1976, с.352 об.

**Azerbaijani city of Iravan was represented on this medal instituted on the order of Nikolai I with all its former views – mosques, minarets.*



Seizure of the Iravan fortress was met with joy in the palace of Russian emperor. On November 8, 1827 on the occasion of occupation of the Iravan fortress a special praying ceremony was held in the church of Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. Emperor Nicolai I attended this event personally. Just right the same day the keys of Iravan gates and 4 flags of the Iravan khanate which were taken, were passed through the central streets of the city.⁶¹

As a result of seizure of the Iravan fortress and occupation of the Iravan khanate the whole territory of the North Azerbaijan was amalgamated to Russian Empire. Iravan fortress, which stood against heavy sieges for many times and had a special role in the struggle for the defense of native country, is the glorious part of history of the Azerbaijani people.

Under the Turkmanchay (1828) treaty between Russia and Iran, and the Adrianople treaty (1829) signed between Russia and Ottoman Empire after the occupation of Iravan khanate the Armenians were moved in masses from Iran and Turkey to the territory of the Iravan khanate.

Armenians settled in the territory of the occupied Iravan khanate later had destroyed the Iravan and Sardarabad fortresses, the glorious centres of struggle of the Azerbaijan people against the invaders of tsarist Russia. These ancient historical monuments, heroic fortresses, destroyed by Armenian vandals live in the primary sources and in the memory of Azerbaijani people.

⁶¹ Потто В.А. Кавказская война в., с.518-519.



THE
Iravan
KHANATE

**IRAVAN FORTRESS -
THE FORTRESS OF HEROISM**

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