

The London School of Economics and Political Science

**The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire in the  
Caucasus against Its Southern Rivals (1821-1833)**

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the London School of Economics and Political Science for the degree of  
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## **Declaration**

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation will analyse the grand strategy of the Russian empire against its southern rivals, namely the Ottoman empire and Iran, in the Caucasus, between 1821 and 1833. This research is interested in explaining how the Russian imperial machine devised and executed successful strategies to use its relative superiority over the Ottomans and the Qājārs and secure domination of the region. Russian success needs, however, to be understood within a broader context that also takes in Ottoman and Iranian policy-making and perspectives, and is informed by a comparative sense of the strengths and weaknesses of all three imperial regimes. In this thesis, the question of why Russia was more successful than the Ottoman state and Iran in the Caucasus between 1821 and 1833 is explained in three main ways: the first and most important factor in this process was the well-functioning fiscal-military machine of the Russian empire; the second factor was the diplomatic and military skill of the Russian leadership which helped to avert any effective political and military alliance between the Ottoman empire and Iran and defeated its rivals in two separate and successive wars; the last main factor in Russian success was its geopolitically superior position.

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## Abbreviations

AAE	Archives des Affaires Étrangères
AKAK	Akty, Sobrannye Kavkazskoiu Arkheograficheskoiu Kommissiei
AMTĪQ	Asnād ū Makātabāt-i Tārīkhī Īrān-i Qājārīyah
AR	Armenian Review
AVPRI	Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii
B	Receb (Rajab)
BJMES	British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies
BMATDVUH	Bāygānī-yi Markaz-i Asnād ū Tārīkh-e Dīplumāsī-yi Vazārat-i Umūr-i Khārajah
BOA	Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi
C	Cemaziyelahir (Jumādā al-Ākhira)
C.AS	Cevdet Askeriye
C.BH	Cevdet Bahriye
C.DH	Cevdet Dahiliye
C.HR	Cevdet Hariciye
C.ZB	Cevdet Zaptiye
Ca	Cemaziyelevvel (Jumādā al-Ūlā)
CMRS	Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique
CSP	Canadian Slavonic Papers
CUP	Cambridge University Press
FO	Foreign Office
GARF	Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii
H.	Hijrī
HAT	Hatt-ı Humayun
IJMES	International Journal of Middle East Studies
IS	Iranian Studies
JfGO	Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas
KS	Kavkazskii sbornik
L	Şevval (Shawwāl)
M	Muharrem (Muḥarram)

M.	Milādī
MES	Middle Eastern Studies
N	Ramazan (Ramaḍān)
OUP	Oxford University Press
PRO	Public Record Office
Q.	Qamarī
R	Rebiūlahir (Rabī' al-Thānī)
Ra	Rebiülevvel (Rabī' al-Awwal)
RGAVMF	Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Voenno Morskogo Flota
RGIA	Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv
RGVIA	Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv
RR	Russian Review
RS	Russkii sbornik
S	Safer (Şafar)
SEER	Slavonic and East European Review
SR	Slavic Review
Ş	Şaban (Sha'bān)
TDV	Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı
TDVİA	Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi
VS	Voennyi sbornik
VPR	Vneshniaia Politika Rossii XIX i Nachala XX Veka
VZ	Voennyi zhurnal
UCP	University of Chicago Press
YB	Yabancı Arşivler
Z	Zilhicce (Dhū al-Hijja)
Za	Zilkâde (Dhū al-Qa'da)

## Romanization of Fārsī Alphabet

ا	A/a	ص	S/ṣ
آ	Ā/ā	ض	Z/ẓ
ب	B/b	ط	T/ṭ
پ	P/p	ظ	Z/ẓ
ت	T/t	ع	‘
ث	S/ṣ	غ	Gh/gh
ج	J/j	ف	F/f
چ	Ch/ch	ق	Q/q
ح	H/ḥ	ك	K/k
خ	Kh/kh	گ	G/g
د	D/d	ل	L/l
ذ	Z/ẓ	م	M/m
ر	R/r	ن	N/n
ز	Z/z	و	V/v-W/w-Ū/ū
ژ	Zh/zh	ه	H/h
س	S/s	ي	Y/y-Ī/ī-Ā/á
ش	Sh/sh		

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In Russia, I thank the staffs of the Foreign Affairs Archive of the Russian Empire (AVPRI), the Russian State Military Historical Archive (RGVIA), the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), the Russian State Archive of the Navy (RGAVMF), the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), the Russian State Library –the Leninka- (RGB), and the National Library of Russia (RNB). I owe a very sincere debt to them for making it possible for me to do the research required for this thesis and for allowing me to make the archives and libraries my home in Russia. I must also thank to Dr. Özhan Kapıcı and Tibet Abak who shared the archives and libraries reading room with me day in and day out. Furthermore, Özhan and Tibet generously provided me with immensely valuable archival and library materials from Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (AAÉ) and the Leninka during their research in Paris and Moscow respectively and left me for ever in their debt. I would like to express my thanks to the following staffs of the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in Moscow - Aykut Ünal, Ceren Yazgan, Ersegül Ünüvar, and Emin Kiraz - for their assistance and support in conducting doctoral research in Moscow.

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Archives. I am grateful to the library staff of the LSE (BLPES). The Interlibrary Loan Section of the Library proved crucial in locating and obtaining published and unpublished materials and its work has been both truly remarkable and indispensable. Without their quick and effective help, this study would have continued for years. Some parts of the Russian State Military Historical Archive's (RGVIA) holdings had been digitalized by IDC Publishers in 2005 under the title of 'Russian Military Intelligence on Asia Online: Archive Series, 1651-1917' before I began my doctoral research. The ones which I have used in this thesis are Fonds 446 and 450 – Persia and Turkey. As anyone looking at my references will see, it contains valuable information for my research. Special thanks go to the Library's main Russian specialist Graham Camfield and Paul Horsler, who acquired this unique collection.

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## Introduction

This is a study of the struggle between the Russian,<sup>1</sup> Ottoman and Iranian empires firstly for the Caucasus,<sup>2</sup> and secondly – as key related areas – the basins of the Black and Caspian seas, eastern Anatolia, and the Zagros region.<sup>3</sup> In spite of the obvious importance of these areas where the Russian and Ottoman empires and Iran intersected, the geopolitics of the region has been little studied,<sup>4</sup> and the three rival

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<sup>1</sup>The term “Russian” does not only mean ethnic Russians. Military officers and bureaucrats of the Russian empire were not all of Russian origin, but rather included numerous Baltic Germans, Ukrainians, Poles, Lithuanians, as well as Circassians, Georgians, Armenians, Tatars and Āzarbāyjānis. In this thesis, all these officers and military staffs will be referred as Russians, even though many were ethnically of different origins. Indeed, Russian has two terms equally translatable into English as “Russian”. While the word *ruskii* refers specifically to ethnic Russians, the word *rossiiskii* is a term which covers various different groups inhabiting the Russia empire.

<sup>2</sup> In this work, the region south of the Caucasus Mountain range is called the southern Caucasus, instead of Transcaucasus or Transcaucasia, mainly and carelessly in use in English-language literature. The terms Transcaucasus and Transcaucasia in English are translations of the Russian *zakavkaz’e* meaning the region beyond the Caucasus Mountain range. Using these geographical terms seems innocent and harmless at first but the political meaning that legitimates the northern perspective could not be overlooked and accepted by other imperial players in the region. Even though these terms are imagined and created to make it easier to label some cities, rivers, mountain ranges and geographical regions, they, to some extent, bear the political traces of the inventor. When considered from this point of view, there is a clear inconsistency or carelessness that appears in the description of the area north of the Caucasus. One might expect that Precaucasus or Precaucasia should be widespread and popular in English and other Western literatures, as the translation of *predkavkaz’e*, however mainly the term “North Caucasus” is used by specialists and academicians.

<sup>3</sup> A comprehensive critique of geographical neologism of nineteenth-century colonialism as an extension of the Age of Enlightenment is beyond this work’s range but the terms “Near and Middle East” are not going to be used as they are certainly anachronistic and teleological regarding to the time period which is covered in this work and furthermore, like the terms Precaucasus or Transcaucasus, they, to a certain extent, incorporate a slanted rather than an objective geographical perspective. See for the origin of the terms Near and Middle East: Roderic H. Davison, “Where is the Middle East?,” *Foreign Affairs* 38, no. 4 (1960): pp. 665-75; Nikki R. Keddie, “Is There a Middle East?,” *IJMES* 4, no. 3 (1973): pp. 255-71; Clayton R. Koppes, “Captain Mahan, General Gordon, and the Origins of the Term ‘Middle East’,” *MES* 12, no. 1 (1976): pp. 95-98. As seen also in the example of France, the coinage of new terms and concepts in various areas of social, cultural, geographical, scientific and commercial life to some extent became a conscious effort at legitimisation in the Russian empire. Ferdinand Brunot and Charles Bruneau, *Précis de Grammaire Historique de la Langue Française* (Paris: Masson, 1949), p. 133. See for the example of France, Michael Tilby, “Neologism: A Linguistic and Literary Obsession in Early Nineteenth-Century France,” *The Modern Language Review* 104, no. 3 (2009): pp. 676-95.

<sup>4</sup> The Caucasus geographically covers the territory between the Azov, Black and Caspian Seas. Although some areas and cities such as Kars and Erzurum are perceived and accepted as parts of the Caucasus, I use eastern Anatolia to label that region. Moreover, the main reason why the terms east Anatolia and Zagros region are used in this work is to make it easier to describe and analyse the Irano-Ottoman military struggle which generally occurred in the area between Kars and Baghdad.

empires have very rarely been studied together and comparatively.<sup>5</sup> The absence of monographs on the one hand, and the importance of the problem under discussion on the other hand, made it necessary for this study to go beyond the purely military, diplomatic and geographical spheres and investigate in some detail other closely related areas, primarily central administration, internal politics, the international context, finance and demography. These are the central themes of this thesis, which explores above all questions of power. On the whole prestige and legitimisation were a product of the successful use of power, though a ruler's legitimacy had other sources too such as history and religion.<sup>6</sup> So the main focus of this thesis is on geopolitics, geography and military and diplomatic issues, with other elements studied to the extent that they influenced these core factors.

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to the term Transcaucasus or Transcaucasia related to the Russian nineteenth-century imperial perspective and imagination, some new concepts have currently appeared in scholarly literature. The Safavids used the term *Āzarbāyjān* to describe some of the territory that lay north of the Aras river, see Vladimir Minorsky, ed. *Tadhkirat al-Muluk: A Manual of Safavid Administration (circa 1137/1725)* (Cambridge: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial, 1943), pp. 100-02. The term Azerbaijan does not appear in most Russian or Iranian source written prior to the twentieth century, when referring to the lands of the river Aras. Although the Iranian imperial centre never tried to coin a special term for the region, the term "Transaraxia" (the land across the Aras river) has been proposed for the Iranian perspective by John Perry but it has not been accepted widely. John R. Perry, *Karim Khan Zand: A History of Iran, 1747-1779* (Chicago: UCP, 1979), pp. 106-10. Furthermore, the term "Subcaucasia" has been used in a historical perspective in his own works by Boghos Levon Zekian, to refer to the regions south of the Caucasus including the north-eastern part of Anatolia. According to him, this offers the advantage of bringing together the areas both of the southern Caucasus and the north-eastern Anatolia. Though this has some merit, to introduce new geographical concepts risks adding to the existing confusion of terms. Instead of inventing new geographical concepts, it makes more sense to use simple existing geographical terms but to be aware of their possible biases. Boghos Levon Zekian, "Culture, Policy, and Scholarship in the Subcaucasian Region (Some Critical Remarks and a Methodological Survey)," *Iran & the Caucasus* 12, no. 2 (2008): p. 330. in Markus Ritter, "The Lost Mosque(s) in the Citadel of Qajar Yerevan: Architecture and Identity, Iranian and Local Traditions in the Early 19th Century," *Iran and the Caucasus* 13, no. 2 (2009): p. 243. More neutrally, Atkin uses the designation of eastern Caucasus, see Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*.

<sup>6</sup> In scholarly literature, there are different types of definition for the term "empire". See for definition of empire, Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (London: Pimlico, 2003), pp. 3-26. Although this thesis mainly focuses on Russian imperial grand strategy in the Caucasus, what makes it an original work is its comparative analysis of regional imperial structures. All these three empires can generally be called land empires but unlike Iran, the Russian and Ottoman empires could also use waterways. See for the comparative study, Maurice Duverger, ed. *Le Concept d'Empire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1980). See for comprehensive analysis of political structure and motivation of land empires, Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1993). On the other hand there are other works focusing on maritime empires. See, for example Michael W. Doyle, *Empires* (London: Cornell University Press, 1986).

The thesis illustrates the geographical, military-diplomatic and demographic superiority of the Russian empire over the Ottoman empire and Iran, particularly in the Caucasus, between 1821 and 1833.<sup>7</sup> The nucleus of this work is a study of grand strategy,<sup>8</sup> wars, diplomacy and bio-political (demographic) policies. Military and diplomatic policies were closely interlaced in these years and must be analysed together. One of the key aims of this work is to get back beyond the myths and clichés to the realities of the Russian military-diplomatic effort particularly between 1821 and 1833. The thesis focuses on the wars of these years and the treaties of Erzurum, Turkmanchāy and Adrianople (Edirne), respectively signed in 1823, 1828 and 1829. I am interested in explaining how the Russian imperial machine devised and executed successful strategies to use its relative superiority over the Ottomans and the Qājārs and secure domination of the region. Russian success needs, however, to be understood within a broader context that also takes in Ottoman and Iranian

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Mann divides power into four sources – ideological, economic, military and political – and discusses the relationship between these four elements. Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power: A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760*, III vols., vol. I (Cambridge: CUP, 2012). A comprehensive discussion of the first two elements of power – ideological and economic – is beyond this work's range, but even so they will be touched upon briefly. Geography and demography will be brought to the forefront instead. The effect of geography and demography on the imperial policy-making process and the relationship between these two elements should not be overlooked as they were significant factors in terms of grand strategies of empires. In general, the prominence of geographical and demographic features of empires has not yet been sufficiently emphasised. Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals*: p. 447.

<sup>8</sup> The pioneer of the more recent scholar by literature on “grand strategy” – looking beyond military strategy to the political, economic, geographical, and demographic setting of imperial purpose – is Edward N. Luttwak. See for his works: Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century AD to the Third* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979); Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Soviet Union* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983); Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009). Furthermore, according to Paul M. Kennedy, grand strategy is mainly about the balancing of ends and means, that is, ‘the crux of grand strategy lies therefore in policy, that is, in the capacity of the leaders to bring together all of the elements, both military and non-military, for the preservation and enhancement of the best interest of state in wartime and peacetime’. Paul M. Kennedy, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 5. Lastly, one of the splendid works of LeDonne for my research was influenced by Luttwak and Kennedy, see John P. LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831* (Oxford: OUP, 2004). On Russian foreign policy and strategy, William C. Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia 1600-1914* (New York: The Free Press, 1992); Hugh Ragsdale, “Russian Foreign Policy, 1725-1815,” in *The Cambridge History of Russia: Imperial Russia, 1689-1917*, ed. Dominic Lieven (Cambridge: CUP, 2006); Hugh Ragsdale and Valerii Nikolaevich Ponomarev, *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993).

policy-making and perspectives, and is informed by a comparative sense of the strengths and weaknesses of all three imperial regimes.

In this thesis, the question of why Russia was more successful than the Ottoman state and Iran in the Caucasus between 1821 and 1833 is explained in three main ways: the first and most important factor in this process was the well-functioning fiscal-military machine of the Russian empire;<sup>9</sup> the second factor was the diplomatic and military skill of the Russian leadership which helped to avert any effective political and military alliance between the Ottoman empire and Iran and defeated its rivals in two separate and successive wars;<sup>10</sup> the last main factor in Russian success was its geopolitically superior position.<sup>11</sup> But local factors within the northern and southern Caucasus must not be forgotten. Geography encouraged the emergence of intensely local identities and the fragmentation of political authority into numerous petty kingdoms. The rival imperial powers sought to use these local communities and kingdoms to their own advantage but often found them hard to control. The thesis looks at the evolution of Russian thinking and policy as regards both its imperial rivals and the local potentially client communities in the Caucasus. The 300-year old rivalry in the region lying roughly from the south of the Caucasus to the Persian Gulf between the Ottoman state and Iran was used with unprecedented success by the Russian imperial policy-makers during 1821-33. Furthermore, invasion and annexation were supported by long-term efforts to secure conquered territory by colonisation.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Janet Hartley, "Russia as a Fiscal-Military State, 1689-1825," in *The Fiscal-Military State in Eighteenth-Century Europe: Essays in Honour of P.G.M. Dickson*, ed. Christopher Storrs (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 125-45.

<sup>10</sup>Laurence Kelly, *Diplomacy and Murder in Tehran: Alexander Griboyedov and Imperial Russia's Mission to the Shah of Persia* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2006), pp. 73-81.

<sup>11</sup>Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals*: pp. 201-30; LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*: pp. 15-37.

<sup>12</sup> There are plenty of modern works covering Russian colonisation methods and policies, see James A. Duran, "Catherine II, Potemkin, and Colonization Policy in Southern Russia," *RR* 28, no. 1 (1969):

This thesis shows that Ottoman-Iranian rivalry, which included a religious and ideological element and which had existed for centuries was still alive at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and thus these two imperial states could not collaborate in forming a military and political alliance against a third power,<sup>13</sup> the Russian empire, which in fact was the greatest threat to both of them. The thesis explains why. Domestic political factors mattered, especially in Iran, but I also show that the Russian government was very aware of the potential dangers of Ottoman-Iranian solidarity. This was a frequent theme in Russian official documents. Having fought simultaneous wars against the Iranians and Ottomans between 1804 and 1813 in the Caucasus, St. Petersburg was not satisfied with the balance of gains and losses which had been achieved by the Treaties of Bucharest and Gulistān, which concluded the Russo-Ottoman War of 1806-1812 and the Russo-Iranian War of 1804-1813. The great financial sacrifices and manpower losses suffered by Russia in the two wars to some extent justified St. Petersburg's view.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, there were some sporadic attempts both before and during the wars from both Istanbul and Tehran to form a temporary alliance against Russia and then to wage *jihād* but these attempts failed because the political interests of the rival

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pp. 23-36; Michael Rywkin, *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917* (London: Mansell, 1988); Kalpana Sahni, *Crucifying the Orient: Russian Orientalism and the Colonization of Caucasus and Central Asia* (Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 1997); Michael Khodarkovsky, "Of Christianity, Enlightenment, and Colonialism: Russia in the North Caucasus, 1550-1800," *The Journal of Modern History* 71, no. 2 (1999): pp. 394-430; Willard Sunderland, "The 'Colonization Question': Visions of Colonization in Late Imperial Russia," *JfGO* 48, no. 2 (2000): pp. 210-32; Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Nicholas B Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers: Forging Russia's Empire in the South Caucasus* (London: Cornell University Press, 2005); Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Nicholas Breyfogle, Abby Schrader, and Willard Sunderland, "Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History," (London: Routledge, 2007); Robert Geraci, "On 'Colonial' Forms and Functions," *SR* 69, no. 1 (2010): pp. 180-84; Alexander Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011); Alexander Morrison, "Metropole, Colony, and Imperial Citizenship in the Russian Empire," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 13, no. 2 (2012): pp. 327-64.

<sup>13</sup>Markus Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy: Competing Claims for Authority and Legitimacy in the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict," in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. Hakan T. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 151-73.

<sup>14</sup>Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question: Army, Government and Society, 1815-1833*: pp. 121-48.

regimes clashed.<sup>15</sup> Even basic cooperation was poor: as an interesting example, it is clear from the correspondence between Istanbul and Tehran that the Ottoman government did not even inform Iran diplomatically about the ongoing negotiations for a peace agreement with St. Petersburg in 1812 and thus Iran was forced to send a diplomatic note to Istanbul to learn of the treaty after it had been signed. The Russo-Ottoman peace treaty of Bucharest in 1812 was a key factor forcing the Iranians to make their own peace with Russia through the Treaty of Gulistān in 1813. This mutual distrust between Iran and the Ottomans was a main factor which St. Petersburg certainly did not create but used skilfully in its advance into the Caucasus.

This thesis views the Caucasus both as a territorial periphery and as an interaction centre of three different imperial structures: the Russian, Ottoman and Iranian empires. All three empires tried to create the best conditions for their future political plans, according to some of which the Caucasus was imagined as a natural borderland whereas in other cases it was seen as a threshold to be used as a base for further expansion.<sup>16</sup> Even though the topography of the Caucasus to some extent limited mutual interaction among the local communities, the geopolitical struggle between the rival empires did to a limited extent encourage contacts between local communities.

Of course, religion played a big role in encouraging the allegiance of local communities to one or other of the rival empires but the strength of religious allegiances differed. No Muslim community in the southern Caucasus put up nearly as long-lasting or determined a fight against Russia as the Circassian, Chechen and

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<sup>15</sup> Abū al-Fāḍl ‘Ābidīnī, "Ittiḥād-i Jahān-i Islām dar Dawrah-i Šafāvīyah va Afshārīyah," *Nāmah-i Tārīkh Pazhūhān* 12(1386 [2007/2008]): pp. 78-92.

<sup>16</sup> Marie Benningsen Broxup, ed. *The North Caucasus Barrier: The Russian Advance towards the Muslim World* (London: Hurst, 1992), chapters xiii-xvii, pp. 301-87.

other tribes to the north.<sup>17</sup> But geography was obviously a key cause of this. The mountains provided a unique base from which these peoples could fight back against Russian encroachment. It also mattered greatly that there were large Christian communities in the southern Caucasus, the Georgians and Armenians. But the fundamental reality was that in the longer run the peoples of the Caucasus were divided and that their rulers for the most part were forced to adapt pragmatically to shifts in power between the surrounding empires. On their own no local people, nor even a confederation of local peoples, could hope to keep imperial power at bay. So the fate of the region was in the end decided by struggles between the three rival empires, unless other Great Powers could be drawn into the struggle (as happened briefly but uniquely in the Crimean War of 1854-6).

## Existing Historiography

In the period between 1815 and 1853, the Russian empire was indisputably the strongest land power in Europe, and this might was used to maintain the order

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<sup>17</sup> Moshe Gammer, "The Beginnings of the Naqshibandiyya in Daghestan and the Russian Conquest of the Caucasus," *Die Welt des Islams* 34(1994): pp. 204-17; Khodarkovsky, "Of Christianity, Enlightenment, and Colonialism: Russia in the North Caucasus, 1550-1800," pp. 394-430; Austin Jersild, "Faith, Custom, and Ritual in the Borderlands: Orthodoxy, Islam, and the "Small Peoples" of the Middle Volga and the North Caucasus," *RR* 59, no. 4 (2000): pp. 512-29; Anna Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: the Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000); Gary Hamburg, Thomas Sanders, and Ernest Tucker, *Russian-Muslim Confrontation in the Caucasus: Alternative Visions of the Conflict between Imam Shamil and the Russians, 1830-1859* (London: Routledge, 2004). For the works on Muridism, see P. Alfer'ev, *Kazi-Mulla i miuridizm* (Kazan': Tsentral'naia tipografiia, 1909); N. A. Smirnov, *Miuridizm na kavkaze* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSR, 1963); Mukhadin Kandur, *Miuridizm: Istoriia kavkazskikh voen, 1819-1859 gg.* (Nal'chik: El'-Fa, 1996); AYTEK KUNDUKH, *Kafkasya Müridizmi (Gazavat Tarihi)*, ed. Tarık Cemal Kutlu (İstanbul: Gözde Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1987). For the missionary activities, see Hakan Kırımlı, "Crimean Tatars, Nogays and Scottish Missionaries: The Story of Kattı Geray and Other Baptised Descendants of the Crimean Khans," *CMRS* 45, no. 1 (2004): pp. 61-107; A. D. H. Bivar, "The Portraits and Career of Mohammed Ali, Son of Kazem-Beg: Scottish Missionaries and Russian Orientalism," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 57, no. 2 (1994): pp. 283-302; Paul Jenkins and Waltraud Haas, eds., *Führer zum Archiv der Basler Mission: Südrussland und Persien (besonders Kaukasus 1820-1840)* (Basel: Die Mission, 1980).

established by the Congress of Vienna of 1815.<sup>18</sup> In general, in this period the ‘legitimate’ monarchies of Europe stuck together for fear of a return to the internal convulsions and international anarchy that had devastated Europe between 1792 and 1815. For this reason Russia usually allied itself to Austria and Prussia. Britain sought a balance of power in Europe but, together with Russia, it was the main European power also operating outside Europe and it sought to limit Russia’s advance in order to protect its own imperial interests. But in the period which we are studying the ‘Great Game’ between Britain and Russia had not yet really got underway. As we shall see, in the years covered by this thesis Britain was not willing to make a major effort to support Iran against Russia and in the Mediterranean region it sought to work with Russia in order to protect the Greek rebellion from the Ottomans and divide the Russo-Austrian-Prussian alliance. Obviously, Iran and most of the Ottoman empire were not in Europe, and neither country was accepted as an equal by the Great Powers. The Ottomans and Iranians tried to use European Great Power rivalries to their own advantage but even the Ottomans, let alone the Iranians, were not yet as experienced and skilful at this game as they later became. This thesis illustrates this point, especially as regards the Iranians.

In scholarly literature, the nineteenth-century struggle between the Russian and Ottoman states in general has been separated geographically into two distinct regions - the Balkans and the Caucasus. In this context, the Balkans formed the main area of the so-called “Eastern Question” which, after the Congress of Vienna, turned into the most critical of the many questions in European international relations.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe, 1789-1848* (London: Abacus, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> For the historiography of the Eastern Question in English: George de Lacy Evans, *On the Designs of Russia* (London: J. Murray, 1828); George de Lacy Evans, *On the Practicability of an Invasion of British India: And the Commercial and Financial Prospects and Resources of the Empire* (London: Richardson, 1829); John MacNeill, *The Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East* (London:

Even though the term Eastern Question has sometimes been used to cover all political developments in the Ottoman empire, the term has been mainly used to examine the problems originating from the Balkan peninsula and at the Straits.<sup>20</sup> The Balkans and the Straits were linked because they were close geographically so developments in one area necessarily had a big impact both in the other and in the nearby Ottoman capital. In addition, the Balkans was open to new revolutionary ideas and political currents such as the Serbian and Greek revolts of 1804-1813 and 1821-29.<sup>21</sup>

As the Ottoman subjects of the Balkans were mostly Slav and Orthodox, the Russians saw themselves as their protectors and for Russian public opinion this seemed a legitimate reason for international intervention. On the other hand, though only Austria and Russia were much concerned about narrowly Balkan affairs, all the Great Powers (with the partial exception of Prussia) took a great interest in the fate of Istanbul and the Straits. All these reasons generally kept the Balkans and the Eastern Question at the very centre of European international relations during the period. By contrast, the Caucasus was a geographically more remote region where the interests of the European Great Powers were much less involved than in the Balkans and

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J. Murray, 1836); H. C. Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East* (London: John Murray, 1875); George N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia in 1889 and the Anglo-Russian Question* (London: Longmans, 1889); George Henry Bolsover, "David Urquhart and the Eastern Question, 1833-37: A Study in Publicity and Diplomacy," *The Journal of Modern History* 8, no. 4 (1936): pp. 444-67; Matthew Smith Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1966); Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *The Foreign Ministers of Alexander I: Political Attitudes and the Conduct of Russian Diplomacy, 1801-1825* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Karl Marx, *The Eastern Question: A Reprint of Letters Written 1853-1856 Dealing with the Events of the Crimean War*, ed. E. Marx Aveling and E. Aveling (London: F. Cass, 1969); David Saunders, *Russia in the Age of Reaction and Reform 1801-1881* (London: Longman, 1992); Allan Cunningham, *Eastern Questions in the Nineteenth Century: Collected Essays*, ed. Edward Ingram, vol. 2 (London: Frank Cass, 1993); Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848*; Miroslav Šedivý, "From Adrianople to Münchengrätz: Metternich, Russia, and the Eastern Question 1829—33," *The International History Review* 33, no. 2 (2011): pp. 205-33.

<sup>20</sup> On the Eastern crisis, see A. V. Fadeev, *Rossiiia i vostochnyi krizis 20-kh godov XIX v.* (Moskva 1958).

<sup>21</sup> On the Russian engagement with the Serbian and Greek revolts, see E. P. Kudriavtseva, *Rossiiia i stanovlenie serbskoi gosudarstvennosti (1812-1856)* (Moskva: Kvadriga, 2009); G. L. Arsh, *Rossiiia i bor'ba Gretsii za osvobozhdenie* (Moskva: Indrik, 2013).

where geography meant that it was in any case very difficult for most of them to bring their power to bear. For that reason, compared to the Balkans, the Caucasus has not received much attention from scholars and has not been generally perceived as a part of the Eastern Question.

The political relationship between the Russian empire and Iran has been discussed under the headings of the Great Game and 'Persian Question'.<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, the origin of these terms lay in the Russo-British struggle over Iran. In the nineteenth century, Iran became an arena where Britain and Russian interests collided. For Britain, it was a strategic block to ensure the security of the routes stretching through Central Asia to India. But the British obsession about the Russian threat and Russophobia in Britain only became virulent from the 1830s onwards and were of no great relevance to the period studied in this thesis. A long-term problem as regards the historiography of the region is that the role of the Iranian government and of Iranian domestic developments has often been ignored or distorted because of scholars' interest in British policy and Anglo-Russian rivalry. One result of this bias was that events in Iran were easily used to support stereotyped views, rooted much more in interpretations of Anglo-Russian rivalry than in what was actually happening inside Iran. Still, if the views of contemporary European historians led to a Eurocentric understanding of the Eastern Question, they did also sometimes include

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<sup>22</sup>The terms of the Great Game and Persian Question were invented in the mid-nineteenth century but they were anachronically used to characterise the earlier periods. For the current works in English, see David Gillard, *The Struggle for Asia, 1828-1914: A Study in British and Russian Imperialism* (London: Longman, 1977); Edward Ingram, "A Preview of the Great Game in Asia-I: The British Occupation of Perim and Aden in 1799," *MES* 9, no. 1 (1973): pp. 3-18; Edward Ingram, "A Preview of the Great Game in Asia-II: The Proposal of an Alliance with Afghanistan, 1798-1800," *MES* 9, no. 2 (1973): pp. 157-74; Edward Ingram, "A Preview of the Great Game in Asia-III: The Origins of the British Expedition to Egypt in 1801," *MES* 9, no. 3 (1973): pp. 296-314; Edward Ingram, "A Preview of the Great Game in Asia-IV: British Agents in the Near East in the War of the Second Coalition, 1798-1801," *MES* 10, no. 1 (1974): pp. 15-35; Edward Ingram, *The Beginning of the Great Game in Asia, 1828-1834* (Oxford: OUP, 1979); Edward Ingram, "Family and Faction in the Great Game in Asia: The Struggle over the Persian Mission, 1828-1835," *MES* 17, no. 3 (1981): pp. 291-309; Edward Ingram, *Britain's Persian Connection, 1798-1828: Prelude to the Great Game in Asia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Elena Andreeva, *Russia and Iran in the Great Game: Travelogues and Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 2007).

an important Asiatic dimension, involving the three-way power struggle of the Russian empire, the Ottoman empire and Iran for the control of the Caucasus.<sup>23</sup>

The rise of the term Eastern Question to prominence owed much to events occurring during the reign of Catherine II in which the two devastating wars of 1768-74 and 1787-92 were conducted against the Ottoman empire, and the Treaties of Küçük Kaynarca and Yassı were signed.<sup>24</sup> It was from this point that Ottoman weakness and even possible collapse became a source of concern and rivalry among the European Great Powers. Moreover, the Iranian expedition of 1796 showed that despite the restoration of the Iranian state by the Qājārs Iranian internal order and military strength were also very inferior to Russian. During the reign of Alexander I, Georgia was fully incorporated into the Russian empire, thus ending a process that had begun with the Treaty of Georgievsk, signed in 1783.<sup>25</sup> The Iranian and Ottoman imperial centres both tried to preserve the status quo in the region, but failed to help each other against their common northern rival. As a result, the imperial expansion of Russia in the Caucasus continued with the wars against the Iranians and the Ottomans, between 1804-1813 and 1806-1812 respectively. During these two wars, the Russian imperial army was forced simultaneously to fight against the Iranian and Ottoman armies in the various regions of the Caucasus, as well as against the Ottomans in the Balkans. But the key reason for the long duration and less than decisive outcome of these wars was Russian attention was distracted by simultaneous wars with France.

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<sup>23</sup>Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question: Army, Government and Society, 1815-1833*: p. 2.

<sup>24</sup>Isabel De Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Brian Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution in Eastern Europe: Russia's Turkish Wars in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Continuum International Publishing, 2011).

<sup>25</sup>For the incorporation or annexation of Georgia into the Russian empire, see Z. Avalov, *Prisoedinenie Gruzii k Rossii* (Sankt Petersburg: Tipografiia A. S. Suvorina, 1901); David M. Lang, *The Last Years of the Georgian Monarchy, 1658-1832* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957); Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Nikolas K. Gvosdev, *Imperial Policies and Perspectives towards Georgia, 1760-1819* (London: Macmillan, 2000).

The key political and military events of the period studied in this thesis were the Irano-Ottoman War of 1821-23,<sup>26</sup> the Treaty of Erzurum of 1823,<sup>27</sup> the Greek movement of 1821-29,<sup>28</sup> the Russo-Iranian War of 1826-28,<sup>29</sup> the Battle of Navarino of 1827, the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29,<sup>30</sup> the Treaties<sup>31</sup> of Turkmanchāy of

<sup>26</sup> For the Irano-Ottoman War of 1821-1823, see Sabri Ateş, *Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843-1914* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), pp. 52-57; Graham Williamson, "The Turko-Persian War of 1821-1823: Winning the War but Losing the Peace," in *War and Peace in Qajar Persia: Implications Past and Present*, ed. Roxane Farmanfarmaian (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 88-109; Riżā Qulī Khān Hidāyat, *Tārīkh-i Rawzat al-Şafā*, II vols., vol. II (Tehran: 1270-1274 [1853-1856]); Muḥammad Taqī Lisān al-Mulk Sipīhr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh: Tārīkh-i Qājārīyah*, vol. I (Tīhrān: Dībā, 1390 [2011/2012]), pp. 318-49; Muḥammad Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad Raḥīm Linjānī Işfahānī, *Jannat al-Akhbār (Bakhsh-i Tārīkh-i Zandīyah va Qājār)*, ed. Mir Hashem Mohaddis (Tīhrān: Kitābkhānah, Mūzih va Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, 1391 [2012/2013]), pp. 166-75; Jamīl Qūzānlū, *Tārīkh-i Nizāmī-i Īrān*, II vols., vol. II (Tīhrān: Chāpkhānah-i Fardūwsī, 1315 [1936/1937]), pp. 819-42; B. P. Balaian, *Diplomaticheskaia istoriia Russko-iranskikh voyn i prisoeдинeniia vostochnoi Armenii v Rossii* (Erevan: Izdatel'stvo AN Armianskoi SSR, 1988), particularly pp. 124-36.

<sup>27</sup> Bruce Masters, "The Treaties of Erzurum (1823 and 1848) and the Changing Status of Iranians in the Ottoman Empire," *IS* 24, no. 1 (1991): pp. 3-15.

<sup>28</sup> Charles William Crawley, *The Question of Greek Independence* (Cambridge: CUP, 2014); George F. Jewsbury, "The Greek Question: The View from Odessa 1815-1822," *CMRS* 40, no. 4 (1999): pp. 751-62.

<sup>29</sup> V. A. Potto, *Kavkazskaia voina v otdel'nykh ocherkakh, episodakh, legendakh i biografiakh*, IV vols., vol. III (Sankt Peterburg: V. Berezovskii, 1888); V. A. Potto, *Kavkazskaia voina: Persidskaia voina 1826-1828 gg.*, V vols., vol. III (Stavropol': Kavkazskii krai, 1993); N. F. Dubrovin, *Istoriia voiny i vladychestva russkikh na kavkaze*, VI vols., vol. VI (Sankt Peterburg: V. Berezovskii, 1888); S. E. Skrutovskii, *Leib-Gvardii Svodnyi Polk na Kavkaze v Persidskuiu Voynu s 1826 po 1828 g.* (Sankt Peterburg: 1896); *Podrobnoe opisanie Persii, s prisovokupleniem pokhoda Persiian protiv Rossii v 1826, 1827 i 1828 g.*, vol. III (Moskva: Tipografiia S. Selivanovskogo); V. A. Bartolomei, *Posol'stvo kniazia Menshikova v Persiiu v 1826 godu* (Sankt Peterburg: Obshchestvennaia Pol'za); "Sovremennie letopisi: Vzglia na podvigi rossiian v Persii v 1826 i 1827 g.," *Otechestvennie zapiski* XXXIII(1828); P. P. Zubov, *Kartina poslednei voiny Rossii s Persieiu 1826-1828* (Sankt Peterburg: Tipografiia Konrada Vingebera, 1834); "Persidskaia voina: Kompaniia 1826 goda iz zapisok grafa Simonicha," *KS* XXII(1901); Iu. V. Starshov, *Russko-persidskaia voina 1826-1828* (Moskva: Ekslibris, 2006).

<sup>30</sup> P. A. Iovskii, *Posledniaia voina s Turtsieiu, zakliuchaiushchaia v sebe kampaniiu 1828 i 1829 godov v evropeiskoi i aziatskoi Turtsii i na kavkaze*, II vols., vol. I (Sankt Peterburg: Tipografiia Depart. Narod. Prosveshch., 1830); *ibid.*, II; N. I. Ushakov, *Istoriia voennykh deistvii v aziatskoi Turtsii v 1828 i 1829 godakh*, II vols., vol. I (Sankt Peterburg: Tipografiia Eduarda Pratsa, 1836); *ibid.*, II; N. A. Lukianovich, *Opisanie turetskoi voiny 1828 1829 godov*, IV vols., vol. I (Sankt Peterburg: Tipografiia Eduarda Pratsa, 1844); *ibid.*, II; N. A. Lukianovich, *Opisanie turetskoi voiny 1828 1829 godov*, IV vols., vol. IV (Sankt Peterburg: Tipografiia Eduarda Pratsa, 1847); Vasilii Ivanovich Melikhov, *Opisanie deistvii chernomorskogo flota v prodolzhenie voiny s Turtsiei, v 1828 i 1829 godakh* (Sankt Peterburg: Tipografiia Karla Kraiia, 1850); V. A. Potto, *Kavkazskaia voina v otdel'nykh ocherkakh, episodakh, legendakh i biografiakh: Turetskaia voina 1828-1829 g.* (Sankt Peterburg: V. Berezovskii, 1889); V. A. Potto, *Kavkazskaia voina: Turetskaia voina 1828-1829 gg.*, V vols., vol. IV (Stavropol': Kavkazskii krai, 1994); A. Verigin, *Voennoe obozrenie pokhoda rossiiskikh voisk v evropeiskoi Turtsii v 1829-m godu* (S. Peterburg: Voennaia Tipografiia, 1846); V. I. Sheremet, *Turtsiia i Adrianopol'skii mir 1829 g.* (Moskva: Nauka, 1975); G. V. Valentini, *Obozrenie glavneishikh deistvii general-fel'dmarshala kniazia varshavskago, grafa Paskevicha-Erivanskago protiv Turok v Azii*, vol. Sankt Peterburg (Tipografiia Nikolaia Grecha, 1836).

<sup>31</sup> Victor Fontainer, *Voyages en Orient, Entrepris par Ordre du Gouvernement Français, de l'Année 1821 à l'Année 1829* (Paris: Librairie Universelle, 1829); William Monteith, *Kars and Erzeroum with the Campaigns of Prince Paskiewitch in 1828 and 1829* (London: Longman, 1856); James Edward

1828 and Adrianople (Edirne) of 1829, the first Mehmed Ali of Egypt crisis of 1832-33, and the Russo-Ottoman Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi of 1833. In this context, one of the most interesting and significant events of the first quarter of the nineteenth century was the military intervention of the Russian empire in collaboration with Britain and France in the Greek conflict at the expense of the Ottoman empire. The Battle of Navarino of 1827 was perceived by the Ottomans as an indication of the long-running aggressive and imperialist ambition of Russia. The Russian government supported the Greek uprising and justified its decision to go to war with the Ottomans by religious rhetoric. The Irano-Ottoman war of 1821-23 was forgotten in western-language studies, which were much more concerned with the Greek rebellion of 1821-29. The same was indeed true at the time as regards not just the European powers but also the Ottoman government. But although even Iranian and Ottoman specialists have also seldom been interested in the war, it did have some interest and significance. Study of the war illustrates in striking and graphic fashion the specific weaknesses of both Iran and the Ottoman empire, and shows too how domestic – and often purely dynastic - political factors had a big impact on foreign-policy decision-making. But the course of the war also provides fine examples of how the plans of the rival imperial centres became entangled and distorted by many local factors in the imperial borderlands.<sup>32</sup>

## Notes on Methodology and Sources

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Alexander, *Travels to the Seat of War in the East, Through Russia and the Crimea in 1829*, II vols., vol. I (London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1830); *ibid.*, II; Helmuth von Moltke, *The Russians in Bulgaria and Rumelia in 1828 and 1829* (London: John Murray, 1854); Felix Fonton, *La Russie dans l'Asie Mineure, ou Compagne du Marechal Paskevitch en 1828 et 1829* (Leneveu: Paris, 1840).

<sup>32</sup>Kelly, *Diplomacy and Murder in Tehran: Alexander Griboyedov and Imperial Russia's Mission to the Shah of Persia*.

This work differs both in terms of methodology and subject-matter from works already published. It also blends a thematic structure with a chronological narrative. Although this work is based on comparative research, it situates itself above all within borderland literature and Russian historiography. There are several collections of primary source material in the Russian language;<sup>33</sup> the single most important one being the massive, twelve-volume work published by the Caucasian Archeographical Commission, the first ten volumes of which were edited by Adol'f Petrovich Berzhe and the rest by Dmitrii Arkad'evich Kobiakov. It appeared between 1866 and 1904 and contained documents taken from the archive of the Caucasian Viceroy relating to the period 1801 to 1862.<sup>34</sup> Another important set of published primary sources covers Russian foreign policy in certain periods of the nineteenth

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<sup>33</sup> In the second half of the nineteenth century, several collections of primary source material – i.e. official documents, accounts, correspondences, and memoirs produced in previous centuries and even decades, gradually started to be transcribed and published in government-sponsored and civil journals in the Tsarist regime. Although these transcribed primary sources undoubtedly were subject to strict censorship, the use of them became increasingly widespread among the academic and research circles across the empire. Most significantly, the value of these sources gradually increased during the Soviet era because Russian state archives were largely closed to both foreign and Soviet scholars until the 1990s. The restrictions on archival access imposed by the Soviet state were a major obstacle to the development of the comparative and critical methodology for Russian imperial history. Above all, one of the main disadvantages of these transcribed sources was that they were to be offered to the public without their own facsimiles due to the then technological level and possibilities. Accordingly, scholars and researchers were deprived of comparing the transcribed forms with the original manuscripts. Despite not being directly associated with the subject of the thesis, the manuscript of a published official report which I have come across during my doctoral research in the RGVA, has proved that its published form in *Russkii vestnik* in 1867 has to some extent been falsified and not intact. When thoroughly compared with the original manuscript, it is obvious that the published version does not include several sentences and even paragraphs in the main text and footnotes relating to a wide range of issues – i.e. backwardness of the Qajar system, deceitfulness of the Qajar statesmen, and treachery of the Polish and Russian deserters. The main purpose and motivation of writing this kind of report was directly related to Nicholas I's visit to the Caucasus. Briefly, in 1837, Nicholas I had travelled to the Caucasus and, during a meeting with Mīrzā Taqī Khān, requested that the Russian battalion be dissolved and the Russian soldiers returned Russia and in 1838, Captain Lev Al'brant had been sent to Iran to bring back to Russia the Russian deserters residing in Iran. In his account, Al'brant tells how he was able to overcome numerous difficulties and successfully carry out his task. The mindset and motivation behind this sort of falsification or distortion in the second half of the nineteenth century is a subject of another thorough study and analysis but based on this example, it might be said that the intactness of the published primary sources not only in Russian but also in other languages is questionable. For the original manuscript, see RGVA, fond: 446, opis': 1, delo: 360, pp. 1-79. For the published version, see [Lev] Al'brant, "Komandirovka kapitana Al'branta v Persiiu v 1838 godu," *Russkii vestnik* 68, no. 3 (1867): pp. 304-40.

<sup>34</sup> Adol'f Petrovich Berzhe and Dmitrii Arkad'evich Kobiakov, eds., *Akty, sobrannye kavkazskoiu arheograficheskoiu kommissiei*, XII vols. (Tiflis: Tipografiia glavnago upravleniia namestnika kavkazskago, 1866-1904).[Hereafter *AKAK*]

and early twentieth centuries, which was issued by the Foreign Ministry of the USSR and of the Russian Federation. Seventeen volumes of this series have been published up to now, some of which cover the period included in this thesis.<sup>35</sup>

The Ottoman chronicles, *Şânî-zâde Târîhi*, *Es'ad Efendi Tarihi*, *Târih-i Enderûn*, *Târih-i Cevdet*, and *Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi* have been key sources of information for the early period of Ottoman-Iranian-Russian relations.<sup>36</sup> Except few examples of recent scholarship, the Ottoman military historiography was neglected in general, particularly the period covering the post-seventeenth century. Although it is not possible to witness any monograph or well-researched article on the Ottoman-Iranian War of 1821-23, there are only four works on the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29, two of which were written by Mehmed Sadık Rıfat and Ahmed Muhtar in Ottoman Turkish and the others were by Celal Erkin and Naci Çakın respectively.<sup>37</sup>

In the Persian language too, there are several collections of primary sources, one of which is a seven-volume work including diplomatic reports and correspondence, published by the Foreign Ministry of Iran.<sup>38</sup> A four-volume collection of other Iranian documents, edited by Muḥammad Rizā Naṣîrî, is also

<sup>35</sup> *Vneshniaia politika Rossii XIX i nachala XX veka*, (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1961-). [Hereafter *VPR*]

<sup>36</sup> *Şânî-Zâde Mehmed 'Atâ'ullah, Şânî-Zâde Târîhi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1223-1237/1808-1821)*, II vols., vol. I (İstanbul: Çamlıca, 2008); *ibid.*, II; Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, *Vak'a-Nüvis Es'ad Efendi Tarihi (Bâhir Efendi'nin Zeyl ve İlâveleriyle 1237-1241 / 1821-1826)*, ed. Ziya Yılmaz (İstanbul: Osav, 2000); *Atâ Tayyâr-Zâde, Osmanlı Saray Tarihi: Târîh-i Enderûn*, ed. Mehmet Arslan, V vols., vol. III (İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 2010); Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'aniüvis Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, ed. Nuri Akbayan, trans. Ahmet Hezarfen, VIII vols., vol. I (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999); *ibid.*, II-III; *ibid.*, IV-V; *ibid.*, VI-VII-VIII; Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Târîh-i Cevdet*, XII vols., vol. X (Dersa'âdet [İstanbul]: Matbaa-i Osmaniye, 1309 [1891]); *ibid.*, XI; *ibid.*, XII.

<sup>37</sup> Mehmed Sadık Rıfat Paşa, *Rusya Muharebesi Tarihi* (İstanbul: Takvimhane-i Amire, 1275 [1858/1859]); Ahmed Muhtar, *Türkiye Devletinin En Mühim ve Meşhûr Esfârından 1244-1245 H. (1828-1829 M.) Türkiye-Rusya Seferi ve Edirne Mu'âhedesi Yâhûd Vakitsiz Seferin 'İbret ve İntibâh Dersleri*, II vols., vol. I (Ankara: Büyük Erkan-ı Harbiye Reisliği Ankara Matbaası, 1928); *ibid.*, II; Celal Erkin, *1828-1829 Türk-Rus Harbi (Kafkas Cephesi)* (İstanbul: Askeri Matbaa, 1940); Naci Çakın, *Osmanlı-Rus Harbi (1828-1829)* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1978).

<sup>38</sup> *Guzîdah-i Asnâd-i Siyâsî-i Īrân va 'Uşmânî: Dawrah-i Qājārîyah*, (Tihirân: Daftar-i Muṭâla'ât-i Siyâsî va Bayn al-Milâlî, 1369 [1990/1991]). [Hereafter *GASÎU*]

significant in terms of analysing the disputes between the three imperial states.<sup>39</sup> A significant two-volume collection consisting of letters and reports of Abū al-Qāsim Qā'im'maqām Farāhānī, the grand vizier of 'Abbās Mīrzā, elaborates on mostly domestic politics and the political atmosphere in Iran during the first decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>40</sup> Finally, a comprehensive two-volume work, compiled by Ghulām Ḥusayn Mīrzā Šālih, covers the political relationship of Iran with Great Britain, Russia and Ottoman empire.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, this thesis relies heavily on the Foreign Affairs Archive of the Russian Empire, the Russian State Military Historical Archive, the Russian State Historical Archive, the Russian State Archive of the Navy, the State Archive of the Russian Federation, the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archive of Turkey, the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, the Public Record Office of the National Archives and Archives of Foreign Affairs of France.

## Structure of the Thesis

After listing the existing historiography in the introductory chapter, the first chapter of the thesis describes the geographical and geopolitical background of the Caucasus and its neighbouring regions – the Black and Caspian Seas, eastern Anatolia, and the Zagros region. To understand Russo-Ottoman-Iranian rivalry it is necessary to take into account the geographical and geopolitical nature of this interconnected region together and as a unit. In this chapter, the geographical

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<sup>39</sup>Muḥammad Rizā Naṣīrī, ed. *Asnād ū Makātabāt-i Tārīkhī Īrān-i Qājārīyah* (Tihṛān: Kayhān, 1366-1368 [1987/1989]). [Hereafter *AMTĪQ*]

<sup>40</sup>Abū al-Qāsim ibn 'Īsā Qā'im'maqām, *Nāmah'hā-yi Parākandah-i Qā'im'maqām Farāhānī*, ed. Jahāngīr Qā'im'maqāmī, II vols. (Tihṛān: Bunyād-i Farhang-i Īrān, 1978-1980). [Hereafter *NPQF*]

<sup>41</sup>Ghulām Ḥusayn Mīrzā Šālih, ed. *Asnād-i Rasmī dar Ravābiṭ-i Siyāsī-i Īrān bā Ingilīs va Rūs va 'Uṣmānī*, II vols. (Tihṛān: Nashr-i Tārīkh-i Īrān, 1365 [1986/1987]). [Hereafter *ARRSĪRU*]

features of these regions are described and analysed with regard to military and commercial considerations. The significance of the mountains and the vital importance of the river-ways facilitating regional transportation and communication are explained. If the Caucasus Mountains impeded Russian expansion, the rivers were among its greatest assets. The Black Sea coastal fortress and port system, as one of the most important factors in imperial expansion, is discussed as well as the intersection points of the military and transportation land routes. In the second section of Chapter One I describe the local peoples and their histories. In particular, I focus on their social structure, religious allegiances and their political and economic interests because these factors influenced their policies vis-à-vis the three imperial rivals.

Chapter Two compares the three imperial states – Russia, the Ottoman empire and Iran. A detailed study of the fiscal-military machines of these empires is beyond the scope of this research but I make a general comparison of their military, political, fiscal and economic strengths and weaknesses. I trace the history of the three imperial polities and give a sense of how history conditioned their policies both towards each other and in the Caucasus and adjacent areas during the period covered by this thesis.

Chapter Three examines the Russo-Iranian and Russo-Ottoman wars between 1804 and 1813 and the Iranian-Ottoman military and political cooperation attempts against their common rival in the Caucasus. The year of 1801 was the start of permanent Russian presence in the southern Caucasus. While the western part of Georgia was nominally under the authority of the Ottomans, the Caucasian khanates along the Caspian coast and east of Georgia were still under the control of Iran. According to the Russian high command and Alexander I, the Russian south-eastern

border should be aligned with the Aras and Kura rivers. Though the aggression of Russia in the Caucasus had been considered as an obvious threat not only Iran and the Ottoman empire but also by the local petty kingdoms, all these political entities, especially imperial ones, failed to cooperate with each other in the Caucasus against their common rival.

Chapter Four examines the Irano-Ottoman War of 1821-23. It should be noted that there are very few secondary sources that examine this war or even provide a basic chronicle of events. In fact, no scholar has thus far drawn attention to this war, whether to its causes, its local context, or to the manner in which Russia was the main beneficiary of the war. The Russian financial contribution to Iran during the war against the Ottomans was a logical part of St. Petersburg's overall strategy to keep its rivals divided but the main motive behind the Russian intervention was to weaken the Ottoman military forces deployed in the Balkans and to undermine the British trade network established between Tabrīz and Erzurum.

Chapter Five deals with the origins and conduct of the Russo-Iranian War of 1826-28. Russia began its advance into the southern Caucasus against Iran towards the end of the eighteenth century and brought this advance to a successful conclusion in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The Qājār state was weak and struggles over the succession were a further source of vulnerability under Fath 'Alī Shāh. In addition, Georgia's recognition of Russian suzerainty upset the already delicate and unstable balance of power among the Ottomans, the Georgians, the Armenians, the Iranians and the Muslim khans of the southern Caucasus and became a crucial base for Russian domination of the region. All these destabilizing factors contributed to a state of continual warfare in the region in the period covered by the thesis. An important point to note was that none of the three imperial rivals had a single source

of authority as regards policy in the region. If the Russian tsar's control over his lieutenants was much greater than that of the Ottoman sultan or Iranian shāh, it remained true that tsarist generals in the Caucasus often found ample opportunities for independent action.

In Chapter Six, the coverage of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 does not attempt to compete with the existing multi-volume campaign histories in terms of the day-to-day detail. Instead, the focus is on strategy, main operations, the role of personality, tactics, supplies, logistics, as well as on the internal administration and politics of the armies.

Chapter Seven lays stress on another component of geopolitics, namely post-war demographic fluctuations in the Caucasian provinces of the three imperial powers. The mass emigration of Armenians from Iran and the Ottoman state into the lands newly conquered by Russia was an important element in Russian colonisation and in the consolidation of Russian rule in the region. The Treaties of Turkmanchāy and Adrianople (Edirne) resulted in approximately 140,000 Armenians emigrating to Russian territory. This was to be neither the first nor the last example of how wars had major demographic consequences for the local peoples, with whole communities at times being deported.

# Chapter One - Rediscovering the Caucasus: The Geopolitical Background

“Conditions of the ground dictate the actions you can take.

There are grounds one doesn’t contest.”

Sun-Tzu

## The Role of Geography

To imagine a region with its all geographical features such as seas, rivers, lakes, mountains, hills and passes is a complicated process, and moreover the constructions built in or near the region such as ports, fortresses, bridges and canals can make it more complicated. In addition, to understand the Caucasus as a theatre of war in the early nineteenth century one also needs to take into account adjacent regions such as the Black and Caspian seas, eastern Anatolia and the Zagros region. Methodologically, geography and history are distinct ways of looking at the world but they are so closely related that one cannot afford to ignore either.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, both geography and history offer not just one perspective upon the world but multiple perspectives upon peoples, places and periods.<sup>2</sup> War holds a significant

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<sup>1</sup> On history and geography, see Henry Clifford Darby, "On the Relations of Geography and History," *Transactions and Papers (Institute of British Geographers)*, no. 19 (1953): pp. 1-11; Leonard Guelke, "The Relations Between Geography and History Reconsidered," *History and Theory* 36, no. 2 (1997): pp. 216-34; John H. Pryor, *Geography, Technology, and War: Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean, 649-1571* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992); Alan R. H. Baker, *Geography and History: Bridging the Divide* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> For the useful connection between geography and history, see Halford John Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," *The Geographical Journal* 23, no. 4 (1904): pp. 421-37; Spencer Wilkinson, Thomas Holdich, and Halford John Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History: Discussion," *The Geographical Journal* 23, no. 4 (1904): pp. 437-44; Halford John Mackinder, "The Teaching of Geography and History as a Combined Subject," *The Geographical Teacher* 7, no. 1 (1913): pp. 4-19.

position between geography and history.<sup>3</sup> For this reason, the geography of war is a complicated but significant area of research that needs attention to fully understand and analyse the nature of any specific conflict.<sup>4</sup> There are a number of geographic factors that contribute to the origins of war. Historically, the desire to acquire new and fertile land, key communication routes, strategic points and natural resources has generally been a cause of war. War has been one of the most vital elements in the evolution of states. But the geography of a region exists not just in maps but also in a people's imagination and the experience of war in a region can have a strong impact on this imagination.<sup>5</sup>

In practical terms, the strategies, technologies, tactics and results of war have been affected by geography and its branches. The basic definitions of geography must be correlated into the realm of war by looking at a number of sub-disciplines such as physical, political, economic and cultural geography. Physical geography refers to the physical features that are distributed over a particular region. War in general and specific military campaigns are affected by climate, terrain, landforms, or any physical feature that may hinder or assist the warring states. For a general, choosing the correct terrain on which to fight battles was always a crucial test of his skill: in many cases getting this choice right could be as important as the size of armies or the nature of their weapons. To understand a region's geography and adapt your strategy to that geography was essential if wars and campaigns were to be won.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Baker, *Geography and History: Bridging the Divide*: p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Lukas Milewski, "Grand Strategy and Operational Art: Companion Concepts and Their Implications for Strategy," *Comparative Strategy* 33, no. 4 (2014): pp. 342-53.

<sup>5</sup> For the Russian imagination for the Caucasus, see Susan Layton, "The Creation of an Imaginative Caucasian Geography," *SR* 45, no. 3 (1986): pp. 470-85; Mikail Mamedov, "Imagining the Caucasus in Russian Imperial Consciousness, 1801-1864" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Georgetown University, 2010). For the Far East, see Susanna Soojung Lim, *China and Japan in the Russian Imagination, 1685-1922: To the Ends of the Orient* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> W. L. Grant, "Geographical Conditions Affecting the Development of Canada," *Geographical Journal* 38, no. 4 (1911): pp. 362-74; G. R. Parkin, H. J. Mackinder, and L. S. Amery, "Geographical Conditions Affecting the Development of Canada: Discussion " *The Geographical Teacher* 38, no. 4

Cartography became a crucial element in eighteenth-century warfare, as well as more broadly as an arm of both science and government, both in Europe as a whole<sup>7</sup> and in Russia.<sup>8</sup> Since men and supplies had to move if advances into hostile territory were to be sustainable, a general needed to take communications, climate and topography into account when planning a campaign.<sup>9</sup> The geography of a region would, for example, determine the size of armies that could be deployed there. Generals planning campaigns would study where cavalry could feed themselves and

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(1911): pp. 374-81; H. J. Mackinder, "Geographical Conditions Affecting the British Empire: I. The British Islands," *The Geographical Journal* 33, no. 4 (1909): pp. 462-76; George Chisholm and H. J. Mackinder, "Geographical Conditions Affecting the British Empire: Discussion," *The Geographical Journal* 33, no. 4 (1909): pp. 476-78.

<sup>7</sup> For the influence of the Enlightenment on geography, see Matthew H. Edney, "Reconsidering Enlightenment Geography and Map Making: Reconnaissance, Mapping, Archive," in *Geography and Enlightenment*, ed. David N. Livingstone and Charles W. J. Withers (London: UCP, 1999), pp. 165-98. For the cartography in Europe, Josef Konvitz, *Cartography in France, 1660-1848: Science, Engineering, and Statecraft* (Chicago: UCP, 1987); J. Brian Harley, "Silences and Secrecy: The Hidden Agenda of Cartography in Early Modern Europe," *Imago Mundi* 40, no. 1 (1988): pp. 57-76; David Buisseret, ed. *Monarchs, Ministers, and Maps: The Emergence of Cartography as a Tool of Government in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: UCP, 1992); David Turnbull, "Cartography and Science in Early Modern Europe: Mapping the Construction of Knowledge Spaces," *Imago Mundi* 48, no. 1 (1996): pp. 5-24; Valerie A. Kivelson, "Cartography, Autocracy and State Powerlessness: The Uses of Maps in Early Modern Russia," *Imago mundi* 51, no. 1 (1999): pp. 83-105; Alexey V. Postnikov, "Maps for Ordinary Consumers versus Maps for the Military: Double Standards of Map Accuracy in Soviet Cartography, 1917-1991," *Cartography and Geographic Information Science* 29, no. 3 (2002): pp. 243-60; Christian Jacob, *The Sovereign Map: Theoretical Approaches in Cartography throughout History* (Chicago: UCP, 2006); Jeremy Black, "Government, State, and Cartography: Mapping, Power, and Politics in Europe, 1650-1800," *Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization* 43, no. 2 (2008): pp. 95-105; Gilles Palsky, "Connections and Exchanges in European Thematic Cartography: The Case of 19th Century Choropleth Maps," *Belgeo*, no. 3-4 (2008): pp. 413-26; James R. Akerman, ed. *The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire* (Chicago: UCP, 2009); Jeremy Black, "A Revolution in Military Cartography?: Europe 1650-1815," *The Journal of Military History* 73, no. 1 (2009): pp. 49-68.

<sup>8</sup> For the cartographical development in Russia, Leo Bagrow, "At the Sources of the Cartography of Russia," *Imago Mundi* 16, no. 1 (1962): pp. 33-48; S. Ye. Fel, "Russian Cartography of the 18th Century as a Synthesis of Astronomic-Geodetic and Graphic Processes," *Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization* 11, no. 1 (1974): pp. 15-23; Leo Bagrow, *A History of the Cartography of Russia Up to 1800* (Wolfe Island: Walker Press, 1975); Steven Seegel, *Mapping Europe's Borderlands: Russian Cartography in the Age of Empire* (Chicago: UCP, 2012); Pellervo Kokkonen, "Practice of Marine Cartography and the Russian Representation of the Baltic Sea in the Eighteenth Century," *Fennia-International Journal of Geography* 175, no. 1 (2013): pp. 1-96; Alexei V. Postnikov, "Contact and Conflict: Russian Mapping of Finland and the Development of the Russian Cartography in the 18th and 19th Centuries," *Fennia-International Journal of Geography* 171, no. 2 (2013): pp. 63-98.

<sup>9</sup> Russian military bureaucrats and geographers' progress and enthusiasm in mapping and cartography was far advanced in comparison to those of the Ottoman empire and Iran. Modern geographical, topographical, statistical, ethnographical and hydrographical measurements and intelligence made the Russian military campaigns more manageable vis-à-vis the Ottomans and Iranians. For the geographical measurements and maps of the Balkans, Anatolia, the Caucasus, and Iran, RGVA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 151-275 [up to 1829]; fond: 446, opis': 1, delo: 54-79 [up to 1826].

which bridges or passes could most easily block an advance. But a successful general would also need to ask what kind of warfare a terrain favoured and whether his own army and local allies were well-adapted to fighting in this terrain. In this context not just physical but also political and cultural geography mattered. But the impact even of physical geography was not entirely fixed: much would also depend on the nature of a specific army. For example, India had often been invaded over its north-west frontier by steppe cavalry armies from Central Asia but it was a very different matter to move a modern European-style army with its artillery and its logistical tail through Afghanistan and Iran. Warfare in steppe was very different and insuperable than warfare in central Europe with its dense network of towns and prosperous villages, where the troops could obtain provisions, clothing, horses, and carts according to their needs. In the open steppe and mountainous regions, there were few towns, scattered villages and lacking transportation roads. This was also true of warfare in the Caucasus region.<sup>10</sup>

### **Caucasus Region**

In some respect the Caucasus has been one of the strangest and most interesting regions of the world. For thousands of years it has been a region where many routes of migration, invasion, trade, and cultural influences intersect. The term Caucasus, which has been used from the time of Herodotus, in the strict physical geographical sense refers only to the main chains of the mountains, extending from the Taman peninsula on the Azov Sea to the Apsheron peninsula on the Caspian, from west-north-west to east-south-east, and occupying a strip of land 1,100 km wide

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<sup>10</sup> See e.g. the comments of Levin von Bennigsen, a senior Russian general, on the possibilities of invading India: Dominic Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon: The Battle for Europe, 1807 to 1814* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), pp. 64-65.

while stretching some 720 km north to south.<sup>11</sup> Its total area is about 145,000 km<sup>2</sup>. More than a dozen peaks exceed 5,000 m. At the same time, the word Caucasus may be a term of political geography which can cover the provinces to the north and south of the main range of the mountains. In general, the Caucasus is geographically and politically divided into northern and southern parts. The north of the Caucasus is known as 'the North Caucasus', but is rarely called Ciscaucasia (Predkavkaz'e) in Russian-language literature. The northern slopes of the Caucasus Mountains lead down to the Eurasian steppe and the population is restricted to the river banks. The south of the Caucasus is commonly known as Transcaucasia (Zakavkaz'e). The southern slopes of the Caucasus Mountains slip into the rich agricultural zones of Georgia and the Mughan plains along the Caspian, and the rough uplands of Anatolia and the Iranian plateau. The southern slopes facing the sun were also much more densely populated than those turned towards the arid and infertile steppes of Europe. The name Transcaucasia was designed by Russian leaders in St. Petersburg in the nineteenth century, because seen from the northern perspective, this was a region situated behind the main Caucasian range.<sup>12</sup> The word Transcaucasia still remains in frequent use in Russian and western language publications. Historically, the Caucasus has been imagined by different outside powers centres as a threshold, a borderland, an outpost and finally a bridge, through which land routes link Asia with

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<sup>11</sup>The following books and studies were used for the geographical description: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Kırım ve Kafkas Tarihçesi* (İstanbul 1307 [1889/1890]); Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, ed. Yücel Dağlı, Seyit Ali Kahraman, and İbrahim Sezgin, vol. II-V-VII (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi, 1999-2001); Douglas W. Freshfield, *The Exploration of the Caucasus*, II vols., vol. I-II (London: Edward Arnold, 1896); D. Gambashidze, *The Caucasus: Its People, History, Economics and Present Position* (London: The Anglo-Georgian Society, 1918); John F. Baddeley, *The Rugged Flanks of Caucasus*, vol. I (Oxford: Humphrey Milford, 1940); Semyon Bronevskii, *Noveishiia geograficheskiia i istoricheskiia izvestiia o kavkaze*, II vols., vol. I-II (Moskva: S. Selivanovskogo, 1823); Iosif Debu, *O kavkazskoi linii i prisoedinennom k nei chernomorskom voiske, ili obshchiia zamechaniia o poselennykh polkakh, ograzhdaiushchikh kavkazskuiu liniu, i o sosedstvennykh gorskikh narodakh s 1816 po 1826 god*, Tipografiia Karla Kraiia (Sankt Peterburg 1829); E. S. Levin, *Perevaly tsentral'nogo kavkaza* (Moskva: Fizkul'tura i Turizm, 1938); M. Litvinov, "Kavkaz – voenno-geograficheskii ocherk," *VS*, no. 2 (1884); M. Litvinov, "Kavkaz – voenno-geograficheskii ocherk," *VS*, no. 3 (1884); Litvinov, "Kavkaz – voenno-geograficheskii ocherk."

<sup>12</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see introduction.

Europe but it has never received the attention it deserves in world history, often falling between mainstream histories of Europe, Russia and Asia.

In general, the Caucasus consists of several different physical and cultural regions, which must be described separately as a part of the entire mountainous region. All the north-western part of the Caucasus, neighbouring the Sea of Azov, forms one region together with the Kuban basin and neighbouring plains; another region comprises the central part of the Caucasus, the home of a number of distinct tribes; while a third embraces the eastern part of the Caucasus, whose inhabitants were generally known as highlanders (gortsy) by the Russians. The geographical borders of the Caucasus are the Kuma-Manych depression to the north, the Caspian Sea to the east, the Çoruh, Arpaçay and Aras rivers to the south, and the Black Sea and Sea of Azov to the west. Since the main chain of the Caucasus, which consists of a series of parallel ridges, extends as a barrier from one sea to another, it separates the basins of the rivers of the northern part from those of the southern. Although the region is generally known as mountainous, many lowlands and valleys form the landscape in the south and along the Black and Caspian Seas.

As a result of high levels of precipitation and the melting of snow, numerous rivers, both short and long, are found in the Caucasus. Most of them rise in the mountains, where they flow rapidly, but are calmer by the time they reach the lowlands. The main rivers pouring into the Sea of Azov are the Don, Kuban, Yeya, Kalmius, Mius and Molochna. Most Caucasian rivers flowing into the Black Sea are relatively short but are extremely numerous where the mountainous region almost touches the coastline. The main ones are the Bzyp, Kodori, Çoruh, Inguri and Rioni: the last two are the largest rivers that rise in the Caucasus and drain into the Black Sea. In contrast, the rivers of the Caspian basin are in general much longer. These are

the Volga, Ural, Kuma, Terek, Sulak, Uluçay, Samur, Kura and its tributary, the Aras. The Kura is the longest river in the Caucasus. Most rivers in the Caucasus, apart from the Don, Volga, Kura, Kuban and Rioni, are not convenient for navigation, as they are shallow, often change riverbed configuration, and have fast water flows. The flow of almost all rivers is very dependent on seasons. As during the spring the snowmelt and rainfall reach their maximum, this has long been accepted as the best moment to reach the southern part of the region via a few navigable rivers. During the winter period, in the Terek-Kuma plains major rivers, except the Terek, do not even reach the Caspian Sea as they generally freeze over. Apart from the effect of the mountains, the rivers splitting the plains of the Caucasus into distinct regions played a crucial role in terms of the ethnic and cultural homogeneity of the region. As examples of these natural conditions, in the south the Rioni and Çoruh basins were mainly populated by one stock, and had assisted in the formation of a properly bordered ethnic region while in the east the fields irrigated by the Kura had not developed such a racial unity as this land was shared by both the Muslim Tatars and Georgians. Still the Aras River constituted a well-defined region, and the same might be said of the Aras valley, which had been inhabited by the Armenians and Muslim Tatars jointly. Although the Caucasus has looked like a strategic nodal point as a result of its waterways that link the Sea of Azov, the Black and Caspian seas, they were of much less use and impact than was the case in central Europe and the Balkans. The impact of the waterways on shipping and trade was sometimes of local significance but the natural factors – currents, tides, fluctuations and the shoals of coastal regions – made the region much more difficult to penetrate by water as compared with the Balkans. This helps to explain why large Ottoman

forces, much of whose transport in the Balkan theatre was water-borne, found it harder to operate in the Caucasus region and on the Iranian plateau.<sup>13</sup>

Apart from the mountains, seas and waterways, steppe and meadows have played a significant role. Steppe and meadows form the north-western and central parts of the Caucasus. In the north of the Kuban plain and on its higher ridges they were forest steppes. The fertile black soil was cultivated, and the meadows were used mainly as winter pasture for sheep. The major part of the Terek-Kuma plains and the Caspian coastline were characterized by desert and semi-desert, whereas there were wetlands and swamp forests in the delta and on the floodplains of the Terek. Deserts and semi-deserts were also located in the arid regions of the south-eastern Caucasus, such as the Kura-Aras lowlands and the Apsheron peninsula. Semi-deserts were used for winter pasture and for irrigation cultures, such as cotton. In the south the Kura-Aras plains have generally remained unpopulated, because of their fierce climate conditions and disadvantageous terrain.

For a number of peoples inhabiting the different regions of the Caucasus, during times of war the mountains have been a refuge and shelter from which they employed guerrilla tactics and launched lightning attacks on the enemy. Even after a region was in theory subdued guerrilla bands would descend from inaccessible bases in the mountains to raid communications, unwary rear units, and supplies. In these mountainous regions, some strategic passes have had great importance in terms of the movement of troops, communication and logistics.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century there were two principal lines of access over the main chain from north to south. The first route follows the seashore of the Caspian between the Daghestan Mountains and the sea. The narrowest

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<sup>13</sup> On Ottoman military logistics see Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700* (London: UCL Press, 1999), chapter 4, pp. 65-83.

gateway between the Caucasus Mountains and the Caspian Sea is at Darband, where the gap is about three kilometres in width.<sup>14</sup> This line has always been the historic highway along which armies have passed through the Caucasus and has had a major importance which derives from the strategic unity of the Caspian area with the two great estuaries of the Volga and the Kura-Aras which flow into the Caspian Sea. It was a point of encounter between the peoples of the Eurasian steppe and those of the Near East. Historically, its strategic position allowed the sovereigns of the gateway to monitor land traffic between the north and south and it constituted the most significant outpost by which imperial rulers secured the wealthy Caspian provinces from attack from the north-west. The second option was to go straight through the middle of the range, from north to south, that is, along the Georgian Military Road from Vladikavkaz to Tiflis.<sup>15</sup> This route was explored only in the 1760s and upgraded into a passable way for large-scale transport in the 1790s. Other routes were available, but they were not convenient for trade or military operations. The seaboard of the Black Sea located at the western part of the Caucasus, stretching some 400 km long, has never served as an effective route through the mountains. Surrounded by various natural obstacles, endowed with few viable roads and passes, and inhabited by fierce tribes, it never served as a military route through which the region could be penetrated and conquered. Furthermore, the roads, which had been used by Genoese merchants in previous centuries, did not follow the coast but instead crossed the hills, thus connecting the inland districts with the Black Sea ports.

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<sup>14</sup> For the Darband Pass, see İbrâhîm Harîmî Rahîmizâde, *Târîh-i Osman Paşa: Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa'nın Kafkasya Fetihleri (H.986-988/1578-1580) ve Tebriz'in Fethi (H.993/M.1585)*, ed. Yunus Zeyrek (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2001), pp. 48-51; Baddeley, *The Rugged Flanks of Caucasus*, I: p. 155.

<sup>15</sup> For details on the Darial Pass, see W. E. D. Allen, *Russian Embassies to the Georgian Kings 1589-1605* (Cambridge: CUP, 1970), pp. 299-307; Sergey Anisimov, *Kafkas Kılavuzu*, trans. Binbaşı Sadık (İstanbul: Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye İstihbarat Dairesi, 1926), pp. 175-82.

These roads offered a path into the immediate interior but were of limited use as regards north-south communications.

The key geographical divisions in the Caucasus separate not just the north and south of the region but also the east and west. In the middle of the main chain two sets of uplands jut out and divide the main mountain range at oblique angles. In the north, the Stavropol hills glide down toward the plains. In the south, the Surami Mountains connect the Anatolian plateau and the heights of the Caucasus. The geographical line of division between the strategically significant north-eastern part of Anatolia and the Caspian-Iranian region has always been the Surami ridge and the main chain of the Zagros Mountains running in a general direction south-south-east.

East-west communications in the Caucasus region always faced great obstacles. As an example, in 1823, for the first time probably for centuries, merchandise was transported across the Caucasus from Redutkale to Baku, that is, from the coast of the Black Sea to that of the Caspian Sea.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, since antiquity the main way of getting from one sea to the other was not to traipse across the south Caucasus but rather to paddle up and down rivers in the north: one travelled upstream on the Don river from the Sea of Azov, moved by portage across the steppe, and then set the boats down again on the Volga and floated to Astrakhan, from which men and goods could be moved by water on the Caspian. Therefore, the

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<sup>16</sup> In 1804, Mingrelia was garrisoned by the Russians, who built a fort on the left bank of the river Khobi, namely Redutkale/Kemhal, about 20 km north of the fortress of Poti - four hours' sailing south of Anaklia and two hours' north of Poti - which was garrisoned by the Ottomans. Soon after, the fortress of Redutkale was strengthened by the order of I. V. Gudovich on his own initiative. By the beginning of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1806-12, the Ottoman troops garrisoned at Poti attempted to raid on the Redutkale twice but failed. By 1810, the Ottoman fortresses of Poti, Anapa and Suhumkale, imposing a protectorate on Abkhazia, were captured by the Russians, under such circumstances the Redutkale would lose its strategic importance and turn into a naval supply point. V. A. Potto, *Kavkazskaia voina: ot drevneishikh vremen do Ermolova*, V vols., vol. I (Stavropol': Kavkazskii krai, 1994), pp. 401-04. The Treaty of Bucharest, nevertheless, forced Russia to give these strategic fortresses back to the Ottomans, but the Russian high command would not squander the military advantage obtained from the Ottomans on the coast of Mingrelia by reserving the fortress of Redutkale as a commercial outpost to pave the way of the transportation of munitions and other necessities.

geographical position of the Caucasus must partly be analysed in the context of waterways which facilitate the advance of imperial states: the strategic significance of the Black and Caspian Seas and their connection points to other waterways add to the region's importance as regards the grand strategies of neighbouring empires. As an example, though the port of Redutkale was one of the most advantageous spots on the eastern Black Sea shore to reinforce the surrounding regions -Mingrelia, Imereti, Guria and Abkhazia-, the Khobi River was not suitable for river transportation in the spring and furthermore the climate of the region was not convenient to store flour and bread stocks for a long time. The role of the Caucasus, as a threshold or bridge between the Balkans and Central Asia, also had commercial as well as military significance.<sup>17</sup>

### **Black Sea Region**

Historically, a number of imperial powers, such as the Byzantines, the Ottomans and the Russian empire at various times saw the Black Sea at the very centre of their strategic aims and interests, but there has not been sufficient research on the role of this sea in the history of these empires.<sup>18</sup> The Black Sea stretches from the port of Burgas in the west across to the port of Batum in the east, a distance of 1,174 km; from the cape of Crimea in the north to the port of İnebolu in the south is only 260 km. The western edge is located at the Bosphorus, where the Black Sea connects to the Aegean and Mediterranean seas while the eastern tip lies on the Rioni

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<sup>17</sup> The distance from the Black Sea ports to Tiflis ranged from 320 to 480 km; from Poti 330 km; Redutkale 360 km; Suhumkale 485 km; St. Nikolai 345 km, see Ushakov, *Istoriia voennykh deistvii v aziatskoi Turtsii v 1828 i 1829 godakh*, I: p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> On history of the Black Sea, see Charles King, *The Black Sea: A History* (Oxford: OUP, 2004); Neal Ascherson, *Black Sea: The Birthplace of Civilisation and Barbarism* (London: Random House, 2007).

River, fed by snow water from the Caucasus Mountains. The Black Sea is fed by significant rivers from the western and eastern sides, respectively the Danube and the Rioni, both of which cause currents that run counter-clockwise at their mouths. In the northeast, the Don River empties into the Sea of Azov and, through the Kerch Strait, into the Black Sea. In the southwest another strait, the Bosphorus, allows a top current to carry the cooler Black Sea water out into the Sea of Marmara and then into the Mediterranean through the Dardanelles. The water level of the Black Sea is higher than that of the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmara, and the difference in altitude between the northern and southern sides of the Bosphorus is almost 40 cm and this gives rise to strong surface currents from north to south. All of these waterways serve as a way of communication with different regions and states beyond the region. If the Danube was followed upstream, the centre of Europe would be reached easily, passing the Hungarian plain and the Alps; if the Rioni was tracked, its source located in the Caucasus would be discovered. The Crimea was a gate to the Eurasian steppe in the north, while the southern capes stuck out from the Anatolian uplands.

The region enclosing the Black Sea has been very mixed in terms of ethnicity, religion, culture and custom. Generally, the centre of the stage is the sea and its littoral extending from the Balkans to the Caucasus Mountains and from the *Dasht-i Qipchaq* to central Anatolia. In terms of history, parts or even all of the sea have sometimes been controlled by a major imperial power, but the coastline has most often been divided among many local rulers. In order to understand the strategic importance of the Black Sea in the history of empires, one must firstly focus on its connection points to other waterways such as rivers and seas, hence Istanbul could be the proper starting point for a clear analysis.

The geographical location of Istanbul, monitoring the crossing between east and west, and between north and south, between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, and between Europe and Asia rendered it vital for an empire in terms of economic and strategic interests in both Europe and Asia. For this reason, the role of Istanbul, as a significant gateway into the Black Sea and Mediterranean regions, was a factor in the formulation of imperial ideology as well as imperial strategy.<sup>19</sup> At times in the history of Byzantium almost all parts of the empire were overrun and only the besieged city of Constantinople survived. But with their capital city secure behind its great walls Byzantine rulers were able to regain their strength and reconquer lost provinces. For the Ottomans, the capture of Constantinople (Istanbul) meant a great rise in status, turning one of the many Turkic states into the heir of Rome. But not only Istanbul but all the other ports and fortresses should be seen as complementary parts of the Ottoman defensive system in the Black Sea.

The geography of the Black Sea basin gave the Russians more strategic choices and opportunities compared to the Ottomans. The great rivers flowing into the sea from the north facilitated the swift passage of large armies or commodities over large distances. The movement of goods on the waterways and connecting portages during the navigable season was by far the most efficient form of transport. In this context, it would have been useful to build canals to replace portages in order to avoid the delays of repeated transshipment but the marshy terrain of the northern Black Sea made such projects difficult, especially at empire's periphery. Geography made it extremely probable that the state holding the river heads to the north would eventually be fighting to wrest the river mouths from those who held them.<sup>20</sup> The

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<sup>19</sup> For the defence system which was based around Istanbul at the beginning of the nineteenth century, see RG VIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 705, pp. 1-9ob.

<sup>20</sup> William Henry Parker, *An Historical Geography of Russia* (London: University of London Press, 1968), p. 20.

Black Sea itself was vital for the shipping of supplies for any army operating in the region, and the strength, both natural and man-made, of fortresses played a significant role in blocking the transportation of troops and supplies.<sup>21</sup>

Fortresses were the most important element in the defence of the Black Sea coastal line.<sup>22</sup> Terrain, climate and sparse populations limited the number of available routes along which armies could move. An invading army had to reduce any fortresses on its line of march or suffer attacks to its rear and the wrecking of its supply lines by the resident garrison. Furthermore, fortresses also could aid an offensive action, acting as supply depots and bases for reserve troops. The struggle for control of fortresses located on the northern coast of the Black Sea was the hallmark of the major Russian-Ottoman campaigns of the eighteenth century. From west to east, the rivers Danube, Dniester, Bug, Dnieper, Don and Kuban were vital natural communication and transportation lines for regional trade, control and security on the northern coastal line of the Black Sea. The key fortresses and military fortifications the Ottomans captured or built at the junction of the Black and Azov Seas, the steppe, and often of the rivers, along with their control over client states subject to their suzerainty allowed them to maintain a high degree of security in the immediate Black Sea region for many centuries. These fortresses were massive and vital strongholds guarding the Ottoman frontier against the incursions of hostile neighbours around the northern edge of the Black Sea and beyond. It was above all their strength that for many centuries preserved the Black Sea as an Ottoman lake.

From west to east the most important fortresses were İbrail, İsakçı, İzmail, Tulça, and Kili in or near the Danube delta; Bender, on the Dniester and Akkerman on that river's mouth; Ochakov (Özü) on the Dnieper; Orkapı (Perekop) at the

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<sup>21</sup> John P. LeDonne, "Geopolitics, Logistics, and Grain: Russia's Ambitions in the Black Sea Basin, 1737–1834," *The International History Review* 28, no. 1 (2006): pp. 1-41.

<sup>22</sup> RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 454, pp. 1-30ob.

isthmus of the Crimean peninsula and Kefe on the south Crimean coast; Kerch at the mouth of the Sea of Azov, Yenikale on the eastern salient of the Crimean peninsula, and Taman across the straits through which the Sea of Azov debouches into the Black Sea; and finally Azov where the Don river debouches into the Sea of Azov. Furthermore, the north-eastern coast of the Black Sea was also secured by the Ottoman fortresses of Taman, Temrük, Kızıldağ, Adahun, Boğaz and Acu which were built around the Taman peninsula above all to secure it against any naval assaults. In the eighteenth century these fortresses formed the vital barrier against the growing southward expansion of the Russian empire.

The chain of these fortresses enclosing the northern coast of the Black Sea, in combination with the control of the steppe provided by the Crimean Tatars, meant that for 300 years from the destruction of Byzantium until the second half of the eighteenth century there was little threat of any power on the Ottomans' northern borders – Habsburgs, Poles or Russians - mounting a serious challenge to Ottoman dominion over the Black Sea area. The rich natural resources and commercial potential of the Black Sea region – both land and water – provided the Ottoman imperial centre with a hinterland that played a major role in the strength and prosperity of the entire empire and contributed to Ottoman ability to expand on other fronts. On the other hand, for the Russians control over the agricultural resources and the communications of this region north of the Black Sea was vital to the whole strategy of southward expansion. The Ottomans displayed an unbending determination to hold their Black Sea defence line and deny Russia access to the Sea. Following the Ottoman victory on the Prut against the Russians in 1711 which resulted in the regain of Azov, the Ottoman and Russian empires had three major wars during the eighteenth century – from 1735 to 1739, 1768 to 1774, and 1787 to

1792. Until 1768 the Ottoman line remained largely intact but the last two wars were devastating for the Ottomans, who were forced to sign the Treaties of Küçük Kaynarca and Yassı, in 1774 and 1792 respectively. The Ottomans lost the key strongholds of Kılburun, Yenikale, Kerch, Azov, Ochakov, Taman, Temrük, Kızıltaş, Adahun, Boğaz and Acu to the Russians as a result of defeat in these two wars.

In this complex Ottoman defensive system, the vital geographical position of the fortress of Azov as the link between the western and eastern fortress systems increased its strategic and military significance and it was subsequently turned into a strategic hub by the Russians.<sup>23</sup> In the north-eastern and eastern region of the Black Sea, from Azov to Tiflis and from Kerch to Kizliar, the Ottoman security line based on military and transportation routes connecting fortresses, fortifications, redoubts, castles and warehouses was hard to sustain because its security depended too much on the assistance of the local peoples. The Russians designed their key Azov-Mozdok military line to suit the specific needs of controlling and fighting in the Caucasian interior. This when completed ran from Azov in the west through Sv. Dmitriia (Rostov), to Stavropol', Aleksandrovsk and Mozdok fortress, which was strategically situated in the north-central Caucasus on the Terek river.<sup>24</sup> The Azov-Mozdok military line included both major fortresses and smaller strongholds. Its purpose was to secure Russian territory and supply lines from raids by the local peoples and in some cases also against Ottoman attacks. But the forts also were bases from which further southward advances could be launched.

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<sup>23</sup> On the importance of Azov, see Alan Fisher, "Azov in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *JfGO* 21, no. 2 (1973): pp. 161-74.

<sup>24</sup> While the fortress of Stavropol long remained except as a strategic position between the Don delta and Mozdok, Vladikavkaz had paramount strategic importance in the Terek basin. Having protected the entrance to the passes through which the Terek escapes, it had a key place in all the wars of the Caucasus since it controlled key land-based communication and transportation routes.

In Mozdok, the military line split into two parts, one of which carried on towards the east through the Naur and Gerki-Sunzhensk redoubts and finally reached the fortress of Kizliar, close to where the river Terek flowed into the Caspian Sea. The fortress of Kizliar strengthened Russia's ability to control and utilise the Caspian waterway.<sup>25</sup> The second line went towards the south, passing through Ossetia and the Caucasus mountain range as far as the fortress of Tiflis. This military line contained a number of fortresses, smaller strongholds and fortified supply centres, and protected the main route through the Caucasus Mountains to Georgia along the Georgian Military Highway. This line of strongholds and fortresses was created as a part of a long-term grand strategy to allow Russian southward expansion by securing key communications and supply lines and facilitating the domination of the surrounding areas.

By holding the fortresses of Kerch and Yenikale, the Russians had secured communications and transportation between the Azov and Black seas. Nevertheless, they were not sufficiently strong either to consolidate their military power on the north-eastern coast of the Black Sea or to turn the region into an economic and logistical base for further expansion even by the end of the eighteenth century. The north-eastern waters of the Black Sea basin, some four hundreds kilometres long, had the handicap of being shallow and poorly sheltered and the absence of roads also hindered the transport of goods to the seaboard. In the Kuban basin, navigation was risky and the basin did not possess convenient natural or port facilities.

The Russian ports further to the west on the Black Sea coast developed in order to import Mediterranean products in large amounts in exchange above all for the wheat of the newly cultivated steppes. In the decades following Catherine II's

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<sup>25</sup> N. N. Garunova and Nikolai Dmitrievich Chekulaev-Bratchikov, *Rossiiskaia imperatorskaia armiia na Kavkaze v XVIII veke: Istorii kizliarskogo garnizona (1735-1800 gg.)* (Makhachkala: Alef, 2011).

conquest of the region its population and economy grew enormously. By 1827 colonists had poured into the three coastal provinces of Ekaterinoslav, Kherson and Tauride whose male population was now almost 800,000. Less than 5% of Russia's foreign trade passed through the Black Sea ports in 1802 and nearly one quarter by 1816. By then almost 70% of Russian wheat exports went through her newly acquired or constructed Black Sea ports.<sup>26</sup> Income from the market-oriented agriculture and other commercial activities was highly significant for the Russian treasury as well as for economic development in the region.

The port of Taganrog located at the Don outlet became significant in the eighteenth century. But despite being linked by established waterways and portages with central Russia, it suffered from severe drawbacks: the Sea of Azov freezes from November to March, and there was never enough water through the Taman strait to allow deep-draft shipping.<sup>27</sup> Odessa was founded in 1794 between the mouths of the Dniester and the Bug, and became one of the greatest ports of the Black Sea. It had a population of 30,000 in 1823 and almost 80,000 twenty years later. The site was an open, deep bay and was protected by breakwaters. Frost interrupted navigation only briefly and in some years not at all.<sup>28</sup> Wheat was the main export. The huge growth in the population, economy and infrastructure of New Russia was the crucial and essential base for projecting Russian power westwards towards Istanbul and eastwards towards the Caucasus.

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<sup>26</sup> E. I. Druzhinina, *Severnoe prichernomorie 1775-1800 g.* (Moskva: Akademii Nauk, 1959), pp. 254-5, 58; E. I. Druzhinina, *Iuzhnaia Ukraina 1800-1825 gg.* (Moskva: Akademii Nauk, 1970), pp. 335-38; E. I. Druzhinina, *Iuzhnaia Ukraina v period krizisa feodalizma 1825-1860 gg.* (Moskva: Akademii Nauk, 1981), pp. 12-13.

<sup>27</sup> Jean de Reuilly, *Voyage en Crimée et sur les bords de la Mer Noire en 1803* (Paris: Bossange, 1806), p. 280.

<sup>28</sup> Maria Guthrie, *A Tour, Performed in the Years 1795-6, through the Taurida, or Crimea* (London: T. Cadell, 1802), p. 25; Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa: A History, 1794-1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 121.

The port of Sevastopol, having a natural harbour and deep inlets sheltered by promontories, was backed by mountains. It was more suited to become a great naval base than to be a commercial port. It was closed to commerce in 1804 and the infrastructure to build and supply a formidable navy was created at remarkable speed. Henceforth Sevastopol was the headquarters of the Russian fleet, which dominated the Black Sea and protected maritime communications between the northern and eastern shores of the Black Sea. Naval supremacy on the Black Sea also allowed Russia to transport troops and military supplies in wartime, which could prove a crucial advantage for armies operating either in the Balkans or in Anatolia, since in both regions land communications were poor, supply trains were vulnerable to guerrilla raids, and it was seldom possible to live off the land.<sup>29</sup>

In the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, Astrakhan was not only an important port on the coast of the Caspian Sea but also a key supply depot for armies crossing the Caucasus overland.<sup>30</sup> Military equipment and necessities were transferred from Astrakhan to Kizliar and Mozdok, from where local wagons carried them across the mountains to Tiflis. Nevertheless, this route was not entirely secure from raids by the very mobile mountain peoples even in the nineteenth century after Russia's annexation of Georgia. From Tiflis, both civilian and military traffic had to cross the Surami Pass before reaching the city of Kutaisi. Oxen could not cope with the terrain and the weather, and horses had to be used. From Kutaisi to the Black Sea coast at Poti was a far easier journey: supplies could be rafted down the river Rioni to Poti. The fortress of Bagdad[çık] was situated at the gorges of the Khani, south-east of Kutaisi, in order to guard the strategic route from central Georgia to the Black Sea. Poti was the best port in the region and therefore a key strategic asset. Although

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<sup>29</sup> de Reuilly, *Voyage en Crimée et sur les bords de la Mer Noire en 1803*: pp. 207-08.

<sup>30</sup> Samuel Gottlieb Gmelin, *Astrakhan Anno 1770: Its History, Geography, Population, Trade, Flora, Fauna and Fisheries*, trans. Willem M. Floor (Washington: Mage Publishers, 2013).

lost to Russia in 1809, the Ottomans bargained hard to get it back from the Russians at the treaty of Bucharest in 1812. Only after a further defeat in the Russo-Ottoman war of 1828-29 were the Ottomans finally forced to concede Poti.<sup>31</sup> This was a major strategic gain for the Russians even though large ships departing from the port of Odessa were obliged to offload their cargoes in 18-20 meters of water to smaller boats capable of crossing the bar at Poti.

All the fortresses and garrisons of the Kuban valley were supplied from the ports of Odessa, Feodosiia and Kerch but regiments stationed in the central and eastern regions of the Caucasus received their supplies directly from the central Russian provinces. Thus the supplies shipped for the army of the Terek and of Daghestan arrived first in Astrakhan, after a voyage of more than 1100 km down the Volga, and then they were transferred by the Caspian Sea for the most part to the mouth of the Kuma, where they were taken up by the local people, on their little ox-carts impressed for the service, and reached their final destination after 15-20 days travelling.<sup>32</sup> The mode of transportation was slow, expensive and difficult for military material, and this was especially true of weapons and ammunition coming from the Urals-Siberian region which arrived only during the spring floods of the Volga and the Dnieper. The difficulties entailed in moving reinforcements, equipment and supplies to the region from central Russia to the Caucasus region made the acquisition of Georgia as a base in which substantial forces could be fed and housed from local resources all the more important.

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<sup>31</sup> On the fortress of Poti/Faş, see Mahir Aydın, "Faş Kalesi," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* VI(1986): pp. 67-138. The port of Poti did not offer much to battleships as they were to lay anchor a few km from the shore. Against its disadvantageous climate and location, the Russians were to capture it because it was vital to connect with the Bukharan trade in India and China.

<sup>32</sup> LeDonne, "Geopolitics, Logistics, and Grain: Russia's Ambitions in the Black Sea Basin, 1737-1834," pp. 1-41. Since to supply the strongholds on the coast of the western Caucasus with provisions by land was not secure and practical, the Russians were to use Azov ports across the strait of Kerch, but Sevastopol and Nikolaev for artillery supplies.

While the Ottomans were traditionally content to leave protection of the steppe approaches north of the Black Sea and the Caucasus to the Crimean khanate, which was their protectorate, they could at various times lend close support to the Crimean Tatars' efforts on the steppe or in the north Caucasus from the ring of Ottoman fortresses on the northern shores of the Black Sea. Before the 1770s the Ottomans basically had their own way, thanks in part to a strong navy, in seeking slaves, timber, mineral, and food-stuffs through trade with Abkhazia, Mingrelia, Guria, Imereti, and Samtskhe on the western shores of the Caucasus. The Imereti range provides a serious barrier for Imereti against invasions to the east, but the lowlands along the Rioni River made Imereti and its capital of Kutaisi easily accessible to Ottoman naval and military incursions. The same can be said of Guria and its cities of Poti and Ozurgeti just south of the Rioni River, which traditionally were also under Ottoman indirect control. On the other hand, most of Abkhazia and Svaneti consisted of high mountain valleys which were very hard to penetrate. To the southwest, the Georgians of Samtskhe and its capital of Ahıska (Akhalsikhe) were located on high plateaux and forbidding ranges south of the Imereti range, not easily accessible from either Iranian or Ottoman territory.

After losing strategic fortresses and strongholds to the Russians in the region between 1774 and 1812, the Ottomans had created new military strongholds and strengthened the existing fortresses on the north-eastern coastal line during the last two decades of the eighteenth century. From west to east, on the north-eastern coast of the Black Sea, the fortresses of Anapa, Soğucak (Sudjukkale) and Gelincik were rebuilt in the 1780s;<sup>33</sup> it was a costly process to fortify and sustain the north-eastern

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<sup>33</sup> On the re-construction and consolidation process of the fortress of Anapa, see Haşım Mehmet Efendi Kesbî, *Ahvâl-i Anapa ve Çerkes*, ed. Mustafa Özsaray (İstanbul: Kafkas Vakfı, 2012), pp. 18-21, 54-57; Cengiz Fedakar, *Kafkasya'da İmparatorluklar Savaşı: Kırımı Giden Yolda Anapa Kalesi (1781-1801)* (İstanbul: İş Bankası, 2014), pp. 50-80, 82-85. The northern Black Sea coast depended

coast of the Black Sea for the Ottoman treasury since building materials as well as food and other supplies had to be shipped from the Anatolian ports of İnebolu, Samsun and Trabzon. Although the fortress of Soğucak was taken by the Russians during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1806-1812, it was ceded back to the Ottomans by the Treaty of Bucharest in 1812.<sup>34</sup> But in 1820 both Soğucak and Gelincik were abandoned by the Ottomans and this increased the strategic importance of the fortress of Anapa, just across the Kerch Straits from Russian-held Crimea.<sup>35</sup> It would be the only Ottoman stronghold on the north-eastern coast of the Black Sea during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29. Further south, in the centre of the Black Sea's eastern shore, the Ottomans did still hold some points but even when, as was the case with Suhumkale, these combined both fortifications and good harbours, they were of little strategic significance due to the lack of viable communications with the interior. This made all the more serious the Ottoman loss of Poti on the south-eastern coast of the Black Sea in 1829.

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on being supplied and reinforced not only by the sea but also the river-ways; the distance from the mouth of the Kuban to the Inguri ranged 430 km and the fortress of Anapa, possessing an open harbour, was 35 km far away from the western mouth of the Kuban. This vast stretch of coast offered several anchorages, some of which were naturally well-defended against intruders, others, with some inexpensive maintenance and repairs, would acquire the same advantages. In order to carry out an amphibious attack, the most proper and advantageous location was south-west because that part of the coast had sufficient depth enabling warships to get closer and to bombard the fortifications built on the coastal line from sea. According to Paul Guibal, Anapa was the most important military fortification among the Ottoman strongholds on the coastal line and had been well-fortified to impress on the Circassians the military strength of the Ottomans in the region. In general, holding the fortress of Anapa was very costly to the Ottomans since the Circassian tribes were not to pay tribute-tax to the Ottoman central government and furthermore their chieftains had been put on the regular payroll by the Porte. AVPRI, fond: 144, opis': 488, delo: 2303, pp. 55ob-56ob.

<sup>34</sup> RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 514, p. 1. The fortress of Soğucak possessed a strategic position, about 35 km south of the fortress of Anapa. Its citadel/castle was ruined but used as magazine by the Ottomans to fulfil the needs of the Circassian tribes inhabiting the region around the fortress. It had been slightly connected with tracks by which wagons would proceed to the river Kuban. AVPRI, fond: 144, opis': 488, delo: 2303, pp. 58-58ob.

<sup>35</sup> On the construction of the Gelincik port, see Kesbî, *Ahvâl-i Anapa ve Çerkes*: pp. 52-53. While heading southwards, the next stronghold was the fortress of Gelincik whose port was relatively wider and in good condition furthermore it would be easily approached by large ships. Most importantly, its strategic position has made it possible to defend against any naval attack. AVPRI, fond: 144, opis': 488, delo: 2303, p. 58ob, Paul Guibal, 4 (16) January 1829.

The southern coast of the Black Sea was secured for the Ottomans by Edirne, Sinop, Samsun and Trabzon fortresses.<sup>36</sup> Besides the fortresses, there were a number of supply centres such as Bendereğli, Amasra, İnebolu, and Ünye along the southern coast of the Black Sea.<sup>37</sup> These centres were particularly vital to meet the needs of the fortifications and garrisons situated along the north-eastern and eastern coasts of the Black Sea. Since the end of the fifteenth century, the Black Sea has been considered as an inner sea by the Ottoman authority, these ports gradually lost their advantageous international transit capabilities, rather turned into internal trade points.<sup>38</sup> Pragmatically, from the point of the Ottomans, there was no need to keep a considerable navy on the Black Sea. In parallel with this, the fortifications also would be overlooked until the beginning of the seventeenth century.<sup>39</sup> At the first stage, the Cossack raids were on a small scale but their gradually increasing destructive potential worried the local administrations protecting the southern Black Sea coastal line.<sup>40</sup> After the second half of the eighteenth century – i.e. during the reign of Catherine II, the importance of the ports on the southern Black Sea coast would increase for security reasons at first step, particularly after the Treaty of

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<sup>36</sup> Unlike three other port-cities, Edirne was not situated on the southern Black Sea coast but it had a very strategic junction connecting the roads between the Black and Marmara Seas, see Tayyib Gökbilgin, "Edirne," in *TDVİA* (İstanbul: TDV, 1994), particularly pp. 427-29.

<sup>37</sup> The coast of Bendereğli was not protected against the northern gales, Minas Bijişkyan, *Karadeniz Kıyıları Tarih ve Coğrafyası, 1817-1819*, trans. Hrand D. Andreasyan (İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1969), p. 20. While heading eastward, the next crucial point was Amasra which had two ports, one of which, situated on the western part, was accessible by ships, *ibid.*, p. 23. İnebolu was open to eastern gales and deprived of a functional port but ships could touch at its bay, *ibid.*, p. 25. Apart from being a supply centre, Ünye had sufficient features and background to build big ships, *ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>38</sup> Though along the southern Black Sea coastal line – i.e. from Istanbul to Batum, there were 123 quays in the sixteenth century; many of them were cancelled during the nineteenth century, see Yusuf Halaçoğlu, "Anadolu (Ulaşım ve Yol Sistemi)," in *TDVİA* (İstanbul: TDV, 1991), p. 127.

<sup>39</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1948), p. 445.

<sup>40</sup> On the Cossack raids against the south Black Sea coastal line, see Victor Ostapchuk, "The Human Landscape of the Ottoman Black Sea in the Face of the Cossack Naval Raids," *Oriente Moderno* 81, no. 1 (2001): pp. 23-95.

Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, their potential of being international transit hub gained acceleration.

In central Anatolia, the city of Sivas was situated at a key junction of major caravan trade routes which were reaching the Black Sea coast through Sinop, Samsun and Trabzon. Sinop, being situated along a narrow causeway and serving as a base and port for transport to the northern Black Sea, was one of the most significant cities in north-central Anatolia. Its deep harbour was the best along the southern seaway from the Bosphorus to the Caucasus. Furthermore, it was the main point for the movement of people and goods between northern Anatolia and Crimea.<sup>41</sup> Although the port of Samsun had the best access to central Anatolia, and furthermore its hinterland was reaching southern regions – i.e. Mesopotamia, over the east of Anatolia - in compare with those of Sinop and Trabzon, it could not attract a great deal of attention from Istanbul until the Russo-Ottoman conflicts occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>42</sup> Trabzon was the last point of an ancient trade route that meandered around the north of Anatolia, through the Zigana Pass, to the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.<sup>43</sup> The fortress of Trabzon was the most strategic point in eastern Anatolia; that had been built on a series of steep cliffs, providing a ready defence in the event of any land or maritime attack. On the other

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<sup>41</sup> The natural harbour of Sinop, similar to the Bosphorus, was protected against the north-western gales of the Black Sea that has made it advantageous vis-à-vis other ports and harbours on the Anatolian coast but since its disadvantageous hinterland, it did not have any growing potential. Mehmet Öz, "Sinop," in *TDVİA* (İstanbul: TDV, 2009), pp. 252-56. There were two shipyards building ships for the Ottoman navy, see Bıjškyan, *Karadeniz Kıyıları Tarih ve Coğrafyası, 1817-1819*: p. 28. For a detailed description of the fortress of Sinop in Russian official sources, by de Lafitte-Clavet, see RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 503, pp. 1-3; delo: 505, pp. 1-2; delo: 507, pp. 1-4; delo: 510, pp. 1-2. A group of Nekrasov Cossack, about 400-man, had been settled there by the Ottoman government. AVPRI, fond: 180, opis': 517/1, delo: 113, pp. 194, 20 September (2 October) 1827, K. F. Nesselrode to A. I. Ribeaupierre.

<sup>42</sup> Osman Köse, "18. Yüzyıl İkinci Yarısı Osmanlı-Rus Savaşlarında Karadeniz Liman Kenti Samsun," in *Geçmişten Geleceğe Samsun*, ed. Cevdet Yılmaz (Samsun: Form Ofset, 2006), pp. 273-81; Mehmet Öz, "Samsun," in *TDVİA*, ed. Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı (İstanbul: TDV, 2009), pp. 83-88. Although it possessed a wide harbour, it was not safe to shelter. Bıjškyan, *Karadeniz Kıyıları Tarih ve Coğrafyası, 1817-1819*: p. 32.

<sup>43</sup> RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 692, p. 1.

hand neither the natural harbour of Trabzon nor the port facilities were sufficient to handle large-scale transport of people or goods.<sup>44</sup>

In general, it was possible for most vessels to cross from Istanbul to Trabzon in a few weeks, including stops along the way to trade or take on supplies. The duration of a direct trip could be shortened to a week or less given good weather. From the port of Trabzon, a ship could go across to the Crimea, anchoring at Kefe, and then continue into the Sea of Azov. For an Istanbul merchant, trying to include the Black Sea as part of any commerce with the east made economic sense. A roundabout journey by sea from Istanbul to Trabzon and then by caravan to Iran took a third of the time of a direct overland trip across Anatolia, and the possibility of a storm at sea was always preferable to the certainty of impassable roads and highwaymen.

### **Caspian Region**

The Caspian Sea, as a seaway between the Caucasus and Central Asia, has distinct features of its own that differentiate it from the Black Sea. Measuring about 1,200 kilometres from north to south and having an average width of 300 kilometres, the Caspian Sea consists of three basins which have very different characteristics. First, the northern basin of the Caspian Sea is very shallow: the water depth never reaches more than 25 meters and is less than five meters deep over two-thirds of its area. Furthermore, although surface temperatures rise to 24 degrees centigrade in summer, in winter, which generally lasts from November to spring, the sea freezes. This can be seen as an effect of the Volga and Ural rivers that decrease the salinity of

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<sup>44</sup> RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 689, pp. 1-3ob; Bijişkyan, *Karadeniz Kıyıları Tarih ve Coğrafyası, 1817-1819*: pp. 43-59; Heath W. Lowry and Feridun Emecen, "Trabzon," in *TDVİA* (İstanbul: TDV, 2012), pp. 296-301.

the northern part of the Caspian Sea. The sea gradually drops off towards the central basin and the southern basin is the deepest part. This affects water temperatures as well. In the south, water surface temperatures are around 28 degrees centigrade in summer while they are about nine degrees centigrade in winter. In the northern and central basins the maximum water level height occurs in May or June while in the southern basin the maximum occurred in July. For this reason, in the nineteenth century during winter maritime traffic was not sustainable particularly around the north of the sea, and this was one of the handicaps compelling military vessels and merchantmen to be supplied by ports other than Astrakhan.

Another reason behind why the vessels could not easily approach the coast was that the northern and central basins of the Caspian Sea were under the influence of a strong counter-clockwise current caused by the Volga River as the river pushed south along the western Caspian coast. On the one hand this was an obstacle hindering the development of trade and commercial activities but on the other hand 'it was a ready defence against any potential naval assault'. The strategic position of the Caspian Sea was significant in terms of the military and commercial interests of the regional imperial powers but the navigation of the Caspian presented greater handicaps than that of any other seas. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the northern coast of the Caspian Sea had almost no tips and protected shores. Almost all the northern coastal line was narrow in the direction of the prevailing winds.<sup>45</sup>

The Caspian Sea was potentially a route by which men, supplies and equipment could be transported by ships from southern Russia to the Caucasus. The sea was indeed used for this purpose but not quite to the extent that one might

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<sup>45</sup> Guive Mirfendereski, *A Diplomatic History of the Caspian Sea: Treaties, Diaries, and Other Stories* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

suppose just from looking at a map. The sea's shallowness and its currents made navigation difficult even in those months of the year when the shallow areas of the sea were not frozen. Astrakhan was the main Russian port on the north shore of the Caspian and was linked to the Russian interior by the Volga. This water-link between the Russian heartland and the Caspian region was vital to Russian southward expansion in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless problems existed. Ships could not be loaded in Astrakhan itself. Instead goods had to be transported well out to sea on barges before they could be loaded on to the ships, which increased the time it took to move troops and supplies from central Russia to the southern Caucasus.<sup>47</sup>

Starting from Astrakhan, on the western Caspian coast, the first stopping place was Darband. Similar to Astrakhan, ships suffered from the sea's shallowness and therefore cargoes must have been unladen on barges far away from the coast and got ready in the port of Darband to transport to Kizliar which was a common market for mountaineers inhabiting the outlying regions. While heading southward along the coast, the second point was the port of Nizābād, in Qūbā. Although it was in good condition – i.e. even Russian ships could anchor there, the local residents were prone to send their goods to either Darband or Baku.<sup>48</sup> The port of Baku, which was first gained by Russia in 1806 and then retained by the peace treaty, was by far the best

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<sup>46</sup> For a more detailed report of Mikhail Danilovich Skibinevskii on the Caspian region, see RGVIA, fond: 446, opis': 1, delo: 1, pp. 1-5.

<sup>47</sup> The ships were forced to be launched without any cargo from Astrakhan; some 30 km from the coast they were able to take in half their cargo, and it was not until they were out 160 or 190 km that they could completely carry out their shipping. On the commercial routes passing through Astrakhan, see Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, "Les Routes Commerciales de l'Asie Centrale et les Tentatives de Reconquête d'Astrakhan: D'après les Registres des "Affaires Importantes" des Archives Ottomanes," *CMRS* 11, no. 3 (1970): pp. 391-422.

<sup>48</sup> RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis': 4, delo: 450, p. 6ob-7; N. S. Vsevolozhskii, *Dictionnaire Geographique-Historique de l'Empire de Russie*, vol. I (St Petersburg: J. Brieff, 1833), pp. 88-89.

natural port on the Caspian.<sup>49</sup> Ships were well protected when in harbour and could load and off-load fifteen meters far away from the quay.<sup>50</sup> Even most of Russo-Iranian trade passed through Baku rather than attempting to use any harbour on the southern coast. Nevertheless, the number of shoals, islands, and sandbanks made the entrance to Baku in some places difficult and dangerous, so the port's use required experienced sea-captains.<sup>51</sup>

Historically, along the south-western coast of the Caspian, in other words the region bordering on Iran's most populous provinces, overland communication and transportation were troublesome because numerous small streams cross the zone.<sup>52</sup> There was one viable route across the Tālish hills linking Tabrīz to the Caspian shores via Ardabīl, and a second one running parallel to the coast from Rasht to the frontier town of Astara. In the north-western (i.e. Russian) coastal region of the Caspian Sea, to use river transportation was possible albeit difficult but the southern coastland did not even possess this possibility. In general, the disadvantages of the southern Caspian region were even greater than in the north. First of all, the southern region lacks a navigable river which had a negative influence on the development of trade. Yet another disadvantage of the southern coastal area of the Caspian Sea was similar to that of the northern, namely that the waters close to shore were shallow and therefore merchantmen were forced to offload their cargo to small boats. Owing to the Alburz Mountains, the coastal region was historically somewhat isolated from the Iranian plateau and the historically significant silk-producing areas of Gīlān and

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<sup>49</sup> The distance from the Caspian Sea ports to Tiflis ranged from 530 to 800 km; from Darband 785; Nizābād 740; Baku 540; Sālyān 555; and Lankaran 700 km, see Ushakov, *Istoriia voennykh deistvii v aziatskoi Turtsii v 1828 i 1829 godakh*, I: pp. 15-16.

<sup>50</sup> RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis': 4, delo: 450, p. 7. The city of Baku attracted the merchants not only from inner regions such as Lankaran, Shakī, and Shemakhe but also from Iran – i.e. Māzandarān and Gīlān.

<sup>51</sup> William Coxe, *Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden and Denmark*, II vols., vol. II (London 1784), p. 260; Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: pp. 16-17.

<sup>52</sup> RGVIA, fond: 446, opis': 1, delo: 64, pp. 1-1ob.

Māzandarān. Another drawback was related to the inconvenience of the land routes. To get from Tehran to the coast, passing through the Alburz Mountains, was exhausting. These were great disadvantages as regards administrative and economic integration of the region with the Iranian plateau. The result was dispersed villages, economic isolation and affinities and loyalties that remained intensely local and regional.<sup>53</sup>

In previous years, one of the most key trade points on the south-western coast of the Caspian was the port of Anzalī, in Rasht, through which the Russo-Iranian trade was mainly passing however because of heavily suffering from drawdown, it was difficult if not impossible for larger ships to approach the coast and therefore the port lost its trade potential gradually. In the 1820s, its situation was not much better than Baku. As the region surrounding the port of Anzalī was marshy and the city of Rasht was intensely covered with mountain chain, the tradesmen were not able to reach there with their goods. To carry on merchandising with Iran via Anzalī would be advantageous only to Gīlān. The free port of Māzandarān also was not fruitful for the Russian trade on the Caspian.<sup>54</sup> Another important point was Āshūrādah, which was situated at the entrance to the Bay of Astarābād, where the trade routes from Gurgān, the Ātrak River, and adjoining lands reached the Caspian in search of an outlet. It was also a terminus of shipping and trade links from Baku and Astrakhan.<sup>55</sup>

For Russian interest, the most beneficial port was Baku from where maritime traffic could be conducted with the ports located at the southern Caspian coast. Furthermore, Baku had a secure coastal road network which has supplied Georgia

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<sup>53</sup> Rudi Matthee, *Persia in Crisis: Safavid Decline and the Fall of Isfahan* (London: IB Tauris, 2012), p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis': 4, delo: 450, p. 7ob.

<sup>55</sup> Mirfendereski, *A Diplomatic History of the Caspian Sea: Treaties, Diaries, and Other Stories*.

with the Iranian goods in previous years connecting with the Iranian main cities.<sup>56</sup> According to A. S. Menshikov, Baku would be the regional trade centre that would undermine the trade potential of the Iranian ports – Anzalī and Māzandarān. The vital requisites were security and wealth which should have been provided by Russia and then this could effectively boost the trade capacity of the Caspian. In the long run, Russia could possess the chance of taking advantage of this as a political instrument against Iran.<sup>57</sup> To manage this, at first, the Russo-Iranian border should have been extended up to the Kura and Aras rivers; and then the Russian troops should have captured Ganjah where the river Kura was navigable, finally, Shūsha, Nakhjavān and Īravān (Revan/Erevan) should have been fortified and linked with the Black Sea over the river Rioni.<sup>58</sup> To achieve this goal, Russia had to steer the Caspian trade to Astrakhan through Baku and to protect Georgia against the devastating raids of mountaineers and even the Ottoman empire. In this way, the wealth of Asia would pass through the Caspian ports owing to the security and confidence provided by Russia.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> The coastal road network was connected with the route following the main Iranian cities - Tabrīz, Ardabīl, Sulṭānīyah, Tehran, Qazvīn, Iṣfahān, Iraq, Luristān, Khūzistān and Fārs. RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis': 4, delo: 450, pp. 8-8ob.

<sup>57</sup> RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis': 4, delo: 450, p. 9. Menshikov had interesting suggestions in developing the trade in Baku that to turn the town into a Mecca for the Indian fire-worshipping Parsis, in this way, the trade route from Astarābād through Baku to Astrakhan would be much closer to India, *ibid*, pp. 9-9ob. On the Russo-Indian commercial relations between seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, see Michal Wanner, "Indian Trading Community in Astrakhan in Context of Russian-Indian Relationship (1636–1725)," *West Bohemian Historical Review* 2, no. 1 (2012): pp. 115-31; Michal Wanner, "Development of Indian Trading Community in Astrakhan in Context of Russian-Indian Relationship (1725–1800)," *West Bohemian Historical Review* 3, no. 1 (2013): pp. 34-51.

<sup>58</sup> RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis': 4, delo: 450, pp. 10-10ob. Another one of the attention grabbing suggestions of Menshikov was that during the reign of Catherine II 2,000 young soldiers were sent to Baku where the Russian government was to encourage them to engage in farming and marrying Georgian and Armenian women, *ibid*, p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis': 4, delo: 450, pp. 11ob-12. For Russia, the commercial relations with Iran were relatively profitable and that was in the hands of Arab and Armenian merchants of Būshahr and Tiflis respectively. Goods and cargoes were being transported by British ships from Būshahr to Mumbai over the Arabian Sea. Large scale transportations usually belonged to the Imam of Muscat [Saīd bin Sulṭān]. The Gulf had a greater role in regional trade which has been dominated by the British ships on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. While the total value of imported materials by Iran was 2,000,000 ducats, the value of exported ones was 300,000 ducats, *ibid*, pp. 32-32ob. The value of the imported goods by the Armenians of Tiflis, Qarabhāgh, Shakī and Shirvān into Iran was 189,681;

## **Eastern Anatolia**

Anatolia consists largely of a spacious high plateau, circled by higher mountain ranges to the north and south. The northern range can be envisaged as the mountain wall of the Black Sea basin. Strategically, these mountain ranges represent a second mountain wall, parallel with the main chain of the Caucasus, covering the approaches from the Eurasian plain to the Iranian plateau and the Mesopotamian lowland. The population and agriculture of the region was sufficient to feed and supply the normal needs of Ottoman armies defending the empire's eastern borders. Historically, supply problems for Ottoman forces in the east only became acute when they attempted to penetrate into the Iranian heartland on the Iranian plateau.

In general, travel in central Anatolia was far from easy. Navigable rivers were few therefore people and animals were to walk. Considering the geographical features and road network in central Europe, the relatively rapid travel was almost impossible in central Anatolia. Sea and river ways rendered travels and transportations to coastal and riverside districts more quickly but central Anatolia, as most of the Ottoman land, was deprived of taking this advantage. Camel, horse and mule were the best modes of travel and transportation. All these difficulties and distances hindered the Ottoman high command and central administration in their

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317,344; 178,619; 306,590 ducats in 1822; 1823; 1824; and 1825 (including the first months of 1826) respectively. As the direct commercial traffic from Astrakhan to Gilān was in the control of the Iranian merchants, the cash flow was high in Gilān, *ibid*, pp. 32ob-33. Furthermore, the Iranian merchants were relatively active in Istanbul where generally the French and British goods were in demand. The total value of imported goods by the Iranians was 1,000,000 tumans; of exported ones was 800,000 tumans in the 1820s, *ibid*, 33ob, 26 September (8 October) 1826.

effort to mobilize the central and provincial troops quickly against not only Iran but also Russia on the eastern borderland.

Under such conditions, land-based transportation and communication were very vital and depended on three major roads ('ulu yollar') – i.e. the *sağ*, *orta* and *sol kols* – in Anatolia. The *sağ kol*, or right-hand road (that of the pilgrimage), connected Istanbul to Cairo and Mecca via Aleppo and Damascus. The *orta* and *sol kols*, or middle and left-hand roads, provided an inland road from Istanbul as far as Amasya, before it divided into two main roads, one that led to the Caucasus and Erzurum, and the other verging southeast through Diyarbakir, Mosul and to Baghdad and Basra.<sup>60</sup> There were also smaller routes linking towns and villages to the major roads as well as to each other. These routes all had been furnished with a relatively well-functioning the *ulak* (state courier), *derbend*, and *menzil-hâne* (posting-station) system by the Ottomans in the first half of the eighteenth century, as in earlier centuries.<sup>61</sup> This network, nevertheless, suffered from the repetitious wars and

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<sup>60</sup> The maintenance of these main routes was a chronic problem of the Ottoman state. The *menzil-hânes* were founded at intervals of between six and 12 hours' riding – i.e. at distances of between 20 and 70 km, depending on the terrain. In frontier regions, or in thinly-populated steppe or semi-deserts, the distances between *menzil-hânes* were often greater – up to 24 hours or 150 km. The routes of the state couriers, called as "Tatars" could be considered to be the quickest. A 'Tatar', heading from Istanbul, could reach Sivas in 183; Diyarbakır in 275; Erzurum in 281; Kars in 302; Van in 342; Trabzon in 252 hours. Halaçoğlu, "Anadolu (Ulaşım ve Yol Sistemi)," p. 127. For a detailed description of the 'Tatar' couriers, see Adolphus Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece, etc. and of a Cruise in the Black Sea with the Capitan Pacha in the Years 1829, 1830, and 1831*, II vols., vol. II (London: Saunders and Outley, 1833), pp. 6-10.

<sup>61</sup> For short descriptions of the *ulak*, *derbend*, and *menzil-hâne* network in the Ottoman land, see Yusuf Halaçoğlu, "Ulak," in *TDVİA* (İstanbul: TDV, 2012), pp. 77-79; Yusuf Halaçoğlu, "Derbend," in *TDVİA* (İstanbul: TDV, 1994), pp. 162-64; Yusuf Halaçoğlu, "Menzil," in *TDVİA* (İstanbul: TDV, 2004), pp. 159-61. For a monograph on the *derbend* system, see Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Derbend Teşkilatı* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1967). For the works on *menzil-hâne*, see Rıza Bozkurt, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Kollar, Ulak ve İaşe Menzilleri* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1966); Yücel Özkaya, "XVIII. Yüzyılda Menzil-hane Sorunu," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* XXVIII, no. 3-4 (1970): pp. 339-68; Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Osmanlılarda Ulaşım ve Haberleşme (Menziller)* (İstanbul: İlgı Kültür Sanat, 2014).

malpractice by the local elites towards the end of the century and lost its cost effective feature gradually.<sup>62</sup>

Apart from being used by the state couriers, these road networks, linking the centre of the empire with its periphery, were the main lines of the march of the Ottoman armies in the time of war against Iran and Russia. The military traffic of the state was concentrated along these routes on which several depots had been established to store provision and grain; military supplies were gathered months in advance and transported from other fertile and productive regions by land or by sea. Prior to wars against Iran and Russia in eastern Anatolia, provisions were generally supplied from the depots of the fortress of Erzurum and Van.<sup>63</sup> It is perhaps not too much to say that it was the *ulak-derbend-menzil-hâne* network, in its communication and provisioning function that held together the imperial centre and periphery, even – particularly – in the eighteenth century.

In eastern Anatolia, the fortress of Erzurum was crucial for the Ottomans. The role of the town of Erzurum had always been to guard the roads linking Anatolia to the Iranian plateau and the Caucasus. The fortresses of Ahıska, Kars and Bayezid were constructed around Erzurum as outposts against any threat from east and

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<sup>62</sup> For English-language works on the *menzil-hâne* system in the Ottoman Balkans, see Rositsa Gradeva, "The Activities of a Kadı Court in Eighteenth-Century Rumeli: The Case of Hacıoğlu Pazarcık," *Oriente Moderno* 79, no. 1 (1999): pp. 177-90; Colin Heywood, "Some Turkish Archival Sources for the History of the Menzilhane Network in Rumeli during the Eighteenth Century," *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Dergisi* 4-5(1976-7): pp. 39-54; Colin Heywood, "The Ottoman Menzilhane and Ulak System in Rumeli in the Eighteenth Century," in *Türkiye'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Tarihi (1071-1920)*, ed. Osman Okyar and Halil Inalcik (Ankara: 1980), pp. 179-86; Colin Heywood, "The Via Egnatia in the Ottoman Period: The Menzilhane of the Sol Kol in the Late 17th/Early 18th Century," in *The Via Egnatia under Ottoman Rule (1380-1699)*, ed. Elizabeth Zachariadou (Rethymnon: 1996), pp. 129-44. All of these have been reprinted in Colin Heywood, ed. *Writing Ottoman History: Documents and Interpretations* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002). As in Anatolia, there were three major routes in the Balkans branching out from Edirne (Adrianople) to Özü (Ochakov) and the Crimea or the line of the Dniester; to Belgrade; and to Salonika and the Peloponnese and Albania.

<sup>63</sup> During the Russo-Ottoman war of 1828-29, Russian officer Voskoboinikov owned an opportunity to make some measurements in a copper mine around Erzurum. For his report, see RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 524, pp. 1-17ob.

north.<sup>64</sup> This fortified zone was a major obstacle to any invading army even in the nineteenth century. The easiest way to transport goods, move troops and pass messages and communication between Istanbul, Erzurum and the Ottoman-Iranian frontier zone was by sea. The initial destination for military materials and troops sent from Istanbul was the port of Trabzon.<sup>65</sup>

Transport and communications from Trabzon to the Anatolian interior was confined to a limited number of passes which linked the separate districts and strongholds to each other. The best-known and most viable routes were the Passes of Zigana and Vavuk linking Trabzon on the Black Sea to Erzurum, which lies behind the dividing ridge between the Euphrates and the Aras. The road which linked Trabzon and Erzurum to Tabrīz was vital for transportation and communication across the whole region on both sides of the Ottoman-Iranian frontier. Furthermore, the commercial importance of this route was a key factor in interstate relationship between the Ottoman empire and Iran. Both the Ottoman and Iranian states had a big interest in protecting and taxing the long-distance, international as well as regional trade which flowed along this road. On the other hand, the Euphrates and Tigris rivers were not navigable until they merged in Iraq, so they played a minimal role in commercial and military movements in Anatolia.

## **Zagros Region**

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<sup>64</sup> RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 557, pp. 1-12. For the region between Erzurum and Gumri, see RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 570, pp. 1-2.

<sup>65</sup> The military materials and the troops sent from the imperial centre at first were to follow the route of 'Trabzon-Gümüşhane-Bayburt-Erzurum' and then there were two different routes stretching eastward and southward: 'Erzurum-Eğil-Oltu-Ardahan-Ahıska' and 'Erzurum-Hasankale-Molla Süleyman-Erciş-Van'.

About 1,200 kilometres from north-west to south-east, and some 300 to 400 kilometres in width, the Zagros Mountains dominated a large region which made up the borderland between the Anatolian and Iranian plateaux. In terms of topography it is possible to divide the region into two distinct sub-regions: northern and south-western sections. In the north, that is, from Hamadān-Kirmānshāh as far as the area of Būshahr, the mountain ranges are extremely regular, straight in form and parallel, and relatively tightly packed together. Farther south they open out, becoming less densely grouped. The north-western section of the Zagros, including Tabrīz, covering the lands of Qazvīn, Hamadān and Kirmānshāh, was of significance as the focus of major routes linking Anatolia, Central Asia and India. The western Zagros range constituted a natural barrier against attack from Anatolia, but the same mountains also allowed access from the country's heartland to Luristān.

In the north, Tabrīz has in some eras functioned as the capital of a wide territory, which sometimes included not only Iran but even lands beyond. What made it an important city was its nodal position where the more ancient east-west routes intersect the newer north-south lines. Owing to the region's geography, the site of Tabrīz is the only suitable meeting point in a wide area for communications both to the east and the north. This advantageous position made Tabrīz the centre of a vast and relatively rich province lying beyond Anatolia and to the south of the Caucasus. It was indeed one of the most important cities between Istanbul and India. The Tabrīz region combined a local economy based on agriculture and herding with its key role in international trade and its strategic importance. Located in the extreme north-west of Iran, in the open countryside from which relatively easy routes reach the Caspian central lowlands, Russia, eastern Anatolia, and the Black Sea coastlands, Tabrīz had become a key centre of Safavid military power. As Russian power grew and Russia's

frontiers extended southwards, Tabrīz by the early-nineteenth century was the centre of a salient commanding the approaches from the vital north-west towards central and southern Iran.

The more southern provinces of Baghdad and Kirmānshāh were also significant commercial and military centres. The province of Baghdad stood on a fertile plain where cultivation was well-developed on both sides of the Tigris River. Since ancient times it had been a densely populated and wealthy region, combining a rich agricultural base with large cities and a high level of urban civilisation. Baghdad was an ancient meeting place of long-distance caravan routes, enjoying a temperate and healthy climate. Its geographical position, concentrated population, traditions and culture made Baghdad a great centre of commerce. Similar to the province of Baghdad, that of Kirmānshāh was also one of the key points on the caravan and pilgrimage routes which united the 'Islamic Middle East' and therefore its commercial and strategic importance gradually increased in the nineteenth century. Strategically important in military terms was the Pass of Zagros or *Gardānah-i Pātāq* where the *Tāq-i Garā* or *Shīrīn* (Gate of Zagros), as it was variously called, opened the way from Ottoman territory into the Iranian province of Kirmānshāh and central Iran.

## **Peoples**

### **North of the Caucasus**

This thesis is not about the peoples of the north of the Caucasus or the conquest of the north of the Caucasus by Russia. Nevertheless it cannot entirely

ignore the region and its peoples since they are relevant to the relations between the Russian, Ottoman and Iranian empires in the early nineteenth century. In ethno-national terms the 'North Caucasus' was uniquely diverse. Above all this was because of geography, with different peoples living apart in semi-isolation because of the mountainous terrain. At the eastern end of the north of the Caucasus, bordering on the Caspian Sea, Daghestan contained by one estimate thirty ethnic groups. At the western end of the region which bordered on the Black Sea the Circassians were the dominant group but were split into numerous tribes (e.g. Kabardians) with often mutually incomprehensible dialects. The Abkhaz lived in the south-western corner of the region and might be described in ethno-linguistic terms as cousins of the Circassians. Between Circassia at one end of the North Caucasus and Daghestan at the other there lived a number of peoples of whom the Chechens and Ingush bordered on Daghestan and the Osetians occupied much of the central Caucasus. For Russia the Osetians had two great advantages: in the first place they were Orthodox Christians and in the second they dominated most of the territory through which passed the Georgian Military Highroad, the key north-south route that linked Russia to Georgia and the 'Transcaucasus'. The Osetians were Russia's most reliable allies in the region.<sup>66</sup>

All the other peoples in the region were Sunni Muslims though the strength of their commitment to Islam differed. Traditionally it was strongest in Daghestan, much weaker in Circassia. Religion mattered as regards sympathy towards neighbouring empires. The Osetians looked naturally to Russia and the Muslims to

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<sup>66</sup> For a short description of the North Caucasus region, its peoples and the Russian conquest see: Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*, trans. Alfred Clayton (Harlow: Longman, 2001), pp. 179-85. For more detail see James Forsyth, *The Caucasus: A History* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), pp. 14-18 as regards basic linguistic and ethnographic information but passim as regards the peoples' historical evolution. On the Osetians, for instance, see pp 202-03, 72-76. On the Circassians see Amjad M. Jaimoukha, *The Circassians: A Handbook* (London: Curzon, 2001), pp.19-30.

the Ottomans. As was so often true in tribal societies, religion provided the strongest glue to hold together any movement that sought to be more than very localised. Opposition to Russia was strongest when led by charismatic religious-political figures, drawing on Sufi Islamic traditions and beliefs. Of these the first was Sheikh Mansur, whom the Russians finally captured in 1791.<sup>67</sup> The last and most famous was the Imam Shamil who held out against repeated Russian onslaughts in the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>68</sup> Mansur was Chechen, indeed, although Shamil was originally Avar, he was widely accepted as leader by the Chechen society. Islamic belief took a tight hold on Chechen society and culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But it helped that the Chechens were a relatively egalitarian society without a powerful native aristocracy.<sup>69</sup> The tsarist empire was based on a tight alliance between the monarchy and the Russian landed nobility.<sup>70</sup> It had expanded and flourished partly because it co-opted non-Russian aristocracies into the imperial elite. Russia's rulers tried to apply this policy in the North Caucasus and succeeded best where – as in Kabardia – there were native aristocracies to whom they could appeal.<sup>71</sup>

The struggle between Russia and the Avar leader, Imam Shamil, is by far the best-known aspect of Russia's conquest of the Caucasus but the war to subdue the Circassians in fact lasted longer, was equally dramatic, on the whole drew more Russian attention and ended, unlike the war against Shamil, with the wholesale

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<sup>67</sup> For more detail, see Alexandre Bennigsen, "Un Mouvement Populaire au Caucase au XVIIIe Siècle: La "Guerre Sainte" du Sheikh Mansur(1785-1791), Page Mal Connue et Controversée des Relations Russo-Turques," *CMRS* 5, no. 2 (1964): pp. 159-205; Nart, "The Life of Mansur, Great Independence Fighter of the Caucasian Mountain People," *Central Asian Survey* 10, no. 1-2 (1991): pp. 81-92; Julietta Meskhidze, "Imam Shaykh Mansur: A Few Stanzas to a Familiar Portrait," *Central Asian Survey* 21, no. 3 (2002): pp. 301-24.

<sup>68</sup> Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan* (London: Frank Cass, 1994); Austin Lee Jersild, "Who was Shamil?: Russian Colonial Rule and Sufi Islam in the North Caucasus, 1859–1917," *Central Asian Survey* 14, no. 2 (1995): pp. 205-23. On Shamil in Soviet historiography, see Moshe Gammer, "Shamil in Soviet Historiography," *MES* 28, no. 4 (1992): pp. 729-77.

<sup>69</sup> Sh. A. Gapurov, *Rossiia i Chechnia v pervoi chetverti XIX veka* (Nal'chik: El'-Fa, 2003).

<sup>70</sup> John P. LeDonne, "The Eighteenth-Century Russian Nobility," *CMRS* 34, no. 1 (1993): pp. 139-47.

<sup>71</sup> On the Russian war to conquer the North Caucasus, see Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*.

emigration and expulsion of the Muslim peoples of the western Caucasus.<sup>72</sup> The reason for the contrast was largely geopolitical. Daghestan and Chechnia, the home of Shamil's movement, were isolated by geography from any possible intervention by foreign powers. Iran, the traditional rival to Russia in the eastern Caucasus, was both weak and, as a Shia state, unlikely to enjoy much sympathy from Shamil's followers.<sup>73</sup> The Circassians on the other hand bordered on the Black Sea and were by history and geography much more closely linked to the Ottomans. Russian attempts to control Circassia and dominate its coastline owed much to this fact. The obvious point to make about the Russian war against the peoples of the North Caucasus was that it took far longer and required far greater sacrifices than the relatively easy victories over the Ottomans. The basic point was that Russia's European-model army was trained to fight in open battle against states whose armies did the same. Winning a guerrilla war in mountainous countryside was much harder. Nevertheless in the long run Russia's defeat of the Ottoman and Iranian empires and their expulsion from the Caucasus decided the fate of the peoples of the North Caucasus too. Their resistance against overwhelming Russian power could not be sustained for generations without outside support.

### **South of the Caucasus**

My definition of south of the Caucasus in this section does not always follow a strictly geographical logic. The Abkhaz might in strictly geographical terms be

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<sup>72</sup> On the Circassian struggle, see Paul B. Henze, "Circassian Resistance to Russia," in *The North Caucasus Barrier: The Russian Advance towards the Muslim World*, ed. Marie Bennigsen Broxup (London: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 62-111; Forsyth, *The Caucasus: A History*: pp. 284-93.

<sup>73</sup> On the political contact between Imam Shamil and Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt, see Moshe Gammer, "The Imam and the Pasha: A Note on Shamil and Muhammad Ali," *MES* 32, no. 4 (1996): pp. 336-42.

seen as living in the southern Caucasus but in reality are best understood along with the Circassians as part of the north-western region of the Caucasus. The peoples in the south of the Caucasus whom I discuss in this section are the Muslim populations of the khanates of the southern Caucasus - who subsequently were given the name Āzarbāyjānis, and the Christian populations of the Armenians and the Georgians.

The Georgian population in 1800 was overwhelmingly rural. Most Georgians were peasants but roughly 5% were landowning nobles. At the top of the pyramid stood the many branches of the royal dynasty (Bagrationi) and the autonomous princely rulers of western Georgia. The main Georgian group between the nobles and peasants were Orthodox clergy.<sup>74</sup> Generations of internal turbulence combined with being fought over by rival imperial powers had devastated the economy and drastically reduced the size of the population. Thousands of Georgians were abducted as slaves on a number of occasions in the eighteenth century.<sup>75</sup> The size of the population in 1800 is contested but it appears to have been little more than 500,000 in 1770. That was one-tenth of the population in 1254 at the height of Georgia's medieval flourishing.<sup>76</sup>

The small urban population in Georgia was seldom Georgian and was largely dominated by Armenian merchants. In fact Armenians dominated finance and commerce not just in Georgia but throughout most of the region.<sup>77</sup> Medieval

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<sup>74</sup> Nikolas K. Gvosdev, "The Russian Empire and the Georgian Orthodox Church in the First Decades of Imperial Rule, 1801–30," *Central Asian Survey* 14, no. 3 (1995): pp. 407–23.

<sup>75</sup> Sussan Babaie et al., *Slaves of the Shah: New Elites of Safavid Iran* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

<sup>76</sup> For the statistics see Gvosdev, *Imperial Policies and Perspectives towards Georgia, 1760–1819*: p. 2. The key text on Georgian history is Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*. but see also Forsyth, *The Caucasus: A History*: especially pp. 267–70 for Georgia on the eve of annexation.

<sup>77</sup> E. V. Kugrysheva, *Istoriia armian v Astrakhani* (Astrakhan': Volga, 2007); Bhaswati Bhattacharya, "Armenian European Relationship in India, 1500–1800: No Armenian Foundation for European Empire?," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 48, no. 2 (2005); Ronald W. Ferrier, "The Armenians and the East India Company in Persia in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries," *The Economic History Review* 26, no. 1 (1973); Razmik Panossian, *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars* (London: Hurst, 2006).

Georgian kings had encouraged Armenians to immigrate in order to boost the economy and the royal treasury. The great majority of the world's Armenians lived in Iran or, above all, in the Ottoman empire.<sup>78</sup> Even in eastern Anatolia, their main homeland, Armenians still constituted a minority among the majority Muslim population. At the height of Safavid power Shāh 'Abbās I had deported a significant number of Armenian merchants from eastern Anatolia to his new capital at Iṣfahān and there their descendants remained in 1800. But most Armenians in the Iranian empire were peasants who lived in western Āzarbāyjān in the khanates of Īravān and Nakhjavān, and in the mountains of Qarabāgh (Karabağ) and Ganjah. The biggest concentration of Armenians in the south Caucasus was in the khanate of Īravān where they made up perhaps 20% of the total population. In this khanate in the town of Etchmiadzin was located the seat of the head of the Armenian Church, the Catholicos. By 1800 there was a significant Armenian diaspora in Russia, mostly in the south but even in Moscow and St. Petersburg, where some of them had prospered greatly. Armenian merchant communities existed all the way from London and Venice to Madras, the sheer extent of their spread being one of their advantages in international trade. It was above all the Armenians' dominant position in regional and international commerce that made them such valuable subjects for the empires competing to dominate the Caucasus.<sup>79</sup>

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, apart from the various Georgian kingdoms and principalities, the southern and south-eastern Caucasus region contained some fifteen autonomous khanates, all of which owed allegiance to the

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<sup>78</sup> Hagop L. Barsoumian, "The Dual Role of the Armenian Amira Class within the Ottoman Government and the Armenian Millet (1750 - 1850)," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, ed. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), pp. 171-84.

<sup>79</sup> Anahide Ter Minassian, "L'Arménie et L'Eveil des Nationalités," in *Histoire du Peuple Arménien*, ed. Gérard Dédéyan (Toulouse: Editions Privat, 2007), pp. 474-85; Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: pp. 12-13.

Iranian shāh. These khanates varied considerably in size, population and wealth but, like the Georgians, all had suffered from the century or more of continual warfare and anarchy in the region. Populations, towns and prosperity had shrunk almost everywhere. The khanate of Īravān, which grew cereals for its own consumption but also exported cotton and tobacco, was among the most prosperous. Elsewhere cereal agriculture and cattle-herding supported most of a population made up largely of peasants. Most of the khans originated as tribal leaders. Succession struggles were a constant source of instability as were rivalries between neighbouring khans. All these khans, the ruling elites of the khanates and most of their very small cadre of scribal officials were Muslims, though the political power of the Muslim 'ulamā was small and the depth of commitment to Islam of the various tribes and communities varied.<sup>80</sup>

For most of its history Georgia was divided. The main geographical division was between east and west and ran along the Surami mountain range. From the early seventeenth century Georgia west of the Surami Mountains was under Ottoman domination whereas eastern Georgia – the kingdoms of Kartli and Kakheti – formed part of Iran. Western Georgia was even more divided into small principalities, above all Abkhazia, Guria, Imereti and Mingrelia. Western Georgia provided slaves to the Ottomans but its main advantage was that it gave them a secure foothold in the western Caucasus, above all through the ports of Batum, Poti and Suhumkale (Sukhumi). Georgians played a bigger role in Iran, providing the Safavids with many of their most dependable soldiers, together with many senior figures in court and government.

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<sup>80</sup> See above all Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: pp. 11-19; Jalīl Nāyībīyān and Dāvud 'Umrānī, "Bar'rasī-i Mawqī'iyāt-i Īravān dar Dawrah-'i Qājār (Az Āghāz-i Ḥukūmat-i Qājār tā Judayī az Īrān)," *Ārām* 32-3(1391 [2012/2013]): pp. 64-80.

Russia became a significant and permanent factor in Georgian politics in the eighteenth century. But the south of the Caucasus was still peripheral in Russian eyes and Georgians who relied on Russia for protection could suffer badly. When resources were scarce, other regions took priority. Peter I had overstretched Russian resources both in general and specifically by involving himself in the south of the Caucasus. His successors drew back in the 1730s, recognising the region as belonging to the Ottoman sphere of control. During the eighteenth century opinions differed within the Russian ruling elite as to whether Russia should expand southwards and, if so, how far this expansion should grow. Grigorii Potemkin, Catherine II's favourite, was a great supporter of southward expansion and of the Russo-Georgian Treaty of Georgievsk of 1783, which turned Georgia into a Russian protectorate and marked the highpoint of St. Petersburg's commitment to Georgia in the eighteenth century. After Potemkin's death the tide turned, fears of imperial overstretch grew in St. Petersburg and the Georgians were often left to Ottoman and Iranian mercy. Even in 1801 the decision to annex eastern Georgia aroused much opposition among decision-makers in St. Petersburg with Alexander I himself initially undecided.<sup>81</sup>

Full-scale annexation and the subsequent assimilation of Georgia to Russian norms angered many Georgians. Peasant revolts against the tightening of serfdom were frequent. More dangerous to Russia were conspiracies among the Georgian elite, which occurred regularly in the years after annexation. Loyalty to the Bagratid (Bagrationi) dynasty, whose direct heirs fled to the shāh's court, provided a focus for much of this conspiracy and discontent. The most famous of these noble conspiracies occurred as late as 1832. But there were many factors pushing Georgians to accept

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<sup>81</sup> For Russo-Georgian relations up to and including annexation see Gvosdev, *Imperial Policies and Perspectives towards Georgia, 1760-1819*: especially chapters 3,4 and 5, pp. 26-98.

Russian rule. Most basically, after 1801 this rule was a fact of life and, given Russian power, one that was unlikely to disappear. Russian victory in the early-nineteenth-century wars against the Ottomans and Iranians were a reminder both of Russian power and of the fact that would-be rebels had no rival imperial state on which they could rely for help. Ever fewer members of the Georgian elite would in any case have wished to swop Russian rule for that of the Ottomans and Iranians. More positive factors also mattered greatly. Common religion was one. Probably more important was the fact that Russian and Georgian society was in many ways similar: Georgian nobles fitted well into the imperial elite, enjoyed the fruits of Russian-style serfdom and benefited from opportunities to make careers in the tsars' service.<sup>82</sup>

In 1801 the Russians only annexed eastern Georgia, in other words the kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti. But geopolitical logic drove them within a very few years to absorb all of western Georgia too. It would have been foolish for Russia to leave coastal Georgia in Ottoman hands and make itself wholly dependent on its two long, narrow and vulnerable land-routes through the Caucasus northwards to the Kuban and eastwards to the Caspian. Annexing the lands and ports of western Georgia made obvious sense and was largely achieved by 1812 though not without some local resistance, above all from King Solomon of Imereti. But to gain the full potential strategic value of western Georgia Russia needed good ports and this is only really achieved when it annexed Poti in 1829. Nevertheless, in geopolitical terms the vital point was that much of Georgia was by nature a rich agricultural region. James Forsyth writes that 'much of western Georgia – the Rioni basin and the coastal plain of Mingrelia (Greek 'Colchis') – is so fertile that grapes, citrus fruits and tea can be grown'. The Russian empire brought peace and peace resulted in the

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<sup>82</sup> On the first generation of Russian rule, see Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*: chapter 4, pp. 63ff.

growth of the economy and population. Of course economic recovery did not come overnight and the Russo-Iranian war of 1804-13 itself put additional pressure on the Georgian population. A near-famine occurred in 1811 and even in 1827 Georgia found it difficult to supply General Ivan Paskevich's army as it advanced southwards. Nevertheless, Russia could now mobilise Georgian manpower against the Ottomans and Iranians. Above all, within a generation of annexation, it could mobilise Georgian resources to feed and supply an increasingly sizeable Russian garrison. P. B. Henze, a leading historian of the region, correctly writes that 'the Georgians were the keystone of the Russian position in the Caucasus'.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Henze, "Circassian Resistance to Russia," pp. 62-111; Forsyth, *The Caucasus: A History*: p. 11; Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: p. 104.

## Chapter Two - Imperial Rivals

### Geopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus Region

By the period covered by this thesis the Caucasus region had been the focus for competition between rival empires for millennia. The usual form taken by this rivalry was a clash between one empire located along the eastern Mediterranean coastline and another whose centre was located on the Iranian plateau. The Caucasus lay towards the geographical periphery of both such empires. At times it fell as a whole under the sway of one or other of these empires but not just distance but also the region's terrain and peoples made secure and stable rule difficult and expensive.

The classic example of the region's role in imperial rivalries came during the centuries-long competition between the Roman empire in its various forms (Republican, monarchical and Byzantine) and the Parthian and Sasanian empires of Iran. This competition reached its spectacular finale in the 25 year war between the Byzantines and Sasanians at the beginning of the seventh century A.D.<sup>1</sup> Initially victory went to the Sasanians who exploited internal disputes in the Byzantine leadership to overrun Syria and Palestine.<sup>2</sup> The Byzantine emperor Heraclius risked everything by moving his best army northwards out of the main theatre of military operations, re-conquering Armenia and Iberia, and then in 627-8 striking southwards from his base in the Caucasus region into the heart of the Sasanian empire.<sup>3</sup> This advance led to the disintegration of Sasanian power and Iran's capitulation. For the

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<sup>1</sup> On the struggle between Byzantium and the Sassanid, Nina Garsoïan, "Byzantium and the Sasanians," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: The Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanian Periods*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), pp. 568-92.

<sup>2</sup> R. N. Frye, "The Political History of Iran under Sasanians," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: The Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanian Periods*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), pp. 116-80.

<sup>3</sup> David M. Lang, "Iran, Armenia and Georgia," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: The Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanian Periods*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), pp. 505-36.

Byzantines the fruits of victory quickly disappeared as the whole region was overrun during the Arab-Islamic advances of the 630s but Heraclius's strategy illustrates the importance of the Caucasus region to any regime whose power was rooted in the Iranian plateau. An enemy who held this region could strike easily into the Iranian heartland.<sup>4</sup>

The fusion of Arab and Islamic power led to a geopolitical earthquake in the seventh century. Almost the whole of the 'Near and Middle East' was united in a single empire that also encompassed North Africa. Nothing like this had been seen since the Achaemenid empire a millennium before. The dramatic success of Islamic empire under the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs rested on two main pillars: the military power of a peripheral semi-nomadic people and the unity and inspiration provided by allegiance to a universalist religion. In various forms these were core elements of imperial power which recurred frequently in history. In nomadic societies every adult male was a warrior. Hunting trained warrior skills and nomad cavalry armies could move with a speed, range and surprise that the armies of settled agricultural societies could seldom match. Meanwhile allegiance to a great religion helped not just to unite and motivate the Arab tribesmen of the early Caliphate but also enabled the new empire to win the allegiance of conquered peoples.<sup>5</sup>

As regards the focus of this thesis, the key point about the early caliphate was that it united the worlds of the eastern Mediterranean and the Iranian plateau under a single emperor for two centuries. In time and inevitably the enormous strains of

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<sup>4</sup> On the Arab conquest of Iran, see 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Zarrīnkūb, "The Arab Conquest of Iran and Its Aftermath," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: The Period from the Arab Invasion and to the Saljuqs*, ed. R. N. Frye (Cambridge: CUP, 1975), pp. 1-56. On Roman-Persian rivalry see Beate Dignas and Engelbert Winter, *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity: Neighbours and Rivals* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007). On the final stage in this rivalry see Walter Emil Kaegi, *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> On the Islamic conquests and the caliphate see Chase F. Robinson, *The New Cambridge History of Islam: The Formation of the Islamic World. Sixth to Eleventh Centuries*, vol. I (Cambridge: CUP, 2010).

holding together such a vast empire told and the empire began to split up between its major regions. In many of these regions Turkish warriors who had initially served in the caliphs' armies created dynastic states.<sup>6</sup> Of all the various Turkish warrior dynasties that emerged in the region after the demise of the caliphate the Ottomans were to be by far the most famous and long-lived. The best chance of preserving a single united empire combining the east Mediterranean and Iranian regions probably lay in a new nomadic conquest, this time launched from the Asian steppe, which was the homeland of the world's most formidable and numerous warrior-nomads.

North-eastern Iran – in other words Khurāsān – was a huge plain bordering on the Asian steppe and an easy gateway through which nomadic armies could invade the Iranian plateau and the regions to its west. First Genghis Khan and his descendants and then Tamerlane swept over the region, conquering everything in their path, nearly destroying the Ottoman dynasty at the battle of Ankara in 1402. But Mongol rule, even after conversion to Islam, proved fleeting. The Mongol empire was too vast to last for long. In addition, at its heart lay a crucial weakness which helped to undermine almost all empires whose origins lay in Central Asian nomadism. This was the question of succession to the throne. The steppe tradition was for the ruler's sons to fight each other for their father's inheritance. Alternatively, compromise might for a time be achieved by dividing the empire between its heirs. For dynasties rooted in this tradition it proved hard to create a stable system of succession preserving an empire's unity.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> H. R. Roemer, "The Türkmen Dynasties," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, ed. Peter Jackson and Lawrence Lockhart (Cambridge: CUP, 1986), pp. 147-88.

<sup>7</sup> The best general study of succession systems is Jack Goody, ed. *Succession to High Office* (Cambridge: CUP, 1966), especially Goody's introduction, pp. 1-56. Specifically on the Mongol empire, see Christopher Pratt Atwood, ed. *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire* (New York: Facts on file New York, 2004).

In the ruins of the Byzantine, Chingissid and Timurid empires a new geopolitical order had emerged in the region south of the Caucasus by the early sixteenth century.<sup>8</sup> The Ottomans had taken the place of the Roman and Byzantine empires, with their power concentrated above all in Istanbul, Anatolia and the Balkans but also stretching across North Africa. The Safavid dynasty had created a rival empire on the Iranian plateau. The Ottoman and Iranian states were two of the three empires whose competition in the early-nineteenth-century Caucasus is the subject of this thesis. The third empire involved in this competition – Russia- first involved itself in this region in the late sixteenth century after Ivan IV conquered Kazan and Astrakhan, and Russia reached the Caspian.<sup>9</sup> But this Russian advance into the Caucasus was unsuccessful and short-lived. Here as elsewhere Ivan's ambitions had over-stretched Russian resources. Subsequently Russia was not to make a significant impact on the area south of the Caucasus range until the eighteenth century. The rest of this chapters looks in turn at the Ottoman, Iranian and Russian empires.

## **Ottoman Empire**

The Ottoman state came into being at the end of the thirteenth century in the northwest of Anatolia to the east of the Byzantine capital, Constantinople. It was

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<sup>8</sup> On the origins of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict, see Adel Allouche, *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict: 906-962/1500-1555* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1983). On the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry in the Caucasus, see C. Max Kortepeter, *Ottoman Imperialism During the Reformation: Europe and the Caucasus* (New York: New York University Press, 1972), chapter 3, pp. 39-50.

<sup>9</sup> On the capture of Kazan, see Isabel De Madariaga, *Ivan the Terrible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), chapter vi, pp. 92-106.

only one of many small Turcoman principalities which appeared in Anatolia;<sup>10</sup> the most critical factor which helped the Ottomans was their geographical proximity to the decadent Byzantine empire.<sup>11</sup> Structurally, the Ottomans possessed a dynastic system, in the sense that the political existence of the state was dependent upon the dynasty's male heirs, a rule that had been determined by Sunni/Hanafi law. According to Islamic law, the sultan was the leader of the dynastic family, as well as the only ruler of the state. For this reason, too, the idea of a formally recognised queen was as alien to the Ottoman system as it was to other Islamic politics. Every son of a prince or sultan was a candidate for the throne, and so became a political rival to his brothers. This was one of the most vital weaknesses of the Ottoman political system.

In their origins, the early Ottoman rulers were pragmatic leaders owing their legitimacy to military conquests which had been achieved from their Christian rivals.<sup>12</sup> Although wars against Christian military forces were legitimised by the religious rhetoric of *ghaza*, by which conquered lands and booty boosted the prestige of the Ottoman rulers, the Ottoman state was not an orthodox Islamic state.<sup>13</sup> The

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<sup>10</sup> Rudi Paul Lindner, "Anatolia, 1300-1451," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: Byzantium to Turkey, 1071-1453*, ed. Kate Fleet (Cambridge: CUP, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Halil Inalcik, "The Emergence of the Ottomans," in *The Cambridge History of Islam: The Central Islamic Lands from Pre-Islamic Times to the First World War*, ed. P. M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: CUP, 1970), pp. 263-91; Halil Inalcik, "The Rise of the Ottoman Empire," in *The Cambridge History of Islam: The Central Islamic Lands from Pre-Islamic Times to the First World War*, ed. P. M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: CUP, 1970), pp. 295-323; Inalcik, "The Heyday and the Decline of the Ottoman Empire," pp. 324-53.

<sup>12</sup> In Ottoman historiography, there have been four different theses regarding the origins and the nature of the Ottoman empire. The first thesis argues that the Ottoman empire was a continuation of the Byzantine empire and the Ottoman system included several institutions taken from the Byzantine. Herbert Adams Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire: The History of the Osmanlis, 1300-1403* (Oxford: OUP, 1916). The second thesis is that the Ottoman empire and its character could be regarded as part of the movements of migrating Turkish tribes. Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire*, trans. Gary Leiser (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992). According to the third thesis, the Ottoman empire was a *ghazi* state and based upon Islam and the idea of *jihād*. Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1938). The last one is that the Ottoman empire was an example of nomadic empires originating from tribal structures. Rudi Paul Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1983).

<sup>13</sup> Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1600*, II vols., vol. I (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), pp. 11, 20-21.

political atmosphere of the region where the Ottomans struggled to exist required much more than strict religious rules. Therefore, the Ottomans did not properly conform to the type of polity which the *ghazā/gaza* or *jihād* thesis would suggest.<sup>14</sup> To possess the title of *ghāzī/gazi* had two dimensions; legitimising the wars of the sultan against Christians as the fulfilment of divine command and justifying his possession of former Christian territories. Thus, the sultans were legitimate rulers of land which they had captured from Christians. But the Ottoman empire fought against Islamic states as often as they did against Christian ones, and captured as much Muslim as Christian territory too.

In the fifteenth century, to legitimise the necessity of war against Islamic states, Ottoman chroniclers mentioned the Muslim adversaries of the Ottomans as hindering the Holy War – for example, the Karamanids. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Ottoman legitimisation method changed. In the course of this century, and into the seventeenth, the most powerful Muslim rivals of the Ottomans in the east were the Safavids of Iran.<sup>15</sup> The Safavid shāhs were Shi'ites and claimed

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<sup>14</sup> There are several examples which clearly prove that although the Ottoman empire has been regarded as an Islamic state on paper, it was a pragmatic political entity practically. They pragmatically interpreted the rules of Islam especially with regard to external affairs. A. Nuri Yurdusev, "The Ottoman Attitude toward Diplomacy," in *Ottoman Diplomacy: Conventional or Unconventional?*, ed. A. Nuri Yurdusev (New York: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 13-16. Although Islam did not prevent the Ottomans from making agreements with non-Muslims, from the foundation of the Ottoman state, they were prone to form alliances with non-Muslim states against other Islamic ones. Apart from the Ottoman empire, there were others, namely the Golden Horde, Crimean Khanate, Safavid and Qājār Iran, and the Timurid empire, forming alliance with non-Muslim states against any other regional Islamic ones. As a striking example regarding to the Ottoman self-interest, according to an agreement between Bayezid II and Pope Innocent VIII, the sultan, known to be very religious, nevertheless promised to deliver the sacred city of Jerusalem to the French King after it was taken from the Mamluks, in return for the King keeping his brother Cem in custody in France instead of sending him to the enemies of the Ottomans. Halil Inalcik, "A Case Study in Renaissance Diplomacy: The Agreement between Innocent VIII and Bayezid II on Djem Sultan," in *Ottoman Diplomacy: Conventional or Unconventional?*, ed. A. Nuri Yurdusev (New York: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 66-88.

<sup>15</sup> On political and military rivalry between Iran and the Ottoman empire, see Bekir Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran Siyâsî Münâsebetleri (1578-1612)* (İstanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 1993). "The emergence of an Islamic state system gave rise to complex legal problems pertaining to the recognition of Muslims states by one another, the equality and reciprocity of their interrelationships, and the treatment of their subjects of each Muslim state in the other. When the split in Islam began at the opening of the sixteenth century, neither the Ottoman empire nor Iran was prepared to recognize

quasi-divine status as heads of the Safavid Religious Order. These claims allowed the Ottomans to present the Safavids as rebels against the legitimate authority of the Ottoman sultans, and more importantly, as apostates and infidels. So appalling, in fact, was Safavid heresy that fighting against these heretics was more important than fighting the infidels.<sup>16</sup> In a sense, Ottoman military power and victory justified its religious rhetoric against the Safavids.<sup>17</sup>

The Ottomans also did not refrain from collaborating with the Byzantium against the Serbian forces: this allowed them to capture the fortress of Çimpe in Thrace in 1352.<sup>18</sup> Just two years later, the strategic fortress of Gallipoli was brought under control of the Ottomans. This was the first territory that the Ottomans captured in Europe. The crossing of the Dardanelles possessed crucial importance for the transformation of the Ottoman state from a rather insignificant frontier principality into an empire encompassing the Balkans and Anatolia.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, the demography of Anatolia had begun to change; primarily Greek and Christian in the eleventh century, by the beginning of the fourteenth century Anatolia had been largely colonised by Turks.<sup>20</sup>

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Ottoman central government took advantage of the large numbers of Turcoman tribesmen who had migrated to Anatolia by transferring them from Anatolia to the Balkans, as a part of the latter's colonisation. In this context, the geography and climate of Anatolia played a key

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the other, nor to regulate their relationships on the basis of equality and reciprocity." Majid Khadduri, *The Islamic Law of Nations: Shaybani's Siyar* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 2001), pp. 62-65.

<sup>16</sup> Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 121.

<sup>17</sup> The Battle of Ankara in 1402 between the forces of the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid I and Timur caused the same discussion related to the Islamic law but in this case, the Ottomans could not legitimised their own religious rhetoric.

<sup>18</sup> Almost exactly 50 years later, approximately 10,000 Serbian troops under the leadership of Stefan Lazarevich would fight with the Ottomans against the Timurid forces. As a striking detail, the Timurid army was much more Turkic compared to the military forces under the control of Bayezid I in 1402. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*: p. 17.

<sup>19</sup> Inalcik and Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1600*, I: p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*.

role. The region became a favoured resting place for nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists who had migrated from Central Asia and who en route had made temporary stopovers on the Iranian plateau and partly in the region north of the Caspian Sea. The Mediterranean coastlands and the plain of northern Syria provided them with a warm winter climate, while in the summer they and their flocks could follow the retreating snowline to the upland pastures of the Taurus Mountains and the Anatolian plateau. It was perhaps these factors more than the collapse of Byzantine rule that encouraged these nomads into Anatolia.<sup>21</sup>

Between 1300 and 1400, the Ottoman military changed from a force of raiders gathered around the ruler, to a disciplined army capable of undertaking sieges of cities and battles against large enemy armies. The two institutions that underpinned this transformation remained the core of the Ottoman military machine in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, namely the timar/fief-holding cavalry (*sipahis*) and the Janissary infantry. Alongside them developed a small central scribal bureaucracy and a system of rule in which core Ottoman territories were divided into provinces and *sancaks*, or sub-provinces, which were controlled through military-governors known as *sancak-beyis*. The Ottomans seized the opportunity of exploiting the political rivalries among local leaders in the Balkans in order to extend and legitimise their own authority and territory.<sup>22</sup>

In general, the Ottoman social structure was divided into two main groups – *askeri* and *reaya*. The *askeri*, the military or administrative class, was officially exempted from all taxation. The *reaya* – the merchants, artisans and peasants – pursued productive activities and therefore paid taxes. Furthermore, there were some intermediary groups which were exempted from the extra ordinary levies and had

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 3, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6; Inalcik and Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1600*, I: p. 13.

special tasks such as guarding mountain passes and fortresses or contributing special supplies to the palace or army. To some extent, there was mobility among these groups. As an example, the *devşirme*, the levy of Christian children, was an opportunity for Christians to join the military class. For Muslim *reaya*, it was possible to be enrolled in the military by a special decree of the sultan. But in the Ottoman regime at the height of its power in the sixteenth century, the general principle was held to that each individual should remain in his own status group. In this way equilibrium in the state and society could be maintained.<sup>23</sup>

Though Ottoman forces suffered a crushing defeat at Timurid hands at the battle of Ankara in 1402, the dynasty quickly recovered during the reigns of Mehmed I (1413-1421) and Murad II (1421-1451). Success largely occurred because the Ottomans could build upon the solid institutions which had evolved in the fourteenth century-the Janissary army, the *timar*-holding *sipahis*, the ulema and the bureaucrats.<sup>24</sup> The death of Tamerlane in 1405 and the rapid disintegration of his empire were also crucial. After the defeat of 1402, the geopolitical centre of the Ottoman empire moved to the Balkans from where the Ottomans re-organized and regained their authority in western and northern Anatolia. By the middle of the fifteenth century, the Ottoman state was a significant regional power, controlling western and northern Anatolia and a large part of the Balkans. But at sea, Ottoman strength was negligible. Moreover, compared to the Mamluk Sultans who ruled the Holy Cities of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, the prestige of the Ottoman state was insignificant. It was the capture of Istanbul in 1453 and of the Holy Cities in the 1510s that turned the Ottoman state into the imperial heir to Rome and even to some extent to the caliphate.

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<sup>23</sup> Inalcik and Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1600*, I: pp. 16-17.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

The capture of Istanbul in 1453 was followed within a few decades by Ottoman domination of the whole Black Sea coastline, though the Ottomans often preferred to rule through local clients rather than to resort to annexation. After the conquest of almost the entire Black Sea coast of Anatolia by the 1460s, the Ottomans shifted their sights across the water and took control of the major ports and fortresses around the Black Sea such as Kefe and Azak at the mouth of the Don river in 1475, and Anapa in 1479. The fortresses of Akkerman and Kilia (both important commercial centres) were seized in 1484 following the accession of Bayezid I. The Black Sea became “an Ottoman lake”, closed to merchants of other states who were prevented from entering the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. The regional trade came under the control of the Ottomans.<sup>25</sup> The Ottoman state was historically the first empire which had been able to control the entire Black Sea littoral, hence Istanbul became a trade hub where merchandise passed through and could be taxed or used to feed the gradually increasing population of the Ottoman capital.

For three centuries the Ottomans controlled the Black Sea, from the conquests of the late fifteenth century until the opening of the sea to European navies and merchants in the late eighteenth century. To consolidate its naval superiority in the Black Sea, Bayezid both increased the size of the fleet and engaged experienced corsairs as naval captains in 1498. Piracy was, in the succeeding centuries, to act as the most important school of seamanship and naval warfare for Ottoman mariners, and the corsairs were to provide the most successful Ottoman admirals. It was

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<sup>25</sup> To some scholars, the gradual closing of the Black Sea to direct foreign commerce by the Ottomans after the capture of Istanbul in 1453 was a disaster of the first order for subject peoples and Ottoman Muslims alike. Carl M. Kortepeter, “Ottoman Imperial Policy and the Economy of the Black Sea Region in the Sixteenth Century”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 86, No. 2 (1966), p. 86.

Bayezid who established the close link between piracy and the Imperial Ottoman fleet.<sup>26</sup>

Ensuring control of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles was one of the keys to the seizure of Istanbul. It was an unchanging component in the security of the new Ottoman capital after the conquest. For these reasons, the Black Sea held a vital position in the Ottoman imagination and in Ottoman grand strategy. It was accepted as a distinct region of the Ottoman sultan's domain, bounded on the south by the Anatolian heartland and on the north by the *Dasht-i Qipchaq*, which served as a buffer between the sea and the gradually emerging threats to the north. The Ottomans well understood the relationships between geography, security, commerce, and state-building, far better indeed than the empires that preceded it in the region.<sup>27</sup> In this context, the northern coastal line of the Black Sea, from the Bosphorus around to the Crimean ports and the straits of Kerch became sub-provinces, governed by appointed administrators from the imperial centre. The southern coastline was likewise divided into provincial administrations. The Caucasus coast, although never a directly administered district, was dominated by garrisons inside fortified ports.

Ports and fortresses were crucial to the Ottoman system of rule. Fortresses might be in the hands of local warlords who submitted to the Ottomans when so commanded but who otherwise acted autonomously. In this context, a relatively low-cost strategy was employed by the Ottoman central government. Possession of the strategic fortresses and ports allowed control of the sea and gave the Ottomans the leverage to forge agreements with the most powerful political entities inland. These agreements provided for some degree of autonomy over local affairs in exchange for

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<sup>26</sup> Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*: p. 40.

<sup>27</sup> Gábor Ágoston, "Where Environmental and Frontier Studies Meet: Rivers, Forests, Marshes and Forts along the Ottoman-Hapsburg Frontier in Hungary," in *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, ed. A. C. S. Peacock (Oxford: OUP, 2009), pp. 57-79.

tribute and professed loyalty to the sultan. That strategy entailed a certain amount of risk, however. The points of direct Ottoman power – fortified garrisons on rivers and seaports – were targets of assault when the vassals decided to revolt, and patron-client relationships with powerful native rulers were stable only so long as the client did not receive a better offer from another potential patron and also so long as the patron was feared.

The advantages and hazards of empire by condominium were clear in the Ottomans' relations with two groups around the sea from the fifteenth century to the seventeenth centuries: the khans of Crimea and the kings of Georgia. In the first place, the Crimean Tatars were speakers of a Turkic language and, as Muslims, part of the same cultural universe as the Ottomans. The khan of Crimea controlled his own affairs and conducted a foreign policy that was at times wholly independent of that of the Ottoman court. Tatar raids on Polish, Russian, and even Wallachian and Moldovan cities and caravans provided a useful instrument for the Ottomans north of the sea, a way of fending off potential aggressors and of checking rebellious Christian clients. However, the independence of the Giray khans also meant that they could, at times, pursue policies that were contrary to the strategic interests of the Ottomans. Tatar incursions often threatened to provoke full-scale wars with Poland and Muscovy. In fact, from the last seventeenth century forward, Ottoman policy toward the Tatars more often involved attempts to control their reckless raiding than use them as a lever against northern powers. The problem was that the Girays' legitimacy and their state's political economy depended on slave trade and plunder.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> C. Max Kortepeter, "Ottoman Imperial Policy and the Economy of the Black Sea Region in the Sixteenth Century," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 86, no. 2 (1966): pp. 86-113; C. Max Kortepeter, "Ğāzī Girāy II, Khan of the Crimea, and Ottoman Policy in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, 1588-94," *SEER* 44, no. 102 (1966): pp. 139-66; Alan Fisher, "Muscovy and the Black Sea Slave Trade," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 4, no. 4 (1972): pp. 575-94; Alan Fisher, "Les rapports entre l'Empire ottoman et la Crimée: L'aspect financier," *CMRS* 13, no. 3 (1972): pp. 368-81;

Nevertheless, although the Crimean khans could be an embarrassment to the Ottomans, their state played a crucial role in Ottoman grand strategy and domination of the Black Sea. The Ottomans and the khans depended on each other in order to survive.<sup>29</sup> Though the Crimeans khans were entrusted with providing the land-based security of the Black Sea by the Ottomans, the bureaucratic structure and the military system of the khanate had not been designed to withstand the military and demographic advancement of Russia towards south in the eighteenth century.

The situation in the Caucasus was even more intricate. Of all the areas around the Black Sea, the Caucasus was the most difficult to control. The Circassian highlanders, the Abkhaz along the coast, and the various Georgian kings and princes in the south were so divided that there was no single political figure who could claim to speak on behalf of any sizeable part of the region. The inhospitable interior also meant that projecting military forces beyond the thin coastline was often impossible. The Ottomans therefore settled on generally leaving the highland tribes to their own devices, placing directly appointed administrators in the fortified ports, and striking political bargains with the lowland kings farther inland.

There was an important strategic reason to rely on pacts rather than outright conquest, especially in the Georgian lands. As a borderland between the Ottoman empire and Iran, the southern Caucasus would have demanded significant resources to police, and successive sultans settled for relying on local feudal powers to raise their own armies and secure Ottoman interests against the Iranians and their allies. That often meant, of course, that Georgian armies found themselves on opposite

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Mikhail Kizilov, "Slave Trade in the Early Modern Crimea from the Perspective of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources," *Journal of Early Modern History* 11, no. 1-2 (2007): pp. 1-31.

<sup>29</sup> Alexandre Bennigsen et al., eds., *Le Khanat de Crimée dans les Archives du Musée du Palais de Topkapi* (Paris: Mouton, 1978). For a comprehensive review on this work, see Victor Ostapchuk, "Review: The Publication of Documents on the Crimean Khanate in the Topkapi Sarayi: New Sources for the History of the Black Sea Basin," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 6, no. 4 (1982): pp. 500-28.

sides of the battle lines – the Ottoman-influenced kings of western Georgia, or Imereti, against the Iranian-influenced kings of eastern Georgia, or Kartli-Kakheti, plus dozens of lesser rulers on either side. But as in many other parts of the Ottoman imperial system, it was strategic prudence and political advantage, not religion or language, that usually determined the lines of allegiance.

The combination of centralized control of trade, complex systems of tribute and taxation, and loose political-military bargains with local leaders worked well for the first two centuries after the closing of the sea. However, by the seventeenth century, the system began to undergo changes that would have a serious impact on the political and economic relationships around the sea. Within the lands directly controlled by the empire, the highly centralized administrative system created during the reign of Mehmed II (1451-1481) gave way to a far looser one. Rather than relying on governors directly appointed by Istanbul and dispatched to the provinces, the state came to rely on local landowning notables. The power of these local elites was recognized by the sultan, and in turn they provided for the collection of taxes and the raising of military forces during the campaign season. In some areas, these landlords developed quasi-dynastic, autonomous systems of rule within the lands that they administered. This shift of power was evident across Anatolia, including along the Black Sea coast. There, the leaders of powerful regional families came to be known as *derebeys*, literally lords of the valleys. Important owners of large estates, some of them associated with the old Turcoman families that had commanded parts of the coast even before the Ottoman conquest, they came to dominate the regional economy and also its politics. Major ports such as Sinop and Trabzon were run as the

fiefdoms of leading families, with the centre generally unable to change the status quo.<sup>30</sup>

There were two methods of provisioning an army on the move. The first one was to plunder local food producers by seizing their stocks of grain or animals; the other was to organize the logistics before the campaign started. The second was depended on a well-functioning fiscal-military system; this meant that food supplies were to be collected from the local residents and to be stored in magazines along the intended route of the march. Most likely, the first method was helpful to figure out the question of provisioning an army in the short period of time however it could cause more serious problems in the end since the locals were unable to continue cultivate for some time. This might be considered as a self-destructive move of an empire that could paralyze the peasantry's productivity and the regularity of provisioning of the army in the long period of time. The Ottoman imperial system seemingly developed a complex example of logistics synthesizing the Iranian-Seljukid and Byzantine traditions.<sup>31</sup>

There of course were geographical limitations to Ottoman eastward advance. The Ottoman campaigns against Iran in the sixteenth century had proven that the stiff and harsh terrain in the borderlands between the two imperial structures was sufficient to hinder Ottoman advance, even when Iran offered no military resistance but the scorched-earth policy. Fighting against the Iranians, the Ottomans added vast territories into their realm but at great cost. The Ottoman success was not only a result of the military superiority but it owed much to the internal turbulence in Iran

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<sup>30</sup> Much the most comprehensive work on the eighteenth-century Ottoman polity, including the decentralisation of power is Suraiya Faroqhi, ed. *The Cambridge History of Turkey: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, vol. III (Cambridge: CUP, 2006). See in particular the chapters by Carter Findley, Virginia Aksan, Linda Darling in Part II but even more the three chapters in Part III ('The Centre and the Provinces') by Dina Khoury, Fikret Adanir and Bruce Masters.

<sup>31</sup> William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society since AD 1000* (UCP, 1982), pp. 2-4.

and to the raids of the Uzbeks, which left the Iranians fighting on both fronts. On the other hand, the campaigns against Iran, to some extent, were to be considered as one of the key factors behind the increasing weakness of the Ottoman empire. The capture of Āzarbāyjān and the Caucasus in the last decades of the sixteenth century were highly devastating, not only for the Ottoman military structure but also for its financial sources because the Ottoman garrisons in the region were to be reinforced and supplied from the Anatolian provinces.

In the Balkans and parts of North Africa the devolution of power was sometimes even more extreme and dangerous. By the end of the eighteenth century, for example, Ali Pasha of Yanya (Ioannina), though in principle the sultan's appointed governor of much of mainland Greece, was in practice a semi-independent ruler who even conducted diplomatic relations with foreign states. But the extreme case was the Ottoman early-nineteenth-century governor of Egypt, Mehmed (Muhammad) Ali, who not merely set himself up as an independent ruler but by the 1820s was becoming an increasingly serious threat to the survival of the Ottoman dynasty and empire, which in the 1830s he would actually have destroyed but for Russian intervention. Mehmed Ali was exceptional but even where provincial rulers remained loyal to the Ottomans, their control over taxes and military recruitment had fatal implications for Ottoman power.

At the time when the European Great Powers were creating centralised systems of government and formidable fiscal-military machines, the Ottomans were moving in the opposite direction, from central administration to tax-farming, from the previously formidable central Janissary army to provincial militias, and from the well-regulated centralised system of rule of the sixteenth century to the sweeping and barely regulated devolution of power out to regionally based elite families. A good

way to illustrate this process is to compare Ottoman and Russian state finances towards the end of the eighteenth century. The Russian system was considered inefficient and corrupt by most Europeans with costs of collection – among them a big element of corruption - absorbing one-quarter of the notional tax-take. But in the Ottoman case less than one-fifth of state taxes actually reached the sultan's treasury.<sup>32</sup>

A strong financial base was essential if growing Austrian and Russian military power was to be equalled. Military power was at the heart of geopolitical competition and the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed an enormous growth in both the size and the quality of European armies. Given the nature of contemporary weaponry, only close-order formations could deliver the firepower and the shock that brought victory on the battlefield. Infantry units needed to be able to move rapidly across a battlefield in close formation, moving smoothly from column to line or square depending on whether they were advancing to the attack, deploying to maximise their firepower, or taking up a defensive position against cavalry. To manage these movements with calm, speed and efficiency in battlefield conditions required a discipline and training which could not be achieved quickly and depended on having a large core of veteran troops.<sup>33</sup> Still more complex but also essential for victory was the coordination of infantry, artillery and cavalry on a battlefield. Eighteenth-century European armies developed not just these skills but also a growing body of generals and staff officers with a professional understanding of strategy and operations. The basic reason for the disastrous defeats of the Ottoman

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<sup>32</sup> See above all Faroqhi, *The Cambridge History of Turkey: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*. but also, on Ali Pasha, see Katherine Elizabeth Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). On taxes see Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals*: p. 140 and endnotes 11 and 12 on page 429.

<sup>33</sup> Alex Marshall, *The Russian General Staff and Asia, 1860-1917* (London: Routledge, 2006), chapter 2, pp. 11-33.

armies in the wars against Russia of 1768-74, 1787-92 and 1806-12 was the fact that the Russian army had mastered all these skills and the Ottoman one had not.<sup>34</sup>

The key problem was the deterioration of the Janissary corps, which in the sixteenth century had comprised some of the best infantry in the world. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while growing greatly in paper numbers, the Janissaries had become much less effective as a military force.<sup>35</sup> Thousands of civilians entered the corps in order to gain the pay, the status and the legal privileges and exemptions that membership entailed. Artisans and craftsmen packed its lower ranks, turning the corps into almost a guild. Officers used their control over 'recruitment' into the corps for personal profit, and were themselves more frequently businessmen, rentiers and tax-farmers than professional soldiers. Janissary pay coupons were traded on the open market and bought by rentiers. By 1800 it was reckoned that of the 400,000 Janissaries on the rolls, barely one-tenth were actually soldiers of any description.

The collapse of the Janissary corps not only deprived the empire of its best troops but also diverted a large part of the already inadequate military budget to what amounted to a private welfare system. Perhaps even worse, in an effort to retain their privileges the Janissaries revolted against efforts to create an effective alternative military force. Since they were much the largest armed force in Istanbul their power to block such reforms was great. After the disastrous defeats by Russia in 1768-74 and 1788-92 Selim III attempted to create a new professional army on European

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<sup>34</sup> Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon: The Battle for Europe, 1807 to 1814*; Gábor Ágoston, "Empires and Warfare in East-Central Europe, 1550–1750: The Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry and Military Transformation," in *European Warfare, 1350-1750*, ed. Frank Tallett and D. J. B. Trim (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), pp. 110-34; Rhoads Murphey, "Ottoman Military Organisation in South-Eastern Europe, c 1420-1720," in *European Warfare, 1350-1750*, ed. Frank Tallett and D. J. B. Trim (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), pp. 135-58.

<sup>35</sup> In the example of Russia, Peter I had paved the way of general reform process by overcoming the conservative alliance of traditional military units – *sterel'tsy*, religious sectarians in the last decade of the seventeenth century. The Ottoman central government, nevertheless, would not manage to abolish the Janissaries and the Bektaşî order hindering any reform attempt in the Ottoman empire until 1826.

lines.<sup>36</sup> By 1807 he had 22,000 conscripts and 1600 officers in this new corps. After Selim's overthrow by a Janissary revolt these new units were disbanded.

When his cousin and ultimate successor, Mahmud II, tried cautiously to re-introduce a smaller and less radical version of Selim III's military reform he was nearly overthrown in November 1809 in a further Janissary revolt which resulted in the killing of the Grand Vizier and full-scale civil war between rival military forces in Istanbul. Had this further revolt led to the killing of Sultan Mahmud, the last male member of the Ottoman dynasty, then all political order could easily have collapsed and the empire might have disintegrated. Mahmud survived and pursued a quiet policy of re-centralisation in the next two decades, reforming some institutions such as the navy and the artillery corps, putting reliable men into key institutions, and carefully winning the support of the Muslim *'ulamā* ('clergy') by displays of personal piety, by financial support and by never doing anything to offend their conservative beliefs or their interests.<sup>37</sup>

Mahmud moved slowly and cautiously to build a coalition which would make fundamental military reform possible.<sup>38</sup> Only after Mahmud's destruction of the Janissaries in 1826 was Selim's initiative renewed but it was not really until the 1840s and 1850s that a viable professional army emerged.<sup>39</sup> For this there were a

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<sup>36</sup> On some of the reform memoranda submitted to Selim III, Ergin Çağman, ed. *III. Selim'e Sunulan Islahat Lâyhaları* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2010). Stanford J. Shaw, "The Origins of Ottoman Military Reform: The Nizam-i Cedid Army of Sultan Selim III," *The Journal of Modern History* 37, no. 3 (1965); Tuncay Zorlu, *Innovation and Empire in Turkey: Sultan Selim III and the Modernisation of the Ottoman Navy* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008); Thomas Naff, "Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the Reign of Selim III, 1789-1807," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 83, no. 3 (1963); Seyfi Kenan, *Nizam-ı Kadim'den Nizam-ı Cedid'e: III. Selim ve Dönemi* (İstanbul: ISAM, 2010).

<sup>37</sup> On the religious legitimization of the political authority and the abolition of Janissaries, see Es'ad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer (Yeniçeriliğin Kaldırılmasına Dair)*, ed. Mehmet Arslan (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2005).

<sup>38</sup> RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 11, pp. 2-20.

<sup>39</sup> RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 15, pp. 1-22. Following the abolition of the Janissaries in 1826, Mahmud II was to design a new Ottoman army, which were initially based on only Muslim subjects, for details see Gültekin Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok: Zorunlu Askerliğe Geçiş Sürecinde Osmanlı Devleti'nde Siyaset, Ordu ve Toplum (1826-1839)* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2009). However, during the

number of reasons but the most important was finance.<sup>40</sup> Modern arms were expensive and so was supporting and paying a large peacetime army throughout the year. Moreover in the early stages of military reform it was essential to hire many European officers to train the new troops and this too was very expensive.<sup>41</sup>

In the absence of an effective central army Ottoman military power depended on mercenary militias raised at provincial level by the governors. Men were recruited on an annual basis and discharged when a campaign ended. Untrained levies thrown together into rapidly formed units were totally incapable of facing a professional army in the field, though they could sometimes fight effectively in sieges from behind good fortifications. As bad, these soldiers were also frequently a source of banditry in the countryside when they were discharged from service at the end of a

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mobilization of the Ottoman army prior to the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29, the Zaporozhian Cossack units were enlisted into the army. RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 885, pp. 1-8. According to the Russian ambassador in Istanbul, Minchaki, "La Turquie est entrée dans une révolution complète. L'abolition des Janissaires est prélude des tous les changements; la reforme de l'organisation militaire; ne peut manquer d'exercer une grande influence sur les mœurs et celle des mœurs amènera une réorganisation de l'Empire entier. Enfin, je ne saunais partager les opinions de ceux qui envisagent cette révolution comme peu importante et comme incapable de produire des résultats durables. J'y vis au contraire les causes préparatoires d'une grande métamorphose dont les progrès peuvent sans soute entre ralentis aux accélérés suivants l'esprit qui la dirigera." Minchaki was sure that the Ottoman empire had already entered a period of metamorphosis following the abolition of the Janissaries, though newly founded Ottoman units currently did not have any superiority over a European army, the morale of these troops, in a period of four to five years, would be boosted by the feeling of self-confidence, and then Sultan Mahmud II would have a reliable army which could reach the level of a perfectly organized and disciplined force unless this process was not suspended by any foreign power. As the army lacked new military training and instructions, the Porte needed foreigner officers –i.e. Italian, French and German ones. According to his notes, it was surely beyond doubt that the well-disciplined and trained Ottoman army would be ready before long. AVPRI, fond: 180, opis': 517/1, delo: 109, pp. 107-110ob, M. I. Minchaki to K. F. Nesselrode, 3 March 1827. In this transition period, some officers from France presented a proposal to found a military school in the Ottoman capital. AVPRI, fond: 180, opis': 517/1, delo: 124, pp. 510-510ob, Lieven to A. I. Ribeaupierre, 6 September 1830. Apart from Minchaki's detailed reports, F. F. Berg, being the Russian military agent in Istanbul, provided valuable information/intelligence on the continuing transformation process of the Ottoman military mechanism to the General Staff in St. Petersburg. For his detailed reports, see RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 4, pp. 1-401ob; delo: 5, pp. 1-300; delo: 7, pp. 1-115. [1826-30]. On Ottoman army regulations, RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 11, pp. 1-19ob.

<sup>40</sup> According to the Russian ambassador, the Ottoman empire lacked sufficient financial resources that was one of the main factors slowing down the might of Sultan Mahmud II and paralyzing his efforts in such a sensitive period. AVPRI, fond: 180, opis': 517/1, delo: 109, p. 109ob, M. I. Minchaki to K. F. Nesselrode, 3 March 1827.

<sup>41</sup> On the Janissaries as an essentially civilian organisation see Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), chapter 6, pp. 191-226. On Ottoman military reform under Selim III and Mahmud II see Virginia H. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged* (London: Pearson, 2007), chapters 5-9, pp. 180-398.

campaign or mutinied for want of pay. Of course it was impossible to create a professional officer corps or professional generals in this military system. Given the scale of the external challenges looming on the Ottoman horizon the decline of its military machine was a disaster. But a thesis focused on the Caucasus theatre needs to note one additional point. In earlier centuries, faced by a sometimes great threat from Safavid Iran, the Ottoman eastern front had a high priority in Ottoman eyes. By the early nineteenth century things had changed. Even Egypt under its ambitious, in theory Ottoman, viceroy posed a much bigger threat and had a higher priority in the late 1820s and 1830s. Above all Istanbul's eyes turned to the Balkans theatre where the main armies of Russia, its greatest enemy, were concentrated and where an advancing enemy might threaten the capital itself. The eastern front and specifically the Caucasian theatre got the leftovers of an already inadequate military effort.<sup>42</sup>

## Iran

The Ottoman empire was weak in 1800 in comparison to the European Great Powers. But in comparison to Iran it was strong. Geography was a key reason for Iranian weakness.<sup>43</sup> Comparing Safavid Iran's natural endowment with that of its Ottoman and Mughal neighbours, Stephen Dale describes Iran's core territory as 'a thinly settled, desiccated plateau of mountains and sand deserts, with major river systems located only in the north-western and south-eastern frontier zones'.<sup>44</sup> Only

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<sup>42</sup> The best short overall survey of Ottoman military developments between 1603 and 1839 is by Virginia H. Aksan, "War and Peace," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), chapter 5, pp. 81-117.

<sup>43</sup> For a detailed historical geography of Iran, see Vasilii Vladimirovich Barthold, *An Historical Geography of Iran*, ed. Clifford Edmund Bosworth, trans. Svat Soucek (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984).

<sup>44</sup> Stephen Frederic Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010).

some 5% of Iran's territory was cultivable, while 55% of the land was desert.<sup>45</sup> To make sense of the imperial competition which is the subject of this thesis it is essential to realise that Āzarbāyjān was crucial to the shāh 'because it contains Iran's largest areas of fertile soil'.<sup>46</sup> In most areas of Iran any agriculture required irrigation but irrigation systems were very vulnerable to the nomadic tribes who had migrated to Iran from Central Asia over many centuries and had frequently remained there.<sup>47</sup> Iran also had few useful natural resources: above all, it had no gold or silver.<sup>48</sup> It therefore faced a constant battle to maintain a favourable balance of external trade in order to import even basic necessities such as rice, sugar and spices.<sup>49</sup> One advantage Iran did possess was strong natural borders – in other words mountains – along most of its western, northern and south-eastern frontiers.<sup>50</sup> The trouble was that the lands within these borders would be hard-pressed to sustain a powerful state and army. To be truly powerful Iran needed to control areas beyond its natural frontiers, including the fertile and densely populated Baghdad region to the west of the Zagros

<sup>45</sup> On Iran's poor natural wealth see also Matthee, *Persia in Crisis: Safavid Decline and the Fall of Isfahan*: chapter 1, pp. 1-26.

<sup>46</sup> The quote on Āzarbāyjān is from Forsyth, *The Caucasus: A History*: p. 11.

<sup>47</sup> On the classic irrigation system in Iran, see B. Spooner, "Ābyārī," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1983), pp. 405-11. For a detailed description of the underground irrigation canal system in Iran, see Xavier de Planhol, "Kāriz," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 2011), pp. 564-65.

<sup>48</sup> For the monetary history of Iran, see Rudi Matthee, Willem Floor, and Patrick Clawson, *The Monetary History of Iran: From the Safavids to the Qajars* (London: IB Tauris, 2013), text.

<sup>49</sup> There was a fierce competition between the Safavids and the Ottomans, see Rudi Matthee, "Anti-Ottoman Politics and Transit Rights: The Seventeenth-Century Trade in Silk between Safavid Iran and Muscovy," *CMRS* 35, no. 4 (1994): pp. 739-61; Rudolph P. Matthee, *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver, 1600-1730* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999); Hooshang Jabbari, *Trade and Commerce between Iran and India during the Safavid Period (1505-1707)* (Delhi: Indian Bibliographies Bureau, 2003); N. G. Kukanova, "Rol' armianskogo kupechestva v razvitii russko-iranskoi trgovli v poslednei treti XVII v.," *Kratkie Soobshcheniia Instituta Narodov Azii* XXX(1961); V. A. Baiburtian, *Armianskaia koloniia Novoi Dzhul'fy v XVII veke (Rol' Novoi Dzhul'fy v irano-evropeiskikh politicheskikh i ekonomicheskikh svyaziakh)* (Erevan: Izdatel'stvo AN Armianskoi SSR, 1969); Guity Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market: Foreign Trade and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Iran," *IS* 14, no. 1 (1981): pp. 53-85; N. G. Kukanova, *Torgovo-Ekonomicheskie Otnosheniia Rossii i Irana v Period Pozdnego Feodalizma* (Saransk: Izdatel'stvo Mordovskogo Universiteta, 1993); Ina Baghdiantz-McCabe, *The Shah's Silk for Europe's Silver: The Eurasian Trade of the Julfa Armenians in Safavid Iran and India, 1530-1750* (Atlanta: University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts Series, 1999); A. L. Riabtsev, *Rol' Irana v vostochnoi torgovle Rossii v XVIII veke* (Moskva: Prometei, 2002).

<sup>50</sup> W. B. Fisher, "Physical Geography," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: The Land of Iran*, ed. W. B. Fisher (Cambridge: CUP, 1968), pp. 3-110.

Mountains.<sup>51</sup> This it achieved at the highpoint of Safavid power under Shāh ‘Abbās I but it could not hold the region after ‘Abbās’s death as Ottoman power revived.<sup>52</sup> Still more relevant to this thesis was the importance of the north-western borderlands - Āzarbāyjān, Georgia and the Caspian province – for Iran. Āzarbāyjān and Georgia were by Iranian standards rich and fertile agricultural territory.<sup>53</sup> The Caspian province was the home of the silk industry, on which much of Iran’s finances and balance of trade depended. But this northern borderland was very vulnerable to Russian attack.

Given its small population – roughly 10 million under ‘Abbās I – and scarce resources Iran needed effective government if it was to have any chance of holding its own against its neighbours. For the first 120 years of its existence the Safavid dynasty did usually provide competent and at times even inspiring leadership.<sup>54</sup> The dynasty’s founder, Shāh Ismā’īl combined the religious charisma of a Sufi *pīr* (hereditary saint)<sup>55</sup> and a Shi’i imam.<sup>56</sup> At that time the division between Sunni

<sup>51</sup> Rudi Matthee, "The Safavid-Ottoman Frontier: Iraq-i Arab as Seen by the Safavids," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 9, no. 1 (2003): pp. 157-70.

<sup>52</sup> ‘Alī Akbar Vilāyatī, *Tārīkh-i Ravābiṭ-i Khārijī-i Īrān dar ‘Ahd-i Shāh ‘Abbās-i Avval Ṣafavī* (Tihārān: Mu’assasah-‘i Chāp va Intishārāt-i Vizārat-i Umūr-i Khārijah, 1374 [1995/1996]); Iskandar Bayg Turkamān, *Tārīkh-i ‘Ālam’ārā-yi ‘Abbāsī*, ed. Īraj Afshār, II vols. (Tihārān: Amīr Kabīr, 1387 [2008/2009]); David Blow, *Shah Abbas: The Ruthless King Who Became an Iranian Legend* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009).

<sup>53</sup> These regions were particularly vital for nomadic tribes, see Richard Tapper, *Pasture and Politics: Economics, Conflict and Ritual among Shahsevan Nomads of Northwestern Iran* (London: Academic Press, 1979); Richard Tapper, "History and Identity among the Shahsevan," *IS* 21, no. 3 (1988): pp. 84-108; Richard Tapper, "The Tribes in Eighteenth-and Nineteenth-Century Iran," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, ed. Peter Avery (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), pp. 506-41; Richard Tapper, *Frontier Nomads of Iran: A Political and Social History of the Shahsevan* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997); Richard Tapper, "Introduction," in *Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan*, ed. Richard Tapper (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 1-82.

<sup>54</sup> For the Safavid administration system, see Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-Muluk: A Manual of Safavid Administration (circa 1137/1725)*; Roger M. Savory, "The Safavid Administrative System," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, ed. Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhard (Cambridge: CUP, 1986), pp. 402-23; Willem M. Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2001), pp. 53-81; Colin P. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran: Power, Religion and Rhetoric* (London: IB Tauris, 2009).

<sup>55</sup> For the foundation of Safavid Iran, see Roger M. Savory, "Notes on the Safavid State," *IS* 1, no. 3 (1968): pp. 96-103; Roger M. Savory, "Safavid Persia," in *The Cambridge History of Islam: The Central Islamic Lands from Pre-Islamic Times to the First World War*, ed. P. M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: CUP, 1970), pp. 394-429; Roger M. Savory, "The Safavid State and Polity," *IS* 7, no. 1 (1974): pp. 179-212; Roger M. Savory, "Some Reflections on

Sufism and Shi'i belief was blurred, especially in the minds of Ismā'īl's tribal followers who saw in Ismā'īl something close to a living God.<sup>57</sup> These tribesmen - of Oghuz, Turkic origin - were formed into the so-called Qizilbāsh ('red turban') tribal confederation.<sup>58</sup> In a manner familiar to Islamic history, charismatic religious leadership provided the most effective source of unity and purpose to such confederations of tribes. Ismā'īl's Iran posed a great threat to the Ottoman empire,<sup>59</sup> above all because Ottoman Anatolia and Mesopotamia contained large heterodox communities sympathetic to the shāh.<sup>60</sup> The response to this threat by the formidable Sultan Selim I was devastating and almost catastrophic for the Safavids: Selim used his artillery and his disciplined infantry equipped with firearms to destroy Ismā'īl's tribal cavalry army at Çaldıran/Chāldirān in 1514, thereby stopping Safavid Shi'i messianic expansionism.<sup>61</sup>

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Totalitarian Tendencies in the Şafavid State," *Der Islam* 53, no. 2 (1976): pp. 226-41. For a general description of the Safavid period of Iran, see Roemer, "The Safavid Period," pp. 189-350.

<sup>56</sup> Said Amir Arjomand, "The Clerical Estate and the Emergence of a Shi'ite Hierocracy in Safavid Iran: A Study in Historical Sociology," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 28, no. 2 (1985): pp. 169-219; Rula Jurdi Abisaab, "The Ulama of Jabal 'Amil in Safavid Iran, 1501-1736: Marginality, Migration and Social Change," *IS* 27, no. 1 (1994): pp. 103-22; Kathryn Babayan, "The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamite Shi'ism," *IS* 27, no. 1 (1994): pp. 135-61; Devin J. Stewart, "Notes on the Migration of 'Amili Scholars to Safavid Iran," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 55, no. 2 (1996): pp. 81-103; Devin J. Stewart, "The First Shaykh al-Islām of the Safavid Capital Qazvin," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116, no. 3 (1996): pp. 387-405; Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia: Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004); Shahzad Bashir, "Shah Isma'il and the Qizilbash: Cannibalism in the Religious History of Early Safavid Iran," *History of religions* 45, no. 3 (2006): pp. 234-56; Devin J. Stewart, "An Episode in the 'Amili Migration to Safavid Iran: Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad al-'Amili's Travel Account," *IS* 39, no. 4 (2006): pp. 481-508; Maryam Moazzen, "Shi'ite Higher Learning and the Role of the Madrasa-yi Sulṭāni in Late Safavid Iran" (University of Toronto, 2011).

<sup>57</sup> Bashir, "Shah Isma'il and the Qizilbash: Cannibalism in the Religious History of Early Safavid Iran," pp. 234-56.

<sup>58</sup> Babayan, "The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamite Shi'ism," pp. 135-61; Masashi Haneda, *Le Châh et les Qizilbâš : Le Système Militaire Safavide* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1987).

<sup>59</sup> Allouche, *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict: 906-962/1500-1555*; Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont, *Les Ottomans, Les Safavides et Leurs Voisins, Contribution à L'histoire des Relations Internationales dans l'Orient Islamique de 1514 à 1524* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1987).

<sup>60</sup> Faruk Sümer, *Safevî Devletinin Kuruluşu ve Gelişmesinde Anadolu Türklerinin Rolü* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999).

<sup>61</sup> Roger M. Savory, "The Principal Offices of the Şafawid State during the Reign of Isma'īl I (907-30/1501-24)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 23, no. 1 (1960): pp. 91-105; Roger M. Savory, "Tajlu Khanum: Was She Captured by the Ottomans at the Battle of Chaldiran or

The Safavids just survived this blow but their prestige among the tribes took decades to recover. In time the dynasty rebuilt its position partly by emphasising old pre-Islamic Iranian culture and its respect for absolute monarchy, and partly by balancing its over-dependence on tribal support by building up its own *ghulām* regular military forces.<sup>62</sup> In a manner familiar from the history of the Ottoman empire and other Islamic states these *ghulāms* were sometimes the ruler's slaves and were often drawn from the empire's non-Muslim borderlands, especially Georgia.<sup>63</sup> But the shāhs' *ghulāms* never matched the discipline or military skill of the Ottoman Janissaries at their sixteenth-century peak.<sup>64</sup> Like the Ottomans, the Safavids also used *ghulāms* in key political and military positions but the shāhs encouraged these Georgian *ghulāms* to keep close ties with the rulers and elites of their native Georgia, who were usually their blood relations. The greatest of the Safavid monarchs, 'Abbās I, was especially skilful at maintaining the balance between competing elite constituencies on which a shāh's ability to manage Iran depended. 'Abbās encouraged the flowering of the Shi'i faith but kept its leaders under tight control. In a manner familiar under the Sasanids one thousand years before, he also uprooted part of the Armenian community of merchants and craftsmen from eastern Anatolia

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not?," in *Irano-Turkic Cultural Contacts in the 11th/17th Centuries*, ed. Éva M. Jeremiás (Pilisesaba: Avicenna Institute of Middle East Studies, 2003), pp. 217-32.

<sup>62</sup> Roger M. Savory, "Relations between the Safavid State and its Non-Muslim Minorities," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 14, no. 4 (2003): pp. 435-58.

<sup>63</sup> Babak Rezvani, "The Islamization and Ethnogenesis of the Fereydani Georgians," *Nationalities papers* 36, no. 4 (2008): pp. 593-623; Babak Rezvani, "The Fereydani Georgian Representation of Identity and Narration of History: a Case of Emic Coherence," *Anthropology of the Middle East* 4, no. 2 (2009): pp. 52-74; Babak Rezvani, "Iranian Georgians: Prerequisites for a Research," *Iran and the Caucasus* 13, no. 1 (2009): pp. 197-203; Babaie et al., *Slaves of the Shah: New Elites of Safavid Iran*; Mansūr Safātghul, ed. *I'tirāf-nāmah hamrāh bā Rasālah-i Shanākht* (Tihārān: Kitābkhānah, Mūzih va Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, 1388 [2009/2010]); Hirotake Maeda, "Parsadan Gorgijanidze's Exile in Shushtar: A Biographical Episode of a Georgian Official in the Service of the Safavids," *Journal of Persianate Studies* 1, no. 2 (2008): pp. 218-29.

<sup>64</sup> For military slavery in Islamic Iran, see Clifford Edmund Bosworth, "Barda and Barda-Dāri," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988), pp. 774-76.

and re-located it in his new capital, Iṣfahān.<sup>65</sup> These Armenians played a crucial role in trade, finance and craftsmanship but they also added an extra element to the balance of elite communities which ‘Abbās used to his political advantage.<sup>66</sup>

The main problem was an obvious one, shared with most other dynasties, especially in the Islamic world. Maintaining effective monarchical leadership across the generations was very difficult. Managing the succession was a recurring source of weakness. Royal princes and especially the heir to the throne could be a deadly threat to the ruling monarch and were therefore most safely kept away from politics and immured in the royal harem. Both the Ottomans and the Safavids (after ‘Abbās I) resorted to this policy with the almost inevitable consequence that the ability of rulers collapsed. Unlike the Safavids, the Ottomans to some extent created institutions to substitute for the lack of royal leadership but they also simply enjoyed a greater margin of power and resources, and could therefore survive worse government. In the last century of Safavid rule, however, a succession of ineffective rulers allowed court factions, corruption and the growing power of the Shi’i ‘clergy’ to undermine the state’s finances, military power and political cohesion to such an extent that Safavid Iran was overrun and destroyed in 1722 by what amounted to little more than a raid by Afghan tribesmen.<sup>67</sup> There followed generations of anarchy

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<sup>65</sup> Baghdiantz-McCabe, *The Shah's Silk for Europe's Silver: The Eurasian Trade of the Julfa Armenians in Safavid Iran and India, 1530-1750*.

<sup>66</sup> For a good survey of these issues see Sholeh A. Quinn, "Iran under Safavid Rule," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam: The Eastern Islamic World Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. David O. Morgan and Anthony Reid (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), pp. 201-38; Kukanova, "Rol' armianskogo kupechestva v razvitii russko-iranskoi torgovli v poslednei treti XVII v.," pp. 20-34; Baiburtian, *Armianskaia koloniia Novoi Dzhul'fy v XVII veke (Rol' Novoi Dzhul'fy v irano-evropeiskikh politicheskikh i ekonomicheskikh svyaziakh)*.

<sup>67</sup> "The defeat of the Safavid armed forces that brought about the collapse of the Safavids in 1722 was of the result of military backwardness. The Afghans at Gulnābād in 1722 were no more advanced in military development than their Safavid opponents, but their command was more integrated and better motivated. The Safavid army was well-equipped and could have beaten the Afghans, and several contemporaries believed that they nearly did. The weakness that caused the defeat was poor leadership and coordination at the top." Michael Axworthy, "The Army of Nader Shah," *IS* 40, no. 5 (2007): p. 637. For more details about the fall of the Safavids, see Laurence Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi*

before something resembling political order was restored under the Qājār dynasty at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>68</sup>

The Qājārs' restoration of order and central government authority was inevitably bloody. When the founder of the Qājār dynasty, Āqā Muḥammad, finally took Kirmān in 1794 he massacred tens of thousands of its inhabitants: it took more than a century for the city to recover.<sup>69</sup> One aspect of Āqā Muḥammad's restoration of central authority had even more lasting consequences. During the eighteenth century Georgia, traditionally part of the Iranian empire, had slipped out of Iranian control. Āqā Muḥammad was determined to reassert control and in 1795 re-captured Tiflis, taking 15,000 Georgians off into captivity as slaves.<sup>70</sup> Faced with this threat, the Georgian king appealed to Russia for protection, which came speedily and was followed by formal annexation of Georgia by Alexander I in 1801.<sup>71</sup>

Although outright resistance was crushed and the authority of the Qājār dynasty imposed throughout Iran the government's hold on the provinces and on local elites was weak.<sup>72</sup> Many taxes and offices were farmed out and the central

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*Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia* (Cambridge: CUP, 1958); Martin B. Dickson, "The Fall of the Šafavi Dynasty," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 82, no. 4 (1962): pp. 503-17.

<sup>68</sup> Matthee, *Persia in Crisis: Safavid Decline and the Fall of Isfahan*: is the fullest study of Safavid decline; Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World.*, revolves around the replacement of dynastic autocracy by an Ottoman version of constitutionalism. But see the chapter by Carter V. Findley, "Political Culture and the Great Households," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), pp. 65-80.

<sup>69</sup> On Āqā Muḥammad Khān and the establishment of Qājār rule, see Gavin Hambly, "Āghā Muḥammad Khān and the Establishment of the Qājār Dynasty," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, ed. Peter Avery (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), pp. 104-43.

<sup>70</sup> Hormoz Ebrahimnejad, *Pouvoir et Succession en Iran: Les Premiers Qājār, 1726-1834* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999).

<sup>71</sup> For a good survey of the ascent of the Qājārs and the problems they faced see Homa Katouzian, *The Persians: Ancient, Mediaeval, and Modern Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), ch.6, pp. 139ff; Abbas Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831-1896* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

<sup>72</sup> For the evolution of Qājār bureaucratic structure, Shaul Bakhash, "The Evolution of Qajar Bureaucracy: 1779-1879," *MES* 7, no. 2 (1971): pp. 139-68; Colin Meredith, "Early Qajar Administration: An Analysis of Its Development and Functions," *IS* 4, no. 2 (1971): pp. 59-84; Vanessa Martin, "An Evaluation of Reform and Development of the State in the Early Qajar Period," *Die Welt des Islams* 36, no. 1 (1996): pp. 1-24. For the policy-making process of early Qājār rule, see Manoutchehr M. Eskandari-Qajar, "Between Scylla and Charybdis: Policy-making under Conditions

government had no chance of implementing a national system of tax and military conscription even had it conceived of such a policy.<sup>73</sup> In fact no Qājār ruler exercised even the limited power and authority possessed by Shāh ‘Abbās I at the Safavid dynasty’s peak.

One major weakness was the monarchy’s relationship with the Shi’i ‘*ulamā*.<sup>74</sup> Any government ruling a Shi’i country faces a threat from the enormous potential appeal of the ‘Hidden Imam’ and charismatic religious leaders who claim to speak for him.<sup>75</sup> Part of the problem in the nineteenth century was that the Qājārs never had the same degree of charisma or legitimacy as their predecessors. The Safavids had made the Shi’i religion Iran’s official faith. They claimed descent from the Seventh Imam. In the first century the Shi’i religion and its ‘*ulamā* was fighting to establish itself as the dominant faith in Iran and needed the Safavids’ support. But in the last century of Safavid decline the religious leadership gained greatly in power and confidence. In the decades of chaos between the collapse of the Safavids and the foundation of the Qājār monarchy seventy years later the ‘*ulamā* became even more powerful. Often they became the accepted leaders and protectors of local communities. The dominant Shi’i doctrine, set out by Āqā Muḥammad Bāqir Bihbahānī in the eighteenth century, claimed that the ‘*ulamā*, and especially the elite

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of Constraint in Early Qajar Persia," in *War and Peace in Qajar Persia: Implications Past and Present*, ed. Roxane Farmanfarmanian (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 21-46.

<sup>73</sup> For the economic organization of early Qājār Iran, see Gavin Hambly, "An Introduction to the Economic Organization of Early Qājār Iran," *Iran* 2(1964): pp. 69-81. For an interesting view for political economy of Qājār Iran, see John Foran, "The Concept of Dependent Development as a Key to the Political Economy of Qajar Iran (1800–1925)," *IS* 22, no. 2 (1989): pp. 5-56; Hooshang Amirahmadi, *The Political Economy of Iran Under the Qajars: Society, Politics, Economics and Foreign Relations 1796-1926* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012). For the fiscal evolution in Iran, see Willem Floor, *A Fiscal History of Iran in the Safavid and Qajar Periods, 1500-1925* (New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 1998).

<sup>74</sup> Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969). For the economic power of ‘*ulamā* in Iran, see Willem Floor, "The Economic Role of the Ulama in Qajar Persia," in *The Most Learned of the Shi'a: The Institution of the Marja' Taqlid*, ed. Linda S. Walbridge (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>75</sup> For the legitimacy of the early Qājār rule, Abdul-Hadi Hairi, "The Legitimacy of the Early Qajar Rule as Viewed by the Shi'i Religious Leaders," *MES* 24, no. 3 (1988): pp. 271-86.

of exceptionally wise and pious religious figures (so-called *mujtahids*) had the duty to guide the faithful. This doctrine did not accept any division between the worlds of religion and of politics. The *mujtahid* must offer guidance in all matters that concerned the Muslim people. Nor did the state have any role in deciding who was a *mujtahid*. It was disciples of Āqā Muḥammad who played a big part in pushing Fath ‘Alī Shāh into the disastrous war with Russia in 1826. A key problem for the Qājārs was that, unlike the Safavids, they could not claim either to have helped to convert Iran to the true faith or to be descended from one of the great Shi’i imams but their legitimacy did depend greatly on their role as defenders of Shi’i doctrine and of the Iranian Shi’i land. The dynasty therefore relied on the support of the Shi’i religious establishment and the Shi’i faithful, whom it could not afford to antagonise. The religious establishment was more powerful in Iran than in the Ottoman empire and far stronger in political matters than was the case in Russia.<sup>76</sup>

Another great and unavoidable problem concerned the Qājār tribe, the reigning dynasty and the issue of succession.<sup>77</sup> The Qājārs were one of the most important tribes in the former Qizilbāsh confederation of northern Iranian Turkic tribes that had been a mainstay of the Safavid regime.<sup>78</sup> But the Qājārs were divided into sub-tribes which were traditionally often at each other’s throats. The two main sub-tribes were the Qūvānlū (also spelled Qūyūnlū) who provided the Qājār monarchs and the Davalū, who were their old rivals. To heal this rift Āqā

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<sup>76</sup> See above all, Hamid Algar, "Religious Forces in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Iran," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, ed. Peter Avery (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), chapter 19, pp. 705-31. Note the comparison between the situation of religion and religious leaders in the Ottoman empire and Russia: Madeline C. Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988); Madeline C. Zilfi, "The Ottoman Ulema," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), chapter 10, pp. 209-25. Gregory L. Freeze, "Russian Orthodoxy: Church, People and Politics in Imperial Russia," in *The Cambridge History of Russia: Imperial Russia, 1689-1917*, ed. Dominic Lieven (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), chapter 14, pp. 284-305.

<sup>77</sup> Ebrahimnejad, *Pouvoir et Succession en Iran: Les Premiers Qājār, 1726-1834*.

<sup>78</sup> Ni‘mat Allāh Qāzī Shakhī Īl-i Qājār dar Pahnah-i Tārīkh-i Īrān (Tihārān: Nivīsandah, 1991).

Muḥammad made his heir and nephew, Fath ‘Alī, marry a Davalū princess. He also ordered that Fath should be succeeded by Fath’s son, ‘Abbās Mīrzā, who had married a daughter of the Davalū chief. This did something to heal divisions between branches of the Qājār tribe but rivalries remained. The nomination of ‘Abbās Mīrzā also did something to clarify the line of succession but was by no means necessarily accepted by all members of the dynasty as the last word in the matter. At his death in 1834 Fath ‘Alī left some sixty living sons. ‘Abbās Mīrzā, the designated crown prince, was not the shāh’s oldest son. Nor was he the only one married into the Davalū branch of the tribe. So there was much room for conflict.

Things were made worse by the fact that, in a manner similar to the early Ottoman dynasty but abandoned by it in the sixteenth century, Fath ‘Alī sent his senior sons out to govern provinces where inevitably they gathered their own retinues and factions. Especially in border provinces where they were responsible for local defence these governors commanded large military forces. Other princes conspired against Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā and his claim to the succession. His greatest rival was his elder brother, Prince Muḥammad ‘Alī Mīrzā, the governor of the central-western Kirmānshāh province, situated across the border from Ottoman-held Iraq. Prince Muḥammad ‘Alī was a warrior chief, an intelligent, ambitious and ruthless man, with a character rather like his great uncle, Āqā Muḥammad Khān, the founder of the dynasty. As was often true in monarchies, the shāh himself feared his designated heir and liked to play Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā off against his brothers. ‘Abbās Mīrzā was given the most honourable but also most thankless post of governor of Āzarbāyjān, which made him responsible for defending Iran’s richest

province and its Caucasian frontier against the Russians.<sup>79</sup> He was well aware that failure would be exploited by his rivals.

During the war of 1804-13 against Russia ‘Abbās Mīrzā attempted to create new model military units on European lines,<sup>80</sup> as indeed did some of his brothers in their provinces though in much less thoroughgoing fashion. Since ‘Abbās Mīrzā so closely associated himself with European-style reform of the army, his chief rival, Prince Muḥammad ‘Alī Mīrzā, ostentatiously clung to the traditional Iranian style of warfare and cultivated conservative support, though he did in fact create some European-style infantry units of his own.<sup>81</sup> The Qājārs were tribal leaders and their traditional army was made up of cavalymen. Even after European-style infantry units began to be created in Iran the irregular tribal cavalry remained often the most effective element in the army.<sup>82</sup> Almost inevitably Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā was defeated in the 1804-13 war against Russia and this damaged his prestige. His rival,

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<sup>79</sup> On the economic and commercial importance of Tabrīz, the capital of Āzarbāyjān, see Christoph Werner, *An Iranian Town in Transition: A Social and Economic History of the Elites of Tabriz, 1747-1848* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000); Nādir Mīrzā Qājār, *Tārīkh va Jughrāfī-yi Dār al-Sulṭānah-i Tabrīz*, ed. Muḥammad Mushīrī (Tīhrān: Iqbāl, 1981). For the trade route between Trabzon and Tabrīz in the nineteenth century, see Charles Issawi, "The Tabriz-Trabzon Trade, 1830-1900: Rise and Decline of a Route," *IJMES* 1, no. 1 (1970): pp. 18-27.

<sup>80</sup> For the whole process of *Nezam-i Jadid* in Iran, see Monica M. Ringer, *Education, Religion and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar, Iran* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2001), chapter I, pp. 15-51; Stephanie Cronin, "Importing Modernity: European Military Missions to Qajar Iran," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50, no. 1 (2008): particularly pp. 197-208; Stephanie Cronin, "Building a New Army: Military Reform in Qajar Iran," in *War and Peace in Qajar Persia: Implications Past and Present*, ed. Roxane Farmanfarman (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 47-87; Stephanie Cronin, "Deserters, Converts, Cossacks and Revolutionaries: Russians in Iranian Military Service 1800-1920," *MES* 48, no. 2 (2012): pp. 147-82.

<sup>81</sup> Nāṣir Najmī, *‘Abbās Mīrzā va Jang-hā-yi Īrān bā Rusiyah-i Tizārī* (Tīhrān: Chāphānah-i Tajaddud-i Īrān, 1326 [1947/1948]), pp. 15-19. Seemingly ‘Abbās Mīrzā had in mind the Ottoman example and borrowed from Sultan Selim III both the term used to designate the new corps and its theological justification. Selim had found support for his military reform among a minority of the higher *ulema*. Hidāyat, *Tārīkh-i Rawḍat al-Ṣafā*, II: book ix, p. 436. For a report on the Iranian regular army, written by P. N. Ermolov, RGVA, fond: 446, opis’: 1, delo: 6, pp. 1-17ob; delo: 168, pp. 2-8ob. ‘The discipline of the *Nezam-i Jadid* was held to be that which was instrumental in the early conquest of Islam. It had then penetrated to Europe and simultaneously declined in the Muslim East. Thus far from being a suspect innovation, the *Nezam-i Jadid* was to be regarded as a return to the beginning of Islam,’ see Harford Jones Brydges, *The Dynasty of the Kajars* (London: J. Bohn, 1833), pp. 307-10.

<sup>82</sup> For a detailed military report on the Iranian irregular forces written by Vasilii Osipovich Bebutov in 1817, see RGVA, fond: 446, opis’: 1, delo: 5, pp. 1-6ob. Uzi Rabi and Nugzar Ter-Oganov, "The Military of Qajar Iran: The Features of an Irregular Army from the Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century," *IS* 45, no. 3 (2012): pp. 333-54.

Prince Muḥammad ‘Alī Mīrzā, governing a province well to the south, played little part in the war but did lead one spectacular cavalry raid deep into the Russian rear. This too potentially harmed the Crown Prince in the competition to succeed Fath ‘Alī Shāh.<sup>83</sup>

Creating true European-style professional armies, paid on an all-year-round basis and equipped with artillery was an expensive business. Iran would in all circumstances have found it hard to pay for such an army, and especially for the European officers and non-commissioned officers who would be needed to train it.<sup>84</sup> The necessary training was carried out initially by Russian deserters, and later by the French military mission under General Gardane. The Iranian political system ensured, however, that the Crown Prince would never be able to draw even on central government funds, let alone on the resources of the provinces governed by his brothers. Iran’s main army and the defence of its most vulnerable and crucial frontier essentially depended on the resources of Āzarbāyjān alone. In these circumstances it was remarkable that by 1812 ‘Abbās Mīrzā had created a European-style trained corps of some 13,000 men, mostly infantry but also including artillery and cavalry units.<sup>85</sup> On occasion during the war of 1804-13 against Russia these troops fought well. But this force could not have been created and could not be sustained without the British subsidy of £150,000 a year which began in 1810. A key problem was that

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<sup>83</sup> On Qājār dynastic politics and the competition between ‘Abbās Mīrzā and his brother see above all, see Gavin Hambly, "Iran during the Reigns of Fath ‘Alī Shāh and Muḥammad Shāh," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, ed. Peter Avery (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), chapter 4, pp. 144-74.

<sup>84</sup> After Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo in 1815, some of European officers such as Jean François Allard, Paolo Avitabile, Claude Auguste Court, and Jean-Baptiste Ventura, were dismissed from service and tried to seek their fortunes abroad such as in Egypt, Iran, Afghanistan and India. Major Hugh Pearse, "Some Account of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His White Officers," in *Soldier and Traveller: Memoirs of Alexander Gardner, Colonel of Artillery in the Service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, ed. Alexander Haughton Campbell Gardner (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1898), particularly pp. 293-354; Charles Grey, *European Adventurers of Northern India, 1785 to 1849*, ed. H. L. O Garrett (Lahore: Government Printing, Punjab, 1929); Jean Marie Lafont, *Fauji-i-Khas Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His French Officers* (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 2002).

<sup>85</sup> For a more detailed notes written on Iran by Lieutenant Noskov, see RGVIA, fond: 446, opis’: 1, delo: 3, pp. 1-16.

the British had begun to pay this subsidy at a moment of crisis in the Napoleonic wars when France and Russia were both enemies of Britain. With the end of the Napoleonic war Britain no longer faced a life and death geopolitical threat and the British government was desperate to retrench having piled up enormous war-time debts. In 1815 the subsidy in practice ceased and ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s army now relied on the taxes he could squeeze from Āzarbāyjān.<sup>86</sup> Unless these Iranian political, fiscal and military realities are understood the course of the Russo-Iranian clash in the Caucasus is incomprehensible.<sup>87</sup>

## Imperial Russia

In the mid-nineteenth century Iran’s population is estimated to have been roughly 6.5 million. If this estimate is accurate then the population had decreased substantially since the peak of the Safavid era under ‘Abbās I over two hundred years before. This decline reflected the consequences of one century of increasing chaos as Safavid rule deteriorated, followed by another century of anarchy, invasion and civil war. By comparison, the Russian population was already well over 60 million by the 1830s. Nor was the imbalance between Russian and Iranian resources just a measure

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<sup>86</sup> “The first attempt to impose conscription was made in the early nineteenth century by ‘Abbās Mīrzā. Directly inspired by the Ottoman example, ‘Abbās Mīrzā devised a rudimentary scheme, known as *bunīchah* system, which he introduced in Āzarbāyjān as part of his attempts to construct a modern standing army with which to confront the Russian advance southwards.” Stephanie Cronin, "Conscription and Popular Resistance in Iran, 1925-1941," *International Review of Social History* 43, no. 3 (1998): p. 451. For the more details about the *bunīchah* system, see Cronin, "Importing Modernity: European Military Missions to Qajar Iran," especially pp. 207, 11-12; Willem Floor, "Bonīča," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1989), pp. 355-58.

<sup>87</sup> Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: chapters vii and viii, especially pp. 107-10, 17-20, 36-38, 55-56. The per annum taxes paid to the treasury of Tehran: 800,000 tūmāns from Tehran-Qum-Kāshān-Burūjard; 500,000 from Iṣfahān; 200,000 from Gīlān; 150,000 from Kirmānshāh; 30,000 from Zanjān; 120,000 from Kirmān; 150,000 from Shīrāz; 50,000 from Māzandarān; Total – 2,000,000 tūmāns. Goods and gifts – 2,500,000 tūmāns. Āzarbāyjān paid not to the treasury of Tehran but Tabrīz, 800,000 tūmāns. RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis’: 4, delo: 450, p. 95. 20 September 1826.

of population. In the eighteenth century Russia had settled and put under the plough all the vast and fertile lands that stretched right down to the Black Sea. By the 1830s the Moscow region was already adding a modern textile industry to the small-scale craft industries that had long-since existed there. The Urals metallurgical and Tula military industries, though now becoming backward in comparison to modern West European technology, still gave Russia a great advantage over Iran, where nothing similar existed.<sup>88</sup> Nor did Iran have any equivalent to Siberian gold and minerals.<sup>89</sup>

Most important as regards geopolitical conflict, Russia had created a modern European-style army. By the mid-eighteenth century this army was already a match for any other in Europe. Initially inferior to the military machine created by the French Revolution and Napoleon, after 1807 it had introduced many reforms derived from French examples. In 1813-14 it had outfought Napoleon's army on the battlefields of central and western Europe. During these years it had created effective staff organisations and trained competent generals through the school of war-time experience. Though logistics were never the strongest point of the Russian army, nevertheless they had been managed with sufficient competence to support half a million men operating beyond Russia's borders in 1813-14 and had got the Russian army to Paris. It is true that experience of war against Napoleon might not always be relevant to fighting the Ottomans and the Iranians in the Caucasus. But the Russian army did also have much experience of facing the Ottomans, whom it had defeated in three wars between 1768 and 1812. Also, unlike most other European armies, the Russians had at their disposal border troops – the Cossacks – well after decades of

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<sup>88</sup> Parker, *An Historical Geography of Russia*: chapter 11, pp. 154-76.

<sup>89</sup> The estimate of Iran's population is in Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831-1896*: p. 10. The figure for Russian population is from A. I. Aksenov, ed. *Ekonomicheskaiia istoriia Rossii* vol. II (Moskva: Rosspen, 2009), p. 500. For an overall comparison of the evolution of Russian and Ottoman imperial power: Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals*: chapters 4 and 8, pp. 128-57, 262-87.

war on the steppe and in the Balkans and the Kuban were used to the kind of warfare that they needed to conduct in the southern Caucasus. The Ottomans and Iranians were therefore facing a first-class military machine which they could not hope to match. It is true that the Russian military machine was just about to become out-of-date as a result of the military consequences of the French Revolution ('the nation in arms') and the Industrial Revolution. But this only became apparent in the Crimean War of 1854-6. In any case it was irrelevant to a war between Russia and the Ottomans or Iranians.<sup>90</sup>

Behind the Europeanised Russian army stood the kind of military-fiscal state that the Ottomans and Iranians had failed to create or maintain in the eighteenth century. This thesis cannot go into details about Russian state power or how it was created. At the heart of this state was a ruthless but effective system of taxation and conscription, itself dependent on an especially oppressive type of serfdom. But in terms of developing military and geopolitical power, the tight alliance of the Russian monarchy and nobility was far more effective than the relationship between the Ottoman and Iranian monarchies and these countries' elites. Russian central government institutions were more developed than their Ottoman, let alone Iranian, equivalents and they had more effective provincial branches. Though Russia too had faced succession crises in the eighteenth century, these had been brief and had not greatly affected the state's effectiveness. If the Decembrist revolt of 1825 had overthrown the absolute monarchy or, still more, removed the Romanov dynasty altogether then just possibly confusion at the centre might have weakened the centralised Russian military-fiscal machine but in fact the autocratic regime suppressed and survived the Decembrist movement. Subsequently under Nicholas I

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<sup>90</sup> On the Russian army see Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon: The Battle for Europe, 1807 to 1814*; Frederick W. Kagan, *The Military Reforms of Nicholas I: The Origins of the Modern Russian Army* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

the government machine grew greatly in size and reach but became, if anything, even more authoritarian. Of course, looked at in the long run and in comparison with Europe it is the weakness and backwardness of Russian government that stand out but that comparison is irrelevant when studying Russia's conflicts with the Ottoman empire and Iran.<sup>91</sup>

Russia first approached the Caucasus with the annexation of Astrakhan in 1556. Russia now had a port on the Caspian Sea linked to central Russia by the river Volga. Cities were founded on the lower Volga in the late sixteenth century – Samara in 1586, Tsaritsyn in 1589 and Saratov in 1590. In time Astrakhan became a base from which Cossacks could raid the south shore of the Caspian Sea where Iran's silk industry was based. Russia could use control of the Caspian to support a military advance down the narrow coastal plain into Āzarbāyjān. First Ivan IV and then Peter I had such ambitions and Peter actually occupied much of the Iranian Caspian coastline for a time. But the costs of occupation exceeded any benefits that Russia could obtain, at least in the short term. In any event Peter had badly overstretched Russian power and resources, so his successors retrenched and withdrew from the southern Caucasus.

Only in the second half of the eighteenth century did Russia's southward advance resume in powerful fashion under Catherine II. Above all this meant the conquest of the southern steppe, the Crimea and much of the northern coastline of the Black Sea. The conquest, rapid colonisation and effective government of this vast and strategically vital area created a rich economic base in 'New Russia' for further

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<sup>91</sup> On the development of the Russian state and Russian power in the eighteenth century: Simon Dixon, *The Modernisation of Russia, 1676-1825* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999). For the first half of the nineteenth century: Saunders, *Russia in the Age of Reaction and Reform 1801-1881*; W. Bruce Lincoln, *Nicholas I, Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978). On the Russian army, see John Shelton Curtiss, *The Russian Army under Nicholas I, 1825-1855* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1965); John Shelton Curtiss, "The Army of Nicholas I: Its Role and Character," *The American Historical Review* 63, no. 4 (1958).

southward expansion, and allowed the construction of a naval base and powerful fleet at Sevastopol which dominated the Black Sea and which could be used to land troops on the coasts of the western Caucasus and block Ottoman communications with the region.<sup>92</sup>

The Russian advance into the southern Caucasus was partly inspired by fanciful hopes of opening up the route to India and matching the wealth derived by other European empires from their overseas colonies. Needless to say, these hopes were never realised though in time Russian exports did come to dominate north Iranian markets. The Russian annexation of Georgia in 1801 was the vital moment in the conquest of the southern Caucasus. Right down to the last moment policy-makers in St. Petersburg were divided as to the wisdom of this move, in some cases fearing it would drag Russia into further conflicts and expenditure in an area that was not essential to Russian interests. Among the doubters was Emperor Paul I. After Paul's murder in March 1801 the final decision rested with his son, Alexander I, and he in the end accepted the arguments of advisors who argued, among other things, that Georgia would fall into anarchy and be ravaged by the shāh unless annexed by Russia. It certainly was the case that having promised to protect Georgia in the 1783 treaty and having then failed to defend her against Shāh Āqā Muḥammad in 1795 Russia needed to re-assert her power and credibility in the region. On the other hand, many of the fears and doubts of Russian statesmen who opposed annexation proved correct.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> On the progress of the Black Sea fleet under the reign of Catherine II, see Galina Grebenshchikova, *Chernomorskii flot v period pravleniia Ekateriny II*, II vols., vol. I (Sankt Peterburg: Ostrov, 2012); *ibid.*, II.

<sup>93</sup> On the Russian advance into the Caucasus see Forsyth, *The Caucasus: A History*: pp. 267-72; Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: above all chapter 4, pp. 46-65. Both are critical of Russian policy. More neutral is Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*: pp. 171-85. Specifically on Russian attitudes towards Georgia and the debates surrounding annexation, see Gvosdev, *Imperial Policies and Perspectives towards Georgia, 1760-1819*: especially chapter 6, pp. 77-98, who is on the whole more sympathetic to Russian policy.

Having annexed Georgia, geopolitical logic pushed Russia into guaranteeing access to the Black Sea and the Caspian for its new south Caucasian province. The Russians also now had no alternative but to secure their communications through the Caucasus mountains. This committed them to decades of war against the mostly Muslim peoples who lived in the mountain region and on its northern slopes. Having intervened to protect the Georgians against Iranian attempts to re-impose their rule and then gone on to invade the neighbouring khanates of the southern Caucasus, the Russians also inevitably became involved in conflict with Iran. The first Russo-Iranian war lasted from 1804 until 1813 and ended in Russian victory and the treaty of Gulistān. By the terms of this treaty Russia became the only country allowed to have warships on the Caspian Sea and also acquired the port of Baku: both these gains were vital to consolidating and expanding Russia's hold on the southern Caucasus.

In 1735, the Russian garrisons had been forced to abandon Baku and Darband, captured by Peter I in the 1720s, to Iran. Following the annexation of the Crimea and Russia's protectorate over the kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti in 1783, the assault of Āqā Muḥammad Khān on Tiflis in 1795 caused the return of the Russian headquarters in the south Caucasus in 1801. The Russian annexation of Georgia vitally transformed the geopolitics of the region. If Russian supply bases had remained on the north shore of the Black Sea and the northern borders of the Caucasus Mountains then sustained, large-scale military operations even against the Iranians, let alone the Ottomans, beyond the Caucasus range would have been very difficult. But Russia now had a large, secure and potentially rich base south of the Caucasus mountain range from which it could advance into either Iranian southern Āzarbāyjān or Ottoman Anatolia.

Put this way the great superiority of Russian power makes its domination of the southern Caucasus appear inevitable and unstoppable. By the early nineteenth century that was true to a great extent. Nevertheless matters were not quite so clear or so easy as this suggests. As noted above, even at the beginning of the nineteenth century by no means all Russian statesmen supported Russia's advance into the region. Nor were Russian military victories in the Caucasus region always easily won. Part of the problem was precisely the arrogance of a military leadership which had defeated first Frederick the Great and then Napoleon, and had routed Ottoman armies in three wars between 1768 and 1812. The contempt for 'Asians' and Muslims of Russia's westernised ruling elites could easily feed this arrogance. This could blind Russian generals to the difficulties of operating even in the south Caucasus, let alone in the Caucasian mountains. Even 'Abbās Mīrzā's soldiers in 1804-13, let alone the Caucasian mountaineers proved to be much more dangerous enemies than most Russian commanders imagined. Wisdom came sometimes slowly and as a result of bitter experience. In addition, the south Caucasus always came behind central Europe and the Balkans in terms of Russian geopolitical and military priorities. This influenced both the size of the Russian garrison and the quality of its commanders. In 1811, for example, with Russia preparing to fight Napoleon, struggling to defeat the Ottomans in the Balkans, and garrisoning newly acquired Finland and western Georgia, only 3,000 Russian troops were left to fight 'Abbās Mīrzā and his allies among the south Caucasian khans. But in a sense this sums up the reality of the situation. Despite the immense emergency caused by Napoleon's invasion, the 3,000 Russian troops, joined by only a small number of reinforcements, still achieved victory and imposed peace terms on the Iranians in 1813.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: especially chapter vii, pp. 99-122, on the war of 1804-13 and chapter v, pp. 69-84, on the first Russian commander, General Tsitsianov: note on page 75 his

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extravagant sense of European superiority and Asian/Muslim barbarism. On the same theme see Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*: especially chapter 4, 'Ermolov', pp.29-38 but the whole book is a study of Russian generals' slow and painful education in mountain warfare. On Russian imperialism and the changing attitudes of the Russian elites towards non-Europeans see Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*: chapters 6-7-8, pp. 201-87; Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals*.

## Chapter Three – The Wars of 1804-13 and 1806-1812

At the start of the nineteenth century, the aggressive course of Russian military policy in the Caucasus must be understood within the context of its imperial transformation and geopolitics. Following Giorgi XII's death, the ruler of the kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti, in December, 1800, despite the claims of two heirs, Paul I signed a decree on the annexation of Kartli-Kakheti into the Russian empire that was ratified by Alexander I in September, 1801.<sup>1</sup> The year 1801 was the start of permanent Russian presence in the southern Caucasus. Now that Georgia was ready to be used as a military base for further expansion southwards. Alexander I believed that the Russian south-eastern border should be aligned with the Aras and Kura rivers. However, the gradually increasing military tension in Europe forced Russia to be more prudent and flexible with its bilateral relations with other empires and actors in the region. While the western part of Georgia was nominally under the authority of the Ottomans, the Caucasian khanates along the Caspian coast and east of Georgia were still under the control of Iran. Though the aggression of Russia in the Caucasus had been considered as an obvious threat not only by Iran and the Ottoman empire but also by the local petty kingdoms, all these political entities, especially the imperial ones, failed to cooperate with each other in the Caucasus against their 'common enemy'.<sup>2</sup>

### Russo-Iranian Conflict

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<sup>1</sup> Lang, *The Last Years of the Georgian Monarchy, 1658-1832*: pp. 244-46; Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: pp. 58-59.

<sup>2</sup> Najmī, *'Abbās Mīrzā va Jang-hā-yi Īrān bā Rusiyah-i Tizārī*: p. 25.

The main reason behind the Russo-Iranian war of 1804-13 was that Russian aggression in the Caucasus was perceived as a military threat to its authority over the north-western border provinces by Iran. Indeed, the Qājār dynasty had been recently established in 1796 by Āqā Muḥammad Khān and thus a large amount of time and energy was needed by the dynasty to consolidate its sovereignty in the heart and the peripheral territories of Iran against any internal turbulence or external imperial power – i.e. Russia and the Ottoman empire. Of course, this was not the sole cause of the war, there were other reasons – i.e. protecting the royal honour and restoring historical imperial prestige – and this kept military and political conflicts alive for nine years between Iran and Russia.<sup>3</sup>

The abolition of the rule of Bagratians by the Russian authority helped Iran consolidate its support and legitimacy among the nobles of Georgia as the true defender of the Bagratians. By recognizing the Bagratid princes, Alexander and Taymuraz, as the legitimate rulers of Georgia and backing the desire to restore Bagratid rule, Iran seems to have strengthened its position against Russia.<sup>4</sup> In fact Fath ‘Alī Shāh was convinced that in order to protect his own authority and to resurrect the historical hegemony of Iran over the south-eastern part of the Caucasus, the Russians had to be driven from the region. On the Russian side, though the primary goal of Russia was to extend its border to the Aras and Kura rivers, the Russian commander-in-chief Pavel Dmitrievich Tsitsianov’s proposal to capture not only Tabrīz and Khūy but also Gīlān was welcomed in St. Petersburg. Not only for

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<sup>3</sup> Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: p. 92. For the diplomatic negotiations between Iran and Russia prior to the Russo-Iranian War of 1804-13, see Balaian, *Diplomaticheskaiia istoriia Russko-iranskikh voĭn i prisoedineniia vostochnoi Armenii v Rossii*: pp. 26-39; F. Abdullaev, *Iz istorii russko-iranskikh otnoshenii i angliiskoi politiki v Irane v nachale XIX v.* (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo "Fan" Uzbekskoi SSR, 1971).

<sup>4</sup> Gūdarz Rashtīyānī, "Shāhzādah 'i Irān Garā; Bar'rasī-i Vaz'iyat-i Gurjistān va Naqsh -i Āliksāndar Mīrzā dar Jang'ha-yi Irān va Rūsiyah," *Tārīkh-i Ravābiṭ-i Khārijī* 42(1389 [2010/2011]): pp. 49-79. Prince Alexander, the younger son of Erekle and the brother of Giorgi XII, was one of the prominent figures in the nineteenth-century history of the southern Caucasus. *AKAK*, vol. I, no: 23, p. 107, K. F. Knorring to Paul I, 23 July (4 August) 1800.

the Qājārs, but also to some extent for the Russians, control over the south Caucasus was seen as crucial to their royal prestige, though in the Russian case this was more a case of prestige in the region than of the Romanovs' global prestige and status.<sup>5</sup>

In January 1804, Tsitsianov attacked Ganjah and captured its citadel, seriously increasing the tension between Iran and Russia. The fortress of Ganjah was not an ordinary military stronghold but a fortress key to the northern provinces of Iran.<sup>6</sup> The ruler of Ganjah, Javād Khān Qājār,<sup>7</sup> was under Iran's military protection, recognizing the shāh as his suzerain.<sup>8</sup> Upon the fall of Ganjah, Tehran, being aware of the growing threat, made some diplomatic attempts to appease Russia and took political risks – e.g. turning over the Bagratid princes to the Russians – to defuse the tension and to avoid war. However, not only Tsitsianov but also the authorities in St. Petersburg at this moment were eager for war with Iran. It seems that the Russian central government made the vital decisions on the future of the Caucasus under the guidance of Tsitsianov's advice and this allowed the Russian commander-in-chief to be relatively independent from the central decision-making process.<sup>9</sup> In other words, the geographical distance to the imperial centre and the extraordinary features of the Caucasus rendered its position exceptional when compared to most of the empire's regions. The local commanders in the region had considerable autonomy, enjoying the advantages of being far distant from the centre's control and operating in a

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<sup>5</sup> Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: pp. 95, 98.

<sup>6</sup> Jamīl Qūzānlū, *Jang-i Dah Sālah yā Jang-i Avval-i Īrān bā Rūs* (Tīhrān: Chāpkhānah-i Dū Hazār, 1362 [1983/1994]), pp. 15-19.

<sup>7</sup> Muḥammad Bahmanī Qājār, "Javād Khān Qājār Ākharīn Marzbān-i Īrān dar Ganjah," *Ārām* 24-5 (1389 [2010/2011]): pp. 69-88.

<sup>8</sup> Ḥasan Fasā'ī, *History of Persia under Qājār Rule*, trans. Heribert Busse (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 107. Tsitsianov, a descendant of a Georgian noble family, introduced himself as the leader of the 'Georgian people' in the Caucasus and wanted to reunify all the regions of historical Georgia by using Russian military power. Ganjah had been subject to Georgia since the reign of Queen Tamara in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Tsitsianov tried to force Javād Khān to surrender the fortress of Ganjah but Javād refused his claim to Russian-Georgian possession. *AKAK*, vol. II, no: 1172, p. 588-9, P. D. Tsitsianov to Javād Khān, 29 November (11 December) 1803; no: 1173, p. 589-90, Javād Khān to P. D. Tsitsianov.

<sup>9</sup> Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: p. 78.

unique region whose peculiarities required Petersburg to avoid trying to exercise tight control of operations. Therefore, it was not surprising that Tsitsianov tended to dominate the coordination of policy and planning between St. Petersburg and the leadership in the Caucasus. For example, he made great and successful efforts to convince Petersburg not to negotiate a settlement with Iran in 1805. However, the current political and military emergency in Europe was even more crucial than Tsitsianov's plans for the Caucasus. The possibility of a war against Napoleon forced Russia to restrain its aggressive policy in the Caucasus in 1805.<sup>10</sup>

Following the fall of Ganjah, Tsitsianov tried to take hold of Etchmiadzin where the Russian army suffered heavy casualties against 'Abbās Mīrzā's army of 18,000 in June and was forced to withdraw. Not long after the Iranians' victory at Etchmiadzin, Tsitsianov laid siege to the fortress of Īravān (Revan/Erevan) in July: however the Iranian garrison refused to surrender and defended themselves well.<sup>11</sup> The Russian commander-in-chief had failed twice in battles against the Iranians in a short period. This seriously affected Russian prestige and the morale of the Russian soldiers. The war between the Russians and the Iranians lasted for nine years.<sup>12</sup> Although the Caucasian theatre was secondary for Russia by comparison with the European, it was truly vital for Iran. This was the Qājārs' first serious contact with European powers – not only with Russia but also with Britain and France. Russia had one of the strongest armies, more than half a million, in Europe and also possessed a navy on the Caspian sea to reinforce the Russian troops in the Caucasus. But one of

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<sup>10</sup> Kh. K. Ibragimbeili, *Rossiia i Azerbaidzhan v pervoi treti XIX veka: Iz voenno-politicheskoi istorii* (Moskva: Nauka, 1969).

<sup>11</sup> Fasā'ī, *History of Persia under Qājār Rule*: pp. 108-09.

<sup>12</sup> Bahrām Amīr Aḥmadīyān, "Jang'hā-yi Īrān va Rūsīyah va Judā-yi Qafqāz az Īrān," *Muṭāla 'āt-i Āsyā-yi Markazī va Qafqāz* 46(1383 [2004/2005]): pp. 151-84; Muḥammad Salmāsī'zādah, "Nakhastīn Talāsh'hā-yi Nizāmī - Siyāsī-yi Rūsīyah Tizārī barāyī Istiqrār-i Ḥakīmīyat-i Khud dar Qafqāz dar Qarn-i 19," *Muṭāla 'āt-i Āsyā-yi Markazī va Qafqāz* 58(1386 [2007/2008]): 89-122.

the main problems which Russia faced in the Caucasus was that the Russian army had to struggle with another southern rival besides Iran, namely the Ottoman empire.

### **Russo-Ottoman Conflict**

The growing tension between Russia and the Ottoman empire has to be evaluated within the context of the rise of France. Neither Russia nor the Ottoman empire really wanted this war, and both were unprepared for it. Although the Ottoman army was weakened and disorganized by reform attempts, it was still large, and Russia could spare only a small army of 40,000 to oppose it in the Balkans where Napoleon sought to strengthen his own influence against Russia. Given the new geopolitical context brought about by Napoleon's victories in central Europe, the Ottoman government shifted towards an alliance with France. Indeed, the military successes of Napoleon in Europe, particularly against the Prussian army at Jena in October 1806, persuaded the Ottoman sultan to go to war, thereby seizing the opportunity to counter the ever-increasing Russian threat. The main immediate reason for the Russo-Ottoman war of 1806-12 was the Ottoman removal of the pro-Russian rulers in the Danubian principalities. In response, crossing the Dniester river, Russian armies occupied the Danubian principalities in November 1806, which in turn caused the Ottoman declaration of war against Russia in December.<sup>13</sup>

Even though the Balkans had generally been the main theatre of conflict in Russo-Ottoman wars, the southern Caucasus was another conflict zone where Russia had developed a realistic political and military strategy to struggle with not only the

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<sup>13</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Empire of the Gazis - The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire 1280-1808*, II vols., vol. I (Cambridge: CUP, 1976), pp. 271-73; Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations*.

Ottomans but also the Iranians. Though the causes of the 1806-12 war between Russia and the Ottoman empire were related solely to European affairs, the Ottomans' claims of suzerainty over the western part of the Caucasus and Russia's claim to the Georgian principalities might be considered as additional regional reasons behind the conflict in the region. Following the transfer of its military headquarters from Astrakhan to Tiflis, the advance of the Russian army in the western Caucasus had been fast. Many of the rulers, princes and nobles of the western Georgian kingdoms looked with suspicion and sometimes even resisted the expansion of Russian military power in the Caucasus.

Established as an independent kingdom in the mid-sixteenth century, Mingrelia, being on hostile terms with the kingdom of Imereti, became part of the Russian empire in December 1803. Imereti was now surrounded by Russia from all sides; even though King Solomon of Imereti was forced into submission and his kingdom became a Russian protectorate in April 1804, the fight continued for five years more and the Russians only finally controlled the whole kingdom in 1809. Due to a problem between an Abkhazian prince Keleş/Gülşen Bey and Tsitsianov, although the Russians took hold of the Ottoman fort of Anaklia in March 1805, the Russian garrison was subsequently removed as a result of Ottoman protest.<sup>14</sup> The principalities of Abkhazia and Guria did not submit until 1809 and 1811 respectively. All these incidents in the western Caucasus added to the increasing tension between Russian and the Ottoman empire. Indeed, for the Ottoman empire and Iran present circumstances were uniquely advantageous for the formation of a common front against their common northern rival since Russia was also at war with France (1805-7 and 1812-5). Even though Russia had one of the strongest armies in Europe, the

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<sup>14</sup> A. V. Fadeev, *Rossii i kavkaz pervoi treti XIX v.* (Moskva: Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1960), pp. 122-23.

three-front wars with Napoleon (and Sweden) in Europe, with the Ottomans in the Balkans, and with Iran caused great problems for St. Petersburg: 40,000 badly-needed troops were tied down in the Caucasus theatre in a war that lasted six years in large part because 40,000 was too small an army to secure decisive victories in the region quickly.<sup>15</sup>

## **Naval Encounters in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea**

Apart from the Danubian and Caucasus theatres of war, there were also naval fronts on the Black and Mediterranean seas. In the Russo-Ottoman war of 1806-12, the navies of these two empires on the Black and Mediterranean seas were important factors, given the obstacles that the Russian armies had to overcome in the Caucasus and Balkan theatres. Warships could themselves transport troops and could provide cover for the transport of substantial military forces in merchant ships. They could also use their firepower to support military campaigns ashore. This was what happened in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea during the course of the Russo-Ottoman and Russo-Iranian wars between 1804 and 1813. In the early nineteenth century, the Ottoman navy was concentrated in a single force around Istanbul and could be deployed to either the Mediterranean or the Black sea. In comparison with the fleets of 1770 and 1787, the Ottoman navy, under the command of Kapûdan Seydî Ali Pasha, was a respectable force, possessing 10 modern ships of the line, five heavy and two light frigates.<sup>16</sup> The Russian squadron, under the command of Rear-

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<sup>15</sup> Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*: chapter 4, pp. 63-95; W. E. D. Allen, *A History of the Georgian People: From the Beginning Down to the Russian Conquest in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1932).

<sup>16</sup> John Tredrea and Eduard Sozaev, *Russian Warships in the Age of Sail, 1696-1860: Design, Construction, Careers and Fates* (Yorkshire: Seaforth Publishing, 2010), p. 98. On the

Admiral Dmitrii Nikolaevich Seniavin, was one of the strongest fleets in the Mediterranean Sea. Not only were the ships well-designed but also the sea-going and combat experience of Russian officers and men, was much superior to their Ottoman opponents. However, this was less true of the Russian Black Sea fleet under Rear-Admiral Semyon Afanas'evich Pustoshkin. Firstly, the infrastructure of the Black Sea had not been properly improved in the pre-war decade to sustain a long naval war against the Ottomans; furthermore, though the number of Pustoshkin's ships matched those in the Ottoman fleet, their crews if anything were inferior to their Ottoman opponents in terms of combat experience and even training.<sup>17</sup>

Prior to the start of the war, the plan of the Russian high command was to launch an organized amphibious attack against the Ottoman forces positioned around the Straits and Istanbul. Two senior officials, the commander-in-chief of the Black Sea fleet Marquis de Traverse and the military governor of New Russia, the Duc de Richelieu, had been entrusted with looking at the feasibility of launching the attack at once and finalising planning. However, both men were convinced that under the current circumstances conducting such an amphibious attack against the Straits and the Ottoman capital was not sensible or even possible and reported this to Petersburg.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the plan to attack the Ottoman capital, conceived by the Naval Minister Pavel Vasilevich Chichagov, was unrealistic and exaggerated; it was in fact far beyond the military capacity of Russian naval and land forces.<sup>19</sup>

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modernization of the Ottoman navy at the beginning of the nineteenth century, see Zorlu, *Innovation and Empire in Turkey: Sultan Selim III and the Modernisation of the Ottoman Navy*.

<sup>17</sup> Tredrea and Sozaev, *Russian Warships in the Age of Sail, 1696-1860: Design, Construction, Careers and Fates*: p. 99.

<sup>18</sup> Madlen diu Shatne, *Zhan-Batist de Traverse ministr flota rossiiskogo* (Moskva: Nauka, 2003), pp. 197-99.

<sup>19</sup> A. I. Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, II vols., vol. I (Sankt Peterburg: Tipografiia Shtaba Otdel'nago Korpusa Vnutrennei Strazhi, 1843), pp. 87-90; A. N. Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, III vols., vol. I (Sankt Peterburg: Voennaia Tipografiia, 1885), pp. 328, 30. The Russian Black Sea defence

The case of Kapitan-Komandor Timofei Gavrilovich Perskii in 1807 was a good example of Russian military weakness and incompetence in the Black Sea. While waiting for the decision from Petersburg as regards an attack on the Straits and the Ottoman capital from St. Petersburg, Marquis de Traverse, upon receiving information that the construction of an Ottoman *kalyon* (galleon) of 80s had been almost completed but that the ship was not yet ready to sail from the harbour of Sinop, used his own initiative and sent Perskii to destroy the Ottoman warship before it could weigh anchor.<sup>20</sup> Perskii, however, failed as the Russian forces were repulsed by the Ottoman batteries placed along the coast.<sup>21</sup>

The bold plan to attack the Ottoman capital was in fact put aside because the Black Sea fleet was clearly not ready to conduct a large-scale operation against the enemy immediately the war broke out. But unlike in 1768-74 in this new conflict the Ottoman fleet had to face the possibility of simultaneous attacks launched by the Russian naval forces not only from the Mediterranean but also from the Black Sea. In other words, the Russian Mediterranean fleet planned to launch an attack on the Ottoman forces at the Dardanelles, while the Black Sea fleet attacked at the Bosphorus and the army advanced through the Balkans by land. Being aware that the Ottoman capital overwhelmingly depended on maritime supply and traffic, Seniavin forced the fortress of Tenedos (Bozcaada) to surrender, and blockaded the Dardanelles in March 1807. The main motive for the capture of the fortress of Tenedos was that the

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system was concentrated at the Crimea from where the Russian military reinforcement and needed provisions could be delivered to the southern ports – i.e. Trabzon and Batum, in five days.

<sup>20</sup> Apart from being the only natural harbour where the Ottoman fleet could easily lay anchor in the southern coast of the Black Sea, the port of Sinop owned one of the nearly self-sustaining shipyards in the empire. Ottoman archival sources indeed confirm that the *kalyon* (galleon) with a keel of 59,5 *zira* (approximately 45 m), having 80 gun-ports, would be almost ready within a few months to sail for the Tersâne-i Âmire (Imperial Shipyard) in Istanbul. BOA, C.BH, dosya: 2, gömlek: 53, 11/M/1222 [21 March 1807]; dosya: 206, gömlek: 9633, 29/S/1222 [8 May 1807]; dosya: 20, gömlek: 966, 25/Ra/1222 [2 June 1807]; dosya: 86, gömlek: 4150, 23/Z/1224 [29 January 1810].

<sup>21</sup> Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, I: pp. 90-91.

Russian Mediterranean fleet lacked a forward base to provide its supplies and logistics while it blockaded the Dardanelles. Seniavin's objective was not to blockade and neutralize the Ottoman fleet but to destroy it, by drawing it away from the shelter of its bases and shore batteries.<sup>22</sup>

The simultaneous blockade of both sides of the Straits disrupted the lives of the inhabitants of Istanbul, causing food riots and shortages. This has generally been considered as one of the reasons leading to the Janissary revolt on 31 May 1807 and the subsequent deposition of Selim III in favour of Mustafa IV. Defending the Dardanelles against the Russian Mediterranean fleet was overwhelmingly the top priority of the Ottoman navy. The Ottoman high command was well aware that the Ottoman fleet was unequal to a simultaneous fight against the Russians on the Black and Mediterranean seas at and therefore Kapudan Seydî Ali Pasha correctly preferred to position his naval forces around the Dardanelles, not least because traditionally the Bosphorus was well defended by fortifications but the Dardanelles were weaker. The Ottoman commander was twice defeated by Seniavin in the battles of Dardanelles and Athos in May and June 1807. But the Ottoman fleet though seriously weakened was not destroyed. The Russian blockade remained unbroken, but the Dardanelles were still in Ottoman hands and their land defences were being strengthened. Apart from the superiority of the Russian squadron over the Ottoman fleet, the experience and tactical creativity of Seniavin was one of the determining factors responsible for Russian naval success in the Mediterranean Sea. Seemingly, there was no choice for the Ottomans but to rely on their coastal batteries and fortifications guarding the Bosphorus and the Black Sea shore. Thus, while the Russian Black Sea fleet started to

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 99-103; Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, I: pp. 347-50, 54-62.

undertake an expedition against Anapa in the first week of May, the Ottoman fleet was obliged to remain at anchor until 19 May around the Dardanelles.<sup>23</sup>

Following the abandonment of the amphibious attack against Istanbul and the failure of the expedition against Sinop, Alexander I, without giving any chance to the Ottomans to react, ordered Rear-Admiral Pustoshkin to capture the fortress of Anapa. The absence of the Ottoman fleet enabled Pustoshkin to launch naval attacks combined with troop landings against Ottoman fortifications on the northern and southern shores covering the fortress. On 2 May the Russian Black Sea fleet left Sevastopol for Anapa. Upon the refusal of the Russian summons to surrender the fortress by the Ottoman pasha, the town was bombarded and the pasha fled to the mountains. The Russians, not confronted by any strong resistance, captured the town on 11 May after a two-day blockade.<sup>24</sup>

Following the fall of Anapa, upon receiving information from the Russian consulate in Trabzon that the town might be easily captured by a naval attack, Pustoshkin sailed southwards from Sevastopol with 2,000 troops and reached the neighbourhood of Trabzon on 19 June.<sup>25</sup> However, the Ottoman coastal batteries defended the town more successfully than the Russian admiral expected and the Russian naval forces operating without any land forces in support were fended off by the Ottomans.<sup>26</sup> This was the second unsuccessful expedition of the Russian Black Sea fleet vis-à-vis the Ottoman opponents. In July 1807 the treaty of Tilsit put a temporary end to conflict between France and Russia. Though the treaty did not end

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<sup>23</sup> Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, I: pp. 103-12; Norman E. Saul, *Russia and the Mediterranean, 1797-1807* (Chicago: UCP, 1970), pp. 216-20.

<sup>24</sup> Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, I: pp. 92-93; Petrov, *Voyna Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, I: pp. 339-40; diu Shatne, *Zhan-Batist de Traverse ministr flota rossiiskogo*: pp. 199-203.

<sup>25</sup> In his official letter, Yusuf Ziya Pasha confirms that the Russian Black Sea fleet including 30 vessels of different sizes and a landing force of 3,000 men sailed from Odessa (Hocabey) to take the fortress of Trabzon by storm. BOA, HH, dosya: 966, gömlek: 41304, 22/Ca/1222 [22 July 1807].

<sup>26</sup> diu Shatne, *Zhan-Batist de Traverse ministr flota rossiiskogo*: pp. 208-10.

the tension between St. Petersburg and Istanbul, it provided for a two-year ceasefire that allowed not only the Ottomans but also the Russians to recover from their losses in the Black Sea and the Caucasus.<sup>27</sup>

Having finished its mission, the Russian squadron and troops left Anapa. Taking advantage of this, the Ottoman pasha returned to Anapa and in the spring of 1809 Ottoman warships approached Anapa carrying gifts to the Circassian chieftains. Following the Ottoman visit, the Circassians started to launch raids against the Russian fortifications along the Kuban in June. The commander-in-chief of the Black Sea fleet Marquis de Traverse was ordered by Alexander I to regain control of Anapa.<sup>28</sup> Traverse reinforced the Russian fortifications in Taman with two battalions under the command of Capitan Lieutenant Stulli. Meanwhile a squadron with a landing force under the command of Capitan Lieutenant Perkhurov proceeded to Anapa by sea, and two infantry battalions under the command of Major General Panchulidzev were sent from Taman to Anapa through Boğaz to assist the landing.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, in order to distract the Circassians' attention from Anapa, a frigate and brig were sent to Sudjukkale. The Russian forces easily took Anapa on 27 June. The fortifications in Anapa were strengthened and Panchulidzev with three battalions remained to command the garrison.<sup>30</sup>

Prior to the resumption of hostilities in 1810, Pustoshkin had been replaced with Rear-Admiral Aleksei Andreevich Sarychev. The numerical superiority of the

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<sup>27</sup> Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, I: pp. 95-97; Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, I: pp. 341-47; Mütercim Ahmed Âsım Efendi, *Âsım Efendi Tarihi (Osmanlı Tarihi 1218-1224/1804-1809)*, ed. Ziya Yılmaz, II vols., vol. II (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2015), pp. 934-39.

<sup>28</sup> Upon receiving information that the Russian fleet, concentrated in the vicinity of the Crimea, was almost ready for launching attack on Anapa and Soğucak, Ottoman grand vizier, Yusuf Ziya Pasha commanded that the Ottoman fleet, anchored off Beşiktaş, be urgently sent out to meet the Russian vessels however this attempt failed. BOA, C.BH, dosya: 56, gömlek: 2658, 11/C/1224 [24 July 1809].

<sup>29</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 1006, gömlek: 42200, 26/Ş/1224 [6 October 1809].

<sup>30</sup> Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, I: pp. 267-70; A. N. Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, III vols., vol. II (Sankt Peterburg: Voennaia Tipografiia, 1887), pp. 531-37.

Russian Black Sea fleet over the Ottoman opponents was by now clear. The Ottoman high command had welcomed the opportunity of the two-year ceasefire and had attempted to recover its naval capabilities. The Ottomans still had some fortifications on the northern shores of the Black Sea – i.e. Suhumkale and Sudjukkale/Soğucak that were a threat to Russian transport and communications. On 21 June, a Russian squadron under the command of Captain-Lieutenant Dodt surrounded Suhumkale by landing troops. Suhumkale surrendered on 23 June.<sup>31</sup> In October 1810, Sarychev planned a landing operation to seize Trabzon. On 18 October, the Russian Black Sea fleet carrying 4,000 troops sailed from Sevastopol. On 22 October, Sarychev decided to attack the town by landing the Russian troops near the port under the command of Major Revelioti but they were immediately attacked by the Ottoman coastal batteries and troops. After a fierce battle, the Russians were repulsed with heavy casualties, only half of them managing to reach their ships.<sup>32</sup> After the defeat Sarychev decided to return to Sevastopol. The last naval operation of 1810 was launched against

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<sup>31</sup> A. N. Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, III vols., vol. III (Sankt Peterburg: Voennaia Tipografiia, 1887), pp. 231-32. Following the fall of the Anapa fortress, the safety of Suhumkale was of great strategic significance for the Ottomans suffering from Russian attacks in the Black Sea and therefore the Porte urgently warned the muhafiz of Suhumkale, Arslan Bey to strengthen the fortification of the town and to protect its neighbourhoods from Russian raids. BOA, C.AS, dosya: 386, gömlek: 15941, 29/Ra/1225 [4 May 1810].

<sup>32</sup> In fact, Sarychev's landing attempt was one of the serious fiascos which the Russian fleet severely experienced during the war in the southern coast of the Black Sea. According to Ottoman archival sources, the 900 men of the Russian landing group died under heavy fire from Ottoman coastal defending forces and some of them got drowned during the landing process around Akçakale and Puladhane. Seemingly, the key motivation for the Russian bold attack on Trabzon was directly connected to information/intelligence provided by the Russian consul, Roubaud de Ponteves, in Trabzon. Following the outbreak of the war, Roubaud had left for the Crimea where he had informed Sarychev of how defenceless city Trabzon was, however, Sarychev was totally oblivious of the Ottoman units which had been garrisoned around Akçakale to be dispatched towards Poti. The main reason of Sarychev's failure was that he did not even try to confirm the information/intelligence presented by Roubaud. BOA, C.AS, dosya: 775, gömlek: 32801, 19/L/1225 [17 November 1810]; HH, dosya: 994, gömlek: 41855/D, 21/Za/1225 [18 December 1810]; dosya: 1006, gömlek: 42221/A, 29/Z/1225 [25 January 1811]; dosya: 1010, gömlek: 42410, 29/Z/1225 [25 January 1811]. For a detailed description of Puladhane and its neighbourhood presented by Beauchamp in 1794. RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 677, pp. 1-83. On the eve of the Russo-Ottoman war of 1828-29, Roubaud presented a new report providing information about the roads and routes from Trabzon to Toprakkale. RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 843, pp. 1-15.

Sudjukkale and it was easily captured in December.<sup>33</sup> In general, the Russian Black Sea fleet was not adequate for a struggle with a European navy, but it had become an effective counterweight to the Ottoman navy.

Though the Russian Caspian fleet had been created in 1783, it was the weakest of all the Russian naval commands. Compared to the Russian naval forces in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the warships were small and furthermore many of them were in disrepair. Not only the ships, but also the quality of the Russian troops were sub-standard and they were not able to achieve much on the Caspian.<sup>34</sup> Even though Iran did not have a single warship on the Caspian, the Russians found it hard to exploit their naval superiority to overcome the difficulties encountered by the Russian army on land. In July 1805 Russian troops landed in Anzalī but Mīrzā Musa, the governor of Gīlān, deterred them from advancing toward Rasht. In March 1806, the Russian Caspian fleet landed troops under General Zavalishin near Baku where he was joined by Tsitsianov. Both generals then attacked Baku but the attack failed and Tsitsianov was killed by Ibrahim Khān.<sup>35</sup>

## Gudovich

One of the key problems of the Russian army on both sides of the Caucasus was that the number of the Russian troops was not sufficient to meet the pressing needs. The number of troops was about 22,000 in the entire region; 11,000 men had been positioned at the Caucasus Line to keep the Caucasian tribes under control, the

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<sup>33</sup> A. I. Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voiny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, II vols., vol. II (Sankt Peterburg: Tipografiia Shtaba Otdel'nago Korpusa Vnutrennei Strazhi, 1843), pp. 128-32; Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, III: pp. 232-34.

<sup>34</sup> On the chronic problems of the Russia Caspian fleet, see RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4325/1; delo: 4325/2.

<sup>35</sup> Sipihr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh: Tārīkh-i Qājārīyah*, I: p. 140; Fasā'ī, *History of Persia under Qājār Rule*: p. 110; Najmī, *'Abbās Mīrzā va Jang-hā-yi Īrān bā Rusiyah-i Tizārī*: p. 42.

rest were stationed in Georgia under the command of Ivan Vasilevich Gudovich who replaced Tsitsianov. Gudovich thereby achieved recognition for his role against the Ottomans between 1787 and 1792. Even given the shortages of essential supplies and the sometimes relatively low quality of the Russian troops in the Caucasus, the Russian force was sufficient to defend the territories of Georgia and the Caucasian khanates against Iranian assaults but the Ottoman declaration of war on Russia<sup>36</sup> on 30 December 1806 seriously disrupted Russian military calculations in the region.<sup>37</sup>

Hence, Gudovich was ordered by Alexander I to seek a ceasefire with Iran at once. The Tsar was even ready to waive his claim to align the Russian southern border with the Aras and Kura rivers. Alexander I's proposal was highly welcomed in Tehran because the tension between Iran and the Ottoman empire had recently increased due to Abdurrahman Pasha of Baban's taking refuge in Iran.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, the Russian commander himself had already started military preparations to storm the Ottoman fortress of Ahıska (Akhalsikhe). Secondary campaigns against Kars and Poti were also planned; Pyotr Danilovich Nesvetaev and Ion Ionovich Rykgov respectively were ordered to capture these towns. Gudovich concentrated his main force towards Ahıska because the pasha of Kars, Mehmed Pasha, sought Russian support against the Ottoman Serasker of Erzurum, Yusuf Ziya Pasha.<sup>39</sup> The feuding and jealousy between the pasha of Kars and Yusuf Ziya enabled the Russian commander to use his small military force more effectively. Gudovich welcomed Mehmed's proposal: the pasha promised in return that the fortress of Kars would not

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<sup>36</sup> Mütercim Ahmed Âsım Efendi, *Âsım Efendi Tarihi (Osmanlı Tarihi 1218-1224/1804-1809)*, ed. Ziya Yılmaz, II vols., vol. I (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2015), pp. 415-24.

<sup>37</sup> Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, I: pp. 72-73; Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, I: p. 289.

<sup>38</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 161, gömlek: 6703/A, 04/Ra/1221 [22 May 1806]; Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, I: p. 294.

<sup>39</sup> Âsım Efendi, *Âsım Efendi Tarihi (Osmanlı Tarihi 1218-1224/1804-1809)*, I: p. 124. Yusuf Ziya Pasha had been appointed as governor of Erzurum on 23 May, 1805.

resist the Russian army if it arrived there and would easily surrender. After making this agreement, Gudovich ordered General Nesvetaev to advance on Kars via Gumri, which Nesvetaev reached on 28 March 1807.<sup>40</sup> However, Nesvetaev's attempt failed.<sup>41</sup> Concentrating his force in Tsalka, Gudovich had planned to proceed to Ahıska but the fortress of Ahılkelek (Akhalkalaki) had to be taken first. Gudovich summoned the fortress of Ahılkelek on 18 May but was refused. A night attack failed on 21 May in which the Russian commander lost one third of his troops – i.e. around 900 men.<sup>42</sup> For Gudovich, there was no choice but to withdraw to Georgia. On the same day, Rykgov had already laid siege to the town of Poti: however, due to the failure at Ahılkelek, he was ordered to lift the siege. As a result, all of these three military operations against the Ottoman strongholds failed.<sup>43</sup>

Motivated by the latest failure of the Russians, Yusuf Ziya Pasha with a force of around 20,000 took the offensive and attacked the fortress of Gumri on 2, 14 and 17 June. The fortress was defended well by Nesvetaev. Upon the withdrawal of the

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<sup>40</sup> Upon receiving reports on the Russian attack attempt to take Kars, the Ottoman high command in Istanbul urgently ordered all the regional provincial rulers to strengthen the military units of Yusuf Ziya Pasha with 7,000-cavalry and 5,000-infantry and furthermore the necessary provisions were to be provided to them from Kars and Çıldır. BOA, C.AS, dosya: 82, gömlek: 3844, 21/S/1222 [30 April 1807]; dosya: 1120, gömlek: 49641, 21/Ca/1222 [27 July 1807].

<sup>41</sup> In the eastern part of the Ottoman empire, governors of the provinces, entrusted with securing the borderline against Iran and Russia, were usually prominent members of the local dynasties legitimizing themselves with their own people and historical background. In general terms, their primary goal was to sustain their military and political presence in their own realm, and therefore they were pragmatically prone to alter their political side particularly in the crisis periods. As an example of this, Mehmed Pasha, being one of the leaders of the Hatunoğlu (or Hatinoğlu) dynasty, had been appointed as muhafız of Kars by the Ottoman government. According to a letter (having no date) written by Mehmed Pasha held in the National Archives of Georgia, during the war of 1806-12, he interestingly welcomed and then congratulated Gudovich on being appointed as the post in Tiflis. BOA, YB (21), dosya: 10, gömlek: 79. It seems that being completely unaware of the secret deal between Mehmed and Gudovich, Serasker Yusuf Ziya Pasha, sent an official letter to Nesvetaev demanding his submission to Mehmed. BOA, YB (21), dosya: 10, gömlek: 65, 15/Ra/1222 [23 May 1807]. Mehmed Pasha was executed for treason after Yusuf Ziya learnt his wartime activities. BOA, HH, dosya: 1358, gömlek: 53328. Upon receiving the news of the military success of the Ottoman commanders in Kars, the Ottoman government, still being unaware of the case of Mehmed Pasha, had awarded him a grant of 25,000 kuruş however this money was used for building two bastions in Kars. BOA, C.DH, dosya: 55, gömlek: 2741, 23/\$/1222 [26 October 1807].

<sup>42</sup> BOA, C.AS, dosya: 34, gömlek: 1550, 17/\$/1222 [20 October 1807].

<sup>43</sup> Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, I: pp. 73-81; Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, I: pp. 306-10, 12.

Ottoman troops from Gumri, Gudovich arrived in the town on 20 June. Combining his force with that of Nesvetaev, Gudovich marched with roughly 6,000 men to carry out a raid on the Ottoman camp near Tihnis on 29 June. As generally happened when Russian and Ottoman forces met in the field, the Ottomans were defeated by the Russians at the Arpaçay and the Ottoman army then disintegrated.<sup>44</sup> The Ottoman defeat at Arpaçay led Faḥ ‘Alī Shāh to review his earlier decision to continue the war and therefore, after congratulating Gudovich on his victory over the Ottomans, the shāh stated that Iran was ready to sign a peace agreement with Russia.<sup>45</sup> However, the peace negotiations did not come to a conclusion. The Treaty of Tilsit now allowed Gudovich to use all the Russian troops against Iran by ending the war in Europe and bringing about a truce in the Russo-Ottoman conflict.<sup>46</sup>

Strengthening the Russian position at Qarahbāgh, Gudovich’s aim was to capture Īravān. Expecting the surrender of the fortress, he laid siege to the town in October. This was very late in the season to start an operation in the southern Caucasus but he succeeded in surrounding the town with about 3,500 men nevertheless. However, the operation was not well-planned. After a six-week siege, the Russian commander decided to launch an attack on Īravān in early December 1808. He felt certain that the Russian artillery would breach the walls of the fortress and the garrison would then surrender. Whatever the reasons for this prediction, they soon turned out to be incorrect for the Iranians defended the fortress bravely and

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<sup>44</sup> BOA, YB (21), dosya: 6, gömlek: 20, 18/06/1807 [30 June 1807].

<sup>45</sup> In May 1808, an Iranian envoy, ‘Askar Khān Afshār, was sent to Istanbul to present a proposal of military cooperation against the common enemy. Âsım Efendi, *Âsım Efendi Tarihi (Osmanlı Tarihi 1218-1224/1804-1809)*, II: pp. 1139-40; Câbî Ömer Efendi, *Câbî Târihi (Târih-i Sultân Selâm-i Sâlis ve Mahmûd-ı Sâni Tahlîl ve Tenkidli Metin)*, ed. Mehmet Ali Beyhan, II vols., vol. I (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003), p. 218.

<sup>46</sup> Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, I: pp. 81-86; Petrov, *Voyna Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, I: pp. 313-20, 23. In his official letter to Gudovich, Yusuf Ziya Pasha certainly guaranteed that the Ottoman side would respect the declared armistice terms between Russia and the Ottoman empire. BOA, YB (21), dosya: 10, gömlek: 75, 29/Z/1222 [27 February 1808]; dosya: 10, gömlek: 76, 29/Z/1222 [27 February 1808].

fended off the Russian troops. Furthermore, good quality Iranian cavalry arriving at Īravān caused chaos among the Russian troops. Losing about 300 men in the last attack, Gudovich waited two more weeks for the Iranians to surrender. When this did not happen, Gudovich decided to lift the siege and returned to Georgia on 15 December. This was his most ambitious and least successful operation during his military service in the Caucasus. The unsuccessful operation of Gudovich against Īravān in 1808 was a serious blow to Russian military prestige in the Caucasus.<sup>47</sup>

### **Tormasov**

Upon the resignation of Gudovich, Alexander Petrovich Tormasov was appointed as the commander-in-chief in the Caucasus; he arrived in Tiflis about April 1809. The number of the Russian troops had been increased up to 42,000 but Tormasov nevertheless adopted a defensive strategy.<sup>48</sup> In comparison with Gudovich, the new commander-in-chief was much more cautious. His attitude was inevitably influenced by the likelihood that war with the Ottomans would start again when the truce agreed at Tilsit expired. It seemed to Tormasov that Russia lacked the necessary means to conduct an aggressive policy and win the struggle against two other empires on Caucasian fronts stretching from the western shores of the Caspian to Poti, and therefore he wanted peace with Iran. Though Iran was able to maintain the current level of warfare in the Caucasus so long as Russia was at war in Europe, after Tilsit Fath 'Alī Shāh, too, was inclined to sign a peace agreement with Russia.<sup>49</sup> However, he also hoped for renewed cooperation with the Ottomans and did not stop

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<sup>47</sup> Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, I: p. 324; Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, II: pp. 513-18.

<sup>48</sup> Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, II: p. 522.

<sup>49</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 795, gömlek: 36877, 14/R/1224 [29 May 1809].

recruiting levies to keep alive the option of launching raids into Georgia at the same time. This, to some extent, was a tactical weapon to be used during the peace negotiations. In these circumstances it mattered that the Ottoman regional command was almost paralyzed because of rivalry and feuds among the pashas; the Serasker of Erzurum and the pasha of Ahıska, Şerif Mehmed and Selim, were at daggers drawn;<sup>50</sup> the brothers of the previous pasha of Kars were seeking military support from the Sardār of Īravān, Ḥusayn Khān, to overthrow the current pasha of Kars.<sup>51</sup>

The peace negotiations between Russia and Iran failed as the Iranians launched large -scale raids against Georgia on 2 August 1809. The Ottoman central government had been persuaded to cooperate with Iran against Russia but the local Ottoman pashas, including the Serasker of Erzurum, ignoring the Iranian call for a combined attack on the Russians and the orders sent from Istanbul, remained silent, failed to respond to Iranians, and did not carry out any attack against Russian territories.<sup>52</sup> Of the local Ottoman leaders, only Şerif Mehmed Pasha of Trabzon was

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<sup>50</sup> In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, one of the serious weaknesses of the Ottoman government was that several provincial governors, commanders, and local leading figures were at daggers drawn with each other in the east of the country. Especially during the crisis periods of 1806-12, 1821-3, and 1828-9, the personal conflicts of interest among the Ottoman officials serving in the eastern provinces became very apparent that was the one of the key reasons causing military and political disorder and forcing the Porte to make frequent appointments of high officials in the region. The cases of Selim Pasha of Çıldır, Süleyman Bey of Livane, and Şerif Pasha of Trabzon during the war of 1806-12 were the main ones weakening the Ottoman military resistance against the Russians along the border provinces. BOA, HH, dosya: 646, gömlek: 31696, 11/Z/1224 [17 January 1810]. The gradually increasing tension between Şerif Mehmed and Selim Pashas forced the Porte to replace Şerif Mehmed with Ali Pasha in February 1810. 'Atâ'ullah, *Şânî-Zâde Târîhi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1223-1237/1808-1821)*, I: pp. 319-20.

<sup>51</sup> Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, I: pp. 257-59. Indeed, the lack of central authority was due to a power vacuum exacerbated by continuing conflicts between several rival figures that each aimed to sustain their own personal interests. As an example of this, a brother of the executed muhafiz of Kars, Kara Mahmud Bey of Magazberd (Hatunoğlu), refusing to accept the authority of the newly appointed muhafiz of Kars, Abdullah Pasha, waged a battle against him. After defeating Abdullah, Kara Mahmud caused a new wave of power vacuum in the region, whose effect was even felt in the khanate of Īravān. BOA, HH, dosya: 800, gömlek: 37084/G, 29/Z/1224 [4 February 1810]; dosya: 800, gömlek: 37084/F, 29/Z/1224 [4 February 1810].

<sup>52</sup> 'Atâ'ullah, *Şânî-Zâde Târîhi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1223-1237/1808-1821)*, I: pp. 323-24.

determined to attack the Russian positions on the Black Sea shore.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile Tormasov ordered Prince Tamaz Mamukovich Orbeliani to capture Poti which would give the Russians a proper port on the Black Sea shore through which they could both supply the Russian forces in the region and break the Ottoman connection with the Caucasian tribes beyond Mingrelia and Imereti. By the end of August, Orbeliani surrounded the Ottoman garrison, which consisted of only 400 men, under the command of Kuçuk/Küçük Bey. On 12 November, Şerif Mehmed with 9,000 men approached within 20 kilometres of the town. With the active military support of the Gurian people who attacked the Ottomans from behind, Orbeliani defeated the Ottoman forces. Upon receiving this news, Poti surrendered on 26 November 1809.<sup>54</sup>

Due to his defeat at Poti, Şerif Mehmed Pasha did not dare to attempt to return to Trabzon directly but instead proceeded to Ahıska through Livane with his remaining forces. He calculated that by taking hold of Ahıska, he would seize an opportunity to strengthen his prestige as regional leader. Şerif Mehmed preferred to legitimate his intervention against another Ottoman leader by inciting the people of Ahıska against their governor, Selim Pasha, who was one of the greatest opponents of Şerif Mehmed in the region. The Porte realised that there was no choice but to stand behind Şerif Mehmed, who controlled the key city of Trabzon and appeared to

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<sup>53</sup> According to the treaty of Kale-i Sultaniye (the Dardanelles) on 5 January 1809, Britain had accepted to protect the integrity of the Ottoman empire against the French through necessary supplies to Istanbul. In line with the treaty, Britain sent several ships to the Ottoman capital, however, following his appointment as the new Serasker of the Black Sea, Şerif Mehmed Pasha, without losing time by waiting for the ships, was ordered to sail to monitor the sea lanes from Sinop to Suhumkale and to take back the fortress of Redutkale/Kemhal. Moreover, according to Ottoman archival sources, one of the grandiose projects of the Porte was to send troops through the Danube to the Crimea, thereby weakening the Russian front. BOA, HH, dosya: 1508, gömlek: 48, 13/C/1224 [26 July 1809]; C.AS, dosya: 249, gömlek: 10429, 29/C/1224 [11 August 1809]; HH, dosya: 1005, gömlek: 42139, 29/Z/1224 [4 February 1810].

<sup>54</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 798, gömlek: 36994, 25/L/1224 [3 December 1809]; Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, I: pp. 259-63; Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, II: pp. 528-29; 'Atâ'ullah, *Şâni-Zâde Târîhi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1223-1237/1808-1821)*, I: pp. 328-29.

be the most powerful leader in the region.<sup>55</sup> Upon realising what was happening, Selim Pasha sought to protect himself from his formidable opponent by approaching the Russians. Of course this was greatly welcomed by Tormasov, who believed that by this means the fortress of Ahıska might be captured with little difficulty. But Tormasov also believed that the operation against Ahıska depended crucially on the results of the peace negotiations with Iran.<sup>56</sup>

In the first few months of 1810 there were no serious battles. On 1 May Tormasov left for the fortress of Askaran where the peace negotiations were held between Iran and Russia. During the 18-day long negotiations, the Iranian side demanded that the Russian withdraw from the Tālīsh khanate and that it be ceded to Iran. Tormasov rejected the proposal put forward by the Iranian and the war started again. Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā was then defeated twice by General Pyotr Stepanovich Kotliarevskii at Meghri. Upon this, the Iranians started to strengthen the fortifications of Tabrīz and Nakhjavān and furthermore sent an envoy to the Ottoman Serasker to present a proposal on restoring military cooperation against the common enemy.<sup>57</sup> On this occasion the proposal was welcomed by the Ottoman side.<sup>58</sup> In August, 10,000 men under the command of the Sardār of Īravān, Ḥusayn Khān

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<sup>55</sup> In their letters and petitions launching complaints against Selim Pasha to the Porte, most of the notables of Ahıska clearly expressed that the pasha, in case of coming back to the town from Acara (Adjara) to where he fled, would not be accepted as the governor of Çıldır because of his oppression of the local people and probable treacherous deals with the Russians. According to the letters, the best candidate for the position was Şerif Mehmed Pasha however the Ottoman high command had very serious doubts about Şerif Mehmed's occupancy of such a sensitive position during the war. BOA, HH, dosya: 798, gömlek: 36994/I, 09/Za/1224 [16 December 1809]; dosya: 520, gömlek: 25428, 09/Za/1224 [16 December 1809]; dosya: 798, gömlek: 36994/M, 29/Z/1224 [4 February 1810].

<sup>56</sup> Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voiny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, I: pp. 264-65; Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, III: pp. 207-08. Although Iran and the Ottoman empire did not have an agreement on military collaboration and information/intelligence-sharing against Russia, the Sardar of Īravān, Ḥusayn Khān, just before the start of the peace talks between Iran and Russia, warned the governor of Erzurum, Behram Pasha that Russian regiments finished their military preparation to launch an attack towards Ahıska and Kars. BOA, HH, dosya: 787, gömlek: 36735, 29/Z/1224 [4 February 1810].

<sup>57</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 795, gömlek: 36897, 29/Z/1225 [25 January 1811].

<sup>58</sup> Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, III: pp. 209-12.

Qājār, left for Ahıska;<sup>59</sup> by the second week of September, the Iranian army arrived in the town. After successfully joining 2,000 Ottoman troops under the command of Şerif Mehmed Pasha, the combined Iranian-Ottoman force moved towards Ahılkelek with the intention of launching a surprise attack on Georgia. Upon receiving information on enemy movements, Tormasov ordered General Dmitrii Tikhonovich Lisanevich to stop the allied army before Ahılkelek. After a three-day march, Lisanevich managed to approach within 200 metres of the Ottoman-Iranian camp on the night of 16 September without being detected, a feat which once again demonstrated the lack of discipline and professionalism of the Iranian and Ottoman forces. The allied army was caught unprepared by the Russian attack and was easily scattered. Both the Ottoman commander and the Sardār of Īravān accused each other of being imprudent and Iranian-Ottoman recriminations over this humiliating defeat facilitated Tormasov's political and military policies in the Caucasus.<sup>60</sup>

In the following days, uprisings in Imereti and Daghestan were suppressed by generals P. A. Simonovich and Lisanevich respectively. These thoroughly successful operations boosted the morale and self-confidence of the Russian forces engaged in them. Having now decided to attack Ahıska, Tormasov divided his army into three bodies, two of which were sent to Imereti and Pāmbāk under the command of Simonovich and Portniagin respectively to secure control over the territories surrounding Ahıska. All three detachments converged on Ahıska and joined there on

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<sup>59</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 4, gömlek: 121, 29/Z/1225 [25 January 1811].

<sup>60</sup> Following the Russian attack, the Ottoman and Iranian allied forces scattered over a large area towards Ahıska, Bayezid and Kars where it caused a serious disorder. In their letters, Iranian officials encouraged the governor of Erzurum, İbrahim Pasha, to maintain the order, thereby launching a new allied attack against the Russians. BOA, HH, dosya: 786, gömlek: 36683, 30/Ca/1225 [3 July 1810]. BOA, HH, dosya: 786, gömlek: 36680, 29/Z/1225 [25 January 1811]. Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voiny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, II: pp. 109-15; Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, III: pp. 218-19.

27 November 1810.<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, Selim Pasha, after giving his son to Tormasov as *emanet/amanat* to prove his loyalty to the Russian government, joined the operation by inciting the people against the pasha of Ahıska, Şerif Mehmed Pasha.<sup>62</sup> However, the Russian attack on Ahıska failed due to an outbreak of plague.<sup>63</sup> After a 10-day siege, Tormasov returned to Tiflis leaving the army on the Georgian border to secure the territory against invasion.<sup>64</sup>

In the winter of 1811, two Ottoman envoys, sent by Sultan Mahmud II, arrived in Tabrīz and Tehran with a proposal to be presented to Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā and Fath ‘Alī Shāh to boost military cooperation against Russia in the Caucasus. The proposal of the sultan was welcomed by the Iranian authorities. Completing his negotiations in Tabrīz,<sup>65</sup> one of the envoys was to proceed to Daghestan passing through the Caucasian khanates.<sup>66</sup> However, in February, Jafar Quli Khān of Shakī caught the Ottoman envoy while crossing the Kura river and then brought him to Tormasov with the imperial edicts calling the Daghestan people to

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<sup>61</sup> Following the repelling of the Russian attack, Hazinedarzade Süleyman Ağa, in his official report to Sadrazam Yusuf Ziya Pasha, provided details of the Russian military force and how they organized before Ahıska. BOA, HH, dosya: 994, gömlek: 41855/E, 21/Za/1225 [18 December 1810].

<sup>62</sup> Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, III: pp. 407-08. Selim Pasha, in his letters to the Ottoman central government, insistently accused Şerif Mehmed Pasha of not taking necessary measures to protect the fortress of Poti, thereby causing many Ottoman troops being captured by the Russians, on the one hand, while secretly seeking the Russian patronage in the region, on the other. BOA, C.DH, dosya: 26, gömlek: 1266, 03/Ca/1225 [6 June 1810].

<sup>63</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 1004, gömlek: 42120/C, 15/Za/1225 [12 December 1810]; dosya: 980, gömlek: 41606, 05/Z/1225 [1 January 1811].

<sup>64</sup> Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, II: pp. 116-22; Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, III: pp. 221-28.

<sup>65</sup> Following his arrival in Tabrīz, Yasincizade Abdulvehhab Efendi presented an imperial letter with gifts to Abbās Mīrzā. In return, the Crown Prince congratulated the military success of Şerif Mehmed Pasha and the muhafiz of Kars, Abdullah Pasha against Tormasov in Ahıska and furthermore sent ceremonial robes (hilat) to them. BOA, HH, dosya: 796, gömlek: 36921, 03/M/1226 [28 January 1811].

<sup>66</sup> In previous centuries, one of the means of political penetration exploited by the Ottoman empire during wars against Russia was to encourage the Caucasian Muslim khans and rulers by declaring *jihād* against the common ‘enemy’. During the war of 1806-12, Sultan Mahmud II also used this method to take the support of the khans in Daghestan. Şehsuvar Bey, as a courier and an envoy, being tasked with gathering intelligence and conveying a special enactment (hutbe fermānı) to the local rulers, was sent to Daghestan. BOA, HH, dosya: 410, gömlek: 21379, 08/Ra/1225 [13 April 1810]; YB (21), dosya: 11, gömlek: 17, 20/Ra/1225 [25 April 1810]; dosya: 11, gömlek: 21, 29/Z/1225 [25 January 1811].

fight together with the Ottoman empire and Iran against Russia. Nevertheless, considering the previous attempts at Ottoman-Iranian cooperation and their results, this mission might be considered as successful because both the Ottoman and Iranian officials agreed on a joint attack toward Gumri and started to build up their forces for the operation.<sup>67</sup> While the Ottomans strengthened the fortifications of Erzurum, Kars, and Ahılkelek and sent an army to Batum from Trabzon in an attempt to lay siege to Poti,<sup>68</sup> the Iranians dispatched military supplies and reinforcements to the Mughān region to incite the pro-Iranian khans against the Russians. According to Tormasov, the risks of potential Ottoman-Iranian aggression were strong enough to demand additional military reinforcement from St. Petersburg that could thwart a combined Iranian-Ottoman attack and ensure the security of Darband, Baku, Ganjah, Poti, and Suhumkale. However, his demand was brusquely refused and furthermore the Russian Minister of War, General M. A. Barclay de Tolly ordered him to dispatch two infantry regiments to the western front to fight against Napoleon, an order that Tormasov could not fulfil.<sup>69</sup>

Having completed his last preparations and having agreed to join the Iranians at Arpaçay, the Ottoman Serasker left for Kars with his army of 24,000 men. Becoming aware of the intentions of the so-called allied army, Tormasov also left Tiflis and headed for Kars in order to destroy the Ottoman army before it could unite with the Iranians. The Ottoman Serasker and the Sardār of Īravān met near the fortress of Magazberd in order to clarify their plan of attack on 11 September 1811.

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<sup>67</sup> Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, III: p. 410.

<sup>68</sup> For the Russians, the fortress of Poti was geopolitically convenient spot on the eastern coast of the Black Sea to properly supply the actively fighting military forces in Georgia. That was why it was a strategic stronghold for the Ottomans to be taken back from the Russians, thereby undermining the Russian supply line in the region. In line with this strategy, concentrating his own military forces in Batum, Hazinedarzade Süleyman Ağa was almost ready for launching an attack on Poti. BOA, HH, dosya: 966, gömlek: 41305/H, 27/C/1226 [19 July 1811].

<sup>69</sup> Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, II: pp. 242-44.

However, the Ottoman Serasker was then shot in the head by a Kurdish soldier in the Iranian army.<sup>70</sup> The badly wounded Serasker was taken to Kars and the prospective attack of the allied armies was cancelled and Hazinedarzade Süleyman Ağa of Trabzon, leaving his army of 16,000 men in Batum, himself withdrew from the field. In September, Tormasov was replaced with Philip Osipovich Paulucci.<sup>71</sup>

## Paulucci

Being aware that the Ottoman army which had concentrated on Kars had now scattered in all directions, Paulucci ordered General Kotliarevskii to capture Ahılkelek in a rapid surprise attack. After a difficult approach march on 19 December, Kotliarevskii succeeded in getting close to Ahılkelek undetected. Similarly to the Iranians, the Ottomans were not accustomed to attack the enemy at night and did not expect the Russians to do so either. But Kotliarevskii took Ahılkelek in a night-time assault on 22 December<sup>72</sup> and then defeated an Ottoman attempt to re-take the town two months later.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Due to the gradually increasing tension between Kara Mahmud Bey of Magazberd and Abdullah Pasha of Kars, the security of the eastern border had seriously weakened and injured and therefore Serasker Emin Pasha had been ordered to remand Kara Mahmud in custody. On the eve of the prospective Iranian-Ottoman attack against Russia, Emin Pasha was severely wounded in the camp of the allied forces while cavalries were playing game (katana oyunu) on horse. Despite being still alive, Emin Pasha did not even try to inform the Ottoman government of the incident, however, interestingly, Şerif Mehmed Pasha of Çıldır was the only one who sent the document providing details about the case of Emin Pasha to Istanbul. BOA, HH, dosya: 716, gömlek: 34161, 29/S/1226 [25 March 1811]; dosya: 807, gömlek: 37183, 23/L/1226 [10 November 1811].

<sup>71</sup> According to a Russian secondary source, the assassination of the Ottoman Serasker had been plotted by one of his political rivals, [Kara Mahmud] Bey of Magazberd, who had been removed from his position by the Porte because the Serasker called him disobedient. Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, II: pp. 245-46. According to Petrov, the Ottoman Serasker was accidentally wounded. Petrov, *Voyna Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, III: pp. 414-15.

<sup>72</sup> Mikhailovich-Danilevskii, *Opisanie turetskoi voyny v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra s 1806-go do 1812-go goda*, II: pp. 248-51; Petrov, *Voyna Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, III: pp. 415-16. Similar to the example of Mehmed Pasha Hatunoğlu, Şerif Mehmed and Selim Pashas were members of the local prominent dynasties – i.e. Atabeks of Çıldır and Hamşioğlu (Khimshiashvili) of Adjara respectively. During the war, due to the conflict between Şerif Mehmed and Selim, the fortress of

## Rtishchev

In February 1812, Paulucci was recalled to fight against Napoleon and General Nikolai Fyodorovich Rtishchev was promoted to be Russian commander-in-chief in the Caucasus. According to Rtishchev, to defend populated areas from the recurrent Iranian raids was more sensible than launching attacks on the enemy's insignificant bases. The main motive behind Rtishchev's defensive strategy was directly related to the prospect of Napoleon's invasion. In Rtishchev's opinion the number of Russian soldiers in the Caucasus was not sufficient to conduct an offensive strategy in the region. However, General Kotliarevskii went beyond Rtishchev's orders and caught the main Iranian army unprepared at Aşlândüz. The Russian detachment of around 2,000 men launched a night attack on Crown Prince 'Abbās Mīrzā's camp of around 30,000 men: after a few hours of battle, the Iranian army was routed and the camp was taken on 1 November 1812.<sup>74</sup> About 2,000 European-style trained Iranian troops were killed.<sup>75</sup> Nearly two months later, Kotliarevskii stormed the fortress of Lankaran located in the Tālīsh khanate. The commander of the garrison of 4,000 men, Şādiq Khān, refused to surrender the fortress and defended it bravely for five days but it fell on 13 January 1813. Although Kotliarevskii was seriously wounded the Iranian garrison was completely

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Ahıska was easily lost to Kotliarevskii, as a result of which the Porte regarded Şerif Mehmed as responsible for the military fiasco and therefore issued an order to Serasker Emin Pasha to execute Şerif Mehmed. BOA, HH, dosya: 1002, gömlek: 42061, 27/M/1227 [11 February 1812]; dosya: 244, gömlek: 13718, 05/S/1227 [19 February 1812].

<sup>73</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 289, gömlek: 17314/A, 03/M/1227 [18 January 1812]; dosya: 250, gömlek: 14193, 27/Ra/1227 [10 April 1812].

<sup>74</sup> Seemingly, Sultan Mahmud II was also closely following the latest developments between Iran and Russia. According to Ottoman archival sources, the news of the Russian attack on the Iranian camp delivered to Istanbul within four weeks. BOA, HH, dosya: 794, gömlek: 36850, 25/Za/1227 [30 November 1812].

<sup>75</sup> Qūzānlū, *Jang-i Dah Sālah yā Jang-i Avval-i Īrān bā Rūs*: pp. 137-39.

cut off and was destroyed.<sup>76</sup> The result was a disaster for Iran; in two months, ‘Abbās Mīrzā lost about 5,000 regular soldiers (*niẓām-i jadīd*), which were almost the only European-trained troops at the shāh’s disposal.

## **Ottoman-Iranian Cooperation**

Only for a short time during the Napoleonic period did Iran and the Ottoman empire cooperate against Russia.<sup>77</sup> In part this cooperation was due to British policy, which aimed at building coalitions against Napoleon and Russia, whenever the latter was an ally of France. The general line of Britain in 1807-11 was to encourage the Ottomans and Iranians to consolidate their alliance, and to prevent Iran from making any separate peace with Russia.<sup>78</sup> Matters changed as the likelihood of renewed war between Russia and France grew. The Sultan concluded a separate peace with Russia in Bucharest in May 1812. By the Treaty of Bucharest, just before Napoleon’s invasion of Russia, the Ottomans lost Bessarabia in the west but regained nearly all they had lost in the east: Poti, Anapa, and Ahılkelek. Russia retained only Suhumkale on the Abkhazian coast.

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<sup>76</sup> Mīrzā Aḥmad Lankarānī, *Akhbār-nāmah: Tārīkh-i Khānāt Tālīsh dar Zamān Janghā-yi Rūsīyah ‘Alīyah-i Īrān* (Tīhrān: Markaz-i Asnād va Tārīkh-i Dīplumāsī, 1387 [2008/2009]), pp. 74-77; Najmī, *‘Abbās Mīrzā va Janghā-yi Īrān bā Rusīyah-i Tizārī*: pp. 68-69.

<sup>77</sup> FO 78/77 Stratford Canning to Ouseley, 20 June, 1812. In general terms, one of the chronic weaknesses of the Russian army was its bad-functioning supply and logistics system in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. While launching campaign against the southern rivals – i.e. Iranians, Ottomans and other local rulers, Russia was to keep its supply and logistics line active and uninterrupted. That was why the port fortresses of Anapa, Soğucak, and particularly Poti were strategic for Russia to sustain its expansion towards the south. In line with this strategy, at the outset of the Russo-Iranian war of 1804-13, the Russian ambassador to the Ottoman empire, A. Ia. Italinskii, requested an official permission from the Ottoman government to pass the necessary supply and provision for the Russian troops through the port of Poti. The Porte neither accepted nor refused the request at once but tried to gain time by correspondence with several commanders to be able to reach an accurate decision. After all, the Porte was to reply in a positive way to the request of the ambassador but this would be very temporary because it had caused offence to Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh in Tehran. BOA, HH, dosya: 167, gömlek: 7069; C.AS, dosya: 126, gömlek: 5634, 29/C/1219 [5 October 1804]; HH, dosya: 259, gömlek: 14926, 05/Za/1219 [5 February 1805].

<sup>78</sup> F. Adamiyat, "The Diplomatic Relations of Persia with Britain, Turkey and Russia, 1815-1830" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science, 1949), p. 240.

Iran took offence at the Ottoman government signing the peace agreement with Russia without warning it.<sup>79</sup> The Ottoman ambassador, Yasincizade Abdulvehhab Efendi travelled to Tehran and met Fath ‘Alī Shāh in March 1811.<sup>80</sup> But although both the Iranians and the Ottomans agreed that Russia was the ‘common enemy of religion’ no real alliance negotiations occurred. The main reason for Abdulvehhab Efendi’s mission was to warn Iran not to patronize the Baban beys in general but Abdurrahman Pasha in particular, whom Istanbul regarded as its subjects. The reply of the Iranian central government was vague and the Ottoman ambassador was told to visit ‘Abbās Mīrzā in Tabrīz, as the matter in question came within his jurisdiction. Meanwhile, with Napoleon’s invasion of Russia now imminent, the British envoy in Iran told the Iranians that the Porte had valid grounds for signing a peace agreement with Russia and furthermore recommended them to settle a similar agreement with her. Of course the British priority was now to concentrate all Russia’s power in Europe and end all other conflicts which might force the detachment of troops to other theatres.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Câbî Ömer Efendi, *Câbî Târihi (Târih-i Sultân Selîm-i Sâlis ve Mahmûd-ı Sâni Tahlîl ve Tenkidli Metin)*, ed. Mehmet Ali Beyhan, II vols., vol. II (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003), pp. 925-26.

<sup>80</sup> After paying a visit to the court of Abbās Mīrzā in Tabrīz, Yasincizade Abdulvehhab Efendi left for Tehran to present Sultan Mahmud II’s letter and gifts. BOA, HH, dosya: 795, gömlek: 36867/A, 05/Ra/1226 [30 March 1811].

<sup>81</sup> Cevdet Paşa, *Târih-i Cevdet*, X: pp. 31-32; Fasā’ī, *History of Persia under Qājār Rule*: pp. 135-36.

## Chapter Four - The Irano-Ottoman War of 1821-23

In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the tension between the Ottomans and Qājārs was shaped by three dominant issues: the misbehaviour of the borderland tribes; political fugitives who sought refuge by crossing the Ottoman-Iranian border; and the pilgrimage of Iranian subjects in Ottoman territory.<sup>1</sup> The main thesis of this chapter is that beside the old political-religious rivalry that had existed since the sixteenth century and was of special relevance given the blurred religious allegiance of many inhabitants of the borderlands, neither the Ottoman nor the Iranian state had achieved anything approaching the European (or Russian) level of centralisation in the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Neither of these two imperial states was able to control the local rulers and tribal leaders who held effective power in the borderland region. These leaders' attempts to preserve their power and legitimacy among the local population were a constant source both of conflict within the region and of tension between the Ottoman and Iranian central governments. Nevertheless, this is far from a total explanation for the war. Crown Prince 'Abbās Mīrzā's search for prestige and legitimacy was also a factor in bringing on the conflict. So too, perhaps most importantly, was the obvious and exceptional vulnerability of the Ottoman empire in 1821.

### The Origins of the War

According to the Treaty of Qaşr-i Shīrīn (Kasr-ı Şirin) of 1639, the frontier between the Ottoman state and Iran was not a well-defined line but rather an ill-

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<sup>1</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 1, gömlek: 18, 25/Z/1235 [3 October 1820]; Qūzānlū, *Tārīkh-i Niẓāmī-i Īrān*, II: pp. 819-20.

defined and conflict-ridden zone stretching from the southern Caucasus to the Persian Gulf.<sup>2</sup> The Zagros region mostly covers the north of this region. Neither the Ottoman empire nor Iran was sufficiently strong to bring this geographically rugged and inaccessible area under strict control. As a result, Kurdish and Arab tribal leaders were the only real lords of this area. Tribal behaviour and conflicts created many disputes between the Ottomans and Iranians. Most of these tribes were semi-nomadic and required extensive pastures for their herds. They migrated across a wide area from season to season.<sup>3</sup> In one sense, the Zagros region was a barrier between the Ottoman state and Iran but these semi-nomads pursued their own economic interests and the logic of their way of life by seeking fertile pastures anywhere they chose on both sides of the border, in the process often evading their tax obligations to both the Ottoman and Iranian states.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes too these semi-nomads were used to loot and sack villages across the border by both imperial powers.<sup>5</sup> By this means the

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<sup>2</sup> The Treaty of Qaṣr-i Shīrīn, signed between the Ottoman Sultan Murad IV and the Iranian Shah Ṣāfi, was not the first but the most explicit agreement in the diplomatic history of these two imperial states in the region. Indeed, it is worth noting that the following treaties signed between the Ottomans and Iranians such as Ahmed Pasha in 1732, Istanbul in 1736, and Kerden in 1746 were not more than examples of short period of time truce. During the negotiations of the Treaties of Erzurum of 1823 and 1847, the frontier problems were still placed near the top but remained almost unresolved. These treaties only identified a strip of land where Ottoman and Iranian authority and the allegiance of numerous nomadic tribes, remained indefinite, weak and disputed. It should also be noted that relations between the political centre of both the Ottoman and Iranian states and their outer dependencies and principalities along the given border region was very weak. As a result, local dynamics were often more important than imperial policies, for establishing spheres of Ottoman or Iranian control and influence along their border region. For the Ottoman side, Andrew C. S. Peacock, *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009); Kemal H. Karpat and Robert W. Zens, *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities, and Political changes* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); Ghulām'husayn Nizāmī, *Naqsh-i Baṣrah va Banādar -i Karānah'ha -yi Shimālī-yi Khalīj-i Fārs dar Ravābiṭ -i Īrān va 'Uṣmānī (1049-1263 HQ./1639-1847 M.)* (Būshahr: Intishārāt-i Būshahr, 1383 [2004/2005]).

<sup>3</sup> Daniel G. Bates, "The Role of the State in Peasant-Nomad Mutualism," *Anthropological Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (1971): pp. 109-31.

<sup>4</sup> For the nomads of Iran, see Tapper, "Introduction," pp. 1-82; Tapper, "The Tribes in Eighteenth-and Nineteenth-Century Iran," pp. 506-41; Tapper, *Frontier Nomads of Iran: A Political and Social History of the Shahsevan*; Martin Van Bruinessen, "Kurdish Tribes and the State of Iran: The Case of Simko's Revolt," in *Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan*, ed. Richard Tapper (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 364-78. For the Ottoman nomads, see Reşat Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009); Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia*.

<sup>5</sup> Yahya Kalantari, "Feth Ali Şah Zamanında Osmanlı-İran Münasebetleri (1797-1834)" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1976), p. 117.

central governments in Istanbul and Tehran tried to exercise some control in the borderland without taking any direct responsibility for its governance.<sup>6</sup>

### Border Transgressions

An example of this sort of problem was the case of the Sipki tribe in the first decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> One of the Kurdish tribes inhabiting the borderland, the Sipki, just after crossing the Iranian border, settled in the Ottoman *eyalets* of Bayezid, Van and Muş respectively.<sup>8</sup> Within the process of staying in Muş, some of the surrounding villages were looted and damaged by the Sipki. Upon this, Selim Pasha of Muş was to expel the Sipki tribe from his *eyalet*.<sup>9</sup> Just after being expelled from Muş, the Sipki tribe was invited to take refuge in Van by Derviş Pasha,<sup>10</sup> the *muhafız* of Van, who, however, did not seek any permission for this from the Porte.<sup>11</sup> The reason behind Derviş Pasha's invitation to the Sipkis was related to the centralization process of the Ottoman state. In the event of having to face future pressure from Istanbul or any local potentate, Derviş Pasha wished to be able to call on the Sipki for support. Likewise in the *eyalet* of Muş, the Sipki tribe led to disturbance among the local residents in Van and therefore some of them started to take refuge in Iran.<sup>12</sup> Not only the local residents but also some of the local lords

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<sup>6</sup> Ateş, *Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843–1914*: p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 1227, gömlek: 47921, 08/L/1233 [11 August 1818].

<sup>8</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 782, gömlek: 36609.

<sup>9</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 1227, gömlek: 47921, 08/L/1233 [11 August 1818].

<sup>10</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 782, gömlek: 36609; 'Atâ'ullah, *Şânî-Zâde Târîhi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1223-1237/1808-1821)*, II: pp. 881-85. For more details, see Fatih Gencer, "Van Muhafızı Derviş Paşa İsyanı," *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 47, no. 29 (2010): pp. 197-216.

<sup>11</sup> Despite not receiving any order from the central government, Celaleddin Pasha of Erzurum permitted the Sipki tribe to settle in Van, see BOA, HH, dosya: 807, gömlek: 37185/H, 13/Za/1232 [24 September 1817].

<sup>12</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 452, gömlek: 22390, 05/Z/1232 [16 October 1817]. Exploiting the manpower of the Sipki tribe, Derviş Pasha launched an attack on the district of Bulanık which was under the control of Selim Pasha of Muş. In return, Selim Pasha with his tribal force looted the local residents living in

were inclined to seek refuge from Iran; Mustafa Bey, ruler of Hakkari, was one of these rulers having serious troubles with Derviş Pasha.<sup>13</sup> Inevitably, Iran became involved in the case and asked the Porte to send the Sipkis back to their previous area of settlement near Īravān (Revan/Erevan).<sup>14</sup> In his letter to the Ottoman Reis Efendi, Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā warned the Ottoman central government about Derviş Pasha’s actions and his potential disloyalty to the sultan.<sup>15</sup> The Porte was unsuccessful in convincing Derviş Pasha to send the Sipki back to Iran.<sup>16</sup> As a result, the Sardār of Īravān, Ḥusayn Khān Qazvīnī, was ordered by Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā to besiege the fortresses of Hoşâb/Mahmudî and Erciş. The Iranian attack was repulsed by Derviş Pasha, to whom Celaleddin Pasha of Erzurum provided military aid.<sup>17</sup>

Being aware of the administrative limitations of the Porte and consolidating his place in Van, Derviş carried out enhancing his pressure on the local rulers and looting the neighbouring districts in the region.<sup>18</sup> Upon this, the Porte officially replaced Derviş with İbrahim Yümnî Pasha and dispatched the latter to the fortress of Van with the support of the governor of Erzurum. Upon receiving the news of his

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the district of Adilcevaz in Van, see 'Atâ'ullah, *Şânî-Zâde Târîhi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1223-1237/1808-1821)*, II: p. 881.

<sup>13</sup> Because of the tribal attacks encouraged by Derviş Pasha, Mustafa Bey had taken refuge in Iran and agreed to be under the protection of the shāh for a while. Following his coming back to the Ottoman land, he submitted a report on the situation to Selim Pasha stating that he was under increasing pressure of Derviş Pasha and therefore he was to seek any kind of military patronage to fend off himself, see BOA, HH, dosya: 452, gömlek: 22393, 24/N/1232 [7 August 1817]; dosya:452, gömlek: 22393/A, 29/Ş/1232 [14 July 1817]; dosya:452, gömlek: 22393/B, 05/N/1232 [19 July 1817].

<sup>14</sup> The attempts of Ḥusayn Khān Qazvīnī at stopping the destructive activities of the Sipki tribe and Derviş Pasha failed and thus Muhib ‘Alī Khān, as the envoy of ‘Abbās Mīrzā was sent to Istanbul to negotiate an agreement, see BOA, HH, dosya: 452, gömlek: 22395, 17/Z/1232 [28 October 1817]; Ateş, *Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843–1914*: p. 49.

<sup>15</sup> *AMTİQ*, vol. I, no: 105, ‘Abbās Mīrzā Nā’ib al-Saltānah [Heir Apparent] to Ottoman Reis ül-Küttab [Chief of the Scribes or Foreign Minister], 1234 [1818-1819], pp. 228-229.

<sup>16</sup> On the pretext that the Sipki tribe were not sent back to Iran, after beating the Ottoman local militia, the Iranian forces captured Hakkari. It was beyond doubt that the presence of Mustafa Bey on the Iranian side facilitated the fall of Hakkari, see BOA, HH, dosya: 782, gömlek: 36609, 24/N/1232 [7 August 1817].

<sup>17</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 782, gömlek: 36609/A, 15/S/1233 [25 December 1817]; dosya: 452, gömlek: 22392, 01/Z/1232 [12 October 1817]; dosya: 452, gömlek: 22392/A, 25/Za/1232 [6 October 1817].

<sup>18</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 1227, gömlek: 47923/B, 23/Ş/1233 [28 June 1818]; dosya: 1227, gömlek: 47921, 08/L/1233 [11 August 1818].

removal from the office, refusing the order of the Porte and leaving the fortress of Van, Derviş retreated to Erçek, situated on the way of Khūy, with his supporters to stimulate some of the Kurdish tribal chieftains. When the fortress of Van was captured by İbrahim Yümnî on 28 January, 1819, Derviş Pasha had already taken shelter in the fortress of Mahmudî.<sup>19</sup>

İbrahim Yümnî Pasha, however, failed to take the necessary military precautions and furthermore his increasing oppression forced people in the region to invite Derviş into Van. Upon this, Derviş, by the help of the local leaders of Van and other militias assembled from neighbouring regions, besieged the fortress and forced İbrahim Yümnî to surrender. Before the garrison fell, İbrahim Yümnî blew the ammunition store up.<sup>20</sup> When Istanbul was informed about the current situation in Van, without any delay, Serd Mahmud Pasha was officially appointed as the *muhafiz* of Van on 25 May, 1819, and Hafız Ali Pasha of Erzurum was dignified as the Serasker of East by the Porte and furthermore military forces and garrisons in the region were ordered to facilitate coordination with Serd Mahmud against Derviş Pasha.<sup>21</sup> Matters became even more confused when Derviş was defeated and removed by Serd Mahmud Pasha in August 1819.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Selim Pasha of Muş had a considerable military force and prestige in the region to be able to fight against Derviş however in case of Selim directly becoming entangled with the issue; this most probably would cause additional problems and encourage the regional tribal chieftains to side with Derviş. Finally, suppose that Selim succeeded in this task, he would demand the muhafızlık of Van for himself or someone else whom he trusted. BOA, HH, dosya: 1227, gömlek: 47928/K, 29/S/1234 [28 December 1818]; 'Atâ'ullah, *Şânî-Zâde Târîhi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1223-1237/1808-1821)*, II: pp. 884-85, 903.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 920-21.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 921.

<sup>22</sup> Derviş Pasha and his private treasurer were put to death where they were caught on 26 August, 1819, see BOA, HH, dosya: 1227, gömlek: 47927, 29/Z/1234 [19 October 1819]; BOA, C.DH, dosya: 57, gömlek: 2810, 29/Za/1234 [19 September 1819]; ibid., p. 931. In addition, it is very surprising that the Iranian government felt the need of submitting some reports to the Porte by the hand of its envoy, Mîrzâ Farajullâh Khân, to underline its neutrality in the current problems, see BOA, HH, dosya: 769, gömlek: 36174, 03/N/1234 [26 June 1819].

Despite Derviş's removal, the Sipki tribe was not forced to return to Iran.<sup>23</sup> Had the Ottoman local authorities attempted to do this the local tribes would have seen this as weakness vis-à-vis the Iranians. There were further Iranian complaints when not just other branches of the Sipki tribe but also a significant Kurdish tribe, the Haydaranlu, also moved from Iranian territory into Ottoman lands.<sup>24</sup> After the removal of Derviş Pasha, Celaleddin Pasha, the governor of Erzurum, and Selim Pasha, the *mutasarrıf* of Muş, became involved in the affairs of the Sipki and Haydaranlu, and sought to facilitate the tribes' migration in order to gain their political and military support.<sup>25</sup> An Iranian envoy, Mīrzā Farajullāh Khān, in his letter to Sadrazam Burdurlu Derviş Mehmed Pasha, the Ottoman grand vizier (r. 1818-1820), called the attention of the Ottoman central government to the distorted reports to Istanbul of the Ottoman borderland pashas.<sup>26</sup> Both Crown Prince 'Abbās Mīrzā and Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh sought to persuade the Ottoman central government to return the tribes,<sup>27</sup> which raised the political stakes in what might otherwise have remained a purely borderland regional issue.<sup>28</sup> After a while, Prince Muḥammad 'Alī Mīrzā, the crown prince's elder brother and bitter rival, also sought to derive political capital from involving himself in this issue though the province which he governed was far distant. He threatened the chief of the Haydaranlu tribe, Kasım Khān, with

<sup>23</sup> Kalantari, "Feth Ali Şah Zamanında Osmanlı-İran Münasebetleri (1797-1834)," pp. 109-13.

<sup>24</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 1, gömlek: 18/E, 11/Z/1235 [19/09/1820]; dosya: 1, gömlek: 18/G, 12/Z/1235 [20/09/1820]. 'Atâ'ullah, *Şâni-Zâde Târîhi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1223-1237/1808-1821)*, II: pp. 999-1001. According to the work of Muḥammad Taqī, the tribe of Haydaranlu was incited by the governor of Muş, Selim Pasha, and settled around the province of Erzurum. Siphr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh: Tārīkh-i Qājārīyah*, I: p. 318.

<sup>25</sup> Ateş, *Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843-1914*: p. 50.

<sup>26</sup> Muḥammad Reżā Naşīrī, *Asnād ū Makātābāt-i Tārīkhī Īrān-i Qājārīyah az 1209 ta 1238 H.Q.* (Tīhrān: Kayhān, 1366 [1987/1988]), vol. I, no: 104, Mīrzā Farajullāh Khān [Maşlahatguzār - Chargé d'Affaires of Iran] to Sadrazam [Ottoman Grand Vizier] Burdurlu Derviş Mehmed Pasha, 1234 [1818-1819], pp. 225-227; no: 107, Mīrzā Farajullāh Khān [Maşlahatguzār - Chargé d'Affaires of Iran] to Sadrazam [Ottoman Grand Vizier] Burdurlu Derviş Mehmed Pasha, 1234 [1818-1819], p. 232, (hereafter *AMTĪQ*, vol. I).

<sup>27</sup> Qūzānlū, *Tārīkh-i Niẓāmī-i Īrān*, II: p. 820.

<sup>28</sup> *AMTĪQ*, vol. I, no: 106, 'Abbās Mīrzā Nā'ib al-Saltānah [Heir Apparent] to Sadrazam [Ottoman Grand Vizier] Burdurlu Derviş Mehmed Pasha, 1234 [1818-1819], pp. 230-231; BMATDVUH, AQ, sāl: 1124, kārtun: 1, paranda: 50, 4 Rebiülsani 1234, [31 January 1819].

retribution unless his tribe returned to Iran.<sup>29</sup> In reality, since the power of the Iranian monarch in the region was very limited such threats were counter-productive, and local leaders above all needed to be wooed.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile in the Balkans, the Porte was facing more serious political problems in a region which was more important to Istanbul for both strategic and fiscal reasons. The Porte was therefore forced to concentrate its regular military forces in Istanbul. For this reason, on the eastern frontier, in the case of war with Iran, the provincial militia would be the key to defending strategic points such as fortresses, ridges and bridges in the region, though the Ottoman central government did tried to strengthen some of the fortress garrisons adjacent to the border in eastern Anatolia, especially Ahıska and Kars.<sup>31</sup> The situation was threatening not just in eastern Anatolia but also further south and therefore Davud Pasha, the *memlük* (mamluk) governor of Baghdad was warned against possible Iranian incursions and encouraged to protect the border.<sup>32</sup> This military mobilization, as was to be expected, was not welcomed by the Iranian government.<sup>33</sup> At the end of 1820, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Khān Qājār Qazvīnī, the Sardār of the Iranian borderland khanate of Īravān, let his brother Ḥasan Khān launch a large-scale attack on the Haydaranlu and Sipki tribes and force them back into Iran.<sup>34</sup> Faced with strong resistance by Selim Pasha,

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<sup>29</sup> *AMTİQ*, vol. I, no: 109, Muhammad ‘Alī Mīrzā [Dowlatshāh] to Kasım Khān [Chief of the Haydaranlu Tribe], 1235 [1819-1820], p. 234. BOA, HH, dosya: 1, gömlek: 18/O (30/M/1235) [18 November 1819].

<sup>30</sup> BMATDVUH, AQ, sāl: 1124, kârtun: 1, paranda: 50, 11 Zilkade 1234, [1 September 1819] ; Cevdet Paşa, *Târîh-i Cevdet*, XI: p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, XII: pp. 5-7.

<sup>32</sup> ‘Atâ’ullah, *Şânî-Zâde Târîhi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1223-1237/1808-1821)*, II: pp. 945-47.

<sup>33</sup> *AMTİQ*, vol. I, no: 103, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Khān Şadr [Mustawfī al-Mamālīk] to Qa’im Maqam of the Ottoman State, 1234 [1818-1819], p. 224.

<sup>34</sup> According to the Ottoman sources, although the Haydaranlu were a part of the Shaqāqī tribe which was originally from the Ottoman province of Diyarbakır, they had enjoyed the pastures situated in the *sancaks* of Muş, Malazgirt and Erciş, which were geographically adjacent to the Iranian border. A few times, they crossed the borderland and that was why the Iranian government had laid claim to the Haydaranlu tribe. Cevdet Paşa, *Târîh-i Cevdet*, XII: p. 4. BOA, HH, dosya: 4, gömlek: 104 (02/09/1820); dosya: 1, gömlek: 18/N (07/10/1820). Linjānī Işfahānī, *Jannat al-Akhabār (Bakhsh-i Tārîkh-i Zandīyah va Qājār)*: p. 166; Qūzānlū, *Tārîkh-i Nizāmī-i Īrān*, II: p. 821.

the local Ottoman governor, Ḥasan Khān withdrew back across the Iranian border after ravaging many Armenian villages and churches in Ottoman territory.<sup>35</sup>

### Political Fugitives

The second source of Ottoman-Iranian tension was the issue of political fugitives who exploited the old and continuing rivalry of the two empires in their own interests. The case of Sadık Bey illustrates this.<sup>36</sup> Sadık Bey was the brother of Sa'id Pasha, the governor of Baghdad, who was discharged and killed in 1817 by his brother-in-law, Davud Efendi, with the encouragement of the Ottoman central government, which suspected Sa'id of disloyalty. Subsequently, Davud Efendi was appointed as the new governor of Baghdad by the Porte. Seemingly, the chief motive behind this appointment was related to the Ottoman administrative inadequacy and pragmatism in peripheral territories.

For fear of sharing his brother's fate, Sadık Bey, after fleeing from Baghdad, sought for support of the Arab tribal chieftains of Zubayd, Muntafiq and Khazil for a while and then took sanctuary in Iran.<sup>37</sup> Safeguarding political fugitives was a significant trump card that had been frequently used by the Ottomans and Iran as a means to intervene in each other's internal politics. In this case Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh wrote to Sultan Mahmud II asking him to forgive Sadık Bey. The answer of Mahmud II is not known but the governor of Erzurum Mehmed Hüsrev Pasha was informed by the

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<sup>35</sup> 'Atâ'ullah, *Şânî-Zâde Târîhi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1223-1237/1808-1821)*, II: p. 1000; Cevdet Paşa, *Târîh-i Cevdet*, XII: pp. 3-4; Kalantari, "Feth Ali Şah Zamanında Osmanlı-İran Münasebetleri (1797-1834)," p. 118.

<sup>36</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 770, gömlek: 36178 (24/03/1821); BOA, HH, dosya: 770, gömlek: 36178 (24/03/1821); BOA, HH, dosya: 770, gömlek: 36178 (24/03/1821).

<sup>37</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 516, gömlek: 25204, 07/Z/1235 [15 September 1820]; Cevdet Paşa, *Târîh-i Cevdet*, X: pp. 228-29; Sipihr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārikh: Tārîkh-i Qājārīyah*, I: p. 324.

Iranians that Sadık Bey and an Iranian envoy, Hāj Maqşūd Āghā, were being sent to Istanbul.<sup>38</sup>

Upon their arrival in Erzurum in 1820, neither man was allowed to proceed. According to Hüsrev Mehmed, holding Sadık Bey in custody on the very spot would be risky since Erzurum was not much far away from the Iranian border; that would spark off a potential political turbulence in Baghdad and therefore Hüsrev Mehmed was inclined to send him to the capital.<sup>39</sup> Sadık Bey was arrested and Hāj Maqşūd Āghā sent back to Iran.<sup>40</sup> Davud Pasha, the governor of Baghdad, reported to Istanbul about the preparations Sadık Bey had made for an armed uprising which had come to light in Baghdad, as a result of which Sadık had been forced to flee to Iran.<sup>41</sup> Given the prestige of Sadık's family in the region, claimed Davud, the Iranian government was seeking to use him to foment trouble on Ottoman territory. Not surprisingly, the Iranian government protested at Sadık's arrest by Hüsrev Mehmed but he ignored the protests and ordered Sadık's execution once he arrived in Tokad in the second or third week of July, 1821.<sup>42</sup> Upon this news, the political tension between the Ottoman state and Iran increased since the execution of Sadık Bey was a clear slight to the shāh's prestige.

### Shi'i Pilgrims

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<sup>38</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 820, gömlek: 37361, 13/C/1236 [18/03/1821].

<sup>39</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 767, gömlek: 36144, 11/B/1236 [14/04/1821]; dosya: 826, gömlek: 37453, 25/Ş/1236 [28/05/1821]; dosya: 826, gömlek: 37453, 25/Ş/1236 [28/05/1821].

<sup>40</sup> Sipîhr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārikh: Tārîkh-i Qājārîyah*, I: p. 324.

<sup>41</sup> Yüksel Çelik, *Şeyhü'l-Vüzerâ Koca Hüsrev Paşa: II. Mahmud Devrinin Perde Arkası* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2013), p. 159.

<sup>42</sup> BOA, C.ZB, dosya: 61, gömlek: 3003, 29/L/1236 [30 July 1821]; 'Atâ'ullah, *Şânî-Zâde Târîhi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1223-1237/1808-1821)*, II: p. 1263.

The safety of the Iranian pilgrims in the Ottoman lands had been a chronic problem since the sixteenth century. In addition to Mecca and Medina, sites sacred to all Muslims – pilgrimage to Ka'aba in Mecca is one of the five pillars of Islam – there are for the Shia many other places. These sites are the tombs of and shrines of successive Imams and their offspring. The major-associated tombs, at Mashhad and Qum, and most Imāmzādah (referring both to descendants of the Imams and to their shrines) are located within Iran. On the other hand, outside of Iran there existed, and still exist, sacred Shi'ite sites. The Shi'ite shrine cities of Iraq – Najaf, Karbalā, Kāzimayn, and Sāmarrā – containing the tombs of six of the imams were under the control of the Ottoman governor of Baghdad. These cities are generally called 'Atabāt which means thresholds.<sup>43</sup> The number of pilgrims to the 'Atabāt was counted in the early nineteenth century to be 10-20,000 in a usual year – 30,000 at most.<sup>44</sup> But this did not mean that the governor could actually guarantee the security of the Shi'ite community or Shi'ite visitors in the region. Two routes were used by Iranian pilgrims for the Atabāt in Iraq. Eighty percent of them used the land route of Kirmānshāh-Baghdad. Those who came from Işfahān, Hamadān, Khurāsān, Tabrīz and Tehran, Rasht, Yazd, Kirmān, Qum, Shīrāz, Māzandarān, Qazvīnī, Burūjard, Baku, Urūmīyah and Ardabīl, as well as the Caucasus and Central Asia, gathered in Kirmānshāh, the biggest city before the Iraqi border, and made their final preparations for a journey to the foreign land. The one way journey from Iran to Iraq required approximately one month. After entering Ottoman Iraq, pilgrims were required by the Ottoman government to travel all together for their safety. At least

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<sup>43</sup> Najaf is where the first Imam, 'Alī b. Abu Ṭālib, was interred; Karbalā is where the third Imam, Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, was martyred; Kāzimayn, near Baghdad, is where the tombs of the seventh Imam, Mūsā al-Kāzim and the ninth Imam, Muḥammad al-Javād, are located. Sāmarrā is where the tombs of the tenth Imam 'Alī al-Hādī and the eleventh Imam, Ḥasan al-'Askarī, are found and where the twelfth Imam, Muḥammad al-Mahdī, went into occultation. There are several holy tombs and *maqāms* in Iraq, not only of Shiite Imams but also of Sunni and Sufi saints.

<sup>44</sup> Adrien Dupré, *Voyage en Perse fait dans les années 1807, 1808 et 1809*, II vols., vol. I (Paris: Imprimeur Librairie, 1819), pp. 178.

one additional month was required to visit the four Iraqi holy sites of Najaf, Karbala, Kazemayn and Samarra, due to the distance between them and the slow pace of travelling by foot.

The greatest challenge in Iraq was security. Many of the nomadic Kurdish and Arab tribes were never fully under Ottoman control. The caravans of pilgrims were often attacked for their wealth. Iranian pilgrims were considered especially wealthy travellers and rich targets for plunder. In fact, they had many convertible objects for their sojourn in Iraq, such as jewels, silk, shawls, tobacco and carpets. Iranian subjects in particular faced many difficulties during their pilgrimages either in Iraq or to Mecca. The pilgrims who travelled to Mecca stood an especially high chance of being plundered by nomadic Wahhabi tribes during the journey. Despite the efforts of the Ottoman central government, the Iranian pilgrims were forced to pay local taxes and were mistreated by Ottoman officials in each city located on their pilgrimage route.<sup>45</sup> Even members of the Qājār dynasty were not spared, including a group consisting of close relatives of Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā.

## **Local Rulers**

Apart from these three sources of trouble, there was another issue which damaged Ottoman-Iranian relations. This related to the search for power and legitimacy of the local rulers in the borderlands. One of the oldest and most powerful

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<sup>45</sup> For the complaint letters of Iranian pilgrims to the Ottoman central government, see BOA, HH, dosya: 766, gömlek: 36109 [1 September 1820]; dosya: 786, gömlek: 36786 [6 May 1818]; dosya: 786, gömlek: 36786/A [30 October 1818]; dosya: 813, gömlek: 37262 [14 August 1825]; dosya: 772, gömlek: 36213/A [6 July 1828]; dosya: 772, gömlek: 36213/B [6 July 1828]; dosya: 790, gömlek: 36803/D [12 July 1828]; dosya: 790, gömlek: 36803/F [12 July 1828]; dosya: 788, gömlek: 36757 [21 June 1830]; BOA, HH, dosya: 794, gömlek: 36856/A [24 April 1821]; dosya: 788, gömlek: 36750 [15 June 1824]; dosya: 784, gömlek: 36622 [21 June 1830]. For the letters which had been sent from the Ottoman central authority to governors of the Ottoman provinces, see BOA, HH, dosya: 769, gömlek: 36173 [26 July 1821]; dosya: 769, gömlek: 36173/H [27 September 1821]; BOA, C.HR, dosya: 3, gömlek: 101 [17 June 1824]; BOA, HH, dosya: 802, gömlek: 37113 [26 August 1824].

local dynasties was, for example, the Kurdish Baban family, whose members had maintained their position in the region from the sixteenth century. In principle these local rulers came under the authority of the *memlük* (mamluk) governors of Baghdad but in fact they often found it more rewarding to collaborate with Iran against the pashas of Baghdad or the Ottoman central authority.<sup>46</sup> The districts of Süleymaniye, Kirkūk, Arbīl, Diyarbakır, Van, Qaṣr-i Shīrīn, Mandalī, Ḥalabjah and the province of Shahrizūr were under the political control of *beys* drawn from the members of the Baban dynasty.<sup>47</sup> While the Ottoman and Iranian central governments aimed to consolidate their sovereignty in the region, the Babans tried to exploit the old rivalry between the Ottomans and Iranians to become more autonomous.<sup>48</sup> In addition, the Iranian princes who governed the provinces of Āzarbāyjān and Kirmānshāh and the Ottoman pashas of Baghdad all sometimes sought the political and military support of the Babans against their own rivals.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile the many quarrels among the Baban *beys* themselves were exploited by the Ottoman and Iranian central governments in order to increase their influence in the region. Whilst officially subject to the pasha of Baghdad, the Babans were also obliged to send some family members as hostages to Tehran. As a result of all these realities, the geopolitical intersection of the Ottoman and Iranian states in the borderlands presented an extremely complicated picture.

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<sup>46</sup> For the Babans between the Ottomans and Qājārs, see Ateş, *Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843–1914*: pp. 42–49; Metin Atmaca, "Politics of Alliance and Rivalry on the Ottoman-Iranian Frontier: The Babans (1500–1851)" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Albert Ludwigs University of Freiburg, 2013); Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925); Rūḥ Allāh Bahrāmī and P arastū Mu ḡaffārī, "Ravābiṭ-i Ḥukkām-i Ardalān, Imārat-i Bābān va Munāsabat -i Īrān va Impirātūrī -i ‘Uṣmānī dar Ahd -i Qājār (1212–1266 Q.)," *Tārīkh-i Ravābiṭ-i Khārijī* 45(1389 [2010/2011]): pp. 1–24.

<sup>47</sup> Mehmed Hurşid Paşa, *Seyâhatnâme-i Hudûd*, ed. Alaattin Eser (İstanbul: Simurg, 1997), p. 168.

<sup>48</sup> Ateş, *Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843–1914*: p. 43.

<sup>49</sup> For the relationship between Mamluk pashas and tribal chiefs, see Tom Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and Society in Early Modern Iraq: Mamlūk Pashas Tribal Shayks and Local Rule Between 1802 and 1831* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982).

In addition to these local rivalries and the involvement in them of both the Ottoman and Iranian central and local rulers, the borderlands contained older sources of Ottoman-Iranian discord. Every educated Iranian knew that this region had once belonged to mighty Iranian empires and contained ruins that reflected the glories of, above all, Iran's Sassanid monarchs. In Iraq, for example, lay the ruins of Tīsfūn/Ctesiphon, the capital of the Sassanid. For the Ottoman caliphs on the other hand, Baghdad had special symbolic importance as the former capital of the Abbasid caliphate. Nevertheless one should not see the Irano-Ottoman war as being somehow a struggle for possession for the land of Iraq. By the early nineteenth century what really mattered to Iranians was access to the territory's Shi'i shrines. As we shall see, despite military victories in the war the shāh made no territorial claims on Iraq during the peace negotiations. Nor does anyone appear to have criticised him for not doing so.

More recent causes of rancour counted for much more than memories of previous Iranian possession of territories which by now had been Ottoman for generations, or in some cases centuries. A certain sense of bitterness may have remained since 1812 when Tehran saw itself let down, even betrayed, by the Ottomans' sudden peace with Russia at a moment when Iran itself was also at war with the Tsar. To an extent a common front had existed since 1806 with both Iran and the Ottoman empire fighting Russia. Iran's expectations that the Porte would not conclude a separate peace with Russia without giving Tehran any warning were not unreasonable. Nevertheless, not only did the Sultan conclude a peace with Russia in Bucharest (28 May 1812) but he also consented to the passage of supplies for the Russian army, which was fighting with Iran in the Caucasus, through his territory. This fact appears to have remained unknown to historians and is never cited as a

cause for Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s hostility to the Ottomans. With the Ottoman empire now tied down by the Greek revolt and Russian intervention against the Porte seemingly probable, now might well seem an excellent moment to repay disloyalty.

The Iranian decision for war may also have been influenced by Russia. Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā was well aware of increasingly strained relations between Russia and the Ottomans in 1820-21 and sought to ally himself with Petersburg against Istanbul.<sup>50</sup> The chief motive behind this policy was the Crown Prince’s naive belief that, through such an alliance, the relations between the two countries might take a new orientation and eventually facilitate a favourable settlement of the frontier disputes between Iran and Russia in Āzarbāyjān.

The answer of Alexander to ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s proposal of an alliance was gracious but non-committal. Though Karl Nesselrode, the Russian Foreign Minister, promised a clear answer would be forthcoming, it never was.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps the Tsar wanted to await the outcome of ongoing Russo-Ottoman discussions in Istanbul. Russo-Ottoman relations were bad but war was not yet inevitable and in fact was postponed for a number of years. The British were urging compromise on the Ottomans. In any event Alexander did not need an Iranian alliance to defeat the Ottomans if war came and had little inclination to take on any obligations towards the shāh. Nesselrode expressed Russian official policy in a dispatch to the ambassador in Istanbul and to General Ermolov, the Tsar’s Governor-General in the Caucasus. “En l’envisageant seuls les rapports de nos interest directs, ils consistent a faire de la Perse et de la Turquie des etats qui soient de leur proper mouvement, et pour toujours les amis reels et sinceres de la Russie” wrote Nesselrode to Stroganov and Ermolov. Nesselrode added that “sans attiser le feu de la discord ou reveiller les

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<sup>50</sup> FO 60/22, pp. 7-10; FO 60/21, pp. 7-14.

<sup>51</sup> FO 60/22, pp. 15-18.

anciennes querelles des deux états, sans vouloir les armer l'un contre l'autre, il pourrait être convenable au salut de tous les deux et au bien général, de les maintenir dans une indépendance absolue et aussi isolée que possible. D'ailleurs il faut le dire leur alliance finirait par être offensive à l'égard de la Russie. La paix alors avec eux ne serait plus fondée sur des bases solides". The Foreign Minister concluded by writing that an alliance of either Iran or the Ottomans with a great power would be even worse for Russian interests than just an Irano-Ottoman alliance.<sup>52</sup>

But although the Tsar and his Foreign Minister held moderate views, Alexander's deputy in the Caucasus, General Ermolov, may have encouraged his agent, Mazarovich, to stir up 'Abbās Mīrzā's ambitions. This in any case is what the British believed, adding that Mazarovich had also told the Crown Prince that London would try to thwart these ambitions.<sup>53</sup>

In 1821 General Ermolov was in fact on leave in European Russia and Mazarovich was for the moment receiving his orders from St. Petersburg,<sup>54</sup> and to a significant degree beyond anyone's full control. Learning from Istanbul that the Tsar had withdrawn his ambassador, Mazarovich concluded that a declaration of war would speedily follow. A messenger from the Porte also informed the Iranian government at that time of the prospect of an immediate war between Russia and the Ottoman empire. The Russian agent strongly urged 'Abbās Mīrzā to enter the war against the Ottomans, and even offered the Prince a loan of thirty-thousand tumans'.<sup>55</sup> According to the report of the British charge d'Affaires in Tehran, Henry Willock, S. I. Mazarovich tried to convince 'Abbās Mīrzā that Britain had agreed to the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire, saying that Alexandria had been taken

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<sup>52</sup> The Russian empire had a special interest on the province of Baghdad, see RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 530, pp. 1-161.

<sup>53</sup> FO 60/22, pp. 61-62.

<sup>54</sup> AKAK, vol. VI, ch. II, no: 478, p. 259, A. P. Ermolov to K. V. Nesselrode, 27 March (8 April) 1822.

<sup>55</sup> AKAK, vol. VI, ch. II, no: 478, A. P. Ermolov to K. V. Nesselrode, 27 (8 April) March 1822.

by British troops.<sup>56</sup> Willock added that the Crown Prince was not deluded by Mazarovich's claim,<sup>57</sup> but as he was furious at the hostile conduct of the pashas of Baghdad and Erzurum, and especially at the ill-treatment of his envoy, Ḥāj Maqṣūd Āghā, Mazarovich's incitement fell on fertile soil.

The British government, on the reception of this information from its Charge d'Affaires,<sup>58</sup> complained to Petersburg through the Russian ambassador in London, Kh. A. Lieven, about Mazarovich's conduct. Alexander and Nesselrode expressed disbelief but instructed Ermolov to make a strict investigation regarding the so-called efforts of Mazarovich to create discord between Iran and the Ottoman government.<sup>59</sup> After making strong efforts to defend his agent, Ermolov concluded that, "it would be difficult to believe that Mazarovich might either have incited the Heir Apparent to war, or attempted to restrain him from it."<sup>60</sup> But the essence of the matter may lie in Mazarovich's own confession to his superior: "Je vous avous, M. le General, que prive comme je le suis de vos nouvelles et ignorant de tout ce qui se passe en Europe, je crains, par trop d'activite, de m'attirer quelque reproche d'autant plus desagreable, que les circonstances m'imposaient le devoir, en excitant la passion de Naib-Sultan ('Abbās Mīrzā) pour la guerre, de prevenir les intentions du Ministre de l'Empereur".<sup>61</sup>

It would, however, be naïve and even somewhat Eurocentric to believe that 'Abbās Mīrzā's main reason for going to war with the Ottomans was foreign advice, especially advice from a rather junior Russian agent. The Crown Prince undoubtedly had his own motives for attacking Iran. Muriel Atkin describes 'Abbās Mīrzā as 'not

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<sup>56</sup> FO 60/22 Willock to Londonderry, 10 December 1821.

<sup>57</sup> FO 60/22 Willock to Londonderry, 10 December 1821.

<sup>58</sup> FO 60/20 Willock to Londonderry, 19 October 1821.

<sup>59</sup> AKAK, vol. VI, ch. II, no: 477, p. 258, K. V. Nesselrode to A. P. Ermolov, 10 March (22) 1822.

<sup>60</sup> AKAK, vol. VI, ch. II, no: 478, p. 259, A. P. Ermolov to K. V. Nesselrode, 27 March (8 April) 1822.

<sup>61</sup> AKAK, vol. VI, ch. II, p. 250. Mazarovich to A. P. Ermolov, 11 (23) October 1821.

a natural soldier', which was a dangerous weakness for any man, let alone a prince who required the respect and support of an elite community of tribal warriors if he was ever to make good his claim to succeed to the throne. She argues that 'Abbās Mīrzā was deeply and personally humiliated by the defeat of his army in the 1804-13 war against Russia and used the border incidents with the Ottomans as a means to acquire military glory and boost his legitimacy as heir apparent.<sup>62</sup>

But the most compelling reason to attack the Ottomans was extremely simple: it was the Ottoman empire's acute weakness and vulnerability. Since we have already examined the long-term causes of this weakness in Chapter Two we do not need to repeat them here. The point that does need stressing is that by 1821 Ottoman vulnerability had reached its extreme point in a manner obvious to all. The revolt against Selim III's military reforms in 1807 had resulted in his overthrow, the dissolution of his European-model troops and the stalling for over 20 years of any meaningful modernisation of the army. Though Selim's nephew, Mahmud II, shared his uncle's aims he was understandably very cautious in confronting the powerful forces that had overthrown and killed Selim. In the absence of military and fiscal reform and of the renewed centralisation that was its absolute pre-requisite, the empire appeared to be disintegrating.

Mecca and Medina were lost to the Wahhabis, a great blow to the prestige of a dynasty whose legitimacy depended partly on its role as guardians of the Holy Places. Almost worse was the fact that only the intervention of Mehmed Ali, the increasingly powerful and independent Ottoman governor of Egypt, regained the cities in 1813, though the Wahhabi threat to Mecca and Medina was not finally eliminated until a further campaign of 1818-20. Almost throughout the European

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<sup>62</sup> Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: pp. 116, 56.

provinces real power lay with local notables, who on occasion successfully took up arms to defeat the central government's efforts to reassert its control. In 1798, for example, Istanbul mobilised an army of 80,000 men in order to bring to heel the de facto ruler of Vidin province, Osman Pazvantoglu, but nevertheless failed and was forced to accept his power and appoint him governor of Vidin. After 1815 renewed revolt broke out in Serbia, this time with outright independence as its goal. Still worse, insurrection broke out in Greece in early 1821. Ottoman reprisals, beginning with the Janissaries' killing of the Orthodox patriarch of Istanbul, greatly increased the already considerable chances of European intervention.<sup>63</sup>

Developments in Anatolia were less spectacular than events in Europe but at least as important for the coming Irano-Ottoman war. The Ottoman regime had never fully controlled the tribes of Anatolia or Mesopotamia and there existed a permanent tension between its desire to tax and settle these tribesmen and their determination to retain their freedom. Meanwhile the back and forth struggle between the central government and local notables which had been underway since even before Selim III's accession left its mark in Anatolia too, though not in quite so dramatic form as in the Balkans. The Anatolian local notables, the so-called *derebeys*, were just as determined to retain their autonomy and the wealth it brought them as were their equivalents, the so-called *ayans* in Europe. Sultan Mahmud II's desire to strengthen central power was no secret, even if the policy was pursued cautiously for the most part. From 1812 onwards the death of a number of key local notables in northern and central Anatolia allowed Mahmud II to appoint loyal and obedient officials to governorships in the province. Of these the best-known was Koca Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha, who was appointed governor of the key port-city of Trabzon in 1818. Hüsrev

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<sup>63</sup> Fikret Adanir, "Semi-Autonomous Forces in the Balkans and Anatolia," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), chapter 8, pp. 157-85.

Mehmed Pasha was one of the sultan's closest lieutenants, who for the previous seven years had been carrying out a fundamental modernisation programme in the Ottoman navy. The message that his appointment sent out to local notables was unmistakeable and unwelcome. Whatever its long-term implications, in the short run Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha's arrival could only mean increased conflict within the Anatolian elites and the local system of power that they dominated.<sup>64</sup>

### **Revolts in the Balkans**

In 1821 the eyes of the Ottoman central government were focused on the Balkans. Those Janissary units which remained militarily effective were either stationed in the Balkans or committed to the European theatre. With few exceptions the defence of the eastern border would depend on tribal contingents and local militias. The tribesmen were notoriously fickle, especially if victory favoured the enemy and no plunder was available. As for the militias, they were often not just incompetent soldiers but also politically unreliable. These militias were levied and commanded by local notables who usually not only commanded widespread support in local society but also occupied key posts in the Ottoman regional administration. Most of these men resented Mahmud II's attempts to regain power for the central government. Moreover many of the Ottoman provincial governors whose cooperation was essential for the war effort were bitter rivals. All these factors had disastrous consequences once the war began.

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<sup>64</sup> Roger Mantran, "Les Debuts de la Question d'Orient (1774-1839)," in *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, ed. Robert Mantran (Paris: Fayard, 1989), pp. 421-58, especially 30-40.

## The Iranian War Planning

The war was waged in two separate theatres – the northern and southern. The geography of the northern theatre offered some advantages to the Ottomans which they failed to use because of the poor quality and dispersal of their troops but above all because of poor overall command. On the Iranian side, the geographical gap between these two fronts was the main disadvantage, hindering regular communication between the northern and southern armies. The distance between Mākū and Kirmānshāh was more than 800 km. The war planning of ‘Abbās Mīrzā was based on the capture of the Ottoman strategic fortresses within the shortest time without allowing for any military aid or reinforcement from Istanbul through Trabzon and then pushing westward.<sup>65</sup>

In the headquarters of ‘Abbās Mīrzā, there were four British officers, one of which was Captain Isaac Hart; they played important role of the war planning and strategy of ‘Abbās Mīrzā. According to the war plan, the Iranian attack was based on two battle zones: the first and most vital one embracing a line of 350 km from Kars through Bayezid to Van in the northern front; the second line of 350 km stretching from Panjvīn through Khanāqīn to Mandalī in the southern front. To reach all these points easily, the Iranian army would need good cavalry units and thus they could proceed to west at shortest time.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Qūzānlū, *Tārīkh-i Nizāmī-i Īrān*, II: p. 822.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 823.

## The Northern Front

### The Ottoman Army

In the northern theatre, the overall commander was Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha, the governor of Trabzon, who was also appointed as the governor of Erzurum instead in July 1820 and was given the title of “Serasker (commander-in-chief) of East” in October 1820,<sup>67</sup> in an effort to facilitate his control over the fragmented Ottoman military forces, which consisted mostly of provincial levies, Kurdish light cavalry, and some mounted irregular infantry. Apart from the regular troops who garrisoned fortresses, the Ottomans could in principle field some 30,000 men.<sup>68</sup> In principle Hüsrev Mehmed was a suitable commander, or at least as suitable as anyone whom one could find in the Ottoman elite of that time.<sup>69</sup> No Ottoman general could match the professional training or experience of senior officers in the armies of the European Great Powers, which was a serious weakness. But Hüsrev Mehmed had been a competent head of the navy for seven years, learning much about military administration and logistics in the process. In 1801 he had also commanded 6,000 troops in the field during the successful Anglo-Ottoman campaign against the French army in Egypt. In other words he was a man who had not just experienced war but had also witnessed how campaigns were waged by a modern European army. Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha’s credentials as an intelligent and reform-minded leader, very close to Sultan Mahmud II were indeed excellent but this was part of his problem. He had

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<sup>67</sup> 'Atâ'ullah, *Şânî-Zâde Târîhi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1223-1237/1808-1821)*, II: p. 1002.

<sup>68</sup> According to the Iranian sources, the number of the Ottoman eastern army was not more than 20,000-man which had been garrisoned in different borderlands fortresses, see Qūzānlū, *Tārīkh-i Nizāmī-i Irān*, II: p. 822.

<sup>69</sup> On Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha, see Halil Inalcik, "Khosrev Pasha," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. C. E. Bosworth, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1986), pp. 35-36; Halil Inalcik, "Hüsrev Paşa," in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1987), pp. 609-16; Halil Inalcik, "Koca Hüsrev Paşa," in *TDVİA* (İstanbul: TDV, 1999), pp. 41-45; Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, ed. Nuri Akbayan, VI vols., vol. II (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), pp. 682-83.

been appointed a governor in order to curtail the power of the Anatolian notables. He now needed the support of these notables to defeat the Iranians.<sup>70</sup>

In eastern Anatolia, the key strategic point was the fortress of Erzurum, which covered invasion routes into the province and, above all, shielded the port of Trabzon, through which reinforcements and supplies sent from Istanbul entered the region. The fortress of Kars was also important but its fortifications were inadequate and its garrison was only 5,000 strong. Some 15,000 men were concentrated in the district of Velibaba/Horasan and a third detachment of 11,000 men was in the Hasankale region. All communications both with Istanbul and between the various detachments in eastern Anatolia went through the Serasker, in other words Hüsrev Mehmed. In principle, this arrangement might have facilitated effective coordination of the Ottoman forces. Given Hüsrev Mehmed's inability to command the cooperation of his subordinates this attempt at centralised command may actually have contributed to the inflexibility and paralysis of the Ottoman forces. Coordination was further hindered by the fact that no supply depots existed along the roads that linked the dispersed Ottoman forces. Hüsrev Mehmed may or may not have had a clear strategy in his mind but his unpopularity among the local notables and quarrels among the regional governors made coordination impossible and forced the fortress and city of Erzurum – of which Hüsrev was governor, to bear the burden of supplying all the Ottoman military detachments.

### **The Iranian Army**

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<sup>70</sup> Williamson, "The Turko-Persian War of 1821–1823: Winning the War but Losing the Peace," p. 92. On Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha see Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged*: pp. 238, 306-7, 10, 26, 52.

The Iranian northern army consisted of two distinct parts which had been garrisoned in the province of Āzarbāyjān and the khanate of Īravān. The first part, which consisted of 12 regular infantry battalions, one cavalry regiment (lancers), one artillery regiment, one camel corps (*zambūraks*) and some irregular infantry (*tufangchīs*/musketeers) and cavalry, was under the command of Nā'ib al-Saltānah (Crown Prince) 'Abbās Mīrzā. His force, levied and supported by the province of Āzarbāyjān, where he was the governor, included the great majority of Iranian so-called *sarbāzān* (regular infantries), trained and drilled in the European fashion. The second part of the northern army, which included one regular infantry battalion but consisted overwhelmingly of irregular infantry and cavalry, was commanded by Ḥusayn Khān Qājār, the Sardār of Īravān. The total number of armed men raised from the province of Āzarbāyjān and the khanate of Īravān was 50-60,000.<sup>71</sup> The forces of the Sardār of Īravān were nominally under the overall command of 'Abbās Mīrzā's but at times acted independently. Their basic allegiance was to their own ruler. Compared to the Ottoman army, the key area of military superiority of the Iranian northern army was its firepower. This meant above all its artillery but also its trained regular infantry.

## The Campaign of 1821

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<sup>71</sup> In Fraser's work, the number of total armed men was 50,640. James Baillie Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey Into Khorasan in the Years 1821 and 1822* (London: Longmann, 1825), pp. 226-27. According to the work of Jamāl Qūzānlū, the northern army of Iran consisted of 10 regular infantry (*niẓām-i jadīd*) battalions, a 100 cavalry platoons (*dastah*) and three artillery regiments. The number of Iranian regular and irregular men under the command of 'Abbās Mīrzā was 63,000, see Qūzānlū, *Tārīkh-i Niẓāmī-i Īrān*, II: p. 822.

On September 10, 1821, the Iranian forces started off from Tabrīz toward the Ottoman border.<sup>72</sup> After stopping shortly in Khūy, the northern army divided into four bodies; the advance guard under the leadership of Ḥasan Khān Qājār, the brother of Ḥusayn Khān Qājār, crossed the Aras river, passed through Mākū, and then outflanked the Ottoman fortress of Bayezid, captured the districts of Iğdır and Kağızman and then headed for the district of Eleşkird (Toprakkale),<sup>73</sup> capturing many Ottoman soldiers and canon as they advanced.<sup>74</sup> On September 16, the second and main body of the northern army, commanded by Ḥusayn Khān Qājār, followed the same route and passed the Ottoman border at Gürbulak, before storming the fortress of Bayezid.<sup>75</sup> The northern army then secured all the roads passing through the Bayezid valley. The district of Bayezid was situated in the easternmost part of the Ottoman rule and had a vital strategical importance as it was the crossing point of the roads of Van and Erzurum. Furthermore, to keep the supply and logistics chain functional and not to allow for any Ottoman assault from rear, for the Crown Prince, there was no choice but to control the district of Bayezid. ‘Abbās Mīrzā has identified the weakest part of the fortress of Bayezid as the western side – i.e. Zengezur, and proceeded to force its surrender thus cutting off the road of Van and hindering any Ottoman reinforcement.<sup>76</sup>

After hearing the news that the Iranian troops had already headed to besiege the fortress of Bayezid, some parts of the Ottoman provincial levies of Çeçenzâde

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<sup>72</sup> According to both Iranian and Ottoman sources, the campaign started on 12 Zilhicce 1236. When the Iranian army very approached the Ottoman border, Ahmed Efendi, as an envoy, was dispatched by Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha to negotiate with ‘Abbās Mīrzā but it failed. Sipîhr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh: Tārīkh-i Qājārīyah*, I: pp. 324-25; Qūzānlū, *Tārīkh-i Niẓāmī-i Īrān*, II: pp. 823-24; Cevdet Paşa, *Tārīh-i Cevdet*, XII: p. 10.

<sup>73</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 819, gömlek: 37348, 17/Z/1236 [15 September 1821]; dosya: 815, gömlek: 37286, 21/S/1237 [17 November 1821].

<sup>74</sup> Linjānī Işfahānī, *Jannat al-Akhbār (Bakhsh-i Tārīkh-i Zandīyah va Qājār)*: p. 167; Sipîhr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh: Tārīkh-i Qājārīyah*, I: p. 325; Qūzānlū, *Tārīkh-i Niẓāmī-i Īrān*, II: p. 824.

<sup>75</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 816, gömlek: 37289/B, 29/M/1237 [26 October 1821].

<sup>76</sup> Qūzānlū, *Tārīkh-i Niẓāmī-i Īrān*, II: p. 824.

Hasan Pasha desperately disintegrated, and the Pasha courageously defended the fortress for two months and then was forced to retreat to Erzurum through Diyadin in November 1821.<sup>77</sup> Çeçenzâde Hasan Pasha had been replaced with Abdülhamid Pasha as being the new *mutasarrıf* of Bayezid to provide the border security in July 1821; the assignment of Çeçenzâde Hasan seems to be considered as one of the first examples of the centralization policies of Sultan Mahmud II in eastern Anatolia.<sup>78</sup> Meanwhile, Mehmed Behlül Pasha, a member of the one of the notable Kurdish families in Bayezid, was released from jail and then dispatched to Bayezid in company with an artillery unit to recapture the fortress of Bayezid.<sup>79</sup>

On September 17, Amîr Aşlân Khân Dunbulî commanding the third body of the northern army, which consisted of 8,000 troops including the battalion of Russian deserters,<sup>80</sup> advanced along a different route and arrived at the fortress of Āq-sarāi in the province of Van on September 21.<sup>81</sup> After a one-week-blockade, Mehmed Behlül, the commander of the garrison, agreed to send one of his brothers to negotiate the conditions of surrender. The fortress of Āq-sarāi surrendered on September 28.<sup>82</sup> The very fluid allegiance of local elites and governors to the Ottoman sultan was clearly revealed when ‘Abbās Mîrzā immediately appointed Mehmed Behlül the ruler of six districts including Bayezid.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 815, gömlek: 37287, 01/R/1237 [26 December 1821]; Cevdet Paşa, *Târîh-i Cevdet*, XII: pp. 10-11; Sipîhr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārîkh: Tārîkh-i Qājārîyah*, I: pp. 325-26. On Çeçenzâde Hasan Pasha, see Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, II: pp. 636-37.

<sup>78</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 1556, gömlek: 37.

<sup>79</sup> Upon hearing on Mehmed Behlül's growing relation with Iran, Hüsvrev Mehmed appointed Abdülhamid as the new ruler of Bayezid and then sent him with a force of 1,500 cavalry and 2 guns to the region. Mehmed Behlül was captured and sent to jail in 1820, see 'Atâ'ullah, *Şânî-Zâde Târîhi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1223-1237/1808-1821)*, II: pp. 1016-18.

<sup>80</sup> Sipîhr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārîkh: Tārîkh-i Qājārîyah*, I: p. 325.

<sup>81</sup> Qūzānlū, *Tārîkh-i Niẓāmî-i Īrān*, II: p. 824.

<sup>82</sup> According to Qūzānlū, the fortress of Āq-sarāi surrendered on 30 Zilhicce 1236 but it is not possible as the month of Zilhicce has 29 days, see *ibid*.

<sup>83</sup> Sipîhr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārîkh: Tārîkh-i Qājārîyah*, I: p. 325.

The Crown Prince also showed favour to other local notables, knowing well how important their cooperation would be to effective control of the conquered area. Ḥusayn Khān Qājār was sent to the district of Bayezid where *khuṭbah/hutbe*<sup>84</sup> was delivered at Friday prayers in the mosques and coins were minted<sup>85</sup> in the name of *Shāhanshāh*<sup>86</sup> Fath ‘Alī Shāh.<sup>87</sup> Local notables, including Mehmed Behlül and Abdülhamid Pashas, participated with Ḥusayn Khān Qājār in these acts to celebrate the power and benevolence of the Iranian shāh. The control of the fortresses of Bayezid and Toprakkale were given to Mehmed Behlül and Abdülhamid Pashas respectively.<sup>88</sup>

On September 18, the fourth body of the northern army separated into three columns and headed towards to the districts of Van. According to the plan, they would band together at the border of Van where arrived on 20 September and then proceed to besiege the fortress of Van. As a result of these strategic moves, ‘Abbās Mīrzā had an opportunity to cut off the roads of Van and Erzurum and to create military pressure by gathering all his troops around Bayezid. On the other hand, the Ottoman vanguard forces, which had been garrisoned around Hasankale to ensure the security of Erzurum, after receiving the news of the fall of the fortress of Bayezid, crumbled and fled towards Karahisar, Maden and Narman. Upon this, ‘Abbās Mīrzā, not to give any chance to the Ottoman forces to get mustered around the fortress of Erzurum once again, despatched a detachment, which consisted of 1,000 *sarbāz*, 1,000 *tufangchī*, and 8,000 Kurdish irregular cavalry, led by Muḥammad Zamān-Khān Qājār, Ḥasan Khān Qājār, ‘Abdullāh Khān Damāvandī and Raḥmatullāh Khān,

<sup>84</sup> In the Islamic tradition, *khuṭbah/hutbe* is delivered at the congregation prayer on Friday and on the two festival days.

<sup>85</sup> Linjānī Isfāhānī, *Jannat al-Akḥbār (Bakshsh-i Tārīkh-i Zandīyah va Qājār)*: p. 167.

<sup>86</sup> The title of *Shāhanshāh* denotes “king of kings” or emperor.

<sup>87</sup> Sipīhr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh: Tārīkh-i Qājārīyah*, I: p. 325.

<sup>88</sup> Cevdet Paşa, *Tārīh-i Cevdet*, XII: p. 10. On Abdülhamid Pasha, see Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, ed. Nuri Akbayar, VI vols., vol. I (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), p. 113.

to deal with the scattered Ottoman forces.<sup>89</sup> In three weeks from the starting of the campaign, the districts of Eleşkird, Diyadin, Bayezid and Başkale had been subjugated by the Iranian forces which were almost ready to head towards west.

One of the critical problems of the Ottoman army faced during the campaign was the lack of communication among the military units in the region. The season of winter was another disadvantage for the both side, particularly in the northern side of the lake of Van, it did not allow for the continuance of the battle but in the southern part the seasonal conditions had not gotten bad yet. Controlling the line of 280 km stretching from Van through Bitlis to Başkale just before heading towards Muş, ‘Abbās Mīrzā separated his forces into two and left them in the border of Toprakkale and Bitlis-Malazgirt, thus securing the rear of its forces and if needed, they would join the battle. The season of winter, however, forced them retreat to Toprakkale, which was the most strategic point on the line of Tabrīz-Bayezid-Erzurum.<sup>90</sup>

On 20 October, ‘Abbās Mīrzā headed from Malazgirt southward, at the border of Hamur, an Ottoman delegation, which consisted of the members of ulema, janissaries and notables, led by Sadıķî Efendi and Hacı Mollabakî, the *müderriş* and *kazasker* of Erzurum respectively, came to the headquarter of ‘Abbās Mīrzā by aiming to conduct a parley with him. Nevertheless, the requests of the Ottomans were not accepted by ‘Abbās Mīrzā and they were dispatched back to Erzurum.<sup>91</sup> The Iranian forces were much stronger than those of Ottomans in the southern part of the lake of Van and headed to west in two columns, though the fortresses of Muş and Bitlis had defended themselves courageously, there was no choice for the Ottoman troops but to retreat towards Diyarbakır. On 1 November, ‘Abbās Mīrzā was obliged to deploy his forces in a region embracing a line of 180 km from Ahlat to Kulp since

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<sup>89</sup> Sipîhr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh: Tārīkh-i Qājārīyah*, I: p. 326.

<sup>90</sup> Qūzānlū, *Tārīkh-i Nizāmī-i Īrān*, II: p. 826.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

the Ottoman reinforcement was on the road to those fortresses. On 3 November, the Ottomans organized an attack on this line, the battle took two days; while the Iranians were evacuating Malazgirt to retreat to Tutak, and the Ottomans were obliged to retreat towards Muş to re-organize their headquarters. The line of 230 km stretching from Toprakkale through Tutak to Van and Bayezid remained under the control of Iranians (Bayezid, Diyadin, Eleşkird, Malazgirt, Bitlis, Ahlat, Adilcevaz, and Erciş).<sup>92</sup>

Meanwhile, Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha dispatched Selim Pasha with a force of 20,000 men through Bulanık to follow Muḥammad Zamān-Khān and Ḥasan Khān Qājārs. Upon receiving the news on this move, the committee was forced to turn back to Erzurum and then ‘Abbās Mīrzā at once proceeded to Bulanık to approach to their rear. Once the Ottomans noticed the advance of ‘Abbās Mīrzā, they panicked and then scattered. Ḥasan Khān and other Iranian commanders followed the Ottomans up to the border of Erzurum. ‘Abbās Mīrzā sent a detachment consisting of 10,000 infantry and cavalry and two guns to follow the Ottoman troops and the tribe of Haydaranlu.<sup>93</sup>

‘Abbās Mīrzā ordered Ismā’īl Khān Bayāt to capture the fortress of Malazgirt which had been sufficiently strengthened nevertheless was open to an organized attack. One of the main problems of the Iranian irregular cavalry was that they consisted of different tribal forces – i.e. Yazīdī, Ḥasanānlū, Chahārdolī, and Bazachlū, and were inclined to plunder the regions passing through. So too, happened this in amongst the troops of Ismā’īl Khān Bayāt and they easily scattered. Upon noticing the problem, Ḥusayn Khān Sardār at once sent reinforcement to the aid of Ismā’īl Khān Bayāt and his command staff, Karīm Khān Kangarlū and ‘Askar Khān

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., pp. 827-28.

<sup>93</sup> Sipihr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh: Tārīkh-i Qājārīyah*, I: pp. 326-27; Cevdet Paşa, *Târîh-i Cevdet*, XII: p. 11.

Afshār. Selim Pasha of Muş sallied out with his forces and gave a good fight against the Iranian force. A bloody and harsh combat took place between the two rival armies in front of the fortress however upon the Iranian reinforcement arriving in the combat zone, the Ottoman troops were obliged to withdraw into the fortress. The town was besieged by the Iranians from three different sides.<sup>94</sup>

Upon the demand of Selim Pasha, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Khān Zanganah was sent to the town and took Selim to the headquarters of ‘Abbās Mīrzā.<sup>95</sup> Meanwhile, the town of Bitlis also was captured by the Iranian army. As happened in the case of Bayezid, *khuṭbahs* were delivered at Friday prayers in the mosques of Muş and Bitlis by order of Mīrzā Abul Qāsīm Farāhānī and the Iranian troops remain there for a few days. ‘Abbās Mīrzā appointed Muḥammad Zamān Khān and Ḥasan Khān, accompanied by Selim Pasha, with 17 guns to capture the fortress of Hınıs. A brother of Selim, Mehmed Bey was entitled as *khan* and then appointed as the *sarhang* (colonel) of an army of 10,000 men.<sup>96</sup>

One of the main problems of the Iranian forces was supply and logistics deficiency. Hence it was getting harder to move on westwards for ‘Abbās Mīrzā. For this reason, Ḥusayn Khān Sardār with 7,000 men was sent to Īravān through Hamur; a detachment of 4,000 men consisting the Shaqāqī, Shāhsavan, Qarahdāghī, and Qarahbāghī cavalry was sent to Khūy through the route of Süphandağ. Mehmed Khān (brother of Selim Pasha) from Bitlis and Muḥammad Bāqir Khān Qājār and Ḥasan Khān from Ahlat started to move on the fortress of Van. They were planning to merge before the fortress of Van. Selim Pasha laid siege to the fortress of Van. ‘Abbās Mīrzā also moved towards the fortress of Erciş. He made a strategic move by sending troops from the two sides of the Lake Van. The fortress of Erciş was situated

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<sup>94</sup> Sipīhr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh: Tārīkh-i Qājārīyah*, I: p. 327.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 328.

<sup>96</sup> Cevdet Paşa, *Tārīh-i Cevdet*, XII: p. 11.

in a peninsula and captured by the Iranian forces on 8 November, 1821. This region was given to the control of Faṭḥ ‘Alī Khān Qājār Bīglarbīgī/Beylerbeyi as it was considered its proximity to Khūy.<sup>97</sup>

Briefly, the towns of Bayezid, Eleşkird, Diyadin, Malazgirt, Bitlis, Muş, Ahlat, Adilcevaz, Erciş, Hınıs and some of the *sancaks* of Hakkari had been controlled by the Iranian army in a period of two-month time long. 48 guns and 10,000 muskets were captured in the Ottoman fortresses.<sup>98</sup> As the winter intensified, Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā himself withdrew to Tabrīz, leaving behind garrisons in key towns and fortresses. For the most part he delegated control over the conquered territories to local elites who here as in other parts of the Ottoman empire had been alienated by Istanbul’s efforts to re-assert some degree of central power. But if this on the one hand illustrated Ottoman weakness, ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s method of waging war also showed the limits of Iranian power. The Iranian irregular cavalry returned to their families for the winter which, given their irregular status, was understandable and maybe harmless. However some of ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s regular troops were also demobilised in order to save scarce financial resources, thus undermining the principles on which a true standing professional army was based. In this context one has to remember that the Crown Prince was no longer receiving the annual British subsidy.

## The Campaign of 1822

The swift and sudden advance of the Iranian army in 1821 inevitably alarmed the Porte. Whatever its reason, Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha’s performance had not met the expectations of the Ottoman central government and he was replaced as Serasker

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<sup>97</sup> Sipīhr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh: Tārīkh-i Qājārīyah*, I: p. 328; Cevdet Paşa, *Tārīh-i Cevdet*, XII: p. 11.

<sup>98</sup> Qūzānlū, *Tārīkh-i Niẓāmī-i Īrān*, II: p. 828.

(commander-in-chief) by Mehmed Emin Ra'uf Pasha, the governor of Diyarbakir an administrator with a high reputation for competence.<sup>99</sup> Ra'uf Pasha succeeded in gathering some 40,000 troops and planned a counter-attack into Āzarbāyjan.<sup>100</sup>

Firstly, Ḥasan Khān Qājār was sent to the direction of Narman-Kars to capture the fortress of Magazberd and fought against an Ottoman detachment. Captivating Seyid Ağā of Sivas and his 1,000 men, Ḥasan Khān turned back to the headquarters of 'Abbās Mīrzā.<sup>101</sup> Crown Prince moved from Tabrīz to Khūy in the third week of May, 1822. The Ottoman prisoners of war captivated by Ḥasan Khān were freed by 'Abbās Mīrzā in Khūy and then Seyid Ağā of Sivas was sent to the Serasker of Erzurum, Ra'uf Pasha, to convince him withdrawing from the war. According to 'Abbās Mīrzā, this was the only way by which the two empires would make peace with each other. The proposal of 'Abbās Mīrzā was not accepted by the Serasker of Erzurum and other command staff; struggling was the only way for the Ottoman command in Erzurum. Upon receiving the reply of the Serasker, by sending the majority of the cavalry to Salmās and the rest to Van, 'Abbās Mīrzā advanced from Khūy.<sup>102</sup>

Meanwhile the Porte attempted to mobilise the Sunni population by appealing to religious feeling against the Shi'ite heretics. The Grand Mufti of Istanbul (şeyhülislam) proclaimed a fatwa, in which Iran was defined as a heretic state assaulting the true abode of Islam. Upon this, orders were sent to the provinces to intimidate any Iranian nobles, merchants and pilgrims to be found there. This was part of a strategy to create pressure on the Iranian central government.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> FO 78/101 Strangford to Londonderry, 25 October 1821.

<sup>100</sup> On Mehmed Emin Ra'uf Pasha, see Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, ed. Nuri Akbayar, VI vols., vol. IV (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), pp. 1361-62.

<sup>101</sup> Sipihr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh: Tārīkh-i Qājārīyah*, I: p. 333.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 334.

<sup>103</sup> Sipihr, *Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh: Tārīkh-i Qājārīyah*, I: p. 333.

But Ra'uf Pasha's intended movement into Āzarbāyjān in the spring of 1822 was delayed by Iranian forces left at Toprakkale and then defeated when Crown Prince Mīrzā himself left Tabrīz on campaign, joined his field army with troops already holding the Ottomans at Toprakkale, and then defeated the Ottoman army in a battle outside that town in May 1822. 'Abbās Mīrzā then set his eyes on Erzurum, the key to Ottoman control of eastern Anatolia, but his plans were derailed by the emergence of cholera in his army and the resulting heavy loss of soldiers.<sup>104</sup>

### **The Southern Front**

On the southern front, which was comprised of the *eyalet* of Baghdad, the Mamluk governor, Davud Pasha, was appointed Serasker, or Commander-in-Chief. Davud enjoyed more personal authority and prestige in his region than was true of his equivalent in the north, Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha, the governor of Erzurum. He also seems to have been a reasonably competent and energetic person. Nevertheless many factors contributed to undermining his chances of effectively waging war against the Qājārs. The many minority ethnic and religious groups in the *eyalet* were of dubious loyalty and certainly could not be counted on for active support. The activities of the Wahhabis threatened the lucrative pilgrimage routes leading from Iraq through the Nejd region in the Arabian Peninsula, which were particularly followed by Shi'i believers. They also further disrupted Iraq's economy through constant plundering as far as the Euphrates and encouraged turbulence and even outright revolt amongst the Arab tribes as a whole. In the northern districts (*sancaks*) of the *eyalet* of Baghdad things were little better as the Kurdish tribes were in perpetual conflict with the local

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<sup>104</sup> Cevdet Paşa, *Târîh-i Cevdet*, XII: p. 12.

authorities. Many Kurds looked to the Iranian governors across the border in the provinces of Luristān and Kirmānshāh for protection. As in the north, an even greater source of vulnerability was the disloyalty of local elites, many of whom in Bagdad too held key positions in the Ottoman local official hierarchy.<sup>105</sup>

### **The Ottoman Army**

On paper, Davud Pasha could field a small standing corps composed of his own bodyguard, some 3,000 strong, plus 5,000 semi-trained infantry. Most of the Janissaries usually stationed in Bagdad who were still capable of active military service had been called away by the central government in Istanbul before the war in the east threatened. Davud Pasha could call upon his district governors to provide him with local militia. This would range from the 10,000 foot soldiers in principle available from Süleymaniye to between 1,500 and 2,000 from Khūy, Ḥarīr, Zuhāb, and Armadiyah. The major towns of Muşul, Kirkūk, Arbīl, Ḥillah and Mandalī all furnished a fixed, but small, number of foot-soldiers armed with firearms as their contribution to this levy. A further 10,000 to 15,000 nomadic tribal cavalry would come from troops raised by local notables. The state would provide bread and forage to all men raised in this way. Davud's greatest weakness in the narrow military sense was his artillery: he had only a handful of cannon, most of which were slow, heavy and out-of-date. In all, slightly more than 35,000 troops and officers would be available, including garrisons, for the campaign. The central government was initially only able to send a small number of regular infantry and cavalry from the cities of Diyarbakır and Halep/Aleppo. Consequently Davud hired over 10,000 men

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<sup>105</sup> RGVIA, fond: 446, opis': 1, delo: 176, pp. 1-12.

from Anatolia as short-service mercenaries, though these men could never display the disciplined skills of professional regular soldiers in established military units.

### **The Iranian Army**

Facing these forces was the army of Prince Muḥammad ‘Alī Mīrzā. The Shāh’s eldest son, though not his designated heir, was made Prince Governor of all the western provinces south of Āzarbāyjān and of their military forces. This was another example of how, in the complex world of court politics, he was often used as a counter-weight to ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s growing authority by their father, Fath ‘Alī Shāh. In the war against Russia in 1804-13 Muḥammad ‘Alī Mīrzā’s forces usually numbered around 30,000 men. His forces were rarely involved in that war except for his one cavalry raid deep into the Russian rear. His ability to muster some 25,000 men at short notice to fight the Ottomans was remarkable. These men were mostly tribal cavalry and the prospect of plunder, so important to a tribal warrior, was undoubtedly a significant attraction. Two-thirds of Muḥammad ‘Alī Mīrzā’s army in 1821 were cavalry raised from local tribes such as the Bakhriarī or Lars. The balance was composed of infantry drawn largely from the Kurdish population. Up to 12,000 men could be raised by the local Kurdish chief, Süleyman Khān, and were regarded as good natural soldiers, though all were irregulars incapable of fighting in close-order European-style formations. Muḥammad ‘Alī’s force of European-officered regular infantry was small, far smaller than his half-brother ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s corps of ‘regular’ infantry. These units seem to have been based in towns and once again the Kurds provided excellent raw material for these new regiments.

## The Campaign of 1821

Prior to the Irano-Ottoman War of 1821-23, the south-western boundary of Kirmānshāh was 10 km far from Karand. In early October 1821, Muḥammad ‘Alī Mīrzā advanced into Ottoman territory from Kirmānshāh, while Davud Pasha sent the Ottoman governor of the border district, Mahmud Pasha, reinforcements commanded by Davud’s deputy, the ‘kadkhudā’ (kethüda) Mehmed Ağa. However, in the ensuing confrontation with the invading Iranians, Mehmed Ağa defected and Mahmud Pasha’s forces were defeated. The victorious Muḥammad ‘Alī Mīrzā appointed Mahmud’s uncle, Abdullah, as ruler of the occupied territory which emphasises the confusing and incestuous nature of politics in the region. Muḥammad ‘Alī Mīrzā himself advanced on Baghdad. What exactly followed next is unclear and much debated but it is clear that, with no help forthcoming from Istanbul, Davud came to terms with Prince ‘Alī Mīrzā. Some sources have suggested that he agreed to pay 10,000 tumans compensation plus a yearly tribute to Muḥammad ‘Alī Mīrzā, which is not inherently implausible.<sup>106</sup> Disregarding Mahmud Pasha’s services during the war, Davud accepted the appointment of Muḥammad ‘Alī’s nominees, including Abdullah Pasha, as governors of Ḥarīr and Khūy districts. In return, Muḥammad ‘Alī Mīrzā withdrew towards Kirmānshāh in Iran. Davud Pasha’s actions threw the region into disarray, which was then deepened by Muḥammad ‘Alī Mīrzā’s sudden death from cholera during his withdrawal from Ottoman territory, on 22 November, 1822. The Ottoman governor of Diyarbakir, Ali Pasha, then seized the opportunity to join forces with Mahmud Pasha, marched on Süleymaniye and rout the disorganised Iranian troops. At the cost of much bloodshed, they then removed

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<sup>106</sup> Williamson, "The Turko-Persian War of 1821–1823: Winning the War but Losing the Peace," p. 95.

Mahmud's uncle, Abdullah Pasha, from the governorship of Ḥarīr. Fath 'Alī Shāh responded to this setback by ordering Muḥammad 'Alī Mīrzā's ambitious son, Prince Muḥammad Ḥusayn Mīrzā, to launch a new campaign but after some initial success the resistance of Ottoman forces and their tribal allies, together with the ongoing cholera epidemic, compelled Muḥammad Ḥusayn to retreat. At this point organised warfare on the southern front petered out.

### **The Treaty of Erzurum of 1823**

The war of 1821-23 was inconclusive, despite Iran's many victories in the field and its capture of key towns and fortresses. In the end these victories had added up to little more than giant frontier raids carried out by Crown Prince 'Abbās Mīrzā and Prince Muḥammad 'Alī Mīrzā. The outbreak of cholera, together with increasing financial problems, meant that Iran would have found it hard to continue the war. As for the Ottomans, the war in Greece and the danger of European intervention absorbed all Istanbul's attention and resources. Both the Ottoman and Iranian governments had concerns about Russia's advance in the Caucasus and this too was an incentive to stop a war which weakened both sides. The shāh also felt pressure from Iranian merchants trading with the Ottoman empire who had been hit hard by the conflict and whose prosperity was an important factor in Iranian state finances.<sup>107</sup>

Crown Prince 'Abbās Mīrzā claimed that he had waged the campaign not for land or against the sultan, but in defence of his family's honour, which was now vindicated. Of course there was an element of bluster and retrospective self-justification in this claim but it was not entirely false. For 'Abbās Mīrzā a significant

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<sup>107</sup> Cevdet Paşa, *Târîh-i Cevdet*, XI: p. 13.

factor in going to war with the Ottomans had been to boost his own military prestige and the reputation of his new army. This he had achieved. What made this especially gratifying was that his great rival, Prince Muḥammad ‘Alī, who might have won equal prestige from his victory in the south, had conveniently died. Sultan Mahmud II remained upset with Tehran in 1822-23 and considered a new campaign. ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s pleas to Stratford Canning, the powerful British ambassador in Istanbul, to intervene in the cause of peace may have helped to change his mind. Following negotiations between Ra’uf Pasha and the Iranian envoy Mīrzā Muḥammad ‘Alī Āshtīyānī, the Treaty of Erzurum was signed on 28 July, 1823.<sup>108</sup>

‘Abbās Mīrzā’s insistence on Iran’s right to interfere in the affairs of the Baban dynasty and its sovereignty over Zuhāb, now under Iranian authority, delayed the treaty’s final ratification. Happy with the postponement, the Ottomans hoped that the Greek uprising would soon be suppressed so they would be in a stronger position to negotiate; to bolster their position, they even sent additional troops to the frontier, almost provoking renewed military confrontation. To make matters worse, the Ottomans now noticed for the first time that the draft treaty did not contain an Iranian apology for the cursing of the first three caliphs and the companions of the prophet. According to Es’ad Efendi, Iran responded by claiming that the erroneous beliefs of the Safavids had been corrected by Nādir Shāh’s efforts to reconcile Shi’i and Sunni beliefs, and Shi’i Iran was now firmly within the al-Sunna tradition. Not wanting to engage in yet another discussion of Islamic theology (specifically in this case Nādirid Jafarism), Istanbul consented, making this the first Iranian-Ottoman treaty not to

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp. 77-78. For the Ottoman Turkish version of the Treaty of Erzurum, see Es’ad Efendi, *Vak’a-Nivīs Es’ad Efendi Tarihi (Bâhir Efendi’nin Zeyl ve İlâveleriyle 1237-1241 / 1821-1826)*: pp. 236-46. For the Farsi version, see Ghulām’riżā Tabātabā’ī Majd, ed. *Mu’āhadāt va Qarārdād’hā’ī Tārīkhī dar Davrah Qājārīyah* (Tīhrān: Bahman, 1373 [1994/1995]), pp. 106-21.

emphasize sectarian divisions between the two countries.<sup>109</sup> ‘Abbās Mīrzā asked that the treaty be ratified by the shāh and his heir apparent, that is to say, ‘Abbās Mīrzā himself. Istanbul agreed, in essence recognizing the prince as the next shāh and reducing the chances that the Ottomans would seek to exploit dissension in Iran over the succession. For ‘Abbās Mīrzā the succession issue had to be his single greatest preoccupation and one that strongly influenced all his policies and calculations. Both the war and the peace had served his cause in this crucial matter.<sup>110</sup>

At first sight Iran itself gained very little at the peace settlement in return for its military victories. The treaty required that all occupied Ottoman territories be returned within 60 days. Nor was there any question of the Ottomans paying an indemnity. On the other hand Iran’s acceptance of a peace without annexations or indemnities showed wisdom. In the first place, Iran could not have forced the Ottomans to make such concessions. The Qājārs had exploited a moment of extreme Ottoman weakness to win limited prestige victories but the Ottoman empire remained fundamentally stronger than Iran. Nor would territorial gains have been lasting or brought Iran any benefits. Local elites in the Ottoman borderlands had been happy to collaborate with the shāh’s armies to spite their own government but they would certainly have been no more loyal or dependable if absorbed into Iran. The conquests made at the height of Safavid power by ‘Abbās I could not be held for long. Even Nādir Shāh at the height of his power in the 1730s had not been able to consolidate his hold on territory west of the Zagros mountains. In fact the Iranian-Ottoman border traced along this mountain range was about as close to being a ‘natural frontier’ as any one could imagine. Moreover this frontier was very close to

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<sup>109</sup> Ernest S. Tucker, *Nadir Shah's Quest for Legitimacy in Post-Safavid Iran* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006).

<sup>110</sup> Es'ad Efendi, *Vak'a-Nüvîs Es'ad Efendi Tarihi (Bâhir Efendi'nin Zeyl ve İlâveleriyle 1237-1241 / 1821-1826)*; pp. 233-34.

the one established as long ago as the Ottoman-Safavid treaty of Amasya in 1555. The accepted definition of what territories were intrinsically Iranian could be traced back for over a millennium and no Iranian territories so defined remained under Ottoman rule in 1830.

It is true that the issue of safe and guaranteed access for Iranian Shi'i pilgrims to holy places in Iraq and Arabia mattered greatly to Iran but here the treaty did bring significant concessions by the Ottomans which were subsequently honoured and which allowed a great increase in the flow of Iranian pilgrims in the nineteenth century. The treaty also satisfied some Iranian grievances as regards Ottoman taxes and frontier duties on Iranian exports by fixing a one-time custom duty of four percent ad valorem and providing for the protection on Ottoman territory of merchants as well as the estates of deceased Iranians. Since Iranians exports to and through Iraq mattered greatly to the Iranian economy and the shāh's treasury this was a significant Ottoman concession. The peace treaty had other features which benefited the cause of long-term stability in the borderlands and between the two states. The Treaty of Erzurum was worded as if it were a renewal of previous treaties and a long-established border.<sup>111</sup> The terms it employed to describe geographical boundaries, the treatment of pilgrims, the rejection of political fugitives, the freeing of prisoners of war from enslavement, and the residence of ministers at the respective courts, relied heavily on language used in the Treaty of Kerden of 1746 but was also distinctly modern. True to the increasing importance of territoriality and control of populations, the treaty also demonstrated a novel concern with the movements of tribes across frontiers. With its preamble stressing Islamic brotherhood and its removal from the treaty of any words wounding to either Shi'i or Sunni believers the

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<sup>111</sup> For the first version of the Treaty of Erzurum, see Majd, *Mu'āhadāt va Qarārdād'hā'ī Tārīkhī dar Davrah Qājārīyah*, pp. 106-15; for the latest version, pp. 16-21.

agreement was also a step towards a long-term reduction in Irano-Ottoman tensions.<sup>112</sup>

## Conclusion

The war had ended in June 1823 but the frontiers had remained unchanged. Of course, both sides to some extent managed to obtain some minor concessions from each other however, in general, it might be considered as a stalemate in terms of geopolitics. Though Crown Prince lost the majority of his army in the last stages of the campaign, he was not despondent at all since the war was a good opportunity for him to legitimate his aim in going to war on purpose of saving the honour of Iran. In this chaotic atmosphere, Russian was the only winner in the region. The results of the war had been much better than Russia had expected: tying down the Ottomans in an important eastern diversion from the Greek war in the Balkans; countering the influence of the British by disrupting their trade and undermining their position as Crown Prince's chief paymaster.

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<sup>112</sup> Masters, "The Treaties of Erzurum (1823 and 1848) and the Changing Status of Iranians in the Ottoman Empire," p. 5; Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831-1896*: pp. 13-14.

## Chapter Five - The Russo-Iranian War of 1826-28

### The Causes of the War

In 1816 General Alexei Petrovich Ermolov was appointed Commander in Chief of the Caucasus Corps and ambassador to the Court of Tehran. His main task as commander-in-chief was to secure Russia's hold on the region, and in particular to stamp out resistance among the Muslim peoples of the North Caucasus and ensure Russia's communications between Tiflis and the Russian heartland north of the mountains.<sup>1</sup> The Russian government and its generals all at this point underestimated just how hard this task would be, since they were unfamiliar both with the mountainous terrain and with the Caucasian tribesmen who would be their enemies. As regards his role as ambassador, Ermolov's instructions were to conduct an inspection of the existing Russo-Iranian frontier and try to placate the Iranians with minor concessions of territory in the khanates of Tālish and Qarahbāgh, thereby ending the disputes over the frontier that had continued ever since the signing of the Russo-Iranian peace treaty in 1813.<sup>2</sup> Ermolov was also ordered to assess whether it was wise for Russia to back the claims to succession to the Iranian throne of Crown Prince 'Abbās Mīrzā.<sup>3</sup> Petersburg's main goal was to improve relations with Iran without making any major concessions, to secure at least its neutrality in the event of a Russo-Ottoman war, and to weaken British influence in Tehran.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the travel notes of the Russian mission in Iran, written by V. I. Rostovtsev, see RGVIA, fond: 446, opis': 1, delo: 4, pp. 1-45ob.

<sup>2</sup> For the Farsi version of the Treaty of Gulistān, see Majd, *Mu'āhadāt va Qarārdād'hā'ī Tārīkhī dar Davrah Qājārīyah*, pp. 72-86.

<sup>3</sup> AKAK, vol. VI. ch. II, no. 392, p. 214, Alexander I to 'Abbās Mīrzā, 8 May (20) 1819.

<sup>4</sup> For details about the journey of Ermolov to Iran, see A. E. Sokolov, *Dnevnie zapiski o puteshestvii rossiisko-imperatorskogo posol'stva v Persii v 1816 i 1817 g.* (Moskva: Sinodal'naia Tipografiia,

The distance of the Caucasian theatre from St. Petersburg meant that whoever served as the Tsar's viceroy must possess wide autonomy. Since the job entailed not just responsibility for fighting the native tribes but also for commanding armies in the event of war with the Ottomans or Iranians it was inevitable that the viceroy must be a general. But the job also required diplomatic authority and skill since the commander-in-chief must handle relations both with the native peoples of the Caucasus and with the neighbouring countries. As regards the Ottoman empire, the Tsar's ambassador, G. A. Stroganov, in Istanbul played the major role but Russia's relations with Iran depended above all on the Commander-in-Chief. Most Russian generals of the time were not natural diplomats. They had reached high positions through their service on the battlefield against Napoleon not through showing negotiating skills or diplomatic tact. But even by the standard of the average Russian general, no worse candidate could have been chosen for this role of diplomat and peacemaker than Aleksei Ermolov.<sup>5</sup>

Ermolov had made a fine military career as a fighting officer and general. As a young officer he had distinguished himself in the war with Iran in 1796 under Count Valerian Zubov and had been present at the capture of Darband and the defeat of Āqā Muḥammad at Ganjah. During the wars against Napoleon he won deserved fame for his inspiring leadership and tactical skill on the battlefield. Ermolov's powerful physique and his lion-like head added to his charisma. In the battle for Paris

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1910). For the Farsi version of the Treaty of Tehran, see Majd, *Mu'āhadāt va Qarārdād'hā'ī Tārīkhī dar Davrah Qājārīyah*, pp. 87-105.

<sup>5</sup> Ermolov tried to have good relations with the Turkmens against the Iranians, see AKAK, vol. VI. ch. II, no. 1054, pp. 699-702, A. P. Ermolov to M. I. Ponomarev, 13 June (25) 1819; no. 1057, pp. 704-5, A. P. Ermolov to K. V. Nesselrode, 18 October (30) 1819; no. 1058, pp. 705-6, K. V. Nesselrode to A. P. Ermolov, 27 October (8 November) 1819; no. 1061, pp. 709-10, N. N. Murav'ev to M. I. Ponomarev, 17 December (29) 1819; no. 1070, pp. 718-20, M. I. Ponomarev to A. P. Ermolov, 25 January (6 February) 1820. VPR, vol. XI, no. 17, pp. 47-48, 24 June (6 July) 1819. For the Russian interest in Bukhara in the eighteenth century, see *Poslannik Petra I na vostoke: Posol'stvo Florio Beneveni v Persiiu i Bukharu v 1718-1725 godakh*, (Moskva: Glavnaia redaktsiia vostochnoi literatury, 1986).

in 1814 he commanded the infantry of the Russian and Prussian Guards. Ermolov ended the Napoleonic Wars as a lieutenant general at the age of 42. After Kutuzov's death in 1813 he was the general most admired by much of Russian public opinion. He remains a great hero of Russian nationalist and even sometimes liberal writers until the present day, not just because of his military achievements but also because he had a reputation for being a critic of the Romanov monarchs, or at least of the favour they showed to German generals and foreign advisors. His reputation as a Russian patriot rather than a lackey of the dynasty made him a favourite of many of the future Decembrist conspirators, which further helped his historical reputation.<sup>6</sup>

Ermolov's performance in the Caucasus, however, was mostly unimpressive, even in a narrowly military sense. The majority of Russian generals had an arrogant belief in their army's overwhelming power and a great contempt for 'orientals' but Ermolov was an extreme example of this. He not just underestimated the difficulties of fighting the Caucasian mountain tribes but also made Russia many unnecessary enemies through his policy of extreme and often indiscriminate savagery. Ermolov justified this policy by claiming that 'orientals' only understood force and cruelty. He displayed similar arrogance in his visit to the shah in 1817 on taking up his position as Commander-in-Chief, which wrecked whatever chance that existed of satisfying his instructions and achieving a compromise with the Iranians over the territorial disputes that had harmed relations ever since 1813.<sup>7</sup> Ermolov refused all the Iranians' claims for border rectifications and made a number of unacceptable demands in brusque fashion, such as that Russian rather than other foreign officers should train the Iranian army and that Russian troops should have free passage

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<sup>6</sup> For Ermolov's biography see V. M. Bezotosnyi, ed. *Otechestvennaia voina 1812 goda: Entsiklopediia* (Moskva: Rosspen, 2004), p. 271. For an evaluation of his role see Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon: The Battle for Europe, 1807 to 1814*: pp. 140-43, 403-04, 49-50.

<sup>7</sup> VPR, vol. XI, no. 1, pp. 8-10. From K. V. Nesselrode to Kh. A. Lieven, 25 April (7 May) 1819.

through Iran to suppress raids from the Central Asian khanates on Russian territory and trade. Told that the French and English envoys had conformed to Iranian court custom and not worn boots in the shah's presence, Ermolov responded that he was a Russian officer, not an English merchant or a French spy. On returning to Tiflis, Ermolov reported to St. Petersburg that there must be no question of returning any territory to the Iranians since this would wreck Russian prestige among the peoples of the region. Despite the fact that Ermolov's behaviour had undermined imperial policy, he was rewarded for his mission to Tehran by promotion to full general, which shows the loose nature of St. Petersburg's control or even understanding of its viceroy's behaviour.<sup>8</sup>

Ermolov had his own diplomatic agent in the court of Crown Prince 'Abbās Mīrzā at Tabrīz. From 1812 to 1824 Semen Ivanovich Mazarovich served in this post and then was succeeded by Andrei Karlovich Amburgherr, who remained in Tehran until July 1826, when war broke out between Iran and Russia. Both these diplomats were responsible to the Commander in Chief of the Caucasus Corps, not directly to St. Petersburg. Mazarovich was a man of an energetic, aggressive and intriguing disposition. As we have seen in the previous chapter, he played a very important part in shaping Russian policy towards Ottoman-Iranian relations in 1821, when Ermolov was absent from the Caucasus, Amburgherr was a man of integrity and pursued a more moderate line of policy; he was not always in sympathy with the provocative attitude adopted by Ermolov towards Iran. It is not surprising then, that Ermolov preferred Mazarovich and defended him from criticism by St. Petersburg but often disliked and ignored Amburgherr's views.

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<sup>8</sup> For a summary account of Ermolov's behaviour in Tehran see F. Kazemzadeh, "Iranian Relations with Russia and the Soviet Union to 1921," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, ed. Peter Avery (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), pp. 314-49, especially pp. 34-35. On Ermolov's role as Commander-in-Chief see Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*: chapter 4, pp. 29-38.

The Qājārs did not have a resident ambassador in St. Petersburg, nor indeed in any other European capital. This both reflected and worsened a broader problem. The Qājār princes had little grasp of the world outside Iran and its immediate neighbours. They were still very much tribal leaders who had absorbed part of the tradition of Iranian monarchy since coming to the throne. Even Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā, for all his encouragement of foreign officers in his army, could not speak any European language. The same was true of all but a tiny handful of the ministers and courtiers. The Iranian leaders did not understand the enormous growth of European or Russian power in the previous century. Had they done so, they might have been less inclined to attack the Ottomans in 1821 at their moment of greatest weakness and more willing to contemplate a common front against the Russian threat. Nor did they understand developments in the relations between the European Great Powers. This was very important both in general and in the run-up to the war with Russia in 1826.

To have any chance against Russia, Iran needed British support, or at least the continuation of the British subsidy. Both Fath ‘Alī Shāh and Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā understood this up to a point. They attached great importance to the so-called ‘Definitive Treaty of Defensive Alliance’ signed on 25 November, 1814, between Britain and Iran, in which the British guaranteed Iran either military support or a yearly subsidy in the event of an attack by another European state. But Iran’s rulers did not grasp how much had changed since 1814. Britain no longer needed to fear French influence in Iran. Russia had turned from enemy to ally almost immediately after the first subsidy treaty was signed in 1812. In the mid-1820s the government in London did not yet really fear that Russia’s advance against Iran might threaten India. In any case in 1825-26 the British government above all sought Russian help

for the Greek rebellion and had no intention of sacrificing this priority to support Iran. When war did break out between Russia and Iran in 1826 the British could argue correctly that it had been started by an Iranian offensive into Russian territory, so the terms of the defensive treaty did not apply.<sup>9</sup>

Iran's lack of an ambassador in Russia also caused more immediate problems. The shah had no means to present his views to the Russian court directly but was forced to go through Ermolov. This strengthened Ermolov's hand and he had many opportunities to misrepresent Iranian affairs and behaviour, and even British policy, where Russo-Iranian relations were concerned. The shah did attempt to send an envoy, Mīrzā Muḥammad Ṣādiq, to St. Petersburg to discuss the issues in dispute between Russia and Iran.<sup>10</sup> Ermolov, however, had no wish to transfer discussion of any matter concerning the Caucasus to St. Petersburg and detained the Iranian envoy on his way from Tiflis.<sup>11</sup> 'Abbās Mīrzā then attempted to send an envoy by way of Istanbul and thus avoid Ermolov, but by the time this envoy had reached the Ottoman-Russian frontier, Iran and Russia were already on the verge of war, and he was turned back.

Aleksei Ermolov's eventual replacement as Commander-in-Chief was General Ivan Paskevich. Paskevich, Nicholas I's favourite general, was both a professional and political enemy of his predecessor.<sup>12</sup> He was nevertheless correct to report that the onset of war between Russia and Iran owed much to Ermolov's behaviour. Even so, Ermolov's actions were by no means the only cause of the

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<sup>9</sup> On Anglo-Iranian relations see Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: chapter vii, pp. 123-44; Rose Greaves, "Iranian Relations with Great Britain and British India, 1798-1921," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, ed. Peter Avery (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), pp. 374-425 (here pp. 379-89). On the treaty and its implications see Majd, *Mu'āhadāt va Qarārdād'hā'ī Tārīkhī dar Davrah Qājārīyah*, pp. 87-105. and J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: 1535-1914*, II vols., vol. I (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1956), pp. 86-88.

<sup>10</sup> Dubrovin, *Istoriia voyny i vladychestva russkikh na kavkaze*, VI: p. 579.

<sup>11</sup> Potto, *Kavkazskaia voina: Persidskaia voina 1826-1828 gg.*, III: pp. 18-19; Glynn R. Barratt, "A Note on the Russian Conquest of Armenia (1827)," *SEER* 50, no. 120 (1972): p. 407.

<sup>12</sup> On this enmity see: V. Andreeva, "Ermolov i Paskevich," *KS* I(1876): pp. 197-213.

conflict even in the short term. Muriel Atkin argues that Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā himself wanted war because he was still smarting from the humiliation he had suffered from defeat by Russia in the war of 1804-13.<sup>13</sup> There is much evidence to support this view. Diplomatic tensions between Iran and Russia increased after the end of the Ottoman-Iranian war when the Crown Prince’s hands were freed. The immediate issue was disputes over the border established by the 1813 treaty and over the Russian occupation of territory bordering on Lake Gukchah (Gökçe). Initially the negotiations between Ermolov and the Crown Prince’s envoy, Faṭḥ ‘Alī Khān, in 1824 seemed to offer some hopes of a compromise, only for the Crown Prince to refuse the concessions offered by his plenipotentiary. When a new set of terms was agreed in Tiflis and brought to ‘Abbās Mīrzā in Tabrīz by Faṭḥ ‘Alī Khān and Ermolov’s deputy, Lieutenant-General Ivan Veliaminov, the Crown Prince denounced these terms as disadvantageous and sent Veliaminov back to Tiflis with instructions that such an agreement had to be negotiated directly with the shah in Tehran.<sup>14</sup> Ermolov was happy with this development and persuaded St. Petersburg to withdraw the Russian agent attached to ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s court.<sup>15</sup>

Even so, Alexander did not want war with Iran and forbade any violation of the terms of the Treaty of Gulistān.<sup>16</sup> On coming to the throne, the new Emperor Nicholas I maintained his brother’s peaceful policy.<sup>17</sup> In June 1826 he sent a Russian

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<sup>13</sup> Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: pp. 156-57.

<sup>14</sup> It had been signed on 28 March 1825. RGIA, fond: 1018, opis’: 2, delo: 76, p. 56; AKAK, vol. VI. ch. II, no. 559, pp. 304-305, A. P. Ermolov to ‘Abbās Mīrzā, 26 March (7 April) 1825; no. 562, pp. 306-307, A. P. Ermolov to ‘Abbās Mīrzā, 30 March (11 April) 1825.

<sup>15</sup> AKAK, vol. VI. ch. II, no. 563, pp. 307-308, A. P. Ermolov to S. I. Mazarovich, 2 (14) April 1825.

<sup>16</sup> AKAK, vol. VI. ch. II, no. 566, pp. 309-310, A. P. Ermolov to S. I. Mazarovich, 2 (14) April 1825; Zapiski Ermolova, pp. 176-177; VPR, vol. XI, no. 74, pp. 211-5, 23 December 1819 (4 January 1820).

<sup>17</sup> On Nicholas I’s foreign policy, see Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), pp. 235-65.

envoy, Prince A. S. Menshikov<sup>18</sup> to Tehran, officially to announce his accession to Fath ‘Alī Shāh but also to seek a compromise over the disputed border territories.<sup>19</sup> Preoccupied with the recent Decembrist revolt and the looming danger of war with the Ottomans in the Balkans, Nicholas I greatly desired peace in the Caucasus.<sup>20</sup> It was the Iranians who rejected this olive branch and started a war which they could not hope to win. A very few of the shah’s advisors such as Ḥājji Mīrzā Abu’l Khān argued against war but Ḥājji Mīrzā’s realism reflected the fact that, uniquely among the Iranian elite, he had carried out a number of diplomatic missions to European capitals, including St. Petersburg, and had a good grasp of international politics.<sup>21</sup>

### The Role of ‘Ulamā

On the Iranian side the ‘*ulamā* were a powerful force pushing for war. It is not necessary to repeat here the reasons why the Shi’i ‘*ulamā* played so great a role in Iranian life and politics in the Qājār era. The specific role of the *mujtahid* as leaders of the Shi’i community was also explained in chapter two. Both the ‘*ulamā* in

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<sup>18</sup> For details of the life of Menshikov, see *Svetleishii kniaz’ Aleksandr Sergeevich Menshikov*, (Sankt Peterburg: Tipografiia departamenta Udelov Litein, 1872). For his embassy in Iran, see Bartolomei, *Posol'stvo kniazia Menshikova v Persiiu v 1826 godu*.

<sup>19</sup> Monteith, *Kars and Erzeroum with the Campaigns of Prince Paskiewitch in 1828 and 1829*: pp. 122-23. In his report to St. Petersburg, Menshikov suggests a series of interesting offers. According to him, in case of making an agreement with Iran at a future date, the mines of rock-salt located at Īravān were to be captured by Russia since Georgia was desperately dependent on this mineral; a specific part of Tālīsh might be relinquished to Iran however the valley of Mughān, the delta of Kura, the hunting-spots at Sālyān and the bay of Qizilaghāch were to be taken; the war indemnity was to be claimed; the towns Ardabīl and Tabrīz were to be entitled as security zone; various factories were to be set up on the shore and in the inner regions of the Caspian and trade was to be developed; permanent mission and general consular of Russia to Iran were to be established in Tehran and Tabrīz respectively and then two consulates were to be established in Gīlān and Astarābād to provide security for trade and to gather necessary information on the surrounding countries respectively; the Christian communities – i.e. the Armenians and the Nestorians were to be put under protection and finally the Iranian government was not allowed to found any military fortification on the shore of the Caspian. RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis’: 4, delo: 450, pp. 35-40, 14 (26) November 1826.

<sup>20</sup> VPR, vol. XIV, no. 130, pp. 371-374, 28 January (9 February) 1826.

<sup>21</sup> Gavin Hambly, "Iran during the Reigns of Fath ‘Alī Shāh and Muḥammad Shāh," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, ed. Peter Avery (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), p. 155.

general and a number of leading *mujtahids* in particular played key roles in pushing the shah into war with Russia in 1826. The *mujtahid* Āghā Sayyid Muḥammad Iṣfahānī, based in Karbala, was the most prominent of all the Iranian religious leaders who pressed the need for a holy war (*jihād*) on Fath ‘Alī Shāh. Calls for a holy war had in fact been growing in Iran ever since the peace treaty of 1813 had been signed. The treaty had meant the loss to the infidel of territory inhabited by Shi’i Muslims and ruled by Shi’i khans. These territories had been held by Iranian monarchs for much of history and had been regained by the Safavids at the very beginning of the dynasty’s rule. Their loss struck at the legitimacy of the Qājār monarch, who was described in official ideology and indeed in his title as protector of the Islamic law (*Shāhanshāh-i Islam Panah*) and guardian of the Islamic lands (*Mamalik-i Mahrusah-i Islam*). At the same time as Prince Menshikov arrived to meet the shah in the town of Sulṭānīyah in June 1826 in the hope of achieving a compromise, a group of prominent ‘*ulamā* visited Fath ‘Alī Shāh to urge him to stand firm and a *fetwa* (a quasi-judicial ruling by prominent ‘*ulamā*) was issued condemning all those who opposed a *jihād* against Russia as unbelievers.<sup>22</sup>

Although there is consensus about the role of the ‘*ulamā* in causing the war, the part played by Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā has been disputed. Given the war’s disastrous outcome, it was inevitable that those involved would seek to evade the blame for starting the conflict. ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s third son, Prince Jahangir Mīrzā, subsequently wrote that the khans who had been dispossessed by the Russians in 1813 and who had fled to Iran organised the systematic forging of letters from Shi’i inhabitants of the occupied provinces claiming that the Muslim population and

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<sup>22</sup> Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, "Fragile Frontiers: The Diminishing Domains of Qajar Iran," *IJMES* 29, no. 2 (1997): pp. 205-34; John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (New York: OUP, 1991), p. 93; Fasā’ī, *History of Persia under Qājār Rule*: p. 174; Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period*: p. 89.

religion were suffering greatly at Russian hands. He also claimed that his father's enemies at the shāh's court joined hands with the exiled khans and the 'ulamā to force the Crown Prince into a war that they knew he would lose.<sup>23</sup> There is no doubt some truth to this view. Undoubtedly the former khans of Shirvān and Qarahbāgh whom 'Abbās Mīrzā had invited to his court at Tabrīz were among those demanding war most strongly, for the obvious reason that victory would regain their lands. But the fact that 'Abbās Mīrzā invited them to his court and made no effort to stop their activities is significant. Even more so is the fact that 'Abbās Mīrzā's chief advisor in Tabrīz, Mīrzā Bozorg, consistently supported the pro-war cause. In fact he sent clerics out to various towns in Iran and the Caucasus to procure *fetwas* demanding war. These rulings were collected in Tabrīz and then widely spread in the form of a volume entitled *Risalah-i Jihādiyah*. Though Mīrzā Bozorg and 'Abbās Mīrzā were not responsible for actually creating the movement among the 'ulamā which called for war, it seems clear that they did everything they could to encourage and spread it.<sup>24</sup>

### **'Abbās Mīrzā**

Beyond question the 'ulamā were crucial in bringing on the war and so too was 'Abbās Mīrzā's search for legitimacy as both a pious Muslim and a victorious commander. As always, the question of the succession played a big part in the Crown Prince's calculations. His arch-enemy Prince Muḥammad 'Alī Mīrzā was dead but other brothers were emerging as rivals: above all this meant Prince Ḥusayn 'Alī

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<sup>23</sup> Jahāngīr Mīrzā, *Tārīkh-i Naū* (Tihiran: 'Alī Akbar 'Ilmī, 1327), pp. 5-9.

<sup>24</sup> Abbas Amanat, "Russian Intrusion into the Guarded Domain": Reflections of a Qajar Statesman on European Expansion," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113, no. 1 (1993): pp. 35-56, especially p.40.

Mīrzā, the governor of Fars in south-western Iran, and Prince Ḥasan ‘Alī Mīrzā, the governor of Khurāsān in the north-east, both of whom ruled key border provinces and led powerful factions which commanded large military forces. The lack of experience and naivety of the Iranian leadership about the broader international context was also vital. We have already noted the misplaced hopes they had for British support but it seems that they were also encouraged by stories of the revolt of the garrison in St. Petersburg and a struggle for power between the brothers of the recently deceased Emperor Alexander. Seen through the prism of Iranian politics this struggle could be expected to weaken the state fundamentally and for many years. Russian realities were very different but Iran had no ambassador in St. Petersburg to alert them to these realities or to warn them that the Decembrist rising had been quickly crushed without long-term consequences to the state’s strength or unity. As a result, Iran partly went to war in July 1826 on the basis of rumours about events concluded six months before.<sup>25</sup>

But although many specific factors caused war to break out in the summer of 1826 it is probably true to say that a conflict was almost inevitable at some point. The shah’s belief in his right to rule the southern Caucasus was firmly held and had strong historical justification. The defeat by Russia in the war of 1804-13 had not been decisive and had resulted in the partition of the Muslim-majority areas of the region between Russia and Iran, with the borders between them ill-defined. This meant that the peace signed in 1813 was always likely to be a truce. Russia too had obvious reasons to extend southwards the frontier agreed at the peace treaty of 1813. The khanate of Īravān (Revan/Erevan), just south of that border, included the largest concentration of Christian Armenians in the region and the headquarters of the

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<sup>25</sup> Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*: p. 157; Hambly, "Iran during the Reigns of Fath ‘Alī Shāh and Muḥammad Shāh," p. 164.

Catholicos of the Armenian Church. Incorporating the khanate and adjacent territories would also give Russia the defensible and 'natural' frontier on the river Aras, for which Marquis Paulucci had called in a key memorandum to Alexander I in 1816.<sup>26</sup>

## **The Campaign of 1826**

By attacking Russia the Iranians condemned themselves to inevitable defeat. The resources available to the two sides were very unequal. The Iranians had to plan for an initial campaign to defeat Ermolov's forces south of the Caucasus mountains. Just possibly they might succeed in doing this. They could count on the support of the exiled khans of the south Caucasus and on uprisings by many of their former subjects in the event of war.<sup>27</sup> The son of the last king of Georgia was gathering Lezghien tribesmen to invade Georgia from the north and assert his claim to his father's throne. The Chechens were an even more immediate threat to the Russians. In 1824 a Chechen revolt broke out and quickly spread as a response to Russian punitive expeditions and to the arrival of a charismatic religious leader from Daghestan.<sup>28</sup> In the summer and autumn a number of Russian forts were attacked: some were taken and their garrisons, together with Russian settlers, were killed. General Ermolov himself led expeditions into Chechnia from January to May 1825 to crush native resistance.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*: p. 171. On the eve of the war, most of the Caucasian khans had already chosen the Iranian side, see RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4337.

<sup>27</sup> AAE, cp: Russie, tome: 170, pp. 251-255.

<sup>28</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 888, pp. 17-22.

<sup>29</sup> Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*: pp. 36-37.

## The Military Force of Russia

Faced by these multiple threats, Ermolov had under his command two infantry divisions (the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>), the Reserve Grenadier Brigade, the Nizhnii Novgorod Dragoons (his only regiment of regular cavalry), fifteen Don Cossack Regiments, and various other units amounting, on paper, to 45,000 infantrymen, 7,000 cavalrymen, and 131 guns.<sup>30</sup> However, since 1817 the Corps had been under strength by almost a quarter and in reality at the beginning of 1826 Ermolov commanded only 35,000 men. Repeated requests for extra recruits had been ignored and because of the many areas in the south Caucasus which required a military presence, the Caucasian Corps's manpower had been spread thin.

In his private notes, Paskevich presents details about the obstacles which the Caucasus Corps had struggled with in the previous war of 1804-13 and suggests his own thoughts why the attacks of the Russian forces had failed to capture the towns of Īravān, Qarahbāgh and Tālish. However, this time, on the contrary of the previous war, the Russian campaign had been planned to launch a direct attack on the heartland of Iran.<sup>31</sup> The Caucasus Corps had been scattered on a line of 640 km stretching from Pāmbāk to Qāflānkūh that was surrounded by infertile lands where the Russian troops was to struggle with shortage of provisions of supplies and bad climate conditions. Crossing the Qizil-Ūzan river would enable the Caucasus Corps advance directly on Tehran.<sup>32</sup>

The newly annexed khanates and their politically unreliable populations required garrisons, but so did central Georgia and many posts on the Black and

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<sup>30</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4289, pp. 6-7ob, 15-16; delo: 4290, pp. 56-57ob.

<sup>31</sup> On the details of the Russian war plan, see RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4291.

<sup>32</sup> The Qizil-Ūzan river is one of the largest in that region, originating in the mountains of Ardalān in the vicinity of Sanandaj. The channel of the Qizil-Ūzan is generally called Shah Rood or the royal river. RGIA, fond: 1018, opis': 2, delo: 76, pp. 1-2.

Caspian coasts.<sup>33</sup> Significant forces were also needed on the Ottoman border. In addition, Ermolov was responsible not just for guarding his communications back to Russia along the Georgian Military Highway but also for garrisoning the Caucasus Line north of the mountains and defending Russian settlers in the region from raids by the Muslim tribes. As a result, out of the fifty-five infantry battalions in the Caucasian Corps, only twelve were available for action against the Iranians when war began in the summer of 1826.<sup>34</sup>

The key problem for the Iranians was that even if they succeeded in defeating Ermolov in the initial campaign, they had no chance on their own of stopping Russian reinforcements arriving in the southern Caucasus in sufficient numbers to make final Russian victory inevitable. The Chechen raids in 1824-26 had not cut or even seriously threatened the Georgian Military Highway, as was at times to happen in the 1830s to 1850s during the much greater rebellions under the imams Ghazi Muḥammad and Shamil.<sup>35</sup> Moreover the Treaty of Gulistān had given Russia the sole right to have warships on the Caspian Sea, so reinforcements and supplies could come down the Volga and from there through Astrakhan to Baku.<sup>36</sup> Of course communications would be a problem. From Tiflis, Russia's central headquarters in the southern Caucasus, it was 570 kilometres to Baku. The distance to Vladikavkaz at the other end of the Georgian Military Highway was less but the road was very narrow and reinforcements from the Russian heartland would take a long time to

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<sup>33</sup> AAE, cp: Russie, tome: 171, pp. 331-333.

<sup>34</sup> RGIA, fond: 1018, opis': 2, delo: 77, pp. 118ob-119; LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*: p. 171.

<sup>35</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 1060, pp. 1-5.

<sup>36</sup> During the campaign, due to the shortage of provision of supply and poor means of transportation, civil and military vessels on the Caspian sea were used to reinforce the Caucasus Corps in the region. RGAVMF, fond: 227, opis': 1, delo: 155, p. 253-253ob. 21 December 1828 (2 January 1829). In the subsequent process of the campaign, the Iranians made some attempts to build a few fortifications on the shore of Anzālī against the Russian vessels however all these were considered as weak and inadequate by Russian officials. RGAVMF, fond: 283, opis': 1, delo: 94, pp. 1-2, P. G. Orlovskii to A. V. Moller, 28 November 1827.

reach Vladikavkaz in the first place. After taking Poti in 1809 the Russians had been forced to return it to the Ottoman empire at the Treaty of Bucharest in 1812 because with Napoleon about to invade Russia they were in no position to draw out negotiations. If Poti had been in Russian hands during the Russo-Iranian War then supplies and reinforcements could have been landed at this good port, only 365 km from Tiflis and then transported up the river Rioni. But one would still have needed to get them across the Surami Mountains. A large army operating in the south-eastern Caucasus could never be adequately supplied through ports on the Black Sea.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless and despite all these considerable logistical problems, even in the most optimistic scenario it was impossible to conceive of Iran defeating Russia single-handedly.<sup>38</sup>

### **The Military Force of Iran**

On paper Iran did have a large army. When Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s main army invaded Russian territory in August 1826 it numbered 33,000 men. Its core was 25 trained infantry battalions, supposedly 25,000 strong, and over 30 guns.<sup>39</sup> Had these men really been trained and commanded to the same level as the

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<sup>37</sup> During the war, not only the Caspian but also the Black sea was actively used by Russian forces. The Black sea fleet, to some extent, had been activated to keep the Circassian tribes occupied, inhabiting the littoral region from Anapa to Batum. For example, Captain-Lieutenant Vukovich and 44 men had been remunerated for all the work they did – 1384 rubles in total, see RGAVMF, fond: 243, opis’: 1, delo: 2596, pp. 7-49ob. 20 February (4 March) 1830.

<sup>38</sup> Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamīl and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*: pp. 54, 165; LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*: pp. 168-69.

<sup>39</sup> The first regular infantry and artillery units, around 12,000, had been raised by the professional consultation of the Shirley brothers under the reign of Shah ‘Abbās I in the first decade of the seventeenth century in Iran. Due to the civil war and turmoil in Iran, these units dispersed. In the regular army of ‘Abbās Mīrzā, there were units consisting of 10,000 called as *jānbāz*. The number of regular infantry battalions was 25 which had been trained by Captain Hart. Regular infantry battalions: Guards, one; Marand, one; Nakhjavān, one; Īravān, two; Shaqāqī, two; Marāghah, one; Rumī and Afshār, two; Russian deserters, one; Khūy, one; Ardabīl, one by Sayf al-Mulk Mīrzā; Qarahdāgh, one by Raḥmatullāh Mīrzā; Hamadān, two by Muhammad Mīrzā; Gurjī, one; Iṣfahān,

Russian infantry and artillery then ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s army would have been formidable. In reality this was not the case and British officers in Iran (who oversaw the troops’ training) sometimes recognised this and urged the Iranians to rely above all on their traditional military strength, which was their thousands of highly mobile and warlike irregular cavalry.<sup>40</sup> But the Crown Prince’s insistence on relying on his infantry was not mere stubbornness. If the Iranians had been fighting a defensive war against a Russian invasion of the Iranian heartland they could have relied on their traditional scorched-earth tactics, combined with the use of their irregular cavalry to raid Russian communications. But in 1826 the Iranians’ goal was to re-take territory held by the Russians, so an offensive strategy was needed. Only infantry and artillery could defeat the Russians in the field, besiege towns or hold territory once it had been conquered. This meant that the Iranians were committed to fighting exactly the kind of war that the Russian army was well-trained to win.<sup>41</sup>

Among the best-trained and disciplined units in the Iranian army were two regiments of Russian deserters, whose origin went back to the Russo-Iranian war of 1796. The first Russian deserters, quitting the army of Valerian Zubov, made their way to Tabrīz where they were welcomed by Biglarbigī of Tabrīz, Aḥmad Khān Muqaddam of Marāghah and created the first Russian regular units in the Iranian army.<sup>42</sup> Russian demands for their return and Iranian refusal to give them up had

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two; Muhammad Ḥusayn Mīrzā, three; Prince of Burūjard, two. For the historical and military survey by E. I. Enegolm, see RGVIA, fond: 446, opis’: 1, delo: 11, pp. 1-63; delo: 12, pp. 1-54.

<sup>40</sup> In his notes, Menshikov uses a different method to calculate the number of troops in the Iranian army, by giving details on the tribal population in Iran. He tries to reach an average number of troops that might be enlisted from the tribes in Iran: Turkish, 92,000 families; Kurdish, 149,600 families (the Kurds in Süleymaniye paying taxes but refusing being enlisted because of the Ottoman pressure); Lor, 157,000 families; Arab, 41,000 families – 439,600 families in total, see RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis’: 4, delo: 456, pp. 3-4ob.

<sup>41</sup> Harford Jones Brydges, *An Account of the Transactions of His Majesty's Mission to the Court of Persia: In the Years 1807-11* (London: James Bohn, 1834)., was one sceptical foreign observer of ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s troops (see pp. 255-6) in the first war against Russia. On Iranian military reforms see Cronin, "Building a New Army: Military Reform in Qajar Iran," pp. 47-87.

<sup>42</sup> As far as is known, Muriel Atkin is one of the first scholars who have drawn attention to the importance of the formation of a unit of Russian deserters in Iran. Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*:

been a long-lasting source of irritation in the two countries' relations. In the years since 1813 other soldiers had continued to desert from the Russian garrison in Georgia. In a way often seen in 'Middle Eastern' countries, the shāh trusted these foreign mercenary troops rather more than was the case with regiments drawn from his own subjects.<sup>43</sup> Part of their function was indeed to suppress any mutinies in the Iranian forces. But the Russian regiments refused to fight their own countrymen. Their commander, Samson Iakovlevich Makintsev (known to the Iranians as Samson Khān) insisted that this had been explicitly excluded when they enrolled in the shah's forces: 'we swore on the Bible that we would not shoot our co-religionists and we will not change our oath'.<sup>44</sup>

Even without his Russian regiments, 'Abbās Mīrzā's advance across the border into the khanate of Qarahbāgh went well and caught Ermolov entirely by surprise. The Crown Prince's army quickly occupied the whole of Qarahbāgh with

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pp. 106-07. The work of Atkin was followed by an article of Aleksandr Kibovskii, in which, he has laid significant emphasis on the personal role of Samson Iakovlevich Makintsev in creating Russian regiments in the army of 'Abbās Mīrzā. According to Kibovskii, the year 1802, when S. Ia. Makintsev deserted from the Nizhnii-Novgorod Dragoon Regiment, was the start for the formation of the Russian regiments in Iran Aleksandr Kibovskii, "«Bagaderan» russkie dezertiry v persidskoi armii, 1802-1839," *Tseikhgauz* 5(1996): pp. 26-29. Finally, his work has been cited by Stephanie Cronin several times in her own articles on military reforms in the Iranian army. Cronin, "Building a New Army: Military Reform in Qajar Iran," pp. 48-87; Cronin, "Deserters, Converts, Cossacks and Revolutionaries: Russians in Iranian Military Service 1800-1920," pp. 147-82. The last one was also published in Stephanie Cronin, ed. *Iranian-Russian Encounters: Empires and Revolutions since 1800* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), pp. 143-85. Briefly, in Russian and English secondary sources, the origin of the Russian deserter units in Iran generally goes back to the first Russo-Iranian war of 1804-13 however Paskevich, in his own manuscripts, clearly suggests that the Russian deserters have been in Tabrīz since 1796 and, they tried to create disciplined military units there. Several deficiencies nevertheless, the military structure established by the Russian deserters gradually had been consolidated in Iran. RGIA, fond: 1018, opis': 2, delo: 76, pp. 68-69.

<sup>43</sup> There were other mercenaries in the Iranian army; while an Italian Lieutenant Bernardi was training and commanding the cavalry-artillery units, a British Major Linsey was responsible from the artillery units in the Iranian army. As a part of the Iranian artillery, the *zambūrak* units were not effective against the modern armies at all. The training quality of the Iranian cavalry was lower than that of the infantry; the cavalry units, lay aside having uniforms, were not even able to provide their own fodder and provision in the campaign. RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis': 4, delo: 456, pp. 1-2ob.

<sup>44</sup> In his notes, Menshikov calls the Russian deserters as the best units in the Iranian army. Though Samson Ia. Makintsev had the rank of dragoon-wachtmeister in the Caucasus Corps, his rank was raised to *sarhang* (colonel) in the Iranian army by 'Abbās Mīrzā, see RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis': 4, delo: 456, pp. 1-1ob. On Samson Makintsev see Adol'f Petrovich Berzhe, "Samson Iakovlev Makintsev i russkie begletsy v Persii," *Russkaia starina* XV, no. 4 (1876): pp. 770-804; Cronin, "Building a New Army: Military Reform in Qajar Iran," pp. 59-60.

the exception of the small town of Shūsha, whose garrison of 1,300 men came from the 42<sup>nd</sup> Jaeger Regiment. But Elizavetpol (Ganja), the khanate's main town was evacuated by Ermolov and fell to the Iranians, leaving the road to Tiflis from the east open.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile the city was also threatened from the south where Ḥusayn Khān, the ruler of the khanate of Īravān, had invaded Georgia with an army of 4,000 infantry and 8,000 irregular cavalry. With 'Abbās Mīrzā's main army rode many of the Muslim khans and nobles who had fled their lands after the Russian takeover during the war of 1804-13. Their presence and the calls for *jihād* from the local 'ulamā encouraged numerous risings among the local Muslim population. Within a month of the war's start the khanates of Qarahbāgh, Shirvān and Tālish had all been cleared of Russian forces, Iranian troops and local rebels had reached the outskirts of Baku, and even some Muslim communities inside Georgia were in rebellion. As early as 11 August Ermolov was forced to report to St. Petersburg that the whole Muslim population was in revolt and only Georgia was still in Russian hands.

Inevitably, Ermolov tried hard to evade responsibility for what had happened. He reminded Nicholas I about his earlier warnings about Iran's ambitions and blamed the Foreign Minister, Count Nesselrode, for disregarding them. He also claimed that he had not wished to put his army on a war footing or make obvious military preparations for fear that this would undermine Prince Menshikov's peace mission to the shah. As regards his current plans, Ermolov wrote that he could do little until reinforcements arrived. He claimed that the Ottomans were concentrating troops in the fortress-port of Anapa and in eastern Anatolia with the intention of joining the war.<sup>46</sup> In fact, Ermolov was spreading a false alarm because the Ottoman

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<sup>45</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4290, pp. 2-4ob.

<sup>46</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 921, pp. 18-20. Apart from strengthening his own military forces in the fortress, Hasan Pasha of Anapa had a plan of building new fortifications along the Kuban that alarmed the Russian side because it would give rise to serious disturbance in the region. AVPRI,

empire was determined to stay out of the Russo-Iranian conflict for fear of provoking an all-out war with the Russians. Given the very fragile relations between the Ottomans and the European Great Powers in 1826-27 Istanbul's caution is easy to comprehend but, in retrospect, it could be argued that the Ottomans might have done better to fight Russia alongside the Iranians in 1826 rather than waiting to fight Russia alone in 1828. In 1826-27, however, the sultan made great efforts to avoid conflict with the Russians in the Caucasus.<sup>47</sup> When, for instance, an Ottoman local notable, Şerif Ağa, crossed the Iranian border with the intention of aiding the Iranian cause the Ottomans informed the Russian ambassador and assured the Russians that he had been ordered to return and would be punished.<sup>48</sup> Determined to maintain strict neutrality, Istanbul took very seriously any border incident that might incite trouble with the Russians.<sup>49</sup>

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fond: 180, opis': 517/1, delo: 112, pp. 324-325ob, 329-335ob, K. F. Nesselrode to A. I. Ribeaupierre, 18 (30) June 1828.

<sup>47</sup> During the Russo-Iranian war, the foreign policy of the Porte remained neutral towards the relation between Russia and Iran as the abolition of the Janissaries had created a turmoil in the Ottoman land. Hence, in his official negotiations with the Russian ambassador, Minchaki, in Istanbul, the Reis Efendi clearly declared that the Ottoman empire was loyal to its word. AVPRI, fond: 180, opis': 517/1, delo: 106, p. 97, M. I. Minchaki to K. F. Nesselrode, 16 (28) September 1826. In the subsequent process, an Iranian envoy, Mir David Zadur, was sent to the Ottoman capital. Originally being a descendant of an Armenian noble house, that of Melik-Shahnazar, after mastering the languages of Arabic and Persian in Iran, Mir David had left for Paris to learn French. Then he was charged by Napoleon to go to Tehran as his envoy in 1804-5. After accomplishing his mission, he was sent a second time to Tehran by Napoleon but this time he did not turn back to France but entered the service of the Iranian government and obtained the title of *khan*. Upon this, being a qualified and experienced official, he was sent to Paris as the Iranian ambassador in 1806 and there represented Iran until 1817. Ismā'īl Rā'īn, *Malik Shāh Nazar'zādah Mīr Dāwūd Zāvardīyān: Nakhustīn Firistādah-i Nāpul'yūn bi-Iran* (Tīhrān: Tūs, 1352 [1973/1974]). In Istanbul, his main aim was to conceive the Reis Efendi to join a so-called alliance of Iran and Austria against Russia however his all diplomatic efforts were in vain since being a part of such an alliance was not reasonable for the Porte. Holding official letters of Fath 'Alī Shāh to France, Austria, Britain and Russia, Mir David was very keen to win the Ottoman officials over. Of course, Minchaki was aware of all the diplomatic manoeuvres and activities of Mir David in Istanbul – i.e. attempts to find proper allies against Russia and to obtain passport from France or Austria to go to St. Petersburg. AVPRI, fond: 180, opis': 517/1, delo: 106, p. 105, M. I. Minchaki to K. F. Nesselrode, 11 (23) October 1826; p. 110, M. I. Minchaki to K. F. Nesselrode, 25 October (6 November) 1826; pp. 318-319ob, 12 (24) September 1826, pp. 323-325, M. I. Minchaki to K. F. Nesselrode, 16 (28) September 1826; pp. 341-344, M. I. Minchaki to K. F. Nesselrode, 11 (23) October 1826.

<sup>48</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 427, gömlek: 21863/H.

<sup>49</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 427, gömlek: 21863.

The neutrality of the Porte was dependent on several military and political motives. Due to the continuing Akkerman negotiations between the Russian and Ottoman officials in 1827, the Porte was to keep its neutrality towards the questions between St. Petersburg and Tehran in the south of the Caucasus. Apart from the case of Şerif Ağa, other incidents occurred along the Ottoman eastern borderland. During the Russo-Iranian war, because of its proximity to the Ottoman border, a German settlement, namely Katharinenfeld, was plundered and about 50 of its residents were taken as captives by a group of armed men assembled from Ahıska (Akhaltsikhe) and Çıldır and then 15 of those captives were sold to the pasha of Ahıska. Upon this, the pasha of Ahıska at once was warned by Ermolov not to support the offenders creating such an incident which could cause serious problems between St. Petersburg and Istanbul. Similar to Ermolov, in his official negotiations, Minchaki kindly reminded the Reis Efendi that the pashas of Kars and Ahıska were to be strictly warned, if needed, punished. According to the official war declaration of Russia, the peace had been violated by Tehran. Hence, Ottoman officers were expected to remain loyal to the principle of neutrality accepted by Ottoman officials in Akkerman. However, Prince Vakhtang of Imereti had been allowed to stay in Erzurum by the Ottoman Serasker.<sup>50</sup>

Ermolov's main concern was the rebellion of Muslim communities across the southern Caucasus and the advance of 'Abbās Mīrzā's army. Relying on Mazarovich's estimate of Iranian numbers, Ermolov exaggerated the scale of the invasion. But he was correct to claim that the Iranian advance, combined with the

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<sup>50</sup> AVPRI, fond: 180, opis': 517/1, delo: 107, pp. 139-139ob, 159-161, K. F. Nesselrode to M. I. Minchaki, 15 (27) August 1826; pp. 162-163, A. P. Ermolov to K. F. Diebitsch, 4 (16) September 1826. In a series of secret instruction to Minchaki, Nesselrode seemingly felt very uncomfortable with the current position of the family of Vakhtang and his supporters obtaining the political backing of Istanbul against Russia. According to him, in the long run, this could bring about serious problems against the Russian interest in Imereti. AVPRI, fond: 180, opis': 517/1, delo: 107, p. 193, K. F. Nesselrode to M. I. Minchaki, 20 December 1826 (1 January 1827); delo: 109, pp. 32-33, M. I. Minchaki to K. F. Nesselrode, 10 (22) February 1827.

risings of the local Muslim population and the threat of Lezghien raids into north-west Georgia, put the lives of Christians living in Georgia and along the Caspian coastline in great danger. Faced with this dual threat, Ermolov reported that he planned to keep one brigade in Daghestan and would concentrate most other available troops to defend Tiflis and central Georgia. Ermolov prioritised crushing the native risings rather than making any attempt to advance against Mīrzā ‘Alī’s army which was besieging Shūsha in Qarahbāgh. He appealed to the Georgian nobility to form a volunteer militia and by 10 September 1,800 volunteers were already in the ranks, a number which subsequently grew to 6,000 and included both Georgian and Armenian non-nobles. Like most regular officers, Ermolov never trusted the Georgian militia, who in his eyes were incapable of military discipline and motivated largely by a desire for plunder. The moment the emergency was over the militia was disbanded. In the eyes of the Commander-in-Chief only immediate and large-scale reinforcement by Russian troops could save the situation and he requested that two infantry divisions (24 battalions) and six Don Cossack regiments should be sent to Tiflis at once.

Some reinforcements were already on the way. A combined Guards infantry regiment comprised of the second battalions of the Moscow and Grenadier Guards arrived in Tiflis on 29 August. In addition, Nicholas ordered the 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and one regular cavalry regiment (2<sup>nd</sup> Uhlans) to move to the south Caucasus. But the emperor did not accept Ermolov’s cautious strategy. Instead he stated that the 30,000 men already deployed in the southern Caucasus were sufficient for a garrison of 2,000 soldiers to defend Tiflis and for a field army of 15,000 to counter-attack into the khanates first of Īravān and then Nakhjavān, after which Nicholas believed they might even be able to invade Iran and strike towards Tabrīz.

Least welcome of all to Ermolov must have been the news that the emperor was sending General Karl von Diebitsch to inspect the situation in the theatre and make recommendations. Diebitsch was the best staff officer in the Russian army. His brilliant performance in 1812-14 had won him promotion to the rank of lieutenant-general in 1814 aged only 28. By 1826 he was one of the emperor's adjutants-general and the closest thing Russia had to a chief of the general staff. Ermolov must have known that Diebitsch would not be fooled by any excuses and that Nicholas would trust his recommendations. In the event Diebitsch's report led to Ermolov's replacement.<sup>51</sup>

Nicholas I initially intended to replace Ermolov by General P. S. Kotliarevskii, a man with long experience of warfare in the Caucasus but Kotliarevskii had not yet recovered from serious wounds and refused. As a result, the emperor in the end chose General Ivan Paskevich, who had arrived in Tiflis on 9 September initially as Ermolov's subordinate.<sup>52</sup> Not until early 1827 was Ermolov formally relieved and Paskevich appointed in his place, and in the meantime the relationship between the two generals was bound to be difficult. As already noted, the two generals were old rivals. Though Paskevich was junior to Ermolov, he was known to be Nicholas I's favourite general: the future tsar had served under Paskevich as a young officer and even as emperor called his old mentor 'father-commander'. Moreover after Diebitsch's visit it was not hard to guess that Ermolov's

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<sup>51</sup> On Diebitsch see Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon: The Battle for Europe, 1807 to 1814*: especially pp. 177-8; Bezotosnyi, *Otechestvennaia voina 1812 goda: Entsiklopediia*, p. 245. On the Guards see S. P. Khval' and A. F. Efimov, eds., *Rossiiskaia imperatorskaia gvardiia* (Moskva: Slavia, 2005), pp. 396-97. One company formerly of the Semenovsky Guards but demoted to the line and sent to the Caucasus after the 'mutiny' of 1820 was integrated into the combined regiment and its soldiers had their status as Guardsmen restored.

<sup>52</sup> For details of the campaigns of 1826-7 in Iran, see "Voennye deistviia rossiiskoi armii v Persii v 1826 i 1827 godakh," VZ, no. I (1829): pp. 68-114; "Voennye deistviia rossiiskoi armii v Persii v 1826 i 1827 godakh," VZ, no. II (1829): pp. 158-76; "Sovremennye letopisi: Vzglad na podvigi rossiian v Persii v 1826 i 1827 g.," pp. 168-202; "Persidskaia voina: Kompaniia 1826 goda iz zapisok grafa Simonicha."

days were numbered. Inevitably Paskevich's arrival caused tensions in the Caucasian Corps which Ermolov had commanded for almost a decade and in which he had built up his own following. Constant campaigning, not to mention Ermolov's own inclinations, meant that the Caucasian Corps looked shabby by comparison with the Petersburg parade grounds where Paskevich had served in recent years. Nevertheless Paskevich was very far from being a mere parade-ground soldier: he too had a fine fighting record in 1806-14, rising to the rank of lieutenant-general aged only 32 on merit and well before he received any special imperial notice or patronage. At Borodino, standing at the very centre of the Russian line, half his division were casualties by the early afternoon with hours of combat still to follow. Almost inevitably, Ermolov and Paskevich immediately disagreed on strategy. Paskevich arrived fully aware of the emperor's wish for a rapid counter-attack and anxious to add to his own reputation, and perhaps also to his claims to succeed Ermolov. He argued for an immediate attack on 'Abbās Mīrzā's army which Ermolov considered untimely and unwise.<sup>53</sup>

In fact, however, Ermolov's hand was forced by events at Shūsha where the besieged garrison of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Jaegers was running out of supplies. Correctly, Ermolov attached no strategic significance to Shūsha. 'Abbās Mīrzā in fact had made a serious mistake in stopping to besiege the town rather than merely covering it with a small force and pressing on towards Tiflis with his whole army before the surprised Russians had time to concentrate their forces to defend it. In other ways too the stubborn defence of Shūsha by the 42<sup>nd</sup> Jaegers had been of great use to the Russian commanders. 'Abbās Mīrzā's army devastated Qarabāgh and his irregular tribal

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<sup>53</sup> On Paskevich's career and his appointment to the Caucasus see I. Paskevich, "Iz zapisok fel'dmarshala kniazia Paskevicha," *Russkii arkhiv* I(1889): pp. 407-24. Nicholas's first choice to succeed Ermolov had in fact been a veteran of the Caucasian theatre, P. S. Kotliarevskii but he declined because of his wounds: John F. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus* (London: Longmans, 1908), p. 157.

cavalry would have done the same to Georgia had the Crown Prince not kept them near Shūsha and within the khanate to support the siege. If the Russian army's logistical base in Georgia had been ravaged in 1826 then it would have been impossible to support a counter-offensive from Georgia through Qarahbāgh and from there into Iran in 1827.<sup>54</sup> Above all, the defence of Shūsha forced the Russians to advance to its relief and fight 'Abbās Mīrzā's army. The result was a decisive victory which was the turning point in the war and which proved that Nicholas and Paskevich had in fact been correct and that Ermolov's analysis of the situation had been too pessimistic.<sup>55</sup>

The order for the advance of the Russian main army from Tiflis to the relief of Shūsha was issued on 16 September. But in fact on the previous day, 15 September, the Russian advance guard of 3,000 men under Major-General Prince Valerian Madatov had routed 11,000 Iranians near Shamkīr on the road between Tiflis and Ganjah (Elizavetpol). Madatov himself was from the small Armenian aristocracy of the khanate of Qarahbāgh but had joined the Russian army in St. Petersburg aged seventeen. His performance on many battlefields between 1808 and 1814 won him forgiveness for previous sins and eventual promotion to the rank of Major-General. When the 1826 war began he was the Russian commander in the former khanates of Shakī, Shirvān and Qarahbāgh. The key to his victory at the Battle of Shamkīr on 15 September 1826 seems to have been his artillery which threw the Iranian cavalry into confusion. Also important was the fact that the Iranian commander (and 'Abbās Mīrzā's maternal uncle), Amīr Khān, was killed early on in the battle. Since the loyalties of much of the army, and especially of its irregular

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<sup>54</sup> AAE, cp: Russie, tome: 173, pp. 265-267.

<sup>55</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 1065, pp. 11-15ob.

cavalry, were above all to their own chieftains Amīr Khān's death had a disastrous effect on his men's morale and discipline.<sup>56</sup>

Hearing of his uncle's death and the defeat of his army 'Abbās Mīrzā abandoned the siege of Shūsha and advanced to meet the Russian forces. Paskevich himself moved from Tiflis, joined with Madatov, and on 25 September the two armies fought a decisive battle near Ganjah. Paskevich commanded some 11,000 men, 'Abbās Mīrzā roughly 35,000, of whom 15,000 were regular infantry. For once too Iranian and Russian forces had equal numbers of cannon. Had the Iranian regulars actually been of equal calibre to the Russians then a battle at such unequal odds could only have had one result. In reality, however, arming men with firearms and teaching them basic drill was far easier than creating disciplined units which would preserve their calm and their formation while moving under fire on the battlefield. Even harder was training commanders who could coordinate the movements of infantry, cavalry and artillery. Apparently Paskevich initially had some doubts of success partly because of superior enemy numbers but also because he suspected the discipline of the Caucasian Corps. In fact the battle was a rout: 'Abbās Mīrzā's own errors and the effect on his troops' confidence of the defeat at Shamkīr contributed to the disaster but the main factor was superior Russian discipline and tactical skill. The Russian infantry calmly beat off the attacks of 'Abbās Mīrzā's irregular cavalry who had no chance of breaking into compact Russian defensive formations. Even well-trained regular cavalry had little hope of defeating infantry squares unless supported by horse artillery, but co-ordination of cavalry and artillery on the battlefield was always difficult and required a level of professional skill well beyond the Iranian troops or their commanders. Russian

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<sup>56</sup> For details of the battle see Potto, *Kavkazskaia voina: Persidskaia voina 1826-1828 gg.*, III: pp. 93-108.

firepower and discipline won an easy victory at the cost of only 300 men. The Crown Prince got away across the river Aras on 30 September back into Iran with most of his guns and his men but the invasion of the southern Caucasus was finished and the morale of the Iranian army never fully recovered from the defeat.<sup>57</sup>

The results of the Russian victory were far-reaching. ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s defeat led immediately to the relief of Shūsha and to the restoration of Russian control of the whole of Qarahbāgh. A few days later a small Russian force under Major General D. V. Davydov expelled the khān of Īravān from the border districts north of Gukchah, thereby removing any threat to Tiflis from the south. With the Iranian threat to Tiflis removed, Ermolov could now begin preparing expeditions for the pacification of the remaining localized revolts. Immediately, disputes resumed between Ermolov and Paskevich over strategy. While Ermolov wished to prioritise crushing Muslim revolts and restoring full Russian control in its south Caucasian territories, Paskevich argued for an immediate advance into Iran to exploit the demoralisation of ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s army and bring the war to an end. Inevitably personal and factional rivalries became involved in disputes over strategy. The usual jealousies occurred over who would be rewarded for the victories over Iran, with Caucasian corps veterans complaining that Paskevich and his followers were stealing the credit.

In fact both Ermolov and Paskevich’s strategies were defensible. Paskevich was correct to argue that the expulsion of ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s army meant that the rebellions in the Russian south Caucasus were doomed. He was also correct to argue that in military terms now was the moment to strike at the heart of ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., pp. 108-26.

power and bring the war to an end by taking Tabrīz.<sup>58</sup> This was even more true than Paskevich realised since the Crown Prince had in usual fashion discharged most of his 'regular' infantry units after the campaign for financial reasons and would now be almost wholly dependent on his irregular cavalry until the spring.<sup>59</sup>

But Paskevich's opponents also had good arguments. They stressed that in Shirvān, Mustafā, the former khān, still had 5,000 cavalymen, while 2,000 Iranians and four guns were blockading Qūbā. In Bākū, the former khān was besieging the Russian garrison with 2,000 men. Moreover Prince Alexander Bagration, the pretender to the Georgian throne, was still a significant threat in the north-east, since the Lezghien tribesmen whom he had recruited were capable of devastating raids into the Georgian province of Kakheti. But above all Ermolov's supporters stressed the great risks of any advance into Iran. Paskevich's force had insufficient supplies for an offensive towards Tabrīz. Once in Iran their communications could be threatened by nomadic tribes and Paskevich had insufficient cavalry to keep 'Abbās Mīrzā's irregulars at bay. In addition, 'Abbās Mīrzā could draw the Russian force into Iranian territory while sending his cavalry across the Aras to reignite trouble in Qarahbāgh.

In the event on 22 October Paskevich made a formal request to cross the Aras into Iran in order to defeat 'Abbās Mīrzā once and for all. Having covered himself in this way, he crossed the river Aras into Iran on 6 November. He later justified this move by arguing that it was essential to stop 'Abbās Mīrzā's cavalry from raiding into Qarahbāgh and even forcing some families from Qarahbāgh to re-settle across the river in Iran. He also claimed that he was carrying out a necessary reconnaissance to discover 'Abbās Mīrzā's whereabouts and the condition of the Iranian army. There

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<sup>58</sup> Şādiq Ḥaydarī-nīyā, "Bāzkhwānī-yi Jaygāh-i Āzarbayjān va Mardmānash dar Andīshah -i 'Abbās Mīrzā pas az Shikast dar Jang'ha-yi Īrān va Rūsīyah," *Ārām* 30-1(1391 [2012/2013]): pp. 127-40; Nāhīd 'Abidīnī, "Tabrīz dar Ṭul-i Jang'hā-yi Īrān va Rūsīyah," *Ārām* 24-5(1389 [2010/2011]): pp. 121-44.

<sup>59</sup> AAE, cp: Russie, tome: 173, pp. 281-283.

were two reasons why Paskevich in retrospect gave his advance a far more limited goal than he had initially intended. In the first place it soon became clear that an advance to Tabrīz was impossible for lack of adequate supplies. Secondly Nicholas I himself now ordered that no advance deep into Iran should be attempted until the Russian rear was pacified, sufficient supplies were gathered, and adequate reinforcements had arrived. In mid-November Paskevich's army re-crossed the river Aras into Russian territory, Major-General Afanasii Krasovskii's 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division arrived in Tiflis and Ermolov ordered all troops into their winter quarters, meanwhile reporting correctly to the emperor that all the revolts in the southern Caucasus had been crushed. The 1826 campaign was over and planning for the 1827 campaign could begin. But Ermolov himself was now relieved of his command and left Tiflis. Russian strategy for the 1827 campaign would be decided by Paskevich in Tiflis and Diebitsch and the tsar in St. Petersburg.

## **The 1827 Campaign**

Russia's goal in the 1827 campaign was to force the Iranians to accept defeat and to cede to Russia the khanates of Īravān and Nakhjavān, and a frontier demarcated by the rivers Aras and Kura. The increasing likelihood of a war with the Ottoman empire in the near future made it necessary to end the conflict with Iran as quickly as possible. The Russian goal could probably only be achieved by invading Iran itself and taking at least Tabrīz. Russian optimism that this goal could be achieved was increased by intelligence that the Iranian people's enthusiasm for the war had cooled because of the great burdens it had entailed. Morale in the army was low because of repeated defeats and the unexpected death of Sayīd Muḥammad, the

most bellicose of the Shi'i *mujtahids*, had taken much of the wind out of *'ulamā* support for *jihād*. Nevertheless invading Iran was not an easy task, above all for reasons of climate, terrain and logistics. In most of the region the weather ruled out campaigning in the winter or the high summer since this would result in enormous losses. The campaigning season was therefore both short and likely to be brought to a temporary halt by the intense heat of July and August . An invasion into Iran had to be launched through the border khanates of Īravān and Nakhjavān , neither of which were yet occupied by Russian forces when the 1827 campaign began, or from Qarahbāgh, which had been devastated in 1826. Even Georgia would be hard-pressed to supply Paskevich's army as it advanced into Iran but, in addition, dragging supplies forward by land from Georgia was a slow and difficult business. Moving through poor or ravaged territory the men, horses and oxen of the supply train could well end up eating the provisions they were supposed to be delivering to the army. Long lines of communications were also a fine target for irregular tribal cavalry, which were the most dangerous element in the Iranian army.

The plan devised by Paskevich and Diebitsch gave Major-General Nikita Pankrat'ev, the commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade of Krasovskii's 20<sup>th</sup> Division, the task of covering Qarahbāgh against Iranian raids and developing a secure line of supply down the rivers Aras and Kura to Sālyān near the Caspian Sea. Supplies would be shipped from Astrakhan by sea, off-loaded at Baku, and then transported by land along the short journey to Sālyān. Protecting this extended line was potentially exceedingly difficult, as Tālīsh remained in the hands of the rebellious and pro-Iranian Mīr Ḥasan. Iranian troops were stationed in Lankaran which was situated only 128 kilometres from Sālyān, the hub of the Russian waterway supply system.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> The Russian supply system became the chief failure of the war. Though it was carefully planned on paper, it easily broke down in practice. Seemingly, one of the vexing problems was related to means

The supply route through Sālyān opened in the middle of June and was soon harassed by Iranian cavalry. Outnumbered, the local Russian commander was forced to order the evacuation of Sālyān island and it was occupied by the enemy on 22 June. Had the Iranians been able to maintain their position at Sālyān the consequences for Paskevich would have been dire. However, Pankrat'ev's counter-attack caused the Iranians themselves to withdraw days later.

After this there were no further significant Iranian attempts to disrupt Russian supplies, penetrate into the Qarahbāgh, or raise popular revolts in Daghestan. The left flank accomplished its mission and an excellent supply system was established which was to serve Paskevich well. The successful execution of Paskevich's orders was owed above all to Nikita Pankrat'ev, who like most other Russian generals had distinguished himself in 1812-14, in his case initially as Mikhail Kutuzov's aide-de-camp and then in various staff positions. But the opening up of this supply line also showed the crucial importance of Russian naval dominance of the Caspian Sea and of its acquisition of Baku, both of which were results of the war of 1804-13 and of the Treaty of Gulistān.<sup>61</sup>

Until the line of supply across the Caspian Sea came into continuous and effective operation from July Paskevich was forced to fend for himself as he advanced through the khanates of Īravān and Nakhjavān . He faced many difficulties and soon realised that Diebitsch's plan to conquer the two khanates and even move on to Tabrīz before the summer heat paralysed operations was too optimistic. The first step in the advance of Paskevich's main army was the conquest of the khanate of

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of transportation. The region was not suitable to provide sufficient fodder and hay for the oxen that caused a disaster; a huge amount of animals – i.e. oxen and artillery and cavalry horses were died of malnutrition. This vitally stalled the movement of supplies.

<sup>61</sup> On Pankrat'ev see V. M. Bezotosnyi, ed. *Zagranichnye pokhody rossiiskoi armii 1813-1815 gody: Entsiklopediia*, vol. II (Moskva: Rosspen, 2011), pp. 191-92.

Īravān.<sup>62</sup> This had a political as well as a military aspect. Without openly and finally breaking his links to ‘Abbās Mīrzā, the head of the Armenian Church, the Catholicos Nerses, urged the Russians to invade and annex Īravān, promising them both supplies and armed support from the local Armenian population.<sup>63</sup> Though he never fully trusted Nerses, Paskevich accepted his offer of support and in mid-April the Russian campaign began. Nerses himself accompanied the six-battalion Russian advance guard commanded by Major-General Konstantin Benckendorff which headed to Echmiadzin, where the headquarters and cathedral of the Armenian Church was located. Benckendorff had been an extremely successful light cavalry commander in 1812-14, leading a number of daring raids deep into the enemy rear. He had served as an aide-de-camp to the emperor and his brother Alexander, the recently appointed Head of the Gendarmerie and the Third Section,<sup>64</sup> was one of the tsar’s closest advisors.<sup>65</sup>

Benckendorff took Echmiadzin but quickly discovered that Nerses’s promises of abundant supplies were false. This was potentially a disaster for Paskevich since the Echmiadzin district was supposed to feed not only Benckendorff’s men but Paskevich’s entire force for at least a month. Probably Paskevich and Diebitsch had

<sup>62</sup> GARF, fond: 109, opis’: 3a, delo: 1151, pp. 1-3ob.

<sup>63</sup> "Armianskii polk, sformirovannii v 1827g.," *Tiflisskii vestnik* 1877, pp. 1-2; "Armianskii polk, sformirovannii v 1827g.," *Tiflisskii vestnik* 1877, p. 1. For the mass immigration of Armenians, RGVIA, fond: 846, opis’: 16, delo: 978, pp. 2-14ob. Not only the Armenians but also Karapapakhs immigrated into the newly annexed regions in the Caucasus, see RGVIA, fond: 846, opis’: 16, delo: 979, pp. 1-12ob.

<sup>64</sup> Alexander Benckendorff served as Head of Gendarmes, but the office of the Executive Director of the Third Section was not formally merged with Head of Gendarmes until 1829. For details of the Third Section, see Sidney Monas, *The Third Section: Police and Society in Russia under Nicholas I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961); Peter Stansfield Squire, *The Third Department: The Establishment and Practices of the Political Police in the Russia of Nicholas I* (Cambridge: CUP, 1968); *Tret’e otdelenie: pervyi opyt sozdaniia professional’noi spetssluzhby v rossiiskoi imperii, 1826-1880*, (Moskva: Tsentrpoligraf, 2006). For the former intelligence service of the Russian empire, see *Ocherki istorii rossiiskoi vneshnei razvedki*, VI vols., vol. I (Moskva: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1999); V. M. Bezotosnyi, *Razvedka i plany storon v 1812 godu* (Moskva: Rosspen, 2005); M. N. Alekseev, *Voennaia razvedka v Rossiiskoi Imperii* (Moskva: Veche, 2010); V. I. Porokh and O. B. Rosliakov, *III otdelenie pri Nikolae I* (Saratov: Saratovskaia Gosudarstvennaia Akademiia Prava, 2010).

<sup>65</sup> On Benckendorff see Bezotosnyi, *Otechestvennaia voina 1812 goda: Entsiklopediia*, p. 59.

been a little naïve in counting on the district to support so many troops. Ermolov, with his long experience in the region, had always been much more realistic about the problems of feeding an army operating on Iranian territory. Very soon Benckendorff's men began to starve and it took great efforts by Paskevich to mobilise provisions in Georgia and then get them to Echmiadzin through torrential rain and impassable roads. The supply convoy finally reached Benckendorff on 5 May but Paskevich wrote that he had been forced to scour all of Georgia to find 800 oxen to pull the carts. Moreover, the delay had ruined Paskevich's timetable. He had planned to leave Tiflis with his main army on 6 May and to begin the siege of Īravān by mid-May. As it turned out, he only left the Georgian capital on 24 May.

Benckendorff's advance guard left Echmiadzin on 6 May after stocking up with supplies and quickly surrounded the town of Īravān on all sides. But of all Iran's fortresses, Īravān was probably the strongest, and without siege artillery there was little hope of securing its capitulation. The heavy guns, ammunition and supply wagons needed for a siege never moved quickly in any terrain. They could only crawl through Georgia and the khanate of Īravān and could not reach the besieged fortress until August. Therefore, Diebitsch and Paskevich had authorized Benckendorff to win over the ruler of the khanate, Ḥusayn Khān, by promising that if he surrendered the fortress he would be allowed to retain his position as regional governor and receive all the income from his former khanate for the rest of his life. As Ḥusayn Khān was eighty years old and had no sons, the Russians could happily make this promise in the knowledge that it would not be long before they could impose direct rule on Qarahbāgh. However, Ḥusayn Khān refused the Russian offer and from his nearby fortress of Sardārābād sent out cavalry detachments to raid Russian communications and attempt to break the blockade of Īravān. A number of

cavalry skirmishes resulted but even Russian victories in these minor battles were unable to end Ḥusayn Khān's attacks on the rear of the Russian forces besieging the fortress.

On 27 June Paskevich and the main forces of the right flank finally arrived at Īravān, to find Benckendorff's force hard hit by the heat and disease. Paskevich now had to choose between either remaining around Īravān and trying to capture Ḥusayn Khān's fortress at Sardārābād, or pressing on south toward Nakhjavān. On paper the first option might look safer but Paskevich would be hard-pressed to feed his much larger force if he encamped alongside Benckendorff outside Īravān. In any case, since the siege of Īravān could not truly begin until the arrival of his heavy artillery in August, to sit down now outside the fortress meant to delay any attack on Tabrīz until the autumn. With Diebitsch and Nicholas I, not to mention Paskevich himself, very anxious to bring the campaign to a rapid close the decision was taken to advance to Nakhjavān with the main force of 15,000, leaving the 6,000 men of Krasovskii's 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division to cover Īravān and defend the army's line of communications.

Paskevich occupied Nakhjavān without resistance on 8 July and immediately moved on to besiege the fortress of 'Abbāsābād. Whereas Nakhjavān was a half-ruined town of no military importance, 'Abbāsābād controlled a key crossing of the river Aras and was the last stronghold in the khanate still held by the Iranians. The Crown Prince, whose army was positioned in Iranian territory not far beyond the river Aras, could not stand by idly while 'Abbāsābād fell to the Russians.<sup>66</sup> He therefore advanced to the rescue of its garrison. Warned by his cavalry of 'Abbās Mīrzā's approach, Paskevich raised the siege of 'Abbāsābād and marched to meet

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<sup>66</sup> Inzhener-Pol'kovnik Litov, "Osada Abaz-abada proizvedennaia v iiule 1827 goda, pod nachal'stvom komandira otdel'nogo kavkazskogo korpusa, generala ot infanterii general-adiutant Paskevicha," *Inzhenernie zapiski* XXII, no. 1 (1839): pp. 1-13.

him. The Russian general knew that if he defeated ‘Abbās Mīrzā then the garrison of ‘Abbāsābād would probably give up hope and surrender. A golden chance of catching an Iranian army on the march and crushing it in a battle the Russians were nearly certain to win was not to be missed. All Paskevich’s calculations proved correct. On 18 July he defeated ‘Abbās Mīrzā at the battle of Javān-Būlāq and ‘Abbāsābād promptly surrendered. In this case Iranian defeat owed much to very poor Iranian reconnaissance and ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s ineptness. Paskevich caught the Crown Prince by surprise by making the difficult river crossing at speed and then marching 16 km in three hours. ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s infantry and artillery was still far behind when Paskevich’s army attacked and routed its isolated cavalry.

The battle of Javān-Būlāq showed Paskevich’s skill and daring as a commander and the quality of his army but it did not end the war.<sup>67</sup> ‘Abbās Mīrzā was still unwilling to agree to the surrender of the khanates of Īravān and Nakhjavān. His stubbornness had some grounds. The Russians could win easy victories in the field but coping with problems of supply and with the region’s climate and terrain were a much greater challenge. ‘Abbās Mīrzā and Ḥusayn Khān of Īravān understood that Paskevich’s long supply lines were vulnerable to attack. Deep raids into the enemy rear were one of the trademarks of Iranian-style warfare. If the Iranian cavalry could destroy Paskevich’s lines of communication and disrupt his supplies then there was a chance that his whole campaign would be ruined. Even a few weeks delay would save the fortress of Īravān and wreck any chance of Paskevich advancing on Tabrīz in 1827. ‘Abbās Mīrzā and Ḥusayn Khān also knew that Paskevich had divided his army and that the smaller part of it under Krasovskii might well be vulnerable to attack. Krasovskii’s men, who were experiencing their first summer in

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<sup>67</sup> On the battle of Javān-Būlāq, see RGVIA, fond: 846, opis’: 16, delo: 4321.

the southern Caucasus, were in fact suffering terribly. By the beginning of July there had been no rainfall for weeks, his horses were dying for lack of forage and half his men were sick. On 3 July General Krasovskii therefore abandoned the blockade of Īravān and retreated to easily defensible higher ground close to water and forage to await the end of summer and the arrival of the siege artillery.

Of course the Russians could not hide this move from Ḥusayn Khān's cavalry. After a brief truce in which peace negotiations were tried and failed, 'Abbās Mīrzā and Ḥusayn Khān decided to mount a massive cavalry raid with 30,000 men on Paskevich's rear and destroy Krasovskii's force. Because the Iranian cavalry had no chance of attacking Krasovskii successfully in his well-protected camp, 'Abbās Mīrzā and Ḥusayn Khān decided to lure him down on to flat ground by threatening to storm Echmiadzin which was defended by just one battalion and five guns. The loss of Echmiadzin, the spiritual capital of Armenians, and the probable massacre of its population would have been an enormous blow to Russian prestige. It would also have opened the road right back to Tiflis to Iranian raids. Almost as important, the heavy artillery needed to take the fortress of Īravān was moving up this road. Its loss would ruin Paskevich's campaign. When the Iranian attack on Echmiadzin began on 28 August Krasovskii advanced to rescue the town with his tiny force of 1,800 infantry, 500 cavalry and 12 guns. In a five-hour battle at Ashtarak the next day half his force were killed or wounded but the Russians broke through to rescue the garrison of Echmiadzin and 'Abbās Mīrzā retreated back over the river Aras to Iranian territory.

The threat to his rear persuaded Paskevich to abandon his plans to move on Tabrīz immediately and instead to secure his communications and concentrate on capturing Īravān. So long as the fortress remained in Iranian hands Paskevich's

communications would be vulnerable. He would also need to split his army in order to blockade Īravān's garrison: the disaster which had almost overtaken Krasovskii's force was a reminder of just how dangerous this might be. With his siege train at last on the scene there was good reason to seize the opportunity to finally capture the Iranians' strongest fortress between the Caucasus and Tabrīz. There were also signs that the failure to destroy even Krasovskii's tiny force despite the enormous odds in the Crown Prince's favour had inflicted great damage on Iranian morale. Ḥusayn Khān himself withdrew to Iran and Sardārābād fell with little resistance on 30 September.<sup>68</sup> Less than two weeks later Īravān surrendered after five days' bombardment.<sup>69</sup>

By now it was mid-October and little time remained if the war was to be concluded in this campaign. But in fact Iran's will to continue the war was crumbling. After so many failures, culminating in the victory of even Krasovskii's tiny force at Ashtarak, the morale of 'Abbās Mīrzā's irregular cavalry and its faith in his leadership plummeted. With no plunder and no glory to be had, much of the irregular cavalry dispersed. So too did 'Abbās Mīrzā's infantry since he had no means to pay them. Not only was 'Abbās Mīrzā's purse empty but there were also little ammunition left in the Tabrīz arsenal. Appeals for help to Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh achieved nothing: relations between father and son had been ruined by the failure of what the shah was happy to see as 'Abbās Mīrzā's war'. An Ottoman agent reported

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<sup>68</sup> General-Maior Truzson, "Osada Sardar-abada proizvedennaia pod nachal'stvom komandira otdel'nogo kavkazskogo korpusa, generala ot infanterii general-adiutant Paskevicha, v Sentia bre 1827," *Inzhenernie zapiski* XXII, no. 1 (1839): pp. 14-41.

<sup>69</sup> "Otryvok, iz dnevnika puteshestviia dlya osmotra erivanskoi oblasti," *Moskovskii telegraf* XIX, no. 4 (1828): pp. 560-67; "Dva pis'ma iz Erivani 1827," *Moskovskii telegraf* XIX, no. 2 (1828): pp. 157-90.

that ‘Abbās Mīrzā was considering seeking the sultan’s protection and fleeing to Ottoman territory since this was preferable to falling into Russian hands.<sup>70</sup>

When Paskevich moved back to besiege Īravān he left a small force of 6,000 men under Lieutenant General Prince Eristov to cover the border between Qarahbāgh and Iran, and to keep an eye on ‘Abbās Mīrzā. Eristov’s men could rely on supplies sent from Baku through Sālyān and guarded by Nikita Pankrat’ev’s brigade. Eristov’s reconnaissance across the river Aras revealed the increasing disintegration of the Iranian army. Paskevich had permitted Eristov to make sorties across the river but had forbidden any serious advance deep into Iranian territory. But with the Iranian army in obvious disarray Eristov allowed a small force under Colonel N. N. Murav’ev to probe deeply towards Tabrīz. When news reached ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s remaining forces on 14 October that Īravān had finally fallen most of the soldiers decamped. The Crown Prince himself with a small entourage rode west to Khūy, within range of the Ottoman border. Sensing his opportunity, Murav’ev headed for Tabrīz where he arrived on 25 October.

Tabrīz had a garrison of 6,000 men, a population of 60,000 and stout city walls. Allāh Yār Khān, the shah’s first minister and one of the key supporters of the war urged a last stand but was persuaded by Mīr Fath Sayīd, the senior member of the Tabrīz *‘ulamā*, that resistance was futile.<sup>71</sup> Murav’ev’s tiny force entered Tabrīz unopposed, capturing all ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s cannon in the process. Their loss was an additional guarantee that Iranian resistance was at an end.<sup>72</sup> The civilian population, including the *‘ulamā*, accepted Russian occupation and the end of the war with relief. Meanwhile both Eristov and Paskevich raced towards Tabrīz in order not to leave all

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<sup>70</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 767, gömlek: 36145 (24/03/1827). Percy M. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, II vols., vol. II (London: Macmillan, 1915), p. 419.

<sup>71</sup> Following the war, Mīr Fath Sayīd left for Tiflis and then was awarded with a medal by Nicholas I, see RGVIA, fond: 846, opis’: 16, delo: 4331.

<sup>72</sup> On the capture of Ardabīl, see RGVIA, fond: 846, opis’: 16, delo: 4319.

the glory to Murav'ev. On 31 October Paskevich himself and part of his cavalry entered the city. The war was over though diplomatic negotiations leading towards the peace treaty lasted four more months. But the treaty itself and the post-war order it created in the southern Caucasus will be the subject of chapter seven.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Robert Grant Watson, *A History of Persia from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the Year 1858* (London: Smith, Elder, 1866). For the Farsi version of the Treaty of Turkmanchāy, see Majd, *Mu'āhadāt va Qarārdād'hā'ī Tārīkhī dar Davrah Qājārīyah*, pp. 122-57, 419-22.

## Chapter Six - The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29

It is not my intention to give a detailed description of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29. In the first place, and most importantly, this has already been done even as regards the campaigns in the Caucasus by Monteith, and by Allen and Muratoff in older works and more recently, to some extent, by Alexander Bitis.<sup>1</sup> Secondly the war of 1828-29 was not primarily about the Caucasus either in terms of its causes or in terms of where the main campaigns took place. Nevertheless the thesis cannot afford simply to ignore the 1828-29 war because it was decisive in establishing Russian domination of the Caucasus region, which is the topic of my thesis. In this chapter I will briefly describe the war's causes and course in the Caucasus region.

### The Causes of the War

Partly the war stemmed from Russian dissatisfaction with the results of the previous Russo-Ottoman War of 1806-12.<sup>2</sup> As already mentioned in this thesis, although the Russians defeated the Ottomans they were forced to settle for small gains in the peace treaty of 1812 because of the need to concentrate all their forces against Napoleon's invasion. Though they received Bessarabia, they had to hand back most of Moldavia and Wallachia to the Ottomans. They did not gain possession of the Danube delta nor did they get the right to send warships through the Straits. In

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<sup>1</sup> Monteith, *Kars and Erzeroum with the Campaigns of Prince Paskiewitch in 1828 and 1829*: particularly chapters vi-ix, pp. 156-303; William Edward David Allen and Paul Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1828-1921* (Cambridge: CUP, 1953), pp. 23-45; Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question: Army, Government and Society, 1815-1833*: pp. 274-324, particularly for the Caucasian campaigns of 1828-9, pp. 294-299, 319-324.

<sup>2</sup> On the basic trends in the conduct of Russian diplomacy between 1812 and 1833, see E. P. Kudriavtseva, *Russkie na Bosfore: Rossiiskoe posol'stvo v Konstantinopole v pervoi polovine XIX veka* (Moskva: Nauka, 2010), pp. 197-260.

the Caucasus region they had to give back the key port of Poti. Even if one just looks at the Caucasus region, it is easy to understand why the Russians were not satisfied by the situation created by the 1812 treaty of Bucharest. Anapa and Poti, the two best ports on the eastern coast of the Black Sea, and the fortress of Suhumkale remained in Ottoman hands.<sup>3</sup> Through them the Ottomans could link up with the Muslim peoples of the Caucasus who were just beginning their war of resistance against Russian rule in the region.<sup>4</sup>

The specific reasons why the war came in 1828 were above all linked to the Greek rebellion, which started in 1821 and lasted throughout the 1820s.<sup>5</sup> The politics involved in the revolt and its attempted suppression by the Ottomans were complicated. This includes events in Greece and disputes among the rebels, as well as the difficult relations between Mahmud II and Mehmed (Muhammad) Ali of Egypt, whom the sultan was forced to use to crush the rebels since the Ottoman forces were too weak to do so.<sup>6</sup> Above all it includes the calculations of the European Great Powers and the relations between them. The important point to note

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<sup>3</sup> For the capture of Suhumkale, see Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, III: chapter xi, pp. 229-34. In 1810, the Abkhazian khan became a Russian subject and converted to Christianity, bringing the major coastal fortress of Suhumkale under Russian control.

<sup>4</sup> For the capture of Anapa by the Russian fleet in 1809, see Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, I: chapter viii, pp. 325-47; Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei 1806-1812 gg.*, II: chapter xix, pp. 531-37.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Montague Woodhouse, *The Greek War of Independence: Its Historical Setting* (Hutchinson, 1952); Richard Clogg, ed. *The Struggle for Greek Independence: Essays to Mark the 150th Anniversary of the Greek War of Independence* (Shoe String, 1973); Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence, 1821-1833* (University of California Press, 1973); Richard Clogg, ed. *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770-1821: A Collection of Documents* (London: Macmillan, 1976); Crawley, *The Question of Greek Independence*.

<sup>6</sup> Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997); Khaled Fahmy, "The Era of Muhammad 'Ali Pasha, 1805-1848 " in *The Cambridge History of Egypt: Modern Egypt, from 1517 to the End of the Twentieth Century* ed. M. W. Daly (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), pp. 139-79; Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, *A History of Egypt: From the Arab Conquest to the Present* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007); Henry Dodwell, *The Founder of Modern Egypt: A Study of Muhammad 'Ali* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011). For the social details of Egypt under the reign of Muhammad Ali, see Fred H. Lawson, *The Social Origins of Egyptian Expansionism during the Muhammad 'Ali Period* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); Daniel Panzac, "The Population of Egypt in the Nineteenth Century," *Asian and African Studies* 21, no. 1 (1987): pp. 11-32; Kenneth M. Cuno, *The Pasha's Peasants: Land, Society, and Economy in Lower Egypt, 1740-1858* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992).

for the purposes of this thesis is that Russian diplomacy skilfully manipulated the other powers. At Navarino on October 20, 1827, the combined British, Russian and French fleets destroyed the Ottoman and Egyptian navies and made any restoration of Ottoman rule in Greece impossible.<sup>7</sup> Russia took the initiative in forming this coalition and guiding it to serve Russian interests. This more or less forced a humiliated Mahmud II to declare a *jihād* against the Russians. But the Ottomans had to fight on their own because Russian diplomacy had ensured that Britain and France would not intervene. Thanks to Paskevich's decisive victory in the 1827 campaign and his subsequent credible threat to march on Tehran unless peace was concluded rapidly, the peace treaty with Iran was signed two months before the Russo-Ottoman war began in 1828. The skilful manner in which Russian diplomacy operated before the war made Russian victory over the isolated Ottomans inevitable.<sup>8</sup>

As with all Russo-Ottoman wars the Balkans were the decisive theatre. This was because the region was more strategic than the Caucasus for an amphibious military operation and Russia could deploy large armies here and because victory in the Balkans allowed the Russians directly to threaten Istanbul. In the region, the main riverways – e.g. Danube River - were vital in order to keep military supply and logistic lines open and active for the Russians as much as the Ottomans. By contrast, it was inconceivable to move very large forces into the southern Caucasus or feed and supply them when they were there. Distances and communications in Anatolia made it impossible for a Russian army to advance through the region and threaten

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<sup>7</sup> The Egyptian fleet under the command of İbrahim Pasha, son of Mehmed Ali Pasha, had already arrived at Navarino on 3 September, see Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'aniüvis Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, I: p. 54. For English-language sources on the battle of Navarino, see Christopher Montague Woodhouse, *The Battle of Navarino* (Chester Springs: Dufour Ed., 1965); R. C. Anderson, *Naval Wars in the Levant, 1559-1853* (Liverpool: University Press, 1952). At the end of the battle, 52 ships had been sunk off; 37 of which belonged to the Ottoman navy, the rest to the Egyptian, for a complete list of the Ottoman and Egyptian sunken or destroyed ships' names, see Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'aniüvis Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, I: p. 65.

<sup>8</sup> For the international politics surrounding the Greek revolt, see Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848*: chapter 14, pp. 637-64.

Istanbul from the east. Russian plans for the 1828 war put all their emphasis on defeating the Ottomans in the Balkans and regarded the Caucasus theatre as of no great significance. The main task of the Caucasus Corps was, by an offensive into Anatolia, to wreck Ottoman military forces, supply and logistics from the Balkan theatre. According to the Russian side, the military success of the Caucasus Corps would make sense only in conjunction with that of the Russian armies in the Balkans, thus it was simply clear that any success of the Caucasus Corps would not be decisive itself.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1828 campaign Russian progress was slower than General Diebitsch, who had drawn up the plan of campaign, intended. As usual in the Balkans, supply problems and disease were major obstacles. Although the Ottoman armies had little chance against the Russians in open battle, they often did fight hard behind fortifications and the need to besiege towns in order to open up lines of supply and communication slowed down any Russian advance. But in the 1829 campaign Diebitsch scattered the Ottoman armies and by marching through Bulgaria threatened Istanbul and forced Mahmud II to make peace. An important element in Russian victory was played by the navy, which dominated the Black Sea and was able greatly to help the army by bringing in supplies once the port of Varna had been captured.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile the Caucasus Corps made a bigger contribution to victory than Diebitsch or Nicholas I had initially expected. In 1828 a combined naval and army expedition captured the key fortress-port of Anapa on which the Ottoman position in the northern Caucasus depended. Meanwhile a detachment of Paskevich's southern army took Poti. The main theatre of war was in eastern Anatolia since Paskevich

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<sup>9</sup> L. Hamilton Rhineland, "Russia's Imperial Policy: The Administration of the Caucasus in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," *CSP* 17, no. 2 (1975): pp. 218-35.

<sup>10</sup> Apart from Bitis, see LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*: pp. 171-74; Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged*: chapter 9, pp. 343-63.

correctly insisted that the only way to defend the long Russian-Ottoman borderline with his far-outnumbered army was to take the initiative and advance into Ottoman territory. Dividing his troops among the possible invasion lines in an attempt to stop the Ottomans from penetrating the Caucasus and linking up with its Muslim peoples was a hopeless strategy. Paskevich moved with a speed that caught the Ottomans by surprise and made it difficult for the various Ottoman commanders to coordinate their efforts, even if they had possessed the skill or the will to do so. In 1826 Mahmud II had destroyed the Janissaries but it would be more than 20 years before a truly professional European-style army was created. In any case, the better Ottoman troops were deployed in the Balkans. Actual 'treason' played a smaller part in Ottoman defeat than had been true of the earlier war against Iran but it remained true that local tribes, and especially the Kurds, often helped the invaders.<sup>11</sup> More important was the fact that Paskevich was a far better general than the Ottoman commanders and his army was also much superior in discipline and tactical skill. Kars fell in 1828 and Erzurum in 1829 but Paskevich was careful not to push his advance too far given the small size of his army and the problems created by supply, climate and terrain. He nevertheless made a significant contribution to Russia's overall victory and an even bigger one to securing the two key Black Sea ports in the peace treaty.<sup>12</sup>

For the Caucasus Corps, the most critical part in the region was to keep supply and logistic lines functional. As the Caucasus Corps had limited number of soldiers to protect the frontier at all points against a crowded Ottoman force, a

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<sup>11</sup> In the Russo-Iranian War of 1826-8, Süleyman Ağa of Zilanlı had collaborated with the Russians against the Iranian armies and then he sought Russia protection in 1832, RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 1097, pp. 1-5ob.

<sup>12</sup> LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*: p. 174 provides a short summary but for detailed accounts see Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1828-1921*: chapter 2, pp. 23-45; Monteith, *Kars and Erzeroum with the Campaigns of Prince Paskiewitch in 1828 and 1829*: chapters vi-ix, pp. 156-303.

restrained attack was also the best means of defending the Caucasus. As experienced by the Russian army during the previous Russian-Iranian war, an Ottoman occupation of the Russian Caucasus would be a disaster for the image of the Russian imperial authority, especially in the north of the Caucasus. The Ottomans were able to raise about 200,000 regular and irregular troops in Anatolia, but after the abolition of the Janissaries, the performance of the new Ottoman military units was questionable. The formation of the *Asakir-i Muhammeddiye* had not been adequately completed and the Ottoman central authority had been obliged to transfer the effective military resources into the Balkans where the Ottoman authority had been weakened by the long Greek rebellion since 1821. To have a guaranteed and effective military success, at first, the Russian army was to block all military routes and gates leading to Russian territory, in this way each individual pasha would have been forced to defend his own territory; the key point way was to hinder the concentration of Ottoman military forces. Secondly, more or less, there was always a potential of an Ottoman-Iranian military alliance against the Russians, thus all military routes and passes from Iran were to be cut off.<sup>13</sup>

One of the main weaknesses of the Russian army, both in the Balkans and the Caucasus, was the number of fighting men in the field in comparison to the Ottomans. The Ottoman and Russian armies were not numerically equal. Indeed, although it looked like a disadvantage of the Russian army at first, particularly in the Caucasus theatre, during the campaigns it turned into an advantage as it facilitated the ability of the Caucasus Corps to make baffling tactical manoeuvres and mobility

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<sup>13</sup> In this regional crisis period, the Iran was aiming to create new diplomatically and military alliances; while an Iranian envoy was being sent to Istanbul to make an offer to form military alliance with the Ottoman empire against Russia, Khusraw Mirzā was heading towards St. Petersburg over Tiflis in order to overcome the problems which were directly related to the Griboedov affair, see AVPRI, fond: 180, opis': 517/1, delo: 117, pp. 224-225, K. F. Nesselrode to A. I. Ribeaupierre, 6 (18) June 1828.

and to proceed into Anatolia quicker than the Ottomans expected. In this framework, the most vital task was not to give any chance to the Ottoman irregular cavalry forces to break the Russian communication, transportation and supply lines through its flanks, thus the Caucasus Corps would have more advantageous position in case of firstly capturing the fortress of Anapa and then the port of Trabzon. There were two options of attack; the first one was to attack from Ahıska (Akhaltzikhe) and then proceed onto Kars, this was very restrained one; the second one was more aggressively to capture Kars and push to Erzurum.

At his command, Paskevich had 56 battalions of regular infantry, 11 squadrons of regular cavalry, 17 regiments of Kuban and Terek Cossacks and 154 guns in total; rather less than 40,000 men of whom about one-quarter were detached for internal security duties in the north of the Caucasus, there remained available for battle action 36 battalions, eight regular squadrons, 13 Cossacks regiments and 112 guns, disposed as follows; N. P. Pankrat'ev, six battalions of regular infantry, two regiments of Cossacks, 16 guns at Khūy-Julfa; A. G. Chavchavadze, five battalions of regular infantry, one regiment of Cossacks, 10 guns at Īravān (Revan/Erevan); P. V. Popov, two battalions of regular infantry, two regiments of Cossacks, four guns at Borjom Pass; K. F. Hesse, eight battalions of regular infantry, one regiment of Cossacks, 14 guns at Kutaisi; Paskevich, 15 battalions of regular infantry, eight squadrons of regular cavalry, seven regiments of Cossacks, 68 guns at Gumri.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Campaign of 1828**

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<sup>14</sup> Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1828-1921*.

Before the opening of the land campaign on 26 June in the Caucasus,<sup>15</sup> the fortress of Anapa was to be captured by a combined operation of the Russian Black Sea fleet and troops from the Caucasian line.<sup>16</sup> On 15 May, a squadron under the command of Vice Admiral A. S. Greig and Rear Admiral A. S. Menshikov with a force of 4,500-5,000 men headed to Anapa.<sup>17</sup> The first task of the squadron, especially of frigates and light vessels, was to cut off the naval communication and transportation of the fortress. In the meanwhile, few Ottoman attempts aiming to provide 1,500 troops and logistics from Trabzon to the fortress had already failed since the three of six Ottoman vessels were sunk off and the rest were captured by G. I. Nemtinov, the Capitan-Lieutenant of the Corvette Iazon.<sup>18</sup> The fortress could not have been captured by only a naval operation; as the harbour of Anapa was too shallow; the cannon fire from the Russian battleships was not sufficiently effective and destructive to convince the Ottoman garrison to surrender.<sup>19</sup> As a result a combined operation of the naval and land forces was to be carried out. Due to the bad weather conditions, the Russian troops could not for a while disembark from their

<sup>15</sup> The Balkan campaign had started almost three weeks before the Caucasus campaign.

<sup>16</sup> The Russian Black Sea fleet was smaller compared to that of Baltic. It was to be Russia's crucial component to consolidate its authority in the Black Sea with the control of Caucasian coastal line, by blocking Ottomans aids to the Circassians. As already succeeded in the Caspian, the Russian navy was to be superior to that of the Ottoman in the Black Sea.

<sup>17</sup> The squadron was consisting of eight battleship – Parizh, Imperator Frants, Panteleimon, Skoryi, Parmen, Nord-Adler, Pimen, Ioann Zlatoust; four frigates – Flora, Evstafii, Shtandart, Pospeshnyi; one sloop-of-war – Diana; one corvette – Iazon; two bomb-vessels – Podobnyi, Opyt; three brigs – Merkurii, Ganimed, Pegas; one steamship – Meteor; three luggers – Shirokii, Glubokii, Strela; one brigantine – Elizaveta; one yacht – Utekha; one bombardier – Sopernik; one schooner – Sevastopol'; three carriages – Zmeia, Ingul, Nyrok; two cutters – Sokol, Zharovonok. Ottoman archival sources also confirm that the Russian squadron, consisting of 32 ships equipped with artillery, requested that the fortress of Anapa be surrendered. This was refused by Osman Pasha. BOA, HH, dosya: 1090, gömlek: 44291/C, 03/Za/1243 [17 May 1828].

<sup>18</sup> Iovskii, *Posledniaia voina s Turtsieiu, zakliuchaiushchaia v sebe kampaniiu 1828 i 1829 godov v evropeiskoi i aziatskoi Turtsii i na kavkaze*, I: p. 33.

<sup>19</sup> In his letters to the Ottoman government, Osman Pasha of Anapa officially expressed that ranges and calibres of the cannons positioned in Anapa were not sufficient to be able to fight off the Russian battleships and land forces. Seemingly, it was obvious that the Russian firepower played a crucial role during the siege because the location of the fortress was very challenging. In comparison with the Ottoman artillery, the performance and superiority of the Russian heavy artillery was obvious. The size of the cannonballs launched from the Russian artillery had even bedazzled Osman Pasha. BOA, HH, dosya: 1027, gömlek: 42781/F, 07/Za/1243 [21 May 1828]; dosya: 1027, gömlek: 42781/G, 07/Za/1243 [21 May 1828]; dosya: 1027, gömlek: 42781/H, 07/Za/1243 [21 May 1828].

ships on the shore of Anapa. Meanwhile, Russian units of 2,000 men, not a part of the Caucasus Corps, under the command of V. A. Perovskii approached the fortress by land to engage the attention of the Ottoman garrison that could provide an opportunity for the navy to launch an amphibious landing and envelopment.<sup>20</sup> On 19 May, the fortress came under the fire from the Russian battleships and besieged by the land forces.<sup>21</sup> The supply and logistic needs of the Russian naval and land forces were to be provided from Kerch and Sevastopol. The Ottoman garrison did not fail to fight back at the Russian assaults but after the latest Russian raid which was conducted on 22 June, after a brief resistance, the fortress of Anapa surrendered with its garrison of 85 guns and 3,000 men by Osman Pasha on 24 June. Following the achievement of the task, the Black Sea fleet at once turned its attention specifically to the Balkan coastal line to strengthen the supply and logistics chain; that would facilitate the work of the Russian second army in the region.<sup>22</sup>

In the meanwhile, before the opening of the land campaign, Paskevich did not show any open hostility towards the Ottoman side. During the previous war against Iran, the Caucasus Corps had captured huge amounts of provisions and ammunition that would make the Russian war effort more effective against the Ottomans. The equipment of the Russian army had been adequately completed, their cavalry had been remounted, and they were provided with the means of transport. Oddly, the

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<sup>20</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 1042, gömlek: 43115/Ö; Muhtar, *Türkiye Devletinin En Mühim ve Meşhûr Esfârından 1244-1245 H. (1828-1829 M.) Türkiye-Rusya Seferi ve Edirne Mu'âhedes-i Yâhûd Vakitsiz Seferin 'İbret ve İntibâh Dersleri*, I: p. 212.

<sup>21</sup> Though the Russian declaration of war against the Porte had been announced on 26 April, the Ottomans were determined to wait more than three weeks; on 20 May came the official declaration of war on Russia by Sultan Mahmud II, see Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'anüvis Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, I: p. 214.

<sup>22</sup> AVPRI, fond: 180, opis': 517/1, delo: 116, pp. 409-409ob, 415-415ob, 3 (15) October 1828; Iovskii, *Posledniaia voina s Turtsieiu, zakliuchaiushchaia v sebe kampaniiu 1828 i 1829 godov v evropeiskoi i aziatskoi Turtsii i na kavkaze*, I: p. 35; Muhtar, *Türkiye Devletinin En Mühim ve Meşhûr Esfârından 1244-1245 H. (1828-1829 M.) Türkiye-Rusya Seferi ve Edirne Mu'âhedes-i Yâhûd Vakitsiz Seferin 'İbret ve İntibâh Dersleri*, I: p. 212. According to an Ottoman source, the Russians, with a squadron of around 25 ships, began laying a land and sea siege to the fortress on 12 May; it took 45 days to take the fortress and two Ottoman military aid vessels were captured by the Russian navy, see Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'anüvis Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, I: p. 216, pp. 372-73.

Ottoman Serasker of the East, Galib Pasha of Erzurum,<sup>23</sup> for a considerable time, did not regard the Caucasus Corps posed any immediate danger and let Russian military contractors buy all the surplus food and fodder in the region just before the start of hostilities, further crippling Ottoman defences. The slow movement of the Caucasus Corps was very surprising for Galib Pasha as he was informed by the Porte that the Russian Second army had already passed over the Prut and been advancing towards the fortress of İbrail/Brailov in the Balkans on 7 May.<sup>24</sup>

In the last week of May, by the order of Galib Pasha, Mehmed Emin Pasha of Kars dispatched Ottoman official gathering information on any potential threat to the Ottoman border. The official was easily allowed to pass through the border control at Gumri to get to Tiflis through a meandering route as Paskevich had noticed the main reason behind the official visit. More clearly, by coming to this risky decision, the Russian commander was trying to turn the visit into an opportunity to gain sufficient time for completing the war preparation of the Caucasus Corps that would not have been able to be completed no later than the third week of June. The Ottoman official was welcomed by Russian officers at almost every station not to give him any reason to get suspicious of Russian military intention but it was too late when the official noticed the reality which Emin Pasha had already been aware of.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Köse Mehmed is Kousa Mahomed of Monteith, Kiosa-Mehmet of Bitis and finally Köse Mahmud of Beydilli. As it seems there is a frequent mistake in the name of the Ottoman Serasker of the East in the works of Monteith, Allen-Muratoff and Bitis; the Serasker was not Köse Mehmed but Galib Pasha, see Monteith, *Kars and Erzeroum with the Campaigns of Prince Paskiewitch in 1828 and 1829*: p. 157; Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1828-1921*: p. 25; Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question: Army, Government and Society, 1815-1833*: p. 296; Kemal Beydilli, "1828-1829 Osmanlı-Rus Savaşında Doğu Anadolu'dan Rusya'ya Göçürülen Ermeniler," *Belgeler* 13, no. 17 (1988): p. 383. At the outset of the campaign of 1828, Galib and Köse Mehmed Pashas were appointed as the Serasker of the East and the commander of the Ottoman mobile army respectively. Although the name of Galib Pasha as being the Ottoman Serasker of the East is mentioned in the work of Ushakov, one cannot come across the name of the Serasker in none of the works of Monteith, Allen-Muratoff and Bitis.

<sup>24</sup> Ushakov, *Istoriia voennykh deistvii v aziatskoi Turtsii v 1828 i 1829 godakh*, I: p. 187.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 187-88.

On 26 June, Paskevich started his main operation at once from Gumri which was the central point of main transportation and artillery depots, other reserves of guns and ammunition being established at Tiflis, Redutkale, Baku and Darband, furthermore it had been strengthened its fortification against any abrupt Iranian attack.<sup>26</sup> Following the route of Tikhnis, Paldervan and Meshko, by commanding 12-14,000 men, he marched on the fortress of Kars which was not only a strategic military stronghold, but also the pride of the Ottoman defence system in the Caucasus in previous decades. Indeed, the Ottomans had almost entirely neglected the fortifications of all the frontier fortresses and left the eastern ones to their fate by sending limited numbers of regular units and artillery.<sup>27</sup>

The first armed conflict between the Ottoman irregular cavalry, commanded by Şerif Ağa of Magazberd, and the Russians occurred near the village of Meshko which was 30 km far from Kars on 29 June; the main goal of the irregular forces was to cut off the Russian supply and logistics line. Regarding the previous sieges of the fortress of Kars, the hills of Karadağ on its north-eastern side had been interpreted as the most proper point of storming the fortress by Russian commanders. However Paskevich did not agree with this old-fashioned analysis because this region did not have sufficient potential to provide fodder and water sources. Furthermore it was stony, rugged and at least one kilometre far from the fortress. On the other hand, the south-western side of the fortress was much more advantageous in terms of water sources and fodder stocks; more importantly, by encamping on the south-western side, Paskevich would block the Erzurum road that would be a disaster for the

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<sup>26</sup> For the detailed topographical description of the road from Gumri to Erzurum, see RGVIA, fond: 450, opis': 1, delo: 570, pp. 1-2.

<sup>27</sup> Although the fortress of Kars had played an important role previously by withstanding an Iranian siege in 1735 and a Russian siege in 1807, it had been taken by the Iranian armies in 1821. Just after the fall of Kars, Paskevich delivered a rousing speech to Russian soldiers making reference to the unsuccessful siege attempt of Nadir Shah in order to boost their moral, see Iovskii, *Posledniaia voina s Turtsieiu, zakliuchaiushchaia v sebe kampaniiu 1828 i 1829 godov v evropeiskoi i aziatskoi Turtsii i na kavkaze*, I: p. 89.

Ottomans since Köse Mehmed Pasha, commander of the Ottoman mobile army, planning at once to advance from Erzurum to Kars, would not be able to come to the aid of Mehmed Emin.<sup>28</sup> Just after performing a risky 20 km manoeuvre southwards, Paskevich encamped near the village of Küçükev which was situated on hilly terrain where the Russian heavy artillery could easily bombard even the citadel of Kars, known as Narinkale.

In the beginning of the campaign, the formation of the Caucasus Corps was planned as in square formation to resist Ottoman irregular cavalry attacks. As usual this formation was relatively more effective in the Caucasus theatre but Paskevich, just before storming the fortress, decided to replace it with column formation since Mehmed Emin would not hazard his irregular cavalry unit consisted of 5,000 men to launch a frontal attack on the Russian regular forces.<sup>29</sup> Although the walls of the fortress had been adequately strengthened, it had been built on a massive rock surrounded by hills that has made the Ottoman garrison exposed to harsh enemy fires nevertheless. On the whole the Ottoman defence was fair but by no means equalled the attack in skill. The main goal of Mehmed Emin was to stall the Russian forces for a few days until getting sufficient military reinforcement from Erzurum; the fortress of Kars was supposedly one of the most formidable strongholds and its depots of food and ammunition had already been reinforced as needed nevertheless the Ottoman garrison including the militia, had originally amounted to 11,000 men,<sup>30</sup> would not keep the Russians out of the walls for a long time and the fortress was surrendered by Mehmed Emin.<sup>31</sup> In the meanwhile, on 27 June, Köse Mehmed Pasha

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<sup>28</sup> Ushakov, *Istoriia voennykh deistvii v aziatskoi Turtsii v 1828 i 1829 godakh*, I: pp. 199-200.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>30</sup> Muhtar, *Türkiye Devletinin En Mühim ve Meşhûr Esfârından 1244-1245 H. (1828-1829 M.) Türkiye-Rusya Seferi ve Edirne Mu'âhede-i Yâhûd Vakitsiz Seferin 'İbret ve İntibâh Dersleri*, I: p. 210.

<sup>31</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4643, pp. 1-30, 58-128.

was on his way to Kars but Paskevich had besieged the fortress of Kars from the south-west and this had served to blockade the Erzurum-Kars road too; as a result Köse Mehmed was forced to alter the main road to a track, thus losing at least one day to arrive at the fortress of Kars. When the fortress of Kars shared the same fate with Anapa and fell on 5 July and fell to the Caucasian Corps, Köse Mehmed had just appeared on the neighbouring hills; that was almost one-day march away.<sup>32</sup>

One of the main reasons behind the fall of Kars was that this regionally strategic fortress had desperately been garrisoned by the Ottoman provincial militia which was untrained, weak and fragile. Furthermore, the uselessness and incapability of the irregular cavalry facilitated the Russian well-disciplined and trained regular forces to capture the fortress. One of the main strategic and tactical weaknesses of Mehmed Emin Pasha was persistently to avoid performing a partisan warfare which would be disruptive for the Russian supply and logistics chain and confusing for the Russian command, of course, if it had been performed in the right time and place. Mehmed Emin, although deprived of European-style military education and training, had sufficient experience of war to be regarded as professional to defend the fortress but even failed to destroy the bridges connecting the fortress to the outskirts by the time the Russian soldiers just neared the walls. If he had managed to slow down the Russians by blowing up the bridges, the Ottoman reinforcement under the command of Köse Mehmed would have sent the Russian command into a panic as it was just five km far from the town. Had the Ottoman commanders been more dexterous in their own organizations, Paskevich might have encountered a disaster.

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<sup>32</sup> Similar to the Russians, one of the vital problems which the Ottomans had to figure out in the region was the shortage of means of transportation. Before the fall of Kars, Galib Pasha had ordered his commanders to send military reinforcement to Mehmed Emin Pasha however the number of means of transportation in the region – i.e. mules, oxen was not sufficient to deliver it on time. Mehmed Emin's fierce defence nevertheless, the fortress of Kars surrendered to the Russians by *müfti* and notables of the town. Following the fall of the fortress of Anapa and Kars, the garrison commanders, Osman and Mehmed Emin Pashas, were sent to the Crimea and Tiflis respectively. Ibid., pp. 217-18; Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'aniüvis Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, II-III: p. 373.

The fall of Kars effectively destroyed the Ottoman defensive posture and shocked the entire region, while the fall of the fortress of Anapa demoralized and neutralized all the neighbouring northern Caucasian nations. With the fall of the fortress of Kars, the Ottoman operational base separated into two groups. The Ottoman main army under the command of Köse Mehmed bypassed Kars and pushed to Ardahan and Ahıska but then returned to the fortress of Erzurum. Following the fall of Kars, plague symptoms appeared suddenly among the Ottoman prisoners of war. The necessary preventive measures were taken urgently; some quarantine stations were created to keep plague out of the Caucasus Corps that would slow down the Russian advance for three weeks.

After all, the Caucasus Corps, by advancing from Kars, had three optional destinations to reach: Erzurum, Ardahan and Ahılkelek (Akhalkalaki). Strategically, to advance on directly to the fortress of Erzurum would be a very bold and risky assault for the Caucasus Corps in terms of tactical organization and supply and logistics. The fortresses of Ardahan and Ahılkelek were situated on the two distinct sides of the route from Kars to Ahıska. It was much more proper and advantageous to move on the route of Ahılkelek to reach Ahıska than that of Ardahan in terms of securing the supply and logistics chain on the borderline and merging with the military reinforcements arriving from Georgia. If the Caucasus Corps had followed the latter, it might have risked the security within the supply and logistics chain connected to Tiflis and been insecure even for a well-equipped Russian force.<sup>33</sup>

In the meanwhile, the capture of the port of Poti was crucial to receive the additional supply and logistics from the northern side of the Black Sea; for this reason, the Russian forces of K. F. Hesse were ordered to capture of the port and

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<sup>33</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4643, pp. 58-128.

fortress of Poti, garrisoning 600 men, after a siege of seven days, the port surrendered by Arslan Bey on 27 July. The news of the fall of the port would arrive at the headquarters of Paskevich on 4 August. This made possible henceforth direct sea communication between the Crimea and the Azov ports and the south of the Caucasus.<sup>34</sup>

Paskevich therefore decided to head north and capture Ahılkelek and then Ahıska. After three-week quarantine and preparation time for the expedition, on 24 July, a unit of the Russian forces including sieging guns, artillery parks and other equipments advanced southeast towards Erzurum but Paskevich, instead of advancing in the direction of Erzurum, left Kars with 10,000 troops and then headed towards Ahılkelek on 28 July. Meanwhile, the commander of the garrison in Kars, E. A. Bergmann, was ordered to make demonstrations with his 3,000 men and 12 guns against the forces of the Ottoman commander. Upon these, Köse Mehmed and his forces were successfully fooled and kept occupied around the mountain of Soğanlı on the route of Erzurum. In the meanwhile, on 28 July, Paskevich led his main forces across the upland tracks to the fortress of Ahılkelek which was a small military post, garrisoning 1,000-militia, but of great importance from its geographical position. He needed five days to cover almost 100 km from Kars to Ahılkelek, and arrived at Ahılkelek on 4 August, after a fierce resistance of 300 men, the fortress surrendered by Selim Pasha of Ahılkelek on 5 August. With the capture of the fortress of Ahılkelek, the direct communication with Georgia by two routes was opened; and it would facilitate the attack on Ahıska.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Muhtar, *Türkiye Devletinin En Mühim ve Meşhûr Esfârından 1244-1245 H. (1828-1829 M.) Türkiye-Rusya Seferi ve Edirne Mu'âhede-i Yâhûd Vakitsiz Seferin 'İbret ve İntibâh Dersleri*, I: pp. 213, 20.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 220.

There were two routes leading to Ahıska. The circuitous one through Ardahan was 170 kilometres and relatively much more convenient for the means of transportation nevertheless too risky; to follow this route meant to get further away from the supply and logistics base of Gumri. Another disadvantage of this option was that if the Caucasus Corps had followed this route, the fortress of Ardahan must have been captured and then garrisoned by a Russian unit. As stated before, the number of the Russian military personnel was much less than required and expected thus it was not a reasonable option for the Russian command. Had Köse Mehmed moved from Erzurum at once, most likely he might have arrived at Ahıska much before than Paskevich reached Ardahan. It meant that the Ottoman mobile army including 30,000 men might have a vital opportunity to approach the rear of the Caucasus Corps and furthermore the Ottomans might come much closer to the borderline than the Russian command expected; Tiflis was almost 200 km far from there. The other route was just 60 km far from Ahılkelek nevertheless mountainous and not proper for the carriages of supply and logistics. To capture of the fortress of Ahıska would strengthen the tactical position of the Caucasus Corps thus the challenging but the shortest route was to be chosen.<sup>36</sup>

Following the fall of Ahılkelek, on 6 August, Paskevich received crucial information that Köse Mehmed already moved from Ardahan to Ahıska, within the same day the Caucasus Corps also headed for Ahıska without any delay. In the course of marching on Ahıska, the fortress of Hertvis (Khertvis), 25 km far from Ahılkelek, was to be besieged en route. It was an ancient military post and had been built on a massive rock near the river Kura and garrisoned by a unit of 200 men. It

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

was taken without a shot by D. E. Osten-Sacken on 7 August.<sup>37</sup> The distance from Ahılkelek to Ahıska ranged 20 km shorter than that of between Ardahan-Ahıska and furthermore the cross-country mobility of the Russian forces was remarkable one; by relying on these parameters, Paskevich had planned to arrive in the town before the Ottomans however this created a misleading and disappointing result for the Russian command since the terrain was uneven and much difficult than expected. Following the 10-day long marching, on 16 August, the Caucasus Corps could manage to approach the Kura river that was six km far from the town of Ahıska where the Ottoman mobile army of a 30,000 men, 10,000 men of which were the Laz warriors, the rest were irregular cavalry units, and 18 guns under the command of Köse Mehmed and Mustafa Pashas had already reached from the southwest on 15 August.<sup>38</sup>

The northern and western heights surrounding the town were the weakest spots of the fortress. Upon this fact, the Ottoman forces divided into four bodies/headquarters, three of which, mostly irregular cavalry units, positioned on the

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<sup>37</sup> On the capture of the fortress of Ahılkelek and Hertvis, see RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4643, pp. 129-171.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 221. According to some of Russian, English and French secondary sources, Köse Mehmed failed to defend the fortress as he arrived late at Ahıska, as experienced in the case of the fortress of Kars. However the reality was not as these secondary sources have portrayed, see Iovskii, *Posledniaia voına s Turtsieiu, zakliuchaiushchaia v sebe kampaniiu 1828 i 1829 godov v evropeiskoi i aziatskoi Turtsii i na kavkaze*, I: pp. 96-97; Ushakov, *Istoriia voennykh deistvii v aziatskoi Turtsii v 1828 i 1829 godakh*, I: p. 275; Fonton, *La Russie dans l'Asie Mineure, ou Campagne du Marechal Paskevitch en 1828 et 1829*: p. 315; Monteith, *Kars and Erzeroum with the Campaigns of Prince Paskiewitch in 1828 and 1829*: pp. 182-83; Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1828-1921*: pp. 28-29; Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question: Army, Government and Society, 1815-1833*: p. 298. The Ottoman commander, benefiting from the advantage of proper conditions of the route stretching from Ardahan to Ahıska, had arrived in the town at least one day before Paskevich approached the Kura river, see Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'anüvis Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, II-III: p. 370; Muhtar, *Türkiye Devletinin En Mühim ve Meşhûr Esfârından 1244-1245 H. (1828-1829 M.) Türkiye-Rusya Seferi ve Edirne Mu'âhdesi Yâhûd Vakitsiz Seferin 'İbret ve İntibâh Dersleri*, I: p. 221; Erkin, *1828-1829 Türk-Rus Harbi (Kafkas Cephesi)*: p. 43; Çakm, *Osmanlı-Rus Harbi (1828-1829)*: p. 161. Köse Mehmed, however, could not manage to organize the army to defend the fortress in an effective way; seemingly his commanding skills were not sufficient to analyze the quality of the Russian regular forces and the tactical skills of Paskevich. Had he come later than his counterpart, the Ottoman force would hardly have come closer to the walls or the gates of the fortress since the Russian commander would already have cut off the route stretching to Ardahan.

western heights around the fortress. The fourth group under the command of Köse Mehmed was deployed in an area between the fortress and the northern heights to where it was hard to approach directly for the Russians. One clear advantage for the Ottomans was their superior numbers as the Ottoman mobile army was three times the size of its Russian counterpart however two-third of the Ottomans, namely the irregular cavalry units, were not in active position since Köse Mehmed had committed the fatal mistake of separating his forces into four bodies.<sup>39</sup>

Paskevich had doubts about continuing the operation as he had at his disposal only 5,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry. He received, however, at this moment reinforcements of 2,500 men from Tiflis and, counting also on the cooperation of Popov's force of 2,000 men in the Borzhom Pass, he decided to give battle before Ahıska. The first armed-conflict and close-combat occurred on 17 August; despite the numerical superiority of the Ottomans, the Russians managed to fend off the raids of the irregular cavalry and then to approach the fortress three-four km more however it was not a durable and effective solution for the Russian side. Paskevich was not inclined neither to engage in a pitched-battle against the Ottomans nor to lay siege to the fortress since the deployment of the Caucasus Corps was not advantageous to take these risks. The task of top-priority for him was to ensure the security of the Russian headquarters since there was no hope to stop the campaign and to draw back with all the military equipments to Tiflis. On 20 August, Paskevich held a war council with his generals; according to the decisions taken by the council, firstly, despite his strategy of avoiding a pitched-battle against the Ottomans, there

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<sup>39</sup> Muhtar, *Türkiye Devletinin En Mühim ve Meşhûr Esfârından 1244-1245 H. (1828-1829 M.) Türkiye-Rusya Seferi ve Edirne Mu'âhadesi Yâhûd Vakitsiz Seferin 'İbret ve İntibâh Dersleri*, I: p. 222. Though in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Ottoman fortifications in the Balkans came increasingly into line with European practice and were frequently designed by European military advisers, the Porte had kept the fortress of Ahıska out of this renovation process similar to other military posts in the region.

was no option but the Ottoman mobile army was to be crumbled and then it might be much easier to besiege the fortress of Ahıska.<sup>40</sup>

Although the Ottoman combat outposts were courageous and active in the day time but the same could not be claimed for nights as they withdrew from the combat zone. This was considered as a unique opportunity by the Russian command to prepare a bold plan for launching a daring night raid on the Ottomans deployed on the northern side. The western side was not advantageous to be carried out a night raid since there were three distinct Ottoman army bodies and the area where they had been positioned was in the shooting range of the guns deployed on the battlements of the fortress. In order to execute the plan, the Caucasus Corps was to be divided into two groups; while one group consisting of 4,500 men and 39 guns was launching a feint-attack from east and south to distract the attention of the garrison, another including 5,500 infantry, 2,500 cavalry and 25 guns could be carrying out a raid on the northern side; the main aim of the latter was to restrain the Ottomans from retreating towards the Ottoman irregular cavalry bodies positioned in the west.<sup>41</sup>

At the night of 20 August, the Russian unit started its move under the guidance of a local notable, Muta Bey of Ahılkelek, who had been taken prisoner following the fall of Ahılkelek, through foothills of the mountain to the northern side.<sup>42</sup> Paskevich had the aim of proceeding around 10 km all night long however could not manage this since the difficulty of the terrain and the shortness of the nights in summer had not been sufficiently taken into consideration. When the

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> In Ottoman sources, the number of Russian troops is slightly different than the Russian ones on the eve of the battle before Ahıska: 6,000 men were for the feint-attach; a force of 4,000 infantry and 2,600 cavalry was for the attack from north, see *ibid.*, pp. 222-23.

<sup>42</sup> Seemingly, the interesting role of Muta Bey of Ahılkelek in the battle of Ahıska has been overlooked by Ottoman sources. Muta Bey not only guided the Russian army through the mountainous way to the fortress at the night of 20 August, but also was ready for going to the garrison to persuade Köse Mehmed to surrender on 22 August, see Ushakov, *Istoriia voennykh deistvii v aziatskoi Turtsii v 1828 i 1829 godakh*, I: p. 298.

Ottomans realized the Russian raid attempt at dawn, the Russian force was least five km far from where to arrive in and therefore caught unprepared. Upon this, Paskevich renewed the plan at once; according to which, the Russian cavalry changed their direction towards west and continued staging the feint-raid on the enemy thus the Ottoman irregular cavalry bodies got the impression that they had been surrounded from rear and scattered over a large area towards Ardahan. Simultaneously, the Russian regular infantry under the command of A. I. Borodin and N. N. Murav'ev launched a frontal-attack on the Ottomans defensively positioned in front of the fortress; there was no option but to withdraw into the fortress for Köse Mehmed with his force of 5,000 men on 21 August.<sup>43</sup>

In the garrison, the Ottomans had around 15,000 men and 70 guns; at the early morning of on 22 August, Köse Mehmed refused the capitulation offered by Paskevich. Upon this, the heavy artillery was organized to bombard the fortress from the northern heights on 26 August. While the Russian infantry under the command of Borodin was trying to penetrate the breaches in the walls, other forces launched feint-attacks on the fortress from east and west.<sup>44</sup> On 27 August, following taking the northern part of the fortress, the Russian was to face a fierce resistance of the Ottoman troops. By the help of additional heavy artillery fire and military aid, the Russian strengthened its position in the fortress. Köse Mehmed was forced to withdraw into the citadel with his commanders and 400 men. The defenders of Ahıska, including the townsmen, desperately fought back, but lacking effective

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<sup>43</sup> Muhtar, *Türkiye Devletinin En Mühim ve Meşhûr Esfârından 1244-1245 H. (1828-1829 M.) Türkiye-Rusya Seferi ve Edirne Mu'âhdesi Yâhûd Vakitsiz Seferin 'İbret ve İntibâh Dersleri*, I: pp. 223-24.

<sup>44</sup> During the penetration of the Russian troops into the fortress, the settlements and buildings seriously hampered Russian military effort; each building might be considered as a little part of the collective defence against the Russian besiegers. At the night of 27 August, a fire broke out inside the fortress that was considered as an advantage by Paskevich and it was boosted by his order. It damaged the town on a vast scale. The boosted fire, the massacre carried out by the command of Paskevich and the fall of Ahıska were generally compared to what happened to the Ottoman garrison and residents in Ismail by the order of Suvorov in 1790. Ibid., pp. 225-30.

command and control and modern fortifications, their bravery cause little hardship for the Russian besiegers.<sup>45</sup> The fortress capitulated by Köse Mehmed on 28 August.<sup>46</sup>

On the Ottoman side, there were two vital omissions. The first one was that Köse Mehmed was well aware that the Russians had only two optional routes to reach to Ahıska. He might easily deploy his forces somewhere around Ardahan in order to cut off the route of Ahıska. It was seemingly clear that the topographical challenges Paskevich faced were much harsher than expected, therefore, the Ottomans could yet have a chance to reach the Russians, and furthermore they might slow the Russians down by forcing them to waste their food stocks. Moreover, by launching an operation through uplands, Köse Mehmed could manage to capture the heavy artillery of the Caucasus Corps that would cause a disaster for the Russian command as Paskevich could hardly lay siege to the fortress of Ahıska without them.

The second one was that Köse Mehmed was supposed to be well aware that there was no hope of merging the Russian main army with Popov's reinforcement before a few days; however, the Ottoman commander, seemingly failing to comprehend the gradually increasing manpower-weakness of the Caucasus Corps, did not attempt to mobilize all the forces available to launch an attack on the enemy on 17 August and thus missed the chance of positioning on the hills of Tavşantepe where the Russian forces would bombard the fortress of Ahıska. Though nearly half of the Russians were weary of the tactical movement and thus could not even

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<sup>45</sup> Upon seeing the storming preparation of the Russian troops, one of the local notables, Ali Bey of Livane, with his 1,500 men escaped from the fortress. Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'anüvis Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, II-III: pp. 370-71.

<sup>46</sup> Muhtar, *Türkiye Devletinin En Mühim ve Meşhûr Esfârından 1244-1245 H. (1828-1829 M.) Türkiye-Rusya Seferi ve Edirne Mu'âhdesi Yâhûd Vakitsiz Seferin 'İbret ve İntibâh Dersleri*, I: p. 230. "Otrazhennoe napadenie turok na krepost' Akhaltsikh (v 1829-m godu)," VZ, no. IV (1829): pp. 170-80; "Opisanie srazhenii, 5-go i 9-go avgusta, pod Akhaltsikhom," VZ, no. V (1829): pp. 184-200; "Opisanie shturma kreposti Akhaltsykha 15-go avgusta 1828 goda," VZ, no. VI (1829): pp. 1-16; "Opisanie osady kreposti Akhaltsykha," VZ, no. I (1830): pp. 15-55; "Pristup na krepost' Akhaltsykh 15-go avgusta 1828 goda," VZ, no. II (1830): pp. 1-19.

managed to create their defending position in the evening of 17 August, Köse Mehmed enabled them to have three days for getting prepared instead of repeating attacks with his fresh forces. Similar to the example of Kars, the Ottoman irregular cavalry, positioned in the northern side of Ahıska, around 20,000 men, was not sufficiently disciplined and trained therefore the Russian regular cavalry of 2,500 men easily crumbled them. One of the weaknesses of the Ottoman mobile army was about its mobility and flexibility on the battlefield; as almost 20,000 men of the Ottoman mobile army were irregular cavalries which suffered from their dilatory movements, marching often with thousand of live stocks.

Upon the capture of Ahıska, a few detachments under the command of I. M. Vadbol'skii and E. A. Bergmann were ordered to besiege Azgur (Atskhur) and Ardahan respectively. The fortress of Azgur was garrisoned by a unit of provincial militia consisting of 1,500 men; it surrendered without resistance on 29 August. The fortress of Ardahan also offered no resistance and the keys of the fortress were handed over to E. A. Bergmann before a few kilometres up to Ardahan on September 3.<sup>47</sup> By the fall of Azgur, the security of the Borjom Pass had been completely provided for the Russian forces that meant the route was adequate to establish a direct transportation line from Georgian to Ahıska. Due to the approaching winter, the Russian command transferred its headquarters to Ardahan where they started to store stocks of provision and logistic.<sup>48</sup>

Meanwhile, A. G. Chavchavadze was ordered to besiege the fortress of Bayezid, garrisoning 1,500 men. The commander of the Ottoman garrison, Behlül Pasha, being aware of the limited capabilities of his forces, had the aim of stalling

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<sup>47</sup> Iovskii, *Posledniaia voina s Turtsieiu, zakliuchaiushchaia v sebe kampaniiu 1828 i 1829 godov v evropeiskoi i aziatskoi Turtsii i na kavkaze*, I: pp. 115-19.

<sup>48</sup> Muhtar, *Türkiye Devletinin En Mühim ve Meşhûr Esfârından 1244-1245 H. (1828-1829 M.) Türkiye-Rusya Seferi ve Edirne Mu'âhedesi Yâhûd Vakitsiz Seferin 'İbret ve İntibâh Dersleri*, I: p. 233.

Chavchavadze for a few days as the Ottoman reinforcement had already moved from Erzurum to Bayezid to come to his aid. When the Russians moved into position to lay siege to the fortress, the Ottoman garrison had already started to disperse throughout the town. There was no option but to surrender on 8 September.<sup>49</sup> By capturing the fortress of Bayezid, Chavchavadze cut off the main route of communication and transportation between Erzurum and Tabrīz. In order to secure the region completely, other outlying military posts and fortresses in the region were to be taken. On September 21, Chavchavadze, taking the fortification of Diyadin en route, headed for the fortress of Toprakkale/Eleşkird. Upon the news of the fall of Bayezid, the Serasker of Erzurum had ordered Abdurıza Bey, brother of Behlül Pasha, to defend Toprakkale with a force of 500 men against the Russians but this attempt failed and the fortress of Toprakkale was captured on 22 August.

By capturing the fortresses of Bayezid and Toprakkale, the Russian forces succeeded in securing the eastern regions of Anatolia; this had the further effect of hindering the Kurdish tribal chieftains from rising in favour of the Ottoman central authority and did not give any chance to the Iranian government to consider the Ottoman invitations to form a military alliance against the Russians. The Ottoman central authority was not sufficiently successful with the Kurdish tribal chieftains who were resented by the centralisation and reformation process, led by Mahmud II. Furthermore, some of the Kurdish chieftains of Īravān served well with their irregular cavalries in the Caucasus Corps against the Ottoman forces.<sup>50</sup>

So in five months' time, with the capture of the fortresses of Kars and Ahıska, all Russian aims had been achieved, except the port of Batum. The Russian frontier

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<sup>49</sup> Iovskii, *Posledniaia voina s Turtsieiu, zakliuchaiushchaia v sebe kampaniiu 1828 i 1829 godov v evropeiskoi i aziatskoi Turtsii i na kavkaze*, I: p. 121.

<sup>50</sup> Ḥusayn Āghā was one of those Kurdish chieftains, having 3,000 irregular cavalry at his disposal. Although his daughter was married to Ḥusayn Khān of Īravān, he was not pleased with the Iranian government.

was secured and the Borjom Pass was opened up for next operations in 1829. On the level of strategy, the 1828 Russian campaign was dominated by the quest to capture certain important geographical points – roads, mountain passes, and towns. The former two were required for the security of the Russian border, the latter as a source of supplies. It was not Paskevich's overriding aim to destroy the main Ottoman forces, but he did so when Köse Mehmed gave him the opportunity in August.

### **The Campaign of 1829**

The Ottoman main army was then subjected to a structural reorganization that included changing all high-ranking commanders and raising additional units. For the first time, the Ottomans chose an offensive strategy for the campaign of 1829. Their plan was to launch feint-attacks against the fortress of Kars and an amphibious landing near Batum in order to surprise and confuse the Russians, which would facilitate the main effort; the attack and capture of the fortress of Ahıska. The plan was more than brilliant, and the Russians were unprepared for such a bold enemy undertaking. However, the Ottoman commanders and units had neither the means nor the training to carry out such an ambitious plan. Thus, the feint-attacks did not divert any Russian troops, and the main effort failed in every aspect even though the Russian defences were weak.

The Serasker of Erzurum, Galib Pasha and the Ottoman mobile army commander, Köse Mehmed Pasha, were replaced with Hacı Salih and Hakkı Pashas respectively, both of whom were supposed to be men of ability.<sup>51</sup> The new

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<sup>51</sup> Both of them were familiar figures in the east of Anatolia; in previous years, Hacı Salih and Hakkı Pashas had held the offices of *muhafız* of Kars and governor of Van respectively, see Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'anüvis Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, I: p. 88. Prior to the Russo-Iranian war of 1826-28, Galib Pasha had reported on the Russian military preparation against Iran, according to him, this period of crisis

commanders started making preparations by refreshing the sinews of war - i.e. storing the large depots of provisions and ammunitions at Erzurum, Hasankale and Horasan and planning to create so-called three large armies; one of which, numbering 80,000 men, was to assemble at the base of Soğanlıdağ and advance on Kars and Ahıska, another, consisted of 50,000, under the command of Muş and Van pashas, was to launch attacks on the left flank of the Caucasus Corps, and the last one, assembling 60,000 men, was to advance on Ahıska, for the campaign of 1829.

The Ottoman command, having the aim of carrying out a plan of strategic defence against the Russians, was determined to organize its military force in two bodies; one of which was to be mobilized to face the Caucasus Corps, another was to be designed to take back the vital fortresses – i.e. Ahıska and Kars. At first glance, one could expect that the Ottomans might carry out an aggressive plan as the Ottoman army numbered much more than that of the Russian nevertheless the Ottoman army was to recruit from the *nefir-i amm* (levée en masse) in Anatolia and these levies were not useful against the regular army as expected and furthermore the number of the troops expected to be assembled was in doubt; even if that many troops were assembled, they would be inclined to desert from the army as experienced during the campaign of 1828. Additionally, these assembled masses did not receive any military training to be able to launch a successful attack on the enemy. Hence the plan of strategic defence was seemingly fit for the nature of the Ottoman army in Anatolia.

Nicholas I authorized Paskevich to act according to circumstances, but stated his opinion that his general should seek the destruction of the main enemy force as

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between these two powers would provide a good opportunity for the Porte to enhance the military capacity of the country. In his subsequent reports to Istanbul, he clearly portrayed desperate conditions in which the Ottoman troops in Erzurum and in the surrounding regions were to fight against the Russians. According to him, it could better to make a peace agreement with Russia but this suggestion was refused in Istanbul, see *ibid.*, pp. 36-37; *ibid.*, II-III: pp. 371-72.

well as the capture of Erzurum, Batum and, if possible, Trabzon. The two ports would facilitate combined fleet action and a possible assault on Sinop. To assist him in this enterprise, Nicholas proposed to send the Corps 20,000 new recruits from the last recruit levy. He argued that the new recruits would take months to arrive and be trained, and could not be ready for action until July. The Caucasus Corps's strike force would thus open the 1829 campaign with 17,000 men and 68 guns. As regards a war plan, geography, logistics, and common sense dictated that any offensive had to begin with the capture of Erzurum. Paskevich ruled out a march on Istanbul as impossible but suggested a push to Sivas might be practicable. Its capture would cut most of the Istanbul's communications with Anatolian provinces and their copper and silver factories. The main problem revolved around supplying the army far from its operational base, as well as protecting its flanks. An elongated magazine chain was considered too prone to attack, and the only solution was to be supplied by sea from the port of Samsun. Yet this was over 300 km from Sivas with no connecting road. The Russian left flank could only be secured if Paskevich succeeded in winning over the Kurdish tribal chieftains while, on the right, the Ottoman forces at Trabzon had to be constantly diverted by Russian naval operations. This fortress-port (Trabzon) was deemed almost impossible to capture because of its fortified mountain position, the absence of any road along which siege artillery could be transported. Paskevich did favour a naval demonstration against Trabzon, though only as a means of preventing the Ottomans from reinforcing Erzurum. Finally, as regards Batum, Paskevich opposed its capture, arguing that it had no military significance and no fortifications. The plan of Paskevich was accepted by Nicholas I.

According to Paskevich, the Ottomans might hardly reinforce their own forces on the eastern frontier; if the Russian troops scattered the enemy and then

controlled the region once, the Ottoman command might not have easily refreshed them by the new levies, therefore, the routes stretching from central to western Anatolia could be opened for the Russian advance, whereas the campaign in the Balkans contained different types of handicaps in itself – i.e. the Balkan mountain range, the renovated and well-garrisoned fortresses in Rumelia and the European balance of power in the region. The results of the campaigns of 1828 in the Caucasus and the Balkans proved that the Russian commander was relatively right in his analysis. According to the first part of his plan, he had the aim of advancing on Erzurum at once; just after receiving reinforcement from Georgia, he had a plan to capture the port of Trabzon and then to move towards central Anatolia. It was a bold move no doubt. According to the results of the Caucasus campaign of 1828, the viability of his plan of carrying out an attack on the fortress of Erzurum, without relying on any additional military aid from Georgia, to some extent, was convincing however an attempt to threaten the Ottoman capital by following the routes stretching through Tokat and Sivas could hardly lead success.

Hostilities began on 4 March with an early and unexpected Ottoman offensive, following the news that the Russian embassy in Tehran had been stormed and the new ambassador, A. S. Griboedov, murdered. Mahmud II, believing that Iran was now about to enter the war on his side, ordered the capture of Ahıska at any cost to open up the Borzhom Pass into Russian territory. According to the plan of Hacı Salih Pasha, while being carried out a feint-attack with a force of few thousand on Kars with the purpose of fooling Paskevich, Ahmed Bey of Adjara (Hulo) with 20,000-militia and six guns would proceed to Ahıska. Simultaneously, Osman Pasha Hazinevaroğlu of Trabzon, with a force of 3,000 men, was ordered to launch an attack on the Russian post at Fort St. Nicholas (Şekvetil) to prevent Hesse from

coming to the aid of Bebutov in Ahıska. The plan was well-prepared nevertheless the quality and preparedness of the Ottoman forces for battle fell short.

Indeed, Ahmed Bey, being aware of heavy winter conditions, was averse to the idea of starting a military operation to lay siege to the fortress of Ahıska in February-March and therefore attempted to make a suggestion that the operation was to be started in spring with regard to having good results. Upon being refused by the Serasker, he was strictly ordered to move against Ahıska. There were two options for Ahmed Bey: being executed for defying the orders or in case of re-capturing the fortress, being appointed as the new pasha of Ahıska. Starting his move from Şavşat on 12 February, Ahmed Bey managed to arrive in Ahıska through Erzurum on 4 March. Before laying siege to the fortress, Memiş Ağa and his brother, Abdi Bey, had been ordered to cut off the roads of Ahıska-Imereti and the Borjom Pass respectively on 1 March. Considering the orders lately issued by the Serasker, Ahmed Bey had been expected to capture not only the fortress of Ahıska but also the Borjom Pass and then to advance on Tiflis, pushing further into the north of Kartli.

As regards the Ottoman plan, due to the fierce seasonal conditions, it was suggested that the Russians, following the previous campaign, did not have any chance to strengthen the fortifications of Ahıska. This was true and thus the Russian garrison of 2,000 men under the command of Bebutov had retired into the citadel. Moreover, upon receiving the news of the Ottoman advance, Paskevich ordered Burtsov to blockade the Borjom Pass with his forces and Murav'ev to go to the aid of Bebutov from Tiflis with his five battalions. The distance from Tiflis to Ahıska ranged around 200 km and it would take least 10 days to get to Tiflis for Murav'ev. The winter conditions notwithstanding, the effort of the Ottoman attack was fair but not as much to force the garrison to surrender. The weakest point of the Ottoman

headquarters was its rear and therefore Ahmed Bey ordered Abdi Bey to cut off the route stretching to the fortress of Azgur on 5 March. On the same day, the Ottoman battery was set up to open fire against the fortress from northern and western heights. Following taking the outer town, the citadel of Ahıska was nearly lost to the Ottomans however Ahmed Bey failed to take advantage of the opportunity of penetrating the citadel through breaches in the walls. The Ottoman commander was beaten back on 16 March following a twelve-day defence by Bebutov and his two battalions. Simultaneously, Osman Pasha Hazinedaroğlu, following the arrival to Batum with the purpose of merging with a force of 5,000-man from Guria, founded his army headquarters six-seven km far from the Russian post at Fort St. Nicholas to wait for a detachment of 10,000 men, by which it would be possible to advance on Mingrelia and Imereti. However, the Russian commander at Fort St. Nicholas, Hesse, being very determined not to allow such a hazardous advance, sallied out to repulse them at once; in subsequent fighting, he managed to capture the Ottoman headquarters on 17 March.<sup>52</sup>

Despite overlooked or slightly mentioned in the works of Monteith, Allen-Muratoff and Bitis, the Ottoman siege attempt in the months of winter was one of the turning points for the campaign of 1829 and thus seriously influenced local and international balances in the region. Though the fortress of Ahıska had been sufficiently strengthened, the Russian garrison were taken unprepared since they did not anticipate any raid or well-organized advance from the Ottoman side during the winter. Due to the winter conditions and to some extent the lack of provisions, the Russian additional battalions had been forced to be withdrawn from the combat zone to Tiflis in September 1828. Seemingly, the regional militias to some extent had a

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<sup>52</sup> Iovskii, *Posledniaia voina s Turtsieiu, zakliuchaiushchaia v sebe kampaniiu 1828 i 1829 godov v evropeiskoi i aziatskoi Turtsii i na kavkaze*, II: p. 75.

chance to be successful in their efforts once they were mobilized against the enemy in their own native land; this was valid for both the right and the left flanks of the Ottoman army nevertheless the chieftains of these militias have never been fully trustable for loyalty to their ruler. Had Ahıska been re-captured by Ahmed Bey, it might have been the first severe blow to Russian self-confidence not only in the east of Anatolia but also in the south of the Caucasus and Iran.

Simultaneously, a series of events had sent the local residents into a panic and turbulence in the south of the Caucasus: several disturbances broke out in Qarahbāgh; some of the Armenian immigrants escaped from their villages in the Armenian province; the Lezgins, abandoning their obedient mood, started to show open hostility to Russian authority; several local riots erupted in the Moslem provinces. Most importantly, in accordance with the reports issued by the military officers positioned on the Russo-Iranian border, the Ottoman earlier attack on the fortress of Ahıska was most likely to be considered as a precursor of a military alliance between the Porte and Iran against Russia and of a possible Iranian attack through the Aras on the Russian posts. Indeed, the changing attitude of the Iranian authority towards Russia was to be evaluated as part of its internal politics too. In the first year following the treaty of Turkmanchāy, due to the lost territories in the Caucasus, a wave of hatred against Russia gradually increased among the Iranians, and therefore the Russian mission in Tehran was attacked by a mob and the Russian ambassador, A. S. Griboedov, and some members of his staff were killed on 11 February. Upon this, news of Iranian preparations for war continued arriving from many sources.

The growing tension between Iran and Russia must be briefly discussed here in this chapter. In the second week of March, ‘Alī Yūzbashī, the private envoy of

‘Abbās Mīrzā, arrived in Tiflis to negotiate the current issues with Paskevich. The Russian commander was well aware that the results of the treaty of Turkmanchāy had created a very awkward situation for ‘Abbās Mīrzā since Fath ‘Alī Shāh and his brothers forced him to wage a war against Russia at once. Seemingly, the main reason behind the visit of the Iranian envoy was to seek advice and help of the Russian commander. Upon this, Paskevich, not missing the opportunity, sent his lieutenant, Staff-Captain Prince Kudashev, to convey an official letter with a secret note to the Crown Prince in Tabrīz. The tone of his secret note to ‘Abbās Mīrzā was unusual, harsh and to some extent threatening. It was well-known to the Russian commander that Fath ‘Alī Shāh and his brothers were inclined to wage a war against Russia with a force of 60,000 men; even though the Iranian force could easily ravage the region in June, they could not manage to capture the Russian garrisons. Moreover, when the route stretching from Tabrīz through Khūy to Bayezid was blockaded by the Russian army of 25,000 in October, the Iranian army could not have any chance to have land connection with the Ottoman forces and most likely, the Iranian forces would easily scatter itself in winter, as happened in the previous war. Thus, the Crown Prince would be obliged to defend Āzarbāyjān against the Caucasus Corps with his own army. In case of losing Āzarbāyjān to Russia, ‘Abbās Mīrzā could not be the heir to the Iranian throne anymore; following this process, most likely, the Qājār dynasty could vanish in one year.<sup>53</sup>

In the second part of his note, Paskevich recommended him not to trust the British and Ottoman promises. Sultan Mahmud II was in difficult situation since the Russian naval forces blockaded the Straits. European Great Powers were not interested in Iran but the Ottoman empire as it was necessary for the balance of

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<sup>53</sup> On Paskevich's correspondences with Iranian and Ottoman statesmen, see RGVA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 1006.

power in Europe. Thus, Russia could subjugate wherever needed in Asia. The political presence and stability of Iran was depended on Russia.

In the last part of his note, the Russian commander proposed, first, the dispatch of one of his brothers or sons as an envoy to St. Petersburg; secondly the persuasion of the Fath ‘Alī Shāh to wage a war against the Ottoman empire. Had Iran attacked on the Ottoman empire and captured Van, Russia would have supported the Iranian army with rifles, guns and military reinforcement. As a result, Paskevich succeeded in influencing ‘Abbās Mīrzā by frequent threats to his province and secured his continued neutrality. The news of the Russian success in Ahıska not only forced Iran to change its policy and to suspend its preparations at once but also improved the Russian troops’ morale in the Caucasus.<sup>54</sup>

Throughout the remaining months of spring and into early summer, Paskevich remained on the defensive. Finally, in June, learning that the new commander of the Ottoman mobile army, Hakkı Pasha of Sivas, had left Erzurum with 40,000 men, Paskevich began preparations for an offensive. Paskevich headed from Kars along the Erzurum road to meet Hakkı Pasha, who had divided his forces into two corps of 30,000 and 20,000 men respectively. In a series of battles and manoeuvres, between 25 June and 2 July, Paskevich inflicted a devastating defeat on the Ottomans. Erzurum subsequently capitulated without a fight on 9 July.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ushakov, *Istoriia voennykh deistvii v aziatskoi Turtsii v 1828 i 1829 godakh*, II: p. 18; on the relation between the Porte and Iran and the Iranian warlike preparation on the borderland, pp. 40-42; for the warning or threatening secret letter of Paskevich to ‘Abbās Mīrzā, pp. 42-44.

<sup>55</sup> The fortress of Hasankale (Pasinler), a town on the road to Erzurum, was taken by the Russians on 27 June (9 July). Following the siege, the Serasker with his four commanders were held prisoner, see AVPRI, fond: 180, opis’: 517/1, delo: 117, p. 316, K. F. Nesselrode to A. I. Ribeaupierre, 26 July (7 August) 1828.

## Chapter Seven – Mass Immigration of Armenians into the Russian Caucasus after the Wars of the 1820s

As noted at the end of the previous chapter, the treaties of Turkmanchāy and Adrianople brought to an end Russia's wars with Iran and the Ottoman empire. Together they reflected Russia's clearly superior power and its domination of the southern Caucasus region. The status quo created by the treaties was to last in the Russo-Ottoman case until 1854-6 when the Crimean war temporarily reversed the long history of Russian expansion at Ottoman expense. As for Russian relations with Iran, the borders created at Turkmanchāy remained until 1917. So too and to an ever-increasing degree did a relationship of power tilted strongly in Russia's favour.<sup>1</sup>

During the Russo-Iranian and Russo-Ottoman Wars, of 1826-8 and 1828-9 respectively, the Russian military advance in the south of the Caucasus was widely welcomed by some of the local communities (i.e. they became a sort of fifth column), one of which was the Armenian community inhabiting in the Iranian and Ottoman borderlands.<sup>2</sup> Besides providing logistical and supply support, guiding the military expeditions, and gathering information/intelligence, some parts of the Iranian and Ottoman Armenian communities actively fought with the Caucasus

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<sup>1</sup> On the Treaty of Adrianople, see Sheremet, *Turtsiia i Adrianopol'skii mir 1829 g*; O. V. Orlik, *Rossiia v mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniakh, 1815-1829: ot Venskogo kongressa do Adrianopol'skogo mira* (Moskva: Nauka, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> Besides the Armenian communities in Iran and the Ottoman lands, some groups from other local communities, namely Tatars/Azeris, Karapapakhs, Circassians and Kurds, also welcomed the Russian army and administration in the region and took part in the military struggle against the Iranian and Ottoman central authorities. This, nevertheless, should not be over-generalized and is to be mainly considered as a reflection of Russian military prestige and the local balance of power among the community leaders in the region. A detailed discussion on the political attitudes of the Muslim communities inhabiting the region is beyond this chapter. For example, as discussed in the fourth chapter, the local Kurdish tribal chieftains were eager to attract the military and political support of the regional imperial powers in their struggles against their local rivals. The case of Ahmed and Hüseyin Ağas is to be regarded as an example of the Russian impact on the regional issues, see Agaian, *Prisoedinenie vostochnoi Armenii k Rossii: Sbornik dokumentov (1814-1830)*, no. 241, pp. 441-42, A. I. Krasovskii to K. F. Diebitsch, 5 (17) January 1828.

Corps against the military forces of the states of which they were subjects. After the signing of the treaties of Turkmanchāy and Adrianople (Edirne), in 1828 and 1829 respectively, the mass immigration of the Iranian and the Ottoman Armenians into the Russian Caucasus was gradually conducted by the encouragement of local Armenian ecclesiastics and Russian military officers and nobles, some of whom were selected from families having an Armenian background. In contradistinction to the mass immigration of the Armenians, conducted by Shah ‘Abbās in the first years of the seventeenth century, this new mass immigration wave of the Armenians should be considered as a post-war(s) process. For a period of approximately five years from 1828, approximately 140,000 Armenian migrated to the Russian Empire, of whom 100,000 were mainly from the eastern part of the Ottoman lands and 40,000 were from the northern part of Iran. These immigrants were encouraged by the Caucasian corps to settle into the newly captured territories – i.e. Īravān (Revan/Erevan), Nakhjavān, Ahılkelek (Akhalkalaki), and Ahıska (Akhalsikhe).<sup>3</sup>

In this chapter, firstly, the general situation of the Iranian and Ottoman Armenians living mainly in the war-zones and in strategic provinces of Iran and the Ottoman empire will be surveyed. Next we will study the reasons for the participation of the Armenian communities on the Russian side and in what way and to what extent they managed to serve the purpose of the Russian command in the region. We will also scrutinise the results of the treaties of Turkmanchāy and Adrianople, and especially of articles of XV and XIII respectively, which directly related to the post-war immigration. Finally this chapter will look in some detail at

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<sup>3</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, "Eastern Armenians under Tsarist Rule," in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004), pp. 109-37. Following the Russo-Iranian war of 1826-28, the question of how to keep the newly annexed regions secure was vital for the Russian imperial strategy in the region. P. A. Tolstoi put forward a proposal for the relocation of 80,000 Cossacks along the Iranian border however this grandiose project was much more costly than the Russian government expected. RGVA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 923.

the mass resettlement/immigration of Armenians from Iran and the Ottoman empire in the Russian empire.

### **Armenian community in Iran**

As noted in chapter one, there is great uncertainty about the size of the Armenian population at the beginning of the nineteenth century in both Iran and the Ottoman empire.<sup>4</sup> In both empires, however, there was a huge gap between the educated and wealthy Armenian elite which lived in the capitals and the great majority of the Armenian population who were small farmers in eastern Anatolia and the south of the Caucasus. The great majority of these peasants no longer spoke Armenian and shared nothing but their religion with the urban elites.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the Armenian community of Iran was divided into two parts: one of which resided in the north of the Aras River (in the south of the Caucasus), a region that had been, for the most part, under Iranian control since the sixteenth century, the other lived south of the Aras River, in the heartland of Iran. The Armenian community north of the Aras River was roughly scattered in four distinct regions – Kartli-Kakheti (Georgia), Shirvān-Shakī-Baku (the Caspian region), Qarahbāgh-Ganjah-Zāngazūr, and Īravān -Nakhjavān in the

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<sup>4</sup> Regarding a very comprehensive report of an agent in Iran, named *chinovnik* 's', of the *Tret'e otdelenie* (Third Department), Senator Bolgarskii argued that not only in Īravān but also in Shakī, the majority of the Armenian community was eager to gain the Russian confidence and military protection, see RGVIA, fond: 446, opis': 1, delo: 8, pp. 1-2. There are three distinct reports which present the numbers of the Armenian dwellings in Iran, prepared by Lazar Melik Nubarov in 1827. According to the first report, the number of the Armenian dwellings in Iran is 21,323; to the second one, 22,411; to the third, 21,354. For the details of the full lists of the Armenian settlements in Iran in 1827, respectively, see RGVIA, fond: 446, opis': 1, delo: 170, pp. 1-5; RGVIA, fond: 446, opis': 1, delo: 175, pp. 1-5; RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis': 4, delo: 450, pp. 81-86ob, 20 March (1 April) 1827. The details on the Armenian settlements in Iran were registered over eight months by Lazar Melik Nubarov by the order of General Ermolov in 1823. Prior to the Russo-Iranian War of 1826-8, the indigenous peoples of the region such as Armenians and Georgians had provided the Russian headquarter in Tiflis with some very detailed reports and letters in Georgian and Armenian languages on the military preparation of Iran, RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 894, pp. 1-44ob.

early nineteenth century. South of the Aras River, the Armenian community partly inhabited a region covering the districts of Mākū, Khūy, Hamadān, Urūmīyah, Salmās, and Tabrīz, in other words a region that was to the highest degree strategic for any military intervention along the key historical invasion routes into Iran, both as regards logistics and supplies, and in terms of securing the flanks of the invading army.<sup>5</sup>

### **Armenians north of the Aras River**

By the signing of the treaty of Gulistan in 1813, several strategic khanates extending from Darband and Baku to Ganjah and Qarahbāgh were added to the control of Russia. Īravān and Nakhjavān, however, remained under Iranian control. The increasing military prestige of Russia was widely welcomed among the Armenians, particularly those inhabiting in Tiflis and Qarahbāgh. Tiflis, owing to its being the headquarters of the Caucasus Corps, provided the Armenian community inhabiting Georgia with cultural and intellectual opportunities. In the case of Qarahbāgh, although the Armenians were a minority in the khanate, for the Russians it was easiest to rule the region through the Armenian nobility. Although the existing Armenian class structure and nobles were considerably different from that of Russia the geographical obstacles to imposing Russian-style rule and the strategic location of Qarahbāgh induced Russia to accept alliance with the Armenian elite as a necessary first stage in integrating the area into the empire.<sup>6</sup> Because of the anarchic

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<sup>5</sup> George Bournoutian, "Eastern Armenia from the Seventeenth Century to the Russian Annexation," in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004), pp. 81-107.

<sup>6</sup> The inhabitants of the province of Qarahbāgh are divided into two general groups – i.e. civilian and religious. The first group can itself be divided into upper, middle and lower classes. *Begs*, *aghas*, *maliks*, *mīn-bāshīs*, and *sultans* belong to the upper class; *yūzbāshīs* and *mu'afs* belong to the middle

nature of the members of the Armenian elite of Qarahbāgh, they usually lacked a clear leader in their political and military struggle against the khans of Qarahbāgh. This struggle was not an ethno-national conflict but generally concerned very local issues and interests. While the Armenian community inhabiting the Caspian districts was generally engaged in trading and commercial activities and inclined to have good relations with both Russia and Iran, the Armenians in Īravān and Nakhjavān were relatively much more remote from the Russian influence.

### **Armenians in Georgia**

The origins of the modern Armenian community of Georgia lie in the second half of the eighteenth century. The fall of the Safavids, the Ottoman capture of the south of the Caucasus, and the devastating civil wars of the eighteenth century had caused many Armenians in central Iran, eastern Anatolia, and the south of the Caucasus to assemble in Georgia, particularly in Tiflis. After the annexation of Georgia into the Russian empire in 1801, which had been viewed as a unique opportunity by the Armenian community, the popularity of Russia gradually began to increase among the Armenians in Tiflis. So too, the Russian administration sought to form a new ethno-social basis of support in the new military centre to the south of the Caucasus as the majority of the population of Tiflis was Armenian in the beginning of the nineteenth century. They were very useful for the Russian military expansion in the region because of their geographical knowledge and linguistic skills, so the Russian regional administration decided to take advantage of them. As a

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class; and the peasants – those belonging to the state, those belonging to landlords, as well as *ranjbars*, make up the lower classes. *AKAK*, vol. VIII, no. 354, pp. 469-477, Notes on the rights of the local notables (*begs*, *aghass*, and *na'ibs*) 1832. This official report includes much more details on the social structure not only in Qarahbāgh, but also in Shakī, Shirvān, Darband, Qarahqāytāk, Tabasārān, Qūbā, Ganjah, Būrchālī, Qāzākh and Shamshadin.

result, Armenian economic, social, political and intellectual power in Georgia thrived under Russian rule. As an example of this process, one of the key Armenian figures, Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak, because of his good relations with the Russian commander-in-chief of the Caucasus, Ermolov, was able to found the Nersesian Academy in Tiflis, in 1824, where several prominent Armenian intellectuals were to be educated.<sup>7</sup>

### Armenians in the Caspian Region

The Armenians in the districts of Baku, Shirvān, Shakī (Nukha) and Astrakhan were mainly involved in the trade between Iran and Russia as they had contacts with the Armenian merchants of Gīlān on the Caspian Sea and possessed trade depots in Astrakhan, Baku, and Darband. Their numbers was relatively insignificant but rose after the Russian gained control of the region. Baku became the centre of the Caspian economy. Unlike the Armenians in Georgia, the Baku Armenians, thanks to their proximity, kept their Iranian contacts and culture alive. During the revolt and war, the Armenian community in the Shirvān province, owing

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<sup>7</sup> George A. Bournoutian, "The Armenian Church and the Political Formation of Eastern Armenia," *AR* 36, no. 3 (1983): p. 13. At the dawn of the Russo-Iranian War of 1826-8, Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak was very sure that Russia would not abandon the Armenian (Christian) Church to the Iranians and aimed to encourage the Armenian community residing in the cities and villages of the Tiflis, Ganjah, Qarahbāgh, Shakī, Shamākhī, Bākū and Darband provinces to fight with the Caucasus Corps against the enemies – the Iranians, see Agaian, *Prisoedinenie vostochnoi Armenii k Rossii: Sbornik dokumentov (1814-1830)*, no. 124, pp. 99-202, Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak's appeal to the Armenian community, 29 July (10 August) 1826. In the following stage, Nerses would create an Armenian national flag and encourage an Armenian volunteer militia to be formed, under the leadership of Armenian ecclesiastics such as Harutium Alamdarian and Grigorii Manucharian. These militia units aided the Russian army in the battles of Oshakan, Ashtarak, and Echmiadzin, see Bournoutian, "The Armenian Church and the Political Formation of Eastern Armenia," p. 13. In another official document, the number of Armenian volunteer militia which Nerses successfully has encouraged is 400-cavalry and 800-infantry, see Agaian, *Prisoedinenie vostochnoi Armenii k Rossii: Sbornik dokumentov (1814-1830)*, no. 241, p. 442, A. I. Krasovskii to K. F. Diebitsch, 5 (17) January 1828.

to the religious rhetoric of Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak, would remain loyal to Russia.<sup>8</sup>

## Armenians in Qarahbāgh-Ganjah-Zāngazūr

The province of Qarahbāgh was geographically divided into two parts – mountainous region and lowlands. The mountainous part of Qarahbāgh was a strategically crucial area which had been controlled by the Armenian *maliks*.<sup>9</sup> The geographical features of the region truly provided a military advantage to these local elites to defend their own position against any raid from the lowlands. According to a published survey conducted by the Russian officers, while the Armenian population was large in the mountainous areas of Qarahbāgh, the Muslims formed the majority of the rest of the khanates as well as in the lowlands of Qarahbāgh in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> The *maliks* of Qarahbāgh enjoyed special privileges

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<sup>8</sup> AKAK, vol. VI/I, no. 628, p. 464, A. P. Ermolov to Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak, 15 (27) February 1827.

<sup>9</sup> The term *malik* can be translated as *upravitel'* in Russian. The *maliks* consisted of three distinct groups. The Armenian *maliks* in Qarahbāgh possessed their own personal malikdoms which were divided into five – i.e. the Shahnazarians of Varanda, the Eganians (Avanians) of Dizak, the Hasan-Jalalians of Khachen, the Beglarians of Talish (Gulistan), and the Israelians of Jraber. Their position, like those granted to semiautonomous khans, was established by the shahs of Iran in return for services conducted. In the following period, they lost their autonomy, because of the political turmoil, and fell under the control of the khans. Their position became the same as *begs* and *aghas*. The second and lower group of *maliks* and who converted to Islam. They had the same privileges as the *begs*. The third group was composed of the village elders. AKAK, vol. VIII, no. 354, p. 470, Notes on the rights of the local notables (*begs*, *aghas*, and *na'ibs*) 1832. For a detailed series of articles on the *māliks* of Qarahbāgh, see R. H. Hewsen, "The Meliks of Eastern Armenia: A Preliminary Study," *Revue des études arméniennes* IX(1972): pp. 285-329; R. H. Hewsen, "The Meliks of Eastern Armenia II," *Revue des études arméniennes* X(1973): pp. 281-300; R. H. Hewsen, "The Meliks of Eastern Armenia III," *Revue des études arméniennes* XI(1975): pp. 219-43; R. H. Hewsen, "The Meliks of Eastern Armenia IV: The Siwnid Origin of Xaç'atur Abovean," *Revue des études arméniennes* XIV(1980): pp. 459-70; Mīrzā Jamāl Javānshīr Qarahbāghī, *Tārīkh-i Qarahbāgh*, ed. Ḥusayn Aḥmadī (Tīhrān: Markaz-i Asnād va Tārīkh-i Dīplumāsī, 1384 [2005/2006]), pp. 12-14. Not only in Qarahbāgh but also in other parts of the region, there were some petty malikdoms which were not as politically effective as those in Qarahbāgh. The malikdoms in different districts of Siunik (Zāngazūr) were the Davids of Tatev, the Ovans of Megri, the Parsadanians of Kapan, the Safrazians and the Tangians of Sisian (Karakilise). Other remarkable maliks in Īravān were the Agamalians and Gegamians.

<sup>10</sup> On the murder of Ibrāhīm Khalīl Khān of Qarahbāgh by a group of Russian soldiers on June 2 (14), 1806, the Russian administration appointed one of Ibrahim Khalīl's sons, Mahdī-Qulī, as the new

during the Safavid administration. Following the fall of Safavid rule, they were obliged to seek an external political and military alliance from Russia against the Ottomans. The military potential of Russia, nevertheless, was not sufficient to build a persistent connection with these local notables. In the following period, the privileges of the *maliks* were renewed by Nadir Shah thanks to their strong resistance against the Ottomans. The takeover of Tiflis by the Russians and their increasing might in Georgia convinced the *maliks* of the military potential of the new imperial actor. In reply to the new political-military facts, the *maliks* tended to side with the Russians against Iran during the Russo-Iranian War of 1804-13. At the start of the Russo-Iranian War of 1826-8, the sudden and unexpected Iranian attack was welcomed by the pro-Iranian Muslim population of Qarabāgh and Caspian region. If the Armenians and their armed volunteers had not protected the Russian administration and garrisons until the arrival of Russian military assistance, the Russian command would have been annihilated as it had been caught off guard. Given the explicit sympathy of the Muslims for Iran, one of the generals of the Caucasus Corps, V. G. Madatov, himself of Armenian origin, would be adamant in employing mainly the

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khan of Qarabāgh. Similar to his father, he also built tight relations with the Iranian Court and then fled to Iran on November 21 (December 2), 1822. Upon this, the autonomy of the province of Qarabāgh was terminated and the khanate was incorporated into the Russian empire. On the death of Ibrahim Khalīl Khān, see Muriel Atkin, "The Strange Death of Ibrahim Khalil Khan of Qarabagh," *IS* 12, no. 1 (1979): pp. 79-107. Following the incorporation of the province of Qarabāgh into the Russian empire, the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasus, A. P. Ermolov entrusted P. I. Mogilevskii and P. N. Ermolov with conducting a very detailed survey of the province of Qarabāgh on January 13 (25), 1823. The motives inclining Ermolov were to ascertain the number of the population living in the province of Qarabāgh and to specify the revenues gathered by Ibrahim Khalīl Khān. Mogilevskii and Ermolov completed the survey, on April 17 (29), 1823, and then presented their findings to General Ermolov in Tiflis on May 2 (14). The survey, providing valuable information on the demography of the province of Qarabāgh, was eventually published, in 1866, in Tiflis. P. I. Mogilevskii and P. N. Ermolov, *Opisanie karabagskoi provintsii, sostavlennoe v 1823 godu* (Tiflis: Tipografiia Glavnago Upravleniia Namestnika Kavkazskago, 1866). For the English-translated version, see George A. Bournoutian, *The 1823 Russian Survey of the Karabagh Province: A Primary Source on the Demography and Economy of Karabagh in the Early 19th Century* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 2011).

Armenian *begs* in the new administrative apparatus,<sup>11</sup> as most of the Muslim *begs* were considered as traitors by him.<sup>12</sup> During the besiege of the fortress of Shūsha by the Iranian troops, the main reason behind the success of the commander of the Shūsha garrison, Colonel Reutt, was the military and logistical aid of the local Armenian community inhabiting the outskirts of the fortress.<sup>13</sup> Not only the Russians but also the Iranians tried to attract the Armenians to their side. The case of Archbishop Sargis was an explicit example of this struggle. When the fortress of Shūsha was beset by the Iranians, Archbishop Sargis tried to turn the Armenians in Shūsha against the Russian troops in the garrison by coming to the walls of the fortress and asking them to open the gates to the Iranians. His behaviour influenced some Armenians to join the Iranians.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The *begs* were generally given their position by the khans and had to serve as well as present gifts to the khans. They could be punished, including corporal punishment, just like regular people. The khans, in their autonomy, granted them estates from which *begs* took as much as they could from the peasants. They enjoyed the right of subjecting their peasants to corporal punishment, and some of them, members of the khan's family, could even sentence their peasants to death. They had the right to sell all movable and immovable property, except for the native peasants on the land, who could be transferred only with the permission of the khan. AKAK, vol. VIII, no. 354, pp. 469-470, Notes on the rights of the local notables (*begs*, *aghās*, and *na'ib*s) 1832.

<sup>12</sup> The indigenous elite and notables were obliged to choose between collaboration and resistance, and were concerned with the Russian imperial advance and their preservation of social status, property, and power. Russia's continuous advance in the region resulted in the growing influence of a different kind of local elite, who were educated in the Russia imperial centre and later returned to serve Russian interests among their own people. General Madatov was one of the key examples of this military education policy. Seemingly comfortable in both Russian and their own culture, these men were privileged outsiders in both worlds. It was explicit that the policy was advantageous for the Russian authority in the peripheral regions. This method of monitoring the peripheries, nevertheless, contained disadvantages – e.g. claiming to be more independent from the central administration and looking out for personal interests in local affairs. On these issues see Michael Khodarkovsky, *Bitter Choices: Loyalty and Betrayal in the Russian Conquest of the North Caucasus* (London: Cornell University Press, 2011). Following the Iranian raids conducted with the collaboration of the indigenous Muslim *begs*, Madatov became extremely hostile to these *begs*, who had burned his houses and villages and destroyed the graves of his parents: this can be considered as one of the abovementioned disadvantages. AKAK, vol. VI/I, no. 1326, pp. 867-868, V. G. Madatov to A. P. Ermolov, 22 September (4 October) 1826.

<sup>13</sup> V. A. Potto, *Pervye dobrovol'tsy karabaga v epokhu vodvoreniia russkogo vladychestva* (Tiflis: M. Martirosyantsa, 1902), p. 64. According to the Russian official reports, not only voluntarily but also forcibly, the Armenians of Shūsha provisioned the garrison, all their belongings having been officially seized by Colonel Reutt to provision the troops in the fortress. AKAK, vol. VI/I, no. 1327, p. 868, V. G. Madatov to A. P. Ermolov, 24 September (6 October) 1826.

<sup>14</sup> A flagrant example of the collaboration of an Armenian ecclesiastic with the Iranian administration and this behaviour was not acceptable to Ermolov as it would harm Russian imperial prestige among the Armenians in the region. Archbishop Sargis was considered as a traitor by Ermolov since he joined 'Abbās Mīrzā and stayed in his camp cross in the hand. Following the defence of the Shūsha

## Armenians in Īravān-Nakhjavān

The region covering the Aras River valley and the Ararat plain was one of the main agricultural and population centres in the southern Caucasus. The potential of the region had been increased by the routes between east and west that passed through it. These routes served as the east-west trade and military corridors which were exploited by the regional imperial actors – i.e. the Ottomans, Iranians and Russians. Apart from being the centre of Iranian defences, the khanate of Īravān possessed the centre of the Armenian Church in Etchmiadzin. The population of this region, unlike that of Ganjah or Tiflis, was far-removed from Russian influence since it had long been surrounded by Iran and the Ottoman empire. Thus, the Armenians living in Īravān and Nakhjavān were better able to protect their religious and cultural position in the region and had relatively better relations with the Iranian administration.

Realizing the strategic value of the region after the loss of Qarahbāgh, Ganjah, and Georgia, Fath ‘Alī Shāh, ‘Abbās Mīrzā and Ḥusayn Qulī Khān decided to work toward Armenian cooperation and granted the Armenian Church, as well as the Armenian secular leader, Malik Sahak Aghamal, considerable privileges.<sup>15</sup> Muslim courts gave favourable rulings to Armenian petitioners. Armenians not only paid the same taxes but had more animals and produce than their Muslim

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fortress, Archbishop Sargis, discredibly referred as *mullah* by Ermolov, was sent to Tiflis for Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak to punish and make an example of. *AKAK*, vol. VI/I, no. 626, p. 464, A. P. Ermolov to Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak, 2 (14) December 1826. Upon Ermolov's hypocritical letter, on 14 (26) June, Nerses wrote to Paskevich that Mahdī-Qulī Khān fooled Archbishop Sargis into disclosing that the Russian were evacuating Qarahbāgh. Since there were some 1,500 Armenians in Shūsha, Sargis asked ‘Abbās Mīrzā to protect them. The efforts of Archbishop Sargis were misinterpreted by his opponents. He should be allowed to go back to Qarahbāgh. Paskevich approved this petition by sending a proper letter to Sipiagin in Tiflis. *AKAK*, vol. VII, no. 204, pp. 251-252, Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak to I. F. Paskevich, 14 (26) June 1827.

<sup>15</sup> Bournoutian, "Eastern Armenia from the Seventeenth Century to the Russian Annexation," p. 104.

counterparts. The Church and Armenian secular leaders put their faith in Iran, and although one of the churchmen, Nerses of Ashtarak, did not agree with that policy and left for Tiflis in order to stir up anti-Iranian agitation, the majority of the Armenian population either actively cooperated with Iran or remained neutral. As long as conditions remained favourable, Armenians here did not look toward Russia for help. Russian promises and active participation, so apparent in Georgia or Qarahbāgh, did not manifest themselves here. After the war Nerses and the Russia administration tried to attract Armenians from Iran and the Ottoman empire to emigrate to the new Armenian province. The Turkmanchāy Treaty, funds, propaganda, and fear of Muslims reprisals did attract thousands of Armenians to Russia's Armenian province.<sup>16</sup>

All the elders of the Armenian villages, the merchants of Īravān, and some of the Tatar elders who were dissatisfied with Iranian rule were of the opinion that the Russians would succeed in taking Īravān, if they attacked from Qarahbāgh and took Nakhjavān first. After that, the Russian army could move from Pāmbāk and Shuragel to Īravān. Otherwise the Iranians would deport all the Armenians across the Aras, as they did in Shāh 'Abbās's time, and the Russians would arrive in an empty Īravān. An inhabitant of Īravān, Kalantar Barsegh, on 1 March 1827 sent a letter to Archbishop Nerses in which he stated that if the Russian troops attacked Īravān now, all the Armenians would be deported to Iran. It would be best therefore not to attack Īravān until 20 September. Prior to that plans should be made for an advance from Gumri to Īravān and then to Tabrīz.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> George A. Bournoutian, *Eastern Armenia in the Last Decades of Persian Rule, 1807-1828: A Political and Socioeconomic Study of the Khanate of Erevan on the Eve of the Russian Conquest* (Malibu, California: Undena Publications, 1982).

<sup>17</sup> George A. Bournoutian, *Russia and the Armenians of Transcaucasia, 1797-1889: A Documentary Record* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1998), no. 282, p. 65, from diary of General Paskevich, 17-20 March (29 March-1 April) 1827. The diary of the commander of the Caucasus Corps mention that

## Armenians south of the Aras River

Armenians in Iran proper comprised the remnants of the once large Armenian community settled by Shah ‘Abbās the Great on the eve of the seventeenth century.<sup>18</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century, when the Qajar tribe under Āqā Muḥammad Khān finally wrested power from its rivals, approximately 100,000 Armenians, out of a former community of some 400,000, living primarily in Iṣfahān, Shīrāz, Mākū, Khūy, Tabrīz, and Hamadān, remained in Iran proper.<sup>19</sup> At the start of the nineteenth century, the Qajar dynasty, beginning with Fath ‘Alī Shāh, not only gradually unified Iran but was also responsible for the eventual revival and stabilization of the Armenian community in Iṣfahān and Tabrīz, as well as the creation of a new and important Armenian community in Tehran, Armenian merchants once again became active in major urban centres of Iran.<sup>20</sup>

## Formation of Armenian Militia Groups in Iran

The first Armenian volunteer groups appeared on their own initiative in the summer of 1826 but not all of these groups was fully equipped or armed at this stage.

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they captured Etchmiadzin in mid -April and that Archbishop Nerses , who had accompanied the Russian troops, issued a proclamation to his supporters in Īravān and Nakhjavān to aid the Russian effort. He encouraged the monks and the other Armenians of Etchmiadzin to cast off their fear of the Iranians and to cooperate with the Russians. He also tried to recruit the Karapapakh tribe who lived around the south shore of Lake Gukchah, to the Russian side.

<sup>18</sup> George A. Bournoutian, "Armenians in the Nineteenth-Century Iran," in *The Armenians of Iran: A Paradoxical Role of a Minority in a Dominant Culture: Articles and Documents*, ed. Cosroe Chaqueri (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 54-55. The decline of the Safavid dynasty at the end of the seventeenth century caused the slow exodus of the Armenians of Iran to different parts of the worlds. More Armenians, including many wealthy and influential merchants, emigrated to Georgia, Russia, Europe, and south Asia.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>20</sup> J. MacDonald Kinneir, *A Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire* (London 1813), p. 36.

While one of these volunteer groups, including some 100 peasants, was defending the village of Qarahkilīsā (Karakilise) against the troops of Ḥasan Khān,<sup>21</sup> other groups which had been assembled around the district of Gumri were organized to protect the border districts by collaborating with the Russian forces in Shirak.<sup>22</sup> Another Armenian cavalry-militia group – some 500 strong, under the command of G. Manucharian, was active in the districts of Qāzākh (Kazak) and Shamshadin.<sup>23</sup> Towards the end of July 1826, once the army of ‘Abbās Mīrzā besieged the fortress of Shūsha, the Russian garrison under the command of Colonel Reutt would be able to defend the fortress for seven weeks through the help of 1,500 Armenian volunteers.<sup>24</sup> By the autumn of 1826 new volunteer groups had emerged made up not only of Armenians but also of other indigenous peoples. By February of 1827, a group of some 4,000 Armenian and Tatar volunteers was already under the command of Madatov.<sup>25</sup>

At the beginning of the Russo-Iranian War of 1826-8, Nerses, under cover of religious rhetoric, had a crucial part in raising Armenian volunteer units in Tiflis to fight against the Iranian army with the Russian troops. During the war, the formation of Armenian militia groups became more and more important; the enthusiastic response of the Armenians to calls for volunteers encouraged Paskevich, as is clear from his correspondence with Field Marshal Count Diebitsch.<sup>26</sup> Not long after this,

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<sup>21</sup> This group of volunteers was not armed, for the details, see Potto, *Kavkazskaia voina v otdel'nykh ocherkakh, episodakh, legendakh i biografiakh*, III: p. 38.

<sup>22</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4338, pp. 39-40.

<sup>23</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 894, pp. 39-39ob.

<sup>24</sup> Potto, *Pervye dobrovol'tsy karabaga v epokhu vodvoreniia russkogo vladychestva*: p. 62.

<sup>25</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4332, p. 27. The term Tatar was primarily used to identify those who spoke the local Turkish dialect in the Russian Caucasus. All Russian sources refer to them as Tatars, while the Iranian sources refer to them by their tribal or regional names.

<sup>26</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4336, pp. 1-1ob, I. F. Paskevich to K. F. Diebitsch, 1827. According to Paskevich, not only from the Armenians but also from other local communities – i.e. Georgians and Tatars – similar groups were desired, see Agaian, *Prisoedinenie vostochnoi Armenii k Rossii: Sbornik dokumentov (1814-1830)*, no. 153, pp. 266-67, I. F. Paskevich to K. F. Diebitsch, 11 (23) May 1827. Indeed, much before this, the Georgians had already actively fought with the Russian army against the troops of Ḥasan Khān around the regions of Pāmbāk and Ābārān under the command

the first Armenian militia group in Tiflis was organized by Sipiagin who was also very keen to encourage the local Armenian community.<sup>27</sup> This was followed by the formation of the second,<sup>28</sup> and the third<sup>29</sup> groups which were soon dispatched into the war-zone. Given the increasing number of Armenian militia groups, Paskevich felt the need to publish military regulations covering the Armenian battalions in October 1827.

According to the thirty-four-article regulation, the battalions would consist of only Armenian volunteers, who would not be younger than eighteen or older than thirty, and their wives and children with themselves would be exempted from all

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of Denis Davydov in the autumn of 1826, see RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 894, pp. 6-8ob; delo: 4297, pp. 1-21ob. Similarly to Armenian militia groups, the first Georgian militia group had been organized under the supervision of H. M. Sipiagin in Tiflis and they have been included in the 7<sup>th</sup> Carabineers under the command of Second Lieutenant (podporuchik) Tumanov to join the army at Īravān, see *ibid.*, no. 161, p. 275, N. M. Sipiagin to K. F. Diebitsch, 29 June (11 July) 1827; RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4336, p. 12, N. M. Sipiagin to K. F. Diebitsch, 29 June (11 July) 1827. In the summer of 1827, the Georgian cavalry-militia groups participated in the storming of the Īravān and Sardārābād fortresses, see RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4338, pp. 37-38. On the Georgian militia in the Russian army, see RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4309. The Tatars also supported the Russian military advance in the region. In 1826, the Tatar militia groups were also organized thanks to the encouragement of A. Bakikhanov and generally used under the command of Madatov and Paskevich. At the request of Paskevich, the formation of the Tatar militia groups was permitted by Nicholas I. RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4336, p. 7, K. F. Diebitsch to I. F. Paskevich, 2 (14) June 1827.

<sup>27</sup> According to one official report, the first Armenian militia group of 129 people was equipped with arm and other military necessities to fight against the Iranians, see *ibid.*, no. 154, p. 267, I. F. Paskevich to K. F. Diebitsch, 29 May (10 June) 1827; RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4336, p. 11, I. F. Paskevich to K. F. Diebitsch, 29 May (10 June) 1827. According to another one, an Armenian militia group including one-hundred-seventeen equipped men departed from Tiflis to Etchmiadzin on 15 (27) May 1827, see *ibid.*, no. 158, p. 269, P. P. Sukhtelen to General Staff, 3 (15) June 1827; RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4336, p. 6, N. M. Sipiagin to K. F. Diebitsch, 15 (27) May 1827. Although this militia group officially had some hundred men in Tiflis, during its march to Etchmiadzin its number reached around one-thousand because of the arrival of new volunteers from the surrounding villages, see RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4338, pp. 37-38. In his speeches issued to the Armenian community, Sipiagin underscored the concepts of 'brotherhood' and 'motherland'. RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4338, pp. 51-51ob.

<sup>28</sup> The second Armenian militia unit was organized under the supervision of H. M. Sipiagin in Tiflis and some one hundred men were armed and ready to march. They were under the command of Second Lieutenant (podporuchik) Akimov and were included in the Kherson Grenadiers in their march to join the army at Īravān, see *ibid.*, no. 157, p. 69, H. M. Sipiagin to K. F. Diebitsch, 2 (14) June 1827; RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4336, p. 9, N. M. Sipiagin to K. F. Diebitsch, 1827.

<sup>29</sup> The third Armenian militia group of sixty-seven men has been formed under the supervision of H. M. Sipiagin in Tiflis and under the command of Captain (Vasilii Osipovich) Bebutov, left for Īravān on 21 August (2 September), it was expected to join the troops of A. I. Krasovskii's troops on 4 (16) September, see *ibid.*, no. 188, p. 314, N. M. Sipiagin to K. F. Diebitsch, 21 August (2 September) 1827; RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4336, p. 14.

taxes and services for the duration of their service in the Russian army.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, during the war, some members of the Armenian community inhabiting the Ottoman border districts such as Erzurum and Karakilise were enthusiastic about joining in the war and, illegally crossing the Iranian border, took a crucial role not only in gathering intelligence and guiding military expeditions in Iran but also in fighting against the Iranian troops in order to protect potentially strategic regions.<sup>31</sup> Martiros Vekilov (Vekilian) of Erzurum and Grigorii Ter (or Tair/Tahir)-Kalantarov (Kalantarian) of Karakilise could be considered as good examples of this case. Vekilov fought in the detachment of A. A. Frederiks at Gumri, commanded Armenian volunteer cavalry in different regions, and then joined the negotiations with Ḥasan Khān that led to the fall of the Sardārābād fortress on 9 (21) May 1827, Kalantarov carried out several various military duties and helped the Russian army to find good spies and guides in the region. In recognition of their military

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<sup>30</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4336, p. 2. The first battalion would be formed by a second lieutenant (podporuchik) of Armenian origin, Sumbatov (G. S. Smbatian), of the Kherson Grenadiers. He received one-hundred rubles for expenses to form the battalion. Each battalion would have one staff officer, two captains, two staff captains, four lieutenants, four sub-lieutenants, four ensigns, one paymaster, one adjutant, four buglers, four drummers, eighty non-commissioned officers, eight-hundred privates, and forty non-combatants. The officers would be appointed by the corps commander. The staff officer or captain of each battalion had to be an Armenian. Each battalion would be divided into eight units of one-hundred and each unit into groups of ten. Each soldier would receive a gun with a bayonet, a belt with thirty cartridges, and ten flints. Everyone would receive a salary appropriate to his rank. In addition, the privates would receive ten rubles a year. Non-commissioned officers would receive fifteen rubles to purchase their uniforms until they had been reimbursed by the state treasury. Weapons would be requested from the Tiflis arsenal, from among those taken from the Iranian troops. Horses would be provided by Second Lieutenant Krakovskii from among those captured from the enemy. The soldiers would be trained in the rudimentary knowledge of Jager skills and taught how to form groups and platoons, how to form columns for attack, and how to form defensive squares, see *ibid.*, no. 239, pp. 433-34, I. F. Paskevich's notes on Armenian battalions, December 1827 or January 1828. RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4336, pp. 2-5. 1827.

<sup>31</sup> In the nineteenth century, there were two distinct districts called as Karakilise. One was today's Vanadzor, the other one was Ağrı which are 250-300 km far away from each other. During the war, those (Armenians) who wished to pass to the northern side of the Aras River and to join Armenian militia groups have already been permitted by Paskevich, see *ibid.*, no. 217, p. 394, I. F. Paskevich to A. I. Krasovskii, 24 September (6 October) 1827.

achievements, Paskevich requested Diebitsch to award Velikov and Kalantarov the ranks of Sub-Lieutenant and 14<sup>th</sup>-class official respectively.<sup>32</sup>

The importance of the Armenian militia groups was considerable as the number of Russian troops was lower than expected in the region. Furthermore, in May 1827, some one-hundred-and-fifty Armenian troops deserted the Iranian garrison of Īravān to the Russian army.<sup>33</sup> Upon this, the Sardar of Īravān, in his report to Tehran, requested that only 'Iranians' was to be sent to the garrison of Īravān and that Armenians were to be employed only in menial non-combatant roles in the inner regions of Iran.<sup>34</sup> As another example, on 17 August, 1827, during the battle of Oshakan in Etchmiadzin, an Armenian artilleryman in the Iranian army, Akop Arutiunian, opened fire on his Iranian fellow soldiers. Apart from actively joining to fight with the Russian troops, Armenians were employed in gathering intelligence and guiding the Russian military expeditions and provisioning the Russian troops. For example, in April 1827, a peasant, Ovannes Aslanian, was sent to Echmiadzin for a special task but he was caught and tortured by the Iranian troops. For his services he was rewarded with a gold medal and put on salary by the command of Paskevich. Pode Esanov was rewarded with the *Georgievskii krest* for his service as a guide during the siege of the Erivan fortress and in the capture of the 'Abbāsābād and Sardārābād fortresses in 1827.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> RG VIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 6218, p. 19; *ibid.*, no. 156, p. 268, I. F. Paskevich to K. F. Diebitsch, 30 May (11 June) 1827. As stated above, not only the Armenians, but also the Tatar groups were conditionally considered as potential allies, particularly in border regions where there were no Russian troops stationed, by some of the Russian commanders. According to Sevarsemidze, in such border regions, even the Tatars were considered as unreliable and untrustworthy by the Russian command, the Armenian community could not be beneficial without them as the Tatar community had all the information from Iran and the Ottoman provinces. Although in peacetime the Armenian community could be considered as loyal and useful, in time of war they were simply useless in border regions. The Tatars, even it means death, could be dispatched to gather intelligence, see AKAK, vol. VI/I, no. 1372, p. 892, L. Ia. Sevarsemidze to A. A. Vel'iaminov, 21 September (3 October) 1825.

<sup>33</sup> RG VIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4338, pp. 37-37ob.

<sup>34</sup> RG VIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4338, pp. 61-63.

<sup>35</sup> Z. T. Grigorian, *Prisoedinenie vostochnoi Armenii k Rossii v nachale XIX veka* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Sotsial'no-Ekonomicheskoi Literatury, 1959), p. 132.

As discussed in previous chapters, one of the vital problems of the Russian army in the Caucasus was the lack of provisions and the means of transportation. In the summer of 1827, the Armenians of Pāmbāk, Shirak, Ābārān, Echmiadzin, Ashtarak, Zāngazūr and other regions sold their wheat, forage, animals and other produce to the Russians at below market price.<sup>36</sup>

### **Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire**

Similar to the case in Iran, the Armenian community were very scattered in the Ottoman realm in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The significance of the Armenian patriarchate and the *amiras* in Istanbul and the *reaya* inhabiting the Ottoman eastern borderline provinces came into prominence especially during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-9. The Russian advance in the south of the Caucasus intensely disquieted the Ottoman central administration as the attitude of the Armenian *reaya* towards Russia was relatively positive. In this context, the relationship between the Armenian patriarchate and the *amiras* and the influence of both these over the *reaya* had key importance.<sup>37</sup>

### **Armenians in Istanbul**

In the Ottoman empire, in accordance with the centuries-old canonical tradition of the Armenian church, the laity participated in the election of parish priests, as well as bishops, prelates, patriarchs, and the Catholicos (i.e. the head of

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<sup>36</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4338, p. 72ob.

<sup>37</sup> On the Armenian Catholic Church in the Ottoman empire, see Christopher Korten, "Private Partners: Cooperation between Russia and Rome in the Crisis of the Armenian Catholic Church, 1827-1830," *SEER* 92, no. 4 (2014): pp. 653-73; Kemal Beydilli, *II. Mahmud Devri'nde Katolik Ermeni Cemâati ve Kilisesi'nin Tanınması (1830)* (Harvard: Harvard University, 1995).

the Armenian church). This traditional participation of the lay element in church affairs dates back to the earliest period of Armenian Christianity. By the early nineteenth century what this meant was that the wealthy Armenian elite – the so-called *amira*<sup>38</sup> – of Istanbul, some of whose bankers owned fortunes of more than one million pounds sterling, dominated the patriarchate. The patriarch in turn was recognised by the Ottoman government as head of the Armenian *millet* (community),<sup>39</sup> over which he exercised not just religious but also administrative and judicial power.<sup>40</sup> The linked interests of the class of *amira* and the Armenian patriarchate rendered them loyal to the Ottoman sultan. Indeed, the class of *amira* often acted as mediators between the Armenian patriarchate and the central government. This Armenian privileged class not only held some of the most important positions in the government but also controlled a considerable part of the Ottoman economy.<sup>41</sup> Their prestige and wealth were relatively influential in the centre of the state but not in the peripheral regions. Not only the class of *amira*, but also the Armenian patriarchate could not exercise powerful influence upon its own

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<sup>38</sup> The Armenian *amira* comes from Turkish *emir* which is derived from Arabic *amir*, meaning prince. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries these wealthy Armenians were known as *hocas* and *çelebis*. Beginning with the second half of the eighteenth century these magnates came to be known as *amiras*, a title given by the sultan only to those Armenians who were officially connected with the Ottoman government. The *amira* class was not based on inherited aristocracy as in Europe and Russia, but merit and capability. It was not until the last two decades of the eighteenth century that the number of *amiras* increased to the point where they began to be considered as a distinct class.

<sup>39</sup> In the Ottoman administrative system, the non-Muslim subjects were organized in semiautonomous bodies, called *millets*. The leader of each *millet* was entitled *millet-başı* (community head), and the Armenian and Greek *millets* were each headed by a patriarch. The division of the Christians into two broad groups was based not on race or nationality but on a profession of faith. On the *millet* system, Michael Ursinus, "Zur diskussion um 'millet' im Osmanischen Reiches," *Südost-Forschungen* 48(1989): pp. 195-207; Macit Kenanoğlu, *Osmanlı Millet Sistemi: Mit ve Gerçek* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2007). On the formation of Catholic and Protestant Armenian *millets*, see Vartan H. Artinian, "The Formation of Catholic and Protestant Millets in the Ottoman Empire," *AR* 28, no. 1 (1975): pp. 3-15.

<sup>40</sup> Hagop L. Barsoumian, "Economic Role of the Armenian Amira Class in the Ottoman Empire," *AR* 31, no. 3 (1978); Vartan H. Artinian, "The Role of the Amiras in the Ottoman Empire," *AR* 34, no. 2 (1981): pp. 189-94; Barsoumian, "The Dual Role of the Armenian Amira Class within the Ottoman Government and the Armenian Millet (1750 - 1850)," pp. 171-84; Hagop L. Barsoumian, *The Armenian Amira Class of Istanbul* (Yerevan: American University of Armenia, 2007).

<sup>41</sup> The families of Duzyan, Dadyan, Cezayirliyan, Balyan, Noradunkyan, Arpiaryan, Bilezikchiyan were the most prominent Armenian *amira* families in the Ottoman land.

community inhabiting the Ottoman eastern periphery. This would be one of the serious disadvantages which the *amiras*, the Armenian patriarchate and the Ottoman central authority had to face during crisis periods of the nineteenth century. Not surprisingly, the Armenian *amiras* were on the whole loyal to the Ottoman regime and had no intention of defecting to Russia. The Armenians' importance in commerce, finance and government was greater in Istanbul. The Ottoman mint was run by Armenians, employed Armenian workers and kept its records in the Armenian language. Most of the sultan's key financial advisers and bankers were Armenians.<sup>42</sup>

### **Armenians in Eastern Anatolia**

According to the work of Lynch, the number of the Armenians in Kars was approximately 20-25,000 in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Concerning the current political situation of the region, in his official reports, the Ottoman Serasker, Galib Pasha, stated that the Armenians in the region remained neutral up to the outbreak of the Russo-Iranian war in 1826, however, in the following process, due to geographical proximity and other motives, the Armenians of Kars and Çıldır gradually started to be inclined to side with Russia. At the beginning of the Russo-Ottoman war, some of the local Armenians in Kars started to be conscripted as *soldati* in the militia groups organized by the Russian commanders and following the

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<sup>42</sup> One of the most prominent magnates of this period was Harutyun Amira Bezciyan, better known as Kazzâz Artin. He was appointed as the superintendent of the *darphâne-i amire* (Ottoman imperial mint) in 1819, after one year, went into exile to Lemnos. In 1823, he was reinstated in his previous position and held in high esteem by Mahmud II as one of his counsellors. During the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-9, the maritime traffic in the Bosphorus was blocked and the provisions shipped from Anatolia were insufficient in quantity and quality. Once the Ottoman capital faced the threat of famine, Kazzâz Artin advised Mahmud II to cancel all import taxes on grain and thus saved the Ottoman capital and periphery from turmoil. Following the war, the Sultan again paid attention to Kazzâz Artin's advice to adulterate the currency with copper and to borrow at interest from European financiers, which made the payment of the war indemnity possible. On Kazzâz Artin, Diran Kelekyan, "Kazzâz Artin," *Tarih-i Osmanî Encümeni Mecmuâsı* 5, no. 26 (1330 [1912]): pp. 84-105.

fall of Kars, the Caucasus Corps armed some Armenian units with rifles taken from the garrison of Kars.<sup>43</sup>

As was clear in the case of the Iranian war, the Caucasus Corps was not very familiar with features of the topography on the other side of Russia's borders and thus needed local guides and spies to gather current information on the enemy. Asatur Aktokatov, being one of these, had been dispatched to Kars; according to his report, due to the long period of crisis in Iran, some of the Armenians had migrated from Pāmbāk and Shuragel into Ottoman territory, however these Armenians were not welcomed by the Ottoman authorities for fear of worsening relations with the shah. Subsequently one of these Armenians was sentenced to death as he has been spying for Russia.<sup>44</sup> As mentioned before, not only the Armenians but also the Tatars, in time of war, could be used to gather information on the enemy; for example, a Tatar travelling from Kars back to Russian territory provided important information about the number of the Ottoman troops under the command of Hurşid Bey and Emin Ağa patrolling on the Ottoman borders and the military preparations of the Ottoman garrison in Kars where large amount of provisions and bread had been stored just before outbreak of the war. Nevertheless, due to Ottoman pressure, both the Armenians and the Tatars were reluctant to migrate to Russian. Because of the admiration of the Armenians in Kars for Russia the Ottoman authorities were deeply suspicious of the Armenian *reaya*'s loyalty and thus the Armenian residents of the villages of Tikhnis, Paldarvan, and Meshko had been already deported into the

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<sup>43</sup> BOA, HH, dosya: 1013, gömlek: 42478/A, 23/S/1244 [04 September 1828].

<sup>44</sup> Asatur Aktokatov, in his reports, gives details on the number of the Ottoman troops - i.e. 15,000 and the amount of gunpowder - i.e. 15,000 puds stored in the fortress of Kars, see Agaian, *Prisoedinenie vostochnoi Armenii k Rossii: Sbornik dokumentov (1814-1830)*, no. 266, p. 476, General-Adjutant Portniagin, 23 March (4 April) 1828; no. 283, p. 495, 18 (30) May 28.

inner provinces of the Ottoman empire once Paskevich advanced from Gumri on 26 June.<sup>45</sup>

As was true in the case of Kars, the majority of the Armenian community in Erzurum seemed favourably disposed towards Russia.<sup>46</sup> Following the fall of Erzurum and the capture of the Ottoman Serasker Hacı Salih Pasha, the majority of the Moslem residents had already scattered over a large region. At this point some units drawn from the Armenian community were armed by the Caucasus Corps and then started to conduct patrolling service in Erzurum. These militia groups even engaged in combat with the Ottoman forces. Russian advance towards Bayezid, as happened in Kars and Erzurum, terrified the Moslems and thus majority of them escaped from the town. However the Armenians mainly remained in the town despite the fierce raids organized by some of the Kurdish tribal chieftains. Inevitably, some of the Armenian families were obliged to immigrate into Erivan and Tiflis.

### **Formation of Armenian Militia Groups in the Ottoman Empire**

The collaboration between the Armenians in the Ottoman land and Russia increased during the Russo-Ottoman war of 1828-9. As experienced in Iran, in order to stop their assistance to the Caucasus Corps, the Ottomans tried to resettle the Armenians inhabiting eastern Anatolia in central parts of the empire. Some of the Armenian groups refused to move into the western regions of the Ottoman empire and left for the territories recently captured by Russia. As Paskevich wrote, Kurdish irregular units had been deployed by the Ottoman administration to stop this

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<sup>45</sup> AKAK, vol. VII, no 753, pp. 501-503, I. F. Paskevich to Tsar Nicholas, 19 June (1 July) 1828.

<sup>46</sup> Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'aniüvis Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, II-III: p. 79.

Armenian emigration to Russia.<sup>47</sup> The total strength of the Caucasus Corps was around 49,000: of these the Russian command would be able to use more than one third on Ottoman soil. The rest would have to be deployed on the borders and at strategic points guarding supplies and communications, and over-awing potentially disloyal local communities. Russia had exploited the human resources in the southern Caucasus as fully as possible in the previous war against Iran and the result had been relatively positive for Russia. It would try this method against the Ottoman empire too.<sup>48</sup>

At the outset of the war against the Ottomans, the Russians founded new militia groups from the peoples inhabiting Īravān and its surrounding countryside. For this purpose, in February 1828, an Armenian cavalry regiment consisting of 400 men and an Armenian infantry battalion consisting of 800 men were formed.<sup>49</sup> In March 1828, by the command of Paskevich, a Tatar infantry battalion – 1,000 men, and a Tatar cavalry battalion – 1,500 men, and an Armenian infantry battalion – 600 men, were organised to protect the borderlands.<sup>50</sup> By the end of the Russo-Ottoman War, the Caucasus Corps included 2,800 Armenian volunteers.<sup>51</sup> In Eleşkird, Erzurum, Ardahan, Bayezid, Kars and other regions, new Armenian militia groups appeared and played important roles in the war. An Armenian infantry unit, 500 strong, organised by Malik Martiros of Bayezid and a unit of 800 men formed by the Armenians from Kars were the best known units.<sup>52</sup> In Kars, Bayezid and Erzurum, the Armenian militia groups were relatively much more active: as an example, an

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<sup>47</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4644, p. 6.

<sup>48</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4732, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4334, pp. 8-9, 12-13ob.

<sup>50</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4329, pp. 277-277ob.

<sup>51</sup> Grigorian, *Prisoedinenie vostochnoi Armenii k Rossii v nachale XIX veka*: pp. 136-37.

<sup>52</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4644, pp. 267-269ob; delo: 1019, pp. 3-3ob.

Armenian group of 2,000 voluntarily enlisted in the Caucasus Corps.<sup>53</sup> The main duty of the Armenian infantry and cavalry police units were to protect the borderlands against Kurdish raids.<sup>54</sup> During the war, not only Armenian but also Tatar and Georgian militia served in the Caucasus Corps. The Russian command was especially inclined to take advantage of the Tatar volunteer groups. The Tatar and other Muslim groups were eager to serve in the Russian army against the Ottomans. During the war, the efforts of the Tatar cavalry units were greatly appreciated by the Russian command.<sup>55</sup> For example, in April 1828, Paskevich ordered Sipiagin to form *sarbaz* battalions of 100 men from the Tatars of the *distansias* of Būrchālī (Borçalı), Qāzākh, Shamshadin, the *okrug* of Ganjah, the provinces of Shirvān, Shakī and Qarahbāgh. The chief of the Nakhjavān *oblast*, S. D. Merlini was ordered to organise Tatar cavalry units of 300 men from the *mahals* of Nakhjavān and Urdūbā d. The cavalry units of Shirvān and Shakī – 114 men - were ready to head on to Gumri on 31 May, 1828 and arrived there on 22 June. Another one – 109 men – had been formed in Qarahbāgh left for Gumri on 21 June and arrived there on 5 July. All these three units came under the command of Captain Kade in the Kherson Grenadier Regiment. Perhaps the enthusiasm of the Russian military leaders for Tatar cavalry reflected both the usefulness of cavalry to gather intelligence and beat off Kurdish raiders on the one hand, and the army's lack of Russian cavalry on the other.

The number of cavalry enlisted from Būrchālī, Qāzākh, Shamshadin and Ganjah was 400. They gathered in Başgeçit/Dmanisi approximately 90 km southwest of Tiflis. These volunteer cavalry units were under the command of the *pristav* of Būrchālī, Captain Prince Orbeliani. At the request of General-Major Pankrat'ev, in March 1829, Paskevich allowed the formation of an Armenian police battalion of

<sup>53</sup> RGViA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 1019, pp. 3-3ob.

<sup>54</sup> Ushakov, *Istoriia voennykh deistvii v aziatskoi Turtsii v 1828 i 1829 godakh*, I: pp. 76-77.

<sup>55</sup> AKAK, vol. VII, no. 284, pp. 326-328, I. F. Paskevich to Chernyshev, 6 (18) April 1829.

500 men to strengthen the garrison of the Bayezid fortress. The battalion was divided into four companies and put under the command of Malik Martiros of Bayezid who was appointed as the *politseimeister* of the battalion. In May, another battalion had been formed from the Armenian of Bayezid but all these battalions were dissolved in November.

In July 1829, Sipiagin formed two cavalry units from the *uezds* of Aleksandropol and Erivan and they came under the command of Colonel Khreshchatinskii. They included 100 cavalry from the *uezd* of Nakhjavān ; 50 cavalry from the *uezd* of Urdūbād; 50 cavalry from the *uezd* of Novo-Bayezid; 300 cavalry more from the *uezd* of Erivan. By August 1, 1829, a cavalry unit of 1100 men was formed in the *guberniia* of Erivan.

## **Treaties**

Article XV of the Treaty of Turkmanchāy and Article XIII of the Treaty of Adrianople covered the migration of peoples between the two empires in the immediate aftermath of the wars. In the Russo-Ottoman case, for example, Article XIII allowed an eighteen-month period in which subjects of both empires could freely emigrate and re-settle in the rival empire.

### **The Treaty of Turkmanchāy**

#### **Article XV**

Article XV of the Russo-Iranian peace treaty of Turkmanchāy read as follows:

“Dans le but bienfaisant et salulaire de ramener le calme dans Ses Etats et d’écarter de Ses sujets tout ce qui pourrait aggraver les maux qu’a déjà attirés sur eux la guerre à laquelle le présent Traité a mis si heureusement fin, Sa Majesté le Schah accorde une amnistie pleine et entière à tous les habitans et fonctionnaires de la Province dite l’Adzerbaïdjane. Aucun d’eux, sans exception de catégorie, ne pourra être ni poursuivi, ni molesté pour ses opinions, pour ses actes, ou pour la conduite qu’il aurait tenue, soit pendant la guerre, soit pendant l’occupation temporaire de la dite Province par les troupes Russes. Il leur sera accordé en outre le terme d’un an, à dater de ce jour, pour se transporter librement avec leurs familles des Etats Persans dans les Etats Russes, pour exporter et pour vendre leurs biens meubles, sans que les Gouvernement, ou les autorités locales, puissent y mettre le moindre obstacle, ni prélever aucun droit, ou aucune rétribution sur les biens et sur les objets vendus, du exportés par eux. Quant à leurs biens immeubles, il leur sera accordé un terme de ce [five] ans pour les vendre, ou pour en disposer à leur gré. Sont exceptés de cette amnistie ceux qui se rendraient coupables, dans l’espace de tems susmentionné d’un an, de quelque crime, ou délit passible des peines punies par les tribunaux.”<sup>56</sup>

Article XV of the treaty made provision for the mass emigration of the Iranian Armenians to the newly created Russian Armenian province across the Aras.

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<sup>56</sup> VPR, vol. XV, no: 138, pp. 407-408. In the facsimile of the original manuscript in French, there is no inscription of five-year but it is possible to see it in its retyped and paginated version in Russian, see pp. 412-413. “With the beneficent and salutary aim of restoring tranquillity in his States and of removing from his subjects all that may aggravate the evils which have brought on them the war to which the present Treaty has put an end so happily, His Majesty the Shah accords a full and complete amnesty to all the inhabitants and functionaries of the province known as Azerbaijan. No one of them, without exception of category, may be either pursued, or molested for his opinions, for his acts or for the conduct which he may have pursued, either during the war or during the temporary occupation of the said province by Russian troops. There will be, moreover, accorded them a period of one year dating from this day in order to transport themselves freely with their families from Persian States into Russian States, to export and to sell their movable property, without the Governments or the local authorities being able to place the least obstacle in the way thereof, nor to deduct previously any tax or any recompense on the goods and objects sold or exported by them. As for their immovable property there will be accorded a term of five years to sell or to dispose thereof as may be desired. There are excepted from this amnesty those who may have rendered themselves culpable within the period of time above-mentioned of one year of some crime, or misdemeanour liable to penalties punished by the Courts.

Some 45,000 Iranian Armenians soon emigrated to Russian Armenia. ‘Abbās Mīrzā protested this loss of revenue and talent, and in order to stop the exodus, made major concessions to the Armenian merchants of Tabrīz and granted special privileges to the Armenian clergy in Iran. He provided funds for the renovation of the St. Thaddeus Monastery, hoping that the Armenian dioceses in Azerbaijan and New Julfa would act autonomously and not be bound to the Holy See of Etchmiadzin, now in Russian territory.<sup>57</sup> Fath ‘Alī Shāh extended this benevolent policy to Armenians living in the south and in 1832 issued a decree in which he instructed the governor of Iṣfahān to take special care of the Armenians, to refer all disputes among them to their church leaders, and to exempt the Armenian archbishop from taxes.<sup>58</sup>

## **The Treaty of Adrianople**

### **Article XIII**

Article XIII of the Russo-Ottoman peace treaty of Adrianople read as follows:

“Les hautes puissances contractantes, en rétablissant entre elles les rapports d’une amitié sincère, accordent un pardon général et une amnistie pleine et entière à tous ceux de leurs sujets, de quelque condition qu’ils puissent être, qui, pendant le cours de la guerre heureusement terminée aujourd’hui, auraient pris part aux opérations militaires ou manifeste, soit par leur conduite, soit par leurs opinions, leur

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<sup>57</sup> Bournoutian, "Armenians in the Nineteenth-Century Iran." Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: 1535-1914*, I: pp. 99-100.

<sup>58</sup> The decree, catalogued under number 271 of the manuscripts at the Armenian diocese in New Julfa, Iṣfahān, has been cited in Ismā‘īl Rā‘īn, *Īrānīyān-i Armanī* (1349 [1970/1971]), p. 119. An interesting fact is that the Iranians, after the loss of eastern Armenia to Russia, tried to ignore the head, or catholicos, of the Armenian Church at Etchmiadzin, who had jurisdiction over all Armenians, and regarded the Armenian archbishops of Tabrīz and New Julfa as the religious heads of the Armenians in Iran. The decrees, therefore, refer to them as khalife or caliph of the Armenians, a title previously used only for the catholicos.

attachement à l'une ou à l'autre des deux puissances contractantes. En conséquence, aucun de ces individus ne sera inquiété ou poursuivi, ni pour sa personne, ni dans ses biens, à cause de sa conduite passée, et chacun d'eux recouvrant les propriétés qu'il possédait auparavant, en aura la paisible jouissance sous la protection des lois ou bien sera libre de s'en défaire dans l'espace de dix-huit mois pour se transporter avec sa famille et ses biens meubles dans tels pays qu'il lui plaira de choisir, sans essuyer de vexations ni entraves quelconques.

Il sera en outre accordé aux sujets respectifs, établis dans les pays restitués à la Sublime Porte ou cédés à la cour impériale de Russie, le même terme de dix-huit mois, à compter de l'échange des ratifications du présent traité de paix, pour disposer, s'ils le jugent convenable, de leurs propriétés acquises, soit avant, soit depuis guerre, et se retirer avec leurs capitaux et leurs biens meubles de Etats de l'une des puissances contractantes dans ceux de l'autre et réciproquement.”<sup>59</sup>

## **Migration**

The migration of Armenians to Russia in the late 1820s and early 1830s was part of a much older and greater history of the movement of peoples across the Russian, Ottoman and Iranian borders in the aftermaths of the many wars fought between the rival empires. Above all this meant the expulsion or flight of millions of Muslims from provinces overrun by Russian armies and lost to the Ottomans at subsequent peace treaties. Between 1783 and 1913 approximately six million Muslims fled from the Ottoman empire's northern borderlands to the core Anatolian provinces. This flood of migrants began after Catherine II's annexation of Crimea

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<sup>59</sup> VPR, vol. XVI, no: 103, p. 265.

and it was repeated almost every time the Ottomans were forced to cede provinces to Russia or its Balkan protégés. But Russia's defeat in the Crimean war also resulted in the massive expulsion of Muslims, who were regarded as a security risk by a Russian regime now acutely sensitive to their empire's geopolitical vulnerability. A point to note is that no such mass movement occurred as a result of the Russo-Ottoman and Russo-Iranian wars of the 1820s. In this case the movement of peoples was relatively small-scale, it was mostly voluntary, and it largely entailed Bulgarian and Armenian peasants moving to Russia rather than any exodus of Muslims to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>60</sup>

Our concern in this work is solely with the southern Caucasus and the migration of Armenians. To put the migration of Armenians into the Russian empire after the two wars into context one needs a brief introduction firstly to Russian policy on immigration and colonisation in the preceding decades, secondly to the Armenian communities in Iran and the Ottoman Empire, and thirdly to Russia's relations with the Armenians in the early nineteenth century.

### **Migration Policy of the Russian Empire**

Russia was an enormous country with a historically small population. Colonisation had always played an important part in the expansion and consolidation of the Russian Empire. Most colonists were Russians (and Ukrainians and Belorussians) but many were foreigners. Russian expansion southwards under Catherine II had resulted in determined efforts by the empress and her officials to

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<sup>60</sup> For the statistic, see Dominic Lieven, *Towards the Flame. Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia* (London: Allen Lane, 2015), p. 77. For the Bulgarians see Mark Pinson, "Demographic Warfare: An Aspect of Ottoman and Russian Policy, 1854-1866" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Harvard University, 1970), pp. 14-20, 85-87.

encourage foreigners to settle in the large, empty and fertile newly conquered territories. Many Balkan peoples but also many Germans emigrated to Russia and started to farm and develop the provinces north of the Black Sea. Serb soldier-colonists, for example, played a role quite like that of Russian and Ukrainian Cossacks. They provided many of the Russian army's first hussar units. German immigrants brought with them many skills, including farming techniques, which also greatly benefited the newly conquered southern provinces.<sup>61</sup> Already by the end of Catherine II's reign the Russian government's enthusiasm for foreign colonists was waning. Colonisation by Russians was far cheaper than attracting foreigners. As the Russian population grew dramatically between 1763 and 1830 there were also more Russian colonists available and decreasing amounts of free prime land even in the southern steppe. On the whole therefore Nicholas I's government ceased to encourage immigration, reduced subsidies to foreign colonies on the southern steppe, and sought to reduce the privileges and special status of existing colonies. In the southern Caucasus, however, there remained both strategic and economic reasons for welcoming Christian, Armenian immigrants to a region which was still facing domestic Muslim rebellion and which would be in the front line of any future wars with the Ottomans and Iranians.<sup>62</sup>

### **Mass Immigration of Iranian Armenians**

The first request regarding the resettlement of Armenians from those parts of Iran under Russian control was made on 8 January 1828 by Archbishop Nerses of

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<sup>61</sup> RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 1016.

<sup>62</sup> The basic text on immigration policy is Roger P. Bartlett, *Human Capital: The Settlement of Foreigners in Russia 1762-1804* (Cambridge: CUP, 1979). On Nicholas I's perspective on immigration and colonists, see e.g. Alexander Bitis, "The 1828-1829 Russo-Turkish War and the Resettlement of Balkan Peoples into Novorossiia," *JfGO* 53, no. 4 (2005): pp. 506-10.

Ashtarak to Paskevich. The Commander-in-Chief, from the moment, he arrived in Tabrīz, received delegations representing Armenians and Greeks from many corners of Iranian provinces, particularly Azerbaijan, even from ones which were not yet under Russian control. These delegations came to express their wish and their plans to emigrate to Russia. In reply Paskevich stated that as long as the Russian army remained in Iran they would be able to immigrate into Russia and take advantage of Russian laws. Archbishop Stepan and Vardapet Nicholas were very useful in conveying Paskevich's messages to various Armenian settlements as well as to Russian officers and Iranian officials, in order to speed up the process. They spread word that the rights of all people – not only the Armenian community - who wished to leave Iran had been guaranteed by Article XV of the treaty of Turkmanchāy and they would not be harmed in any way, as long as the Russian troops remained in Ira. They added that Paskevich has advised all Armenians to migrate over the Russian borders as soon as possible and certainly prior to the departure of Russian forces. Russia had proposed and the Iranian government had accepted in the treaty that those who wished to migrate to Russia would also not be harmed or impeded after the Russian forces left but there were no guarantees that the Iranians would hold to these terms.<sup>63</sup> Nerses of Ashtarak suggested that Russia instruct the Iranian government to encourage the purchase by Iranian individuals of immovable property, such as mills, houses, and orchards at a fair price. However, he added, knowing the Iranian government, one could hardly expect them to agree to pay the Armenians for their property. Individuals could. However, sell their property to Iranian individuals and

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<sup>63</sup> AKAK, vol. VII, no. 546, pp. 588-589, I. F. Paskevich to Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak, 25 January (6 February) 1828.

Russia had proposed that after peace was achieved, those who wished to leave Iran would have five years to settle their estates.<sup>64</sup>

Faced with Armenian requests to migrate to Russia, Paskevich nominated L.I. Lazarev to organize the mass resettlement process from Iran to Russia. Soon after, Lazarev put his proposals for the resettlement of Armenians into Russia to Paskevich for his consideration. In the letter, in order to conduct the resettlement of those Armenians who wished to move into Russia lawfully, Lazarev underscored that he needed (a) to be given instructions in which the specific terms of the treaty and the time-limits envisaged were clearly stated and (b) he must be permitted to appoint sufficient numbers of officers who spoke Armenian. Moreover, the very poor Armenians must be given a subsidy; if there was no fodder for their animals, then orders should be sent to the relevant authorities to supply them; if they had grain or flour which they could not take with themselves, they should be permitted to give it to the Russian treasury and be paid in kind or cash once they arrived at their final destinations. He added that Russian officers had been sent to the various regions in Azerbaijan and were to make a list of those who wished to resettle in Russia and those who might need their protection.<sup>65</sup>

One of the important and (for the Iranians) most damaging articles of the treaty of Turkmanchāy was the war indemnity which was to be paid in instalments by the Iranian government. The Russian negotiators and command had not expected that the Iranian government would manage to pay the first instalment on time. Therefore, although most of the Armenians and Greeks in Azerbaijan had articulated their clear intention and will to emigrate to Russia, the Russians had not encouraged all of them to do so, since they hoped that Iranian Azerbaijan would remain in

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<sup>64</sup> AKAK, vol. VII, no. 546, pp. 588-589, I. F. Paskevich to Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak, 25 January (6 February) 1828.

<sup>65</sup> AKAK, vol. VII, no. 553, pp. 595-596, L. I. Lazarev to I. F. Paskevich, 14 (26) February 1828.

Russian hands. But in fact, as the Iranian government managed to pay the instalment with the help of the British government, Russia had to evacuate Azerbaijan – except Urūmīyah, Khūy, and Mākū, which would be kept until the whole indemnity of one and a half kurur was paid by the Iranian government – there was therefore no reason for the Christians of Azerbaijan to remain in the province any longer. Lazarev was therefore instructed by Paskevich to dispatch officers to all the Armenian and other Christian settlements, to prepare them to leave with Russian troops from the central assembly point of Marāghah not later than 8 (20) March.<sup>66</sup>

Upon their arrival in Marāghah, each family would be interviewed carefully and would be asked to confirm whether they truly wished to leave Iran. None of them should be forced or pushed to migrate to Russia but the advantages of living under the rule of the Russian Tsar as well as the peaceful conditions under Russian laws should be pointed out to them. Armenian merchants would be free to trade in Russia and farmers would be given land and be free from taxes for six years and from services for three years. Those who were in need of financial assistance were to be recorded and the list should be forwarded to Paskevich. All those who lived close to Marāghah were advised to move immediately, or at the late, with the Russian troops, otherwise they would be subjected to the wrath of the Iranians and might not be permitted to emigrate. Since the Russian troops would remain in Urūmīyah and Khūy, the Armenians living there could prepare to depart by the end of May. The names of the villages or families wishing to emigrate should be listed carefully, so it would be easier to know which group was exempt from taxes in Russia. Each village should be permitted to leave a trusted individual behind to sell the immovable property of the village during the time agreed in the treaty. The name of the

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<sup>66</sup> They were to leave immediately and to report to the commander of the army, General Pankrat'ev. A senior officer with twenty-five Cossacks was to assist their move.

individual and his duty was to be recorded on a form, a copy of which should be given to the Russian commissioner at the court of ‘Abbās Mīrzā or to the Russian diplomatic representative in Tabrīz, to make possible their assistance in this matter. To ensure that the immigrants would have enough food for themselves and their livestock, they would be broken into groups of 150 to 300 families, or one village at a time. Each group should take a different route to the Russian border so that enough supplies could be prepared for them. Each family should be given protection.

Paskevich went on to inform Lazarev that it was advisable to direct most of the settlers to the Nakhjavān and Īravān regions , where the Christian population was low. The inhabitants of the village of Uzumchī and the three settlements around it were, however, permitted to go to Qarahbāgh, which was closer to them. Each party was to be assigned an officer whom Lazarev must brief on his task and who must who speak Armenian. Each party must also have two to five Cossacks as escorts. Once a group had moved Russian officers and officials would have to inform the government of Īravān of their exact numbers, where they lived, where they wished to settle, even temporarily, what kind of climate they currently lived in, whether they preferred to settle on mountains or plains, and whether they farmed and, if so, how many animals they possessed. S. S. Zhukovskii had been instructed to give Lazarev 25,000 silver rubles to distribute among the needy, not more than 10 rubles per family. Their elders had to sign receipts and Lazarev and his functionaries had to present an account of the said funds. A committee would be set up by the temporary governor of Īravān to meet the settlers at the Russian border and to help them find a suitable place to live. The villagers wishing to move to Qarahbāgh would be met by the military governor of that province, I. N. Abkhazov. Upon completion of the task, Lazarev was to submit a full report to Paskevich of the number of families who had

been transported and the funds that had been utilized. The farmers would be exempted for five years from paying back the subsidy. From the 25,000 rubles allocated, Lazarev might pay a travelling allowance of two silver kopeks per verst to staff officers and three kopeks to senior officers.<sup>67</sup>

N. P. Pankrat'ev received Paskevich's instructions of 9 March regarding Armenian settlers and reported that some two hundred families had so far arrived from Iran. Pankrat'ev also informed Paskevich that 'Abbās Mīrzā had sent a notice to the Armenians of Marāghah asking them not to leave Iran. He had promised them many privileges. He had also asked Ja'far Qulī Khān to remain in Iran, offering him the governorship of Marāghah. Although Ja'far Qulī Khān knew that he could not trust the promises of the Iranians, he was hesitant to leave, and Pankrat'ev was not sure if he would depart from Marāghah for Russia.<sup>68</sup> Paskevich was also informed of Iranian government complaints that Russia was forcibly removing the Armenians from Iran. Iranian officials were, therefore, in some cases preventing the Armenians from selling their goods. For example, the Armenians of Dahkhārqn, who had already sold their houses and orchards, were forced by the Iranian official Āqā Karīm to return the money. He forbade them to sell their property and leave Iran.<sup>69</sup>

As part of Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak's efforts to resettle the Armenians of Azerbaijan in Russia, he reported to Paskevich that Bishop Israyel, who had been

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<sup>67</sup> Sergei Glinka, ed. *Sobranie Aktov Otnosiashchikhsia k Obozreniiu Istorii Armianskogo Naroda*, III vols., vol. II (Moskva: Tipografiia Lazarevykh Instituta Vostochnykh Iazykov, 1838), pp. 150-56, I. F. Paskevich to L. I. Lazarev, 26 February (9 March) 1828. On 29 February (12 March), Paskevich wrote to the Īravān governor to prepare a committee for the arrival of the Armenians from Azerbaijan. Families who were needy were to receive between 10 and 20 rubles. Armenian peasants were to receive good farmland with water, and each family was to receive at least three *sazhen* of land. Lands belonging to Etchmiadzin were not to be populated by the settlers. State lands were preferred (for future taxes). Those Armenian villages that had extra land could accept settlers if the wish to Christian villages in Muslim areas were to be populated by Christian refugees. Nakhjavān and Īravān, as well as the border regions of Kāpān, Maghrī, and Urdūbād, were preferred sites for Armenian settlers, see *ibid.*, pp. 157-62.

<sup>68</sup> AKAK, vol. VII, no. 559, p. 602, N. P. Pankrat'ev to I. F. Paskevich, 1 (13) March 1828.

<sup>69</sup> AKAK, vol. VII, no. 564, p. 606, I. F. Paskevich to A. K. Amburger, 9 (21) March 1828.

appointed by Etchmiadzin to the monastery of St. Bartholomew in Salmās, had forgotten his Christian duty and was stopping the Armenians from emigrating to Russia, as well as being guilty of other inappropriate actions. Therefore, as the supervisor of Armenian affairs in this region, Nerses had asked Prince A. G. Chavchavadze to order the Russian commander at Khūy to escort Bishop Israyel under guard to Etchmiadzin, so that he might be judged by an Armenian religious court and might explain his actions. But although Chavchavadze passed on this request to the Russian commander at Khūy, the latter had refused to act without Paskevich's approval. Nerses, therefore, asked Paskevich to inform whoever was in charge at Khūy to send Bishop Israyel to Etchmiadzin and permit the Armenians to rid themselves of Iranian demands and emigrate to Russia. Although, added Nerses, it was possible that some Armenians had to settle their accounts prior to immigration that should have not been used as an excuse to stop the Armenian settlement in the Īravān and Nakhjavān provinces.<sup>70</sup>

Lazarev heard that certain individuals were spreading rumours and were casting doubts about the resettlement of Armenians in Russia. He therefore issued a proclamation in April 1828 stating that Armenian migrants might choose to settle in Īravān, Nakhjavān or Qarahbāgh, where they would be given fertile land on which they could start a new life and where they were required to pay only one-tenth of the produce of their farms in taxes to the state. They would be altogether exempt from taxes for six years and those among them who were poor would receive assistance. Those who had immovable property could send their families on ahead and appoint

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<sup>70</sup> AKAK, vol. VII, no. 568, pp. 607-608, Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak to I. F. Paskevich, 17 (29) March 1828. Paskevich's response on 19 March stated that it would have been easier to carry out the wish of Nerses when Paskevich was in Tabriz. He added that although Khūy was temporarily in Russian hands (until the payment of the indemnity by the Iran) he could not order the removal of an Iranian subject – that would be in violation of the treaty and would give an excuse to 'Abbās Mīrzā to file a protest, see AKAK, vol. VII, no. 569, p. 608, I. F. Paskevich to Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak, 19 (31) March 1828.

someone they trusted to sell their property. According to the Treaty of Turkmanchāy they had five years to dispose of such property. The Russian commissioner, who was with ‘Abbās Mīrzā, would ensure that Armenians received the money from the sale. Once in Russia, they would live among Christians and would never again be oppressed because of ‘their religion’. It was true that they would abandon their native land, which was difficult for all, but the thought of living in a Christian land must surely fill them with joy.<sup>71</sup>

In March 1828 Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā wrote to Lazarev that the Russian government had now received the necessary sums from Tehran for the evacuation of Khūy and Urūmīyah. According to the agreement made with Paskevich this meant that the Russians would now evacuate all their troops in Azerbaijan. As to the Armenians, Lazarev would be aware that it has been decided by the treaty that those Armenians who wished to stay would not be forced to leave Iran, while those who desired to leave would not be forced to stay. To ensure that the evacuation process was being carried out according to the agreement, ‘Abbās Mīrzā had sent Muḥammad Taher Khān to make sure that no Armenian was coerced or frightened into leaving against his wishes.<sup>72</sup>

According to Lazarev’s report to Paskevich in April 1828, despite the difficulties put in his way by the Iranian government, Captain Gamazov had managed to resettle 700 Armenian families from Marāghah. There was now not a single Armenian left in Marāghah. Prince Argutinskii-Dolgorukov, who was in

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<sup>71</sup> Glinka, *Sobranie Aktov Otnosiashchikhsia k Obozreniiu Istorii Armianskogo Naroda*, pp. 163-66, L. I. Lazarev’s proclamation to the Armenians of Iran, issued in Urūmīyah, 30 March (12 April) 1828.

<sup>72</sup> Sergei Glinka, *Opisanie pereseleniia armian adderbidzhanskikh v predely Rossii* (Moskva: Tipografiia Lazarevykh Instituta Vostochnykh Iazykov, 1831), facsimile 1, ‘Abbās Mīrzā to L. I. Lazarev, March 1828 (Şevval 243). On 21 April, Lazarev responded that various Iranian officials in Azerbaijan could attest that the Armenian emigration was done voluntarily. He added that one of the khans, Askar, had even dispatched his son to question the Armenians. Lazarev concluded that it was the Iranian government that was breaking the agreement. He asserted that Muḥammad Tahir Khān was bribing the Armenians to stay, see *ibid.*, pp. 69-74.

charge of the resettlement of the Armenians of Tabrīz and its environs, had, as of 4 April, sent 329 families, half of which were already across the Aras River and on Russian soil. Only six Armenian families refused to leave. While travelling from Tabrīz to Urūmīyah via Salmās, Lazarev saw many Armenian villagers who were ecstatic about their new lives. In Urūmīyah Lazarev heard that the Iranian government had scared the Armenians by telling them that the climate across the Aras River was very different to what they were used to. They were also told that there was hunger and that Russian subjects were bought and sold there. Lazarev met Captain Willock from the English Mission in Iran, who told him that he had seen much poverty in Qarahbāgh and feared that the Armenian settlers who were en route to Īravān and Nakhjavān would suffer from hunger, since these areas had been part of the warzone. The resettlement, Willock had added, would be a burden on Russia's conscience. Lazarev commented to Paskevich that this showed that not just the Iranians but also the English were seeking to hamper the Russian policy of resettlement. He noted General N. I. Laptev's statement that some Armenian villagers were quoting Willock. To stop these actions Lazarev informed the Russian commissioner, who was with 'Abbās Mīrzā, about these false statements and issued another proclamation about the benefits of life in Russia. Lazarev also sent Gamazov and Ensign Gorganov with Willock to an Armenian village, whose inhabitants told Willock that they were willing to go to Russia regardless of any difficulties they might encounter there. The Armenians of Urūmīyah and Salmās, were overall, poor. In order to succeed here, Lazarev requested that Paskevich send the remainder of the 25,000 rubles allocated to support migrants. He added that the envoys of Archbishop

Nerses, Bishop Stepan and Vardapet Nikoghos had gone to the villages around Salmās and have tried to gather settlers but have had no great success so far.<sup>73</sup>

In further correspondence with Lazarev, Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā again recognised that according to the treaty signed by the Iranian and Russian governments those Armenians who wished to leave Azerbaijan could do so. He denied that the Iranian government had hindered their emigration. In fact, he stated, a number of Armenian families from Tabrīz had left that city after the Iranian troops returned there. The Russian troops, however, claimed the crown prince, had uprooted entire villages under the guise of voluntary immigration. Lands, orchards and homes that had been lived in and cultivated for thousands of years now lay empty. Some Armenians had emigrated voluntarily but others had been subjected to pressure and to attempts to paint a black picture of their future in Iran. Iran had abided by the treaty and had permitted those who wished to leave. But Russia (in other words

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<sup>73</sup> AKAK, vol. VII, no. 570, pp. 608-609, L. I. Lazarev to I. F. Paskevich, 2 (14) April 1828. On 12 (24) April Lazarev wrote to Paskevich that the Armenians of Marāghah, who had crossed the Aras, were short of food and fodder. He added that these people had left everything behind and had put their trust in Russia. He asked Paskevich to order N. P. Pankrat’ev to immediately forward funds. Armenians in Tabrīz and Khūy were in need of funds as well. Lazarev concluded that such problems could only add fuel to the Iranian rumours regarding the hardships across the border, see AKAK, vol. VII, no. 573, pp. 611-612, L. I. Lazarev to I. F. Paskevich, 12 (24) April 1828. Nerses must have also written to Paskevich regarding the situation, for on 25 April (7 May), Paskevich informed him that he was doing everything possible to alleviate the suffering of the 1,000 Armenian families from Marāghah and Tabrīz and that more than 50,000 rubles had been allocated for their needs, see AKAK, vol. VII, no. 582, pp. 615-616, I. F. Paskevich to Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak, 25 April (7 May) 1828. On 1 (13) May, Lazarev again wrote to Paskevich expressing his concern that the Īravān province was not able to care of the Armenians from Iran. He estimated that some 5,000 families might wish to settle in Īravān province. The funds given to each family (from 10 to 15 rubles) was not enough to sustain them. He also complained that ‘Abbās Mīrzā had been harassing the Russian officers in charge of the resettlement and had been sending money and gifts to the Armenians to convince them to stay behind, and that some 60 families who had received 12 rubles each were demanding more to cross the border, see AKAK, vol. VII, no. 586, pp. 619-620, L. I. Lazarev to I. F. Paskevich, 1 (13) May 1828. On 26 May (7 June), Paskevich reported to Diebitsch that several thousand Armenian families had arrived from Iran in the Īravān province and that a special commission had been set up in Īravān and the rest were in the Īravān and Nakhjavān regions, see Agaian, *Prisoedinenie vostochnoi Armenii k Rossii: Sbornik dokumentov (1814-1830)*, no. 286, pp. 496-98, I. F. Paskevich to K. F. Diebitsch, 26 May (7 June) 1828. On 29 August (10 September), Argutinskii-Dolgorukov reported that conditions were still hard and that 87,000 rubles had been distributed among the more than 6,500 Armenian families who had settled in the Armenian province, see AKAK, vol. VII, no. 614, p. 640, M. Z. Argutinskii-Dolgorukov to I. F. Paskevich, 29 August (10 September) 1828. On 8 (20) September, the Armenian settlers from Iran complained to Catholicos Eprem that they had faced great hardships since their arrival. Bournoutian, *Russia and the Armenians of Transcaucasia, 1797-1889: A Documentary Record*: p. 298.

Lazarev) has distributed subsidies among the Armenians as an incitement to emigrate. In addition, Etchmiadzin has ordered that all priests leave the Iranian domains or face the loss of their status and be punished in their afterlife. The *esauls* of the Cossacks were giving money to the Armenians who wished to stay behind to leave their homeland.<sup>74</sup>

‘Abbās Mīrzā’s claims were strongly resisted by Paskevich’s officers. Pankrat’ev wrote to his commander-in-chief that the main reason for the migration of the Armenians from Azerbaijan to the Russian empire was their desire to escape the oppression of a government, that did not care about the wellbeing of any its subjects, but especially the Christians. The Armenians, reassured by Paskevich, had almost all rushed to put themselves under Russian protection. Having witnessed their flight, Pankrat’ev wrote that he was convinced that they voluntarily and knowingly left their native land to find better living conditions. They were content that Paskevich had supplied them with subsidies through Colonel Lazarev and other officers, who were, for the most part, Armenians.<sup>75</sup>

Nevertheless among themselves the Russian generals admitted the obstacles they faced in executing the migration policy. For example, Lazarev wrote to the Minister of the Interior, A. A. Zakrevskii, on 16 February 1829 about some of these difficulties.<sup>76</sup> Firstly, the Nestorian immigrants and later the Armenians demanded that the Russian empire pay for the possessions that they left behind in Iran but Russia had given them only one third of what they have asked for, which caused resentment.<sup>77</sup> Both Iranian and British agents – e.g. Mīrzā Mas’ūd and Barthélémy

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<sup>74</sup> Glinka, *Opisanie pereseleniia armian adderbidzhanskikh v predely Rossii*: facsimile 2, ‘Abbās Mīrzā to L. I. Lazarev, April 1828 (Şevval 243).

<sup>75</sup> AKAK, vol. VII, no. 625, p. 650, N. P. Pankrat’ev to I. F. Paskevich, 7 (19) October 1828.

<sup>76</sup> RGIA, fond: 383, opis’: 29, delo: 539, pp. 1-2.

<sup>77</sup> RGIA, fond: 383, opis’: 29, delo: 539, p. 4ob.

Semino had tried to prevent their emigration to Russia.<sup>78</sup> Despite Lazarev's attempts at encouraging the Nestorian families to leave, only 100 families had accepted his offer while the rest demanded more financial compensation for their possessions that they would leave in Iran. Lazarev managed to persuade two Nestorian *maliks*, Sarhosh and Alaverd, to change their mind but the rest of the community would not agree to emigrate into Russia without sufficient advance payment for their possessions.<sup>79</sup>

A key problem was that because Iran was able to pay reparations so quickly, the Armenian migrants did not have enough time to prepare for departure. Lazarev explained to the Iranian court that because of their rapid departure the Armenians were not able to sell their land, property and other possessions. Lazarev knew that, all these possessions would be taken under the control of the Iranian court after the migration, and that nobody would dare to buy these possessions from the migrants. Some Armenians tried to sell their properties secretly and by the time the Iranian court discovered this, they had in fact already sold a considerable amount. An Iranian official, Āqā Karīm, then demanded that the Armenians give back the money, which they made after selling their homes, gardens, lands and possessions.<sup>80</sup>

Baron Asche reported that in Mākū, 40 of 250 Armenian families wished to migrate to Russia. Nevertheless, he had some suspicions about Ali Khān's statement that all Armenians were free to leave for Russia since, if they did so, there would be

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<sup>78</sup> RGIA, fond: 383, opis': 29, delo: 539, p. 5. For the biography of Semino, see Jean Calmard, "Le Général Barthélémy Semino (1797-1852): Equisse pour un carrier de soldat de fortune," in *Zhinrāl Samīnū dar Khidmat-i Īrān 'Aṣr-i Qājār va Jang-i Hirāt 1236-1266 Hijrī-i Qamarī* [*Le Général Semino en Iran Qājār et la Guerre de Herat 1820-1850*], ed. Maṣūrah Ittiḥādīyah and Sa'īd Mīr Muḥammad Sādiq (Tih-rān: Nashr-i Tārīkh-i Īrān, 1997), pp. 1-41; Shireen Mahdavi, "Semino, Barthélémy," in *Encyclopedia Iranica*. For his letters with several European diplomats covering a period beginning in December 1843 and ending in April 1852, see Maṣūrah Ittiḥādīyah and Sa'īd Mīr Muḥammad Sādiq, eds., *Zhinrāl Samīnū dar Khidmat-i Īrān 'Aṣr-i Qājār va Jang-i Hirāt 1236-1266 Hijrī-i Qamarī* [*Le Général Semino en Iran Qājār et la Guerre de Herat 1820-1850*] (Tih-rān: Nashr-i Tārīkh-i Īrān, 1997).

<sup>79</sup> RGIA, fond: 383, opis': 29, delo: 539, p. 5.

<sup>80</sup> AKAK, vol. VII, no. 564, p. 606.

no inhabitants left there except some Tatar families. But he admitted that although the poor Armenian families moved to the north in the hope of improving their economic conditions, rich Armenian families were often content to remain in Iran.<sup>81</sup>

According to a report of Lazarev from Urūmīyah to Paskevich on 12 April 1828, by then about 700 families had already migrated from Marāghah. There were some severe problems about securing essential needs such as bread and shelter. Lazarev had only received 800 of 1,500 *chervontsy* to be given to the inhabitants of Tabrīz. He now wrote to Pankrat'ev requesting 3,000 *chervontsy* but in the end he received only 1,000.<sup>82</sup> According to Lazarev, there were 4,000 families, which did not wish to continue to live in Urūmīyah, which was likely to remain an area fought over by the two empires. Furthermore, approximately 200 families from Urūmīyah had given Lazarev back the money given for their migration costs because they had some fears about the attitude of the Iranians.<sup>83</sup>

### **Mass Immigration of Ottoman Armenians**

The most detailed and accurate background report on the Iranian Armenians received by Paskevich was written by A. A. Skalon in November 1828. It set out in some detail exactly how many Armenians were located in which regions, how many were likely to wish to emigrate to Russia, and which areas were of greatest value to Russia in strategic and economic terms. The report also provided intelligence on Iranian intentions.<sup>84</sup> Paskevich himself drew on Skalon for advice and information.

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<sup>81</sup> AKAK, vol. VII, no. 572, p. 611.

<sup>82</sup> AKAK, vol. VII, no. 573, pp. 611-612.

<sup>83</sup> AKAK, vol. VII, no. 573, pp. 611-612.

<sup>84</sup> Agaian, *Prisoedinenie vostochnoi Armenii k Rossii: Sbornik dokumentov (1814-1830)*, no. 321, pp. 552-53, Report of A. A. Skalon on the Armenians of the Ottoman empire and Iran, 26 October (7 November) 1828. On 16 (28) October 1828, Paskevich wrote the following report to Diebitsch, "if

Inevitably, one of his priorities was to recruit local troops and establish effective local Christian militias.<sup>85</sup> Since Paskevich held supreme military and civil command in the Caucasus he was flooded with reports and requests on all subjects. Inevitably the tangled affairs of the Armenian church and its relationship with the various Orthodox patriarchs was one such problem.<sup>86</sup> The commander-in-chief also received many reports from within the Russian Caucasus about the difficulties of re-settling the new immigrants. Thus in December 1828 the commander of the regiment at Bayezid, General Reuth', reported that the Armenians of the town of Bayezid, comprising 1,143 families had asked to move to Russian Armenia and had requested lands in the mahals of Tālīn, Darachichak, and Ābārān. Some 2,000 other Armenians living in the province of Bayezid had requested to settle in Qarahbāgh. But Reuth had investigated the matter and was convinced that these three mahals could not sustain more than 800 families and that the only place left in the Armenian province

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the pashaliks of Bayezid, Kars, and Ahıska remain in Russia, then we shall not need Sardārābād; Gumri will need only small fortifications as a post of Kars, Tsalka will not need to be enlarged, and Īravān can be left in the same condition it is now. If we have to return them to the Porte, then Īravān must be fortified. Sardārābād, or another location around Mt. Ararat, such as Kulb, on the road to Bayezid, or Talin, on the road to Kars, has to be fortified as well. Instead of minor fortifications, Gumri will need a fortress and Tsalka has to be enlarged. Although Jalālughlū (Celaloğlu) is far from the border, I nevertheless think that it, as well as Tiflis, should be strengthened, see *ibid.*, no. 324, pp. 556-57, I. F. Paskevich to K. F. Diebitsch, 16 (28) November 1828. On 12 (24) January 1829, Pankrat'ev wrote to Paskevich that the Armenians and Yezidi Kurds who lived in the vicinity of the Tigris River in south-eastern Turkey had expressed their loyalty to Russia. On 31 December 1829 (12 January 1830), Pankrat'ev wrote to Paskevich that 560 families of Armenian Catholics from Erzurum wished to emigrate to Russia. Other Armenians from Erzurum and Kars also left with the Russian troops, see *ibid.*, no. 337, p. 572, N. P. Pankrat'ev to I. F. Paskevich, 12 (24) January 1829.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 351, p. 588, I. F. Paskevich to A. I. Chernyshev, 16 (28) March 1829.

<sup>86</sup> *AKAK*, vol. VIII, no. 204, pp. 289-290, G. A. Rosen to A. P. Butenev, 28 June (10 July) 1834. On 21 October (2 November) 1834, Butenev wrote to Rosen that he had delivered the proclamations and was awaiting the response of the patriarch to the demands of the catholicos. On 21 November (3 December) 1835, Baron Rosen wrote to Nesselrode that the patriarchs of Istanbul and Jerusalem did not wish to give up any authority over the Ottoman Armenians. In fact, they wished to further distance themselves from Etchmiadzin and use the Porte as an excuse to go against their own tradition. He added that the relationship of Etchmiadzin with Ottoman Armenians was very important for the Russian government and might even slow the success of the Catholic missionaries with the Ottoman Armenians, see *AKAK*, vol. VIII, no. 212, pp. 295-296, G. A. Rosen to K. V. Nesselrode, 21 November (3 December) 1835.

suitable for settlement was the Gukchāy (Gökçay) mahal where one could put all the Armenians of the city, as well as the province, of Bayezid.<sup>87</sup>

The most detailed overall report about the reception of immigrants in the Russian empire was submitted after Paskevich's departure to his successor, General Baron von Rosen. The report noted that although immigrants were grateful to the tsar for the protection offered to themselves and their property by Russian laws, all the immigrants -Armenians, Tatars, and both settled and unsettled Kurds – complained about the slowness and incompetence of the local authorities. Part of the problem was that the administration, and especially the offices dealing with financial matters, was swamped by more business than they could possibly manage. The incompetence, laziness and lack of conscience of many local officials was also a perennial problem. But it was also the case that senior Russian officials were trying to govern through local subordinates who had no knowledge or conception of Russian laws or practices. The inevitable result was confusion, arbitrariness and inefficiency.<sup>88</sup>

### **Short/Long Term Results**

For the Russians the victories in the wars against the Ottomans and Iranians brought geopolitical and economic advantages but not on the scale hoped for by those optimists who had urged Russian expansion in the region. As the new viceroy, Prince Mikhail Vorontsov, reported to Nicholas I in 1835 Russia was simply living

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<sup>87</sup> Agaian, *Prisoedinenie vostochnoi Armenii k Rossii: Sbornik dokumentov (1814-1830)*, no. 368, p. 602, M. Z. Argutinskii-Dolgorukov to I. F. Paskevich, January 1830. Having learned of the above, the Armenians of Bayezid requested that Paskevich permit them to settle in the Gukchāy mahal, around Lake Gukchah. Paskevich granted their wish and the town they founded became known as Novo Bayezid, see *ibid.*, no. 369, pp. 602-05, Armenians of Bayazid to I. F. Paskevich, January 1830; *ibid.*, no. 370, pp. 605-06, I. F. Paskevich to Armenians of Bayazid, 16 (28) February 1830. A few others settled in the mahals of Surmalī, Sardārābād, and Karbi-Basar, see *ibid.*, no. 371, pp. 606, V. O. Bebutov to I. F. Paskevich, 18 (30) March 1830.

<sup>88</sup> AKAK, vol. VIII, no. 388, pp. 504-506, E. O. Palavandov to G. A. Rosen, 3 (15) February 1833.

in a world in which it was very difficult for its exports or communications to compete, especially with the British.<sup>89</sup>

Those secular and ecclesiastical Armenian leaders who had envisioned an autonomous Armenia under a benevolent Russia were also soon disappointed. Both Nicholas I and Paskevich were conservative centralisers. They espoused policies of centralisation designed to secure Petersburg's control over all non-Russian areas of the Empire. Although Archbishop Nerses of Ashtarak was decorated for his efforts, he was promoted in 1828 and shipped off to the post of Armenian prelate in Bessarabia. Catholicos Eprem found Russian control too burdensome and resigned in 1830. The new Catholicos, Hovhannes, an ardent supporter of Russian policy, was placed at Etchmiadzin. Then, in 1836, the Russian instituted a set of new rules and regulations which virtually put the Armenian Church under the Russian state's control. For a while, the Russians were able to neutralize the power of the Church far more than the Iranians had ever attempted, let alone succeeded in doing.

The Armenian Church under the Russians was less free than under the Iranians. As a concession to Armenians and the Armenian Church, Eastern Armenia was for a short time (1828-1840) re-named the *Armianskaia oblast'*, creating an illusion of semi-autonomy. But in 1840 even this empty title was felt to be too

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<sup>89</sup> AKAK, vol. VIII, no. 88, pp. 145-147, M. S. Vorontsov to Tsar Nicholas, 11 (23) January 1835. In 1833, twelve English ships sold 1,620 tons of goods worth 1,098,525 rubles to Trabzon and purchased 1,620 tons of goods worth 643,525 rubles, while Russia had only four vessels selling 406 tons (56,750) and purchasing 406 tons (11,750 rubles), see AKAK, vol. VIII, no. 89, pp. 147-152, M. S. Vorontsov to Tsar Nicholas, 18 February (2 March) 1835. The Russian trade in Trabzon remained the same in 1834, but English merchants lost some of their trade to the Austrian, Sardinian, and Greek merchants as demonstrated in the table, see AKAK, vol. VIII, no. 94, pp. 162-165, A. I. Chernyshev to G. A. Rosen, 6 (18) January 1836. On 24 October (5 November) 1835, Rosen reported to Kankrin that the Armenians were trading in Trabzon, Tabrīz, Astrakhan, and the Euphrates basin of Anatolia, see AKAK, vol. VIII, no. 92, pp. 154-158, G. A. Rosen to E. F. Kankrin, 24 October (5 November) 1835. On 20 March (1 April) 1836, Kankrin reported to the senate that some Armenians from Georgia originally from the Ottoman empire, had returned there and had taken their capital to Trabzon. The capital was not large, however and the trade was minimal. He added that although it was rumoured that this action would bring the Ottoman and Iranian Armenians to Trabzon, the latter would trade there without the presence of 'Transcaucasian' Armenians, see AKAK, vol. VIII, no. 97, p. 171, E. F. Kankrin to State Council, 20 March (1 April) 1836.

“nationalist”. By 1844 the entire region of the southern Caucasus was reorganized into the Russian Caucasian Region with Tiflis as its administrative centre and seat of the Russian Viceroy.

The dream of Armenian autonomy under the supervision of the Church died soon after the Russian annexation. Although Nerses finally became Catholicos in 1843, his actions were restricted by his advanced age and the regulations established by Saint Petersburg to control the Armenian Church. Īravān, Etchmiadzin and other regions populated by the Armenians became a backwater of the Russian empire with the most influential Armenians migrating to Tiflis, Baku, or the urban centres of Russia proper. Nonetheless, Armenia had become a potential political reality, mainly due to the concentration of Armenians and the continued presence of the Holy See at Etchmiadzin. Even amidst limitations, the Holy See functioned as the unofficial representative of the Armenian people,

The Armenians, before and after the Russian capture of the south of the Caucasus, regarded Russia as the best possible guarantee for their physical security, cultural enhancement, and political development.<sup>90</sup> As regards the involvement of the Armenian population of the south of the Caucasus in the war, precedent certainly suggested a significant degree of active participation. Since the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century many of their number had joined the Caucasus Corps or in some way assisted their Ottoman and Iranian campaigns. Yet the most recent history had also suggested that a sharp distinction should be made between those Armenians residing in the Muslim provinces, and those of the khanate of Revan. For, during the 1804-1813 war, while the former, especially those of the Qarahbāgh, had displayed loyalty to the Russians, the actions of the latter had been less than satisfactory. When war

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<sup>90</sup> Richard G. Hovannisian, "Russian Armenia: A Century of Tsarist Rule," *JfGO* 19, no. 1 (1971): p. 32.

broke out in 1826, the Armenians of the Qarahbāgh again displayed their allegiance to Russia, and many individual acts of bravery and self-sacrifice were recorded during their resistance to the Iranian onslaught.

## **Conclusion**

Armenian and Russian historians have faced their own political constraints and myths. They portray Russia as the liberator of the Armenian people from the Muslim yoke. They also confuse the aspirations of a small group of eighteenth-and nineteenth century Armenian leaders as a concentrated effort by the Armenian people to achieve autonomy. In fact, Armenians, Iranians, and other groups living in Iran and the south of the Caucasus reacted to specific political or economic circumstances. Some Armenians regarded Russia as their protector, and others saw Iran in that role. There was no united Armenian political effort and no common Armenian political consciousness in the period under discussion.

Following a number of armed conflicts, the Russians, assisted by Armenian volunteers, achieved their objective in the wars of the 1820s and the lands north of the Aras River became part of the Russian empire. But after Russia gained control of Qarahbāgh, despite its significant Armenian population, this territory became part of the Muslim Province, which included the combined territory of the khanates of Shirvān, Shakī, Qūbā, Qarahbāgh, and parts of Tālīsh. There were several reasons for the inclusion of Qarahbāgh in the Muslim Province. One was the treaty which Russia had made with Ibrahim Khān of Qarahbāgh in 1805. The agreement guaranteed his family the governorship of the region in exchange for his becoming a Russian vassal. But the inclusion of Qarahbāgh in the Muslim province was to be one of the most

significant legacies of the manner in which Armenians were integrated into the Russian empire and the Caucasus was governed under Nicholas I.

## Conclusion

The main aim of this study is to examine the Caucasus as a theatre for geopolitical rivalry between the three neighbouring empires between 1821 and 1833. In essence, Chapter One has focused on two sets of issues – i.e. the geography and the local peoples. The nature of the region and of its main peoples is essential for the history of geopolitical rivalry and war in any region but the extreme and diverse nature of the Caucasus makes this even more true than normal. The desire to acquire key communication and transportation routes, strategic strongholds and natural resources has generally been a cause of war and geopolitical rivalry. It has been the case for the Caucasus. Though it has looked like a strategic point as a result of the waterways; they were of much less use and impact than was the case in the Balkans. Most rivers in the Caucasus were not suitable for navigation.

The geography of the Black Sea basin was more strategic as the great rivers flowing into the sea from the north facilitated the swift passage of large armies or commodities over large distances. Geography made it probable that the state holding the river heads to the north would eventually be fighting to wrest the river mouths from those who held them. The Black Sea itself was significant for the shipping of supplies for any army operating in the region. Fortresses were the most vital element in the defence of the Black Sea coastal line. In the eighteenth century these fortresses formed the vital barrier against the growing southward expansion of the Russian empire. The strategic position of the Caspian Sea was significant but the navigation of the Caspian was not convenient. Considering the road network in central Europe, the rapid travel was almost impossible in central Anatolia. Sea and river ways

rendered travels and transportations to coastal and riverside districts more quickly but central Anatolia was deprived of taking this advantage.

The difficult geography and nature of the Caucasus and the local factors encouraged the emergence of intensely local identities and the fragmentation of political authority into numerous petty kingdoms. The regional imperial powers sought to use these local communities and kingdoms to their own advantage but often found them hard to control. In these mountainous regions, some strategic passes have had great importance in terms of the movement of troops, communication and logistics.

The Caucasus was a territorial periphery and an interaction centre of three different imperial structures: the Russian, Ottoman and Iranian empires. All three empires tried to create the best conditions for their future political plans. Even though the topography of the Caucasus to some extent limited mutual interaction among the local communities, the geopolitical struggle between the rival empires did to a limited extent encourage contacts between local communities. It also mattered greatly that there were large Christian communities in the southern Caucasus, the Georgians and Armenians. But the fundamental reality was that in the longer run the peoples of the Caucasus were divided and that their rulers for the most part were forced to adapt pragmatically to shifts in power between the surrounding empires. On their own no local people, nor even a confederation of local peoples, could hope to keep imperial power at bay. So the fate of the region was in the end decided by struggles between the three rival empires.

The Ottoman state was historically the first empire which had been able to control the entire Black Sea littoral for three centuries. In fact, the Black Sea held a vital position in the Ottoman grand strategy. The Ottoman officials well understood

the relationships between geography and security. Ports and fortresses were crucial to the Ottoman system of rule. Possession of the strategic fortresses and ports allowed control of the Black Sea and gave the Ottomans the leverage to forge agreements with the most powerful political entities inland. The Caucasus coast was dominated by garrisons inside fortified ports. Though the Crimeans khans were entrusted with providing the land-based security of the Black Sea by the Ottomans, the bureaucratic structure and the military system of the khanate had not been designed to withstand the military and demographic advancement of Russia towards south in the eighteenth century. Of all the areas around the Black Sea, the Caucasus was the most difficult to control. As a borderland between the Ottoman empire and Iran, the southern Caucasus demanded significant resources to police, and successive sultans settled for relying on local feudal powers to raise their own armies and secure Ottoman interests against the Iranians and their allies. There of course were geographical limitations to Ottoman eastward advance. The stiff and harsh terrain in the borderlands between the two imperial structures was sufficient to hinder Ottoman advance.

At the time when the European Great Powers were creating centralised systems of government and formidable fiscal-military machines, the Ottomans were moving in the opposite direction. The key problem was the deterioration of the Janissary corps. After the defeats by Russia in 1768-74 and 1787-92 Selim III attempted to create a new professional army on European lines. After Selim's overthrow by a Janissary revolt these new units were disbanded. In earlier centuries, faced by a sometimes great threat from Safavid Iran, the Ottoman eastern front had a high priority in Ottoman eyes. By the early nineteenth century things had changed. Above all Istanbul's eyes turned to the Balkans theatre where the main armies of

Russia, its greatest enemy, were concentrated and where an advancing enemy might threaten the capital itself.

Āzarbāyjān and Georgia were by Iranian standards rich and fertile agricultural territory. Iran also had few useful natural resources: above all, it had no gold or silver. One advantage Iran did possess was strong natural borders – in other words mountains. Like the Ottomans, the Safavids also used *ghulāms* in key political and military positions but the shāhs encouraged these Georgian *ghulāms* to keep close ties with the rulers and elites of their native Georgia, who were usually their blood relations. The greatest of the Safavid monarchs, ‘Abbās I, was especially skilful at maintaining the balance between competing elite constituencies on which a shāh’s ability to manage Iran depended. The main problem was an obvious one, shared with most other dynasties, especially in the Islamic world. Maintaining effective monarchical leadership across the generations was very difficult. Managing the succession was a recurring source of weakness. One major weakness was the monarchy’s relationship with the Shi’i *‘ulamā*. Any government ruling a Shi’i country faces a threat from the enormous potential appeal of the ‘Hidden Imam’ and charismatic religious leaders who claim to speak for him. Part of the problem in the nineteenth century was that the Qājārs never had the same degree of charisma or legitimacy as their predecessors. Creating true European-style professional armies, paid on an all-year-round basis and equipped with artillery was an expensive business. Iran would in all circumstances have found it hard to pay for such an army. Iran’s main army and the defence of its most vulnerable and crucial frontier essentially depended on the resources of Āzarbāyjān alone. In these circumstances it was remarkable that by 1812 ‘Abbās Mīrzā had created a European-style trained

corps of some 13,000 men, mostly infantry but also including artillery and cavalry units.

Most important as regards geopolitical conflict, Russia had created a modern European-style army. By the mid-eighteenth century this army was already a match for any other in Europe. The Ottomans and Iranians were therefore facing a first-class military machine which they could not hope to match. Behind the Europeanised Russian army stood the kind of military-fiscal state that the Ottomans and Iranians had failed to create or maintain in the eighteenth century. But in terms of developing military and geopolitical power, the tight alliance of the Russian monarchy and nobility was far more effective than the relationship between the Ottoman and Iranian monarchies and these countries' elites. Russian central government institutions were more developed than their Ottoman, let alone Iranian, equivalents and they had more effective provincial branches. Of course, looked at in the long run and in comparison with Europe it is the weakness and backwardness of Russian government that stand out but that comparison is irrelevant when studying Russia's conflicts with the Ottoman empire and Iran.

Russia was drawn into the Caucasus for strategic reasons. It became seriously involved in the south Caucasus for the first time during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1768-74. The only purpose of the Russian-Georgian coalition of the war years was to divert Ottoman forces from the main theatre of operations in the Balkans. However, from 1775 to 1791, Russian strategic thinking about the Caucasus underwent a major change. Indeed, the Caucasus was a political vacuum between the Russians on the north, and the Ottomans and Iranians on the south. In 1783, when the Treaty of Georgievsk was signed, Georgia was still an area of peripheral importance to the Russian empire until 1795 when Āqā Muḥammad's attack forced Russia to retaliate.

When the Russian empire had decided that the Caucasus was vital for Russia's regional interests, there was no alternative but to incorporate Georgia and abolish its monarchy at once. This was necessary to legitimise the incorporation of Georgia into the Russian empire in 1801. On the whole prestige and legitimisation were a product of the successful use of power, though a ruler's legitimacy had other sources too such as history and religion. The more Russia became involved in the region, the more it had to contend with an array of interstate and regional power whose actions it could neither predict nor fully control. On the interstate scene, Russia's chief rivals for influence in the region were Qajar Iran and especially the Ottoman empire, which had clients on both sides of the Caucasus mountains and could threaten to use its army to resist Russian encroachments there.

The Ottoman-Iranian rivalry was still alive at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and thus these two imperial states could not collaborate in forming a military and political alliance against a third power, the Russian empire, which in fact was the greatest threat to both of them. Domestic political factors mattered, especially in Iran, but the Russian government was very aware of the potential dangers of Ottoman-Iranian cooperation. This was a frequent theme in Russian official documents. Having fought simultaneous wars against the Iranians and Ottomans between 1804 and 1813 in the Caucasus, St. Petersburg was not satisfied with the balance of gains and losses which had been achieved by the Treaties of Bucharest and Gulistān, which concluded the Russo-Ottoman War of 1806-12 and the Russo-Iranian War of 1804-13. The great financial sacrifices and manpower losses suffered by Russia in the two wars to some extent justified St. Petersburg's view. This mutual distrust between Iran and the Ottomans was a main factor which St. Petersburg certainly did not create but used skilfully in its advance into the

Caucasus. In this study, the question of why Russia was more successful than the Ottoman state and Iran in the Caucasus between 1821 and 1833 is explained in three main ways: the most decisive factor in this process was the well-functioning fiscal-military machine of the Russian empire; the diplomatic and military skill of the Russian leadership; the last main factor in Russian success was its geopolitically superior position.

In narrowly military terms the story told in these three wars confirms and illustrates the superiority of the Russian army on the battlefield. But it also underlines the enormous significance of supply questions and shows how these were greatly influenced by geography. On the whole these first six chapters show the great superiority of Russian power and suggest that its takeover of the region was probably inevitable. A key problem was that the Ottomans and Iranians never united against Russia. Chance/contingency also played role. For example, if Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā had not delayed at Shūsha in 1826 it might have been impossible for the Russians to finish the war in 1827, which might well have resulted in the Russians having to fight the Ottomans and Iranians together. Russian would still almost certainly have won but its victory would have been harder and maybe less decisive.

Russian domination of the region survived for the rest of the nineteenth century. But whereas Iran was thoroughly defeated and never again challenged Russia, the Ottomans did. In fact their best chance of rolling back Russia came in 1854-6 when two great powers fought on their side. Nevertheless the pattern set in the 1820s and 1830s largely survived until the disaster of 1914-18. In other words the Russians advanced in the region and the Ottomans retreated. But when the decisive war for the region occurred in 1914-18 one factor strengthened by the 1820s wars made for even greater tragedy. By 1820 geopolitical boundaries were more or less

‘natural’ but ethnic ones were not. Both Russians and Ottomans saw potential fifth columns behind their front. Disaster resulted, especially in the case of the Ottomans. But under Stalin the Russians too began to deport suspected peoples from the region.

## Appendix I: The Caucasus Corps in Iran 27 May 1828<sup>1</sup>

**Detached Corps:** Major-General K. F. Hesse

(forming right wing along Black Sea)

Mingrelia Infantry Regiment

44<sup>th</sup> Jager Regiment

Rebrikov Cossack Regiment

2<sup>nd</sup> Light Battery, 21<sup>st</sup> Brigade

Mountain Licornes, 5<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battery

**Detached Corps:** Major-General P. V. Popov

(Guarding defiles of Borjom and Tsalka)

Kherson Infantry Regiment

Grekov Cossack Regiment

Molchanov Cossack Regiment

5<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battery, 21<sup>st</sup> Brigade

**Main Battle Corps:** General of Infantry I. F. Paskevich

(concentrated around Gumri/Gümri)

**1<sup>st</sup> Brigade:** Major-General N. N. Murav'ev

Georgia Grenadier Regiment

Erivan Carabinier Regiment

**2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade:** Major-General E. A. Bergmann

Crimean Infantry Regiment

39<sup>th</sup> Jager Regiment

40<sup>th</sup> Jager Regiment

**3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade:** Major-General Korol'kov

Shirvān Infantry Regiment

42<sup>nd</sup> Jager Regiment

8<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Regiment

**Cavalry Brigade:** Colonel N. N. Raevskii

Nijegorod Dragoon Regiment

Combined Uhlan Regiment

**1<sup>st</sup> Cossack Brigade:**

Ilovaiskii Cossack Regiment

Isvailov Cossack Regiment

**2<sup>nd</sup> Cossack Brigade:**

Leonov Cossack Regiment

Sergeev Cossack Regiment

**3<sup>rd</sup> Cossack Brigade:**

Karpov Cossack Regiment

4<sup>th</sup> Black Sea Cossack Regiment

**Headquarters Guards:**

Combined Cossacks

Georgian and Tatar Militia

**Artillery:** Major-General Ia. Ia. Gyllenschmidt

**Caucasus Grenadier Artillery Brigade:**

1<sup>st</sup> Position Battery

2<sup>nd</sup> Light Battery

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<sup>1</sup> Fonton, *La Russie dans l'Asie Mineure, ou Compagne du Marechal Paskevitch en 1828 et 1829*.

**20<sup>th</sup> Artillery Brigade:**

1<sup>st</sup> Position Battery

2<sup>nd</sup> Light Battery

**21<sup>st</sup> Artillery Brigade:**

1<sup>st</sup> Position Battery

Mountain Licorn Battery

**Other:**

3<sup>rd</sup> Don Cossack Battery

1/2 5<sup>th</sup> Line Cossack Battery

Siege Artillery

**Detached Corps:** Major-General A. G. Chavchavadze

(Defending Armenia)

2/Sebastopol Infantry Regiment

11<sup>th</sup> Jager Regiment

Bassov Cossack Regiment

3<sup>rd</sup> Light Battery, 20<sup>th</sup> Artillery Brigade

**Detached Corps:** Major-General S. D. Merlini

(In Iran or on the Iranian frontiers)

Tiflis Infantry Regiment

Det/1<sup>st</sup> North Sea Regiment

Artillery Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Caucasus Artillery Brigade

**Detached Corps:** Major-General N. P. Pankrat'ev

(In the Iranian province of Khūy)

Kozlov Infantry Regiment

Nasheburg Infantry Regiment

Kabarda Infantry Regiment

Shamshev Cossack Regiment

1<sup>st</sup> Black Sea Cossack Regiment

2<sup>nd</sup> Light Battery, Caucasus Artillery Brigade

3<sup>rd</sup> Light Battery, Caucasus Artillery Brigade

## List of Maps

- I) The Near East<sup>1</sup>
- II) The Russo-Iranian War of 1826-28<sup>2</sup>
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- IV) The Caucasus after the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829<sup>4</sup>
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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question: Army, Government and Society, 1815-1833* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), p. xvii.

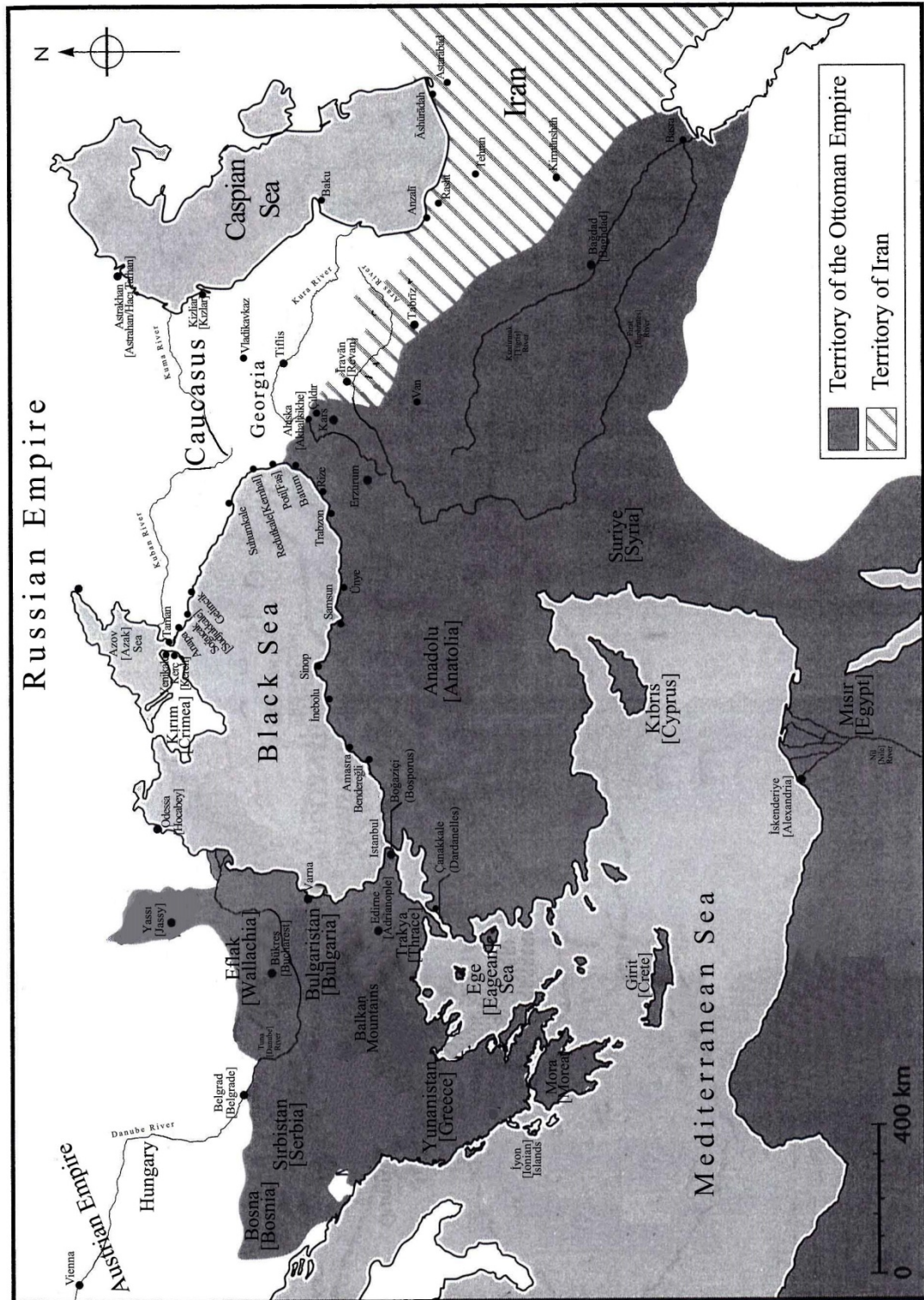
<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. xviii-xix.

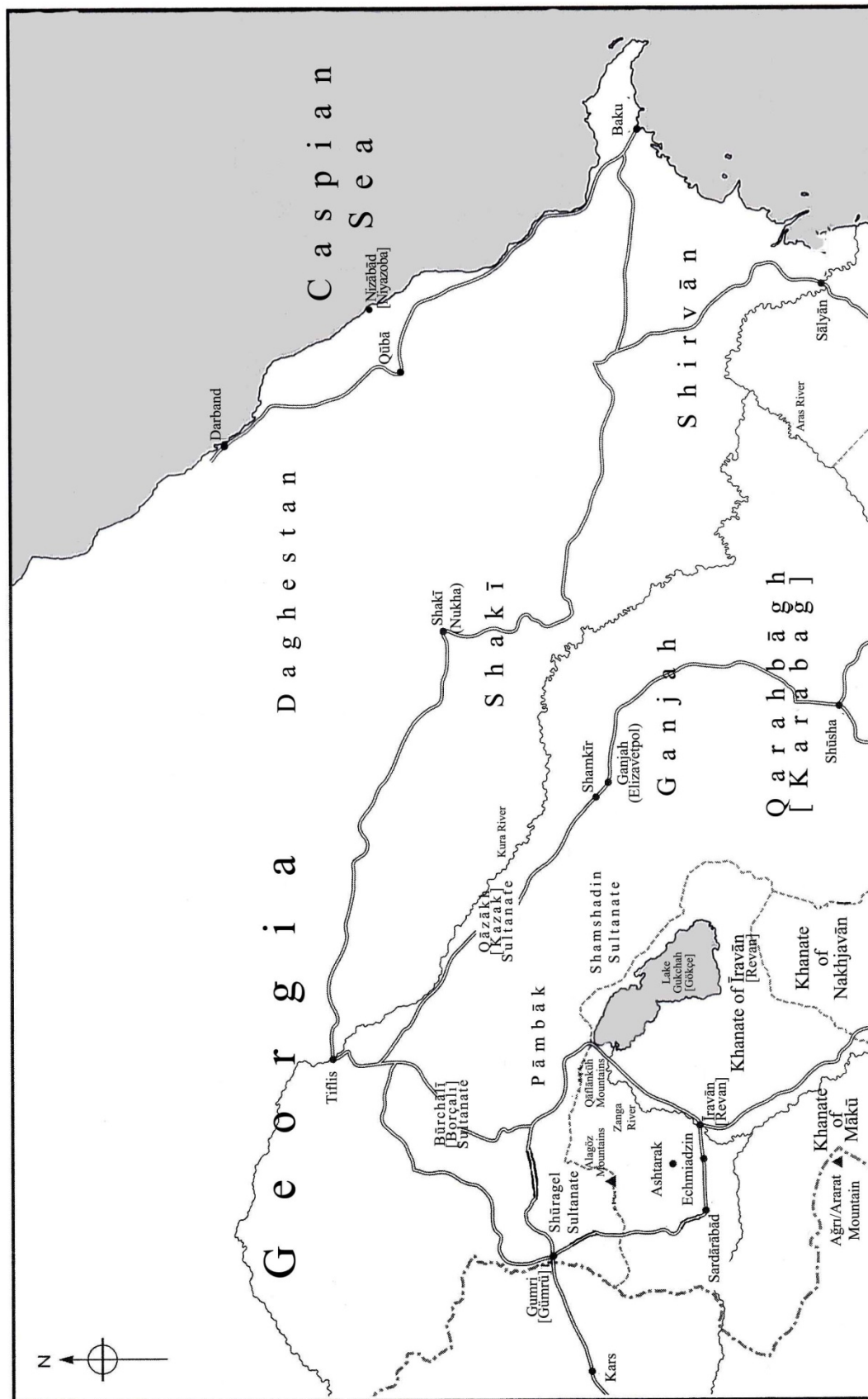
<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. xxii.

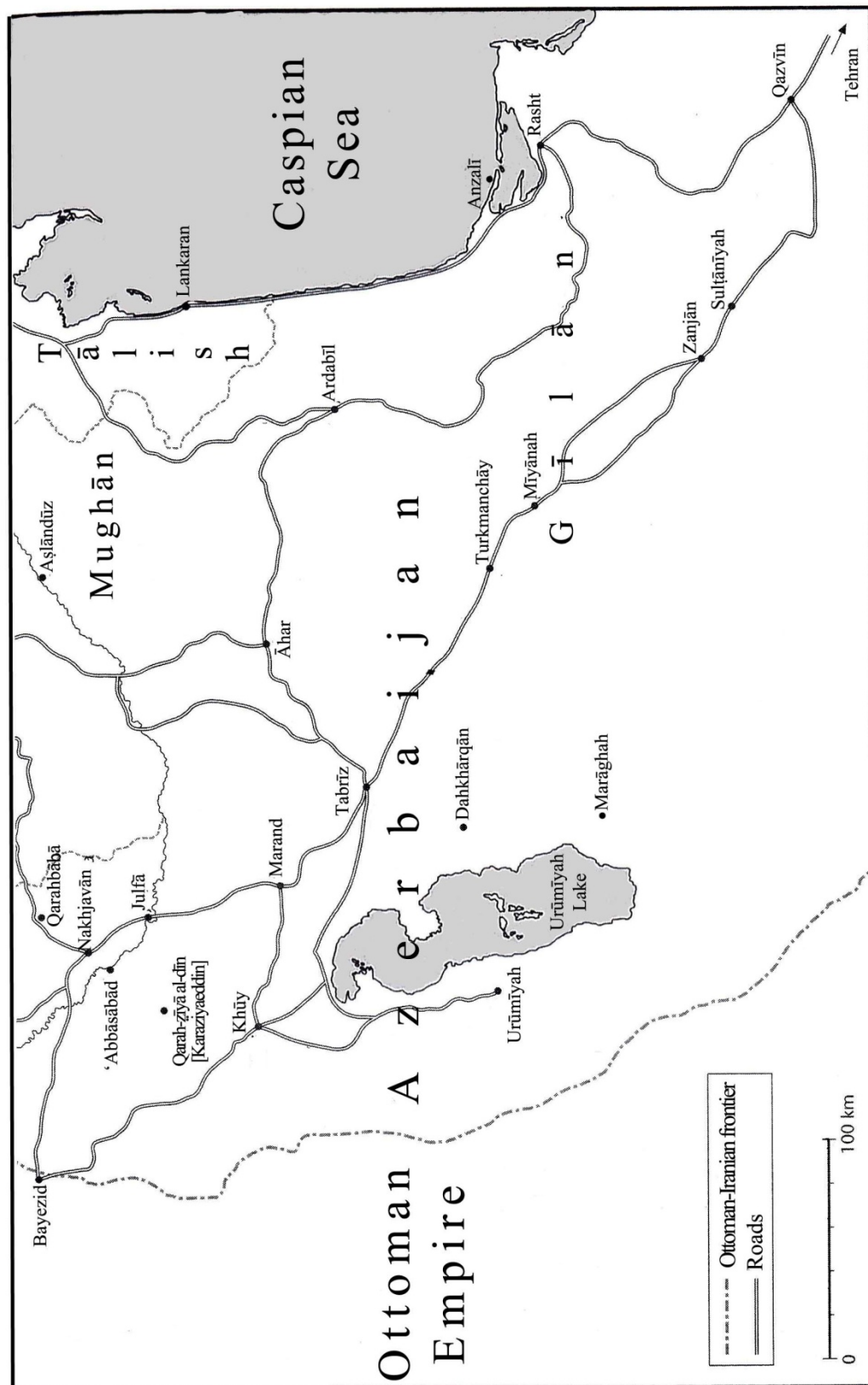
<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. xxiii.

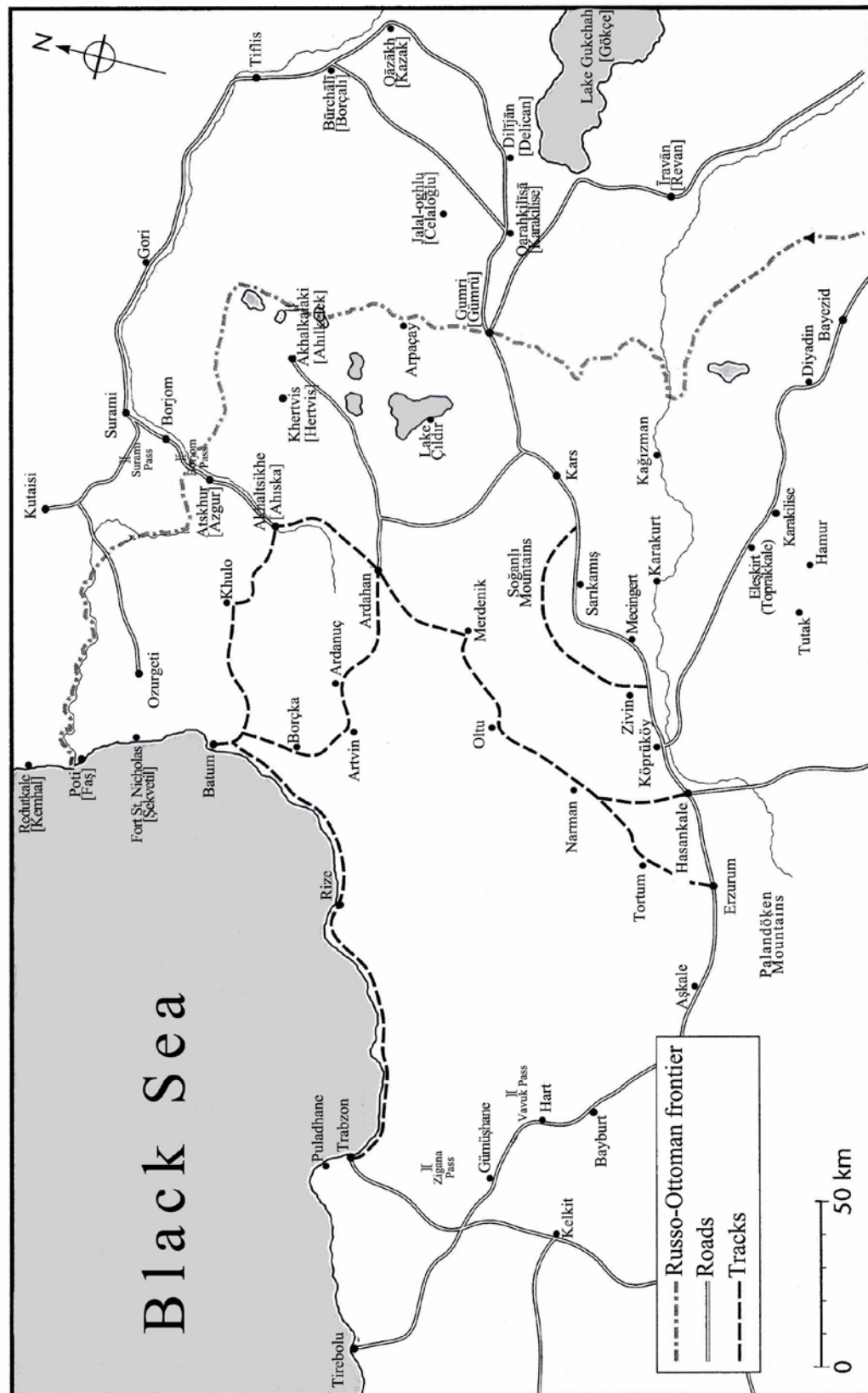
<sup>5</sup> Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), p. xv.

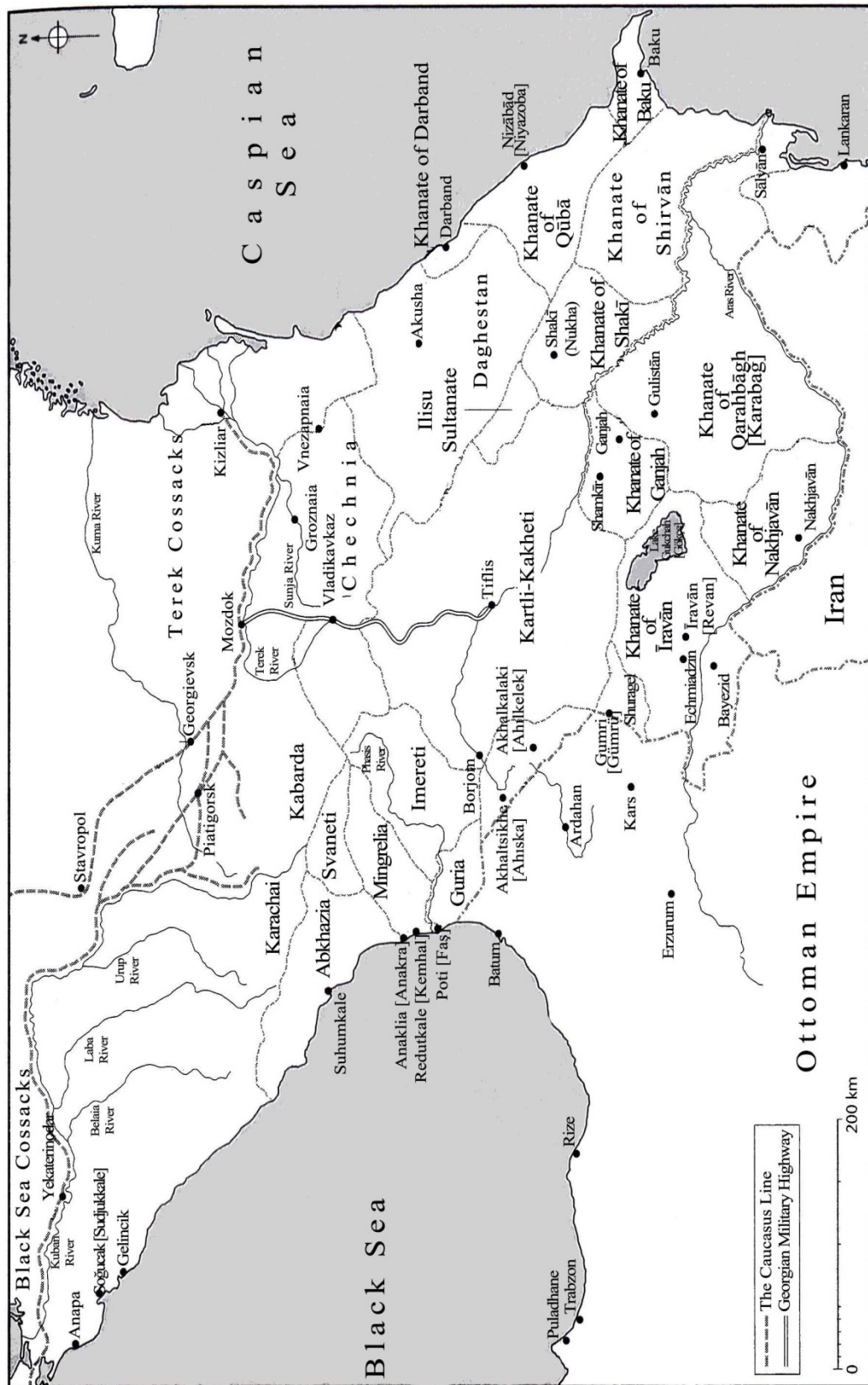
<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. xiv.

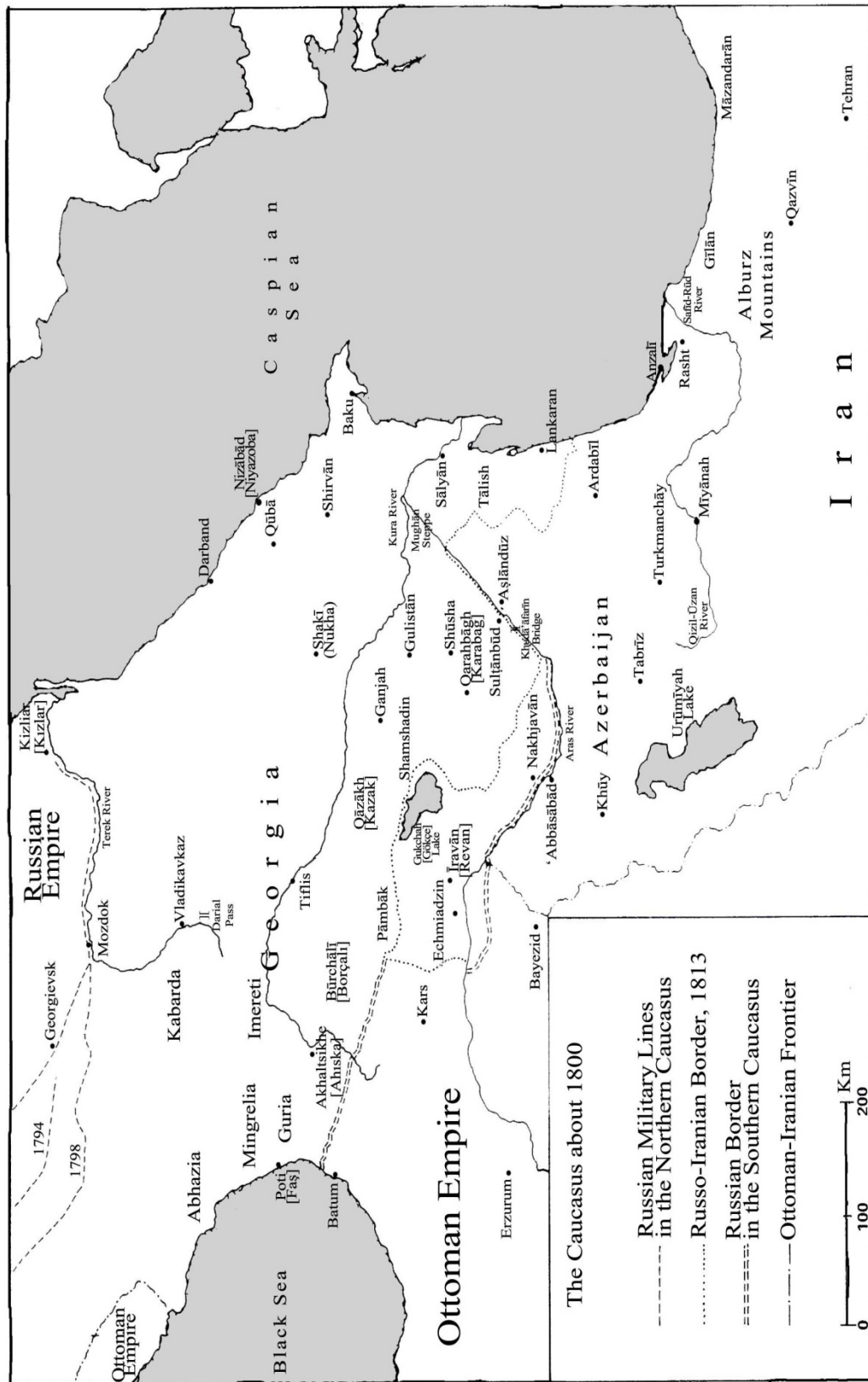












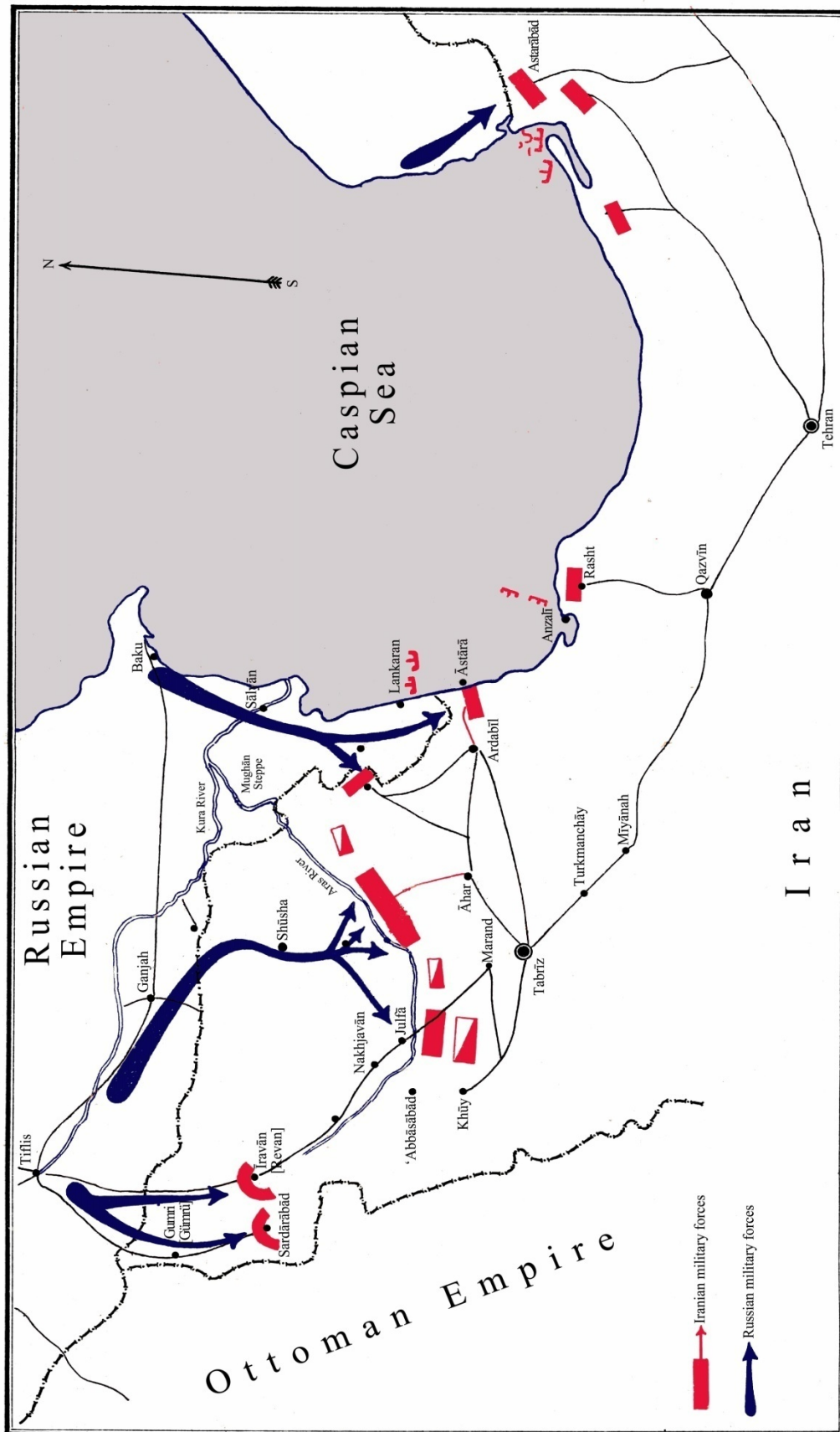




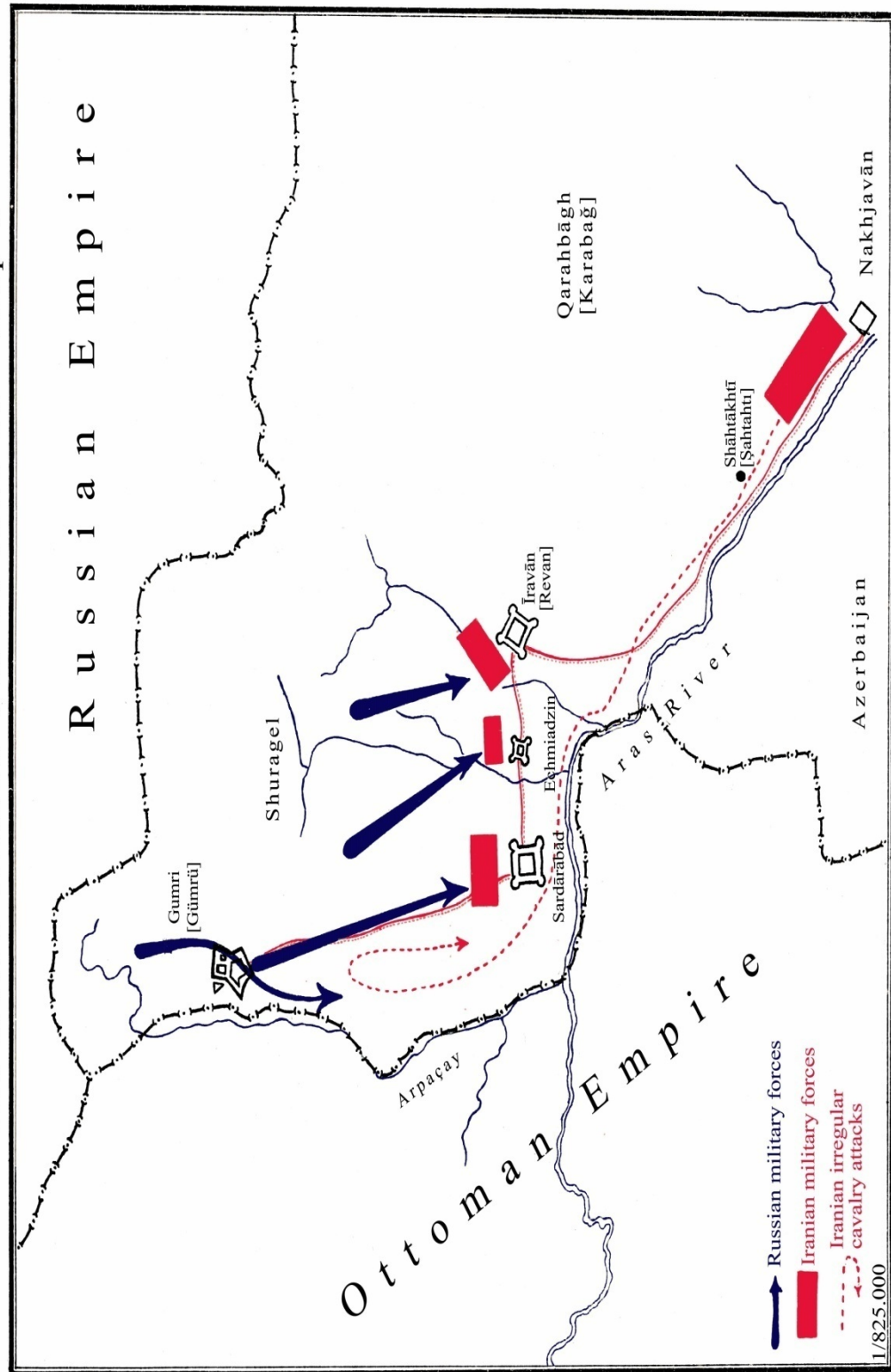
Khanates of the South Caucasus and Iran  
in the Eighteenth and the First-Quarter of the Nineteenth Centuries

The map depicts the Caucasus region, bordered by the Russian Empire to the north and west, the Ottoman Empire to the south, and Iran to the east. The Caspian Sea is located to the north. Major cities and locations marked include Tiflis, Ganjah, Baku, Salyan, Javat, Murad, Shuflyin, Khyz, Maku, Boyezid, Asharak, Horom, Gannji, Gannji, Echmiadzin, and Aghar. The map shows the movement of Russian military forces (indicated by blue arrows) and Iranian military forces (indicated by red arrows). It also highlights areas of Russian military build-up (blue circles) and Iranian military build-up (red circles). A legend in the bottom right corner defines the symbols used: Frontier (dashed line), Russian military forces (blue arrow), Iranian military forces (red arrow), Russian military build-up (blue circle), and Iranian military build-up (red circle).

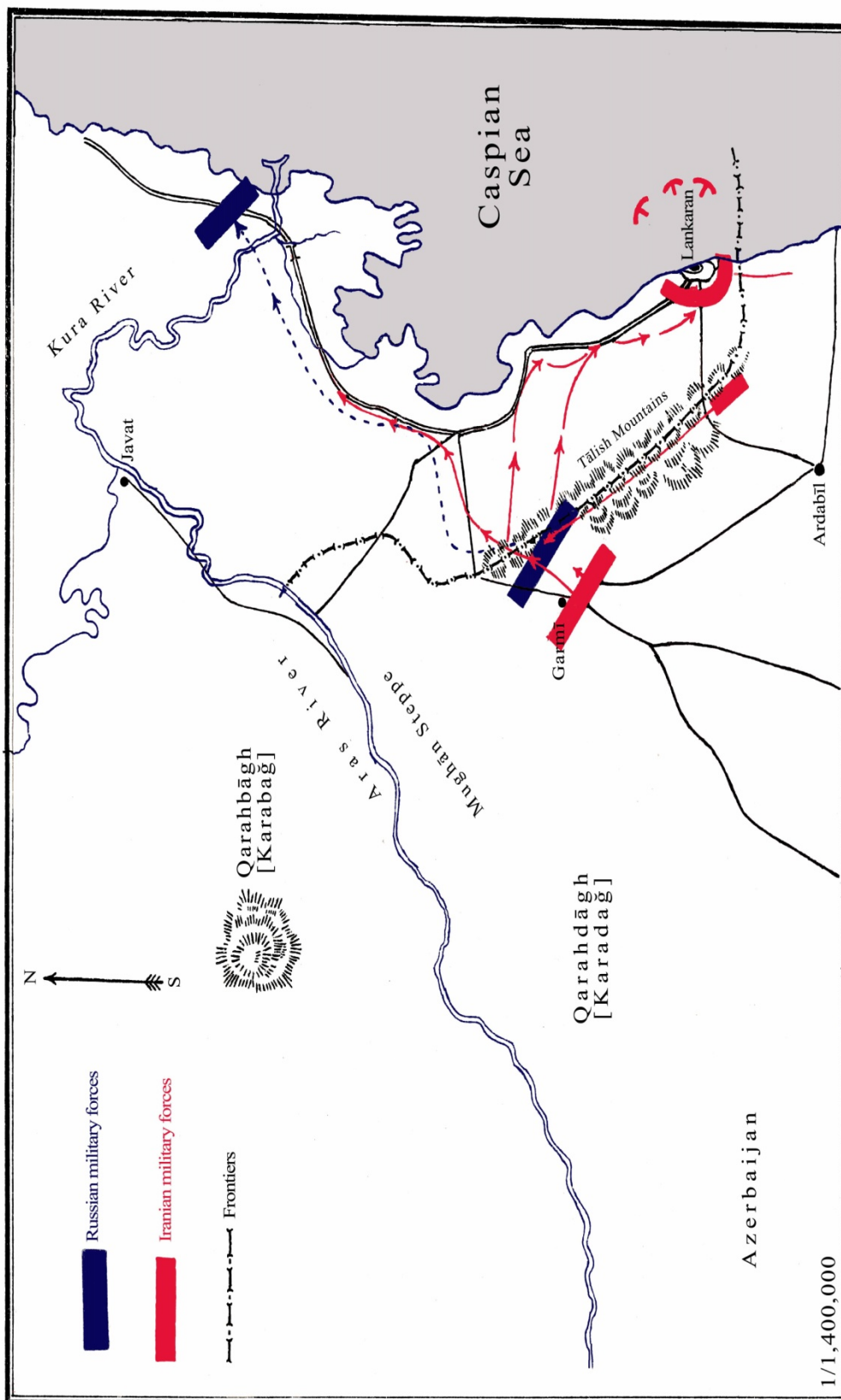
The Russo-Iranian War of 1826-28 - Map 2



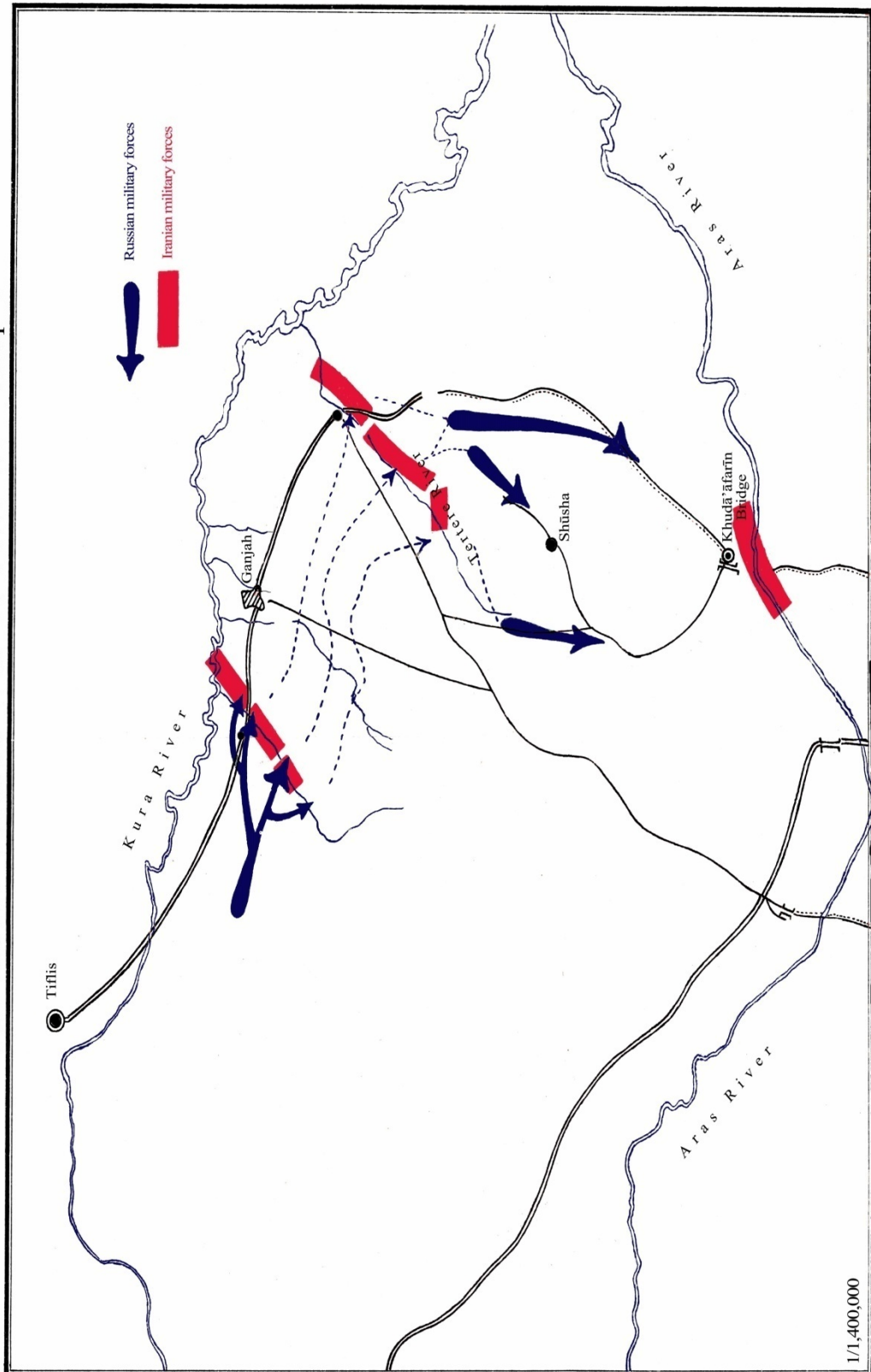
The Russo-Iranian War of 1826-28 - Map 3



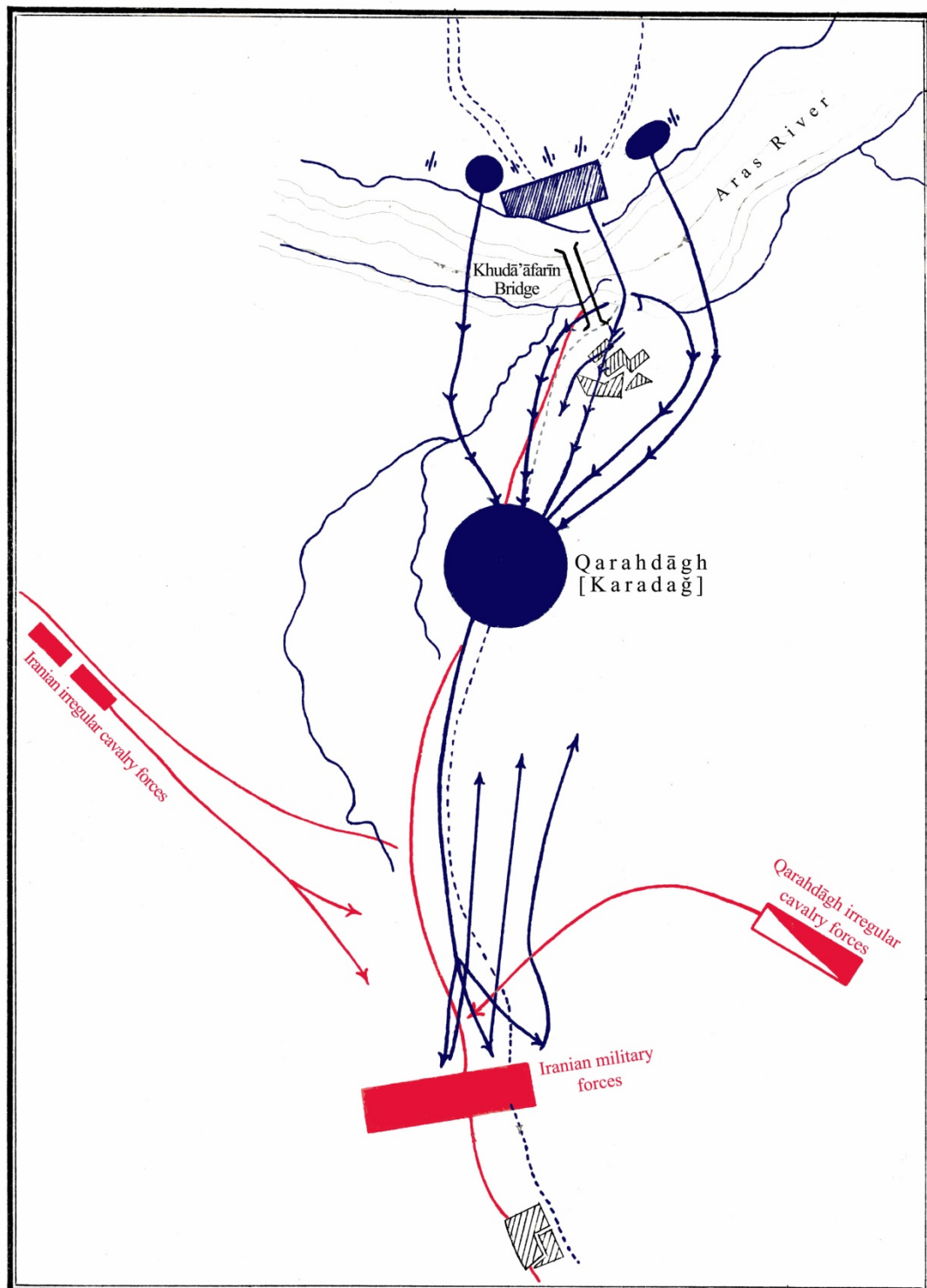
The Russo-Iranian War of 1826-28 - Map 4



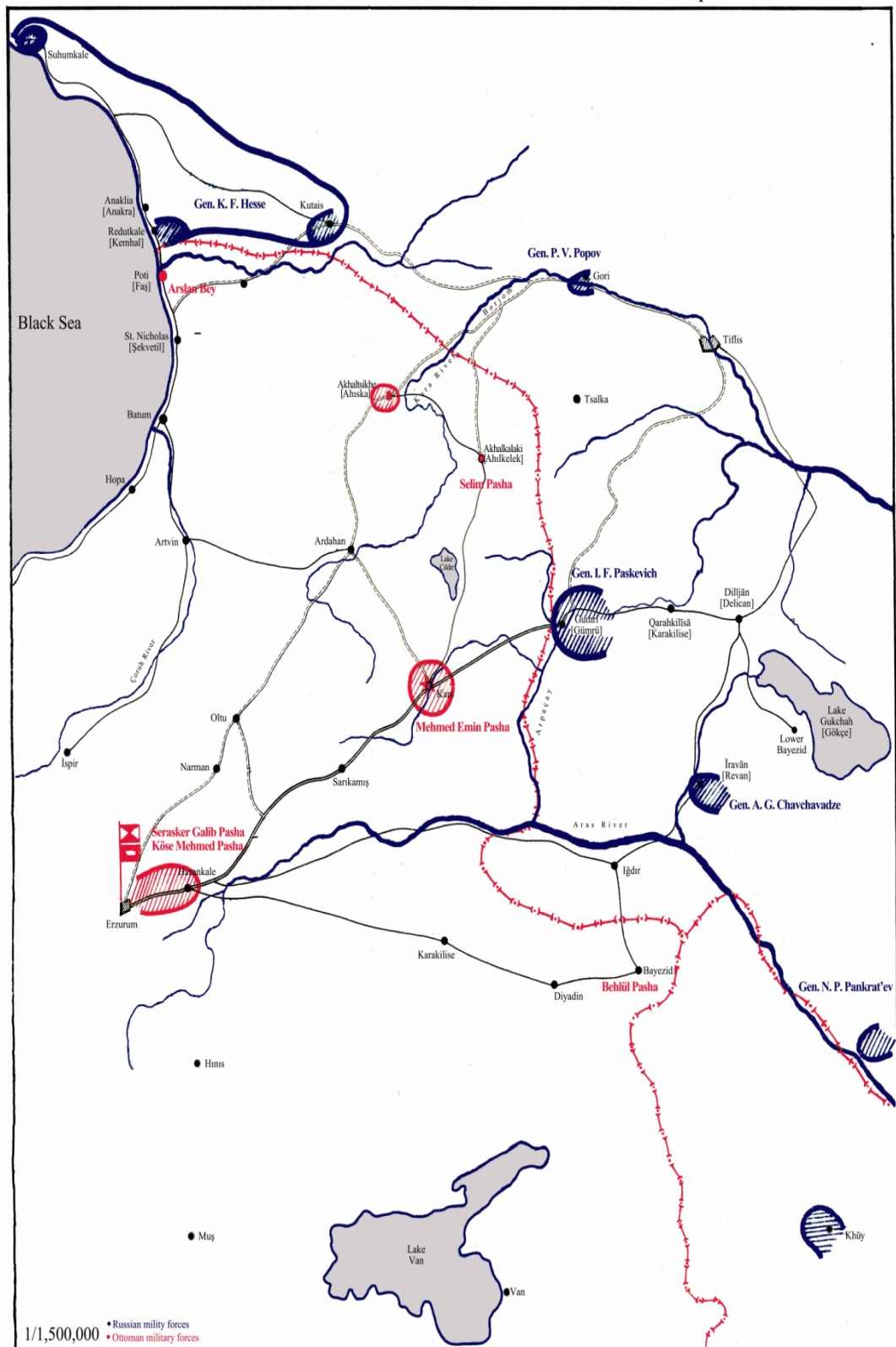
The Russo-Iranian War of 1826-28 - Map 5



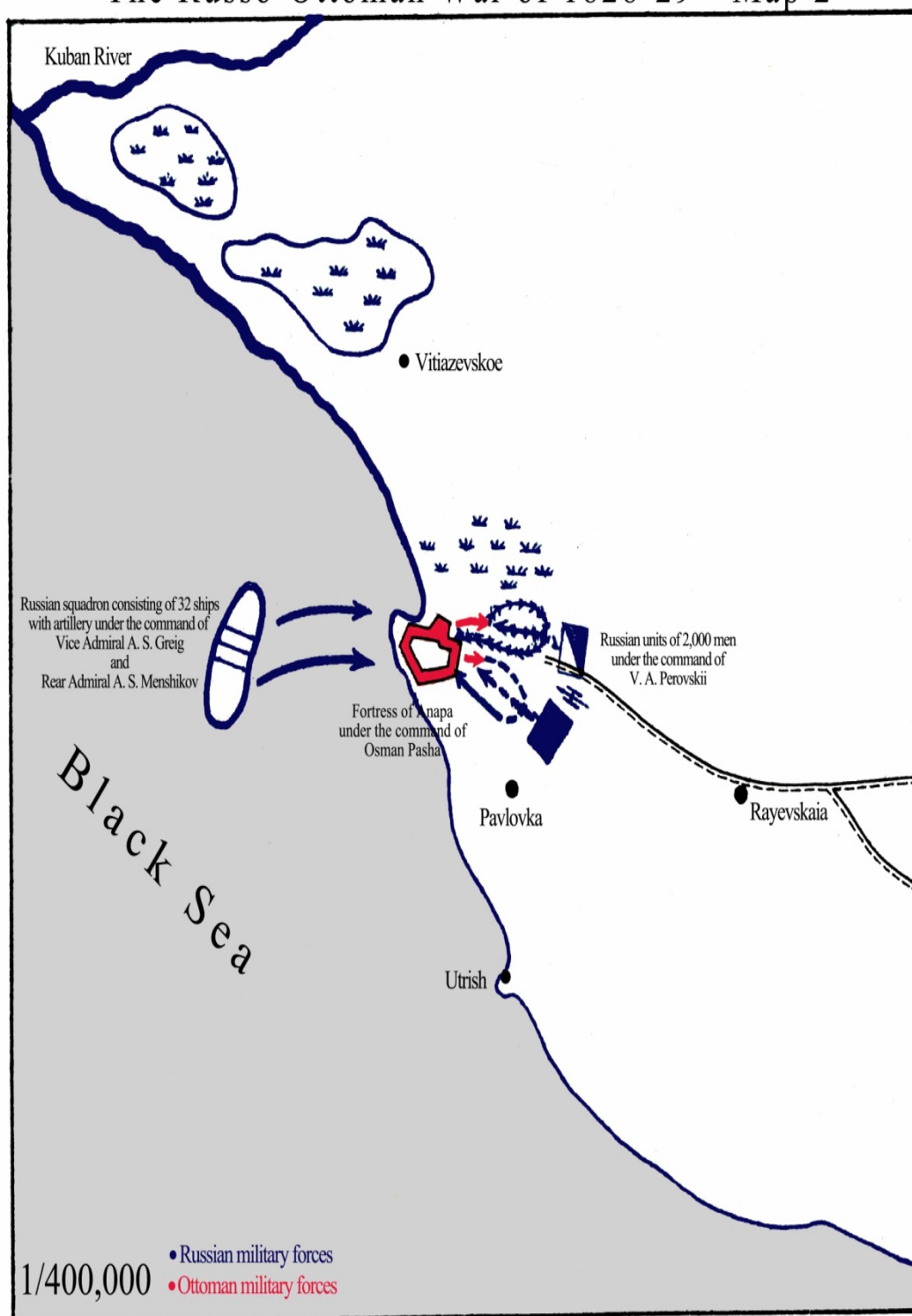
# The Russo-Iranian War of 1826-28 - Map 6



The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 - Map 1



## The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 - Map 2



Black Sea

Redutkale [Kemhal]

Poti [Fas]

St. Nicholas [Şekvetil]

Batum

Artvin

Ardanuç

Oltu

Narman

Erzurum

Hasankale

Eleşkirt [Toprakale]

Diyadin

Bayezid

Kutais

Gen. K. F. Hesse

Rioni River

Ahiska [Akhaltsikhe]

Digor

Ardahan

İncesu

Kars

Mehmed Emin Pasha

Köse Mehmed Pasha

Sarkamış

Aras River

Ahılkelek [Akhalkalaki]

Selim Pasha

Gumri [Gümrü]

Gen. I. F. Paskevich

Dilijan [Delican]

İrevan [Revân]

Gen. A. G. Chavchavadze

Behlül Pasha

Gen. P. V. Popov

Gori

Kura River

Tiflis

Tsalka

Arpaçay

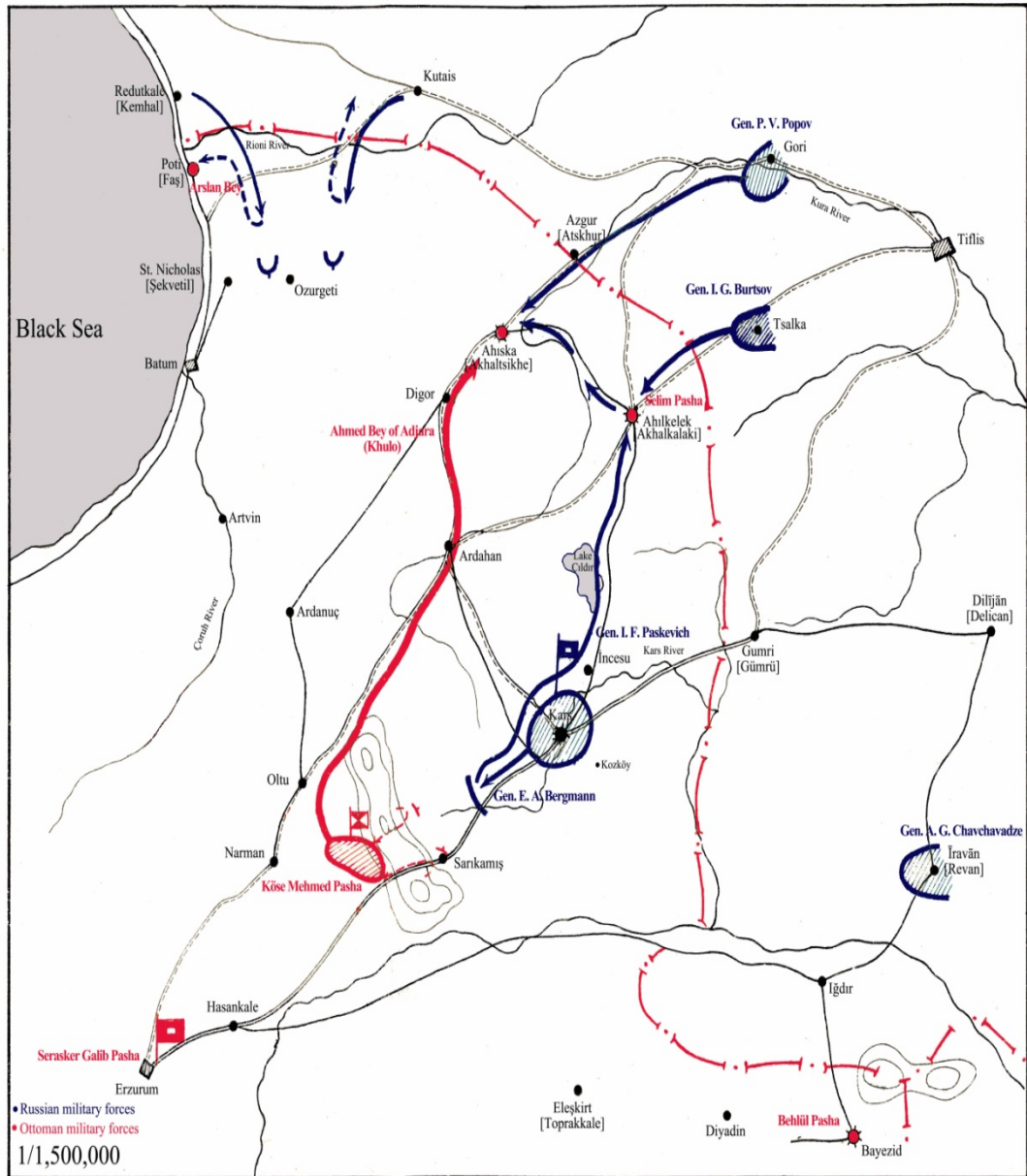
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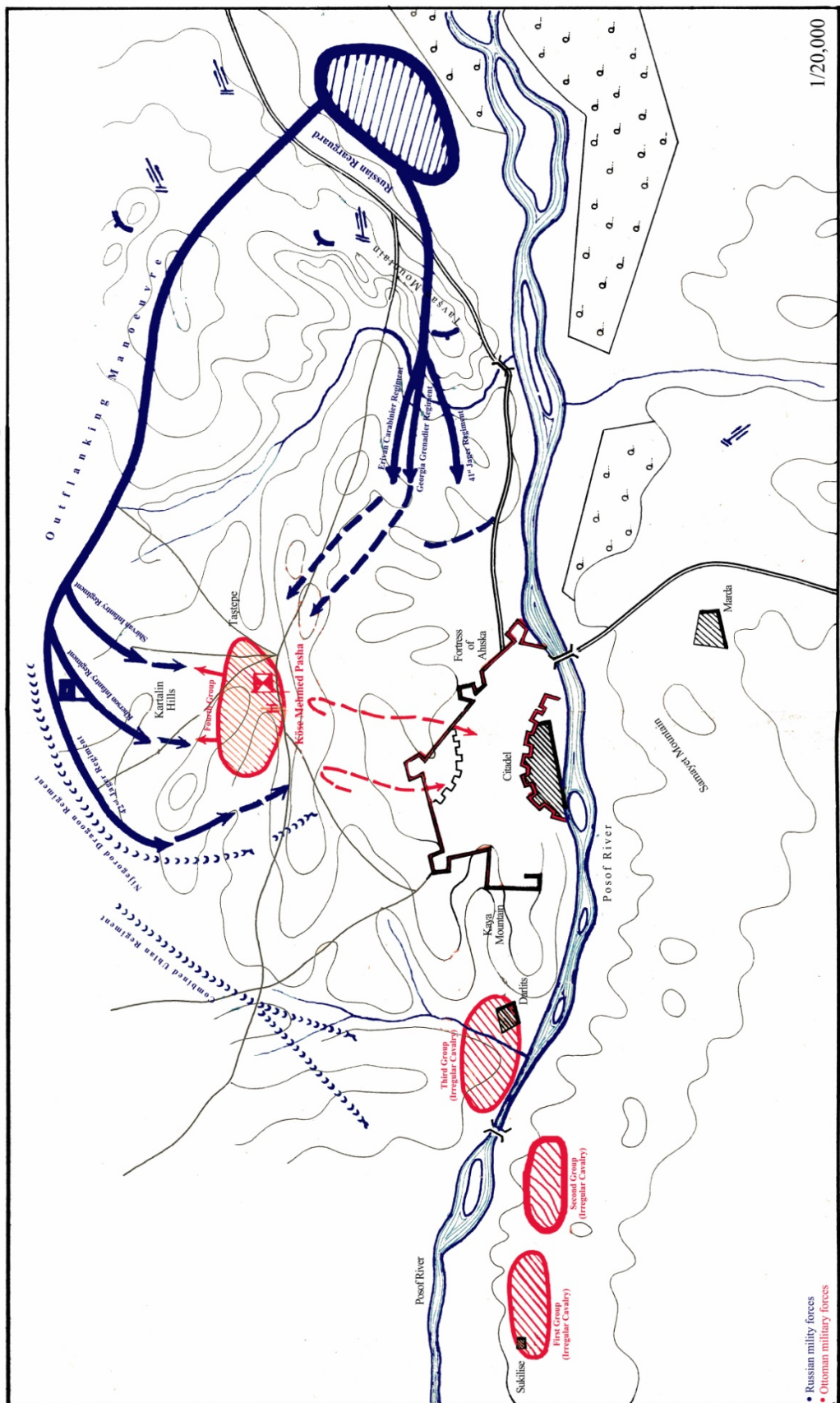
• Russian military forces  
• Ottoman military forces



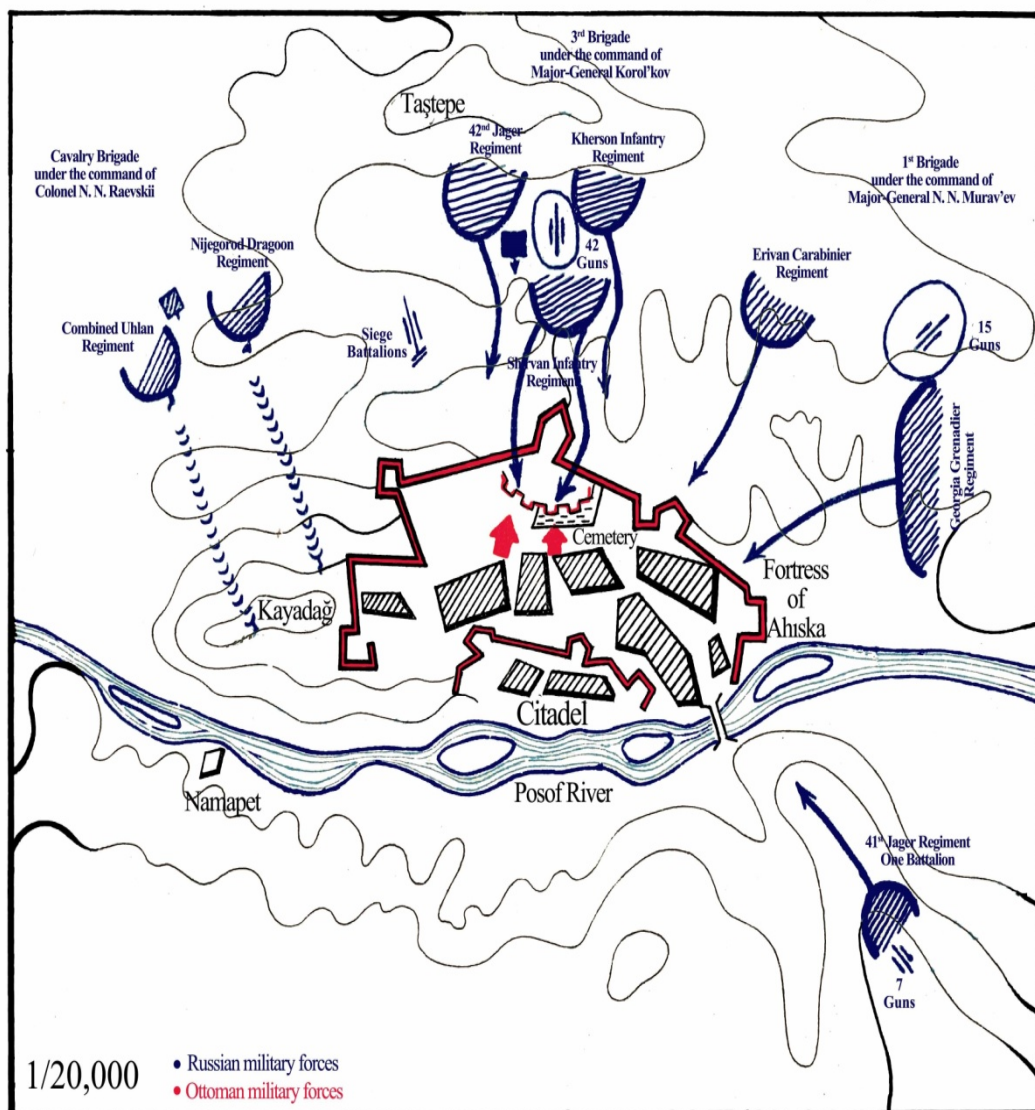
The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 - Map 4



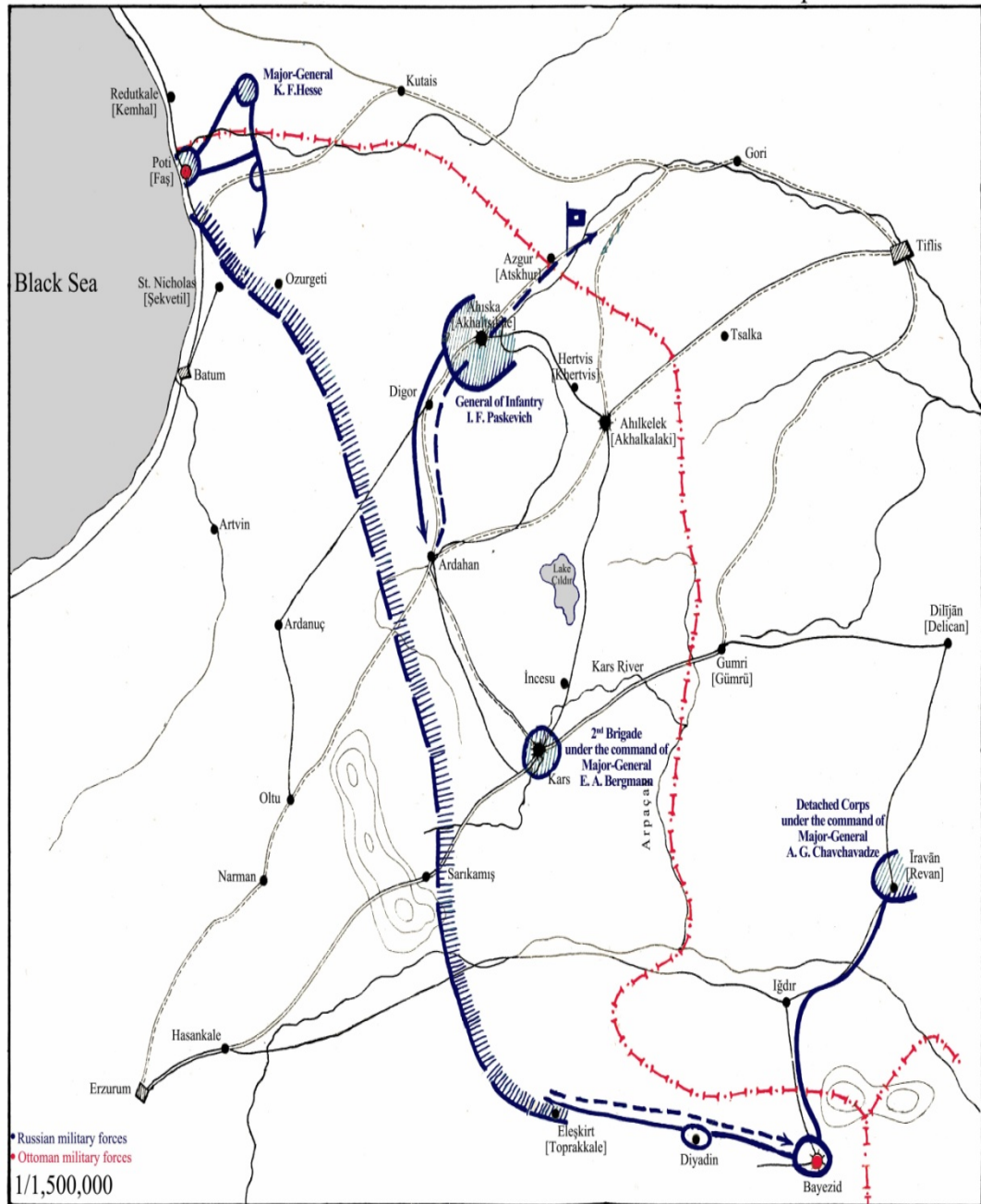
The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 - Map 4A



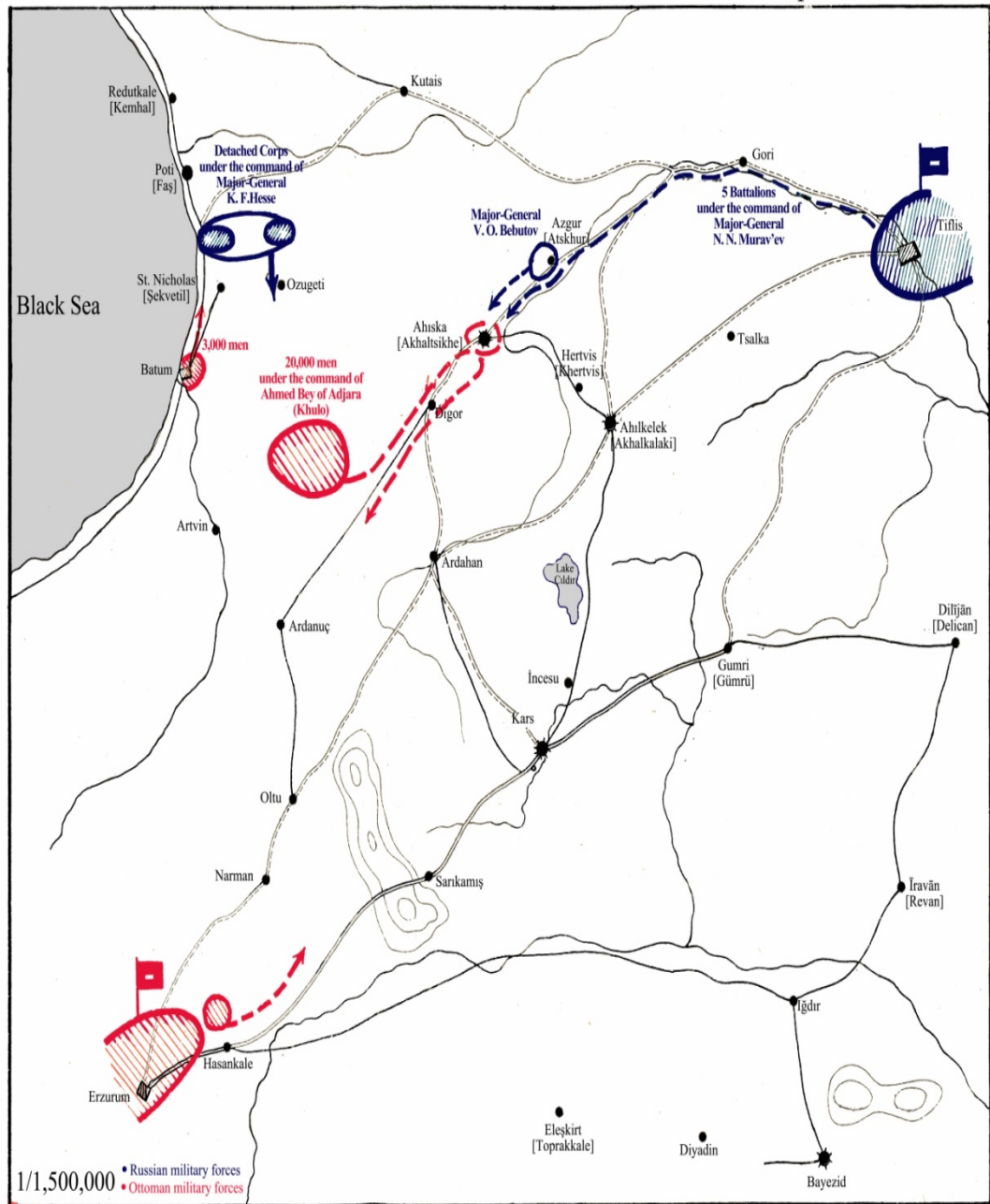
# The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 - Map 4B



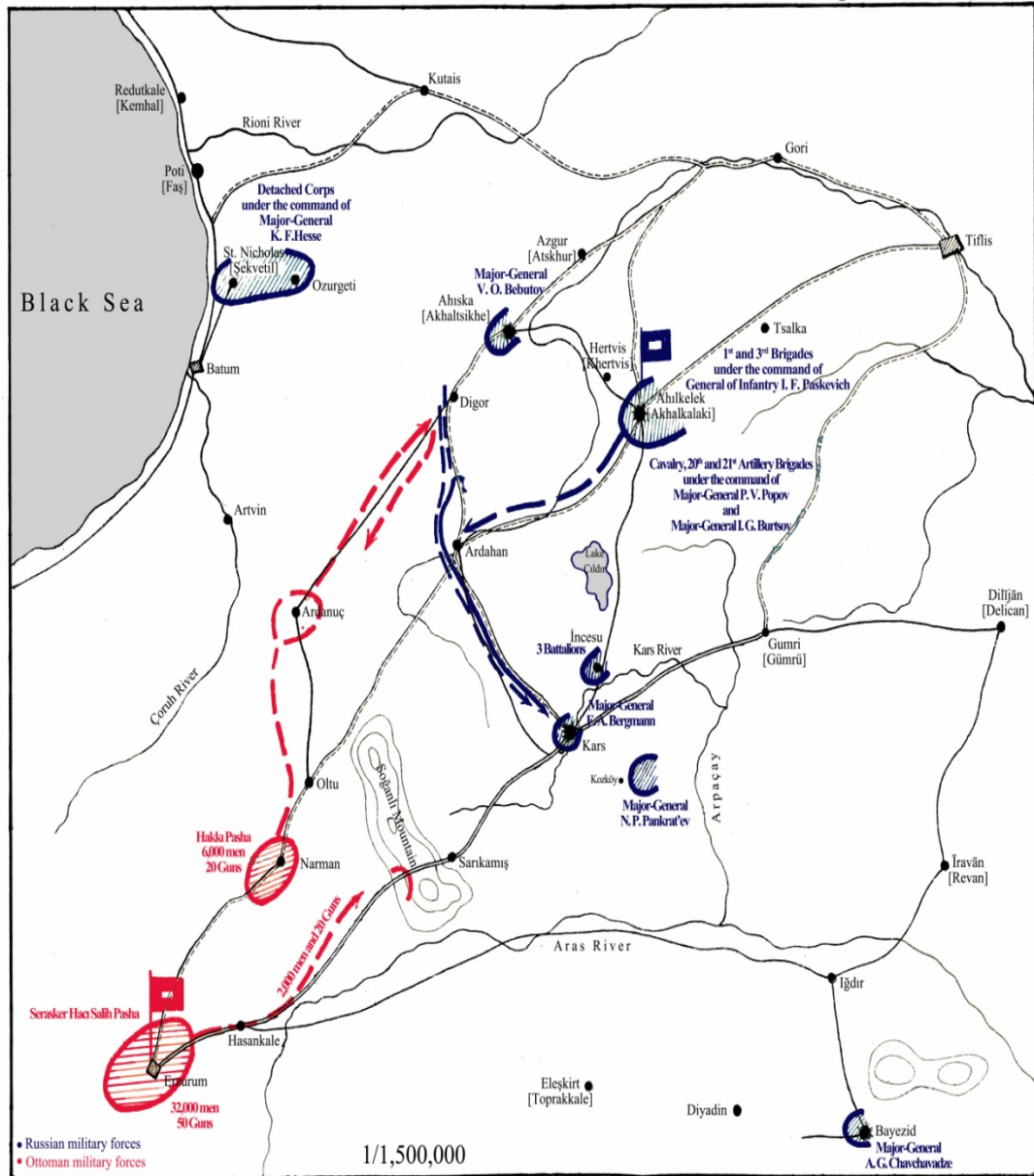
The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 - Map 5



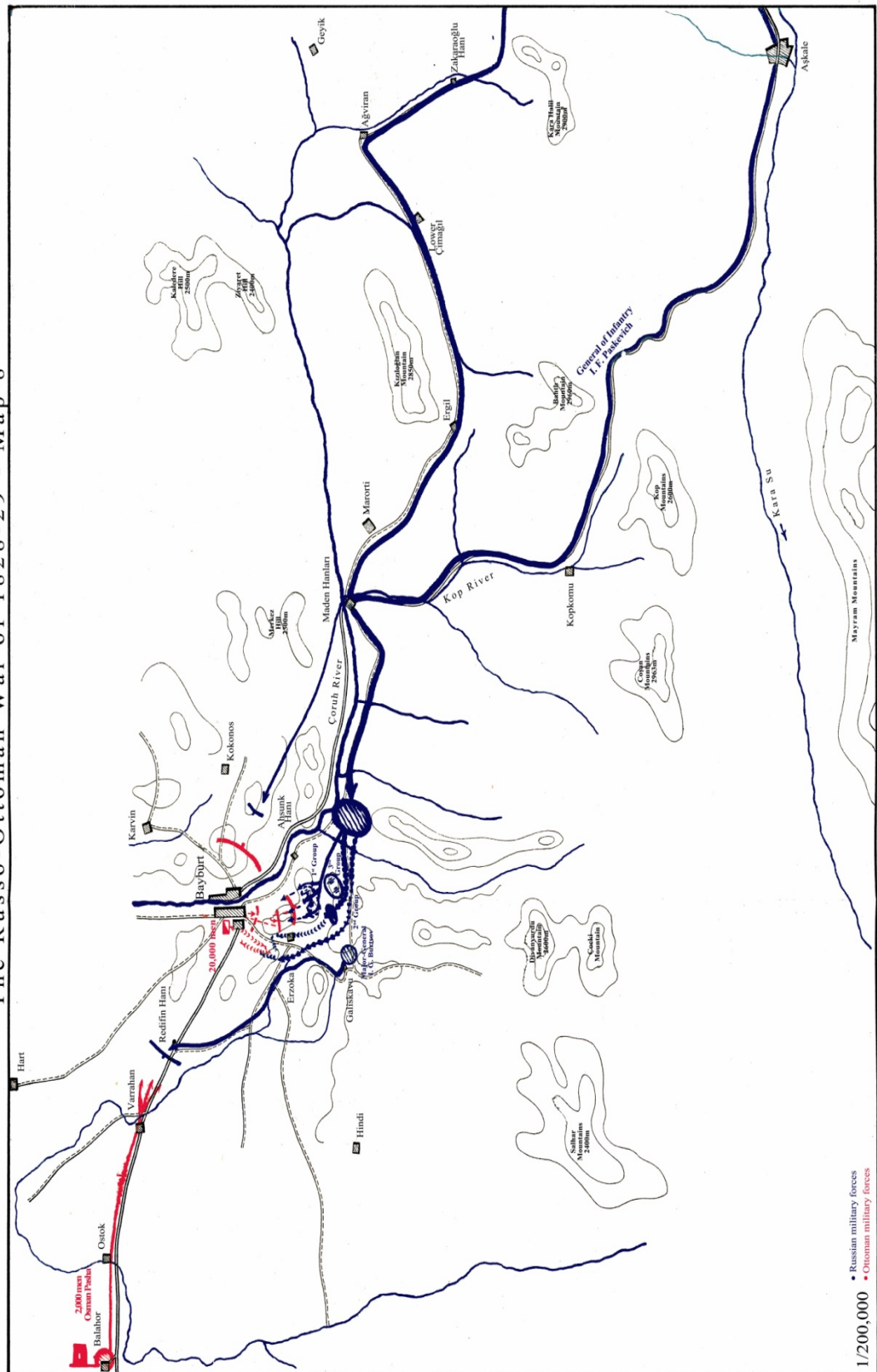
# The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 - Map 6



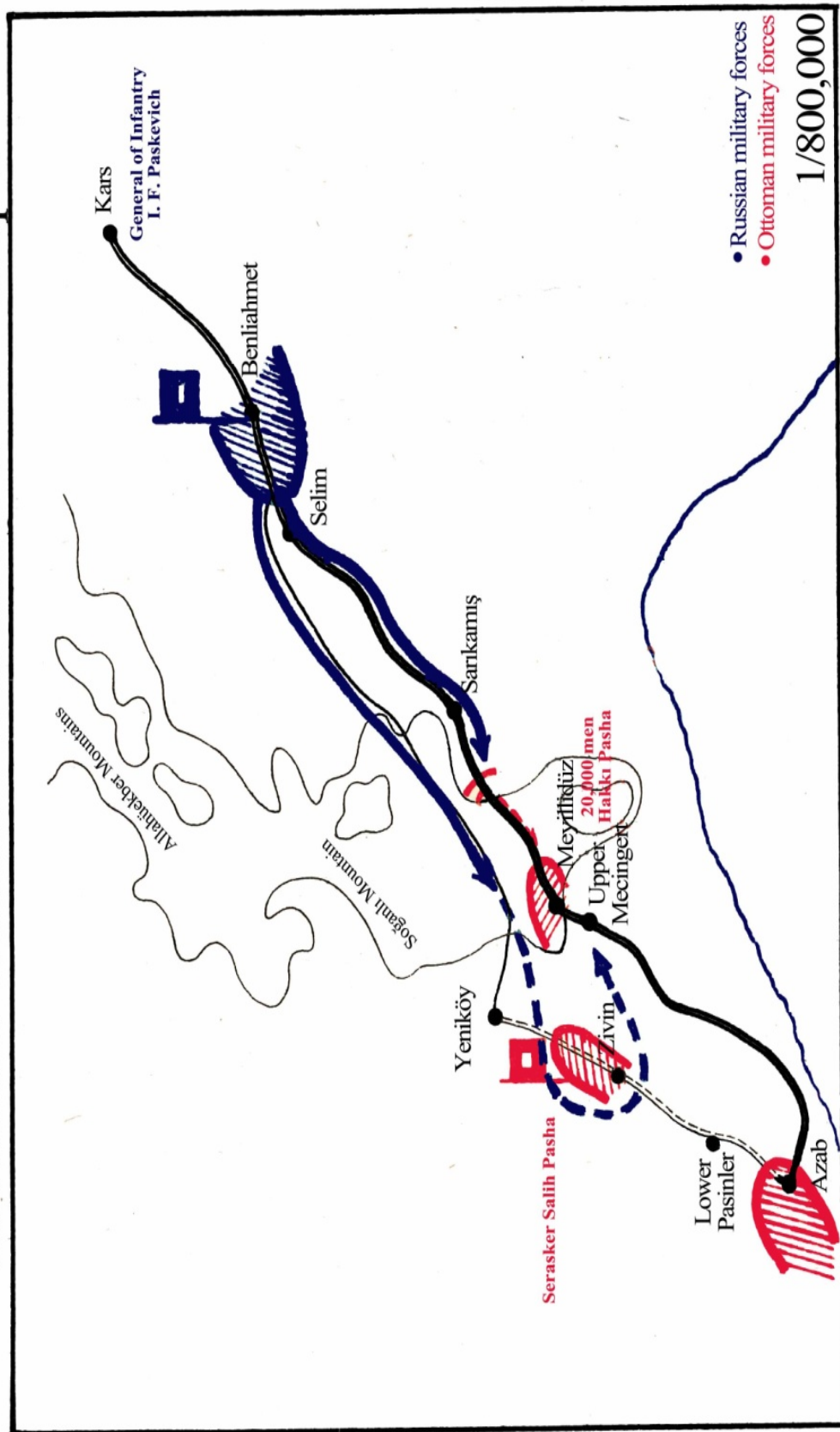
The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 - Map 7



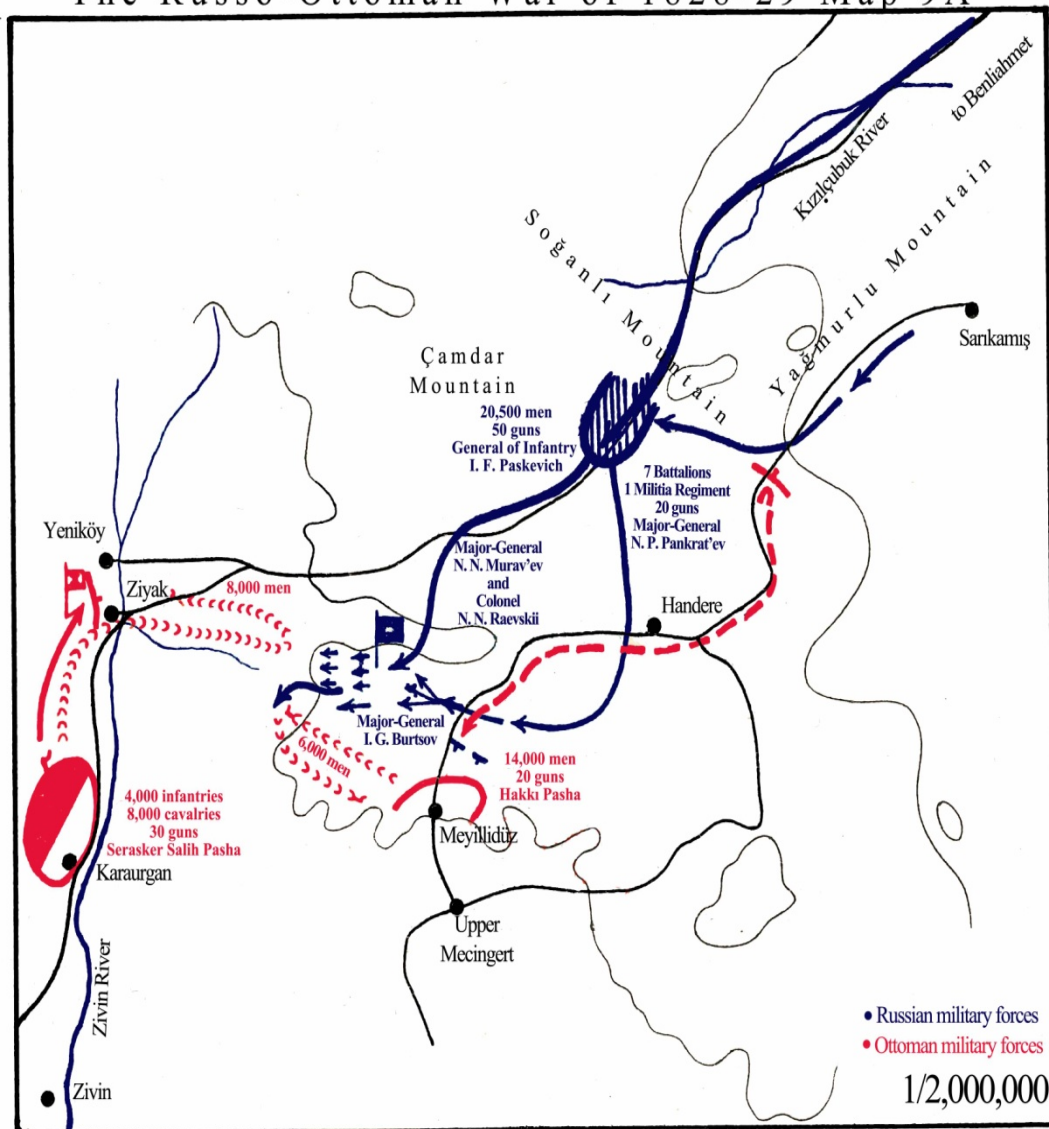
The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 - Map 8



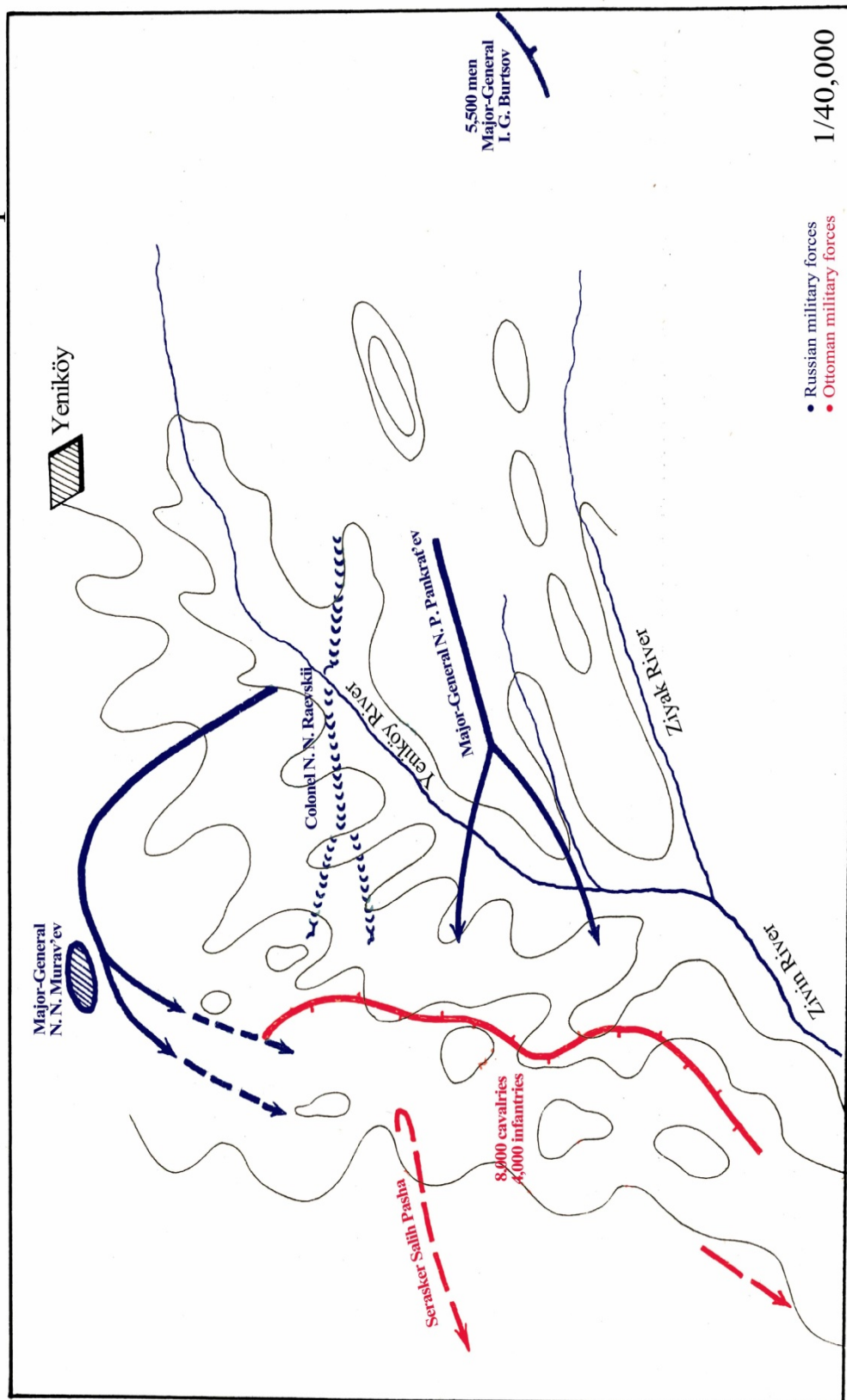
# The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 - Map 9



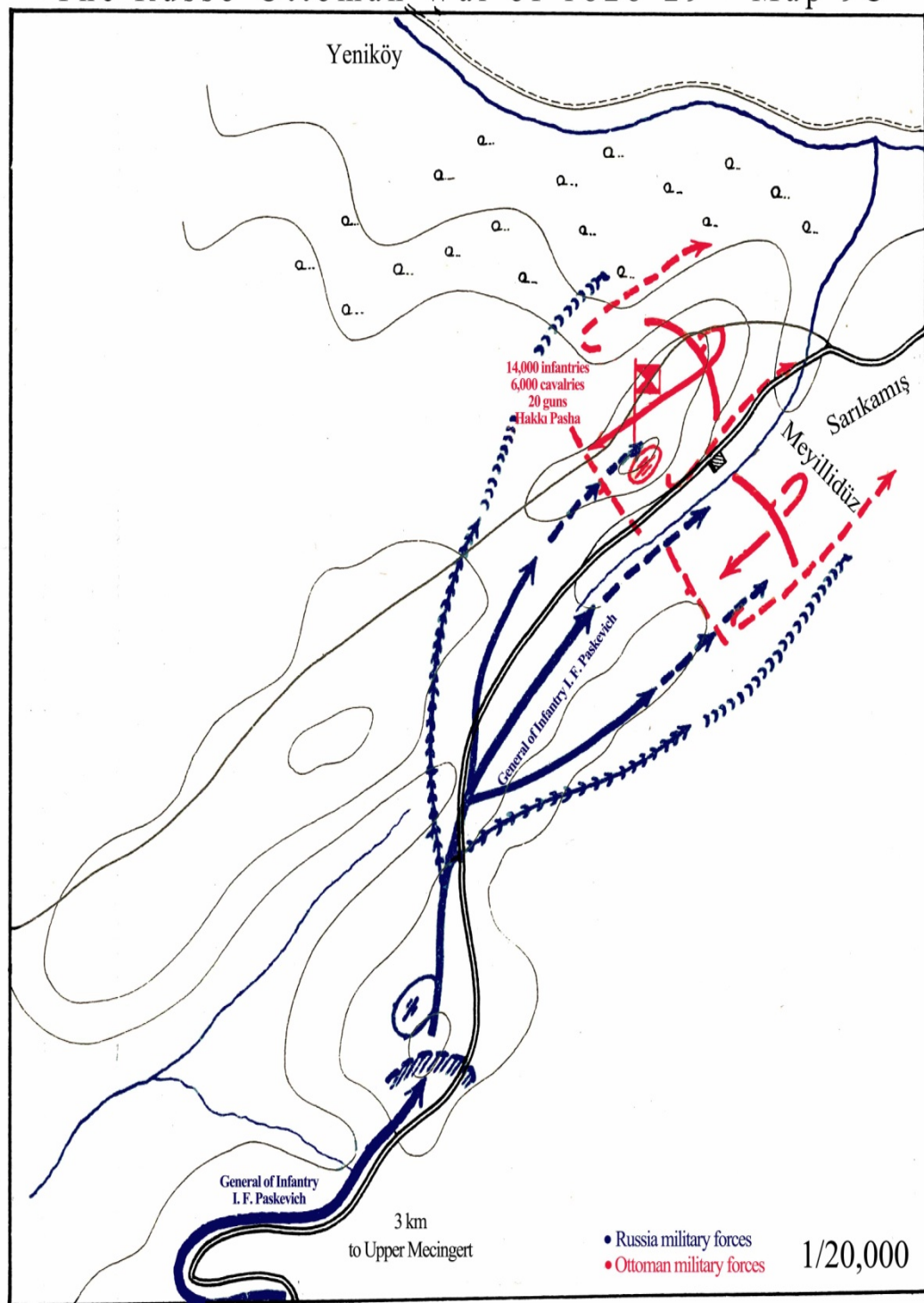
# The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 Map 9A



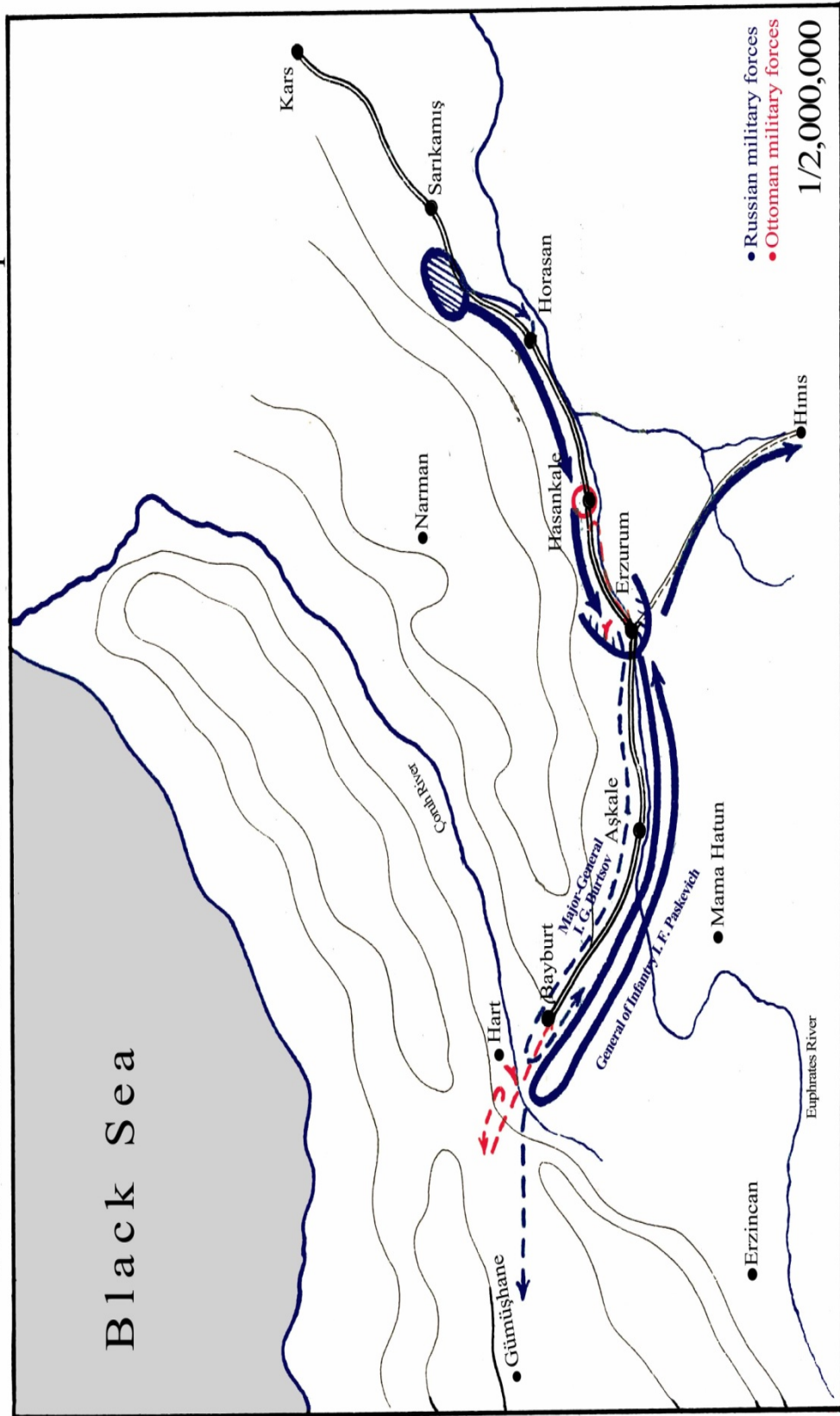
# The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 - Map 9B



# The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 - Map 9C



The Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29 - Map 10



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Vladieniakh i Vozbuzhdeniia Gortsev k Vozstaniu Protiv Russkikh. Gorazdo Podrobnnee, Izlozheny Rasporiazheniia Gr. Paskevicha, Kak Dlia Togo, Chtoby Obezpechit' Nashi Vladieniia, Tak i Dlia Togo, Chtoby Vnesti Voinu v Nepriatel'skuiu Zemliu. Zdes' Mozhno Naiti Ischislenie Nashikh Voisk, Raspredelenie Ikh po Otriadam i Raspolozhenie Etikh Otriadov (Str. 31-58); 3) Perekhod Russkikh Voisk za Granitsu i Vziatie Karsa. Zdes' Izlozheny: Poriadok Dvizheniia Russkikh Voisk k Karsu, Vozzvanie Gr. Paskevicha k Zhiteliyam Strany, Deistviia pod Stenami Kreposti i Zatem Podrobno Opisyyvaetsia Vziatie Onoi. K Etoi Glave Prisoedineny: Polnoe Opisanie Ukrepleniia Karsa i Opisanie Osady Akhaltsykha ( Str. 58 -128), 4) Dal'neishiia Deistviia Russkago Korpusa, Vziatie Krepostei: Akhalkalak i Gertvisa, Opisyyvaetsia Poiavlenie v Voiske Chumy i Mery, Priniatiia dlia Ee Presecheniia, Ustroistvo Upravleniia v Zaniatoi Strane, Dvizhenie k Akhalkalakam, Osada i Vziatie Etoi Kreposti, Pokorenie Gertvisa, Takzhe Prilozheno Opisanie Gertvisa (Str. 129 - 171); 5) Nachalo Glavnykh Voennykh Deistvii, Zamechatel'nyi Perekhod Cherekh Saganlugskii Khrebet, Bitvy 19 i 20 Iunia (172-212); 6) Pokorenie Arzeruma, Kak Sledstvie Predshestvovavshikh Pobed, Politicheskie Mery po Privedeniiu v Pokornost' Korestnykh Oblastei (213-284).”

RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4644.

RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4696, “Po Zapiske Zakliuchaiushchei v Sebe Predpolozheniia o Sberezhenii Nizhnikh Chinov v Garnizonakh, Raspolozhennykh po Krepostiam i v Oblastiakh, Priobretennykh ot Aziiatskoi Turtsii i Persii. 1828-1833 g.g.”

RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 4732, “O Predlozhenii Lezginskikh Obshchestv Vystavit' Opolchenie dlia Upotrebleniia Onago Protiv Turok. 1829 g.”

RGVIA, fond: 846, opis': 16, delo: 6218.

### **(iii) Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv [RGIA], St. Petersburg.**

RGIA, fond: 203, opis': 1, delo: 1259

RGIA, fond: 379, opis': 1, delo: 951

RGIA, fond: 383, opis': 29, delo: 539

RGIA, fond: 1018, opis': 2, delo: 76

RGIA, fond: 1018, opis': 2, delo: 77

RGIA, fond: 1018, opis': 10, delo: 180

RGIA, fond: 1341, opis': 29, delo: 206

### **(iv) Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Voenno-Morskogo Flota [RGAVMF], St. Petersburg.**

RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis': 4, delo: 450

RGAVMF, fond: 19, opis': 4, delo: 456

RGAVMF, fond: 227, opis': 1, delo: 155

RGAVMF, fond: 243, opis': 1, delo: 2596

RGAVMF, fond: 283, opis': 1, delo: 94

**(v) Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii [GARF], Moscow.**

GARF, fond: 109, opis': 3a, delo: 1151

**(vi) Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [BOA], İstanbul.**

BOA, C.AS, dosya: 1120, gömlek: 49641, 21/Ca/1222 [27 July 1807].  
BOA, C.AS, dosya: 126, gömlek: 5634, 29/C/1219 [5 October 1804].  
BOA, C.AS, dosya: 249, gömlek: 10429, 29/C/1224 [11 August 1809].  
BOA, C.AS, dosya: 34, gömlek: 1550, 17/Ş/1222 [20 October 1807].  
BOA, C.AS, dosya: 386, gömlek: 15941, 29/Ra/1225 [4 May 1810].  
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BOA, C.AS, dosya: 82, gömlek: 3844, 21/S/1222 [30 April 1807].  
BOA, C.BH, dosya: 2, gömlek: 53, 11/M/1222 [21 March 1807].  
BOA, C.BH, dosya: 20, gömlek: 966, 25/Ra/1222 [2 June 1807].  
BOA, C.BH, dosya: 206, gömlek: 9633, 29/S/1222 [8 May 1807].  
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BOA, C.BH, dosya: 86, gömlek: 4150, 23/Z/1224 [29 January 1810].  
BOA, C.DH, dosya: 132, gömlek: 6594, 29/N/1236 [30 June 1821].  
BOA, C.DH, dosya: 26, gömlek: 1266, 03/Ca/1225 [6 June 1810].  
BOA, C.DH, dosya: 55, gömlek: 2741, 23/Ş/1222 [26 October 1807].  
BOA, C.DH, dosya: 57, gömlek: 2810, 29/Za/1234 [19 September 1819].  
BOA, C.HR, dosya: 3, gömlek: 101, 19/L/1239 [17 June 1824].  
BOA, C.ZB, dosya: 61, gömlek: 3003, 29/L/1236 [30 July 1821].  
BOA, HH, dosya: 1, gömlek: 18, 25/Z/1235 [3 October 1820].  
BOA, HH, dosya: 1, gömlek: 18/E, 11/Z/1235 [19 September 1820].  
BOA, HH, dosya: 1, gömlek: 18/F, 13/Z/1235 [21 September 1820].  
BOA, HH, dosya: 1, gömlek: 18/G, 12/Z/1235 [20 September 1820].  
BOA, HH, dosya: 1, gömlek: 18/N.  
BOA, HH, dosya: 1, gömlek: 18/O, 30/M/1235 [18 November 1819].  
BOA, HH, dosya: 1002, gömlek: 42061, 27/M/1227 [11 February 1812].  
BOA, HH, dosya: 1004, gömlek: 42120/C, 15/Za/1225 [12 December 1810].  
BOA, HH, dosya: 1005, gömlek: 42139.  
BOA, HH, dosya: 1006, gömlek: 42200, 26/Ş/1224 [6 October 1809].  
BOA, HH, dosya: 1006, gömlek: 42221/A.  
BOA, HH, dosya: 1010, gömlek: 42410.  
BOA, HH, dosya: 1013, gömlek: 42478/A, 23/S/1244 [04 September 1828].  
BOA, HH, dosya: 1027, gömlek: 42781/F, 07/Za/1243 [21 May 1828].  
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BOA, HH, dosya: 767, gömlek: 36144, 11/B/1236 [14 April 1821].  
BOA, HH, dosya: 767, gömlek: 36145, 25/Ş/1242 [24 March 1827].  
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BOA, HH, dosya: 782, gömlek: 36609.  
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BOA, HH, dosya: 784, gömlek: 36622.  
BOA, HH, dosya: 786, gömlek: 36680.  
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BOA, HH, dosya: 786, gömlek: 36786/A.  
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BOA, HH, dosya: 788, gömlek: 36750, 17/L/1239 [15/06/1824].  
BOA, HH, dosya: 788, gömlek: 36757.  
BOA, HH, dosya: 790, gömlek: 36803/D.  
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 BOA, HH, dosya: 815, gömlek: 37287, 01/R/1237 [26 December 1821].  
 BOA, HH, dosya: 816, gömlek: 37289/B, 29/M/1237 [26 October 1821].  
 BOA, HH, dosya: 819, gömlek: 37348, 17/Z/1236 [15 September 1821].  
 BOA, HH, dosya: 820, gömlek: 37361, 13/C/1236 [18/03/1821].  
 BOA, HH, dosya: 826, gömlek: 37453, 25/Ş/1236 [28/05/1821].  
 BOA, HH, dosya: 966, gömlek: 41304, 22/Ca/1222 [22 July 1807].  
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 BOA, YB (21), dosya: 11, gömlek: 17, 20/Ra/1225 [25 April 1810].  
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