

Foreign relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire and its impact on Echmiadzin based on the Persian documents of Matenadaran

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Abstract— *The foreign relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire have had profound effects on the border regions, especially on the city of Echmiadzin in Armenia, during different historical periods. The documents available in Matenadaran, the National Library of Armenia, as a reliable source, represent the political, economic, and cultural interactions between these two empires. This research examines how these relations affected the social and religious situation of Echmiadzin. According to the available documents, it can be seen that the political and military competitions between Iran and the Ottoman Empire have affected not only the geographical borders but also the cultural and religious identity of the region. Also, these relations have led to the formation of new religious and social institutions in Echmiadzin. This research seeks to answer the following questions using an analytical-documentary method: 1. How have the political competitions between Iran and the Ottoman Empire affected the social and religious situation of Echmiadzin? 2. What roles did religious institutions play in Echmiadzin in response to changes in Iranian-Ottoman relations? The research findings suggest that 1. The changing relations between Iran and the Ottomans led to significant changes in the social and religious structure of Echmiadzin. 2. Religious institutions in Echmiadzin acted as intermediaries that not only helped preserve the region's cultural identity but also resisted political pressures from the two empires.*

Keywords— *Foreign relations, Iran, Ottoman, Echmiadzin, Matenadaran.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The foreign relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire from the Safavid to the Qajar period were influenced by political, religious and economic factors. During the Safavid period, Iran as a Shiite power and the Ottoman Empire as a Sunni empire were in conflict with each other. This religious conflict led to numerous wars between the two countries, the most important of which was the Battle of Chaldoran in 1514AD and subsequent wars in the 16th and 17th centuries AD. Over time, both countries sought to expand their influence in the border areas. The Safavids, relying on their Shiite identity, tried to absorb Sunni areas, while the Ottomans sought to consolidate their power in Islamic lands. These rivalries led to constant tensions and military conflicts. During the Qajar period, the situation changed, and with the emergence of Western powers, both countries were somewhat weakened. The foreign relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire during the Qajar period were influenced by domestic and international political and social developments. As both empires weakened due to external pressures and internal unrest, new interactions were created. The Qajar government sought to consolidate its power against external threats, especially from Russia and Britain, and this led them to improve relations with the Ottomans. During this period, both countries faced similar challenges, including the influence of Western powers and internal discontent. This situation led the Qajar government and the Ottomans to try to prevent foreign influence by cooperating with each other. This cooperation took place mainly in the economic and military fields. However, religious tensions still existed. The Qajars, as a Shiite state, and the Ottomans, as a Sunni empire, were sometimes in conflict with each other. These tensions sometimes led to border conflicts. Also, issues related to Kurds and Arabs on the common borders also affected relations. In general, Iranian-Ottoman relations

during the Qajar period were somewhat complex and contradictory. On the one hand, there were attempts to cooperate and ally against external threats, and on the other hand, religious tensions and border disputes prevented the formation of a stable and friendly relationship. These conditions reflected the need for both countries to protect their national interests in a tense environment.

II. BACKGROUND

Analyzing the foreign relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire and its impact on the historical city of Echmiadzin, especially from the perspective of the documents available in Matenadaran, is an objective that helps us understand the political and cultural complexities of these two empires. These documents indicate the diplomatic, military, and economic interactions between Iran and the Ottoman Empire that led to the formation of the cultural identity of the Armenians and religious institutions in Echmiadzin. The necessity of this analysis lies in the fact that political and military changes have affected not only the geographical borders but also the social and religious structure of this region. By examining these relations, we can gain a better understanding of the role of Echmiadzin as the cultural and religious center of the Armenians and its challenges in the face of external pressures. This study can also help to reinterpret the history of the region and its effects on ethnic and religious identities. This research, using an analytical-descriptive method, attempts to examine the various dimensions of the subject. Regarding the present research entitled "Investigation of Iranian-Ottoman Foreign Relations and Its Impact on Echmiadzin Based on the Persian Documents of Matenadaran", no independent and comprehensive analytical research has been conducted so far, and only limited case studies and studies have been conducted on this subject. Therefore, the present research has been conducted in line with this existing necessity. Books, articles, and writings that were used as sources in this research and are relevant to the content of the present research are introduced. The Persian Orders of Matenadaran, written by Kristineh Gostikian (2021), are documents related to Armenian villagers. In the field of political, social and economic history of Armenia in the Middle Ages, the Persian documents of the archive of the manuscript repository "Matnadaran" in Yerevan provide very valuable information about the life of the Armenian peasants. The first attempts to scientifically study 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 available in the Echmiadzin Cathedral and several neighboring religious centers was available to the author, while since then, with the gradual collection of many documents and evidence from other places, the collection of said documents has increased significantly in terms of volume and number, and the most important of them, translated into Armenian and Russian, along with the original text of the documents, were printed and published in Yerevan by Hakob Papazian (1968) in two volumes with an introduction, commentary and detailed footnotes. Shahen Hospian (2006) A brief look at the history of Yerevan; Andarnik Hovian (2001) Iranian Armenians, Armenians of Iran; Armen Maleki (2006) The Ottoman military force; Arp Manukian (2014) How Armenians settled in New Julfa.

III. SAFAVID TO ZANDID

Both the Safavid and Ottoman states were founded and formed on the basis of religion, each emphasizing its own rightfulness, and from the very beginning, anger, hatred, and hostility dominated their relations. Shah Ismail formed his state with the help of the Qizilbash tribes. These tribes had come to Iran from Asia Minor and obeyed the Shah as their great guide and protector. The Ottoman state, which fanatically supported the Hanafi¹ school of thought, treated the Alawites of Asia Minor cruelly and forced a group of them to emigrate to Iran. Of course, some Alawites remained in Asia Minor and maintained their relationship with the Safavid state. To lead them in each area, individuals called "caliphs" were sent from Iran. In the early years of the Safavid state, hundreds of these caliphs carried out the orders of the great guide within the Ottoman Empire and robbed the rulers of that state of sleep [1]. Shah Ismail did not treat the Sunnis in Iran well. In order to reduce the hostility between the two governments, the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II sent an ambassador named Muhammad Chavash to Tabriz in 910 AH to congratulate Shah Ismail on his victories and the establishment of the Safavid government. The ambassador asked the Shah to refrain from oppressing the Sunnis. The Shah apparently accepted Mohammad Chavash's request. However, he continued his policy of persecuting the Sunnis. In return, the Ottoman Sultan prevented Iranian pilgrims from traveling to Iraq. Shah Ismail sent an ambassador to Istanbul (912 AH) to obtain permission for the pilgrims to travel again. However, when the Shah killed Shibak Khan Uzbek, Bayezid resented this action because of the common religion and friendly relations he had with him. At the same time, Shah Ismail incited his Sufis and followers to kill the Sunnis in the Ottoman territory[2]. The Shiites of Asia Minor, encouraged and funded by Shah Ismail Safavi and led by a man named Shah Qoli, rebelled in this region. This was while Bayezid II was facing problems at home[3]. Sultan Selim set out for Iran in 920 AH with a large army. On the way,

¹ Sunni Muslims have followed four schools of jurisprudence from around the seventh century to the present day and believe that every Muslim should adhere to one of the four schools of jurisprudence in religious rulings and imitate them.

messages were exchanged between the two sultans, which indicated threats, insults, and boasting. Finally, in the Chaldran Plain, near the city of Khoi, a province of Chughur-Saad, a battle took place between the two sides, which resulted in the defeat of the Safavid Shah. Sultan Selim returned to Istanbul after staying in Tabriz for eight days, as the signs of rebellion had become apparent in his army[4]. Although the relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire were based on the Treaty of Zahab (1049 AH), and the Iranian government, due to its inactivity and inaction, and the Ottoman government, due to its intense and frequent conflicts with European countries, especially Austria, respected the aforementioned treaty and observed its provisions, there were still cases where the Treaty of Zahab was in danger, and only the forgiveness of both parties ensured that the matter did not lead to war and that peace and tranquility remained stable. Just as the issue of Basra and the rebellion of Amir Hussein Beg occurred during the reign of Shah Abbas II, it also happened that the issue of the dispute between the two countries during the reign of Shah Sultan Hussein was also Basra[5]. In this era, Shia and Sunni became the plaything of the differences between two similar but hostile political powers, the Safavids and the Ottomans, and the instrument of the petty grudges that existed between the two states, and at a level that was sometimes so childish that it was surprising! The Ottomans had a "Bab-e-Ali" and the Safavids built "Ali-Qapu"! The Ottomans called their servants: Pasha (king) and in return, the Safavids called their slaves: "Sultan"! And so on[6]. During the years of conflict between the Safavids and the Ottomans, no internal force motivated by Sunnis took any action to support the Ottomans[7]. In the second campaign of Suleiman the Magnificent, Shah Tahmasp sent an Iranian envoy as a plenipotentiary, and a peace treaty was concluded between the two parties on 8 Rajab/29/962 May 1555 in the Sultan's camp in Amasya, and this treaty was the first peace treaty concluded between the Safavids and the Ottomans. This treaty remained in force until the death of both rulers, i.e. until 986/1578[8]. Border disputes between Iran and the Ottoman Empire date back to the Safavid era and to some extent stem from foreign policy during the reign of Shah Abbas. During the reign of Shah Tahmasp, there were also some issues, but during the reign of Shah Abbas the Great, the hostility between the two states reached its peak. In fact, Shah Abbas' wars with the Ottoman Empire were related to the liberation of the Central European states from the pressure of the Turks, who had gone as far as Vienna and besieged that city. Shah Abbas's campaign against the Ottoman Empire caused the Turks to abandon the siege of Vienna and return to fight the Safavid Shahryar, and it was this return that prevented them from continuing their conquests in Europe. Nader Shah Afshar, who had realized the danger of the Turks, tried to put an end to these border disputes forever and for this purpose he had collected a lot of ammunition in Kermanshah to realize his dream, but death did not spare him and he died and this matter remained silent. "Nader" held the position of commander-in-chief of Tahmasp Mirza's forces. Nader's quick victory in the war against Ashraf Afghan in Mehmandost Damghan and Morchekhort Isfahan caused Ashraf to flee from city to city and see Nader's army chasing him everywhere and finally he was killed by the Baluchis in Baluchistan in the year (1142 AH). Nader started a war against the Ottomans to regain the invaded points. Nader's operations were successful and he advanced to the siege of the city of Yerevan; but due to the chaos in the east of the country he went to Khorasan. Shah Tahmasp tried to continue the fight against the Ottomans personally, but he was defeated in two consecutive wars and lost everything that Nader had gained. Finally, he signed a shameful treaty in Baghdad, according to which he ceded Ganja, Tbilisi, Yerevan, Nakhchivan, Shamakhi, and Dagestan, that is, all of Georgia and Armenia, to the Ottomans. In return, the Ottomans promised to send forces to help the Iranian army to take back the territories occupied by Russia. Nader did not accept such a treaty and protested. Tahmasp summoned him to Isfahan, but Nader came to Isfahan at the head of fifty thousand horsemen, deposed the Shah from the throne and exiled him to Khorasan. He elected the deposed Shah's infant son, Shah Abbas III (1145-1148 AH), as king, and he himself assumed the role of regent for him and asked the Ottoman government to return the occupied provinces. The Ottoman Sultan, concentrating his forces, went to war with Nader (1146 AH) and after a bloody battle due to rebellions in Kerman and Shiraz, signed a ceasefire agreement and went to southern Iran. Nader also demanded the return of the occupied provinces from Russia. After Peter, Russia was ruled by the new empress Anna. He agreed to return the provinces of Mazandaran and Gilan and, by arranging the "Treaty of Rasht" in 1144 AH, be an ally of Iran against the Ottomans. The war between Iran and the Ottomans began again. In Muharram 1148 AH, the Ottoman forces were defeated by Nader in the Arpachai Plain and as a result of this war, Georgia and Shirvan were captured by Nader. And in 1149 AH In 1191, the "Sublime Bab" proposed peace and the Treaty of Istanbul was signed, and the Ottomans gave up all their possessions with the exception of Baghdad. During the war between Russia and the Ottomans, with the rare threat of the cities of Baku and Derbent, they returned to Iran[9].

IV. QAJAR

During the Qajar period, since Iran was drawn into the sphere of international politics, the issue of border disputes also became part of the sphere of political intrigue. Whenever the British government deemed it necessary, it would provoke the Ottoman government and threaten and encroach on the borders of Iran, and as soon as the political purpose of the party was achieved, the Ottoman government would calm down with a gesture. Mohammad Shah's trip to Khorasan and Herat was not in accordance

with the wishes of the British government, but he tried in every way to prevent this trip, but it was ineffective. It was at this time that the Minister Plenipotentiary of the British Government residing in the court of Tehran, Henry Ellis, wrote to Lord Palmerston: "The reason why the Shah of Iran is marching to Khorasan and Herat is because the peaceful borders of the south and west of the country of Iran are a source of freedom and peace of mind for the Shah and a means of strengthening him to go anywhere and act for the common good" . During the reign of Mohammad Shah Qajar, the Ottoman government's provocations and aggressions began on the borders of Iran, causing hardship to the Iranian population at several border points, and plundering Iranian merchants on Ottoman soil and plundering their property. The Ottoman Kurdish tribes invaded Qatur and Khoy, and at the instigation of the governor of Ravanduz, they plundered the surrounding areas of Urmia. The governor of Baghdad sent an equipped force, and they plundered Muhammareh, plundered the people's property, and destroyed the city. Pasha Bayezid engaged in provocations among the Kurdish tribes of Iran and encouraged them against the Iranian government. In Karbala, the Ottoman government began to kill and plunder Iranians during the reign of Mohammad Shah Qajar (1249-1264 AH/1834-1848 AD). Many of them were killed in this incident and their property was plundered. During these times, the Ottoman government did not hesitate to commit any kind of aggression against Iran and Iranians, until Mohammad Shah Qajar returned from Herat and, seeking revenge, prepared an army to prepare for war. But by this time, the British government's goal had been achieved and the Iranian army had moved away from the vicinity of Herat. Since the Iranian king was no longer a nuisance to the ruler of Herat, there was no question of a war between the Ottoman government and Iran. Therefore, like a benevolent reformer, they intervened and brought peace and tranquility to the conflict between the two Islamic states[10]. In addition to performing administrative services, Amir Kabir carried out important political missions in Erzurum to resolve disputes between Iran and the Ottoman Empire and conclude a treaty with that government. The first mission was carried out during the reign of Fath Ali Shah and the second mission was carried out during the reign of Muhammad Shah. Iran's relations with foreign countries in the early days of the reign of Fath Ali Shah Qajar led the king to appoint someone to be responsible for managing Iran's foreign relations, and for this purpose, Mirza Abdol-Wahhab Neshat Motamed-ud-Dawla Isfahani was appointed to this position, but Motamed-ud-Dawla did not have the title of minister. In early 1339 AH, Haji Mirza Abu al-Hasan Khan Shirazi was appointed by Fath Ali Shah to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which at that time had the title of Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A - The five departments included: 1 - Department of Printing, Translation and Ambassadorial Office; 2 - British Department; 3 - Russian Department; 4 - Ottoman Department; 5 - Department of Non-Neighboring Countries [11]. The importance and sensitivity of the Ottoman government to the Qajar government was such that it established a department under the title of Ottoman Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

V. SUPPORT FOR ARMENIANS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE (1235AH)

In order to establish its right to sovereignty and legitimacy over the Holy See, the Qajar government, in addition to issuing the decree of the caliphate of the caliphs over the Holy See, also took steps to inform the leaders of the Ottoman government: "His Highness the Caliph Ephrem, the Caliph of the Holy See, should know that His Highness Mirza Farajullah, the recorder of the government, should know that since until now there has been no statement regarding the issuance of the decree of the Caliph of the Holy See, the Caliph Ephrem from this government against the authority of the governor, the issuance of his caliphate decree from that court has been delayed and complicated by the delay. Therefore, the officials of the government have written an explanation of the book of the merits and salvation of the chief of the book. After visiting the number of the Qadashim, he should inform the leaders of the Ottoman government of the caliphate and issue and send the decree of the caliphate of the said caliph, which is being delayed due to the issuance of the decree of some of the ammunition that the said caliph has in the provinces of Rome" [12]. The decree, emphasizing the status and position of this caliph, points out the importance of issuing his decree by the Ottoman government. In this text, words such as "Alijah", "Majdat", and "Fakhamat" indicate the respect for the position of Caliph Ephrem by the Qajar government. The Qajar government refers to the delay in issuing the caliphate decree and expresses concern that this delay may harm the important affairs that the caliph has in the Roman provinces. In addition, the reference to the confirmation of his caliphate by Christian monks and priests indicates the support of the religious community for this caliph. The decree requests that after examining and reflecting on this issue, the Ottoman authorities be informed so that the caliphate decree can be issued and sent. This text, in a way, reflects the complex political and religious relations between the Ottoman government and the Armenians at that time. In fact, the Qajar government tried to draw the attention of the Echmiadzin to its positions, and since the Armenians in Iran were under the leadership of Caliph Ephrem, as well as the Armenians who lived in Ottoman lands, the Ottoman government should have paid special attention to not interfering in the affairs of the Caliph, who was under the Qajar government's appointment. "The petition and explanation that His Eminence Ephrem, the Caliph of the Supreme Church, should know that the petition and explanation that he had written was very good and its contents were noted regarding his departure to the Caliphate of Istanbul, which he had written was very good. What was necessary was written to the Caliphate at his request and request, and of course it will be useful for the benefit

of all.” [13]. This decree, which seems to have been written to Caliph Ephrem, clearly glorifies the high position and status of the recipient of the decree, who is described as “His Highness.” The main subject of the decree is the request for Caliph Ephrem to travel to the Caliphate of Istanbul, which could mean an attempt to establish direct communication with Ottoman officials. The decree also emphasizes that the requests of the Ephrem Cell were transmitted to the Ottoman authorities through the Qajar government.

VI. CALIPH DAWUD'S RELEASE TO GO TO BAYAZID AND FATH ALI SHAH'S SUPPORT FOR THE CALIPH (1219 H)

A decree was issued to Mahmud Pasha, the governor of Bayazid, to provide the means of support and satisfaction for Caliph Dawud, the Caliph of the Church of Och-Kalessa, who had been sent to provide the means for the fire and the servants there. In fact, the Qajar government made every effort to support the Caliph of Och-Killasa and the staff of the Ojak so that they would not have any tendencies to deviate from the center. "Alijah Mahmud Pasha, the ruler of Bayazid, should know that since His Highness the Caliph Daoud, the Caliph of Och-Killasa, requested that we release him to go to a place under His Highness's authority in terms of supplies and equipment for the Ojak and its staff, and Nawab Humayun has released him so that whenever he wants to go, His Highness the Masharalie will enter His Highness's presence. It is ordered and decreed that after gaining knowledge and information about the content of the world's command, obey the king and His Highness the Masharalie will enter, and that He should act in a manner that will satisfy His Highness's good conduct" [14].

VII. THE RIGHT TO APPOINT THE CALIPH OF EJMIATSIN BY THE QAJAR GOVERNMENT

The historical relations between Armenians and Iranians entered a new stage in the 17th century. After the forced migration of Armenians from ancient Jolfa to Iran, by order of Shah Abbas I, densely populated Armenian colonies appeared in Iran. The largest example was the city of Jolfa in Isfahan. The Safavid government gave Armenians certain privileges to interest them in Iran. Armenians gradually got used to the new conditions in Iran and entered the social and economic life of Iran with the feeling that they were a part of the greater Iran. "The Armenians, who were hardworking and intelligent people, engaged in trade, and as a result of their efforts, Jolfa became a progressive city." [15]. The presence of Armenians in the Iranian society in the form of human complexes occurred during the reigns of Shah Tahmasp I and Shah Abbas I of Safavid. The various campaigns of Shah Tahmasp I of Safavid to different regions of the Caucasus led many captives of Georgian, Circassian and Armenian tribes to Iran. This trend also expanded during the reign of Shah Abbas I by pursuing various policies. As a result of these trends, Armenian forces have played an effective role in every corner of Iran since the Safavid era, actively present in various fields, especially trade and commerce [16]. Shah Abbas did not like the Armenians of Iran to make a pact of solidarity with the Roman Church and was more interested in appointing the Armenian Caliph himself and for the Armenian Caliphate to be subject to the orders of the Iranian court. "The Augustinians [around Saint Augustine or Saint Augustine who lived from 354 to 430 AD] arrived in Isfahan in 1012 AH at the height of Portuguese power in Asia and were given a large and beautiful mansion near the Grand Mosque of Isfahan in the Husseiniyeh neighborhood by the king's order. At the beginning, the Karmahs had high hopes for their mission in Isfahan and especially hoped to create an effective and lasting solidarity between Iranians and Europeans against the Ottomans in order to achieve a decisive victory over them. They also hoped to convert Shah Abbas to the Catholic faith. But they soon realized that Shah Abbas accepted the alliance with Europe and even wished for such an alliance to be concluded, but he looked down on the activities of barefoot missionaries in the field of converting Muslims and did not at all like the Armenians of Iran to sign an alliance with the Roman Church. He was more interested in appointing and installing the Armenian Caliph himself and having the Armenian Caliphate obey the orders of the Iranian court [17]. The apparent government of the Armenians of Julfa is in the person of the Shah. The guilty are severely punished. On behalf of the Shah, a person called the Sheriff is selected from the Armenians themselves to deal with the claims and complaints of the residents of Julfa. This man is also responsible for collecting taxes from the Armenians. The Armenians are the wealthiest people in the country, both because the Shah has given them long-term loans and because of the foreign silk trade with them. At the same time, they are very content and thrifty, and the money they spend on travel goes deep into their pockets [18]. Given the importance of the church to the Qajar government, any disruption in its affairs was not permitted. So that when the Qajar government learned that the Ottoman government had appointed a caliph for the Church of Och-Kale and was interfering in the affairs of the Caliph David of Mehrasia, in a decree addressed to Pir-Goli Khan Qajar, the governor of the Azerbaijan province, it was noted that the right to appoint the Caliph of Och-Kale was solely the responsibility of the Qajar government. Fath-Ali Shah reminded that Och-Kale belonged to Iran and the removal and installation of its caliph was reserved for the sovereign of the Iranian monarchy and had no involvement in the Roman Empire, and Pir-Goli Khan Qajar must provide the grounds for the independence and order of the affairs of Caliph David and the ruler of the said place, who was another caliph, and convince them in this way that the caliph assigned by the Qajar government is legitimate. "His Highness Pir-Goli Khan

Qajar, the governor of the Azerbaijan province, should know that last year, our Nawab Hodayun, out of the perfect compassion and mercy of His Majesty, His Highness the Grand Patriarch of the Church, sent David of Mehrasia to We have mentioned the Caliphate of the temple of the Uch-Church, the proud and distinguished figure of the Qadashim of Masharaliyya, among the distinguished peers. At this time, it has been reported to the Aqfans of the Astan-e-Nawaz that another Caliph has been appointed by the government against the Ottomans in the area of the said temple and has come to sit in Bayazid and close the church for the movement of his caravans and ascetics, disrupting the order of the Caliph David. Therefore, the ruling of the world is issued to that Highness, who has done the necessary diligence in the independence and order of the affairs of the said Caliph David, and in no way is it permissible to fail, and a letter is written to the ruler of the said place that the other Caliph has written to me and persuades them in this way that the Uch-Church belongs to Iran and the removal and installation of its Caliph is reserved for the world's royal decisions and has no involvement in the Roman Empire. However, that Highness should not forbid them from such movements and interference in the affairs of the Iranian Empire so that they do not disrupt the order of the Caliph David, and what is necessary is to take care of it. "He has his usual independence and organizes his affairs as he should." [19]. In a decree, it is announced that the Caliph Ephrem Uch-Kilsa is assigned to manage the affairs of Vank-Daniel, Vank-Eklis, Vank-Al-Najaq, and Qizil, and the Nakhchivan. "At this time, in view of the ability and competence of the Muslim leader of the Mahrasiya and the abundance of mercy and concern for the Masharaliya, at the request of His Highness, the Caliph Ephrem Uch-Kilsa has assigned and delegated the management of the affairs of Vank-Daniel, Vank-Eklis, Vank-Al-Najaq, and Qizil, and the Nakhchivan to His Highness the Masharaliya, so that out of complete honesty and sincerity of intention, he will devote himself to the management of the affairs and supervision of the Mahrasiyas of the said Ojaqs and will show and demonstrate his good care in their settlement. It is decided that His Highness Karim Khan Kankarlu, the ruler of Nakhchivan and Azad-Jiran, will, in accordance with the decree, assign the management of the affairs of the said Ojaqs to His Highness the Masharaliya, and the requirements of the said job, and return them to His Highness the Highness the Highness the Closest of His Majesty. "Aliya Mustofavian, the head of the bookkeeping department, shall record and record the account number in his books." [20]. Russian statesmen showed great interest in making the Echmiadzin Monastery and its high priests subordinate to state authorities, because they considered Echmiadzin a prelude to their presence and influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus. For this reason, they made efforts to attract the attention of the Echmiadzin trustees. "Almost all Armenians in Turkey and Iran follow the national and historical religion of their origin, which is the Gregorian religion. The interest and importance that the Russian government shows in making the Echmiadzin Monastery and its high priests subordinate to state authorities, in order to help them pave the way for their future victories in Asia, is well understandable." [21]. 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 the 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. In the Russian invasions of Iran, Armenians and Muslims fought side by side to defend Iran and lost their lives in the process. "Of course, you have heard the details of the unrest in Russian soil and the spread to the Caucasus, which reached Nakhchivan and resulted in the killing of many Armenians and Muslims there. For two days now, there has been a commotion on the border of Julfa, and Salmas and Urmia have become very dangerous and dangerous places; in the city of Tabriz itself, hungry people are running around, shouting and shouting. "With the lack of talent, the absence of an army, the Shah's travel, the absence of the procession of Massoud and His Holiness the Holy Spirit of Sacrifice, the cries of the Azerbaijani people, the differences in religious and clerical beliefs, and the enmity between Armenians and Muslims, what is my position as a person in this country?" [22]. In disputes and conflicts over the boundaries of the forts between Iran and Russia, Armenians were used as interpreters. "In this year, Russia insisted that the place known as Baghlu, Goni, and Gogjeh-Dengiz, which are part of the Iravan interior, belonged to the Russian government within the limits of division. Hussein Khan, the commander of Iravan, presented the matter, and General Yermolov, the commander of Georgia, sent Bolkonok Mizrawi, the Russian government's representative, with the Armenian Shahmir Khan as an interpreter, to the court of the Khagan Sahibqaran." [23]. 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VIII. CONCLUSION

The Matenadaran documents clearly demonstrate that the principled policy of the Qajar government was serious and continuous support for the Armenians. The absence of forced conversion, support for the construction and maintenance of churches in different regions of Iran, the right of the Iranian kings to appoint a caliph, freedom to hold religious ceremonies, the allocation

of an Armenian sheriff for the Jolfa neighborhood, and other matters are part of this historical reality. The role of Echmiadzin in regulating the relationship of the Qajar kings with the Armenians of Iran as a religious and social institution is of particular importance in the history of Iran. As a center for the consolidation and representation of Armenians, Echmiadzin was able to act as an effective mediator between the Qajar government and the Armenian community. The foreign relations of Iran and the Ottomans, as two great powers in the region, had a deep and widespread impact on the border regions and especially on the historical city of Echmiadzin in Armenia. The documents in the Matenadaran indicate the complex political, economic, and cultural interactions between these two empires. These documents indicate that military and diplomatic rivalries between Persia and the Ottomans affected not only the geographical borders but also the cultural and religious identity of Echmiadzin. At various times, political changes in these two empires had an impact on Echmiadzin. Echmiadzin served as a center of social gatherings and activities, and in response to political and military pressures, it played an important role in preserving the cultural identity of the Armenians.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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