

Research Article

Studying the Role and Function of Iranian Armenians in the Iran-Russia Wars During the Qajar Period Based on the Orders of Matenadaran Documents

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Abstract

During the Qajar period, the Armenians of Iran, as a social group with their own characteristics, had a great influence on the political and economic developments of the country. This community, especially during the Iran-Russia wars, played a vital role due to its geographical location and trade relations. Armenians helped the Qajar government in the wars by creating extensive trade networks and providing financial resources. This research seeks to answer the following questions with a descriptive-analytical approach: 1- What was the role of the Armenians of Iran in providing financial and military resources for the Qajar government in the Iran-Russia wars and how did this role affect the course of the wars? 2- How have Armenians acted as mediators and political advisors in peace negotiations and agreements between Iran and Russia, and what impact have these interactions had on the social and political situation of Armenians in Iran? The findings of the study indicate that Iranian Armenians have acted as a key factor in strengthening the war fronts for the Qajar government by providing financial resources, goods, and manpower, which has had a positive impact on the course of the wars. Armenians, as mediators and political advisors in peace negotiations, have been able to help protect their interests and the Armenian community in Iran by using their mastery of different languages and cultures, and these interactions have led to the strengthening of their cultural and social identity.

Keywords

Armenians, Iran, Russia, Qajar, Matnadarar

1. Introduction

During the Qajar period, the Iran-Russia Wars, as one of the most important events in the contemporary history of Iran, had profound effects on the social, political, and economic structure of the country. In the meantime, the Armenians of Iran, as a religious and ethnic minority, played a special role in these wars. Given their geographical location and historical relations with Iran, the Armenians acted as intermediaries and

mediators in the relations between Iran and Russia. The Matenadaran documents, which are a collection of Armenian historical and cultural documents, provide valuable information about the role and function of this community in the Iran-Russia Wars. These documents show that the Armenians were active not only in the military arena, but also in the economic and diplomatic fields. As merchants and traders,

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they were able to provide the necessary financial resources to meet military needs and thus help the Qajar government. In addition, the Armenians also acted as translators and political advisors in some cases. Their proficiency in different languages and familiarity with different cultures enabled them to play an effective role in relations between the two countries. On the other hand, the presence of Armenians on the war fronts as soldiers is also notable; they fought bravely and selflessly alongside Iranian forces and made a significant contribution to the defense of Iran. In general, examining the role and function of Iranian Armenians in the Iran-Russia wars based on Matenadaran documents presents a comprehensive picture of the cultural, economic, and social interactions of this community with historical events. This study can help us to better understand the effects of these wars on Armenian society as well as their role in the developments in contemporary Iranian history.

2. Background

Until now, no independent and documented research has been written on the role and function of Iranian Armenians in the Iran-Russia wars during the Qajar period based on the orders of the Matenadaran documents, and case studies have been conducted on the role of Armenians in the Iran-Russia wars, including: In the field of political, social, and economic history of Armenia in the Middle Ages, the Persian documents of the archives of the Matenadaran manuscript repository in Yerevan provide very valuable information about Armenian life. The first attempts to scientifically examine these documents were made by Catholicos Simeon Yerevantsi (1763-1780), and their results are presented in one of his works called "Jamber". For the aforementioned study, only the collection of documents in the Etchmiadzin Church and several neighboring religious centers was available to the author. However, since then, with the gradual collection of many documents from other places, the collection of said documents has increased significantly in terms of volume and number. The most important of them, translated into Armenian and Russian, along with the original text of the documents, were published in Yerevan in two volumes with an introduction, commentary, and detailed footnotes by Hakob Papazian (1968). Also, other sources such as: Christine Gostikian (2021) *Faramin Farsi Matenadaran*, Ismail Rain (1977) *Iranian Armenians*, Sergey Minasyan (2001) *The Role of Armenians in the Iranian Army*, Sir Harford Jones (2007) *The Memoirs of Sir Harford Jones*, Hossein Abadian (2001) *The Iranian Narrative of the Iran-Russia Wars*, Norik Sarkisian (2012) *The Resettlement of Armenians in Iran by the Russian Government in 1828*, Ejmiadzin, Ali Asghar Shamim (2008), *Iran during the Qajar Dynasty*, Charles Issavi (2009) *The Economy of Iran in the Qajar Period* have been written based on documents and records in the context of the Iran-Russia Wars.

3. The Role of Armenians in the Iran-Russia Wars

Armenians had an effective presence in the Iranian army during the Qajar period. "In Agha Mohammad Khan's expedition to Transcaucasia, a large number of Armenians served in various departments, especially the artillery" [1]. Armenians also played a role in the political spheres of Iran. Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar sent the Armenian Satut Khan as his first ambassador to the London court. Fath Ali Shah Qajar looked favorably upon the Armenians [2]. Some important military positions were also given to Armenian soldiers. Davit Khan Saginian, who was "usually called Mayor Khan, was the head of the Isfahan army at that time. According to Darhohanian, "Mirzataqi Khan Farahani wanted to have an army of Armenian soldiers whose ranks ranged from the first to the last, and whose major generals were Armenians, so that they could come to the court and get to know the king according to their caste, and when injustice was committed, they could freely seek mercy from the king, and through intercession, they could quickly resolve the problems of their fellow believers. Amir Kabir involved Armenians in all important affairs of the country. The Iran-Russia wars during the reign of Fath Ali Shah ended with the signing of the two treaties of Golestan and Turkmanchai [3]. In the third chapter of the Treaty of Golestan, the Iranian king, in order to express his friendship and agreement with the Russian emperor, considered all the provinces of Karabakh and Ganja, the Khanates of Mokshi, Shirvan, Qaba, Darband, Baku, and every part of the provinces of Talesh that are actually in the possession of the Russian government, as well as all of Dagestan and Georgia up to the Caspian Sea, as special and belonging to the Russian imperial government [4]. In the third and fourth chapters of the Treaty of Turkmenchay, concessions were also given to the Russian government, and the sphere of influence of Iran in the Caucasus region was lost forever. The Shah of Iran, on behalf of himself and his successors, ceded to the Russian government the Khanate of Yerevan, which is located on both sides of the Aras River, as well as the Khanates of Nakhchivan and Yerevan. In order to prove his sincere friendship towards the Russian Emperor, he, by virtue of this chapter, on behalf of his heirs and successors, clearly and publicly acknowledges that the countries and islands located between the delimitation line of the last chapter and the spear of the Caucasus Mountains of the Caspian Sea, as well as the Bedouin peoples, etc., belong to the Russian government. Available documents show that in addition to Georgians such as Alexander Mirza, son of Erkele II Arakli Khan, who fought with great enthusiasm alongside Abbas Mirza against the Russians in all the wars between Iran and Russia, some Armenians were also pioneers in the battle against Russia. By issuing a decree in 1334, Fath Ali Shah appreciated the services of the Armenian Evakim and his brother in treating the wounded and their services to the Iranian government, and emphasized respecting their

dignity and status.¹ Abbas Mirza appreciated the Armenians' sacrifice in battle in numerous decrees and decrees, as well as by granting them a robe.² Annual payment of 15 Tomans as a lifetime allowance for Simon and her children on the date of Jumada al-Awwal 1228 AH.³ Determining the amount of Toman as the annual salary from the free cash tax for the property of the church advance on the date of Shaban 1241 AH.⁴ And awarding the Lion and Sun Order to Nikoloz Beg in Jumada al-Awwal 1228.⁵ Abbas Mirza paid special attention to the Armenians. In another decree dated Safar 1220 AH, he acknowledged the services of the Christian Qarabig and granted him the title of "Big Zadgi" and exempted him from paying taxes and civil duties.⁶ In these wars, Armenian soldiers fought in both the Iranian and Russian armies, but "the number of Armenian soldiers serving in the Iranian army was noticeably greater than their number in the Russian army"[5]. Meanwhile, the Church expresses its loyalty in the form of a petition and assistance to the foreign government. In a decree issued to Caliph Sarkis after the war between Iran and Russia during the time of Abbas Mirza and with the victory of Iran, he declared royal satisfaction with the actions of the church and complete submission to the Iranian government regarding the destruction of the Russian forces, which had fallen into the hands of the Iranian army with nine thousand defeated soldiers and six cannons, mortars, chariots and wagons. "May the Holy Sarkis know, may God praise him, at this time His Highness Muhammad Reza Sultan Chapar arrived from the saddle of the victory of His Majesty Sepehr Rifat, the Supreme Viceroy, and brought the good news of the conquest of the defeated Russia, that the Russians had decided to come to the church. On this side, His Majesty the Viceroy went to confront him with all his might. From the side of the fire of war and conflict, the grace of His Majesty Bari helped, Russia was defeated, and six cannons, mortars, chariots and wagons of Russia, obtained from the nine thousand soldiers, a small force, with a thousand misfortunes, threw themselves into the church, and that "They are also in trouble, and by God's grace, they will all be arrested today and tomorrow"[6].

4. The Role and Function of Echmiadzin in the Persian-Russian Wars

When the Russian army occupied Armenia in the first half of the 19th century, it prepared a map of Vagharshabad. In this map, the remains of the eastern wall of the city, a thousand

meters long, in the form of an earthen mound, the location of the churches, the Echmiadzin monastery, and the location of the village that Catholicos Simon Yervantsi had built to the north of the monastery are indicated. Bishop Hovhannes Shakhatonians also mentioned the wall and the remains of the eastern gate in his memoirs in 1840. Although Vagharshabad has been the religious center of Armenians all over the world for centuries, the number of churches built there is less than that of Yerevan before the terrible earthquake of 1679. Perhaps the reason is that the Catholicosate was located outside this place for ten centuries. During the reign of Karim Khan Zand, chaos had gripped northwestern Iran, and the khans of the region had each established an independent government. King Heraclius of Georgia seized this opportunity and attacked the Yerevan Khanate. He besieged the Yerevan fortress for four months. During this time, the Georgian troops plundered the village and the Echmiadzin monastery, and many of the villagers were forced to migrate to Bayezid and Kars [7]. During the last four periods of Iranian domination over this city, from the Safavid period to the early Qajar period, Vagharshabad was always the seat of the Catholicos, and Muslims avoided settling in this place. The village and the surrounding lands also belonged to the monastery by court decree, and the Catholicos administered the affairs of this area. Despite this, the khans of Yerevan always tried to bring it under their control. This demand was sometimes met with resistance from the Catholicos. One of these rulers was Mohammadguli Khan, whom the Catholicos Philippus Aghbaktsi had managed to prevent from interfering in the internal affairs of the monastery and the neighboring village. In retaliation, after the Catholicos' death in 1655, the khan did not allow him to be buried in the Ejmiatsin monastery and was forced to bury him in the Hripsimeh church. Apart from the khan of Yerevan, his agents also constantly oppressed the people of the village and the clergy of the monastery [8]. The book "Life of Harutun Araratyan from Vagharshabad", written at the end of the 18th century, describes this issue in detail. In May 1804, the Shah of Iran demanded that the Russian army immediately evacuate Georgia, Ganja and other khanates. Thus began the first stage of the Russo-Persian war, which lasted until 1813. In mid-July 1804, in a battle near Echmiadzin, the Russian army under the command of Tsitsianov defeated the Iranian army operating under the command of Abbas Mirza, the crown prince and governor of Azerbaijan. In 1805, the khanates of Sheki, Shirvan and Karabakh sided with the Russians; the Russian army immediately occupied their lands [9]. After Georgia came under Russian protection and Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar's punitive campaign against Tbilisi ended, the first Russian army attack on the Yerevan Khanate began in 1804 under the command of General Pavel Dmitrievich Sisyanov, a Georgian by birth. Mohammad Khan, the ruler of Yerevan, who had taken up a position in the Echmiadzin Monastery to confront the Russian army, forced the Armenians of the village of Vagharshabad to evacuate the village and move towards the Ottoman border, fearing that they would

1 Gaj, Archive of Historical Documents of Georgia, Fund, No. 42.

2 Manuscript available in the library. Museum and Documentation Center of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, 1986 No. 7.

3 Gage, Archives of Documents of the Historical Institute of Georgia, Fund, No. 114.

4 Gage, Archives of Documents of the Historical Institute of Georgia, Fund, No. 183.

5 Gage, Archives of Documents of the Historical Institute of Georgia, Fund, No. 115.

6 Gage, Archives of Documents of the Historical Institute of Georgia, Fund, No. 156.

join the Russian army [10]. In Sisyanov's attack on the Yerevan Khanate, the Russian army advanced without any resistance until it reached Vagharshabad, but there it clashed with the Iranian army [11]. After three days of inconclusive fighting, Sisyanov abandoned the monastery and moved towards the Yerevan fortress. This was the first experience of using the Echmiadzin monastery as a defensive fortress. Sisyanov, who had also not achieved any results from the siege of the Echmiadzin fortress, retreated towards Georgia. On the way, he plundered the Echmiadzin monastery, which the Iranian army had abandoned, under the pretext of Armenian cooperation with the Iranian army [12]. Abbas Mirza, the crown prince of Iran, who had realized the consequences of the dissatisfaction of the people of the region with the local rulers, dismissed the Khan of Yerevan. He appointed first Mehdi Qoli Khan and then Muhammad Khan Maraghe as the ruler of the Khanate of Yerevan. In order to gain the support of the Armenian population of the Khanate, the new ruler of Yerevan provided financial assistance to the Catholicos to compensate for the damage done to the Echmiadzin Monastery. Some time later, one of the sons of Fath Ali Shah, Muhammad Ali Mirza Dolatshah, attacked Tbilisi in retaliation for the Russian attack and clashed with the Russian army, but was eventually forced to retreat. On his return, he plundered a number of villages of the Khanate of Yerevan, including the village of Vagharshabad. In 1807, by order of Fath-Ali Shah Qajar, one of his relatives, Hussein Qoli Khan Qajar, who was the ruler of Qazvin, became the Khan of Yerevan. He also made his brother, Hassan Khan Qajar, who was a tyrant and materialist, his assistant. Oppression of the people of the region resumed, preparing the situation for the Russian campaign. In 1805, Russia once again began military operations in the region, and in 1808, the Russian army under the command of Ivan Godovich attacked the two Sheki factions - Shirvan-Moghan and the Erivan Khanate. The Sheki faction was victorious, and in 1813, the Treaty of Golestan was concluded, but after a three-month siege of the Erivan fortress, the Russian army was forced to retreat. During the retreat, the Russian soldiers plundered the Ejmiatsin monastery. In these battles, Sir Harford Jones, the representative of the British ruler in India, was in the army of Crown Prince Abbas Mirza. He visited the Yerevan Fortress and the Och Church and met with the Catholicos. In his memoirs, he wrote about the hospitality of the Catholicos and his dissatisfaction with the Russian army's attack on the Yerevan Khanate and the plundering of the monastery. In 1826, the war began again. By order of the Khan of Yerevan, the inhabitants of the villages located on the left bank of the Aras River, including the village of Vagharshabad, were forced to move to the other side of the Aras River. After the end of the war, Bishop Nerses of Ashtarak wrote in one of his letters that all the villages of the Ararat Plain were uninhabited.⁷ Seeing Ararat, I felt a deep admiration and respect for this mountain that I have never felt before for any other mountain. This mountain is very far from Ye-

revan, but despite this, apart from the other mountains, which seem to have lined up behind it to pay homage at a certain distance, it alone, even with both its twin peaks, completely dominates that city and from under its half-crown of permanent snow, with its glory and splendor, it evokes in the heart of every viewer all the memories of the second cradle of humanity, along with a sense of respect. According to an Armenian legend - which, like many of their other legends and traditions, is worthy of attention and respect - Yerevan is located on the site of the first land that Noah saw from the top of the sacred mountain after the flood subsided and the waters receded. With such a history and ancient authenticity, this city had long been shrouded in darkness and silence, and its fame - as has been the fate of many other cities - began simultaneously with its misfortunes. From the reign of Shah Ismail Safavi to the beginning of the reign of Nader Shah, this city changed hands four times by the Persians and the Turks, and was plundered and plundered. Until 1827 [1243 AH] it was considered part of the territory of Iran, but in that year it was besieged and occupied by Paskevich, and in this way Yerevan was annexed to the vast territory of the Tsar and became the capital of Russian Armenia.⁸ In the war that took place between the Iranian army under the command of the Crown Prince, Abbas Mirza, and the Russian army under the command of General Paskevich, the Iranian army was defeated and on October 3, 1827, the Yerevan fortress fell into the hands of the Russian army. Then, the Russian army invaded the southern regions of the Aras River, and as a result, the Treaty of Turkmenchay was concluded. According to this treaty, the Yerevan Khanate came under the rule of the Russian Empire. In the midst of the war, the Russian army captured the Echmiadzin monastery while advancing towards the Yerevan fortress, but then the army of Hussein Khan besieged the monastery. Paskevich sent reinforcements to rescue the besieged. Abbas Mirza and the Russian troops met north of the village of Vagharshabad, and a bloody battle ensued. In 1833, Russia erected a monument at the site of the battle in memory of the soldiers killed in the battle. According to the inscription on the monument, 1,131 Russian soldiers were killed in the battle. After the Russians took control of the village and monastery of Echmiadzin, they turned it into a hospital for Russian soldiers. The Russian Empire intended to repopulate the villages of the Yerevan and Nakhchivan khanates, which had been devastated and depopulated by long wars. It also sought to harm the economy of this region by abandoning Iranian Azerbaijan. To achieve these two goals, the Russians took advantage of the unfavorable situation that the khans of Iranian Azerbaijan had created for the Armenian inhabitants of the region. They began to promote a favorable living situation for Armenians north of the Aras River and by 1830, using the provisions mentioned in the Treaty of Turkmenchay, they had facilitated the migration of more than 45,000 Armenians living in Iranian Azerbaijan to the north of the Aras River [13]. Arakel Grigor Babakhanyan, known as

7 Letters of Nerses Ashtaraktsi (Matenadar Archives), Document No. 166.

8 Letters of Nerses Ashtaraktsi (Matenadar Archives), Document No. 109.

Leo, a 19th-century historian, believes that many Armenians from Azerbaijani villages were forced to migrate by the Russian army, and according to Russian plans, 65,000 people were supposed to migrate north of the Aras River, but with the intervention of Abbas Mirza and the sending of a letter of protest to Paskevich, 20,000 people remained in the villages of the region [14]. The immigrants settled in various villages and towns of the Ararat plain, and some of them also settled in the village of Vagharshabad, although exact statistics on their number are not available. In addition to forcing the Armenians to emigrate, Russia sent about 80,000 Russians, known as the Malakan sect, to various regions of the South Caucasus, but they did not settle in the village of Vagharshabad due to their religious beliefs. Abbas Mirza, who was aware of the harmful consequences of this great migration, worked hard for the Armenians. He even renovated a number of their monasteries, including the Karakalpak and the Holy Stepanos monasteries, and took steps to transfer the religious center of the Armenians from the monastery of Echmiadzin to Karakalpak. With the death of Abbas Mirza, his efforts remained incomplete [15].

4.1. The Deportation of Various Armenians from Ojagh⁹ to the Shoreh Kel¹⁰, Panbak¹¹, and Georgia Due to a Decree Issued by the Russian Government

In a decree from the Qajar Shah addressed to the Caliph Ephraim, it was emphasized that, given the importance of the prosperity of the Ojaq, it was necessary for the Caliph to gather the scattered Armenians who were in Russian territory and under the leadership of Echmiadzin and enter the borders of the Qajar state. In fact, the Qajar Shah claimed control over all the Armenians who were under the command of Echmiadzin, even though they lived in Russian territory, and it was necessary for these Armenians to return to the land of Iran. "Your Highnesses, the Viceroy of Barsog and the Caliph Narcissus and other Mehrasias of the Ojaq of the Church should know that the petition of the Caliph Ephraim has been considered. Your Highnesses need to emphasize that the Highnesses of the Consultative Council should depart for these borders as soon as possible and be busy with organizing the Ojaq affairs. Your Highnesses should also strengthen the Ojaq affairs according to their own rules and rituals and engage in prayer upon the arrival of the Highness of the Consultative Council. His Eminence the Caliph Ephraim will issue a decree from the Russian government regarding the bringing of the scattered Armenians of the Ojaq who are in the

Great Council, Panbak, and Georgia. Therefore, it is also decided by His Eminences to write a commentary on His Eminence the Caliph Ephraim that he will also bring the aforementioned division with him so that the Ojaq cause will flourish and spread fully" [16].

4.2. Decrees of the Safavid Kings Regarding the Vank Endowments in Russian Territory

The Qajar government, in accordance with the decrees and orders of the Safavid kings who had issued endowments for the welfare and development of Vank, also emphasized these decrees and paid attention to the prosperity of the Armenian churches. "Alijah Fatanat and Farast, accompanied by the great dignitaries and the Christian dignitaries, presented that Vank Tatuf, by virtue of the decrees of the Safavid kings of Ferdows, the place of endowments in the aforementioned places and due to the aforementioned disruption, has become prosperous and popular, and requested that, by virtue of the decree of the union of the two states and the concurrence of the two powers, a firm and enforceable decree be issued in this regard. Therefore, an enforceable decree was issued in accordance with the aforementioned decrees, which has the honor of being issued, that the interest of the said Vank endowments located in the aforementioned places shall continue to be exclusively for the benefit of Vank and its employees, and shall not be contrary to the condition of the endowment" [17]. The decrees of the Safavid kings regarding the Vank endowments in Russian territory indicate the dynasty's special attention to Armenian religious and cultural issues. These endowments were important as financial and support resources for the preservation and expansion of Armenian culture outside of Iran, especially in areas under Russian influence. By issuing these decrees, the Safavid kings sought to strengthen relations with the Armenians and protect them against external pressures.

4.3. Request for Leave of Absence of the Caliph of Sperm to Prepare for the Payment of Her Debt to the Russian Land

Given that at times the Caliph of Och-Kelissa would become indebted and had to request leave from the Qajar Shah to pay off his debt and prevent distress to the Ojaq and Armenians of Och-Kelissa in order to prepare for the payment of his debt to Russia. The Qajar Shah also agreed to the Caliph's departure to Russia to collect donations, zakat, and khums, in accordance with the treaty of friendship between the two governments of Iran and Russia. "His Highness the Caliph of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Caliph of the Holy Sepulchre, should know that he had requested leave regarding his debt and distress, and that he had made provision for his debts and those of the monks of the said Sepulchre. Since there is now perfect friendship and goodwill between the government of the Holy Sepulchre and the Russian govern-

9 Khandhan is used in the mentioned commands in the meaning of center, kindergarten.

10 During the war of 1219 (Shoregol-Yerevan), Sisianov sent his army towards Echmiadzin (Uch-Kelisa) and on the 20th of that month he camped near the town of Ochmayazin on the road from Ochmayazin to Yerevan. (Shamim, Ali Asghar, Iran during the Qajar Dynasty, Tehran, Behzad, 2008, p. 80).

11 A region near Yerevan, Danbali has named it as the Mahal Panbek Yerevan. (Maftoon Danbali, Abdol Razzaq, Ma'aser al-Sultaniyyah, edited by Gholam Hossein Zargarinejad, Tehran, Iran Institute Publications, 2010, pp. 111-112).

ment, and the settlement of the said Sepulchre is also in the interest of the merciful. It is clear that we will never be satisfied that the said Sepulchre is in a state of poverty and debt, and we will not be disturbed if His Highness the Caliph went to Karabakh and the Holy Sepulchre to make provision for his debts from the Christian nations in those provinces. In view of the perfect alliance between the two governments, those provinces will not be different from the provinces of the Sultan. Therefore, it is decided that after obtaining knowledge and understanding of the content of the decree, His Highness the Amir will be granted leave and authorized to travel to the provinces to both regulate the affairs of the Armenians there and make provisions for his debts" [18].

4.4. Qajar Government Decree Prohibiting Russian Agents from Disturbing the Vank Crew (1235 AH)

The loyalty of the Caliph of Och-Kalesa to the Qajar government and the good relations between the Caliph and the Qajar Shah had caused the prosperity of Och-Kalesa and its affairs to be emphasized by the Qajar government. Therefore, the handling of the affairs of the Armenians under the command of Vank, who was in Russian territory, was also under the supervision of the Caliph of Och-Kalesa. For this purpose, the Caliph and the agent of Och-Kalesa traveled to and from Armenian churches in Russian territory to inspect the churches and collect donations, zakat, and khums. The Qajar government also sent letters to the Russian government for the comfort, welfare, and security of the Caliph, emphasizing the respect and honor of the Caliph, and considered the right to appoint and supervise the Caliph of Ochkiss to be the right of the Qajar government alone. "The supreme ruling was that since the servants of the Vank Tatf of the Qapan, who are the workers and administrators of the zakat funds there, travel back and forth to carry out the aforementioned important requirements, it should be agreed upon that no one should interfere without direction and reason, and that they should be allowed to carry out the aforementioned Vank affairs at their leisure, and in this regard, according to the usual regulations, they should not violate and are responsible"[19].

4.5. Qajar Government Decree to Install the Russian State Emblem by Caliph Ephraim (1229 AH)

The loyalty of the Caliph of the Church to the Qajar government and his loyalty to the decrees issued are such that he does not make any decisions outside the laws of the Qajar government without a royal order in the field of relations with other governments. The Caliph Ephraim asks the Qajar government for permission to install the emblem that the Russian government has given him. Since the enmity between the two foreign governments has disappeared and friendship has been established, the Qajar government announces its agreement to

this matter. "His Highness Ephraim the Caliph should know that he had stated that a sign of consideration has come to His Highness from the Russian government and if permission is granted by the High Deputy, he will make it a proud pendant because the enmity between the two foreign governments has disappeared and friendship has been established, and despite the friendship and peace between the two governments, such events that occur from the two governments to the servants of the parties are a kind of tradition of loyalty and peace. Therefore, His Highness should make that emblem that came from the government a pendant of honor and pride with all the honor and respect that is worthy of the friendship of the two foreign governments"[20].

5. Conclusion

During its relations with the Qajar government, the Russian government always sought to have grounds for interference and comment on Iran's internal affairs. During the Qajar period, Iran's relations with Russia had a great impact on the situation of Armenians. Armenians played an important role in the Iranian army during the Qajar period in the war with the Russians. Some important military positions were given to Armenian soldiers. Abbas Mirza, in numerous decrees and figures, thanked the Armenians for their sacrifice in the battle with the Russians by granting them the Khulaat. Armenians fought with full enthusiasm alongside Abbas Mirza against the Russians in all the wars between Iran and Russia, and some Armenians were also pioneers in the battle with Russia. By issuing a decree in 1334 AH, Fath Ali Shah appreciated the services of the Armenian Avakim and his brother in treating the wounded and their services to the Iranian government, and emphasized respecting their dignity and status. The Matenadaran documents clearly demonstrate that the principled policy of the Qajar government was to give serious and continuous support to the Armenians. As a religious and ethnic minority, the Armenians played a key role in the trade and economy of Iran. By establishing trade and financial networks, they helped the Qajar government secure financial and military resources in wars. This economic cooperation led the Qajar government to pay more attention to the Armenians and exploit this minority in an attempt to maintain a balance in its international relations.

Author Contributions

Abbas Eghbal Mehran: Writing - original draft
Mohammad Reza Alam: Writing - review & editing
Arsen Avagyan: Writing - review & editing

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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