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## **Irevan Khanate and Its Administrative Division (1747-1828 years)**

### **Abstract**

The article discusses the administrative-territorial division of the Irevan Khanate after its establishment. The conducted research shows that during the centralized Azerbaijani Safavid Empire, part of the northwestern Azerbaijani lands formed one of the administrative-territorial units of the empire under the name of Chukhursad Beylerbeyliyi, and the city of Irevan was its center. Chukhursad Beylerbeyliyi existed for two centuries. After the fall of the Azerbaijani Safavid Empire, these territories were briefly part of the Azerbaijani Afshar Empire. After the fall of the Azerbaijani Afshar Empire, the Irevan Khanate was formed in the Irevan region in 1747. During the Irevan Khanate, the khanate was divided into districts in terms of administrative-territorial division, and the districts into villages. The center of the Irevan Khanate was the city of Irevan, 15 districts. All this is examined in the article based on Russian-language sources of the time, as well as historical literature.

**Keywords:** Azerbaijan, Irevan, Khanate, Administrative-Territorial Division, District, Village

## **İrevan Hanlığı ve İdari Bölünüşü (1747-1828 Yılları)**

### **Öz**

Makale, İrevan Hanlığı'nın kuruluşundan sonraki idari-bölgesel bölünmesini ele almaktadır. Yapılan araştırmalar, merkezileşmiş Azerbaycan Safevi İmparatorluğu döneminde, kuzeybatı Azerbaycan topraklarının bir



<https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/atdd>

*kısımının Çuhursad Beylerbeyliği adı altında imparatorluğun idari-bölgesel birimlerinden birini oluşturduğunu ve İrevan şehrinin onun merkezi olduğunu göstermektedir. Çuhursad Beylerbeyliği iki yüzyıl boyunca varlığını sürdürmüştür. Azerbaycan Safevi İmparatorluğu'nun yıkılmasından sonra bu topraklar kısa bir süre Azerbaycan Afşar İmparatorluğu'nun bir parçası olmuştur. Azerbaycan Afşar İmparatorluğu'nun yıkılmasından sonra 1747 yılında İrevan bölgesinde İrevan Hanlığı kurulmuştur. İrevan Hanlığı döneminde hanlık idari-bölgesel bölünme açısından ilçelere, ilçeler de köylere ayrılmıştır. İrevan Hanlığı'nın merkezi İrevan şehri, 15 ilçesi bulunmaktaydı. Tüm bunlar makalede dönemin Rusça kaynaklarına ve tarihi literatüre dayanarak incelenmektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Azerbaycan, İrevan, Hanlık, İdari-Bölgesel Taksimat, İlçe, Köy

## Introduction

The reign of the Azerbaijani Afshar Empire, founded by Nadir Shah, did not last long. The assassination of Nadir Shah in 1747 left a deep mark on the history of the Azerbaijani Afshar Empire. The weakness and lack of will of the heirs who were unable to maintain central power after Nadir Shah made the empire's collapse inevitable. The forces that did not want to submit to the central power soon acted as independent rulers and broke up into small states, khanates, and sultanates. This political fragmentation had negative effects on the subsequent historical fate of Azerbaijan. Thus, after this event, the integrity of Azerbaijan was completely violated. In the subsequent period, only the Azerbaijani Turks north of the Araz River were able to decide their own future destiny.

### 1. The formation of the Irevan Khanate, its geographical borders

After the fall of the Afshar Empire, Irevan was one of the independent khanates that emerged in the lands of Northern Azerbaijan. After Nadir Shah was killed in Khorasan in May 1747, Mir Mehdi Khan, who led the uprising against the central government in Irevan, established a khanate in a large part of the Chukhursad Beylerbey (Əliyev & Həsənov, 1997). Part of the former territory of the Chukhursad Beylerbeyliyi was included in the Nakhchivan Khanate and other khanates during administrative reforms (İrəvan xanlığı, 2010). As can be seen from the information, at the time of the formation of the Irevan Khanate, the khanate did not cover the entire territory of the former Chukhursad Beylerbey.

Mir Mehdi Khan, who declared Irevan an independent khanate, made campaigns to the territories of neighboring khanates in order to expand his territory. For this purpose, he marched to the Urmia Khanate in early 1748. During this attack, the ruler of the Urmia Khanate, Fatali Khan Afshar, was forced to cede part of Mir Mehdi Khan's territory (Əliyev & Həsənov, 1997). However, it was not long before the Irevan Khanate itself was encroached upon. In 1749, together with Panahali Khan of Karabakh, Shahverdi Khan of Ganja, Haji Chalabi Khan of Sheki, Haji Muhammad Ali Khan of Shamakhi and others, they decided to march to Georgia. However, before starting the campaign, Panah Ali Khan attacked the Irevan Khanate

in order to obtain more booty. Karabakh troops mainly plundered the villages around the “Three Churches” monastery and returned with many prisoners and booty (Əliyev & Həsənov, 1997). This information also gives reason to say that the territory of the Irevan Khanate was not stable. According to the dictates of the political conditions of the period, neighboring khanates attacked the territories of the khanate, seized territories, or vice versa. However, based on the primary sources of the period, it allows us to clarify the borders of the Irevan Khanate at the time of its formation.

N. F. Dubrovin, one of the military historians of the Tsarist Russia era, writes that the Irevan Khanate bordered on the north with the Pambak, Shamshad-Dil, Gazakh sultanates and the Ganja Khanate, on the east with the Karabakh and Nakhchivan khanates, and on the south and west with Persia and the Ottoman Empire (Dubrovin, 1871). Some Russian-speaking authors write that the Irevan Khanate was located only on the left bank of the Araz River. One of such authors, S. D. Burnashev, author of the work “Description of the Azerbaijani provinces in Persia and their political situation” in Kursk in 1793, writes that the borders of the Azerbaijani khanates often changed as a result of continuous wars. The Irevan Khanate stretched along the left bank of the Araz River, bordered Georgia to the north and northeast, Nakhchivan, which was half a day's drive away from the south, and Turkey to the west (Burnashev, 1793). It is clear from S.D. Burnashev's information that he did not have extensive information about the Irevan Khanate. However, a large part of the Irevan Khanate bordered the Gazakh and Shamshaddil sultanates.

After the occupation of Northern Azerbaijan by Tsarist Russia, it is clear from the information in the 19<sup>th</sup> century source entitled “Description of the Russian provinces in the South Caucasus in terms of statistics, ethnography, topography and finance” consisting of 4 (four) volumes compiled by officials sent to the Caucasus by the Russian Minister of Finance, Count Y.F. Kankri, that the Irevan Khanate, taking the fertile Ağrı valley between 61<sup>0</sup>-64<sup>0</sup> east longitude and 41<sup>0</sup>-39<sup>0</sup> north latitude, bordered the Shoreyal, Pambak, Shamshaddil, Gazakh sultanates to the north, Ganja to the northeast, Karabakh and Nakhchivan khanates to the east, Khoy khanate, Maku khanate and Bayazid pasha to the south, and Kağızman and Kars pashas to the west. The territory of the Irevan Khanate was 11,000 sq. km. in total. It was equal to a verst (Əmrahov, 2022; Amrahov & Balayev, 2024). I.I. Shopen writes that the Irevan Khanate extends from Arpachay in the west, from the village of Gizilkilsa, from north to south, then turns slightly east towards the village of Haji Bayramli on the lower reaches of Arpachay, from here it crosses the river and extends westwards and reaches the Gabirdag range. Here the border crosses the Araz and extends along that mountain range to the northwest - to Mount Koroglu. Then, turning first to the northeast, and then slightly north, it extends to the water-distributing height - Kichik Ağrı, and then to the northwest - to the Araz. Here it cuts the border of the Araz and extends along the mountain range separating Nakhchivan from the

Sharur plain, then it includes the Gozeldare mountain range, the northern part of the Zangezur mountains, Lake Goyja and the mountains to the east of it. After that, the borders of the khanate passed over the village of Bazarjig along the line connecting the Pambak Mountains and the northern slope of Alagöz with the Arpachay River and reached the village of Gizilkilsa (Shopen, 1852). Although the Russian-language information given above contains inaccuracies regarding the borders of the Irevan Khanate, it is possible to specify the geographical area of the khanate as a result of cameral drawings made in the territory of the khanate during the occupation of the Irevan Khanate. It is also a fact that the Irevan Khanate did not completely cover the territory of the Chukhursad beylerbey during the first period when it declared its independence. Periodic wars and the intervention of neighboring khanates led to changes in the borders of the khanate.

## **2. Administrative-territorial division of the Irevan Khanate**

The central city of the Irevan Khanate, located in the north-west of Azerbaijan, was Irevan. As in other khanates of Azerbaijan, the Irevan Khanate was divided into districts in terms of administrative-territorial division, and the districts were divided into villages (Shopen, 1852). There were 15 districts in the Irevan Khanate. These were the Kirkhbulag district, the Zangibasar district, the Garnibasar district, the Vedibasar district, the Sharur district, the Surmeli district, the Darekand-Parchenis district, the Saadli district, the Talin district, the Seyidli-Akhsakhli district, the Sardarabad district, the Korpubasar district, the Abaran district, the Derechichek and Goycha districts (Shopen, 1852). It should be noted that according to the “Comprehensive Book of the Irevan Province” dated 1728, compiled during the Ottoman rule, the administrative division of the Irevan Province consisted of the city of Irevan, the districts of Kirkhbulag, Karbi, Maku, Khinzirak, Karni, Vedi, Darachichek, Abaran, Goycha, Mazraa, Surmeli, Igdir, Aralıq, Sharur, Sadarak, Zarzamin, and the Shuragal liva, while the Nakhchivan sanjak consisted of the city of Irevan, the districts of Nakhchivan, Alinja, Sair Mavazi, Darashahbuz, Mülki-Aslan, Mavaziyi-Khatun, Karabakh, Qishlagat, Daresham, Azadjiran, Shorlut, Daranurgut, Daralayaz, and Sisyan (İrəvan əyalətinin icmal dəftəri, 1996). As is clear from the information, the territory of Chukhursad, which had the status of a beylerbeylik during the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan, was first divided into districts and districts during the short-lived Ottoman rule, and then into 15 districts with the creation of the Irevan province in 1728. After the beginning of the khanate period in 1747, as in all khanates, the previous administrative-territorial divisions in the Irevan Khanate were replaced with new ones, counties, and the counties were in turn divided into villages.

Relatively complete and comprehensive information on the administrative-territorial division of the Irevan Khanate is given in the work of I.I. Shopen mentioned above. I.I. Shopen writes that the Irevan

Khanate was divided into one city, 15 districts and districts. These districts were located on the right and left banks of the Araz River. The city of Irevan and 13 districts of the khanate were located on the left bank of the Araz River, and 2 districts were located on the right bank of the Araz River (Shopen, 1852). The city of Irevan, the capital of the Irevan Khanate, bordered the Kirkhbulag district in the north, the Zangibasar district in the west and south, and the Korpubasar district in the east. The city of Irevan consisted of 3 large parts or neighborhoods. These were the Shahar (old city), Tepebashi and Demirbulag neighborhoods. The old city covered the north-eastern part of the city. This was the central part of the city. Tepebashi, one of the city's neighborhoods, was located between the Zangi River and the old city. Tepebashi neighborhood covered the western part of the city. Here were places called Abaglat, Gizil-Qala, Dara-bagh, Darakand, Delma, Yeni-kend. Demirbulag neighborhood was located in the southeastern part of the city (Shopen, 1852). One of the districts that took place in the administrative-territorial division of the Irevan Khanate was the Kirkhbulag district. The Kirkhbulag district was located between the Derechichek and Zangibasar districts, and mountains separated it from the Goycha and Zangi rivers. This district was adjacent to the city of Irevan from the north (Shopen, 1852). One of the districts included in the Irevan Khanate was the Zangibasar district. The Zangibasar district started from the lower part of the Irevan fortress and extended to the Kirkhbulag district and the Araz river in the south, and to the Karpi and Garnibasar districts. All the villages of this district were irrigated by the waters of the Zangi river (Shopen, 1852). The Garnibasar district covered the lands north of the Araz river, as well as the valleys irrigated from the Gapanchay basin (Shopen, 1852). Vedibasar district was located between Sharur and Garni-Basar districts, on the left bank of the Araz River. It was separated from Goycha district by a high mountain range, the Vedichai and Gapanchai rivers, and plains. This district included 95 villages, 43 of which were destroyed (Shopen, 1852). Sharur district was located in the southeast of the Irevan Khanate. It was located between Vedibasar district and Khok, bordering the territories of the Nakhchivan Khanate. This district had 61 villages, 11 of which were completely destroyed (Shopen, 1852). One of the districts of the Irevan Khanate was Surmeli. Under this name there was a square in the southern part of the Araz River. This district stretched between the Sharur district, Ağrıdag and the Araz River. The territory of the district was irrigated by the waters of the Araz River. There were 78 villages here, 28 of which were completely destroyed as a result of the wars (Shopen, 1852). The Darekand-Parchenis district of the Irevan Khanate was located in the southwestern part of the khanate, on the right bank of the Araz River. I.I. Chopin writes that this district bordered the Saadli district to the north, the Ottoman state to the south and west, and the Surmeli district to the east. The Darekand-Parchenis district consisted of three valleys extending from Bayazid Sherehaddin to the Araz River. The Parchenis Valley had 26 habitable villages, and the Darakand Valley had 54. If we add 8

villages destroyed during the war, there were 88 villages in total in this district (Shopen, 1852). The administrative-territorial division of the Irevan Khanate also included the Sardarabad district. This district was located on the northern side of the Araz River, opposite the Surmeli district. The district was bordered by the Talin district to the north, the Araz River separating it from the Surmeli district to the south, the Saadli district to the west, and the Korpubasar and Zangibasar districts to the east. This district, whose administrative center was the Sardarabad fortress, consisted of 30 villages. 8 of them were destroyed as a result of the wars (Shopen, 1852). Saadli district was one of the smallest districts of the Irevan Khanate. It was located at the western end of the khanate. This district was also created by Huseyngulu Khan at the same time as Sardarabad district (Shopen, 1852). Talin district was located at the western end of the Irevan Khanate. I.I. Chopin writes that it was bordered by Shorayel district to the north, Sardarabad and Saadli districts to the south, Seyidli-Agsaqqalli district to the east, and the Arpachay River to the west, which separated it from the Kars pashalig (Shopen, 1852). The Seyidli-Agsaqqalli district of the Irevan Khanate bordered by Abaran to the north, Korpubasar to the south and east, and Sardarabad to the southwest. According to sources, the Seyidli-Agsaqqalli district had 20 villages. Of these, 11 villages belonged to the Seyidli tribe, and 9 to the Agsaqqalli tribe (Shopen, 1852). The Korpubasar district of the Irevan Khanate was one of the richest districts of the khanate. It was bordered by the Seyidli-Aghsaqqalli districts to the north, Zangibasar to the south, Sardarabad to the west, the Zangi River separating it from the Kirkhbulag district to the east, and Derechichek to the northeast. The villages of this district were irrigated by the Garni River (Shopen, 1852). The Abaran district of the Irevan Khanate stretched along the northern and northeastern part of the Alagöz mountain and the steep Pambak mountains. The Abaran district bordered Pambak to the north, Shorayel to the west, Seyidli-Agsaqqalli to the south, Korpubasar to the southeast, and Derechichek to the east (Shopen, 1852). The Derachichek district of the Irevan Khanate was the most pleasant district in the khanate due to its climate. The territory of the district consisted of Lake Goycha, a valley stretching from the mouth of the Zangi and Miskhana rivers to the village of Alapars. Derachichek district was located between the Pambak district and the Gazakh sultanate to the north, the Kirkhbulag and Korpubasar districts to the south, the Abaran district to the west, and the Goycha district and Lake Goycha to the east. The district consisted of 37 villages. I.I. Chopin writes that 16 of these villages were destroyed as a result of wars (Shopen, 1852). The Goycha district of the Irevan Khanate was one of the largest districts. The territory of this district was washed by the waters of Lake Goycha (Shopen, 1852). This district bordered the Shamshaddil Sultanate and the Ganja Khanate to the north, the Derechichek district to the northwest, the Nakhchivan Khanate to the south, the Karabakh Khanate to the east, and the Kirkhbulag, Garnibasar, and Vedibasar districts to the west. The Goycha district consisted of 126 villages.

However, as a result of the last Russian-Qajar war, 67 villages were destroyed, and even the names of 37 of these villages were completely forgotten (Qarayev, 2016).

### Conclusion

Thus, the conducted research shows that the Irevan region was one of the territories with the oldest history of Azerbaijan, the peak of our political culture. For centuries, Azerbaijani Turks lived in these territories and occupied an important place in our statehood history. During the centralized Azerbaijani Safavid Empire, part of the northwestern Azerbaijani lands formed one of the administrative-territorial units of the empire under the name of Chukhursad Beylerbeyi, and the city of Irevan was its center. Chukhursad Beylerbeyi existed for about two centuries. After the fall of the Azerbaijani Safavid Empire, these territories were briefly part of the Azerbaijani Afshar Empire. After the fall of the Azerbaijani Afshar Empire, the Irevan Khanate was formed in the Irevan region in 1747. During the Irevan Khanate, the khanate was divided into districts in terms of administrative-territorial division, and the districts into villages. The center of the Irevan Khanate was the city of Irevan, 15 districts.

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