



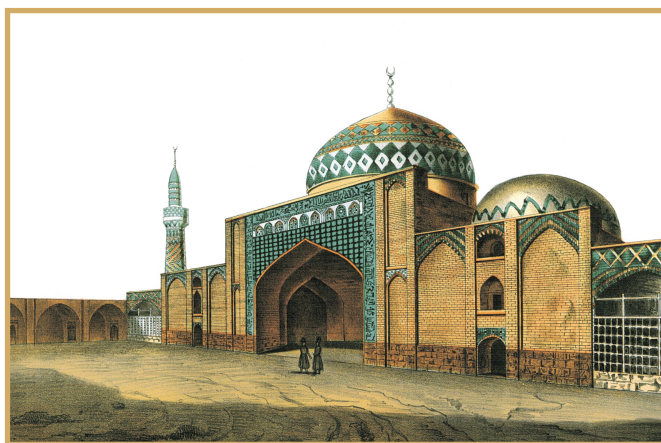
The Council of State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan



Historians of Azerbaijan Public Union



# THE *Iravan* KHANATE



**MOSQUES**  
**of IRAVAN obliterated**  
**by Armenian vandals**

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The idea mover,  
project manager,  
author of the foreword  
and academic editor

**Yagub Mahmudov**  
Honored scientist,  
corresponding member of ANAS  
State Prize-winner

Reviewer:

**Guntakin Najafli**  
*PhD in history*

Technical editor:

**Mehri Khanbabayeva**  
*PhD in Mathematics*

**Nazim Mustafa.**

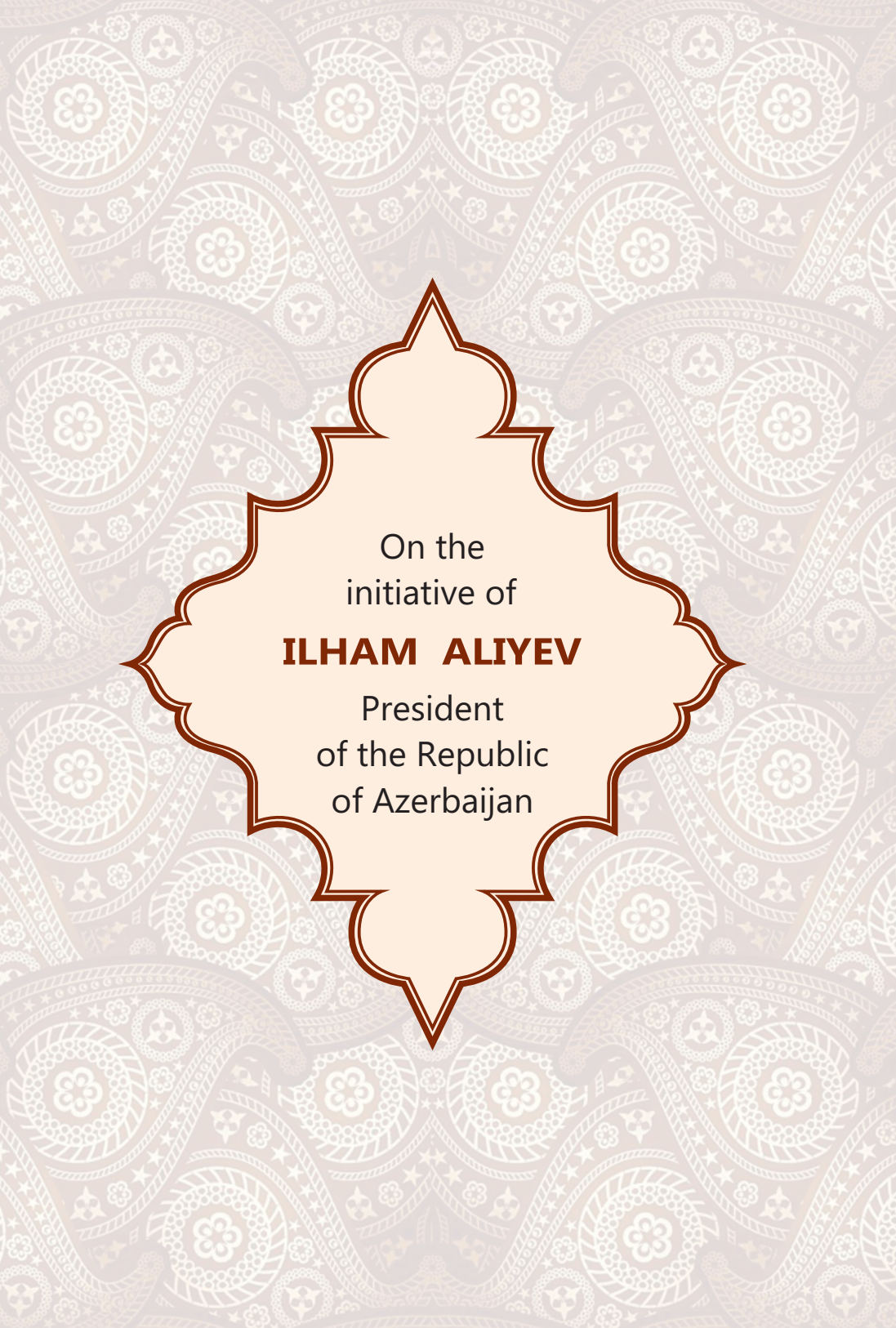
*The Iravan knanate:*

*Mosques of Iravan obliterated by Armenian vandals*

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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 city of Iravan with its rich history, full of glorious and heroic pages, is very dear to every Azerbaijani. As an integral part of Azerbaijan in all periods of history, Iravan left a deep trace in the historical past of the country.

Before the conquest of Northern Azerbaijan by tsarist Russia, in the early XIX century Iravan was one of the important centers of the Azerbaijani statehood. This city, indigenous population of which were Azerbaijani Turks, throughout the Middle Ages was one of the centers of Azerbaijani *emirate*, *beylerbeyate* and *khanates*. During the period when it was the capital of one of the independent states of Azerbaijan – the Iravan khanate (1747-1828), the city had become one of the important trade, craft, cultural and political centers of the South Caucasus, as well as the entire Near and Middle East.

The Azerbaijani people created rich culture, including the rare pearls of architecture in the city of Iravan, located at the junction of international trade routes.

One of the historical sights of the ancient Iravan city was the famous Iravan Fortress. It was erected at early XVI century by the Safavi warlord Ravangulu Khan on the order of Shah Ismail Khatai, the founder of Azerbaijani Safavi state (1509-1517).

The Iravan Fortress had a great deal of ancient monuments and rare architectural complexes. Located here- in Iravan fortress, the *Khan's Palace*, or *Sardar Palace*, famous Iravan mosques, minarets were 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 the South Caucasus and began the period of ethnic cleansing, forced deportations and genocide against the Azerbaijani people. And on May 29, 1918 was created an Armenian state in Northern Azerbaijan - on the territory of former Iravan khanate.

Armenian vandals having carried out ethnic cleansing on the historical Azerbaijani lands - the territory of Iravan khanate and Zangazur over the last 180-200 years created a mono-ethnic state with exclusively Armenian population. However, supported at first by Tsarist Russia, then by the Soviet-Bolshevik regime Armenian vandals not being satisfied with this destroyed hundreds of settlements, historical monuments, including the castles, architectural complexes, mosques, minarets and cemeteries which belonged to the Azerbaijani people, and changed all the historical names in these places.

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

One of the monuments subjected to genocide by Armenian vandals was the symbol of statehood culture of Azerbaijani people and a rare gem of Azerbaijani architecture – the **Khan's Palace**, or the **Palace of Sardar**. Along with Khan's Palace the famous Iravan mosques were also razed to the ground by Armenian vandals.

Creating their “Motherland” on an alien land, introducing themselves to the world as a “cultural” and “civilized na-



tion”, and the Turks as “wilds” and “predators”, in order to drive out the local Turkic-Muslim population from Azerbaijani lands they were moved, Armenian vandals destroyed all the places of worship where the local Muslim population brought their religious services – **more than 300** mosques, numerous minarets, sepulchres, places of pilgrimage and cemeteries were razed to the ground – unique masterpieces of architecture that preserved existence for centuries. These vandals, first of all, destroyed ancient mosques in Iravan.

The ancient city of Iravan, all its historical Turkic-Islamic monuments including the *Khan's Palace (Sardar Palace)* destroyed by Armenian vandals, live in the historical memory of the Azerbaijani people.

This booklet, presented to the readers, deals with the bitter fate of unique architectural monuments - the old mosques of Iravan belonging to the Azerbaijani people that were destroyed by Armenian vandals.

*We express our gratitude to the staff of the Presidential Library of the Administrative Department under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for assistance in the preparation of the booklet “**The Iravan khanate: Mosques of Iravan obliterated by Armenian vandals**” for publication.*

**Yagub Mahmudov**

*Honored man of science,*

*Corresponding member of ANAS*

*State Prize-winner*



## OLD IRAVAN MOSQUES

One of the material cultures of any nation confirming its existence in the homeland is the presence of religious places of worship. There were hundreds of mosques and other religious places of worship in the former Azerbaijani lands, present Armenia, as the religion of Islam began to spread in this territory from the seventh century. Every mosque existing in the Iravan khanate, as well as, in Iravan city was an example of rare architecture. A lot of rare examples of brick architecture belonging to Azerbaijan were created in Iravan city, as well as inside the Iravan fortress.

Though there were tens of mosques in old Iravan city where Islamic values became the standards of life, and where hundreds of religious figures were brought up, all these historical monuments were destroyed by the Armenian vandals moved to the territory of the Iravan Khanate in the nineteenth century.

Works of the travelers who had been to Iravan in different periods, as well as works of various authors who had written about Iravan city after the Russian occupation are abundant sources of information on the mosques of the city.

According to historical sources, Ravan Qulu Khan, a warlord of the reign of Shah Ismail who is said to have fortified the place by his ruler's order, in the years 1509-1517 also erected a mosque there.

In 1583, after the Ottoman army headed by commander Farhad Pasha captured Iravan, along with building





the oval inner and outer walls of the fortress he erected a new mosque as well. The mosque was named Rajab Pasha Mosque in honor of the Turkish warlord who had built it.

The famous French traveler Jean Chardin, who visited Iravan in 1673, reported about the brick-built mosque facing the city bazaar which had become dilapidated at the time. He writes that it was named after the founder of the mosque Div Sultan\*.<sup>1</sup>

In the background of the picture of the ancient tower (sepulcher) drawn by an artist, who accompanied Jean

*A mausoleum in Old Iravan destroyed by Armenian vandals. Two grand mosques and their minarets are seen in the background. Artist Jack Hyppolite Vanderbyer, engraver Devule.*

*(See: L'Univers. Histoire et Description de tous les Peuples. Crimée, Circassie et Géorgie... Paris, 1838, p. 21).*




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\*Div Sultan Rumlu, who was the beylerbey of Iravan in 1515 is meant.

<sup>1</sup> Şardən J. Səyahətnamə. Fransız dilindən tərcümə edən V.Aslanov. Bakı, 1994, s.22.



Chardin during his visit to Iravan two grand mosques and their minarets are seen, but at present there remained no trace.

The Russian historian and statistician Ivan Chopin, who had conducted official census of the population after the capture of Iravan by Russia informs us, that there were 8 mosques in the city; 2 - inside the Fortress and 6 - outside the city. I.Shopen noted that these mosques were used as an arsenal and a shop after the occupation, and he enumerates the names of the 6 survived mosques: **the Zal Khan Mosque, Novruzali Bey Mosque, Sertib Khan Mosque, Hussein Ali Khan Mosque, Haji Imamverdi Mosque and Haji Jafar Bey Mosque**. I.Shopen also mentions other dilapidated mosques in the city. Chopin also writes that there was a madrasa attached to every mosque.<sup>2</sup>

In 1833, French geologist and archaeologist, naturalist Frederic Dubois de Montpéreux in the 3rd volume of his work "Voyage autour du Caucase (The travel around the Caucasus)" which was published in 1839 in Paris after his journey to the Caucasus and Crimea described the Iravan fortress and the Blue Mosque in detail. Main entrance of the Sardar Mosque and the Blue Mosque drawn by him illustrates that both mosques were grandiose and perfect works of architecture. These paintings were included to the third part of atlases as an appendix to the author's aforemen-

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<sup>2</sup>Шопен И. И. Исторический памятник состояния Армянской области в эпоху её присоединения к Российской империи. СПб., 1852, с.468.



tioned work printed in 1840. Engraver Hercule Nikole developed engravings of Dubois de Montpéreux's paintings.<sup>3</sup>

Photoes of historical-architectural monuments of Azerbaijan, including mosques in Iravan taken by famous Russian photographer Dmitry Yermakov in the 80-90s of the nineteenth century had been included in his albums printed in the 1896 and 1901years. Part of the numerous photos of Iravan mosques taken by Dmitri Yermakov are being pre-



*The Sardar Mosque. Artist Dubois de Montpereux, engraver Nicolet Hercule.*

(See: Frédéric Dubois de Montpéreux. *Voyage autour du Caucase, chez les Tcherkesses et les Abkhases, en Colchide, en Géorgie, en Arménie et en Crimée - Volume III, Paris, 1839, Voyes atlas, III serie, pl. 24*).

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<sup>3</sup> Frederic Dubois de Montpereux. *Voyage autour du Caucase, chez les tcherkesses et les abkhases, en Georgie, en Armenie et en Crimée. Volume III, Paris, 1839, p. 346-347.*



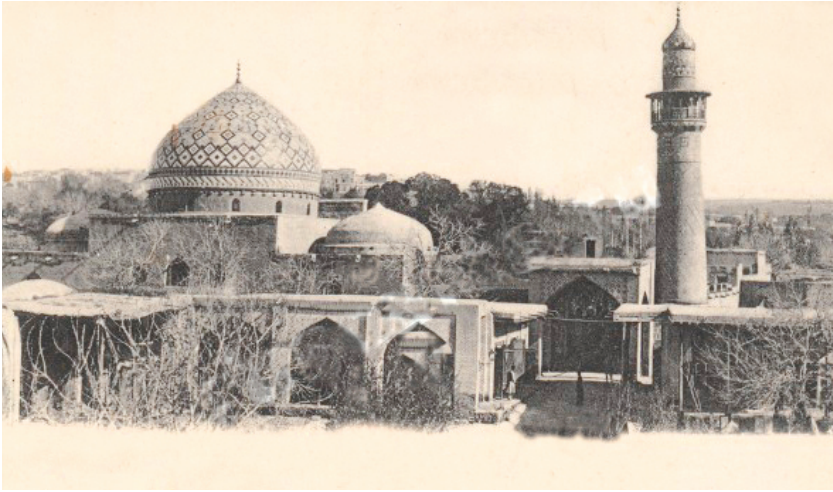
served in Yermakov fund of Simon Janashia State Museum of Georgia and Shalva Amiranishvili Museum of Arts.

German art historian and archaeologist Friedrich Sarre been in Iravan in 1897 and taken dozens of photographs of Sardar Mosque and Goy (Blue) Mosque from various aspects involved them in the scientific circulation as Muslim historical monuments. Part of Friedrich Sarre's photos is being preserved in the section of Islamic Art of State Museum in Berlin



*The Blue Mosque. Artist Dubois de Montpereux, engraver Nicolet Hercule.*

*(See: Frédéric Dubois de Montpéroux. Voyage autour du Caucase, chez les Tcherkesses et les Abkhases, en Colchide, en Géorgie, en Arménie et en Crimée - Volume III, Paris, 1839, Voyes atlas, III serie, pl. 23).*



*Another view of the Blue Mosque.*

Armenian researcher M.Qasparyan notes that at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century the Blue Mosque, Haji Hussein and the City (Zal Khan) Mosques of Iravan was located in Kohnesheher (Shahri) housing area, Tepebashi Mosque in the area with the same name, Haji Novruzali Bey, Haji Jafar bey and Demirbulag Mosques - in the Demirbulag area.<sup>4</sup>

In 1902, the statistics committee of Iravan governorate published the **“Commemorative booklet of Iravan governorate for the year 1902”**. According to the booklet, there

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<sup>4</sup> Гаспарян М.А. Планировочная структура Еревана 19 – начала 20 вв. // Национальное своеобразие зодчества народов СССР. Сб. науч. тр.– Москва, 1979, с. 64–72.



*The courtyard of the Blue Mosque. October, 1897. Photo by Friedrich Sarre. (See: Sarre Friedrich. Transkaukasien, Persien, Mesopotamien, Transkaspien. Berlin, 1899, p. 29).*

were **310** mosques in Iravan governorate, 7 of which were in Iravan city.<sup>5</sup>

B.Mehrabov who worked in 1906-1911 as a technician of Iravan had compiled a plan and the list of architectural monuments in the city. According to B.Mehrabov there were 8 mosques in the city. These mosques were called as following: **the Tepebashi Mosque, City Mosque (Zal Khan Mosque), Sertib Khan Mosque, the Blue Mosque (Hussein Ali Khan Mosque), Haji Novruz Ali Bey Mosque, Fortress Mosque (Sardar Mosque or Abbas Mirza Mosque), Demirbulag and Haji Jafar Bey Mosques.**<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Памятная книжка Эриванской губернии на 1902 год. Эривань, Типография Эдельсонь, 1902, Отд. III, с. 119-121.

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.iatp.am/old\\_yerevan](http://www.iatp.am/old_yerevan).



*The bazaar of Iravan and the Blue Mosque. 1875.  
Artist Paul von Franken, engraver R. Illner.*

If taken into account the mosque, built in 1909 in Demirbulag area by Muzaffar Haji Agha and the one built by Asad Agha near the Iravan Women's club then, at least **10** mosques operated in Iravan city before the creation of an Armenian state in 1918 in the territory of Iravan governorate.

During the establishment of Armenian Dashnak government on the historical territory of Azerbaijan in 1918-1920, and in the first years of Soviet power Armenian refugees that fled from Turkey were settled in **Sardar Mosque, Tepebashi Mosque, Sertib Khan Mosque** and **Haji Novruz Ali Bey Mosque**.

After the approval of the general plan of the Iravan city in 1924, first of all, many of the city's ancient historical monuments belonging to the Azerbaijani people “were included to the plan”, and Azerbaijani historical and architectural



monuments, including mosques located in the city center were demolished, and housing blocks, squares and parks were built instead. An archive document of 1949 year kept in State Archives of the Republic of Azerbaijan informs us about **15** Azerbaijani architectural monuments recorded in the territory of Armenia. This list indicating the date of construction and the purpose of their use also provides with information about 4 mosques operated in Iravan city. According to the document the **Zal Khan Mosque was built in 1649-1685, Blue Mosque in 1776, Sardar Mosque in 1807-1817 and Haji Jafar Bey Mosque in the eighteenth century.**<sup>7</sup>

On October 6, 2003, Foreign Minister of Armenia Vardan Oskanyan falsifying historical facts at a press conference in Iravan said that as if there had never been 6 mosques, but only 3 mosques in Iravan; one was demolished in 1930s, the other was turned into the trolleybus park, but thanks to the efforts of the Armenian intellectuals the Blue Mosque which also had been included in the Bolsheviks' plan was not destroyed. The only truth pronounced at press conference by V.Oskanyan was that he had confessed **the Blue Mosque to be the oldest building in Iravan.** Buildings belonging to Armenians, including Armenian churches built one after another were constructed in Iravan city only in the nineteenth century, after the capture of the city by Russian troops.

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<sup>7</sup> State Archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan, fund, 3026, l. 1, f. 261, p. 23.





## Archive document

Ermənistan SSR ərazisində qeydə alınan Azərbaycan memarlığının arxitektura abidələrinin

### SİYAHISI

(XX əsrin 40-50-ci illəri)

№	Ünvan	Abidənin adı	İnşa tarixi	İstifadə qrupu	Qeydlər
1	İrəvan şəhəri	Göy məscid	1776-cı il	Muzey binası kimi istifadə olunur	Freska nəqqaşlığı və mayolika mövcuddur
2	İrəvan şəhəri	Zal xan məscidi	1649-1685-ci illər	Rəssamların sərgi salonu kimi istifadə olunur	
3	İrəvan şəhəri	Sərdar məscidi	1807-1817-ci illər		
4	İrəvan şəhəri	Hacı Cəfər bəy məscidi	XVIII əsr		
5	Artaşat rayonu, Kanaçut kəndi	Məqbərə	XIV əsr		
6	Qafan rayonu, Kəfaşen kəndi	Məscid	XVII-XVIII əsrlər		
7	Qafan rayonu, Oxcu kəndi	2 məqbərə	XVIII əsr		
8	Qafan rayonu, Zeyvə kəndi	Məqbərə	XIII-XIV əsrlər		
9	Məğri rayonu, Ləhvaz kəndi	Məqbərə	XIX əsr		
10	Eçmiədzin rayonu , Arqavand (Cəfərabad) kəndi	Minarəli məqbərə	XIII-XIV əsrlər		
11	Eçmiədzin rayonu , Arqavand (Cəfərabad) kəndi	Məqbərə	XIII-XIV əsrlər		
12	Eçmiədzin rayonu, Ağavnatun kəndi	Məqbərə	XIII-XIV əsrlər		
13	Eçmiədzin rayonu, Yuxarı Xatunax kəndi	Məqbərə	XV-XVI əsrlər		
14	İrəvan şəhəri	Pənəh xanın evi	XIX əsr		Freska nəqqaşlığı və mayolika mövcuddur
15	İrəvan şəhəri	Alaverdyan küçəsindəki yaşayış evi	XIX əsr		freska nəqqaşlığı və mayolika mövcuddur

Azərbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Arxivi, fond 3026, siyahı 1, iş 761, vərəq 23.



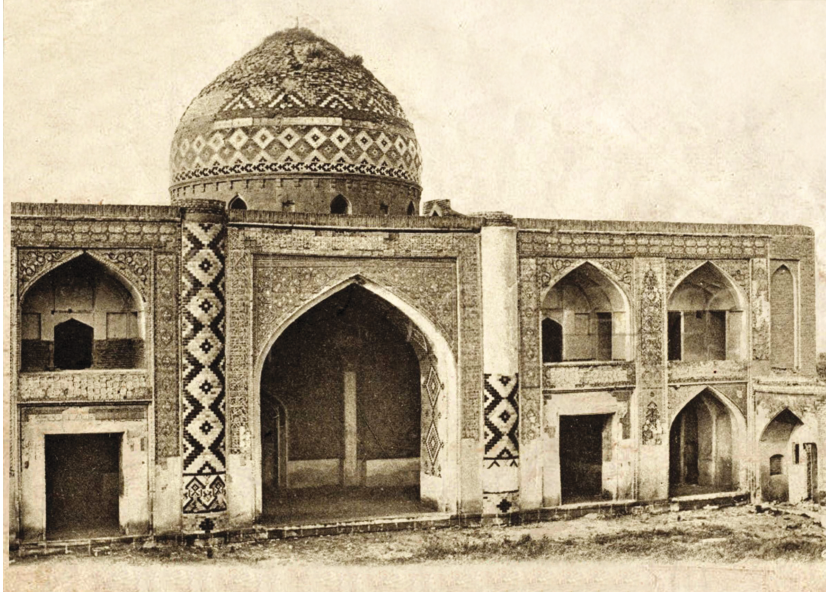
## THE KHAN MOSQUE or SARDAR MOSQUE

At different periods travelers and researchers had mentioned in their works the names of **“Sardar Mosque”**, **“Khan Mosque”** and **“Abbas Mirza Mosque”** located near the Sardar palace in Iravan fortress. Studies have shown that, although presented under different names, in fact, the matter is about the **Khan Mosque**- the unique architectural monument of the period mentioned in the recent researches and official documents as the **Sardar Mosque**. The mosque was mentioned as the Abbas Mirza Mosque in the documents of the period of occupation of Iravan Fortress by Tsarist Russia. Apparently, due to the reconstruction of the mosque at the beginning of the nineteenth century by Crown Prince Abbas Mirza it was named after him. German researcher August Haksthauzen who in August 1843 was in Iravan noted that one of the two mosques, that’s to say the **Rajab Pasha Mosque had become the Russian-Greek church, and the other – the Sardar mosque an ammunition depot.**<sup>8</sup>

Famous Russian archaeologist countess Praskovya Aleksandrovna Uvarova visited the Iravan city in 1880 and described with a heavy heart the destruction of historical and architectural monuments there that had been created over centuries. Armenian researcher Yervand Shahaziz in his book *“Old Iravan”* published in 1931 in Iravan quoted

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<sup>8</sup> Гакстгаузен Август. Закавказский край. Санкт-Петербург, 1857, часть 1, с.230.



*The Abbas Mirza Mosque.*

from P.Uvarova's book saying that the Sardar Mosque bore resemblance to the painting drawn by Vereshchagin's brush. Making reference on P.Uvarova Y.Shahaziz further writes that main dome of the Sardar Mosque, its exterior walls, columns, interior walls, and numerous other domes were covered with colorful glazed tiles and beautiful depictions. P.Uvarova noted that dark blue dome of the Sardar mosque was keeping harmony with open air, and on a dark blue panel on its portal was engraved with white a text in Arabic, that minarets rising over the wall columns were square-shaped and covered with dark blue and light blue glazed



*The dome of the Abbas Mirza Mosque. 1897. Photo by Friedrich Sarre.*

(See: Friedrich Sarre. *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst: geschichtliche Untersuchung und Aufnahme muhammedanischer Backsteinbauten in Vorderasien und Persien.* Berlin, 1910, p.53).

tiles. Shahaziz going on writes through P.Uvarova's tongue that in front of the Sardar Mosque located another small summer mosque in Oriental style, keeping the traces of cells on both sides. Usually in the East, this type of summer mosques were built in front of the main building, aligned to the north. Moreover, P.Uvarova noted that the pool built for the Muslims' use (Ablutions-ed. in the center of the courtyard was used till 1870.<sup>9</sup>

In 1911, under the decision of the Imperial Archaeological Commission, Academician Nikolai Marr examined

the Iravan Khan's palace and described the condition of

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<sup>9</sup> Յերվանդ Շահազիզ: Հին Յերևանը: Յերևան, 1931, էջ 170-171; (Yervand Shahaziz. Old Erivan. Erevan, 1931, in Armenian).



Abbas Mirza Mosque which was part of the palace complex. In his report at the meeting of Imperial Archeological Commission held on May 17, 1912, Nicholas Marr wrote: **“The Mosque is still in good condition, but no measures are taken to preserve it, and all serves to the collapse of the building like the Sardar Palace. However, it is a valuable heritage of the local Muslim culture, there is an inscription in Arabic letters along the perimeter of the dome; ornaments on the alter bear resemblance to a carpet and highly stylish. The dome has cracked and it had to be repaired for a long time ago.”**<sup>10</sup>



*The Abbas Mirza Mosque. At the end of the XIX century.  
Photo by Shervinsky. Berlin State Museum.*

<sup>10</sup> Известия Императорской Археологической Комиссии. Выпуск 46. Санкт-Петербург, 1912, с. 79.



An Azerbaijani archaeologist and epigrapher Isa Azimbeyov was in expedition in Iravan in 1928. In his paper, “Muslim inscriptions in Tiflis, Iravan and Nakhchivan” devoted to the results of the expedition, I.Azimbeyov wrote that the mosque located within the limits of the fortress near the Sardar Palace and built on behalf of Shah Abbas was in a dilapidated condition, and several Armenian refugee families were living in its yard. He writes that the mosque had a large yard with a swimming pool in the center. I.Azimbeyov noted that the mosque was not operated as a praying house.



*A mosque once existed inside the Iravan Fortress and been effaced by Armenian vandals in early XX century.*

I.Azimbeyov further wrote that at the time a certain man by name Mashadi Jabbar had told him about the exist-



*View of the façade of Abbas Mirza Mosque. 1897. Photo by Friedrich Sarre. Berlin State Museum.*

tence of another mosque in the area, older than the Shah Abbas Mosque. And the mosque was built by Shah Khudabende.\* Author noted that the old, red brick mosque with a low sanctuary which he saw amidst the houses was in poor condition. The length of the walls of which was 9 m, width - 6 m. I. Azimbeyov writes that the inscription on the entrance of the mosque indicates its construction in 1098 Hijrah (1685).<sup>11</sup>

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\*The Safavi ruler Mahammad Shah Khudabende is meant.

<sup>11</sup> Азимбеков Иса. Мусульманские надписи Тифлиса, Эривани и На хичевани. Известия Азкомистариса, Баку, 1929, выпуск 4, с. 299-300.



*Ruins of the Sardar Mosque destroyed by Armenian vandals.  
End of the XX century.*

In 1864 the Iravan Fortress stopped its services as a military-fortification of Russian troops and the historical and architectural monuments, including the Sardar or Abbas Mirza Mosque were exposed to heavy destruction. Armenians moved from Turkey in the early twentieth century were settled in the Sardar Mosque. In the Soviet era of Armenia the Sardar Mosque was partially destroyed and residential buildings were built in the place.





## THE RAJAB PASHA MOSQUE

After the capture of Irbil by Ottoman troops in 1724, the Turkish commander Rajab Pasha implemented a number of measures for renovation of the city. In 1725 on a commission from Rajab Pasha a new mosque was built inside the Fortress, and it was named as the Rajab Pasha Mosque after him. The mosque was in the form of a parallelepiped and had a spherical dome, decorated with geometric ornaments in the Oriental style. On October 1, 1827, the day after the capture of the fortress by Russian troops the moon and the star on the dome of the mosque was taken away and a cross and a church bell was hanged instead, which turned it to a Russian Orthodox church. Further changes were made in its exterior as well, cylindrical columns were added to the facade; the roof was covered and formed as a Christian temple.

In Franz Roubaud's painting devoted to the capture of Irbil Fortress in the foreground the Rajab Pasha Mosque and its minaret, and in the background the Sardar Mosque near the Khan's Palace were depicted. The Russian Orthodox Church was also razed to ground within the campaign of the "Godless" implemented in 1930.



*The Rajab Pasha Mosque turned into the Russian Orthodox Church after the Russian invasion.*



## THE BLUE MOSQUE or HUSSEIN ALI KHAN MOSQUE

The Iravan city seen by travelers and researchers was described in their works. And as the most grandiose architectural monument both for the immense and beauty in the first place was mentioned the Blue Mosque. **The Blue Mosque was the largest mosque of the Caucasus for its size.**

The Blue Mosque, which is considered a rare example of Oriental architecture, was constructed in 1760-1766, during the reign of Husseinali Khan.



*The Blue Mosque.*

*(See: August von Haxthausen. Transcaucasia: Sketches of the Nations and Races Between the Black Sea and the Caspian. London, 1854, p. 268).*



The Blue Mosque, situated opposite the central covered bazaar of Iravan, in terms of composition and shape of the main prayer house was similar to the Juma mosque built in 1616, in Ganja during the reign of Shah Abbas. The dimensions of the Blue Mosque were 97.2 x 66 m. Due to its dome covered with blue tiles the mosque was named as Goy mescid, that's the Blue Mosque. A stone pool with a fountain in the center was constructed in the yard of the mosque, with dense, shady trees planted around.<sup>12</sup>

Not only the Blue Mosque, but all the mosques in Iravan had separate halls for praying of both men and women, and a corridor or a curtain separated them from each other. The ceiling and walls of the praying halls were usually decorated with floral paintings. On the walls and columns of the mosques were hung flowers made of Cashmere fabric.

Armenian historian Tadevos Hakopyan in his book **"The history of Iravan (1500-1800)"** referring to the Bishop of Echmiadzin Hovhanes Shahkhatunyans writes: **"A part of the minaret and dome of the mosque were covered with blue tiles. The main buildings were in the south and north sides of the mosque, and the ancillary buildings and cells in the sides. A small pool arranged with the slabs and with trees planted around was constructed in the yard of the mosque. The mosque had three doors. Two small doors opening to the north and east, while the entrance facing south. The mosque was orientated to the south. The building had three adjoining halls. The dome of the mosque was**

<sup>12</sup> Арутюнян В., Асратян М., Меликян А. Ереван. Москва, 1968, с. 31.



*Portal of the Blue Mosque. Photo by Henry Lynch.*

*(See: Lynch, H. F. B. Armenia. Travels and Studies. London, 1901, p. 215).*

over the grand hall which was higher than the two other small ones. Windows of this simple halls looking into the yard were worked out in the style of interlacing covered with colorful glasses. There was also a small place of worship in the northern part of the yard. The minaret of the mosque was very nice and highest among the buildings of Iravan, and was seen all over the city. Ascending every day to the minaret the muezzin was calling Muslims for worship. In the inscription on the southern portal of the mosque were engraved Hussein Ali Khan's name and the date of construction.<sup>13</sup>

Famous British explorer and geographer Henry Lynch, who was in Iravan in 1893-1894 and in 1898, in his travel book published in London in 1901 mentioned the names of the Blue Jameh (Mosque), Haji Nasrullah \* Bey Mosque and

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<sup>13</sup> Հակոբյան Թ., Երևանի պատմությունը (1500-1800 թթ.). Երևանի համալսարանի հրատարակչություն, 1971, էջ 274-275. (Hakopyan T. Yerevanın tarixi (1500–1800). İrəvan, 1971, s. 274-275)

\* Bu məscidin adı digər mənbələrdə Hacı Novruzəli bəy məscidi kimi qeyd olunur.



*Courtyard of the Blue Mosque. Photo by Henry Lynch.*

(See: Lynch, H. F. B. *Armenia. Travels and Studies*. London, 1901, p. 214).

the City Mosque in the Azerbaijani quarter of the city. Along with giving us detailed information about the Blue Mosque, its minaret, the pool in the yard and the façade, Lynch had included the photographs in his book as well.<sup>14</sup>

Blue Mosque which was seen by Isa Azimbeyov was described in detail in the above mentioned article. He informs us that the mosque consisted of two separate constructions - winter and summer houses; the winter house was built in the south, and the summer house in the north of the complex, being encircled by madrasas. I. Azimbeyov writes that the yard of the mosque was very large, and there were grown plane and poplar trees.

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<sup>14</sup> Lynch H. F. B. *Armenia, Travels and Studies*. London, 1901, p. 213–215.



*Restoration works in the courtyard of the Blue Mosque.  
Photo by Friedrich Sarre.*

*(See: Transkaukasien, Persien, Mesopotamien, Transkaspien.  
Berlin, 1899, p. 27).*

According to Armenian authors, in the 30s of the twentieth century, despite the demolition of all the mosques in Irbil, due to the serious efforts of famous Armenian poet Yeghishe Charents, the Blue Mosque called by her “Blue Diamond” turned into a museum was saved.

Since 1936 the edifice of the Blue Mosque was housed by the Irbil History Museum. After the start of the Second World War the Blue Mosque was used as an arsenal as well. After the war it was used as a Nature Museum, and since 1952, a small prayer room of the Blue Mosque was operated as a planetarium for astronomy lovers.



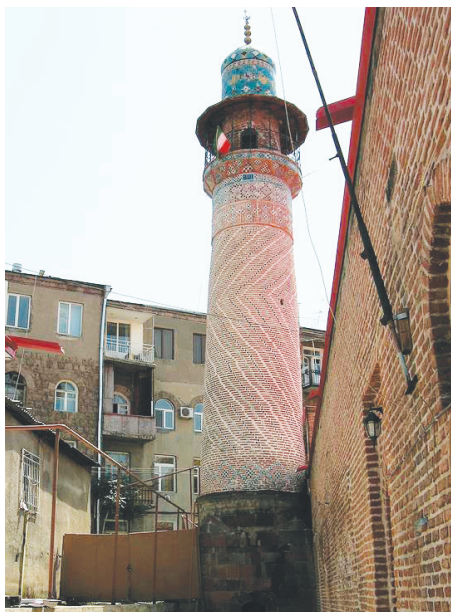
*The Blue Mosque. The year 1910. A postage stamp.*



*A part of the Blue Mosque after restoration. The year 2006.*



After Armenia gained independence in 1991 and were established diplomatic relations with the Muslim world, it arise a necessity for the Blue Mosque to function as a mosque again. At first, in 1991 Natural History Museum, in 1994 the Museum of History was moved from the mosque complex. Under the contract signed in 1995 between Iran and Armenia, the Iranian government bore all the expenses for the reconstruction of the Blue Mosque. The Iranian charity fund “Bunyad-e Mustəzəfan and Canbazan” (“The veterans and martyrs of war”) was entrusted with the reconstruction of the mosque.



*The minaret of the Blue Mosque made invisible among modern buildings*

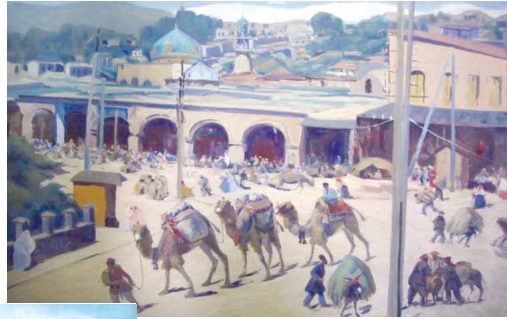
The reconstruction of the mosque was completed in 2006. Reconstruction work was carried out only in the the south-west and northern flanks of the mosque complex. The 24-meter minaret, 28 Pavilions (chambers), library, the grand hall, the dome and the yard of the Blue Mosque were reconstructed. At present, the Armenian officials present the Blue Mosque as the “**Persian mosque**” to foreign guests.





## Blue Mosque in the works of Armenian painters

*Iravan in paintings. 1921. Setrak Arakelyan. Old Iravan. Iravan History Museum.*



*Iravan in paintings. 1926. Anush Sahinyan. Old Iravan. Iravan History Museum.*

*Iravan in paintings. 1930. Gabriel Gurjyan. Old Iravan. Iravan History Museum.*





Armenian painters Martiros Saryan, Setrak Arakelyan, Anush Sahinyan, and Gabriel Gurjyan depicted the Blue Mosque in their paintings drawn in 1920-30 as a symbol of Iravan city.

## THE ZAL KHAN MOSQUE OR SHEHR (TOWN) JAMEH

One of the mosques in Old town located between the Fortress and Tepebashi areas of Iravan was called the Shehr (Town) Jameh or Zal Khan Mosque. Although the mosque is much smaller than the Blue mosque it has a beautiful building. According to H.Lynch, on the Shehr Jameh in Turkish language with Arabic letters was engraved the date of building - Hijrah **1098 (1687)**. It appears that the Town Mosque was built after the earthquake of 1679. Zal Khan, who was the governor of the Iravan beylerbeyate at the time had done a lot to restore edifices in Iravan. One of the mosques built during his reign was known among the people as **the Zal Khan Mosque** or the **Shehr Jameh** (Town Mosque). The Zal Khan Mosque bore some resemblance to the Blue Mosque by its exterior, they were similar in design. It had a yard and a garden to get cool. According to the researchers, the Zal Khan Mosque or Town Mosque located in the center of Iravan – in the area now called as the Republic Square. In 1928, the grand hall of the Town Mosque was destroyed and the “Yerevan” hotel was erected in its place. After



*A mosque once existed in the place of “Yerevan” hotel. Destroyed in the 20-30s of the XX century.*

the reconstruction in 1999, the hotel was renamed to “Golden Tulip Hotel Yerevan”. An archive document of the 1949 year kept in State Archives of the Republic of Azerbaijan shows that the Zal Khan Mosque was used as an exhibition hall.

After World War II was changed the purpose of use of Madrasah attached to the Zal Khan Mosque which had two-storey building and a great number of chambers. At present, the building serves as the exhibition hall of the House of Artists.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Арутюнян В., Асратян М., Меликян А. Ереван. Москва, 1968, с.32.



## THE TEPEBASHI MOSQUE

The minaret of the Tepebashi Mosque located in the Tepebashi residential area was tumbled down in the 1960s. Currently an Armenian family is living in the imam's room of the mosque the thickness of the walls of which is 1.5 m. There was a tea-house in the environs of the mosque where Muslims used to go and have tea there. Currently, the tea-house does not exist either. In the mosque yard and around it Armenians have built shacks. Some reports inform us that the mosque was built by a member of Iravan city office (town council), the descendant of Khan's family Abbasgulu



*Present view of the Tepebashi Mosque now inhabited by Armenian families.*



*An Armenian refugee living in the Tepebashi Mosque.*

Khan Irevansky. His house was also in the same quarter. Armenians still call Abbasgulu Khan's house which is currently has collapsed as the "Khan's house".

## THE DEMIRBULAG MOSQUE

At the beginning of the twentieth century, three mosques were registered in Demirbulag once populated by only Azerbaijanis. These are: **Haji Novruzali Bey Mosque, Haji Jafar Bey Mosque and the Demirbulag Mosque.** Demirbulag Mosque was situated not far from the bridge over the Gedar River and therefore was called as Korpugoulagi Mosque as well. Novruzali Bey and Haji Jafar Bey Mosques became victims of the "Master plan of Iravan city" in the 1930-40s.



*Chatirli minaret of the Demirbulag Mosque. 1897. Does not exist now. Destroyed by Armenian vandals.*

Until 1988 the only mosque frequented by the faithful of the Iravan town was Chatirli Mosque or **Demirbulag Mosque** called so in accordance to the name of its location. An inscription on the outer door shows the date of its building 1327 Hijrah (1909). The mosque had not a minaret. Instead, on the roof of the mosque in the open air was constructed a 1.5-2 m high quadratic square, and the iron railings were installed on it. Because of the iron sheet

roof on the top of this railing open in four sides the mosque was called **Chatirli Mosque**. In terms of architecture this kind of mosques, usually, are related to the “Guldeste (Bouquet of flowers)” type of mosques. Later, in official documents the mosque was renamed to Demirbulag by the name of its location. In the reference given by the Council of the Armenian Church under the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Armenia on August 17, 1981, was shown Babayev Akbar Jafar oglu to be the chairman of the executive body of



*A Reference given to the akhund of Demirbulag Mosque. 1984*

the Demirbulag Mosque. In another reference from June 2, 1985, was raised a question for the installation of alarm system in the Demirbulag Mosque located in Myasnikyan district, Narimanov Street-145 (now Vardanants Street).

After the emergence of Armenian separatism in Nagorno-Karabakh in February 1988, continuous meetings were held in Iravan. On February 23, the Armenian gunmen set the buildings of Demirbulag Mosque and M.F.Akhundov Azerbaijani secondary school No. 9 in Iravan on fire.

The US researcher Robert Cullen in an article on his visit to Iravan which was published in "The New Yorker" newspaper on April 15, 1991, informs us about the Damirbulag Mosque – the only Azerbaijani mosque frequented by the faithful of the town. R.Cullen writes that one night he was taken by his Armenian friend living in Iravan to the



*View of Demirbulag Mosque from inside destroyed by Armenian vandals. 1897.*

junkyard behind the house No. 22 in Qnuni Street and shown a pile of debris.

His friend informed him cravenly that in the same place there was a mosque owned by Azerbaijanis when they used to live in Armenia. R.Cullen writes that **during the Armenian massacres and the drivening of Azerbaijanis from the city Armenians living in the neighborhood had pulled down the mosque with a lever, and then had leveled it to**

**the ground with bulldozer.**<sup>16</sup>

British researcher Thomas de Waal, who visited Iravan in 2000, went to see the place described by Robert Cullen. Thomas de Waal writes: **“Iravan is a city full of mysteries. It seemed to me that one of them was near the central square, behind the high-rise residential building No.22 in Vardanants Street. The narrow stone stairs led me to a small open space consisting of brick and sand piles surrounded by rusty garages. I almost was sure that in this**

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<sup>16</sup> Robert Cullen, A Reporter at Large, “ROOTS,” The New Yorker, April 15, 1991.





area had risen the mosque once used by Iravan Azerbaijanis. However, the mosque was unlucky: it was razed to the ground considered not to be the “Persian” mosque.

Armenians living in the neighborhood informed Thomas de Waal that **after the spread of rumors in 1990, allegedly the Armenian Church was ruined by Azerbaijanis in Baku Armenians razed the Demirbulag mosque to the ground within three days.**<sup>17</sup>

Rumors about the destruction of the Armenian Church in Baku were spread deliberately, to justify the effacement of the Azerbaijani cultural heritage in Armenia from the earth in an Armenian style. The only Armenian Church in Baku in more than 20 years passing after Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan was not destroyed, on the contrary, is preserved by the state as a historical-architectural monument.

One of the Azerbaijani historical-architectural monuments in Iravan is the Madrasa located in Tumanyan Street behind the **Sakharov Square**, earlier called as **Azizbeyov Square**. It seems that today the madrasa is used as a dwelling house, although the mosque once existing in the same place was pulled down. But, for some reason, the madrasa was not included in the list of historical and architectural monuments of Iravan city.

In 2007, Armenian government introduced to the European Council the list of temples and historical monuments

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<sup>17</sup> Томас де Ваал. Черный сад. Армения и Азербайджан между миром и войной». Москва, «Текст», 2005, с.118-119.



*View of Madrasa building in the center of Iravan currently inhabited by Armenian families.*

belonging to religious and ethnic minorities in the country protected by the government of Armenia. The Blue Mosque in Mesrop Mashtots Street No.12 and the mosque in Khorhrdarani Street No.40 have been included into the list. In the list, the Blue Mosque was presented as **Iranian Mosque**, and “preservation” of the framework (skeleton) of the Abbas Mirza Mosque was noted. As seen in the presented picture, until recently, only one wall -2-3 m wide and 3-4 m in height - a small part of Sardar Mosque-complex had been remaining. “Qlendale Hills” Construction Company has built 18 blocks 14-storey residential complex in the area.<sup>18</sup>

Destruction even of a petty remnant from the wall of the Sardar Mosque-complex in Iravan fortress which is

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<sup>18</sup> [http://www.gov.am/u\\_files/file/kron/Armeniapr2\\_en.pdf](http://www.gov.am/u_files/file/kron/Armeniapr2_en.pdf).



*The last days of Abbas Mirza Mosque “protected” by the Armenian government. In November of 2014 was wiped out by Armenian vandals.*



*Armenian Church in the center of Baku protected by the Azerbaijan government.*

called as an immense and unique example of architecture by the nineteenth-century European and Russian travelers and explorers is a good example of Armenian vandalism and the hostile attitude of “civilized” Armenians toward the cultural heritage of Azerbaijanis who are the primordial residents of this territory.

In true meaning, a cultural genocide was carried out towards the historical-architectural monuments and material heritage of Azerbaijanis living not only in Iravan city, but in the entire territory called Armenia and the state which tries to present itself as a “civilized country”.

**THE**  
*Iravan*  
**KHANATE**

**MOSQUES**  
**of IRAVAN obliterated**  
**by Armenian vandals**

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“Publication of 4 brochures on the history of the Iravan khanate”  
History of the Azerbaijan Public Union was published.

**Association of Historians**

AZ1065, Baku., B.Bagirov str., 7, h.29.

E-mail: mxanbabayeva @ mail.ru. Mob. (055) 353-02-33

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