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## THE KHANS OF KARABAKH: THE ROOTS, SUBORDINATION TO THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE, AND LIQUIDATION OF THE KHANATE

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### A b s t r a c t

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**T**he author analyzes the political history and genealogy of the Javanshirs (*Cavanşirs*), one of the khan families of Azerbaijan, their relations with the Russian Empire, and the liquidation of the Karabakh Khanate.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Karabakh Khanate—a feudal state that existed in Northern Azerbaijan from 1747 to 1822, a fragment of the vast empire of Nadir Shah Afshar that existed from 1736 to 1747; in 1805 the khans became vassals of the Russian Empire, which in November 1822 made the khanate one of its territories ruled from St. Petersburg.

**KEYWORDS:** *Karabakh Khanate, Shusha, the Javanshir clan, Panah Ali Khan, Ibrahim Khalil Khan, Mekhti Quli Khan, Jafar Quli Agha, transfer to Russia, liquidation of the khanate, Prince Tsitsianov, Major Lisanevich, General Yermolov, General Madatov.*

### I n t r o d u c t i o n

The vast number of historical works and documentary collections that have appeared in the last few years related to the history of the Karabakh Khanate and the genealogy of the descendants of the Karabakh khans makes it unnecessary to supply details about the khanate's past and the rule of its khans.

Here I will concentrate on the clan of Javanshir (*Cavanşir*), the accession of their khanate to the Russian Empire, the death of the second Karabakh khan, the liquidation of the khanate, and the introduction of direct rule from St. Petersburg.

### The Origins of the Khans of Karabakh

The roots of the Javanshir family go back to the early 17th century when the shahs of the Safavid dynasty (1501-1736) divided the Azeri lands into vilayets (*beglyarbekstvo* [principdom]): the

Shirvan Vilayet with its center in Shemakha; the Karabakh Vilayet (Ganja), which occupied the space between the Kura and Arax rivers; and the Tebriz Vilayet, which occupied the larger part of southern Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Territory. Later, in the 17th century, the Nakhchivan Territory became part of the Chukhur-Saad Vilayet with its center in Erivan. The Ardabil District of Azerbaijan was part of the shah's personal dominions.<sup>2</sup>

The vilayets were ruled by beglyarbeks who, when appointed, acquired the title of khan. In the 16th century, this post became inherited, which made the beglyarbeks feudal landlords.<sup>3</sup> In the 1540s, Tahmasib Shah (1524-1576) appointed Emir Shahverdi Khan Ziyad-ogly Qajar (?-1568) the beglyarbek of Karabakh and the head of the Azeri tribe of Qajar. His descendants ruled Karabakh (with short intervals) until 1737 when Nadir Shah Afshar seized the larger part of their dominions. They preserved small patches of land around Ganja, which they ruled until 1804.<sup>4</sup>

The vilayets were divided into districts (*magals*), the rulers of which (*khakims*) frequently inherited their posts from their fathers. Starting in the mid-16th century, the rulers of the vilayet to the south of Barda forced the Azeri nomad tribes living in Karabakh to unite into magals (later the Otuziki magal, that is, 32 tribes, and Igirmi dyerd magal, 24 tribes). The Javanshir tribe was the largest and strongest among them, the hereditary rulers of which governed the Otuziki District from the early 17th century.<sup>5</sup>

Different authors trace the Javanshir family to different sources. Mirza Jamal Javanshir of Karabakh (c. 1773-1853), the last vizier of the Karabakh Khanate (1797-1822) and the author of *Istoria Karabakha* (The History of Karabakh), wrote that "the family of the late Panah Khan (founder of the Karabakh Khanate.—*E.I.*) originated from Javanshir of Dizak from the Saryjally oymak,<sup>6</sup> one of the branches of the Bakhmanly tribe that came in ancient times from Turkestan. His ancestors were well known in the Javanshir tribe as noble, rich, and beneficial people."<sup>7</sup>

Ahmed-bek Javanshir,<sup>8</sup> author of a political history of the Karabakh Khanate traced his clan back to the descendants of Argun Khan (1284-1291), the ruler of the Ilkhanate Empire. According to the legend to which the author referred in his book, an ancestor of the Javanshirs was a descendant of Argun Khan called Mamed Khan, "who lived in the Alagark stow on the shores of the Arax close to the village of Bakhmanly. According to a purchase deed written on a piece of parchment made of gazelle skin, he bought the whole of Karabakh, about 200 versts along and the same length across between the Kurakchay, Kura, Arax, and Alynjachay rivers and Lake Gokcha. He was the only owner, but during his lifetime he divided his dominions between his three sons."<sup>9</sup>

Historical sources, however, do not confirm the above. Some of those who studied the history of the Javanshirs refer to the book *Rovzat-us-Safa* by Rza Quli Khan Idayat, who wrote that "the Ja-

<sup>2</sup> See: I.P. Petrushevskiy, "Azerbaidzhan v XV-XVII vv.," in: *Sbornik statey po istorii Azerbaidzhana*, Issue 1, Baku, 1949, p. 247.

<sup>3</sup> See: *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> See: Mohammed Masum ibn Hojagi-i Isfaghani, *Khusalat as-Siyar* (Biographies and Lifestories: Why and How), Chapter "Shamma az zikr-i Ziyad-ugli va ausaf-i Ganja" (A Short History of the Ziyad-ogly Family and Description of Ganja), Transl. from the Farsi into Azeri and commented by M. Nagisoyle, *Izvestia istoriko-rodoslovnogo obshchestva*, Issue 3, Baku, 2001, pp. 109-132; I.L. Pavlova, "Ocherk istorii karabagskikh praviteley Ziyad-ogly po materailam *Khusalat as-Siyar*," in: *Khoronika vremen Sefevidov*, Moscow, 1993, pp. 58-62; I.P. Petrushevskiy, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

<sup>5</sup> See: A.-B. Javanshir, *O politicheskom sushchestvovanii Karabakhskogo khanstva (s 1747 po 1805)*, Baku, 1961, p. 99; I.P. Petrushevskiy, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

<sup>6</sup> Oymak—a term applied to each of the clans that make up a tribe and also to their territory.

<sup>7</sup> Mirza Jamal Javanshir of Karabakh, *Istoria Karabakha*, Baku, 1959, p. 66.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmed-bek Javanshir (1828-1903), grandson of Mohammed-bek Javanshir, graduated from the Paul Cadet Corps in 1848, and was enrolled in the Hussar Regiment of Konstantin Nikolaevich. In 1853, fought in the Crimean War, promoted to the rank of second captain of cavalry for his courage. Wounded in a duel, he had to retire in 1854 (see: A.-B. Javanshir, *op. cit.*, p. 62). He went back to his estate in the village of Kekhrizli, where he occupied himself with translations into Azeri of works by Pushkin, Lermontov, Zhukovsky, and other authors. In 1883, he wrote in Russian *Politicheskaja istoria Karabakhskogo khanstva* (Political History of the Karabakh Khanate) published in Tiflis in 1884, in Shusha in 1901, and in 1961 in Baku.

<sup>9</sup> A.-B. Javanshir, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

vanshir elat came from Turkestan and belonged to the tribe of Oshir Khan, who was son of Ildyz Khan, the fourth son of Uguz Khan.<sup>10</sup> The Javanshir tribe joined the 120-thousand-strong army of Hulagu khan.<sup>11</sup> Under Emir Timur,<sup>12</sup> they came back from Rûm<sup>13</sup> for the second time and spread across Turkestan, Kandahar, Kabul, and Iran. One of its branches led by **Ibrahim Khalil Agha**, who served Shah Abbas I,<sup>14</sup> remained in Karabakh.”<sup>15</sup>

A large part of Azerbaijan had been occupied by Ottoman Turks after the war of 1578-1590; it was liberated after the war of 1603-1607. In 1606, Shah Abbas I restored Muhammad Khan Ziyad-ogly Qajar<sup>16</sup> to the post of beglyarbek of Karabakh (1585-1588 and 1606-1616).

It was probably at the same time, in 1606-1629, that Shah Abbas I made **Ibrahim Khalil Agha**, head of the Javanshir tribe from the oymak of Saryjally, head of the Karabakh magal Otuziki. From that time on, head of the Javanshir clan became the hereditary head of the Otuziki magal.<sup>17</sup>

From what Abbas-Quli-agma Bakikhanov wrote in his book, it might be presumed that Ibrahim Khalil Agha became hereditary head of Otuziki before 1018 Hegira (A.D. 1609) when Shah Abbas I spent the winter in Karabakh.<sup>18</sup>

Bakikhanov wrote: “When Shah Abbas had settled everything in Shirvan and Daghestan, he entrusted **Ali-bek Javanshir** with the task of building a pontoon bridge across the Kura in Javad to move the troops to Ardabil.”<sup>19</sup> It seems that Ibrahim Khalil Agha Javanshir and Ali-bek Javanshir were one and the same person, or that Ali-bek (Panah Ali-bek?) was a son or brother of Ibrahim Khalil Agha Javanshir, the first head of Otuziki.

The name of another head of Otuziki is mentioned in the history of Shah Abbas I *Tarikh-i alem aray-i 'Abbasi* (The History of Beautifying the World of Abbas) written by outstanding Safavid court historiographer Iskender-bek Munshi; it contains lists of the emirs of the Qizilbash state for 1576 and 1628: “About the Famous Emirs from among the Khans and Sultans, Some of Whom Were at the High Court, While Some Others, in Regions” and “The Names of All Emirs from among the Khans and Sultans,” respectively. In both lists, the names of the emirs are organized according to their tribes. The list of 1628, which contained the names of emirs from different Turkic tribes that did not belong to Qizilbash, mentions “**Otar-sultan, head of the tribe (mir-i il) Javanshir and the Otuziki tribes, descendant of the Karabakh emirs.**”<sup>20</sup>

The following deserves mention.

- First, the spelling of the name of the head of the Javanshir clan. Unable to check it against the original of *Tarikh-i alem aray-i 'Abbasi*, we cannot be sure that the name *Otar-sultan* (unusual among the Azeris) was spelled correctly. The question is: was it a mistranslation or misprint, or was it spelled in this way in the list of Iskender-bek Munshi?

<sup>10</sup> For more information about Oguz Khan (Uguz Khan) and his descendants, see: Rashid ad-Din, *Oguz-name*, Transl. from the Persian into Russian, introduction, commentaries, notes, and indexes by R.M. Shukiurova), Baku, 1987; R.M. Shukiurova, “Genealogia Oguzov i sviazannye s ney sobytia v *Oguz-name*,” *Izvestia AN Azerbaidzhanskoy SSR. Seria istorii, filosofii i prava*, No. 1, Baku, 1986, pp. 72-79; idem, “Oguz—obshchiy praroditel tiurkskikh dinastii,” *Izvestia AN Azerbaidzhanskoy SSR. Seria istorii, filosofii i prava*, No. 1, 1987, pp. 78-81.

<sup>11</sup> Hulagu (1217-1265), Mongol ruler, grandson of Genghis khan; founder of Hulagu’s dynasty.

<sup>12</sup> Tamerlane, Timur (1336-1405), Central Asian conqueror; founder of the Timurid dynasty (1370).

<sup>13</sup> Asia Minor, which is now Turkey.

<sup>14</sup> Abbas I the Great (1571-1629), Shah of Persia since 1587, member of the Safavid dynasty, prominent military leader.

<sup>15</sup> See: *Rovzat-us-Safa*, Part IX, “Zikr halati emir Ibrahim Khan Javanshir,” Tehran, 1270 (quoted from: A.-B. Javanshir, op. cit., footnote by E.B. Shukiurzade on p. 99).

<sup>16</sup> See: A.-Q. Bakikhanov, *Giulistan-i Iram*, Editor, commentator and author of notes and indexes Z.M. Buniatov, Baku, 1991, p. 245.

<sup>17</sup> See: A.-B. Javanshir, op. cit., footnote by E.B. Shukiurzade on p. 99; I.P. Petrushevskiy, op. cit, p. 248.

<sup>18</sup> See: A.-Q. Bakikhanov, op. cit., p. 119.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>20</sup> I.P. Petrushevskiy, *Ocherki po istorii feodalnykh otnosheniy v Azerbaidzhane i Armenii v XVI-nachale XIX v.*, Leningrad, 1949, pp. 71, 90-92, 99-102, 109.

- Second, a combination of the name of the head of the Javanshir tribe and the Otuziki magal and the title sultan, which was normally conferred on members of military nomadic nobility together with the title of emir or an emirate, confirms, albeit indirectly, that *Otar-sultan* became head of Otuziki under a decree of the shah.

Under the Safavids, sultan and khan were life, not inherited titles, at least officially. However, more often than not, sons acquired the titles of their fathers from the shah, especially if he inherited his father's region or magal. In the latter half of the 16th century, it was accepted that the title of khan was superior to that of sultan.<sup>21</sup> This is obvious in our case: the head of the Javanshir tribe and the Otuziki magal, who was a sultan, obeyed, in administrative respects, the Karabakh beglyarbek, who was a khan.

Mit Mekhti Khazani (c. 1819-1894), the author of a history of Karabakh, mentioned **Ibrahim-sultan Budagh-sultan ogly Javanshir**, head of the Javanshir tribe and Otuziki magal, who was a sultan. According to the firman of 1083 Hegira (1672/73), the Persian shah made him commander of a 730-strong cavalry unit with a salary of 700 *toumans* and 7,000 Tabriz *altuns*. Mekhti Quli Khan, the last of the Karabakh khans, kept the document at home. In his book, Mir Mekhti Khazani described Ibrahim-sultan as the grandfather or ancestor of **Panah Ali Khan Javanshir** (c. 1693-1759), who founded the Karabakh Khanate (*İbrahim Sultan Budaq Sultan oğlu Cavanşir ... Pənah xanın cəddi imiş*).<sup>22</sup>

The above proves that both Ibrahim-sultan and his father Budagh-sultan (Otar-sultan?) received their titles from the Safavids when appointed heads of the Otuziki emirate.

Prominent Azeri historian of the 20th century E. Shukiur-zade mentioned the names of the descendants of Ibrahim Khalil Agha, who remained hereditary rulers of the Javanshir tribe and Otuziki magal until the first half of the 18th century. The historian referred to Rza Quli Khan Idayat's *Rovzat-us-Safa* to write that Panah Ali Agha I replaced his father (Ibrahim Khalil Agha) as head of the tribe; his son Ibrahim Khalil Agha II came after him; Panah Ali Khan Javanshir, who founded the Karabakh Khanate, was described as the son of Ibrahim Khalil Agha II.<sup>23</sup>

The same names appeared in the genealogy of the khans of Karabakh based on information that Major Lisanevich gathered in 1804; it starts with the name of Panah Ali-bek (Panah Ali Agha I) and lacks the name of his father Ibrahim Khalil Agha.<sup>24</sup>

The table compiled by E. Shukiur-zade lacks the names of Otar-sultan, who headed the Javanshir tribe and Otuziki magal in 1628, and Ibrahim-sultan Budagh-sultan ogly, who headed the tribe and the magal in 1672/73.

Captain on Russian service Mirza Adigezal-bek (c. 1780-1848) likewise did not mention these names in his *Karabakh-name*.

His information differs from the initial information Shukiur-zade used for his genealogical table. Mirza Adigezal-bek wrote: "Panah Ali-bek, great grandfather of Panah Khan (that is, Panah Ali Khan.—*E.I.*) was born in Saryjallu. At that time, the khans of Karabakh (that is, the beglyarbeks of Karabakh with its capital in Ganja.—*E.I.*) were prospering. At that same time, he went to Ganja and started working for these khans. His proud nature rebelled against this humiliation since he was convinced that he was much superior to those whose orders he had to obey. He went to the Javanshir oymak of the Karabakh region ... where he grew very rich and then married." There his son **Sarija Ali-bek** was born. "According to Mirza Adigezal-bek, he was very rich and influential. Those who passed his estate—shepherds, hired hands, servants, sheep-breeders, horse-herds—gathered around him. Their number was growing all the time and, finally, both nomad camps became an *oba* (nomads' camp), known as Saryjallu." **Ibrahim Khalil Agha (II)**, son of Sarija Ali-bek "had a myulk (Arabic

<sup>21</sup> See: I.P. Petrushevskiy, op. cit., pp. 98-100.

<sup>22</sup> See: Mir Mehdi Xəzani, "Kitabi-Tarixi Qarabağ," in: *Qarabağnamələr* (Annals of Karabakh), Book II, Baku, 2006.

<sup>23</sup> See: E.B. Shukiurzade, "Genealogicheskaia tablitsa Karabakhsikh khanov," in: *Doklady AN Azerbaidzhanskoy SSR*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 7, Baku, 1981, pp. 83-85.

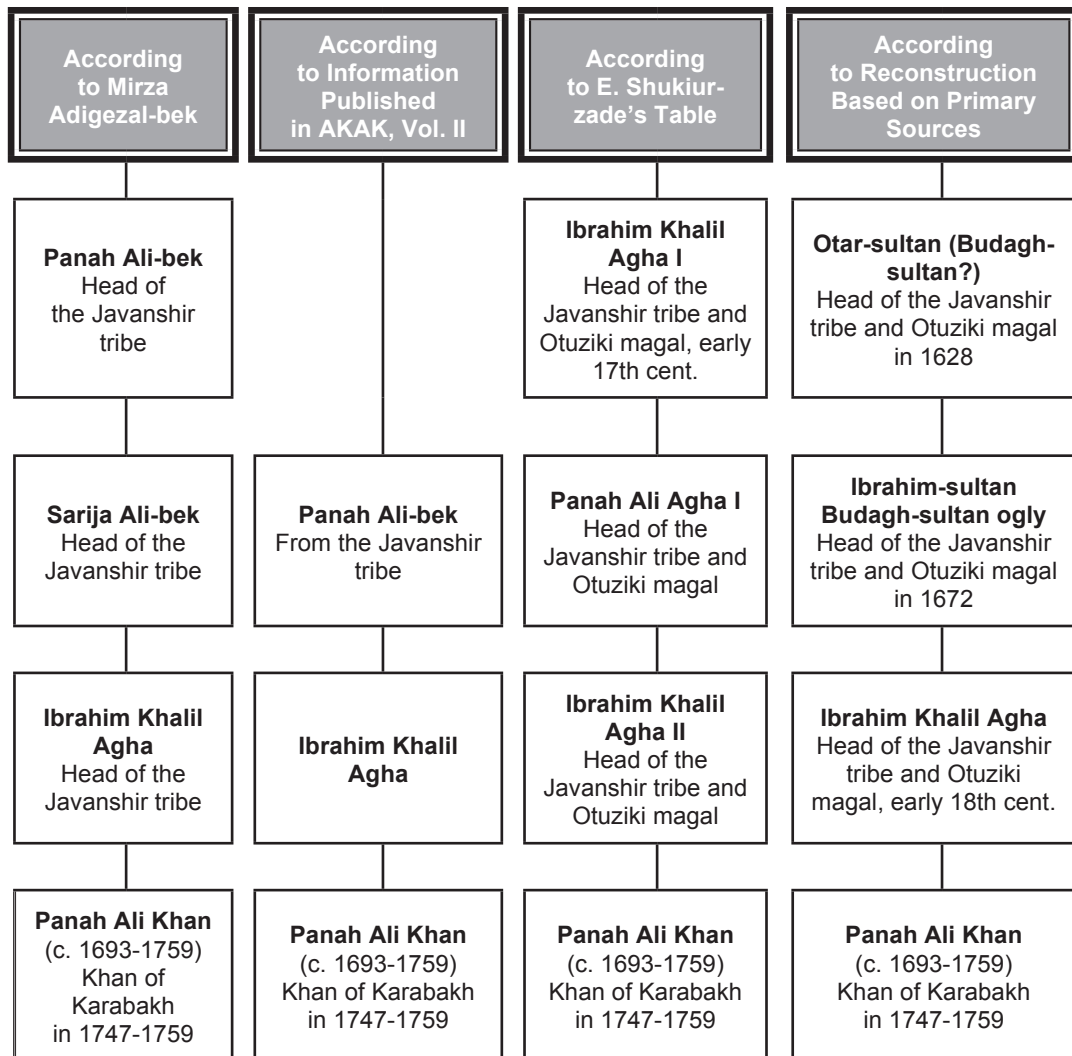
<sup>24</sup> See: *Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy arkheograficheskoy kommissiyei* (further AKAK), Vol. II, Tiflis, 1868, pp. 695-696, Document No. 1415.

for estate) and an orchard in Aghdam. He also had an estate in Arasbar, on the shores of the Arax, as well as pastures and enclosures. He also had a palace called Ibrahim Khalil kalasy in *yaylag* (Azeri for summer pastures). This confirmed Ibrahim Khalil Agha’s greatness and glory.”<sup>25</sup>

The three sources I used to compile an ascending genealogy of the family of the khans of Karabakh—Mirza Adigezal-bek’s *Karabakh-name*, “Rodoslovnaia Ibrahim-khana i ego detey” (Genealogy of Ibrahim Khan and His Children) are published in Vol. II of *Akty kavkazskoy arkheograficheskoy komissii* (Acts of the Caucasian Archeographic Commission) and E. Shukiur-zade’s *Genealogicheskaya tablitsa Karabakhsikh khanov* (Genealogical Table of the Karabakh Khans). They do not fully coincide, but the name of the father of the first of the Karabakh khans is the same in all of them.

This suggested a comparative analysis of the three versions of the ascending genealogies of Panah Ali Khan and my own version based on primary sources (the 1628 list of the emirs compiled by Iskender-bek Munshi and the firman of 1672/73 quoted by Mir Mekhti Khazani).

**Versions of the Ascending Genealogy of the Karabakh Khans**



<sup>25</sup> Mirza Adigezal-bek, *Karabakh-name*, Baku, 1950, pp. 49-50.

## The Independent Karabakh Khanate and Panah Ali Khan

**Fazl Ali-bek** (?-1738) and Panah Ali-bek (c. 1693-1759), the sons of Ibrahim Khalil Agha (II), were enrolled in the army of Nadir-Quli Khan Afshar, chief commander since 1726 of Shah Tahmasib II<sup>26</sup>; in 1736, he displaced the Safavid dynasty and ascended the Persian throne as Nadir Shah (1736-1747).

The new shah moved into the magals of the Karabakh beglyarbeks Ziyad-ogly Qajars south of Ganja to undermine their power; they were left with the Ganja District and the title of beglyarbeks of Ganja.<sup>27</sup> The political situation in Karabakh and even in the whole of Azerbaijan changed.

The central and southern magals formerly ruled by the Karabakh beglyarbeks (including the Otuziki and Khamse magals, that is, Varand, Dizag, Talysh, Khachyn and Chilaberd ruled by meliks)<sup>28</sup> were placed under the direct rule of Tabriz and remained under its power until the death of Nadir Shah and formation of an independent Karabakh Khanate in 1747.<sup>29</sup>

The Javanshirs, who refused to side with the self-appointed shah in 1736, were later resettled from Karabakh to Horasan. Fazl Ali-bek, the elder of the two brothers and Nadir Shah's adjutant (*eshikagasi*), was murdered; Panah Ali-bek, the younger brother, and his retinue fled to Karabakh in 1738.

According to Mirza Adigezal-bek, Nadir Shah replaced murdered Fazl Ali-bek with his younger brother, "handed him the *chomak* (staff), clad him in the clothes of an eshik-agasy, and conferred on him the rights of his dead elder brother;" after several days in his new post "the searching and menacing glances that Nadir Shah cast on him and his deliberate malice" forced Panah Ali-bek to flee; Mirza Adigezal-bek believed that Panah Ali-bek found it undignified to "carry the *chomak*, bow to Nadir Shah, and talk to his osauls."<sup>30</sup>

The shah tried, but failed, to capture Panah Ali-bek and bring him back: the runaway spent some time at the yaylag of Kara Murtuz-bek, a feudal lord in Zangezur, where he rallied his retinue into a band to raid Ganja, Nakhchivan, Sheki, and other places.<sup>31</sup>

In 1747, assassination of Nadir Shah weakened central power to the extent that Panah Ali-bek submitted the larger part of the former dominions of the Karabakh beglyarbeks (to the south of Ganja) to his power. According to Mirza Jamal Javanshir of Karabakh, "when Nadir Shah was assassinated in the year 1160 (1747), above-mentioned Panah Ali-bek appeared among what remained of the Karabakh population; he selected the most suitable young men and started plundering the regions of Ganja, Nakhchivan, etc. He distributed wealth, clothes, horses, and other property among all the young men, especially in his closest circle. At that time, it became known that the ilats of Javanshir and other tribes which the shah had pushed to Horasan were moving back ... exhausted, plundered, and poor. Panah Khan rallied the bravest young men from among his relatives and from the ilats to plunder the Shirvan, Sheki, Ganja, and Karabakh vilayets. He made all the young men independent and rich; other people loved him because he distributed cattle, horses, and awards; the recalcitrant were forced into submission by punishment and murder. None of those who lived in Javanshir, Otuziki, or other villages and ilats dared to rebel against the orders and commands of Panah Khan."<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See: Mirza Adigezal-bek, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>27</sup> See: N.A. Javanshir, "O rodoslovnoy Melik-Aslanovykh," *Izvestia Azerbaidzhanskogo istoriko-rodoslovnogo obshchestva*, Issue 2, Baku, 2001, pp. 23-34.

<sup>28</sup> These districts became inherited magals mainly in the mid-17th century and later (see: P.T. Arutiunian, *Osvoboditelnoe dvizhenie armianskogo naroda v pervoy chetverti XVIII veka*, Moscow, 1954, p. 60).

<sup>29</sup> See: N.A. Javanshir, op. cit.; Mirza Adigezal-bek, op. cit., p. 48; Mirza Jamal Javanshir of Karabakh, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>30</sup> Mirza Adigezal-bek, op. cit., p. 51; in January 1823 General Yermolov wrote to Prince Abbas-mirza that Panah Ali Khan (Penakh Khan) had been *jarchi-bashi*, that is, the head of the public criers (see: AKAK, Vol. VI, Part II, Tiflis, 1875, p. 274, Document No. 510).

<sup>31</sup> See: E.B. Shukiur-zade, op. cit.

<sup>32</sup> Mirza Jamal Javanshir of Karabakh, op. cit., p. 67.

In 1748, he built the Fortress of Bayat, the first capital of his khanate, where he moved his family, relatives, and nobles of the *ilats* (nomadic tribes) that sided with him while he fought for the throne. In the same year, Adil (1747-1748), the nephew of Nazir Shah and the new shah of Persia, recognized him as the khan of Karabakh and sent a document of formal recognition and presents to the fortress: a precious robe, a horse with a gilt saddle, and a sword encrusted with precious stones.<sup>33</sup>

In 1751/52, the hostile environment forced the khan to move his capital from Bayat to the Tarnaut Fortress (Shahbulaghy). The new residence, likewise, proved to be too vulnerable; the next year, Panak Ali Khan, acting on the advice of Shahnazar melik of Varand, started building new walls and fortifications six parasangs (roughly two leagues.—*Ed.*) from the small village of Shushikend on the ruins of an old fortress destroyed by the Mongols.<sup>34</sup> In 1756, the khan moved the entire population of the Shabulaghy to the fortress of Shusha, which for some time was called Panahabad.<sup>35</sup>

By that time, Panah Khan had subjugated all the Khamse magals. “Melik Shahnazar-bek, the old melik of the Varand magal, was the first who deemed it wise to accept his rule... For some time, the melik of Khachyn magal, who had been stubbornly opposing the pressure, was finally subjugated and appointed melik of his hereditary dominions... The meliks of Dizag and Chilaberd, as well as the Talysh magals continued fighting (with Panah Khan) for several years and became subjugated after murders, plundering, and other necessary measures.”<sup>36</sup>

A.-Q. Bakikhanov wrote: “Panah Khan was strengthening his power day by day; he subjugated the Armenian meliks and all the lands in the triangle between Khudaferin Bridge on the Arax, the Kyurek River, and the Bargushat magal. He also joined Meghri and Gyuney of the Karadag province, Tatev, and Sisian of the Nakhchivan, Terter-Kyulani of the Erivan, and Zangezur and Kafan of the Tabriz provinces. From time to time, he spread his power to Ardabil and other provinces.”<sup>37</sup>

Muhammed-Khasan Khan Qajar and Fatali Khan Afshar, ruler of the Urmia Khanate, two claimants to the shah throne, repeatedly and without much success besieged Shusha. The latter even managed to capture Ibrahim Khalil Agha, heir to the Karabakh throne, under the pretext of exchanging prisoners and betrothing his daughter to Panah Ali Khan’s son.

In 1759, Panah Ali Khan gathered his best troops and, after entrusting the khanate to his second son Mekhrali-bek, joined the ruler (*vekil*) of Persia Karim Khan Zand to besiege the Fortress of Urmia. The allies won, but Karim Khan proved to be no less perfidious than Fatali Khan of Urmia before him. He kept Panah Ali Khan as an honorary prisoner and dispatched his son Ibrahim Khalil Agha to Karabakh with rich presents and, most importantly, the firman for the Karabakh Khanate. Karim Khan invited several other Azeri khans to Shiraz, allegedly to celebrate the victory. They were imprisoned; this event went down in history as the Shiraz imprisonment of the Azeri khans.<sup>38</sup>

Fairly soon, Panah Ali Khan died under strange circumstances. The last vizier of the Karabakh Khanate pointed out that “Panah Ali Khan did not remain long in the city of Shiraz... Finally his last hour came, and he committed his spirit to God in Shiraz. His body was brought to Karabakh with great honors and buried at his estate, now known as Aghdam. Allah, have mercy upon him!”<sup>39</sup>

Mirza Adigezal-bek wrote that Panah Ali Khan died “his own death” after he arrived in Shiraz and that “his remains were brought, with great honors, to Aghdam and buried at his own estate.”<sup>40</sup>

Mirza Yusif Nersesov in his *Tarixi-Safi* (A Truthful Story) also wrote that Panah Ali Khan, after falling ill in Shiraz, died a natural death. At the same time, he also offered a different version:

<sup>33</sup> See: *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>34</sup> See: E.B. Shukiur-zade, *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> The coins minted in Shusha and accepted outside the Karabakh Khanate were called panahbadi, that is, “from Panahbad.”

<sup>36</sup> Mirza Jamal Javanshir of Karabakh, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-71.

<sup>37</sup> A.-Q. Bakikhanov, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

<sup>38</sup> See: Mirza Jamal Javanshir of Karabakh, *op. cit.*, p. 76; E.B. Shukiur-zade, *op. cit.*

<sup>39</sup> Mirza Jamal Javanshir of Karabakh, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>40</sup> Mirza Adigezal-bek, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

in an effort to get out of Shiraz, Panah Ali Khan feigned death, while Karim Khan, who guessed what had happened, ordered that he be murdered, embalmed, and sent with honors to Karabakh.<sup>41</sup>

A.-Q. Bakikhanov described Panah Ali Khan as a “courageous and enterprising emir, very simple with people and very gifted.”<sup>42</sup>

## Ibrahim Khalil Khan: Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea

The Karabakh khans remained independent until the end of the 18th century, when Ibrahim Khalil Khan, the strongest among the Azeri khans, and his khanate became a target of Russian and Persian expansion.

After winning the 1768-1774 war with the Ottoman Empire and signing the highly favorable Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, Russia became even more involved in the Caucasus. In the 1780s, Russia was nursing a project of setting up a vassal Christian state in the Azeri lands, including the Karabakh Khanate.

To achieve this it was planned to remove Ibrahim Khalil Khan and transform his lands and the territory of Karadag, its neighbor, into “an Armenian region independent of all except Russia.” The task was entrusted to Lieutenant General Pavel Potemkin, who commanded the Russian army in the Northern Caucasus.<sup>43</sup> In the summer of 1783, at the fortress of Georgievsk, he signed a treaty on patronage and supreme power of the Russian Empire over the Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom.

To prevent similar developments, Ibrahim Khalil Khan contacted the Russian commander in the Caucasus: in April 1783, he informed Lieutenant General Potemkin that he was ready to accept Russian citizenship. In January 1784, he sent another messenger to confirm his previous readiness to become a subject of Russia, but he wanted to know whether Russia would interfere in his internal affairs.<sup>44</sup>

Empress Catherine the Great, who wanted the speediest possible resolution of the problem, wrote to Prince Grigory Potemkin in May 1784: “The letters of Ibrahim Khan are much politer than what the Turks or Persians have written to me. Will you please let me know who he is? How did he become a khan? Is he young or old, strong or weak, and whether the Persians are disposed toward him?”<sup>45</sup>

When talking to her representatives, Ibrahim Khalil Khan could no longer conceal his negative attitude toward the invitation to become a Russian subject. In September 1787, the troops of King Heraclius II and two battalions of chasseurs under Colonel Burnashev stationed in Eastern Georgia used the need to return the people of Qazax (subjects of Heraclius) who had fled to Karabakh as a pretext to approach Ganja and move further. In August 1787, when another Russian-Turkic War had broken out, Colonel Burnashev was recalled to the Caucasian line.<sup>46</sup>

After avoiding the Russian invasion in the 1780s, in 1795, Ibrahim Khalil Khan beat back the first Iranian raid led by Agha Mohammed Khan (Shah since 1796), the founder of the Qajar dynasty in Persia. Having failed to place the North Azeri khans under his power with threats, the new ruler of

<sup>41</sup> See: Mirzə Yusif Qarabaği, “Tarixi-Safi,” in: *Qarabağnamələr*, p. 27.

<sup>42</sup> A.-Q. Bakikhanov, op. cit., p. 159.

<sup>43</sup> See: P.G. Butkov, *Materialy dlia novoy istorii Kavkaza s 1722 po 1803 god*, Part II, St. Petersburg, 1869, pp. 142-143.

<sup>44</sup> See: Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted from: V.N. Leviatov, *Ocherki iz istorii Azerbaidzhana v XVIII veke*, Baku, 1948, pp. 148-149.

<sup>46</sup> See: Ibid., pp. 146-147.



Persia had no choice but to cross the Arax and lead his multi-thousand troops into Northern Azerbaijan. Late in July 1795, Agha Mohammed Shah dispatched his brother with troops to Erivan and entered the dominions of the khan of Karabakh.

The huge army led by the shah tried to capture Shusha for thirty-three days, after which the dispirited shah moved to Tiflis. The city was captured on 12 September, 1795 and plundered.<sup>47</sup>

The Russian government could not reconcile itself to the Persian achievements in Transcaucasia. As could be expected, in the spring of 1796, a Russian army led by General Valerian Zubov entered Daghestan and Azerbaijan and captured the largest cities—Derbent, Baku, Quba, Shemakha, and Ganja.

To remain independent, the North Azeri khans meandered between the strong powers: they demonstrated loyalty to Russia and Agha Mohammed Shah, while looking at Turkey for support.

Mirza Adigezal-bek wrote that when Ibrahim Khalil Khan learned that the Russian troops had arrived, he “dispatched his son Abul Fatkh Khan with numerous rich presents to the representatives of Honorable Great Sardar Count Valerian Zubov. He expressed his loyalty and gratitude and wrote soothing letters to the close associates of Her Majesty Empress Catherine to demonstrate his modesty (obedience). The sardar treated Abul Fatkh Khan with unlimited honors and benevolence and dispatched, through Derbent to Kizliar, a letter from the late Ibrahim Khan, who abided in heaven, to bring it to the High Steps of the House of Her Majesty Powerful Empress. Count Zubov sent many precious presents to late Ibrahim Khan through one of the princes ... and sent a staff encrusted with precious stones to learned Master Mollah Panah Vagif.”<sup>48</sup>

When quoting Ibrahim Khalil Khan’s letter to Zubov, in which he asked for Russia’s patronage, Russian historian Petr Butkov offered an apt comment: “Ibrahim Khan of Shusha, one of the main figures, behaved perfidiously on the sly” because “he was between two fires: he feared his enemy Agha Magomet Khan and feared losing his dominions to the Russians.”<sup>49</sup>

The death of Empress Catherine the Great on 6 November, 1796 put a stop to Russia’s pressure on the North Azeri khanates. Emperor Paul I pulled the troops back to the Caucasian line. Count Zubov asked for retirement and was granted permission; he was replaced with Count Ivan Gudovich as commander of troops on the Caucasian line.<sup>50</sup>

Having avoided Russia’s conquest, the North Azeri khans (Ibrahim Khalil Khan among others) were left to face Shah of Persia Agha Mohammed, who, in the spring of 1797, led an even larger army into the Karabakh Khanate. Aware that a starving and plundered Karabakh could no longer be able to defend Shusha, Ibrahim Khalil Khan, along with his closest associates, retreated from the fortress to seek refuge in the free communities (jamaats) of Jar-Belaken. “The people of Jar, Belaken, and Ilisa welcomed and honored him.”<sup>51</sup>

No wonder, Agha Mohammed Shah entered the practically abandoned city without a single shot being fired. Several days later, on 5 June, 1797, he was murdered by his courtiers.<sup>52</sup>

As soon as the news about his death reached Shusha, the Persian generals and nobles fled Shusha in panic. For some time, the fortress remained in the hands of Mohammed-bek, Ibrahim Khalil Khan’s nephew, who tried to remain in power by murdering those who supported his uncle, including Molla Panah Vagif.<sup>53</sup>

Ibrahim Khalil Khan, in turn, after hearing about the death of the Persian shah, first sent his second son Mekhti Quli Agha to Karabakh “to calm down the people and bring quiet and order; then

<sup>47</sup> See: *Ibid.*, pp. 171-173.

<sup>48</sup> Mirza Adigezal-bek, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>49</sup> P.G. Butkov, *op. cit.*, pp. 405-406.

<sup>50</sup> See: V.N. Leviatov, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-190.

<sup>51</sup> Mirza Jamal Javanshir of Karabakh, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>52</sup> See: V.N. Leviatov, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-190.

<sup>53</sup> See: *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193.

he dispatched his eldest son Mohammed Hasan Agha to Karabakh” and later “arrived in Karabakh [himself] to pick up the reins of government.”<sup>54</sup>

As soon as his uncle appeared in Karabakh, Mohammad-bek fled to Sheki, where he was captured by Mohammad Hasan Khan of Sheki and transferred to Mustafa Khan of Shemakha, who executed him to revenge the murder of his father.<sup>55</sup>

After a while, new Persian ruler Fatali Shah (1797-1834) “sent an ambassador to Ibrahim Khan to express his insistent wish that the khan obey him.” Ibrahim Khan deemed it “wise to establish good relations with Fatali Shah.” he had no choice but to betroth his daughter Agha begim Agha to Fatali Shah and even sent one of his sons, Abulfat Agha, to the court “where he was treated as one of his [Fatali Shah’s] noblest emirs.”<sup>56</sup>

## Russian Citizenship Accepted

In 1801, the murder of Russian Emperor Paul I changed the political situation in and around the Caucasus once more: from his very first days on the throne, Emperor Alexander I (1801-1825) never let the southern sector of Russia’s expansion out of his sight. In 1801, he issued a manifesto that made the Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom part of Russia. The Russian government used Eastern Georgia as a foothold from which to push into the North Azeri khanates, either peacefully or by force.

It was under Lieutenant General Prince Pavel Tsitsianov, who in 1802-1806 commanded the Russian troops stationed in Georgia, that Russia moved into the North Azeri lands. In March 1803, a unit of Major General Guliakov subdued the Jar-Belaken jamaats and plundered Belaken. A month later, in April 1803, the Jar elders and representatives of the Elisu Tatar Sultanate “neighboring and invariably friendly” toward the Jar-Belaken jamaats, were left with only one option: to sign a document in Tiflis that made them subjects of Russia.<sup>57</sup>

In November 1803, Prince Tsitsianov moved his troops into the Ganja Khanate; on 29 November, he presented an ultimatum to Jawad Khan of Ganja and demanded surrender. The khan refused; General Tsitsianov surrounded the fortress and took it by storm in the small hours of 3 January, 1804. Jawad Khan and one of his sons were among the 1,500 defenders killed; the Russians took 17,224 male and female prisoners (the figures quoted by Prince Tsitsianov). He wrote: “The geographic location of the Ganja fortress, which kept the rest of Azerbaijan in fear, makes it the most important acquisition for Russia.”<sup>58</sup>

After capturing the fortress and the khanate, Prince Tsitsianov dispatched threatening letters to the North Azeri khans. On 8 January, 1804, while in Ganja, he sent an ultimatum to Ibrahim Khalil Khan, which said in part: “The fortress was stormed and taken six days ago . . . which means that you, its closest neighbor, should have sought protection from the strongest, but you have not yet sent me a letter of greeting. Jawad Khan bathed his pride in blood and I do not regret him since God opposes the proud. . . I do hope, Your High Dignity, that you will not follow his example and will abide by the general rule that the weak bow to the strong and you do not expect to compete with me. I open the door to the high patronage of our Great and Elevated by God the Emperor and will look forward to meeting one of your confidential messengers or one of your children to announce to them the rules under which you will be received.”<sup>59</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Mirza Adigezal-bek, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

<sup>55</sup> See: V.N. Leviatov, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-193.

<sup>56</sup> Mirza Jamal Javanshir of Karabakh, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>57</sup> See: AKAK, Vol. II, pp. 683-684, Doc. 1383.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 588-594, 597, Doc. 1172, 1173, 1179, 1181, 1182, 1186, 1194.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 696, Doc. 1416.

This means that the Russian general threatened the Khan of Karabakh with the sad fate of Jawad Khan of Ganja if he refused to follow his advice. The threats were based on the fact that under the Treaty of Georgievsk, two Russian battalions were stationed in Eastern Georgia, while the Caucasian Corps of the Russian Army stood nearby, along the Caucasian Line.<sup>60</sup>

This triggered the First Russo-Persian war of 1804-1813: in May 1804, Persia demanded that Russia pull out from Transcaucasia; in June 1804, it started a war.<sup>61</sup>

Ibrahim Khalil Khan found himself in a quandary: Russia was pressing from the north, while Persia was advancing from the south. He had no choice but to seek the patronage of the Russian crown. In May 1804, he sent his representative to Prince Tsitsianov to ask for military support.<sup>62</sup>

In October 1804, Prince Tsitsianov dispatched Georgian noble Ninia Joraev to Ibrahim Khalil Khan to present the main points of the future treaty with Russia. In January 1805, after reaching a verbal agreement on military support, the prince instructed Major Dmitry Lisanevich of the 17th Regiment of Chasseurs to carry on the talks. He was expected to deliver a copy of the discussed treaty to Ibrahim Khalil Khan and decline any amendments; he was further instructed to invite the khan to Elisavetpol (Ganja) to sign the treaty; to reconnoiter the strategic situation of the Shusha fortress and persuade Mohammed Hasan Agha, elder son of Ibrahim Khalil Khan, "that he and his descendants will profit from what has been done."<sup>63</sup>

Simultaneously, the khan received a letter from Prince Tsitsianov, in which the Russian general guaranteed him personal safety, continued existence of the Karabakh Khanate, and transfer of power in it to the khan's descendants. He also congratulated the khan on the December 1804 victory of the Karabakh troops led by Mohammed Hasan Agha at Dizag over the Persian troops fighting under Abulfat Agha, another son of Ibrahim Khalil Khan.<sup>64</sup>

On 14 May, 1805, Ibrahim Khalil Khan of Karabakh, who accepted the terms of the treaty, signed it in the Russian camp on the shores of the Kurakchay River (in the Elizavetpol District). Under his Oath of Allegiance, Ibrahim Khan of Shusha and Karabakh declared his submission to the Russian Empire, along with his family, descendants, and property (the so-called Treaty of Kurakchay). General of Infantry Prince Tsitsianov signed the treaty on behalf of Emperor Alexander I.

Under the treaty, Alexander I "promised by His Imperial Majesty and in the name of his descendants that the khan and his heirs will keep all their dominions... Ibrahim Khan and the house of his heirs and descendants will remain, under all conditions, in the Shusha Khanate; they will preserve the power to administer it, mete out justice and punishment, distribute incomes produced by his estate, while 500 Russian military with guns will be stationed in the Shusha fortress."

Ibrahim Khalil Khan, in turn, accepted the power of the Russian Emperor together with the responsibility to pay the imperial treasury 8 thousand gold rubles every year; find houses for troops stationed in Shusha, supply them with food, and send his grandson as a hostage to Tiflis with a maintenance of 10 silver rubles a day. Under the treaty, Ibrahim Khalil Khan could no longer deal with third countries and lost the right of independent communication with the neighboring khanates.<sup>65</sup>

Under the imperial decree of 8 July, 1805, Ibrahim Khalil Khan was made Lieutenant General as Prince Tsitsianov had suggested; his two elder sons (Mohammed Hasan Agha and Mekhti Quli Agha) were made major generals, while his third son Hanlar Agha was promoted to colonel. Ibrahim Khalil Khan and his descendants were expected to receive a flag with the National Emblem of the Russian Empire and a saber encrusted with precious stones as a sign of their power. Prince Tsitsianov also suggested that Mohammed Hasan Agha, the heir apparent of the Karabakh Khanate,

<sup>60</sup> See: F.M. Abasov, *Karabakhskoe khanstvo*, Baku, 2007.

<sup>61</sup> See: AKAK, Vol. II, pp. 807-810, Doc. 1665, 1668.

<sup>62</sup> See: *Ibid.*, pp. 697-698, Doc. 1421.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 698-699, Doc. 1422, 1425.

<sup>64</sup> See: *Ibid.*, pp. 698-700. Doc. 1423, 1428, 1429.

<sup>65</sup> See: *Ibid.*, pp. 702-705, Doc. 1436.

should receive a gold medal encrusted with diamonds and an inscription "For Loyalty" in Russian and Farsi.<sup>66</sup>

On 17 August, 1805, the imperial decree on the approval of the Treaty of Kurakchay, the document confirming the title of the khan for Ibrahim Khalil Khan and his descendants, as well as imperial decree that made the khan of Karabakh and his sons generals and colonels, reached General Tsitsianov in Tiflis,<sup>67</sup> from where the papers were dispatched to Ibrahim Khalil Khan and his sons along with a letter of congratulations from Prince Tsitsianov (dated 1 October, 1805). The letters said that the flag with the National Emblem of the Russian Empire, the sword that "confirms the title of the khan," as well as the medal for Mohammed Hasan Agha were already being made in the cabinet of His Imperial Majesty.<sup>68</sup>

Submission of the strategically important Karabakh Khanate meant that subjugation of all khanates of Northern Azerbaijan was only a matter of time. After correctly assessing the importance of joining Karabakh to Russia, Prince Tsitsianov wrote to the emperor on 22 May, 1805 when the Treaty of Kurakchay had been signed that "its geographic location makes Karabakh the gate to Azerbaijan;" Karabakh brought Georgia closer to the Baku Khanate, which Prince Tsitsianov expected to capture by the fall of 1805.<sup>69</sup>

## Death of Ibrahim Khalil Khan and Investigation of His Murder

The Treaty of Kurakchay proved a bad shield against the active military actions of the First Russo-Persian War of 1804-1813. The Russian generals correctly expected that Persia would move its army concentrated on the opposite bank of the Arax against the Karabakh Khanate. This explains why as soon as the treaty was signed, six companies of the 17th Regiment of Chasseurs (not more than 300 military) with three guns and 30 Cossacks under Major Lisanevich were stationed in Shusha. In June 1805, Persian troops crossed the Arax and launched a military offensive on Karabakh.<sup>70</sup>

These developments divided the closest circle of old Ibrahim Khalil Khan into two camps. Those who supported the pro-Russian orientation sided with Mohammed Hasan Agha, the eldest son of Ibrahim Khalil Khan, the heir apparent under the Treaty of Kurakchay; on many occasions he led the Karabakh cavalry against the Persian troops. Those who looked toward Persia concentrated around Mirza Ali-bek, the old khan's cousin, and his nephew Fawzi-bek. They remained in contact with Abulfat Agha, another son of Ibrahim Khalil Khan, who commanded the forward detachments in Abbas Mirza's army.

In November 1805, the sudden death of Muhammed Hasan Agha deprived Russia of its main supporter among the retinue of the khan of Karabakh. In his report to Alexander I, Prince Tsitsianov described Major General Mohammed Hasan Agha as the emperor's "most loyal and most faithful slave," whose death deprived Prince Tsitsianov of "his firmest support in Karabakh, which he could always expect from him." At the same time, the Russians acquired another lever of pressure on Ibrahim Khalil Khan's closest circle through the choice and approval of a new heir. Under the Treaty of

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<sup>66</sup> See: AKAK, Vol. II, pp. 712-713, Doc. 1455, 1456.

<sup>67</sup> See: Ibid., pp. 718-719, Doc. 1471.

<sup>68</sup> See: Ibid., p. 722, Doc. 1477, 1478.

<sup>69</sup> See: Ibid., pp. 702-705, Doc. 1436.

<sup>70</sup> See: P.O. Bobrovskiy, *Istoria 13-go leyb-gvardeyskogo Erivanskogo Ego velichestva polka za 250 let*, Part III, St. Petersburg, 1893, p. 221.

Kurakchay, this post belonged to the eldest son of Major General Mohammed Hasan Agha. By late 1805, however, his second son, Major General Mekhti Quli Agha, had managed to gather a much stronger group of Karabakh beks.<sup>71</sup>

In December 1805, Mekhti Quli Agha earned another point by joining the troops under the command of Prince Tsitsianov in the Shirvan Khanate with his own 350-strong unit of Karabakh cavalry. On 25 December, 1805, Prince Tsitsianov signed a treaty with Mustafa Khan of Shirvan, which joined his khanate to Russia; on 9 January, he moved his troops to Baku. As soon as information about the intrigues of Abulfat Agha, Mirza Ali-bek, and Fawzi-bek in Karabakh reached Prince Tsitsianov, he sent the cavalry unit of Mekhti Quli Khan back to Shusha. In his letters to Ibrahim Khalil Khan, Mekhti Quli Khan, and Major Lisanevich, Prince Tsitsianov wrote that “the old khan was a weak ruler” and that he had instructed Mekhti Quli Khan to help his father “liquidate the traitors.”<sup>72</sup>

Fighting in Karabakh continued in the summer of 1806; earlier, on 8 February of the same year, General of Infantry Prince Pavel Tsitsianov, supreme commander in Georgia, was killed at the walls of the Baku Fortress; in the small hours of 27 May, 1806, Karabakh ruler Lieutenant General Ibrahim Khalil Khan Javanshir was killed outside Shusha.

After learning about the death of Prince Tsitsianov, Major General Petr Nesvetaev, who commanded the troops in Pambak in Azerbaijan, arrived in Tiflis where he wrote an order to appoint himself supreme commander of the troops in Transcaucasia. Lieutenant General Grigory Glazenap, who commanded the troops on the Caucasian Line, was appointed acting chief commander. He remained in Georgievsk, from where he issued orders to Major General Nesvetaev. On 2 June, 1806, General of Infantry Count Ivan Gudovich (1806-1809) was appointed supreme commander in Georgia and was expected in Tiflis no earlier than July or August 1806.<sup>73</sup>

By mid-May 1806, the Persians had brought a fairly sizable army to the southern borders of the Karabakh Khanate. Continued hunger in Shusha and the threat that the Persians might destroy the grain harvest forced Ibrahim Khalil Khan to deny Major Lisanevich and his unit food supplies, which the latter interpreted as a violation of the Treaty of Kurakchay.<sup>74</sup>

In May 1806, the conflict with the Shusha commandant drove Ibrahim Khalil Khan, along with several members of his family (his wife Tuba Khanym of Sheki, sons Colonel Hanlar Agha and Abbas Quli Agha, and daughter Soltanat Begim) and their retinue, out of Shusha under the pretext of “seeking fresh air” (the hot season had already begun). They settled 4 versts away from the fortress in a place the Russian sources called Mirza Ali Bekov Sengir.<sup>75</sup>

According to the Shusha elders who complained about Major Lisanevich and his actions, Ibrahim Khalil Khan left Shusha because he was dissatisfied with the orders of the Russian commander: “Majors Lisanevich and Joraev did not know how to deal with people; they treated us badly, oppressed the subjects, acted contrary to the conditions of the treaty, and interfered in local affairs outside their competence without consulting us. Saddened by their behavior, late Ibrahim Khan ordered a tent to be pitched outside the fortress and stayed there with one of his wives and three sons. All the other wives and children remained in the fortress; every two or three days the khan visited the fortress and then returned to the tent.”<sup>76</sup>

In September 1806, Lisanevich, by that time promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, wrote in his report to Major General Nesvetaev that neither he nor Major Joraev had ever said anything offensive enough to Ibrahim Khalil Khan to “make him leave the fortress with wife and children.” He insisted that by

<sup>71</sup> See: AKAK, Vol. II, pp. 725-726, Doc. 1485.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 727, Doc. 1491, 1492, 1493; P.O. Bobrovskiy, op. cit., pp. 241-242.

<sup>73</sup> See: P.O. Bobrovskiy, op. cit., p. 243.

<sup>74</sup> See: Ibid., p. 244.

<sup>75</sup> See: Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>76</sup> AKAK, Vol. III, Tiflis, 1869, pp. 340-341, Doc. 624.

the time the khan left the fortress, he was traitorously disposed. He left the capital where the chasseurs of Lisanevich were stationed to be able to maintain contacts with the Persian military, his son Abulfat Agha, and relatives Mirza Ali-bek and Fawzi-bek, who were expected to reach the khan in the small hours of 27 May with a two-thousand-strong Persian unit.<sup>77</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Lisanevich also pointed out that he had received this information from different sources: from secret agents sent abroad, from the melik of Jamshid, from the people living in Karabakh and, most important, from the khan's closet relatives and two contenders to the throne—Ibrahim Khalil Khan's son Mekhti Quli Agha and his grandson Jafar Quli Agha.

The latter never denied this; in a letter addressed to Count Gudovich, who commanded the Russian troops in Georgia he wrote: "...in the absence of Prince Tsitsianov, the enemies gained control over my very old grandfather, who succumbed to their arguments and flattering suggestions; I prefer to pass over in silence what he has done against his oath of allegiance—he was gradually pushed toward this, and this was the cause of his death. I can only tell you that I have done everything I could to keep him away from what happened, but failed. I informed the head of the Shusha garrison of these events."<sup>78</sup>

Iranian historians confirm that Ibrahim Khalil Khan and Persian Prince Abbas Mirza, heir apparent, exchanged letters. In *Rovzat-us-Safa*, its author Rza Quli Khan Idayat wrote that Ibrahim Khalil Khan sent a letter to Prince Abbas Mirza in Ardabil, in which he asked the prince "to dispatch his favorite and mighty young lion of a son Abulfat Khan Javanshir in front of his troops as soon as they reached Karabakh by the Kapan road so that he will be able to support his old father." According to the same source, Ibrahim Khalil Khan asked "to dispatch Farajollah Khan Shahsevan with another unit along the Chanagchay road in front of the victorious army."<sup>79</sup>

The Shusha elders explained that when the Persian troops were moving toward Karabakh, the khan, who did not want "to lose the harvest as had happened the year before" and afraid that the Persians would plunder his estate, "sent people to the Persians and stopped them before the Russian troops arrived."<sup>80</sup>

After learning that Ibrahim Khalil Khan had allegedly betrayed him, Lisanevich sent Mekhti Quli Agha and Jafar Quli Agha to him "to persuade him to end his contacts with the Persians and come back, together with the family, to Shusha." Ibrahim Khalil Khan refused to return to Shusha, which forced Major Lisanevich (who imagined that Ibrahim Khalil Khan would join forces with Abulfat Agha) to move, in the small hours of 27 May, together with 100 chasseurs of the 17th regiment to the place where Ibrahim Khalil Khan was camping with his family.

There are several widely differing stories about what happened at that night. Lieutenant Colonel Lisanevich reported to Major General Nesvetaev: "I ordered the attacking officers and privates not to open fire before the enemy did this and asked those who knew the language to shout to the enemy not to open fire but to surrender together with the khan. I attacked along a different road, not the one that led straight to the fortress where there were outposts. They did not open fire until they were a rifle shot away, at which point they started shouting and opened heavy fire. No matter how long I and others shouted to them to persuade them to cease fire and surrender, they continued firing and wounded one of the chasseurs, who died several days later. Seeing this impudence I ordered the chasseurs to open fire and attack; they bravely moved forward; very soon the traitors were pushed away from their advantageous position; the khan and several other people were killed by a rifle shot on spot; the chasseurs hunted others in the shrubbery and ravines; his son, daughter, and wife, who died of their

<sup>77</sup> See: AKAK, Vol. III, pp. 334-335. Doc. 610; P.O. Bobrovskiy, op. cit., p. 245.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., pp. 339-340. Doc. 621.

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Azeri from: Ə. Çingizoğlu, "İbrahimxəlil xan Sarıcalı-Cavanşir," *Soy: elmi-kütləvi dərgi*, Baku, No. 6 (26), 2009, pp. 47-53 (A. Chinghis-ogly, "İbrahim Khalil Khan Saryjalıy-Javanshir," *Soy scientific journal*, Baku, No. 6 (26), 2009, pp. 47-53).

<sup>80</sup> AKAK, Vol. III, pp. 340-341, Doc. 624.

injuries, had been obviously been wounded when they fled in the dark along with others and were not recognized. I treated the traitors' personal belongings that remained in the tents as the rightful spoils of war acquired through the use of force. There were few of them and I let my troops take them. The best had been removed by the servants as soon as the fighting began. Later Mekhti Agha found many of them."<sup>81</sup>

Iranian historian Mirza Mohammad Sadig Marwazi offered his own description of the slaughter organized by Lieutenant Colonel Lisanevich: "As soon as the Russians learned that Ibrahim Khalil Khan had asked Abbas Mirza for help, they subjugated Jafar Quli Khan to their power and at night entered the imaret of Ibrahim Khalil Khan when all the people were asleep." It should be said here that since Jafar Quli Agha, grandson of Ibrahim Khalil Khan, supported a pro-Russian orientation, the Iranian historians accused him of the death of his grandfather or even implied that he had been personally involved. The documents published by the Caucasian Archeographic Commission show that that night Jafar Quli Agha remained in Shusha. Mirza Mohammad Sadig Marwazi further writes: "As soon as the Russian soldiers saw the traitor next to them, they fell upon him and tore him to pieces. He cried out after the first blow and woke the rest. All women finally woke up. The Russians who saw this killed two small children of Ibrahim Khalil Khan with sabers. A Russian official pierced a baby with his sword and threw it out of the cradle into the center of the room."<sup>82</sup>

The Shusha elders who complained about Lieutenant Colonel Lisanevich offered their own version of the same event: "Major Lisanevich and the *milakhvar* (a title of Georgian nobles; the reference is to Major Joraev.—*E.I.*) unintentionally took troops, moved against the khan at midnight and killed first him, then his wife, who was the sister of Ali Khan (sister of Selim Khan of Sheki.—*E.I.*), one of his daughters and his son, as well as about 30 officials and relatives, who tried to hide (Colonel Hanlar Agha, son of Ibrahim Khalil Khan was the only survivor.—*E.I.*). They plundered and stole all the murdered people's belongings, their money, clothes, and jewelry, causing despair among us and our neighbors. If Ibrahim Khan indeed had gone against his duties as a subject of Your Majesty, he should have been captured, along with his family and relatives, and put in the fortress. They should have been kept there, while you, Your Majesty, should have been informed about this; no one could have opposed Your Majesty's fair decision."<sup>83</sup>

Selim Khan of Sheki, brother-in-law of Ibrahim Khalil Khan, was of the same opinion. In a letter to the Elizavetpol commandant, he wrote that Ibrahim Khalil Khan had entered into correspondence with the Persians because of Major Lisanevich's behavior: "Major Lisanevich, Milahvar, and melik of Karabakh Jimshid came into collusion among themselves and killed Ibrahim Khan and his servants; they captured my sister; they killed her too, even though they recognized her. Aggrieved by what Major Lisanevich was doing, the late khan did negotiate with the Persians, but he should have been treated according to his loyalty as a Russian subject: he surrendered the fortress without a fight and gave you foodstuffs and paid tribute, contrary to the Muslim ruler."<sup>84</sup>

The last vizier of the Karabakh Khanate Mirza Jamal Javanshir left us the following description of the same events: "In the same spring of 1806, the Qizilbash troops crossed the Arax into Karabakh once more. Secret agents were sent to Ibrahim Khan to calm him and assure him of Iranian support. The Karabakh troops and the chasseurs of Major Lisanevich were not enough to oppose this strong army. It could have easily trampled the ilats and villages of Karabakh, the threat increased by the fact that this was happening at harvest time. Ibrahim Khan decided to remain polite when dealing with the Qizilbashi and deemed it necessary to inform the Major, who firmly assured him that very soon the troops of the High State of Russia would arrive. In fact, they came too late. Meanwhile, since the

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pp. 334-335. Doc. 610; P.O. Bobrovskiy, op. cit., p. 245.

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Azeri from: *Çingizoğlu Ə. İbrahimxəlil xan Sarıcalı-Cavanşir*, pp. 47-53.

<sup>83</sup> AKAK, Vol. III, p. 341, Doc. 624.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 272, Doc. 491.

Qizilbash troops had come up as close to two parasangs from the fortress, Ibrahim Khan removed his family from Khanbagy to a locality close to the fortress. Ill-intentioned people stirred up the Major with their lies. At night he went to the place where the khan was staying; he and some of the members of his family and closest circle were murdered by the will of fate.”<sup>85</sup>

The document Supreme Commander in Georgia Count Ivan Gudovich sent to Minister of Land Forces Sergey Viazmitinov on 21 August, 1806 looks like indirect confirmation that Major Lisanevich was guilty of at least exceeding his powers: “According to the reports I received from commander of troops in Georgia Major General Nesvetaev, it became clear that Lieutenant Colonel Lisanevich of the 17th Regiment of the Chasseurs and Major Joraev, who acted with him, had attacked, together with a unit of chasseurs, and without any reason, Ibrahim Khan of Shusha (who had no troops at his side except 35 male and female servants), who was camping with one of his wives and three small children outside the fortress of Shusha in the orchards on a mountain without any kind of fortifications. He came out of the tent to meet the unit without firing a single shot. The chasseurs began firing and using their bayonets. Ibrahim Khan was killed; his property became the war spoils of the attackers.” Count Gudovich further referred to information supplied in a letter from Mekhti Quli Agha and a report by the Shusha elders, as well as confirmation supplied by the chief of the Trinity Musketeer Regiment Major General Petr Nebolsin. This forced Count Gudovich “to launch a formal investigation to show the relatives of Ibrahim Khan and the other resigned peoples that the laws and justice of His Imperial Majesty do not allow room for crime and invariably offered fair protection.”<sup>86</sup>

The investigation was entrusted to a commission chaired by Lisanevich’s superior, Chief of the 17th Regiment of Chasseurs Colonel Pavel Kariagin, who had become a legend during his lifetime. Lieutenant Colonel Kotliarevskiy of the same regiment and Major Reni of the Trinity Musketeer Regiment were appointed members of the commission.

Here was how Pavel Bobrovskiy, author of the well-known *Istoria 13-go Leib-Grenadersko Erivanskogo Ego Velichestva polka za 250 let* (History of 250 Years of the 13th His Majesty Erivan Grenadiers of the Life Guards Regiment), described the course of investigation: “Kariagin, who had barely recovered from the illness he suffered during the march and who had no time to rest properly, had to go to Shusha. Lisanevich accused Kariagin of being biased; he complained that he was slandered and asked to be transferred to Tiflis. Count Gudovich refused. It seems that Lieutenant Colonel Kotliarevskiy sided with Lisanevich and was very rude to the chief. **Apprehensive of violence** (emphasis mine.—*E.I.*), Kariagin had to leave Shusha for Elisavetpol. Count Gudovich, in turn, deemed it necessary to recall Kotliarevskiy to Tiflis and ordered Kariagin to assume the duties of the military commandant of Shusha, commander of the troops stationed in Karabakh, and continue the investigation. We can assume that Kariagin personally and from the military standpoint did not approve of what Lisanevich had done in Shusha. Lisanevich, whose treatment of Ibrahim Khalil Khan had been far from perfect, was indignant.”<sup>87</sup>

When writing the regiment’s history, Pavel Bobrovskiy relied on a large number of documents from the archives of the headquarters of the Caucasian Military District; he deemed it necessary, however, to drop the details that brought Colonel Kariagin to the conclusion that “what Lisanevich had done in Shusha was far from impeccable.”

General Bobrovskiy, likewise, dropped the details of the conflict between Kariagin and Lisanevich and Kotliarevskiy and offered the following by way of summing up: “These circumstances shook straightforward and noble Colonel Kariagin, whose health was strongly affected by the excessive efforts and incessant military marches. He fell ill with a fever that rapidly developed and brought him to his grave. He died on 7 May, 1807.”<sup>88</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Mirza Jamal Javanshir of Karabakh, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>86</sup> AKAK, Vol. III, pp. 331-332, Doc. 605.

<sup>87</sup> P.O. Bobrovskiy, op. cit., p. 252.

<sup>88</sup> Ibidem.



After his death it was discovered that “Lisanevich was not guilty of Ibrahim Khalil Khan’s violent death; ‘fully convinced’ of this, the supreme commander asked the Emperor to relieve Lisanevich, who had been diligent officer, of responsibility for this crime.”<sup>89</sup>

Supreme commander in Georgia General of Infantry Count Gudovich remained unimpressed by the results of the preliminary investigation by Major General Nebolsin, which confirmed that Lisanevich and Joraev had attacked Ibrahim Khalil Khan “without any reason” and by Nebolsin’s personal conviction that “their actions did not comply with their official duties and official ranks.”<sup>90</sup>

The supreme commander refused to take into account the results of the investigation carried out by late Colonel Kariagin, who was convinced that the way Lieutenant Colonel Lisanevich had treated Ibrahim Khalil Khan was neither impeccable nor irreproachable.<sup>91</sup>

The investigation of the murder of Ibrahim Khalil Khan of Karabakh was discontinued and the case was closed.

## Claimants to the Khan Throne and Confirmation of the New Khan of Karabakh

The death of Ibrahim Khalil Khan made Major General Mekhti Quli Agha and his nephew Jafar Quli Agha, who both had claims to the throne, irreconcilable rivals. Mirza Jamal Javanshir wrote that “without violating the rules of loyalty to the High State, they tried to pacify the disturbed population.”<sup>92</sup>

The day after the murder, Persian troops (which, according to Lisanevich, had to join the troops of late Ibrahim Khalil Khan) appeared at a distance of two versts from the fortress. After leaving Mekhti Quli Khan in Shusha, Major Lisanevich, at the head of 150 chasseurs and the cavalry of Jafar Quli Agha, moved toward the Persians; he forced them to retreat and brought back several people from the Karabakh villages who had followed the Persian detachment.<sup>93</sup>

Full-scale fighting between the Russian and Persian troops in Karabakh was resumed two weeks after the death of Ibrahim Khalil Khan. The Persians and their commander Prince Abbas Mirza camped in Agoglan. On 5 June, 1806, Chief of the Trinity Musketeer Regiment Major General Nebolsin (appointed by Major General Nesvetaev, who was acting commander of the troops in Transcaucasia, the Brigadier General of the Russian troops stationed in the North Azeri khanates) moved out of his camp on the Kurakchay toward Shusha. Not far from the Askeran Fortress, his regiment of 1,092 infantrymen, 113 Cossacks, and 8 guns was strengthened by 109 chasseurs of Major Lisanevich and the Karabakh infantry under Major General Mekhti Quli Khan. On 13 June, 1806, the Russian and much stronger Persian troops (about 4 thousand infantrymen and 16 thousand strong cavalry) clashed in the Khonashin Gorge. After defeating the much larger Persian army, Major General Nebolsin instructed Major Lisanevich to pursue the retreating enemy. On 16 June, Lisanevich with 900 chasseurs, a 250-strong Azeri cavalry unit, and 200 Armenian infantrymen under Jafar Quli Agha moved by forced march out of Shusha toward the Nakhchivan border. Four days later, he caught up with the Persian unit of Abulfat Agha, Mirza Ali-bek, and Fawzi-bek, defeated them and drove them beyond the Arax. In his report to Major General Nebolsin, Lisanevich pointed to “the outstanding bravery of Jafar Quli and his officers.”<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>90</sup> AKAK, Vol. III, p. 331, Doc. 604.

<sup>91</sup> See: P.O. Bobrovskiy, op. cit., p. 252.

<sup>92</sup> Mirza Jamal Javanshir of Karabakh, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>93</sup> See: AKAK, Vol. III, pp. 334-335, Doc. 610.

<sup>94</sup> P.O. Bobrovskiy, op. cit., pp. 246-248; Mirza Jamal Javanshir of Karabakh, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

A detailed description of what went on in the first weeks after the death of Ibrahim Khalil Khan explains why the Russian commanders in the Caucasus recommended Major General Mekhti Quli Agha, rather than his nephew and heir apparent to the Karabakh throne Jafar Quli Agha, as the next khan of Karabakh.

I have written above that until General of Infantry Count Gudovich, appointed on 2 June 1806 as supreme commander in Georgia, arrived in the Caucasus, Lieutenant General Glazenap, who commanded the Caucasian Line and was based in Georgievsk, had been acting supreme commander, while Major General Nesvetaev was acting commander of the troops in the Transcaucasia. He received reports on the hostilities from Major General Nebolsin, who praised Major General Mekhti Quli Agha's role in the Khonashin battle and recommended him as a "very devoted" person who "could not be involved in perfidy."<sup>95</sup>

Lieutenant General Glazenap wanted to know what Major General Nesvetaev thought about the best candidate for the throne of the murdered khan. In his report of 18 July, 1806, Nesvetaev wrote that Mekhti Quli Agha, son of Ibrahim Khalil Khan, had already been governing the khanate by that time before he had received "supreme permission."

It seems that Mekhti Quli Agha used the absence of his 19-year-old nephew from Shusha late in June 1806 (he and his beks were fighting with Lisanevich) to bring together his supporters; with Nebolsin's tacit support, he became the ruler of the khanate.

In the same report, Major General Nesvetaev went forth with a long list of services Mekhti Quli Agha had rendered to Major General Nebolsin and emphatically pointed to the "respect he earned among the people and the power he acquired from the best and loyal beks." The Russian general balanced his praise with mentioning the services of Jafar Quli Agha. It seems that his opinion about Mekhti Quli Agha predetermined the choice made by Lieutenant General Glazenap and Count Gudovich who, in August 1806, after being appointed Supreme Commander in Georgia, took over the Lieutenant General's duties.<sup>96</sup>

On 21 August, 1806, Count Gudovich, who had familiarized himself with the reports of Lieutenant General Glazenap as soon as he arrived in Georgievsk, wrote to Foreign Minister General of Infantry Baron Andrey Budberg that he recommended appointing Major General Mekhti Quli Agha as khan of Karabakh by a decree of His Majesty.<sup>97</sup>

Three months later, on 23 November, 1806, Count Gudovich informed Baron Budberg that his choice of Mekhti Quli Agha was based on the reports of Major General Nebolsin to Major General Nesvetaev and from Nesvetaev to Lieutenant General Glazenap and that he had received these documents earlier than he received Jafar Quli Agha in Tiflis.<sup>98</sup>

On 4 September, 1806, after receiving a letter from the foreign minister, Count Gudovich sent a letter from Georgievsk to Major General Mekhti Quli Agha in which he congratulated him on being appointed khan of Karabakh and Shusha by a decision of His Majesty; he also asked him to come to Tiflis so that he could take his oath of allegiance to the Emperor.<sup>99</sup>

On 11 November, 1806, Major General Mekhti Quli Khan arrived in Tiflis where he gave his oath of allegiance to Emperor Alexander I in the presence of Supreme Commander in Georgia General of Infantry Gudovich.<sup>100</sup>

At the end of the ceremony, Count Gudovich handed Mekhti Quli Khan a decree of His Imperial Majesty signed by Alexander I early in September 1806 that confirmed his new status. The document said: "We confer Our Imperial grace and benevolence on our beloved and loyal subject

<sup>95</sup> AKAK, Vol. III, pp. 344-345, Doc. 631.

<sup>96</sup> See: *Ibid.*, pp. 330-331. Doc. 602.

<sup>97</sup> See: *Ibid.*, p. 332. Doc. 606.

<sup>98</sup> See: *Ibid.*, pp. 339-340. Doc. 621.

<sup>99</sup> See: *Ibid.*, pp. 333-334. Doc. 609.

<sup>100</sup> See: *Ibid.*, p. 338. Doc. 618.

Major General, heir to the Karabakh land, Mekhti Quli Agha. By the deed of Our Imperial Majesty drawn up in the last 1805 year, we honor you and all the people living in the Karabakh land by accepting you as our loyal subjects and by offering you all the conditions that were accepted until the end of time by your late father and Our General of Infantry Prince Tsitsianov for the benefit of the people and your house. It is with deep regret that We learned about the incidence that led to the death of your father Ibrahim Khan. Today, being aware of your devotion to your duties in relation to Our Imperial Throne and especially of your numerous services to Our troops, We confirm you the Khan of Shusha and Karabakh in reward for the praiseworthy evidence of your loyalty and permit you to own this land under Our Supreme patronage and protection of the Russian Empire. You must swear allegiance to it as its subject and in recognition of Our power as the only power over you. We Most Graciously confer on you and all your descendants all the duties of the Karabakh Khanate, as well as the rights and advantages given to it and registered in writing and attached in full to this deed. When entrusting you with the right to rule the Karabakh people with gentleness and fairness, We are convinced that you and your descendants will remain steadfast in your loyalty to Our Imperial Throne and in the faithful performance of your duties as the duty of loyal subjects demands of you. Our Imperial deed with Our personal signature and with the State Seal attached is given to you in confidence and as a sign of Our Imperial grace toward you and the people of Karabakh.”<sup>101</sup>

On 7 January, 1807, Foreign Minister Baron Budberg informed Count Gudovich in a special document that the Emperor Alexander I had conferred on Major General Mekhti Quli Khan of Karabakh the symbols of a khan’s power—a flag with the Russian Imperial Emblem and a saber encrusted with precious stones—sent after the death of Prince Tsitsianov and made for the late Ibrahim Khalil Khan.<sup>102</sup>

## General Yermolov and Liquidation of the Khanate of Karabakh

The Russian Empire concluded its conquest of the North Azeri khanates and sultanates with the Treaty on Perpetual Peace and Friendship signed on 12 October, 1813; known as the Treaty of Gulistan (by the name of the Karabakh village in which it was signed), it ended the First Russo-Persian war.

Under Art 3, Persia recognized Russia’s sovereignty over “the Karabakh Khanate, the Ganja Khanate (which had been changed to the Elisavetpol Province), the Sheki, Shirvan, Derbent, Quba, Baku, and Talysh khanates, Dagestan, Georgia and the Shuragel Province, Imeretia, Guria, Mingrelia, and Abkhazia.”<sup>103</sup>

In 1816, Lieutenant General Alexey Yermolov (1816-1827) was appointed supreme commander in Georgia. Adolf Berge, Chairman of the Caucasian Archeographic Commission, had the following to say about Yermolov’s policy: “In relation to the Transcaucasian Muslim dominions, his policy was different from that of his predecessors. Being absolutely prejudiced against the power of khans and being convinced that it was as burdensome for the people and harmful for the government because of the khans’ contacts with Persia and Turkey, which were hostile toward us, as it was incompatible with Russia’s dignity, he posed himself the task of depriving them of their power and joining their dominions to the Empire. He was especially interested in *the Sheki, Shirvan, and Karabakh khanates*.”<sup>104</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp. 336-337. Doc. 613.

<sup>102</sup> See: Ibid., p. 330. Doc. 601; p. 342. Doc. 625.

<sup>103</sup> *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii* (Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire) PSZ RI, since 1649 (Collection I), Vol. XXXII, 1812-1815, St. Petersburg, 1830, pp. 641-645, No. 25.466.

<sup>104</sup> AKAK, Vol. VI, Part I, Tiflis, 1874, p. V.

In April 1817, General Yermolov was sent to Persia as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary; he came back in October 1817. Between these two dates Major General Alexander Kutuzov, who commanded the division stationed in Georgia, performed the duties of commander of the troops and administrator of the Caucasus.<sup>105</sup>

Earlier, in February 1817, in a report On the Need to Liquidate the Power of the Khans in the Provinces addressed to Emperor Alexander I General Yermolov described his methods of changing the system of administration in Sheki and Karabakh, which should be ruled “according to the same principles as the Elizavetpol District, formerly the Ganja Khanate.”<sup>106</sup>

General Yermolov mentioned Colonel Jafar Quli Agha, the heir to the throne and nephew of Major General Mekhti Quli Khan of Karabakh, who had no children and whose health, according to Yermolov, “was weak.” He also wrote that, after returning from Persia, Jafar Quli Agha was restored in his former rights of heir to the throne. This was done by General of Infantry Nikolay Rtishchev, Yermolov’s predecessor as supreme commander. General Yermolov asked Alexander I not to confirm the rights of Colonel Jafar Quli Agha as heir to the Karabakh throne and promised to find “plausible reasons to keep him away from the throne.”<sup>107</sup>

The document Foreign Minister of Russia Count Karl Nesselrode signed on 25 May, 1817 makes it abundantly clear that Emperor Alexander I liked the measures General Yermolov had suggested and allowed the supreme commander in Georgia to “implement them” as the general saw fit.<sup>108</sup>

In other words, the general was given free rein to find means and reasons to avoid the treaties entered with the Azeri khans.

General Yermolov immediately got down to work: he relied on Major General Grigory Madatov, commander of the military districts of the Karabakh, Sheki, and Shirvan khanates (so-called commander of the military districts of the Muslim Provinces) to implement his plans of liquidating the khans’ power.

The Sheki Khanate was the first victim. Major General Ismail Khan of Sheki died under suspicious circumstances in July 1819; he had no children, which means that his death “gave the Russians an opportunity to liquidate the Sheki Khanate once and for all.” In August 1820, the Caucasian policy of General Yermolov forced Lieutenant General Mustafa Khan of Shirvan to flee to Persia; in November 1822, Major General Mekhti Quli Khan of Karabakh followed in his footsteps.<sup>109</sup>

The khanates were transformed into provinces with Russian commandants as their heads; they took orders from the commander of the military districts organized in these territories,<sup>110</sup> who, in turn, obeyed the supreme commander in Georgia.

In his fundamental work about Ivan Paskevich, Lieutenant General Prince Alexander Shcherbatov wrote the following about what General Yermolov and his administration had been doing in the khanates of Northern Azerbaijan: “The means used to remove the khans were beneath the dignity of the Russian government; in practically every case, the disgusting crimes were concealed with the help of minor figures. The khan of Shirvan, for example, had to flee to Persia under the pressure of the ruler of three border khanates, Major General Prince Madatov. His rich treasury was stolen by Madatov and his aide, Commissioner Mokeev. A contemporary and official figure in the Caucasus left the following description: “When Mustafa Khan of Shirvan had been driven out of his rich dominions, the Armenians and Georgians, greedy for money, filled all the ruling positions; embezzlement and

<sup>105</sup> See: AKAK, Vol. VI, Part I, p. II.

<sup>106</sup> “Prilozheniia k zapiskam A.P. Yermolova, Part II, 1816-1827,” in: *Zapiski Alekseia Petrovicha Yermolova. S prilozheniiami. 1816-1827*, published by N.P. Yermolov, Part II, Moscow, 1868, pp. 37-39.

<sup>107</sup> AKAK, Vol. VI, Part I, p. 835. Doc. 1264.

<sup>108</sup> See: *Ibid.*, pp. 691-692, Doc. 1016.

<sup>109</sup> See: *Ibid.*, p. V.

<sup>110</sup> See: PSZRI, since 1649 (Collection I), Vol. XLIV, Part II, *Book of Personnel, Departments III and IV*, St. Petersburg, 1830, pp. 214-215, No. 29.735.

plunder became common in the khanate.” At the same time, the Talysh Khanate was systematically plundered by Russian official Major Ilyinskiy.<sup>111</sup> In Nukha (Sheki), Major General Prince Madatov, the central figure in the campaign to drive the khans away from their dominions, poisoned Khan Ismail, the last of the khans of Sheki; in Karabakh he forced Mekhti Quli Khan of Karabakh “to transfer to him the lands and villages that belonged to the Shah-Nazarovs.” After receiving them, Madatov persuaded the khan to flee to Persia and increased his dominions by moving 300 families from Karabakh to Shirvan.<sup>112</sup>

The “contemporary and official figure in the Caucasus” to whom Prince Shcherbatov referred was Nikolay Muravyev (1794-1866), a prominent Russian general. At the time of Yermolov’s administration, he commanded the 7th Rifleman Regiment; later, in 1854, as Adjutant General under the General of Infantry, he was appointed the Viceroy of the Caucasus.

His diaries were published under the title “Zapiski Nikolaia Nikolaevicha Muravyeva” in 1880s-1890s in *Russkiy arkhiv*, a journal of historical literary documentary collections, “from the original notebooks filled personally by Nikolay Muravyev and kept by his daughter Alexandra Nikolaevna Sokolova.”

This is a valuable source not only of political and military, but also of geographic, economic, and ethnographic information. The diaries give us a clear idea of General Yermolov and his cruel Caucasian policy, which stirred up the Caucasian War of 1817-1864, the longest in the history of the Russian Empire.

Here are several pertinent examples of how General Yermolov and his administration promoted Russia’s interests in the Caucasus described by Nikolay Muravyev as an eyewitness.

“On 11 January (1820.—*E.I.*), we reached Quba... There I also met Naumov’s brother, Major Leventsov, and Tabunshchikov, who were returning after completing, together with Prince Madatov, the campaign against the hapless villagers who had been plundered, hung, and cruelly liquidated. On 13 January, we left Quba; on 15 January, we reached Derbent... Major General Baron Vrede, the brigadier commander, greeted me with the same kindness and friendship I had enjoyed in Tiflis. His stories and those I heard from other people about Alexander Petrovich’s campaign cannot be recounted here: without direct information, I am reluctant to condemn what the twenty-thousand-strong corps was doing throughout the summer. I have the impression that it was plundering and ravaging nearby villages and beat off several armed attacks of the locals.”<sup>113</sup>

“On 17 January (1820.—*E.I.*), Alexey Petrovich himself arrived (in Derbent.—*E.I.*) ... very upset by the state of affairs, which took twenty hours of his day. Many tried to set him against the Tatars (*Azeris.—E.I.*), whom they called traitors because of personal disagreements. Every time, the Supreme Commander was indignant to the extent that he punished the hapless people with his own hands. The cruelty he demonstrated last year can hardly be compatible with his usual benevolence. One shudders to think about the fate of Ismail Khan of Sheki poisoned by Major General Madatov.”<sup>114</sup>

<sup>111</sup> See: “Zapiski grafa Ivana Osipovicha Simonicha,” to which Prince Shcherbatov referred when describing what Major Ilyinskiy had been doing, were kept in the Military Research Archives of the Main Headquarters and published in *Kavkazskiy sbornik*, Vol. 22, 1901, pp. 2-25 (under the title “Persidskaia voyna. Kampania 1826 goda, iz zapisok grafa Simonicha”). This military and political figure of the first half of the 19th century left us the following description: “The Talysh Khan betrayed his oath to us out of fear of sharing the sad fate of his neighbors and, mostly, because of insults by the Lenkoran commander (Major Ilyinskiy.—*E.I.*). This official, unworthy of his uniform, was later punished, but the very fact that he had been appointed stigmatized General Yermolov’s administration.”

<sup>112</sup> A.P. Shcherbatov, *General Field Marshal Prince Paskevich. Ego zhizn i deiatel'nost*, Vol. II, *August 1826-October 1827*, St. Petersburg, 1890, pp. 28-30.

<sup>113</sup> “Zapiski Nikolaia Nikolaevicha Muravyeva-Karskogo. 1820 god,” in: *Russkiy arkhiv. Istoriko-literaturny sbornik*, Issue 11, 1887, Moscow, pp. 396-397.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 397.

"I spent the evening of 31 January (1820.—*E.I.*) at Baron Vrede's, who told me about the cruelties and tortures that Alexey Petrovich had used against innocent people while staying in Derbent."<sup>115</sup>

"On 12 April (1821.—*E.I.*), Prince Madatov, who was traveling from Nukha to Shirvan, caught up with me... There we found Makaev, commander of the Shirvan region, an uncouth, uneducated, and illiterate Georgian, who remains in his post by fair means or foul. After Mustafa Khan of Shirvan was driven out of his rich dominions, Armenians and Georgians, greedy for money, filled all the ruling positions; embezzlement and plunder became common in the khanate."<sup>116</sup>

"On 1-2 January (1822.—*E.I.*), I stayed in Nukha in the palace of the former khan who had been traitorously poisoned by Prince Madatov... Starkov (Lieutenant Colonel, commandant of Shirvan after Major Makaev and Lieutenant General Vysotskiy.—*E.I.*) told, among other things, that Major Makaev, commandant in the Shirvan Khanate, had died. The money of Mustafa Khan, which the khan was reported to have taken abroad, was found in Makaev's home in Tiflis; there are rumors that Prince Madatov was also involved. There are no doubts that the khan was robbed, his money hidden, and the treasury people tricked; the government here appoints all sorts of people to these posts... I cannot say whether Madatov was guilty or not; it seems that as a friend of Makaev, he was guilty. If he was guilty in this case too, he will correct it because he knows quite well that Alexey Petrovich, after presenting him to the Emperor in flattering terms and helping him to acquire awards and wealth, cannot go against his previous opinions all of a sudden. It's very hard to sort things out; they are all despicable creatures. Some people say Makaev was poisoned: they like to talk about horrible things here."<sup>117</sup>

"Mekhti Quli Khan of Karabakh fled, or was forced to flee, in the summer of 1822 (in fact, in November 1822.—*E.I.*) by the efforts of the government, which wanted to seize the khanate... In an effort to remain in the khanate, he promptly transferred all the land and villages that belonged to Shah-Nazarovs to Madatov in the hope of gaining his patronage. As soon as he received them, Madatov immediately pledged to persuade him to flee in the same way as happened with the khan of Shirvan. Mekhti Quli Khan fled: he feared that he would be taken to Russia on false accusations; Madatov, whom he had helped so much, was nothing but an instrument of the government, in the same way as he acted when driving the khan of Shirvan out of his khanate and poisoning the khan of Nukha."<sup>118</sup>

Let's have a look at how General Yermolov's administration and "Prince" Madatov in particular managed to force Mekhti Quli Khan of Karabakh to leave his dominions and flee to Persia.

It should be said that at first General Yermolov, after returning from his mission in Persia, did not want to evict Mekhti Quli Khan—he wanted to take him to Russia. In July 1818, he wrote about his plans to Foreign Minister Count Nesselrode: "If the external situation is favorable, I will send this khan and his family to Russia."<sup>119</sup>

Since 1817, Russian officials in the Caucasus actively exchanged letters with the Cabinet of Ministers and Mekhti Quli Khan in an effort to justify what was called a present to General Madatov (consisting of several landed estates in Karabakh) to receive imperial permission to these lands and falsify General Madatov's origin from "influential Karabakh families." Finally, on 21 April, 1821, Alexander I permitted "Prince Madatov to enter into hereditary possession" of the lands "offered him by Mekhti Quli Khan."<sup>120</sup>

<sup>115</sup> "Zapiski Nikolaia Nikolaevicha Muravyeva-Karskogo. 1820 god," p. 400.

<sup>116</sup> "Zapiski Nikolaia Nikolaevicha Muravyeva-Karskogo. 1821 god," in: *Russkiy arkhiv. Istoriko-literaturny sbornik*, Issue 1, 1888, Moscow, pp. 81-82.

<sup>117</sup> "Zapiski Nikolaia Nikolaevicha Muravyeva-Karskogo. Dekabr 1821-May 1822," in: *Russkiy arkhiv. Istoriko-literaturny sbornik*, Issue 5, 1888, Moscow, p. 100.

<sup>118</sup> "Zapiski Nikolaia Nikolaevicha Muravyeva-Karskogo. 1822 i 1823 gody," in: *Russkiy arkhiv. Istoriko-literaturny sbornik*, Issue 7, 1887, Moscow, pp. 350-352.

<sup>119</sup> AKAK, Vol. VI, Part II, Tiflis, 1875, pp. 191-193, Doc. 361.

<sup>120</sup> AKAK, Vol. VI, Part I, p. 842. Doc. 1279.

It was rumored, at the same time, that Mekhti Quli Khan planned to flee to Persia. General Yermolov was part of the campaign. On 12 October, 1820, he wrote to Mekhti Quli Khan: "I received a letter from Tabriz that your ill-wishers want to do harm to you. Recently, they started saying that you want to abandon your estates and move to Persia."<sup>121</sup> In the same letter, General Yermolov assured the khan of Karabakh of his friendship and wrote that he did not believe the rumors. We can surmise, nevertheless, that the supreme commander merely passed the desirable for the real or even tried to push the khan into action. "I ridiculed these stupid rumors," Yermolov went on to say, "and treated them as the invention of two fugitives—jenka Khambutay and former khan Mustafa (Surkhay Khan of Gazikumukh and Mustafa Khan of Shirvan.—*E.I.*). Intending to conceal their base treachery, they are trying to prove that they left the lands because of displeasure and that you should leave Russia for the same reason."<sup>122</sup>

A little later General Yermolov drew attention to himself again; this allowed Hierarch Nerses to "count all the Karabakh Armenians." Mekhti Quli Khan was very amazed: if Yermolov wanted to acquire this information, he should have invited an official. The khan deemed it necessary to point out that both the Azeris and the Armenians should be counted together because "they all live in the same domain."

In July 1822, this answer forced General Veliaminov to write to Hierarch Nerses to postpone the population census until "winter, a time more suitable for this sort of activity". This clarifies everything that happened to the khan of Karabakh.<sup>123</sup>

Here is what Raffi, an Armenian author, wrote about this: "...it was decided to use the khan's state of health to remove him from Karabakh, as long as the documents received from him remained valid. Mekhti Khan, a fairly timid man, was intimidated from all sides: it was said that the Russians wanted to murder him or exile him to Siberia, etc. It was said that Prince Madatov himself added to the khan's uncertainty."<sup>124</sup>

In November 1822, unknown people wounded Jafar Quli Agha, heir to the Karabakh throne, when he was returning home after "a talk at the card table with General Madatov."<sup>125</sup> We can only guess what subjects the commander of the military district discussed with his irreconcilable enemy and heir to the Karabakh khanate. Nikolay Muravyev, in his *Notes*, surmised that Jafar Quli Agha injured his hand himself to be able to spread rumors that it was Mekhti Quli Khan who had tried to murder him. "I, in turn, believe," wrote Muravyev, "this it was Madatov who instructed him to acquire a good reason to exile him to Russia and capture his khanate. I cannot understand how Madatov persuaded Jafar Quli Agha to remain silent about Madatov's advice; talking to me he insisted that it was the khan's servants who wounded him when he tried to run away."<sup>126</sup> Jafar Quli Khan not only feared General Madatov, he remained silent probably because the general had promised him the Karabakh throne once Mekhti Quli Khan escaped.

Mekhti Quli Khan, in turn, was firmly convinced that the attack had been organized to accuse him of a crime against his nephew. Finally, the supreme commander in Georgia, acting through General Madatov, realized his initial intention: on 21 November, 1822, frightened by the provocation and threats, Mekhti Quli Khan, accompanied by several nukers (guards), fled abroad, leaving his family behind. Significantly, General Madatov, who had not bothered to find out why the khan had fled the khanate, announced the same day that "the khan has fled Karabakh and will never come back" and

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 840. Doc. 1274.

<sup>122</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>123</sup> See: E. Mamedli, "Khronika trekhvekovoy istorii rossiysko-azerbaidzhanskikh otnosheniy. Kak byla presechena khanskaia vlast v Karabakhe," *Azerros* newspaper, No. 4 (80), 20 February-3 March, 2006, p. 13.

<sup>124</sup> Raffi, "*Melikstva Khamsy*"—*klassicheskiy trud po istorii Artsakh-Karabakha (1600-1827)*, Transl. from the Armenian by L.M. Kazarian, Yerevan, 1991.

<sup>125</sup> AKAK, Vol. VII, Tiflis, 1878, pp. 456-457, Doc. 405.

<sup>126</sup> "Zapiski Nikolaia Nikolaevicha Muravyeva-Karskogo. 1822 i 1823 gody," pp. 350-352.

hastened to inform civilian administrator in Georgia Lieutenant General Ivan Veliaminov about this. He sent him a document in which he assured his superiors of his readiness to compile an inventory of the khan's property and specifically pointed to the herd of horses preserved under his instructions issued to a Russian staff-officer on the eve of the khan's flight!!!<sup>127</sup>

Four days later, General Yermolov feigned surprise when told about Mekhti Quli Khan's flight. In his instructions to General Madatov, he offered the official version to be used every time an explanation of the flight was needed: "He could use any means to exonerate himself from all complaints about injustices and hope that the commanders, who never stopped paying him respects, would demonstrate lenience toward him. He could have demanded and himself used the strictest of measures designed to find those guilty of the attempt on the life of Colonel Jafar Quli Agha if he was innocent of it. This means that I cannot ignore the accusations against him in this latter case."<sup>128</sup>

On 27 November, 1822, General Yermolov wrote to Colonel Jafar Quli Agha that he "was extremely surprised and indignant when he learned about his wound" and instructed General Madatov "to carefully investigate the incident and find those guilty of this coup so that they should be tried according to the laws."<sup>129</sup> This means that the organizer of the crime was instructed to investigate it!

General Yermolov's statement to the people of the Karabakh Khanate was probably written in advance: "It was with great amazement that I learned about the treachery and flight to Persia of Mekhti Quli Khan of Karabakh." Under the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca of 1806, it was Colonel Jafar Quli Agha who should have become the next khan of Karabakh, but General Yermolov announced that the power of the khan was liquidated and the khanate would be transferred to direct Russian rule. General Yermolov did not spare words to assure the people of the former khanate that their property would remain intact, but "those involved in the treachery of the fugitive khan and those bold enough to enter into secret communication with him will be persecuted."<sup>130</sup>

On 14 December, 1822, that is, two weeks later, General Yermolov finally informed the emperor and reported that the Karabakh Khanate had been transferred to Russia's direct rule.<sup>131</sup>

Several years later, on 21 June, 1827, Mekhti Quli Khan described the events in a letter to Major General Prince Ivan Abkhazov, who had replaced General Madatov as commander of the military district of the Muslim Provinces.

He wrote: "When General Yermolov was appointed here as supreme commander in 1816, I fulfilled everything what was required of me according to my duty. At that time, Madatov was also close to Yermolov. During the few days I spent in their company, I was asked to cede Karabakh to the Emperor... Then General Madatov came to my place to say: 'They want to take your district and even the khanate from you; if you side with me and cede some of your dominions and subjects to me, I will preserve your district and your khanate for you, and I am ready to give a corresponding document.' They brought the Bible, on which he vowed in front of several people, and signed the paper I now have in my possession. It said that in future he would not act against me and would prevent any harm done to me, even if coming from Yermolov himself. After pronouncing this oath, he took villages, plough land, summer and winter pastures, leased farms, cash, and other belongings from me.

"Some time later, General Yermolov departed for Persia, while General Kutuzov demanded an explanation from me about Madatov's princely title. He also wanted to know whether I had given him the villages of my free will, or had they been taken from me by force, or had they been in his possession since earlier times? Madatov came from very simple Armenians of Karabakh (his father Georgy paid taxes and was, therefore, from the lower class; he was not even the head of his village, but a

<sup>127</sup> AKAK, Vol. VI, Part I, pp. 848-849, Doc. 1293.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 849. Doc. 1294.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., pp. 849-850. Doc. 1296.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 850. Doc. 1299.

<sup>131</sup> See: Ibid., pp. 850-851. Doc. 1301.



common peasant, so he could not possess either land or people). Being afraid of him, I answered that I had given him these villages not because of his princely dignity, but because he was a general of His Imperial Majesty. Kutuzov wrote to me for the second time to say that there were many generals at the service of His Imperial Majesty and that if I gave each and everyone so many villages I would be left with nothing. When Yermolov returned from Persia, it turned out that Kutuzov, who had guessed rightly, instructed me to take my villages and other possessions back from Madatov, and I did this. Soon after that General Kutuzov died.

“When Yermolov sent me another letter written in his own hand and translated by Mirza Jana Madatov (Yermolov’s interpreter), in which he ordered me to return the villages to Madatov... I had to obey the supreme commander and gave the paper to Madatov for the second time. After receiving it and secretly conferring with Yermolov, Madatov asked me to send the Emperor the paper under which I transferred the villages and other possessions to him. Some time later, he came back to announce that His Majesty had confirmed my paper, but that the villages and other places transferred to him were not enough and that I should include in the paper other places, of which no one would learn, and that this would be in his favor. This was why I added other villages, places, and camps to the paper. For several years, I paid him 500 *chervontsy*, the taxes that should have been paid by these villages. He gathered this money, or even more, from the villages and built himself an excellent house in Tiflis; he also took workers and beasts of burden to build a house in Chanakhchi. I was too frightened to say anything about this to anyone... Later, he asked me to give him a paper confirming that Yermolov’s sons Bakhtiar and Allah Yar were the sons of Ibrahim Khan. I refused and he, very angry, left for Tiflis. Upon his return, he banned all contacts with me and gathered all the officials in the fortress to order that I be kept out of all the affairs... He relied on all sorts of tricks and rumors to force me to flee from Karabakh, but I did nothing of the sort... Finally he arrested Captain Rustem-bek, made an inventory of his house, and took his real estate and all other property away from him.

“At a loss, I asked him to send me his uncle Petrus, and he did this... ‘He said: You have been deprived of your khanate and if you want to remain here you will be arrested’... I decided to go to Tiflis, no matter what, to tell everything in detail; all of a sudden I learned that Colonel Jafar Quli Agha had been wounded with a bullet. Madatov immediately announced that I had done this out of hatred; he sent people who captured and brought him two of my servants who were arrested without investigation. This made me wonder about my own fate; I decided to go to Terter in the hope of finding several people there who would accompany me to Tiflis to explain my situation. Melik Vani was dispatched with an order not to let me reach Tiflis, but drive me away from Karabakh. He caught up with me and, being frightened, I moved to Erivan. In fact, I should not have left Karabakh, but I might have been wounded by a bullet in the same way as Jafar Quli Agha, so I went to Erivan in the hope of saving my life... Meanwhile, at that time, there was peace between Persia and Russia, so I fled to Persia for my life; I expected that sooner or later my oppressors would be removed from my land... Today, thanks to Allah, a new supreme commander endowed with benevolence, justice, and courage has arrived, therefore I pray that my request be delivered to the supreme commander as promptly as possible so that he can lay it at the feet of my Great Emperor.”<sup>132</sup>

“The strictest possible investigation” of the attempt on the life of Colonel Jafar Quli Agha was carried out by General Madatov. General Yermolov wrote that “it was completed and clearly demonstrated that the Khan was not involved; many of my best people, on the contrary, came to the conclusion that Jafar Quli Agha had done this himself with the intention of compromising the Khan, so that he would be punished, thus permitting the first to ascend to the throne in his place.”<sup>133</sup>

<sup>132</sup> AKAK, Vol. VII, pp. 458-459, Doc. 406.

<sup>133</sup> “Zapiski generala Yermolova vo vremia upravleniia Gruziiy,” in: *Zapiski Alekseia Petrovicha Yermolova. Sprilozheniia. 1816-1827*, pp. 138-140.

The results of General Madatov's investigation proved to be extremely suitable for Yermolov's purposes: the supreme commander in Georgia was "forced" to "remove" Colonel Jafar Quli Agha to Russia. On 26 December, 1822, former heir apparent to the Karabakh throne and his son Kerim were exiled to Simbirsk "for the sake of peace in Karabakh."<sup>134</sup>

So the power of the khans in Karabakh was liquidated late in 1822.

## Incomes of the Former Khans of Karabakh Transferred to Russia's Treasury

In January 1923, supreme commander in Georgia General of Infantry Yermolov ordered a description of the newly formed Karabakh Province to identify the incomes of the former Karabakh Khanate, up to and including the leased incomes.<sup>135</sup> From that time on, taxes were sent to the treasury together with the incomes produced by the landed property of the members of the khan family and other landlords of Karabakh.<sup>136</sup>

The landed property of fugitive Mekhti Quli Khan, including the "land under the fortress of Shusha... because it belonged as private property to the ruling Khans of Karabakh, having being bought by Ibrahim Khan from private owners,"<sup>137</sup> as well as the property of former heir to the Karabakh throne Jafar Quli Agha exiled to Russia and the property of all the other members of the khan family and the Karabakh beks who had followed Mekhti Quli Khan to Persia, was transferred to the treasury of the Russian Empire.

On 2 May, 1823, Councilor of State Mogilevskiy and Colonel Yermolov 2nd, earlier entrusted with the task of supplying an inventory of the incomes of the Karabakh Province, handed a report to General Yermolov with an attachment of "35 registers which contained descriptions of Shusha and the magals; it was the property of the treasury and private property. The documents supplied detailed information about the population of Karabakh and all the types of taxes that had been gathered in favor of Mekhti Quli Khan, who had fled abroad, and that would be gathered in favor of His Imperial Majesty."<sup>138</sup>

The thirty-five documents were summed up to form a single final document that listed the incomes of all magals of the Karabakh Province, as well as the incomes produced by private landed properties and by leased taxes that had previously enriched the Karabakh khan. Starting in 1823, these incomes went to the Russian treasury. Significantly, according to the 1823 figures, Major General Madatov was the largest landowner in Karabakh. (As soon as General Yermolov, Madatov's patron, was recalled from the Caucasus, the commander of the military district was first removed from his civilian and then his military posts; in 1829, an investigatory commission confirmed that his landed estate and a house in Tiflis had been acquired illegally; they were confiscated.<sup>139</sup>)

According to the final document drawn up by Councilor of State Mogilevskiy and Colonel Yermolov 2nd, until 1822, the treasury of the Karabakh khan received 9,506.5 gold chervontsy (in-

<sup>134</sup> AKAK, Vol. VI, Part I, pp. 851-852, Doc. 1302.

<sup>135</sup> Leased articles—a system of tax collection and other state incomes and also the right to sell certain commodities (salt, silk, etc.), under which the state leases the right of collection to private persons.

<sup>136</sup> See: AKAK, Vol. VI, Part I, p. 852, Doc. 1304.

<sup>137</sup> *Opisanie Karabaksskoy provintsii, sostavlennoe v 1823 godu po rasporyazheniyu glavnoupravlyayushchego v Gruzii Yermolova deystvitelnym statskim sovetnikom Mogilevskim i polkovnikom Yermolovym 2-m*, Tiflis, 1866.

<sup>138</sup> See: AKAK, Vol. VI, Part I, pp. 856-858, Doc. 1308.

<sup>139</sup> See: S.A. Akhmedov, "Materialy Shushinskoy i Bakinskoy bekskikh comissiy v Gosudarstvennom istoricheskom arkhive Azerbaidzhanskoy Respubliki," in: *Izvestia Azerbajjanskogo istoriko-rodoslovnogo obshchestva*, Issue 6, Baku, 2007, pp. 118-124.

cluding 8,000 paid to the Russian government in the form of annual tribute), 185,592.88 local silver coins (panabadi), which amounted to about 30,364.10 silver rubles, as well as 4,987 stacks of firewood every year from the magals and private landed possessions. The khan's treasury received 49,725 panabadi and 10,893.10 silver rubles in leased taxes.<sup>140</sup>

On 1 August, 1823, under General Yermolov's order, the *zerrab khane* item was removed from among the leased taxes items: the contract with the leaseholder had expired and minting of local coins had been discontinued.<sup>141</sup> It should be said that the coins of the Karabakh Khanate hold a special place in Azeri numismatics. Silver coins known as panabadi, that is, from Panakhabad, were minted in Panakhabad (Shusha), the capital of the Karabakh Khanate. This is the only coin in the history of coin minting in Azerbaijan named after the city where it was minted. The earliest coins known so far are dated to 1787; judging by other coins, the panabadi were minted until 1822, when the khanate was liquidated.<sup>142</sup> One panabadi was equal to about 15 Russian silver kopeks.

## Conclusion

In 1827, Mekhti Quli Khan was allowed to return to Karabakh; two years later, in 1829, his nephew Jafar Quli Agha also returned; they were returned the landed possessions taken away from them under General Yermolov. Other members of the khan family remained in possession of their estates, albeit not as vast as those of the former khan and the former heir to the khanate. In fact, in the 19th century, the members of the khan family became fairly large Caucasian landowners.

In the latter half of the 19th century, the descendants of the Karabakh khans in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union mainly used a Russified version of their clan name: either **Javanshir** or **Javanshirov**. In May 1870, Second Captain of Cavalry Ahmed-bek Javanshir, author of a political history of the Karabakh Khanate, sent a request to the Shusha bek commission, in which he wrote that the name Javanshir belonged to the founder of the clan of the Karabakh Khanate Panah Ali Khan and all his descendants; he also pointed out that the name was confirmed in Russia by the Governing Senate "on the strength of the firman presented to it and issued by Shah of Persia Karim Khan Zand to Mehrali bek, one of our common ancestors, appointed Beglyarbek, that is, ruler of the Karabakh Khanate." The reference is to the younger son of Panah Ali Khan, who ruled the Karabakh Khanate during Panah Ali Khan's march on Urmia and while he was kept prisoner in Shiraz, of which I have written above. Ahmed-bek Javanshir wrote further: "This is confirmed by the inscriptions on the gravestones at the burial sites of many of my ancestors, which can still be seen in the cemetery in the village of Aghdam, by the documents issued by the shahs of Persia kept in the family, by Persian and Turkish historical books that described the events related to our ancestors, and, finally, by the fact that those relatives who descended directly from our common ancestor Panah Khan and who live in Persia bear this family name."<sup>143</sup>

Some of the members of the junior branch of the clan of the Karabakh khans had the names **Panakhkhanovs (Panakhanovs), Begbudovs, Saryjalinskies**, etc. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the descendants of Ibrahim Khalil Khan who lived in the Russian Empire were titled Agha, while the ancestors of his brother were called bek.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> See: AKAK, Vol. VI, Part I, pp. 856-858, Doc. 1308.

<sup>141</sup> See: Ibid., pp. 852-855. Doc. 1305.

<sup>142</sup> See: A. Rajabi, "Monetnoe delo Karabakhskogo khanstva," *IRS-Nasledie*, No. 35, 2008, pp. 12-13.

<sup>143</sup> See: The State Historical Archives of the Azerbaijan Republic (GIAAR), rec. gr. 69, inv. 1, f. 143 (Delo po prosheniyu Abas-beka i Aga-beka Jevanshirovyykh o prichislenii ikh roda k bekskomu sosloviiu. 5.04.1870-31.01.1873), sheets 6-9.

<sup>144</sup> See: Ibid., sheets 32-36rev.

On the other hand, the descendants of the khans of Karabakh, and other khan and bek families of Northern Azerbaijan for that matter, saved and used their local titles, but were never ranked on a par with the Russian hereditary nobles; they were accepted as nobles according to the posts and awards received during service to the empire.

All descendants of Ibrahim Khali Khan could be accepted as Russian nobles because they descended from a Lieutenant General in the Russian service; the descendants of his brothers had to earn nobility by personal services.

In 1843 Emperor Nicholas I ordered the draft of a project of personal rights of the highest Muslim social groups in Transcaucasia. In March 1843, a committee staffed by the region's highest officials was set up "to organize a privileged social estate among the Muslims of Transcaucasia." Under the draft, the highest Muslim social groups should have been divided according to the rules practiced in Russia—hereditary and personal nobility. Under the project, direct descendants of the last khans were to become princes and titled Excellencies; the other members of the highest social group were to be titled Your Honor and permitted to use all the other local titles they had been using before.

On 6 December, 1846, Emperor Nicholas I signed a decree that established the landed rights of the khans, sultans, meliks, agalars, and beks who, together, formed the highest Muslim social group in Transcaucasia and confirmed hereditary rights to the lands they owned when the Caucasus became part of the Russian Empire.

The same decree ordered that the personal rights of this social group be identified and, "if possible, adjusted to the rights of the Russian nobility."

In 1862, after completing the delimitation of landed possessions, the Council at the Caucasian Viceroy, transferred the file on personal rights to the Department of Court Affairs, which, in 1863, drafted instructions for four bek commissions—Tiflis, Erivan, Baku, and Shusha—to inform of and "identify the personal rights of the supreme social groups in the Muslim parts of Transcaucasia."

The bek commissions compiled lists of clans to be treated as hereditary or personal bek nobility and lists of the clans left outside the highest social group. These lists were studied in the Council at the Main Administration of the Caucasian Viceroy and the Council at the Supreme Civilian Administrator of the Caucasus. The following personal lists were compiled on the strength of the Councils' decision:

- (1) a list of the khan clans;
- (2) a summary list of the clans counted as belonging to the social groups of hereditary beks and clan agalars, which, as was expected, would acquire the rights of hereditary nobility of the Russian Empire; and
- (3) a summary list of clans that belonged to the social groups of personal beks who would acquire the rights of personal nobility.

These projects were never legally implemented by the Russian Empire.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> E.E. Ismailov, "Problema resheniia soslovnogo voprosa na Kavkaze i dopolnitelnye istochniki po istorii azerbaidzhanskikh bekskikh familiy," *Izvestia Azerbaidzhanskogo istoriko-rodoslovnogo obshchestva*, Issue 7, Baku, 2010, pp. 171-180; for more details about the bek commissions in Azerbaijan, see: E.E. Ismailov, "Bekskie komissii i proekt polozheniia o pravakh vysshego musulmanskogo soslov'ia Zakavkaz'ya," in: *Genealogicheskiy vestnik*, Issue 9, St. Petersburg, 2002, pp. 47-51; S.A. Akhmedov, "Materialy Shushinskoy i Balinskoy bekskikh komissiy v Gosudarstvennom istoricheskom arkhive Azerbaidzhanskoy Respubliki," *Izvestia AIRO*, Issue 6, Baku, 2007, pp. 118-124; R.M. Abramian, "Materialy Erivanskoy bekskoy komissii kak genealogicheskiy istochnik," *Izvestia AIRO*, Issue 6, Baku, 2007, pp. 125-133.