

Makaleler/Articles:

## The Ottoman Fortification of Ganja and Provincial Administration of Ganja- Qarabagh Province in the Late Sixteenth Century

### 16. Yüzyılın Sonlarında Osmanlılar Tarafından Gence'de Kale Yapımı ve Gence-Karabağ Vilayetinde Osmanlı Taşra Yönetimi

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#### *Abstract*

Fortress as a tool for the implementation of Ottoman military power was necessary for the upkeep and security of the Ottoman rule in Azerbaijan. Following its capture in 1588, Ganja was among the main towns of Azerbaijan fortified by the Ottomans. The primary aim of the fortification of Ganja was to maintain Ottoman rule in former Safavid *beylerbeyi* of Qarabagh, in the territories of which Ottomans established the *vilâyet-i Gence Karabağ* with seven *sanjaks* (districts). After fortifications, Ganja became one of the major garrison towns on the eastern frontier of the Ottomans. Apart from its military functions, the fortress served as the administrative seat of Ganja-Qarabagh province until it fell into the hands of the Safavids after the siege of 1606. In 1615, Ganja fortress, one of the examples of the late sixteenth century Ottoman military architecture in Azerbaijan, was subjected to destruction by the order of Shah Abbas I.

Drawing mainly on primary sources, this article aims to explore the history of Ottoman fortifications of Ganja and examine some little-studied aspects of Ottoman provincial administration of Ganja-Qarabagh province in the late sixteenth century.

**Key words:** Ottoman fortifications, Ganja, Ottoman-Safavid wars, provincial administration, Ganja-Qarabagh province

#### *Özet*

1588 yılında Osmanlı idaresine geçişinin ardından, Gence Azerbaycan'ın Osmanlılar tarafından kale yapılmış şehirleri arasında yer

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aldı. Gence'de kale yapılmasının temel amacı Osmanlıların eski Safevi Karabağ Beylerbeyliği topraklarında kurdukları ve yedi sancaktan oluşan Gence-Karabağ vilayetinde Osmanlı hakimiyetini sağlamak ve kesinleştirmek olmuştur. Yapımından sonra, Gence kalesi Osmanlıların doğu sınırında önemli garnizon şehirlerinden biri haline geldi. 1606 kuşatması sonrasında yeniden Safevî yönetimine girene kadar Gence kalesi askerî olduğu kadar aynı zamanda, Gence-Karabağ vilayetinin yönetim merkezi gibi siyasi ve idari öneme de sahipti. Azerbaycan'da Osmanlı askeri mimarisinin örneklerinden biri olan Gence kalesi 1615 yılında Safevî Şahı I. Abbas'ın (1588-1629) emriyle yıktırılmıştı. Bu makalenin amacı Osmanlılar tarafından Gence'de kale yapılmasının tarihini temel kaynaklara dayanarak araştırmak ve on altıncı yüzyılın sonlarında Gence-Karabağ vilayetinde Osmanlı taşra yönetiminin bazı az çalışılmış konularını incelemektir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Osmanlı tahkimatı, Gence, Osmanlı- Safevî savaşları, taşra yönetimi, Gence-Karabağ vilayeti

## 1. Introduction

Under Safavid rule, Ganja was the administrative center of the *beylerbeyi* (province) of Qarabagh and ruled by governors from Ziyad-oghlu family of Qajar tribe.<sup>1</sup> During the Safavid-Ottoman war of 1578-1590, this province gained considerable importance due to its location between the strategic provinces of Shirvan and Chukhur-i Sa'd (Iravan). As long as Ganja and Qarabagh remained under the Safavid rule, it was impossible for the Ottoman armies to complete the conquest of Azerbaijan.

During the eastern campaigns (1534-1555) of Sultan Suleyman I (1520-1566), the Ottomans faced with supply and logistics problems and mainly due to these reasons failed to maintain their military presence in the Safavid territories (except Iraqi Arab) captured as result of these military expeditions.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, during the new war (1578-1590) with the Safavids, the Ottomans

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the history of Qarabagh under the Safavid rule, see Shahin Farzaliyev, "Gäncä Säfävilärin vâ Osmanlıların hakimiyyäti dövründä (XV-XVIII äsrlär)" [Ganja under the Safavid and Ottoman rule (15<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> centuries)], *The history of Ganja*, proceedings of the scientific and practical conference, Baku 2004, s. 57-72; Namig Musali, "Säfävilär zamanında Qarabağ bəylərbəyliyiinin yaradılması vâ onun inzibati quruluşu" [The establishment and administrative structure of beylerbeyi of Qarabagh during the Safavid period], *Qarabagh past, present and future*, proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> Scientific and practical conference (Baku, 2006): 165-169; Tofig Najafli, "Qarabağ XVI əsrdə" [Qarabagh in the 16<sup>th</sup> century] // *Qarabagh past, present and future*, proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> Scientific and practical conference, Baku 2007, s.237-248.

<sup>2</sup> For the eastern campaigns of Sultan Suleyman I, see Adel Allouche. *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict (906-962/1500-1555)*, Klaus Schwarz, Berlin 1983, pp.130-145.

gave strategic importance to fortress construction in conquered lands of Azerbaijan and other areas of the South Caucasus. Fortress construction constituted an important part of the Ottoman military strategy enabling them to secure their military power and extend their administrative governance in newly captured territories, as well as manage supply and logistical issues efficiently.

Before Ganja, the Ottomans had built or strengthened fortresses in Arash, Shemakhi, Darband, Iravan, Tabriz and other strongholds taken from the Safavids. Peace negotiations with the Safavids, which was started in the autumn of 1586, prevented the Ottomans to realize their military objectives regarding the capture of Qarabagh province. The Ottomans had to wait until the summer of 1588.<sup>3</sup> In a letter, dated 5<sup>th</sup> Jumadalkhir 996/2 may 1588 to the Muhafiz of Tabriz Jafar Paşa there was a mention about the postponement of the fortress construction in Ganja and Qarabagh under the request of Safavid Shah Muhammad Khudabanda in order to maintain the peace condition.<sup>4</sup>

Following the assassination of Safavid prince Hamza Mirza in May of 1587, peace negotiations with the Safavids failed. The Ottomans taking the advantage of internal conflicts among Qizilbash amirs, subsequent to the death of Hamza Mirza started the military campaign with the aim of completing the conquer of Azerbaijan. The politico-military situation favored the implementation of military objectives of the Ottomans in Azerbaijan, especially in Qarabagh province.

In order to capture Ganja and Qarabagh, Farhad Paşa in his letter to Ottoman court which was mentioned in a *hüküm* (order) dated 22<sup>nd</sup> Rajab 995/1 April, 1587 to *ümerâ* (amirs) of Shirvan wrote about the necessity of the construction of fortress in Shamkir<sup>5</sup> which is situated 30 km to the east of Ganja. It is not clear why his proposal was not realized or did not have the necessary support from the Ottoman government. May be as a result of the course of events which was advantageous for Ottomans, he relinquished from his own plan in favor of building fortress in Ganja due to its important geostrategic location.

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<sup>3</sup> For more on Ottoman-Safavid war of 1578-1590, see Bekir Kütükoğlu. *Osmanlı-İran Sijâsî Münâsebetleri (1578-1590)*, İstanbul Edebiyat Fakültesi Matbaası, İstanbul 1962; M. Fahrettin Kırzioğlu, *Osmanlıların Kafkas-İlleri'ni Fethi (1451-1590)*, İkinci Baskı, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 1998; Farah Huseyn, *Osmano-sefevidskaya vojna 1578-1590 gg* [Ottoman-Safavid wars 1578-1590], Nurlan, Baku 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Yusuf Sarıncay, Mustafa Budak, and Kemal Gurulkan, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Karabağ*, T.C. Başbakanlık, Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, Ankara 2009, s.9.

<sup>5</sup> *Osmanlı Devleti ile Azerbaycan Türk Hanlıkları Arasındaki Münâsebetlere Dâir Arşiv Belgeleri*, II C., Başbakanlık, Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, Ankara 1993, s.19-20.

On 20 July 1588, Farhad Paşa who was a commander (*serdar*) of Eastern campaign moved from Erzurum, which was the main launching base of Ottomans in their Eastern campaigns.<sup>6</sup> The ultimate aim of this campaign was to capture Ganja and Qarabagh. On 9 Shevval, 996/1 September 1588, Ottoman army under Farhad Paşa reached Ganja and took the city almost without resistance<sup>7</sup>. The Safavid ruler of Ganja, Muhammad Khan Ziyad-oghlu Qajar at the news of the approaching of Ottoman army, abandoned the city with large numbers of province's population (mainly from Qajar tribe) so that, united with the forces of other Safavid emirs to attack Ottomans<sup>8</sup>. Shortly afterwards, on 29 September 1588, Farhad Paşa attacked the Qajars, who concentrated in Arasbar, near the Aras river and inflicted heavy casualties on them,<sup>9</sup> consequently, the Ottomans completed the conquest of Qarabagh province. In the same year, Ottoman army under Sinan Paşa conquered Nahavand.<sup>10</sup> Safavids were forced to resume peace negotiations, which led to the Treaty of Istanbul on 21 March 1590. According to the Treaty of Istanbul (also known as "Treaty of Ferhad Paşa"), the Ottomans gained Azerbaijan together with other territories of South Caucasus, as well as the western provinces of Iran (Nahavand, Luristan and Shahrizor).<sup>11</sup>

Little research has been done into Ottoman provincial administration of Ganja-Qarabagh province in the late sixteenth century and the Ottoman fortification of Ganja. Drawing mainly on primary sources, this article aims to explore the history of Ottoman fortifications of Ganja and examine the little-

<sup>6</sup>Ibrahim Rahimzadeh Harimi, *Osmanlı qoşunlarının Azərbaycana yürüşləri (XVI əsrin sonu)* [Ottoman campaigns in Azerbaijan (in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century)], translation by R.Sheikhzamanli, ed. by M.Naghisoylu, Nurlan, Baku 2007, s.191-192.

<sup>7</sup>Shahin Farzaliyev, *Azərbaycan və Osmanlı imperiyası (XV-XVI əsrlər)* [Azerbaijan and the Ottoman Empire (XV-XVI centuries)], Azerneshr, Baku 1995, s.103.

<sup>8</sup> Farah Huseyn, *Osmano-sefevidskaya voyna 1578-1590 gg.*,90. Cihat Aydoğmuşoğlu, *Şah Abbas ve Zamanı*, Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi, (Ankara 2011), s.128. According to Ibrahim Rahimzadeh, the numbers of households moved from Ganja with Muhammad Khan Ziyad-oghlu Qajar towards the Aras river were approximately 40,000 or 50,000. For more on this, see Ibrahim Rahimzadeh Harimi, *Osmanlı qoşunlarının Azərbaycana yürüşləri*, s.196-198.

<sup>9</sup>Ibrahim Rahimzadeh Harimi, *Osmanlı qoşunlarının Azərbaycana yürüşləri*, 196-197; Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarikh-i Selaniki. 1563-1600-cü illər: Azərbaycan və qonşu ölkələrin tarixinə aid iqtibaslar* [Tarikh-i Selaniki. 1563-1600. Passages on history of Azerbaijani and neighboring countries], translation from Ottoman Turkish by Z.Bunyardov, Elm, Baku 1992, s. 37-38; Sharaf-khan ibn Shamsaddin Bidlisi, *Sharafname*, translation, foreword, notes and appendixes by E.I.Vasilyev, vol.II, Nauka, Moscow 1976, s.292.

<sup>10</sup> Oqtay Efendiyev, *Azərbaycan Səfəvilər dövləti* [Azerbaijani Safavid state], "Sharq-Qarb", Baku 2007, s.234.

<sup>11</sup> Oqtay Efendiyev, *Azərbaycan Səfəvilər dövləti*, s.235.

studied aspects of Ottoman provincial administration of Gence-Karabağ *vilayet* in the late sixteenth century.

## 2. Ottoman fortification of Ganja in 1588

### a. The Importance of Fortification of Ganja

Fortress as a tool for the implementation of Ottoman military power was necessary for the upkeep and security of the Ottoman rule in Azerbaijan. Due to its geo-strategic significance, two days after taking Ganja Ottomans commenced building a fortress under the order of Ottoman Sultan III Murad (1574-1595). The Ganja fortress was established for different but interrelated purposes.

From the military point of view, the main purpose of the Ottoman fortifications of Ganja was to protect conquered lands in Qarabagh province from possible attack of troops of local Qizilbash (mainly *Qajar*) *amirs*. The Ottoman garrison in Ganja fortress was also responsible to provide military support to other Ottoman strongholds in neighboring provinces, especially in Shirvan to face the Safavids, as well as support safe movement of Ottoman troops from Qarabagh to Shirvan. Furthermore, the fortress provided with sufficient munitions and provisions would enable the Ottomans to use it as a supply base during the war with the Safavids. Moreover, presence of the garrison also allowed to control city, especially it was necessary to prevent possible collaboration between local population and former Safavid rulers of Ganja.

In administrative terms, a fortress was built to serve as a seat of provincial governance in Ganja-Qarabagh *vilayet* (province). Its strategic location in Ganja, which was one of the important centers of silk production and silk trade during the Safavid period made it possible to control trade routes and strategic road leading from Tiflis to Shamakhi.

### b. Primary Sources on Construction of Ganja Castle

There are two detailed and eyewitness Ottoman accounts of the construction of Ganja fortress of 1588: '*Tarih-i Selânikî*' of Selaniki Mustafa Efendi and the '*Kitab-i Gencine-i Fetbi-Gence*'<sup>12</sup> by Rahimzade Ibrahim Harimi. Selaniki took part in Ganja campaign of Farhad Paşa in 1588/996 as *silabdar katibi* (secretary of weapon-bearer corps). Towards the end of this campaign for

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<sup>12</sup> Rahimzade wrote this work as an appendix (*zeyl*) to his *Zafername-i Hazret-i Sulḥan Murad Han and Gonca-ı baġ-t<sup>a</sup> Murad*. He describes the capture of Ganja and construction of a fortress in the Bab 6 under the title of *Gence seferi* (996/1588). Mustafa Eravcı, Rahimzade Ibrahim Çavuş Harimi in *Historians of the Ottoman Empire*.. Edited by C. Kafadar H. Karateke C. Fleischer, 3.<http://ottomanhistorians.uchicago.edu/sites/ottomanhistorians.uchicago.edu/files/rahimizade.pdf>

his service in construction of Ganja fortress, Selaniki was promoted to the *kitabət* (secretaryship) of *sipahis*.<sup>13</sup> Rahimzade, who partook in Ganja campaign as *çavuş* (sergeant or messenger) also relates events he personally witnessed. Rahimzade record that, the foundation of the Ganja fortress was laid down on 11 Shevval, 996/3 September, 1588.<sup>14</sup> Selaniki does not mention the date of commencement of the fortress's construction.

### c. *Dimensions and the Structure of the Fortress*

In comparison with *Tarih-i Selânikî*, Rahimzade's account is more detailed in providing information on the dimensions of the fortress. According to Rahimzade, the length of the wall was 3,800 *zîra*<sup>15</sup> (2.945 meters) and height 10 *zîra* (7,7 m.). The fortress walls was 3 *zîra* (2,3 m) thick was surrounded by a very deep moat. Selaniki gave different figure for length of the fortress and regarding this he relates:

"...an area of more than 6,000 zira (4.650 meters) was plowed, walls, towers erected, and moats laid."

Rahimzade mention the building of inner defenses (*içqala*) within the fortress. According him, the fortress consisted of 43 towers and 7 iron gates<sup>16</sup>. Selaniki does not mention an *içqala*, total number of gates and towers, while he speaks about the phases of construction in detail:

"... Eighths of zulgada 996 (October 9, 1588) two high towers were completed on the section of *silahdars* unit and two big *shabi zərbzen*<sup>17</sup> were put on them and there were festivals. After this, towers in the

<sup>13</sup>Mehmet İpşirli, Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *TDV İA*, cilt: 36:358 <http://www.tdvia.org/dia/ayrmetin.php?idno=360358>

<sup>14</sup>Ibrahim Rahimzadeh, *Osmanlı qoşunlarının Azərbaycana*, s.193.

<sup>15</sup> There were different types of *dhira* or *zîra* (*cubit*, *arşın*). The architects' cubit (*dhira' al-mi'mariyyah*) was measured ca. 77.5 cm. and it was standardized at 75 cm. in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; see, W.Hinz, "Dhira'." *E.I.* 2:232 and W.Hinz, *Islamische Masse und Gewichte*, umgerechnet ins metrische System, Handbuch der Orientalistik, Ergänzungsband I, 1, Leiden 1955, p.60. According to H.Inalcik, under a decree of 1881 issued by the Ottoman government metric equivalent of 1 *arşın* of mason was 0.758 m. Halil Inalcik, "Introduction to Ottoman Metrology", *Turcica*, XV (1983): p. 340. In conversion of *dhira* to metric system, we will use a *dhira* of 77.5 cm., which is relevant to the measure system of the late sixteenth century.

<sup>16</sup>Ibrahim Rahimzadeh Harimi, *Osmanlı qoşunlarının Azərbaycanca yürüşləri*, 194.

<sup>17</sup>*Shabi zərbzen* (also *zərbzen ordarbzen*) was in most common use by the Ottoman field artillery and weighed 125 pounds (56.7 kg.). *Rhoads Murphey, Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, N.J 1999, p.110. For the Ottoman artillery, see also Gábor Ágoston, *TOP. TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, yıl: 2012, cilt: 41, s.240-242 <http://www.islamansiklopedisi.info/dia/pdf/c41/c410132.pdf>

section of *sipahis* were finished. Two gates and towers in the section of *Yeniçeris* were completed. *Cebecis* (armorers) and *topçus* (artillery men)<sup>18</sup>

Rahimzade and Selaniki do not mention the names of the gates and towers. From Munshi we know that, the name of the highest and the best-fortified tower was *Çahartaq* (“four arches”)<sup>19</sup>. The fortress was indeed a complex with a mosque and other buildings inside. *Taribi-Selaniki* makes it clear that, *beylerbeyi* of Shirvan, *vezir* Jafar Paşa was buried at the mosque, which situated within the fortress<sup>20</sup>.

#### *d. Participation of Ottoman Governors in Construction of the Fortress*

Construction of Ganja fortress was no simple task and required an investment of considerable amount of labor and supplies. As pointed out by Rhoads Murphey, “the completion of fortress construction and reconstruction work on this kind of scale, especially on the remoter frontiers, was possible only under exceptional circumstances”.<sup>21</sup> Sources do not record the size of the workforce engaged in the construction of the walls. As for the composition of the workmen, the texts of the sources and the presence of large Ottoman troops in Ganja suggest that, construction work was carried out by the soldiers themselves. Additionally, Rahimzade mentions the skilled masters (*usta*) in construction of the fortress.<sup>22</sup>

It is evident from the accounts of Rahimzade and Selaniki that, the construction of the fortress was delegated to Ottoman *beylerbeyis* and *sanjakbeyis* who participated in Ganja campaign. Rahimzade refers to the allocation of plots in construction site to *beylerbeyis* and *sanjakbeyis* without mentioning their names.<sup>23</sup> However, Selaniki relates this episode in detail:

“Anadolu *beylerbeyi* Hadım Hasan Paşa, *beylerbeyi* of Halab Hasan Paşa, *beylerbeyi* of Maraş Qulaqsız Mehmed Paşa, *beylerbeyi* of Şam Trablusu Bostañçı Ali Paşa, *beylerbeyi* of Qaraman Qorucubaşı Mehmed Paşa, *beylerbeyi* of Erzurum Hızır Paşa, *beylerbeyi* of Diyarbekr Mehmed Paşa, *beylerbeyi* of Sivas Sinan Paşa oğlu Mehmed Paşa, eight *beylerbeyis* constructed the sections of the fortress allocated them”.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, s.36-37.

<sup>19</sup> Isgandar Bey Munshi Turkman, *Tarikh-i 'alam ara-yi Abbasi*, translation by Sh.F.Farzaliyev, vol II, Sharq-Qarb, Baku 2014, s.1290.

<sup>20</sup> Selaniki, *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, s.39.

<sup>21</sup> Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700*, p.18.

<sup>22</sup> Rahimzade, *Osmanlı qoşunlarının Azərbaycana yürüşləri*, s.194.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 193-194.

<sup>24</sup> Selaniki, *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, s.37.

From Rahimzade's description, we know that, Farhad Paşa personally supervised construction works:

“Sardar (Farhad Paşa) from the dawn to nightfall walked around (the construction) section by section”.<sup>25</sup>

### *e. Construction Materials*

Sources does not provide information regarding the shape of the fortress and characteristics of the materials used in construction work. According to Selaniki, a tower which was built by Shah Tahmap I in Ganja square was demolished and remnants were used in construction of a fortress.<sup>26</sup> However, Rahimzade does not give any reference to this tower and the supply of building materials in his description of the construction processes.

<sup>25</sup> Rahimzade, *Osmanlı qoşunlarının Azərbaycana yürüşləri*, s.194.

<sup>26</sup> Selaniki relates: “*this tower built by Shah Tahmasp after his victory in Georgian war and made from the skulls of fathers of Simon (Simon I of Kartli) and Levend Alexander (Levan of Kakheti)...*”. *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, s.36. According to contemporary sources, in 1540-1554 Shah Tahmasp led four campaigns against Georgian kingdoms. In 1556-1561 the Safavid forces under the command of Shahverdi Khan Ziyadoghlu Qajar, beylerbeyi of Qarabagh (Ganja) made three expeditions to Kartli. In a battle of Garisi (also known as Kumas) which took place in 1556 or 1558, Luarsab I, a king of Kartli and a father of Simon, was killed in spite of the defeat of the Safavids (Isgandar Bey Munshi Turkman. *Tarikh-i alämara-yi Abbasi*, V.1, s.167; Brosset, Marie-Félicité, *Chronique géorgienne*, De l'Imprimerie royale, Paris 1831, p.10. In 1561, at the battle of *Tsikhedidi* Shahverdi Khan Ziyadoghlu defeted Georgian army and prince of Kakheti Georgi was killed in action (Isgandar Bey Munshi Turkman. *Tarikh-i alämara-yi Abbasi*, 1:168; Shirazi Khawaja Zainalabidin Ali Abdi bey, *Takmilat ul-akbbar*, translation from Persian and introduction by Abulfaz Rahimov, Elm, Baku 1996, s.85. According to Ali Abdi bey, “*While the envoys of Rum (Ottomans) were in Qazvin the heads of Georgian dead, captured asnavurs (warriors), and trophy were shown to Shah Tahmasp*”. *Takmilat ul-akbbar*, s.85. The existence of this tower was also attested by Oruj Bey Bayat. However, his account of this tower differs somewhat: “*Ganjab possesses a notable building, which I may here mention. This is a tower built up, from foundation to summit, with the skulls of Turks, and the number must exceed 50,000 beads. ... It was erected here by a certain Persian general named Khan Sayyid Oghlu (Shahverdi Khan Ziyadoghlu), after he had conquered the Turks in a pitched battle at this place*”. *Don Juan of Persia: A Shi'ah Catholic 1560-1604* translated by G. Le Strange, Harper & Brothers, New York and London 1926, p.42. Shahverdi Khan Ziyadoghlu was mentioned for his bravery in a battle around Marand in 1548 against the Ottomans. *Tarikh-i alämara-yi Abbasi*, v.1, p.141. Shahverdi Khan also took part in an expedition against the Ottoman governor of Erzurum Iskender Pasha in 1552, which was resulted in victory of the Safavids and according to Isgandar Bey Munshi, he was awarded for his courage shown during the battle. *Tarikh-i alämara-yi Abbasi*, v.1, p.149. From all of this information we can therefore conclude that, reliable sources describing the Safavids-Georgian and Safavid-Ottoman wars do not record any tower of skulls erected with the heads of the Georgian kings or the Ottoman soldiers.



From a small surviving fragment of the *Shirali Bey* Tower of the fortress which was reconstructed on the ruins of the fortress of 1588, it is evident that, the fortress was built of, clay-mud, cobblestone and baked bricks which was characteristic to the architecture of Ganja.<sup>27</sup>

#### f. Completion of the Fortress Construction

According to Rahimzade, the construction of the fortress lasted 43 days<sup>28</sup>. Selaniki slightly differing from him, indicates that the fortress was completed in 40 days<sup>29</sup>. Ottomans were skilled in building similar fortresses in minimum time despite their remote location (Table 1). Size of the workforce, mobilization of the resources, scale of the planned defenses (dimensions of the fortress, number of towers, existence of internal fortresses, depth of the moats, etc.), availability of sufficient local construction materials, distance to local building material sources are among the main factors affecting the duration of the construction work. Another factor having influence in time scale of the construction works was the military and security circumstances in the surrounding area.

Table 1.

Fortress	Duration of construction (days)	Fortification date (year)	Built by	Length of the fortress wall (m.)	Gates	towers	
						outer	internal
Ganja	40; 43	1588	Ferhad Paşa	2.945 <sup>30</sup> ; 4.650 <sup>31</sup>	7	43	?
Tabriz	30 <sup>32</sup> ; 36 <sup>33</sup> ; 60 <sup>34</sup>	1585	Osman Paşa	8.293 <sup>35</sup> ; 9.843 <sup>36</sup>	3	?	?

<sup>27</sup> For more on this, see F.Ahmadov, *Gəncənin tarix yaddaşı* [Historical memory of Ganja], "Shirvanneshr", Baku 1998, s.96-107.

<sup>28</sup> Ibrahim Rahimzadeh, *Osmanlı qoşunlarının Azərbaycana yürüşləri*, s.194.

<sup>29</sup> Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, s.37.

<sup>30</sup> 3.800 zira (2.945m.). Ibrahim Rahimzadeh, *Osmanlı qoşunlarının Azərbaycana yürüşləri*, s.194.

<sup>31</sup> 6.000 zira (4.650 m.). Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, s.36.

<sup>32</sup> Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, cited in Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700*, p.217.

<sup>33</sup> "Fortezza di Tauris finita in trentasei giorni" (Tabriz fortress was completed in 36 days). Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi, *Historia della guerra fra Turchi et Persiani*, Di Gio. Thomaso Minadoi da Rovigo, divisa in libri nove, Appresso Andrea Muschio & Barezzo Barezzi, Venice 1594, p.312; Ibrakhim Efendi Pechevi. *Istoriya* [History] (Passages on history of Azerbaijani and neighboring countries for the period of 1520-1640), translation by Z. M. Bunyadov, Em, Baku 1988, s.63; *Evllya Çelebi. Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa in the Seventeenth Century by Evllya Efendi. Translated by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall. Vol 2, London 1850*, p.134.

<sup>34</sup> Bidlisi Sharaf-khan ibn Shamsaddin, *Sharafname*, s.248.

<sup>35</sup> According to Pechevi, the circumference of the fortress was 10,700 *arshin* (8.293 m.) in length. Pechevi, *Istoriya*, s.63.

Revan	15 <sup>37</sup> ; 45 <sup>38</sup>	1583	Ferhad Paşa	3.048 <sup>39</sup>	5	43	8
Shamakhi	40 <sup>40</sup> ; 45 <sup>41</sup>	1583	Osman Pasa	5.425 <sup>42</sup> ; 7.750 <sup>43</sup>	-	70	20
Eresh	7 <sup>44</sup> ; 22 <sup>45</sup> ; 40 <sup>46</sup>	1578	Mustafa Paşa	7.315 <sup>47</sup>	3	4 <sup>48</sup>	none

<sup>36</sup> “To defend this town a strong citadel was then built of twelve thousand seven hundred cubits” (9.843 m.). *Evliya Çelebi. Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa in the Seventeenth Century*, p.134.

<sup>37</sup> “*Fortezza di Reivan edificata in quindici giorni*” (The Revan fortress was built in the fifteen days). Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi, *Historia della guerra fra Turchi et Persiani*, p.220.

<sup>38</sup> Pechevi. *Istoriya*, s.59; *Evliya Çelebi, Kniga putestestviya* [“Book of travels”]. Territories of the South Caucasus and neighboring provinces of Asia Minor and Iran. Compiled and edited by A. D. Zheltyakov, 3rd ed., Nauka, Moscow 1983, s.151.

<sup>39</sup> In 1603, according to Isgandar Bey Munshi there were three fortresses (*Atiq, Gözcü* and *Yeni qala*) in Iravan city. The fortress built by Ferhad Pasha in 1583 was called *Atiq* (Isgandar Bey Munshi, *Tarikh-i alāmara-yi Abbasi*, v. 2, s.1173. Chardin who visited Iravan in 1673 mentioned the two fortresses in Iravan and gave the dimensions of one which probably built by the Ottomans in 1583: “It is of an oval form, four thousand paces around”. The Travels of Sir John Chardin through Mingrelia and Georgia into Persia, A Collection of Voyages and Travels, v.VII, J. Christie, Dublin 1815, p.385. Assuming that, the mean value of a pace is 0.762 meter, the total length of the fortress equals to 3.048 meter.

<sup>40</sup> Peçevi relates: “on 5 Jumada 991/6 May they started the construction of the fortress and built it in 40 days. Pechevi. *Istoriya*, s.57

<sup>41</sup> Asafı Dal Mehmed Celebi, cited in Özer Küpeli, “*Evliya Çelebi'nin İlk İran Seyahati Güzergahı ve Kalelere İlişkin Bilgiler*,” *Türk Dünyası İncelemeleri Dergisi / Journal of Turkish World Studies* 11:2 (2011), s.89

<sup>42</sup> ... *mubât-i sâr binâsı lâzım olanmabâlli bennâ-i zîrâ'ı ile ölçüldükde kulleleri ile yedi bin mîkdârı zîrâ' olup* (... if the fortress together with its towers measured in architect's *zîra*, the circumference will be 7.000 *zîra*) (5.425 m.). Yunus Zeyrek. *Târîh-i Osman Paşa*. Kültür Bakanlığı, Ankara 2001, s.62.

<sup>43</sup> The circumference of the fortress was ten thousand arsin. Asafı Dal Mehmed Celebi, cited in Özer Küpeli, “*Evliya Çelebi'nin İlk İran Seyahati Güzergahı ve Kalelere İlişkin Bilgiler*”, s.89.

<sup>44</sup> Regarding the construction of Eresh fortress Rahimzade wrote: “... within one week, a strong fortress was built with forts and towers and warehouses for weapons and surrounded by a deep moat” Ibrahim Rahimzadeh, *Osmanlı qoşunlarının Azərbaycana yürüşləri*, s.37.

<sup>45</sup> Minadoi, *Historia della guerra fra Turchi et Persiani*, p.97.

<sup>46</sup> *Evliya Çelebi, Narrative of Travels*, p.155.

<sup>47</sup> “...The circumference of which is nine thousand six hundred paces” (7.315 m). *Evliya Çelebi, Narrative of Travels*, p.155.

<sup>48</sup> Apart from four towers, according to Evliya Çelebi there were 17 *tabiyas* (ramparts) of Eresh fortress, *Evliya Çelebi. Kniga putestestviya*, s.157.

### 3. Provincial Administration of Gence-Karabağ Vilayet

After the conquest of Ganja in 1588, the Ottomans carried out several important measures to maintain their military presence, as well as initiate their administrative and fiscal system in Qarabagh province.

To achieve their first and crucial goal, the Ottoman government ordered the construction of the strategically important Ganja fortress and deployed significant number of troops to staff them.

As in other Ottoman provinces, Azerbaijan's conquered lands were divided into provinces (*vilayet*, *beylerbeyilik*) and sub-provinces or districts (*sancak*). Ganja became the center of a Ganja-Qarabagh province (*vilâyet-i Gence Karabağ*) until it was reconquered by the Safavid Shah Abbas I in 1606. According to the provincial survey in 1593, there were seven sanjaks (Ganja, Khachin, Gargar, Ahistabad, Verende, Dizak and Hekeri) in the territories of the former Safavid *beylerbeyi* of Qarabagh (Ganja).

Furthermore, these sanjaks were in turn divided into *nahiyes* (sub-districts). There were total numbers of 48 *nahiyes* in seven sanjaks: Ganja (with 25 *nahiye*), Khachin (5 *nahiye*), Gargar (3 *nahiye*), Ahistabad (6 *nahiye*), Verende (1 *nahiye*), Dizak (4 *nahiye*) and Hekeri (4 *nahiye*)<sup>49</sup>The biggest sanjak (*liva*) of Ganja, itself was divided into two *kazas* (districts): Ganja and Barda. The Ottomans carried out systematic cadastral surveys (*tabris*) in order to estimate the revenues that the treasury could collect from its recently occupied lands. The first Ottoman provincial survey of the Ganja-Qarabagh *eyalet* carried out in 1593.<sup>50</sup>

In Ottomans, provincial governors were usually changed or rotated every three years.<sup>51</sup>In case of Ganja, we can observe the frequent rotation of governors during the Ottoman rule. Drawing on primary sources, our estimations shows that, during the first 11 years of Ottoman rule (1588-1598), nine *beylerbeyis* served in Ganja. These governors supervised and headed both the military and the provincial administration.<sup>52</sup>In the frontier provinces the governor was styled a *muhafiz*, a defender or keeper, indicating that his primary function was military<sup>53</sup>. Apart from his military function, *beylerbeyi* was a supervisor of revenues, and placed above the defterdar of provincial treasurer.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Oktay Efendizâde, "Gence", *DİA*, Vol. 14, s.18.

<sup>50</sup> Yusuf Sarıncay, Mustafa Budak, and Kemal Gurulkan, *Osmanlı belgelerinde Karabağ*, s.19.

<sup>51</sup> "Tabriz district together with the province Diyarbekir was granted to beylerbeyi of Trablusu-Şam (Şam Trablusu) Hadim Jafar Paşa as a fief (*arपालािक*) on the condition that, three years later he would be transferred to the post of beylerbeyi of Budin". Pechevi, *Istoriya*, s.64.

<sup>52</sup> Gábor Ágoston. "Military Transformation in the Ottoman Empire and Russia, 1500-1800." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12/2 (2011), s. 290.

<sup>53</sup> Kunt, Metin, "Devolution from the centre to the periphery: an overview of Ottoman provincial administration", *The Dynastic Centre and the Provinces: Agents and Interactions*, Duindam, Jeroen and Dabringhaus, Sabine (eds.), Brill, Leiden 2014, p. 41.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p.40.

Frequent rotation of governors of Ganja, in some cases contributed to confusions among sources regarding the appointments to this post. In particular, there is contradiction among sources concerning the identity of the first *beylerbeyi* of Ganja.

According to Selaniki, Rahimzade and Bidlisi following the capture in 1588, Ganja was put under the government of Çerkez Haydar Paşa.<sup>55</sup> Contrary to this, Pechevi and Solakzade indicate that, the former *beylerbeyi* of Anatolia Hadim Paşa was the first *beylerbeyi* of Ganja.<sup>56</sup> It is true that, Hadim Paşa took part in Ganja campaign and construction of Ganja fortress, however, at that time he was appointed governor of Shirvan not Ganja<sup>57</sup> following the death of Jafar Paşa on 11 Zulqadah, 996/ 2 October 1588.<sup>58</sup> From Ottoman official document relating to *timar* allocation in some villages of Ganja province in Muharram 998/November 1589, it is evident that, during that time the governorship of Ganja was held by Mustafa Paşa.<sup>59</sup> In October 1590 (in the end of the Zulhijja, 998) a post of *beylerbeyi* of Eresh was given to the former governor of Ganja and *Silahdarbaşı* (or *Yeniçeri silahdar ağası*) Davud Ağa was appointed as *beylerbeyi* of Ganja<sup>60</sup>. In 1592, Hızır Paşa was made of *beylerbeyi* of Ganja until Mahmud Paşa took this position in 1594.<sup>61</sup> In early Jumadil Akhir, 1005 (January 1597) Hadım Osman Paşa was appointed as the governor of Ganja replacing Baki bey oğlu Osman Paşa in this position.<sup>62</sup> In Rebi-ul avval 1007 (October 1598) *beylerbeyi* of Ganja became Mustafa Paşa replacing Mehmed Paşa was a son of former Grand Vezir Farhad Paşa.<sup>63</sup>

Distinguished service in frontier garrisons also offered opportunities for promotion and other rewards. In case of Davud Ağa, the promotion of *Silahdarbaşı* to the rank of *beylerbeyi* can be observed. Mustafa Paşa, who was one of the former *Yeniçeri ağası* also attained the rank of *beylerbeyi* after his appointment to the governorship of Ganja.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, s.39; Ibrahim Rahimzadeh, *Osmanlı qoşunlarının Azərbaycana yürüşləri*, s.194; Bidlisi Sharaf-khan ibn Shamsaddin, *Sharafname*, v.2, s.292.

<sup>56</sup> Pechevi, *Istorija*, 69; Solakzade Mehmed, *Tarikh: Azərbaycan tarixinə dair iqtibaslar* [History: Quotes about the history of Azerbaijan], translation from Turkish by Z.M. Bunyadov, Elm, Baku 1992, s.67.

<sup>57</sup> Bidlisi Sharaf-khan ibn Shamsaddin, *Sharafname*, s.292.

<sup>58</sup> Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, s.39; Ibrahim Rahimzade, *Osmanlı qoşunlarının Azərbaycana yürüşləri*, s.194.

<sup>59</sup> Yusuf Sarıncay, Mustafa Budak, and Kemal Gurulkan, *Osmanlı belgelerinde Karabağ*, s.17-18.

<sup>60</sup> *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, 42; Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani* (compiled by Nuri Akbayar), Vol II, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 1996, s.408.

<sup>61</sup> *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, s.53.

<sup>62</sup> *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, 61; *Sicilleyi Osmani*, v.4, s.1306.

<sup>63</sup> *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, 66; *Sicilleyi Osmani*, v.3, s.1030; v.4, s.1182.

<sup>64</sup> *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, s.66.

While the governors of Ganja did not hold the rank of vezir, the posts of *beylerbeyi* of Shirvan<sup>65</sup> and in many cases, Revan<sup>66</sup> and Tabriz<sup>67</sup> were granted either with the rank of *vezir* or some holders of this position already bore this title. From *Ruus* Registers it is evident that, the first governor of Ganja carried the title of *mirmiran*.<sup>68</sup> Serving in frontier provinces with rank of *vezir* was an important step toward the post of grand *vezir*. Contributing to the greater degree of provincial autonomy, the rank of *vezir* ensured the holder with wider powers in case of military actions and involvement in them rulers of the neighboring provinces.<sup>69</sup>

Attaching rank of *vezir* to the post of *beylerbeyi* attested the importance of these provinces to the Ottomans. Revan, Shirvan and Tabriz provinces were an active war zones between the Safavids and Ottomans. The Ottomans used the garrisons stationed in these provinces as advance bases against the Safavids, while they relied on Ganja garrison mainly as a supply and support base. Size of the garrisons and numbers of the fortresses in these provinces were other factors contributing to their strategic importance. On the other hand, giving a special status to the governor of Shirvan, the Ottomans also aimed to get backing of local Sunni population.

The provincial *defterdar* (or *mal defterdar*) carried out the administration of the provincial treasury. The *defterdar* of Ganja-Qarabagh province whose name was Ali Efendi was first mentioned in an imperial *hüküm* dated 6 Muharram 999/4 November 1590.<sup>70</sup> From Selaniki we know that, on 23 Ramadan 1002/13 June 1594, Zarif Mehmed Efendi was appointed as the *defterdar*<sup>71</sup> of the

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<sup>65</sup> “Shirvan was given to Hadim Hasan Pasha with the rank of vezir”(Tarikh-i Selaniki, s.39; *Sharafname*, v.2, s.292). “Former governor of Baghdad vezir Jafar Pasha was appointed muhafiz of Shirvan province”( Tarikh-i Selaniki, s.50).

<sup>66</sup> “Brave and Courageous Cigalzade Yusuf (Sinan) Pasha, a former governor of Van became beylerbeyi of Revan granted the rank of vezir” (Pechevi, *Istoriya*, s.59; Rahimzade, s.170).

<sup>67</sup> Yunus Zeyrek. *Tarih-i Osman Paşa*, 68; *Sharafname*, 2:248. “In Ramadan, 1003(11.V.-9.VI.1595) Tabriz was given to Saatci Hasan Pasha with the rank of vezir”( Tarikh-i Selaniki, s.56).

<sup>68</sup> Aydin B., Günalan R., "Ruus Defterlerine Göre XVI. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Eyalet Teşkilatı ve Gelişimi", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* (2011), s.86.

<sup>69</sup> Regarding the appointment to the governorship of Shirvan in 1578 Rahimzade relates: “It was decided that, it would be reasonable if the appointed to the position of beylerbeyi would simultaneously raised to the rank of vezir in order to dispose the troops entrusted to him and conquer the province”. Ibrahim Rahimzadeh Harimi, *Osmanlı qoşunlarının Azərbaycana yürüşləri*, s.37.

<sup>70</sup> Yusuf Sarıay, Mustafa Budak, and Kemal Gurulkan, *Osmanlı belgelerinde Karabağ*, s.16.

<sup>71</sup> Also called as *the mal defterdari* or *defterdar-i hazine*. For more on Ottoman financial establishment, see Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1986, pp.311-314.

province.<sup>72</sup>The rotation of the post of *Defterdar* (“bookkeeper”) in every three years is also evident from the sources. According to Solakzade, a *defterdar* was appointed for three-year term to register the treasure of raw silk in Ganja province.<sup>73</sup> Provincial *defterdars* supervised the activities of their two chief subordinates, the *defter kethüdası timar defterdarı*.<sup>74</sup> The first *timar defterdarı* of Ganja province was Katib Mustafa and the first *defter kethüdası* was Piri bey.<sup>75</sup>

The *defter kethüdası* was superior of the *timar defterdarı* and subordinate to the mal *defterdarı*.<sup>76</sup>The superiority of *defter kethüdası* over *timar defterdarı* is evident also from the difference in their salaries. If the annual revenue of *defter kethüdası* of Ganja province amounted to 80,000 akçe, *timar defterdarı*’s annual income totaled 60,000 akçe.

Financial, judicial and military branches of Ottoman provincial government were separate theoretically. The imperial orders were usually sent to the provincial governors, however, sometimes *defterdars* and *kadı*s (chief judicial officer) were also addressed in these documents.<sup>77</sup> The first mention of *kadı* of Ganja province, whose name was *mevlânâ* (the title for *kadı*s) Kemal, appeared on imperial hüküm, dated 2 Zhulhijjah, 998/ 1 October 1590.<sup>78</sup> In Shah Abbas’s I letter to Ottoman garrison in Ganja, *kadı* and *miifti* (jurisconsult) were also addressed, together with the governor of the province.<sup>79</sup>

#### *a. Financial Provisions of the Provincial Administrators*

From *Ruus* Registers, which are the source of valuable information Ottoman about provincial organization, we can get data about the appointments and financial provisions of provincial administrators including *beylerbeyis*, *defterdars* and *secretaries* (Table 2). Ganja-Qarabagh province was subject to the *timar* system and its governor did not receive a fixed annual income (*salıyané*). According to *Ruus* Register, dated *Fı gurre-i Zilkade*, 996/22 September 1588 *beylerbeyi* of Qars Haydar Paşa was appointed a *beylerbeyi* of Ganja with

<sup>72</sup> Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, s.53.

<sup>73</sup> Solakzade Mehmed, *Tarikh*, s.67.

<sup>74</sup> Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali*, p.313.

<sup>75</sup> Aydın B., Günalan R., "Ruus Defterlerine Göre XVI. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Eyalet Teşkilatı ve Gelişimi", s.86.

<sup>76</sup> Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali*, p.320.

<sup>77</sup> Yusuf Sarınoy, Mustafa Budak, and Kemal Gurulkan, *Osmanlı belgelerinde Karabağ*, s.13-15; *Osmanlı devleti ile Azerbaycan türk banliklari arasindaki münâsebetlere dâir arşiv belgeleri*, v.2, s.20-21.

<sup>78</sup> Yusuf Sarınoy, Mustafa Budak, and Kemal Gurulkan, *Osmanlı belgelerinde Karabağ*, s.13-15.

<sup>79</sup> Isgandar Bey Munshi, *Tarikh-i alâmara-yi Abbasi*, v.2, s.1281.

*hasse*s (revenues) of 2,100,000 (*yirmi bir kere yüz bin*) *akçe* to be collected from the *hasse*s of *nahiye*s of Ankara. However, according to *Tapu Tabrir defter* (tax census) register of the vilayet of Ganja from H. 1001 (1593), the total *has* revenues of *beylerbeyi* (*mirmiran*) amounted to 1,200,000 *akçe*, while the revenues produced from the land fiefs of 5 *sanjakbeyis* (*mir liva*) totaled 1,251,009 *akçe*.<sup>80</sup>

Table 2.

Name of the office	Date of the appointment	Annual revenue (in <i>akçe</i> )
<i>Mirmirânî-i Gence</i> (Governor/ <i>Beylerbeyi</i> of Ganja)	<i>Fî gurre-i Zilkade sene 996/</i> 22 September 1588	2,100,000 <sup>81</sup>
<i>Defterdarlık-ı Timarhâ-i Gence</i> (Treasury of <i>timar</i> allotments in Ganja)	<i>15 Mubarrem sene 998/</i> 24 November 1589	60,000
<i>Kethüdâlık-ı Defterhâ-ı<sup>82</sup> Gence</i> (Register office of large land grants in Ganja)	<i>10 Mubarrem sene 998/</i> 19 November 1589	80,000

#### 4. Size and Composition of Ottoman Garrison in Ganja

After fortifications, Ganja became one of the major garrison towns on the eastern frontier of the Ottomans. According to Selaniki, garrison of 3,500 soldiers were stationed in Ganja fortress.<sup>83</sup> Other eyewitness, Rahimzade does't not record the number of the garrison soldiers. In comparison with the fortresses of Tabriz, Revan, Eresh and Shemakhi garrison of Ganja was less sizeable (Table 3). The initial number of soldiers that served in these garrisons changed during the course of time in a response to the threats posed by the Safavids.

Sources gave information on most types of the Ottoman troops serving in Ganja fortress. Selaniki mentions *Silahdars* ("weaponbearers"), *sipahis*

<sup>80</sup>Kuş, Elif, *699 numaralı Gence vilayeti tapu tabrir defteri H.1001 (1593)* (Unpublished master's dissertation) (Sakarya Üniversitesi, 2003), s.64.

<sup>81</sup>Comparatively, from information provided in Rahimzade's history we learn that, in 1578 the annual salary of beylerbeyi of Ereş Qaytas Pasha was 500,000 *akçe*. Ibrahim Rahimzadeh, *Osmanlı qoşunlarının Azərbaycana yürüşləri*, s.40. According to Ruus Register of 1589, the beylerbeyi of Ereş Osman bey's revenues was 700,000 *akçe* with *hasse*s. Aydın B., Günalan R., "Ruus Defterlerine Göre XVI. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Eyalet Teşkilatı ve Gelişimi", s.80.

<sup>82</sup>The *defterdar* was assisted by two other officials, the *defter kethudası*, who handled *has* grants and *ziamet* grants (large land grants), and the *timar defterdarı*, who dealt with ordinary *timar* allotments, see Geza David, "Administration, provincial" in *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Gabor Agoston and Bruce Masters, Infobase Publishing, New York 2009, pp.13-17.

<sup>83</sup> Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, s.39.

(cavalryman), *Yeniçeris* (Janissaries), *Cebecis*<sup>84</sup> (“armorers”) *Topçus* (“cannoneer, or gunner”) and *kul oğulları*<sup>85</sup> (sons of Janissaries). According to Iskander beg Munshi, Farhad Paşa constructed Ganja fortress and put *muhafiz* and *yeniçeris* there and then returned<sup>86</sup>. According to Vardapet Tsaretsy, Farhad Paşa left the troop unit called *gulams* (Janissaries) in Ganja fortress and returned to his *Qaisar* (Ottoman sultan).<sup>87</sup>

An imperial order (*hokum*), dated 26 April 1594/ 5 shaban 1002 to the beylerbeyi of Ganja Mahmud Paşa record the *gonulluyan*<sup>88</sup> and timariot sipahis among the garrison troops to be sent to the province of Shirvan.<sup>89</sup> Interestingly, Janissaries were not on the list of troops sent to Shirvan. It can be explained by the fact that, since Janissaries formed the backbone of garrison troops, the protection of the fortress rested mainly with them.

Table 3.

Name of the fortress	Date <sup>90</sup>	Number of the garrison soldiers
Ganja	1588	3,500
Tabriz	1585	2,000 or 3,000; <sup>91</sup> 7,000; <sup>92</sup> 7,000 or 8,000; <sup>93</sup> 12,000; <sup>94</sup> 15,000; <sup>95</sup>

<sup>84</sup> The main duty of the *Cebecis* was to manufacture weapons, including the firearms, armor, trenching tools, and related combat equipment of the Janissaries. For more, see Mesut Uyar and Edward J. Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans, From Osman to Atatürk*, Praeger, Santa Barbara, CA 2009, p.49.

<sup>85</sup> The *Kulogblu* are descended from the Janissaries. In North Africa, the son of a Janissari by a Maghrebi (Trablusgarp, Tunisia and Algeria) woman was also called a *Kulogblu*. Abdülkadir Özcan, KULOĞLU, TDV yıl: 2002, cilt.26, s.358.

<sup>86</sup> Isgandar Bey Munshi, *Tarikh-i alāmara-yi Abbasi*, v.1, s.697.

<sup>87</sup> Arakel Davrizhetsi (or Arakel Tabrizi), *Kniga istoriy* [“Book of the histories”]. Translation from armenian, foreword and comments by L.A.Khanlaryan, Nauka, Moscow 1973, s.471.

<sup>88</sup> By this time *gonulluyan*, were salaried cavalry. For more on this, see G.Agoston, Review of "Mark L. Stein, Guarding the Frontier. Ottoman Border Forts and Garrisons in Europe in *Book Reviews / JESHO* 52 (2009), pp.153-184. After the mid-sixteenth century *Gönüllü* category became a generic name for all mercenaries in and around frontier provinces. Mesut Uyar and Edward J. Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans, From Osman to Atatürk*, p. 61.

<sup>89</sup> Yusuf Sarıay, et al., *Osmanlı belgelerinde Karabağ*, s.21-22.

<sup>90</sup> We present the data for the year of the completion of fortress constructon. The only exception is the figures for the garrison stationed in Shemakhi fortress. Since we have no data for the completion year (1583) we give the number for the year of 1606, during the siege of Shmakhi by the Safavids.

<sup>91</sup> Isgandar Bey Munshi, *Tarikh-i alāmara-yi Abbasi*, v.1, s.512.

<sup>92</sup> Bidlisi Sharaf-khan ibn Shamsaddin. *Sharafname*, v.2, s.248.



Revan	1583	5601 <sup>96</sup> ; 8,000 <sup>97</sup>
Eresh	1578	5,000 <sup>98</sup>
Shemakhi	1606	4,000 <sup>99</sup>

Qarabagh was one of the prosperous provinces under the Safavids, in spite of devastating effects (demographic and economic decline resulting from the migration and internal disorder) of Ottoman-Safavid war of 1578-1590, it remained self-sufficient also during the Ottoman rule. According to Tax registers of 1593, the annual revenue of Ganja-Qarabagh province was 22,227,768 *akçe*<sup>100</sup>. About half of this amount, 10,456,825 *akçe* were collected from the *hass* lands of the Ottoman sultan.<sup>101</sup> Revenues collected from *ze'amet* and *timar* lands constituted 5,498,243 and 3,821,691 *akçe* respectively. Interestingly, Solakzade indicates that, the salaries and expenses of the soldiers were paid from the silk and annually, silk of 150 loads *akçe* (15,000,000 *akçe* in value)<sup>102</sup> were sent to the court of the *padishah*<sup>103</sup> (Ottoman sultan). These facts suggest that, the expenditure of Ganja garrison could be met through internal revenues.

#### a. Ganja fortress as Link in Ottoman Fortress Chain in the South Caucasus

As a component of the Ottoman fortress chain in the South Caucasus, one of the responsibilities of the Ganja garrison was the provisioning of military support in the form of troops, weapons and ammunition to other Ottoman

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<sup>93</sup>Pechevi. *Istoriya*, s.63.

<sup>94</sup> Don Juan of Persia, p.185; Minadoi, *Historia della guerra fra Turchi et Persiani*, p.321.

<sup>95</sup> According to Selaniki, following its completion, the fortress was put under the government of Cigalzade Sinan Paşa with a garrison of 15,000. *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, s.20.

<sup>96</sup>Bekir Kütükoğlu. *Osmanlı-İran Siyasî Münasebetleri (1578-1590)*, s.136.

<sup>97</sup>Don Juan of Persia, 170. According to Iskander bey Munshi, there were 12,000 Ottoman soldiers in the province of Revan and about 10,000 of them were stationed in the three fortresses of Revan in 1604. Iskander bey Munshi, *Tarikh-i alāmara-yi Abbasi*, v.2, s.1170-1171). Comparatively, following the capture of Revan in 1635, it was put under the command of Murtaza Pasha with a garrison of 10,000 men. Pechevi.*Istoriya*, s.92.

<sup>98</sup> "Fortress be appointed Kaytas Pasha, with a garrison of 5,000 men". Don Juan of Persia, 147; Minadoi, p.97.

<sup>99</sup> A.Bakikhanov, *Gülüstani-İräm*. (Baku: "Möminun", 2001), s.86.

<sup>100</sup>699 numaralı Gence vilayeti tapu tahrir defteri H.1001 (1593), s.86-87.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., s.63.

<sup>102</sup> 1 load of *akçe* equals to 100.000 *akçe*. For more on this, see Ömer İşbilir, YÜK, TDV yıl: 2013, cilt: 44:48

<sup>103</sup>Solakzade Mehmed, *Tarikh*, s.67.

strongholds to strategic fortresses in the neighboring provinces. An imperial decree issued on 5 Shavval 1002/26 April 1594, ordered *beylerbeyi* of Ganja Mahmud Paşa to send 1,500 soldiers with ammunition to Shirvan province to perform the necessary duties.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, two other imperial orders issued on 5 Jumada al-Akhir 1000/19 Mart 1592 and Muharram 1001/October - November 1592, instructed the governors of Ganja to send weapons and ammunition to Shirvan province.<sup>105</sup> In all these orders, it was mentioned that, before sending the military support to Shirvan province, the sufficient supplies of weapons and ammunitions had to be left in Ganja fortress.

### 5. *The Recapture of Ganja by the Safavids in 1606 and the Fall of Ottoman Garrison*

Shah Abbas I was determined to restore the Safavid rule over the territories lost to the Ottomans under the treaty of 1590. Using the advantage of Celali rebellions in the Ottoman Empire, he took Tabriz by a surprise attack in late 1603.<sup>106</sup> This marked the beginning of a new war with the Ottomans that lasted until 1612. After a victory over the Ottoman army commanded by Cighalzade Sinan Paşa in *Sufian* in November 1605, the Safavids started preparation for Ganja campaign.

During the Safavid-Ottoman war of 1603-1612, Ganja among other strongholds such as Revan, Tabriz and Shamakhi became the theatre of siege warfare. As a contemporary observer, Iskander beg Munshi's *Tarikh-i alam ara-yi Abbasi* is the most reliable source for the siege of Ganja in 1606. Munshi's narrative provides a basis for an assessment of the performance of Ottoman garrison in Ganja against the Safavid warfare. From the passages provided in Iskander Bey Munshi's "*Tarikh-i alam ara-yi Abbasi*" it is evident that, Shah Abbas attached special importance to recapture Ganja which was considered as a "key of Shirvan" due its strategic location.

Before the siege of 1606, the Safavids had made several attempts to recapture Ganja and Qarabagh from the Ottomans. In 998/1589-1590, Muhammad Khan Ziyad-oghlu, a former Safavid ruler of Ganja, with his troops from Qajar and Turkman tribes laid siege to Ganja, but failed to reclaim the city.<sup>107</sup> After the Revan fell into the hand of the Safavids in June 1604, Shah Abbas sent Qorchibashi Allahqulu bey with an army of 15,000 to capture Ganja fortress by storm. In spite of inflicting casualties on the Ottomans near Ganja, the forces of Allahqulu bey failed to take the fortress.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>104</sup>Yusuf Sarıncay, et al., *Osmanlı belgelerinde Karabağ*, s.21-22.

<sup>105</sup>*Osmanlı devleti ile Azerbaycan türk hanlıkları arasındaki münâsebetlere dair arşiv belgeleri*, v.2, s.23-24.

<sup>106</sup>Isgandar Bey Munshi Turkman. *Tarikh-i alâmarâ-yi Abbasi*, v.2, s.1162-1169.

<sup>107</sup>Isgandar Bey Munshi Turkman. *Tarikh-i alâmarâ-yi Abbasi*, v.1, s.716-718; *Tarikh-i Selaniki*, s.41-42.

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*, v.2, s.1198.

In Ramadan 1014/ January-early February 1606, Shah Abbas I sent a letter to the Ottoman garrison in Ganja demanding them to leave city voluntarily.<sup>109</sup> However, the Ottomans refused the Shah Abbas's offer, as they had no intention of surrendering. At that time, the *beylerbeyi* and muhafiz of Ganja was Mahammad or Mehmed<sup>110</sup> Paşa. According to Munshi "... in order to close the doors of peace between them (Ottomans) and Qizilbash, they murdered Safavid *Rustam Sultan Sugelen Zulghadar* who was taken captive during a battle and had been a prisoner in this (Ganja) fortrees for two years."<sup>111</sup>

In early March 1606, the Safavid army took encampment around the Tomb of Sheikh Nizami Ganjavi situated near the city. The Safavids used molds to make stone-firing canons. Using molds in cannon making enabled them to march in possibly short time. Safavid vanguard unit predetermined the location of the their forces around the fortress. To control the entry to the city, the Safavids erected a wall in front of the main gate of the fortress and a regiment of *ghulams* and *tufengchis* (musketeers) were deployed to protect that wall. Safavids also dug trenches around the fortress whcih provided a shelter from the Ottoman cannon and rifle fire.<sup>112</sup>

The available sources do not give the precise date of beginning of the siege. However, from Munshi we know that, the siege began in few days following the Novruz holiday (21 March).<sup>113</sup> Sources differ on duration of the siege. From the text of the "*Tarikh-i alamara-yi Abbasi*" it is evident that, the actual siege lasted over three and a half months. However, according to Pechevi, the siege continued precisely seven months.<sup>114</sup> Contemporary sources do not give information regarding the total number of the Safavid soldiers participating in the siege. As for the Ottomans, the estimated number of troops in Ganja fortress was between 3,500 and 4,000.

Safavids well aware of the formidable defences of Ganja had not intended to take the city by storm. They prefered to weaken the strength of the Ottoman military unit gradually and wait until the heavy cannons to be ready and then make decisive assaults.

The first three months of the siege can be characterised as largely a battle of attrition between the attacker and the defender. The Safavids tried to engage the Ottoman garrison in limited skirmishes in order to wear down the enemy. According to Munshi, the Ottomans made several assaults to the sections of

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<sup>109</sup>Ibid., v.2, s.1280-1282.

<sup>110</sup>Pechevi, *Istoriya*, s.82.

<sup>111</sup>*Tarikh-i alāmara-yi Abbasi*, v.2, s.1289.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., v.2, s.1283-1284.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., v.2, s.1288.

<sup>114</sup>Pechevi, *Istoriya*, s.82.

Zulfigar khan and Hasan khan Ustajlu, but with no success, they drew back to the fortress.<sup>115</sup>

In the fourth months, the Safavids started to use canons which did damages to the defences. According to Arakel Tabrizi, fires from two heavy cannons seriously destroyed the fortress wall<sup>116</sup>. From Munshi it is evident that, among other siege-techniques the Safavids also used mining (trenching) operations. According him, “*qorchi*, *ghulam* and others dug tunnels (*laghim*) and reached the [base of] towers and walls. They stuffed wood piles into the tunnel under one of the sections of the fortress which was 500 *zira* (388 meter) in length and they set fire to these wood piles, as a result breaches appeared on the walls”.<sup>117</sup> From Arakel Tabrizi we know that, the Safavids destroyed the section of wall by blowing up the tunnel they filled with gunpowder.<sup>118.”</sup>

The capture of the strategically important tower called *Chahartaq* by Qorchis<sup>119</sup> determined the course of the battle. According to Munshi, *ghulams* managed to take three *Shir Haji*<sup>120</sup> towers by storm and started to break down the walls of the inner fortress.<sup>121</sup> Following the capture of the several key towers by the Safavids, the Ottoman garrison, having lost all hope of assistance had no alternative but to request *aman* (mercy). Finally, on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 1606 after a defense of more than three months, the fort surrendered.<sup>122</sup>

Safavids considered reconquest of Ganja from the Ottomans in 1606 as the “key to the conquest of Shamakhi”<sup>123</sup> and therefore, on the gate of the *Jameh Mosque* (built in 1606 and known also as Shah Abbas Mosque) of Ganja there was an inscription which stated: “*Kilid-i Shemakhi*” (“key of Shamakhi”)<sup>124</sup>. As a result of the recapture of Ganja by the Safavids, supply lines leading to the Ottoman-ruled Shirvan province were cut off and relief operations became impossible. All these factors were crucial in the fall of Ottoman garrison in Shamakhi, a seat of Shirvan province.

<sup>115</sup>*Tarikh-i alāmara-yi Abbasi*, v.2, s.1289.

<sup>116</sup>Arakel Davrizhetsi, *Kniga istoriy*, s. 94.

<sup>117</sup>*Tarikh-i alāmara-yi Abbasi*, v.2, s.1289.

<sup>118</sup>Arakel Davrizhetsi, *Kniga istoriy*, s.94

<sup>119</sup> Qorchi corps was an elite force of the Safavid army. For more information on Safavid *Qorchi* corps, see Haneda Masashi, “The Evolution of the Safavid Royal Guard” (Translated by Rudi Matthee), *Iranian Studies* 22: 2-3 (1989), pp.57-86 and Ahmad Guliyev, “Safavid Qorchi Corps”, *Azerbaijan & Azerbaijanis* 1-4 (2006), pp.203-208.

<sup>120</sup>Towers of the outer defences.

<sup>121</sup>*Tarikh-i alāmara-yi Abbasi*, v.2, s.1291.

<sup>122</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:1291; Pechevi, *Istoriya*, s.82.

<sup>123</sup>*Tarikh-i alāmara-yi Abbasi*, v.2, s.1292.

<sup>124</sup>M.Useynov, M.Bretanitskiy, A.Salamzadeh, *Istoriya arkhitektury Azerbaydzhana* [The History of Azerbaijani Architecture], “Gosstroyizdat”, Moscow 1963, s.303.

## 6. Destruction of Ganja Fortress

After its capture, Ganja was among the former Ottoman fortresses to be repaired under the order of Shah Abbas I. Isgandar Bey Munshi only mentions the appointment of Alikhan bey as a *sarkâr* (supervisor or “head of affairs”) of the reconstruction works of Ganja fortress without giving the details.<sup>125</sup> However, the repaired fortress was in use only for short period. According to Munshi, with the news of a possible Ottoman attack, Shah Abbas having doubts about the strength of Ganja fortress ordered its destruction in 1615.<sup>126</sup> The destruction of the fortress was done in order to render it unfit for use as a fortress. Rudi Matthee pointed out that, “An awareness that the Ottomans were prone to attack heavily fortified places may also have inspired the Safavids to dismantle some of those that were not frontier outposts”.<sup>127</sup>

Apart from Ganja, the fortresses in Shamakhi Nihavand and several other cities also faced with the same fate. Regarding this, German traveler Adam Olearius, who visited Shamakhi in 1636 relates:

“realising that the Turks were prone to attack cities that were fortified, and convinced that as long as they were not situated right on the borders or at mountain passes, walled cities did more harm than good, the shah (Abbas I) decided to dismantle one part of the town... He had done the same with Tabriz, Nakhjavan and Ganja.”<sup>128</sup>

The well-known Ottoman traveler Evliya Chelebi who passed through Ganja in 1647 also gave reference to the destruction of Ganja fortress by the order of Shah Abbas I:

“At the time when Mohammed (Mehmed) Paşa the Kiaya (*Kethüda*) of Sari Ahmed Pasha was governor of Genje (Ganja), the Shah besieged it for seven months, and killed the whole garrison. Since that time it remained in the possession of the Persians (Safavids), a large town, but the Shah destroyed its castle”.<sup>129</sup>

Russian merchant Fedot Kotov who passed through Ganja during his travel to Safavid territories in 1623 noted an absence of fortress in Ganja.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>*Tarikh-i alâmarâ-yi Abbâsi*, v.2, s.1536.

<sup>126</sup>*Ibid.*, v.2, s.1585.

<sup>127</sup>Rudi Matthee, "Unwalled Cities and Restless Nomads: Firearms and Artillery in Safavid Iran," in Charles Melville, ed., *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, I. B. Taurus, London 1996, s.409.

<sup>128</sup> Adam Olearius, *The voyages and travells of the ambassadors sent by Frederick, Duke of Holstein, to the Great Duke of Muscovy and the King of Persia begun in the year M.DC.XXXIII. and finish'd in M.DC.XXXIX : containing a compleat history of Muscovy, Tartary, Persia, and other adjacent countries*, Printed for John Starkey and Thomas Basset, London 1669, p.165.

<sup>129</sup> *Evliya Çelebi, Narrative of Travels*, s.154.

<sup>130</sup> Fedot Kotov, *Khozhenye kuptsa Fedota Kotova v Persyyu* [A journey of merchant Fedot Kotov to Persia], “Vostochnaya lyteratura” RAN, Moscow 1958, s.56.

Russian religious official Arseniy Sukhanov who visited Ganja in 1653, mentioned the damaged city walls, while giving no referring to the existence of the fortress in Ganja.<sup>131</sup>

### 7. Conclusions

Fortress as a tool for the implementation of Ottoman military power was necessary for the upkeep and security of the Ottoman rule in Azerbaijan. It is evident that, apart from protecting conquered lands in Qarabagh province, Ganja garrison provided the military support to other Ottoman strongholds in neighboring provinces, especially in Shirvan to face the Safavids. Ganja fortress, periodically serving as a base for military offence and defense, along with other frontier strongholds became one of the theatres of war in Safavid-Ottoman conflict in early eighteenth century. It should be noted that, fell of Ottoman garrison in Ganja in 1606 had considerable impact on the course of struggle over the strategic province of Shirvan. The similar course of events took place after the Ottomans recaptured Ganja in 1725. Ganja fortress, facing the almost the same fate, following the eight-month siege fell into the hands of Nadir Shah in 1735.

It is clear that, in comparison with the governors of the provinces of Shirvan, Revan and Tabriz, the *beylerbeyis* of Ganja was never appointed with the rank of *vezir*, a title that ensured the holder with some degree of autonomy. In several cases, some senior janissary officers were promoted to the rank of *beylerbeyi* through the appointment to the governorship of Ganja province while the administration of neighboring Shirvan province was entrusted to the experienced governors.

Ganja fortress served as the administrative seat of Ganja-Qarabagh province until it fell into the hands of the Safavids in 1606. The first Ottoman provincial survey of the Ganja- Qarabagh *vilayet* carried out in 1593 was one of the most important steps in administrative organization of the province. This survey constitutes an important source of information for the study of the social, economic, and demographic situation of Ganja- Qarabagh province in late sixteenth century.

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<sup>131</sup>*Arseniy Sukhanov, Proskinitary*: Khozhdeniye stroitelya startsa Arseniya Sukhanova v 7157 (1649) godu vo Iyerusalim i v prochiye svyatyye mesta dlya opisaniya svyatykh mest i grecheskikh tserkovnykh chinov [A journey of elder builder Arseniy Sukhanov in 7157 (1649) to Jerusalem and other holy places to describe the holy places and Greek church officials], Kazan University Press, Kazan 1870, s.108.

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