

The Military of Qajar Iran: The Features of an Irregular Army from the Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century

Uzi Rabi and Nugzar Ter-Oganov

Iranian Studies, Vol. 25, 2012, Issue 3

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00210862.2011.637776>

Abstract

The article examines the parameters of the irregular army in Qajar Iran, including its assembly, numbers, and provisions, as well as the army's organizational structure: its administration and the divisions of the ad hoc forces (provincial militia and tribal cavalry) and of the standing forces (the shah's bodyguard and artillery corps). Until the creation of the so-called regular army units in Iran at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the irregular army was regarded as the only military force in the service of the Qajar dynasty. Despite the existence of a “regular army,” irregular forces, particularly tribal cavalry, continued to play a significant role in Iran's military system throughout the nineteenth century. By understanding the features of the irregular army—its role in Qajar society, its organizational and social structures, its ethnic composition, and other characteristics—we can better understand the character of the state itself.