

Materials of the Russian Diplomatic Mission to Iran by Islen'ev and Griazev

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The study investigates the materials of the Russian embassy S. Islen'ev and M. Griazev to the court of the Qizilbash shah Safi, stored in the funds of Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts. The archival file is a set of documents reflecting the process of the exchange of embassies between the Russian Tsardom and the Safavid Empire in 1635–1637. The aim of the embassy of S. I. Islen'ev and M. K. Griazev was to discuss some topical issues of bilateral relations such as duties, restitution cases, the purchase of Iranian niter etc. In addition, the documents describe the features of the court ceremonial in relation to foreign guests. The good preservation of the documents gives researchers the opportunity to study the embassy at great length. As for the results of the embassy of Islen'ev and Griazev, they can be regarded as moderately positive. The high level of bilateral relations and their positive nature (“friendship and love”) were confirmed. In addition, the Safavid side once again confirmed the need to verify the membership of embassies and trade missions. On the other hand, the attempt of the tsar's ambassadors to purchase niter in the shah's possessions ended in failure. In general, the embassy of S. Islen'ev and M. Griazev was an ordinary diplomatic mission in terms of tasks and results, but this is its value for a scholar. Sustainability of the bilateral agenda and the presence of well-known “stumbling blocks” in its framework contributed to the regularity of Russian-Safavid ties.

Keywords: Russian-Persian relations of the 17th century, Safi I, Mikhail Fedorovich, diplomatic mission, embassy archival documents.

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Исследование посвящено характеристике и подробному анализу материалов российского посольства С. Исленьева и М. Грязева ко двору кызылбашского шаха Сефи, хранящихся в фонде 77 Российского государственного архива древних актов. Архивное дело представляет собой комплекс документов, отражающих процесс обмена дипломатическими миссиями между Русским царством и державой Сефевидов в 1635–1637 гг. Время правления шаха Сефи ознаменовалось началом постепенных, но достаточно серьезных изменений в отношениях двух государств. Постоянные двусторонние контакты обеспечивались официальными торговыми миссиями, возглавляемыми шахскими коммерческими представителями. Формально архивные дела свидетельствуют о восьми таких поездках за рассматриваемый период. Помимо торговых контактов, имели место также официальные посольства и постоянный обмен корреспонденцией. Что касается посольства С. И. Исленьева и М. К. Грязева, то в его задачи входило обсуждение конкретных проблем двусторонних отношений. Эти вопросы касались условий экономического обмена, таких как пошлины на товары, пребывание торговцев на территории контрагента, закупка в Иране селитры и иные частности. Помимо этого, в документах описаны особенности придворного церемониала, использовавшегося для приема иностранных делегаций. Хорошая сохранность документов дает исследователям возможность изучить детали поездки, а подробное указание топонимов позволяет точно проследить варианты маршрута такого рода путешествий. Что касается итогов посольства Исленьева и Грязева, то их можно рассматривать как умеренно позитивные. Был подтвержден высокий уровень двусторонних отношений и их добрососедский характер («дружба и любовь»). Кроме того, сефевидская сторона в очередной раз подтвердила необходимость верификации состава посольств и торговых миссий. В то же время неудачей закончилась попытка царских послов закупить селитру в шахских владениях. В целом, посольство С. Исленьева и М. Грязева было рядовой дипломатической миссией с точки зрения задач и результатов, однако именно в этом состоит его ценность. Устойчивость двусторонней повестки и наличие в ней общеизвестных камней преткновения способствовали функционированию регулярных русско-сефевидских связей и постепенному разрешению спорных проблем.

Ключевые слова: русско-персидские отношения XVII века, Сефи I, Михаил Федорович, посольство, дипломатическая миссия, архивные документы.

Russian-Safavid relations in the 1630s–1640s remained under-investigated for a long time. Traditionally, these ties were either viewed against the backdrop of the tsar's policy in the Caucasus or Caspian region¹, or associated with the Holstein missions to Russia and

¹ *Sukhorukov V. D. Istoricheskoe opisanie zemli Voiska Donskogo. Vol. 1. Novocherkassk, 1867. P. 199, 225, 242; Potto V. A. Dva veka terskogo kazachestva (1588–1801). Vol. 1. Vladikavkaz, 1912. P. 68–69; Zevakin E. S. Persidskii vopros v russko-evropeiskikh otnosheniakh XVII v. // Istoricheskie zapiski. 1940. Vol. 8. P. 139–142, 149; Zevakin E. S. Moskva i Golshtiniia na Kasp'ii // "Arabeski" istorii. Vyp. 5–6: Kaspiiskii tranzit. Vol. 2. Moscow, 1996. P. 549–565; Bronevskii S. M. Istoricheskie vypiski o snosheniakh Rossii s Persieiu, Gruzieiu i voobshche s gorskimi narodami, v Kavkaze obitaiushchimi, so vremen Ivana Vasil'evicha donyne. St Petersburg, 1996. P. 55; Kusheva E. N. Narody Severnogo Kavkaza i ikh sviazi s Rossiei: vtoraiia polovina XVI — 30-e gody XVII veka. Moscow, 1963. P. 275–277, 304; Mininkov N. A. Donskoe kazachestvo v epokhu*

Iran in 1633–1639². Sometimes (rarely though) they were referred to in narratives on Eurasian trade³. The absence of any data regarding this timespan in the comprehensive work by Igor V. Bazilenko⁴ strikingly testified to a historiographic gap. With no exaggeration, the research project “The Documentary History of the Russian Strand of Safavid Diplomacy (1501–1722)”⁵ launched in 2018 marked a turning point in the study of this topic. The research perspective (through the lens of the Safavids) suggested by the project team, being logical in terms of narrowing the boundaries of the study field, still deprives the reconstructed picture of its full scope. The reference to documents of Russian diplomatic missions to the Qizilbash state are the only sources that can fill these lacunae. Moreover, such archive collections often include documents issued by the host party.

My interest in the materials of the Russian Embassy to Iran by Stepan Islen'ev (Isleniev) and Mina Griazev arose largely by accident. The file containing these materials belongs to Collection no. 77 of the Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents, and was initially addressed to finalize the study on the Qizilbash embassy to Moscow by Hājji-bek (1634–1636)⁶. The comprehensive and informative content of the examined documents, however, compelled me to scrutinize them in-depth.

In general, documents issued by the Posolskii Prikaz (Ambassadorial Office) in the 16th–18th c. with regard to specific diplomatic missions are extensively studied by scholars. Most often researchers either use them to reconstruct specific manifestations of the Moscow foreign policy, or just focus on individual statements, travel reports, descriptions of land and road, etc.⁷ Meanwhile, there is still pressing need for a comprehensive glossary of genres for specific texts or their collections. The typology of collections of surviving

pozdнего srednevekov'ia (do 1671 g.). Rostov-on-Don, 1998. P.148–168; *Seidova G. M.* Azerbaidzhan v torgovykh i politicheskikh vzaimootnosheniakh Sefevidskoi imperii i Russkogo gosudarstva v XVII v. (po russkim istochnikam). Baku, 2004. P.53–54; *Korayev T. K.* Moskovskaia Rus' i Safavidskii Iran v Prikaspii XVI–XVII vv: Sosedstvo, sopernichestvo, sosushchestvovanie // *Istoricheskii vestnik*. 2015. No. 11 (158). P.182–185.

² *Gus'kov A. G.* Proekty torgovli s Kitaem i Persiei cherez Rossiiu v XVII veke kak prodolzhenie traditsii Velikogo Shelkovogo puti // *Sredniaia Evropa: Problemy mezhdunarodnykh i mezhnatsional'nykh otnoshenii*. 12–20 vv. Pamiati T. M. Islamova. St Petersburg, 2009. P.81–82; *Rybar L.* Shirvan v kontekste russko-persidskoi torgovoi politiki v XVII veke (do pravleniia Petra Velikogo) // *Rossiiskie i slavianskie issledovaniia*. Issue 11. Minsk, 2016. P.77–78.

³ *Shpakovskii A.* Torgovlia Moskovskoi Rusi s Persiei v XVI–XVII vekakh. Kiev, 1915; *Zonneshtal'-Piskorskii A. A.* Mezhdunarodnye torgovyie dogovory Persii. Moscow, 1931; *Kukanova N. G.* Ocherki po istorii russko-iranskikh torgovykh otnoshenii v XVII — pervoi polovine XIX v. Saransk, 1977. P. 31, 48; *Matthee R. P.* The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver 1600–1730. Cambridge, 1999. P. 139–142; *Troebst St.* Sweden, Russ and the Safavid Empire: A Merchant Perspective // *Iran and the World in the Safavid Age*. London, 2012. P.253–258.

⁴ *Bazilenko I. V.* Ocherki istorii rossiisko-iranskikh otnoshenii (konets XVI — nachalo XX vv.). St Petersburg, 2017. P. 29.

⁵ *Andreev A. A., Kopaneva D. D.* Paradoxes and Realities of the Iranian Politics of the First Romanovs // *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. History*. 2021. Vol. 66, issue 1. P. 5–18; *Shorokhov V. A., Slesarev T. A.* Safavid Diplomatic documents of the Safi I period from the collection of the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts // *Manuscripta Oriental. International Journal for Oriental Manuscript Research*. 2021. Vol. 27, no. 1. P. 26–32.

⁶ *Shorokhov V. A., Yastrebova O. M., Pischurnikova E. P.* List of Complaints to tsar Mikhail Fjodorovich by shah Safi I. Submitted Verbally by the Persian Ambassador Adjibek on April 13, 1635 // *Manuscripta Oriental. International Journal for Oriental Manuscript Research*. 2020. Vol. 26, no. 2. P. 32–36.

⁷ *Kazakova N. A.* Stateinye spiski russkikh poslov v Italiuu kak pamiatniki literatury puteshestvii (seredina XVII v.) // *Trudy otdela drevnerusskoi literatury*. 1988. Vol. 41. P.268–288; *Liseitsev D. V.* Russko-turetskie otnosheniia v nachale XVII v.: ot konfrontatsii k sblizheniiu // *Otechestvennaia istoriia*. 2002.

sources has rarely been addressed by scholars. The publication edited by D. S. Likhachev⁸ is a classic attempt to study this problem in terms of literary criticism. Likewise, for forty years N. M. Rogozhin⁹ has been ‘holding a monopoly’ over studies on *Posol'skie knigi* (“Ambassadorial Books”) as a phenomenon.

B. A. Kunenkov provided a most detailed description of documents issued during the reign of tsar Mikhail Fedorovich, glued together into a single scroll (a so-called ‘column’, with each scroll relating to a specific embassy) and kept in the Posolskii Prikaz. In my opinion, it was B. A. Kunenkov who gave the most thorough and accurate overview of the collections of documents regarding the activity of Russian diplomats abroad and foreign missions to the Russian tsardom, based on extensive RGADA materials, including the Persian Collection¹⁰. This article will refer to his findings. However, not all of the observations of this scholar are applicable to the materials that are being introduced into the scholarship here.

Thus, an exciting group of texts about the mission by Stepan Islen'ev and Mina Griazev to Shah Safi I of Qizilbash is part of scroll 1, RGADA Collection 77 with a lengthy title “*The departure of the ambassador Adji-bek of Persia to Moscow and the departure of Russian ambassadors Stepan Islen'ev and clerk Mina Griazev to Persia. Included are descriptions and a report by Russian ambassadors about their stay in Persia*”¹¹.

An archive file is a set of documents describing how the Russian tsardom and the Safavid state exchanged diplomatic missions in 1635–1637. The storage unit comprises 785 folios¹². Documents in Russian are in cursive handwriting by different hands. Many sheets bear losses and various damage, some of them rather significant.

The documents preserved in the file mainly refer to the Russian mission to Persia in 1635–1637. In addition, there are texts related to the diplomatic mission of Qizilbash led by ambassador Hājji-bek staying in Moscow, or the business visit of the shah's messenger Ustad Allah-Bardi occurring before the diplomatic mission, as well as evidence of some other bilateral contacts.

As for the genre characteristics, the storage unit can be subdivided into several main groups of sources.

Group 1 consists of directives by Mikhail Fedorovich, mainly addressed to the Russian *voevodas* (local governors) and servicemen. The file features some 20 letters of the kind. A considerable part of them consists of letters of transit, which ensured interaction between ambassadors on both sides and regional administration on the way from Russia to Persia.

No. 5. P. 169–177; *Starikova G. N.* Posol'skie otchety XVII v.: zhanrovoe raznoobrazie, lingvisticheskaia sodержatel'nost' // *Vestnik of Tomsk State University. Philology.* 2015. No. 1 (33). P. 51–65.

⁸ *Puteshestviia russkikh poslov XVI–XVII vv.: Stateinye spiski / ed. by D. S. Likhachev.* Moscow, 1954.

⁹ *Rogozhin N. M.*: 1) *Posol'skaia kniga po sviaziam Rossii s Angliiei 1613–1614 gg.* Moscow, 1979; 2) *Posol'skaia kniga po sviaziam Rossii s Nogaiskoi Ordoi 1489–1508 gg.* Moscow, 1984; 3) *Posol'skaia kniga po sviaziam Rossii s Gretsiei 1588–1594 gg.* Moscow, 1988; 4) *Posol'skie knigi Rossii kontsa XV — nachala XVII v.* Moscow, 1994; etc.

¹⁰ *Kunenkov B. A.* Posol'skii prikaz v 1613–1645 gg.: struktura, sluzhashchie, deloproizvodstvo: dis. ... kand. ist. nauk. Briansk, 2007. P. 280–415.

¹¹ RGADA. F. 77. Op. 1: Stolbtsy. 1635. D. 1: Otpusk byvshego v Moskve persidskogo posla Adji-beka i otpravlenie v Persiiu rossiiskikh poslov Stepana Istlen'eva i d'iaka Myny Griazeva. Tut zhe otpiski i stateinyi spisok rossiiskikh poslov o bytnosti ikh v Persii.

¹² Inventory contains wrong number of 806 fol.

Group 2 includes petitions and notices addressed to the tsar. There are about 30 documents. The addressees are the tsar's *voevodas*, ambassadors, or some other Russian people, as well as representatives of the Persian side who were staying in the Russian state.

Group 3 includes a similar number of units as Group 2 and is represented by warnings addressed to members of Russian missions to Safi. A significant part is devoted to description of offenses, when the rights of the tsar's subjects were violated during their stay in the Safavid state¹³.

Group 4 (approx. 20 units) includes various accounting and bookkeeping documents: expense receipts, statements, inventories of gifts and salaries, etc.

Noteworthy is the description of ambassador of Iran Ḥājji-bek's leave on pp. 139–157.

The most remarkable document in the file is the *stateinyi spisok*/list of files referring to the mission by Stepan Islen'ev and Mina Griazev to Persia to shah Safi I. It is on folios 717–785, while some fragments are on p. 753. The beginning and the end of the manuscript are missing.

It is important to note that the list of files itself is a set of texts, or, more precisely, a chronologically consistent summary of ambassadors' travels supplemented by separate documents or abstracts. There are the ambassadors' reports, brief lists of gifts, and a summary protocol of negotiations. Among documents in Russian there are remarkable response speeches by Persian diplomats addressed to Islen'ev and Griazev during the negotiations (written in Turkic)¹⁴.

By briefly describing the composition of the studied archival file, I will try to give a general description of the international situation in the mid-thirties of the 17th century, as well as the mission by Islen'ev and Griazev.

The mid-1630s was the time of gradual and mostly imperceptible but serious changes in relations between the Romanovs and the Safavid state. The Qizilbash state, exhausted by the struggle with the Ottomans, was on the verge of losing Baghdad, Kandahar, and about to conclude the Peace of Zuhab with the Porte (1638–1639)¹⁵. However, the position of the shahs in the Caucasus remained generally strong. Russia, in turn, began to strengthen its positions in the south during the Smolensk War (1632–1634), in particular by recruiting the Yaik Cossacks. The above notwithstanding, the degree of control by both dynasties over regional and local actors in the buffer zone was rather weak, and depended on changes in the political situation. Dagestani rulers, the Kalmyks, the Nogai, the Turkmens, the elites of Azerbaijan and Gilan, and often administration appointed by Isfahan and Moscow were balancing among formal *suzerains* (often quite a few of them), neighbors, and occasional external threats, like the Ottomans, the Crimeans and the Khivans¹⁶. Overcoming the consequences of the Time of Troubles led to the expulsion to the steppe of those who had joined 'the wrong side'. At the same time, political stabilization stimulated the growth of Russian-Safavid trade. It accelerated upon shah Safi's ascension to power in Iran, who combined his economic policy and winding down infrastructure projects with a relaxed state control over production and export¹⁷. Thus, by the early 1620s, conditions

¹³ Ibid. L. 238–275.

¹⁴ Ibid. L. 774–775.

¹⁵ Pavlova I. K. *Khronika vremen Sefevidov* (Sochinenie Mukhammad-Masuma Isfakhani "Khulasat as-sir"). Moscow, 1993. P. 74–80.

¹⁶ Ibid. P. 47–51, 58–61.

¹⁷ Matthee R. P. *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran*. P. 119–121, 123–129, 139–146.

were established for flourishing Cossacks' piracy in the Caspian Sea, which became the most irritating factor to continuously interfere with bilateral relations¹⁸.

On the whole, Russian-Safavid contacts were regular and friendly at the time when the investigated set of documents was issued.

The diplomats of Safi I visited the Russian tsardom quite frequently. Besides the two "big" diplomatic missions (by Ḥājji-bek, who visited the tsar's lands in 1634–1635, and by Hasan-bek/Sarykhan-bek, in 1640–1641), specifically delegated to Mikhail Fedorovich's court, Imam-kuli-bek's stay in Moscow on his way to Holstein and back can be certainly treated as a high-level visit¹⁹.

The channel providing constant bilateral contacts was the official trade missions headed by the shah's commercial representatives ("kirakiyarāk" in Safavid documents or "kupchina" in Russian records). Formally, the RGADA records eight such trips during the period under consideration. However, the content of letters, memos, and letters of commendation shows that merchants themselves and their subordinates stayed in Russia regularly and played a role of representatives for trade. Participants of one mission often traded in Astrakhan, Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod, Yaroslavl', and Moscow at the same time, left the country and returned, being officially represented by a *kirakiyarāk* only and having common permits. The materials published below show that merchants dealt with a lot more than state business affairs which were by no means devoid of political bureaucracy. A change of government in the Qizilbash State didn't lead to any interruption in the state trade, as is evident from the permit issued by Safi I (published by the author in an earlier paper), which confirmed the status of merchant Aga Hassan delegated to Russia by Abbas.

In addition to the above 'regular' forms of interaction, the shah occasionally resorted to urgent communication. There is evidence of two messengers delegated by Safi I²⁰ to Russia. Besides, in 1639–1640 a shah's falconer (*kushchi*) Talib-bek was sent to Mikhail Fedorovich to buy birds of prey for the sovereign's hunt²¹.

Russian-Safavid contacts at the highest level were not limited to trips of Iranian diplomats to the north. In 1629–1642, the tsar sent three "large" embassies to the Qizilbash State (the last one was received by Abbas II), messenger A. S. Romanchukov, as well as numerous state trade agents²².

¹⁸ Shorokhov V. A., Kopaneva D. D. Iz istorii "vorovskikh" kazakov Prikaspiia v pervoi treti XVII v.: materialy doprosa Gerasima Stepanova i Pronki Mikiforova // Klio. 2021. No. 5. P. 20–25; Shorokhov V. A. "I oni dobra nikakova ne delaiut krome durna": "vorovskie" kazaki v rusko-sefevidskikh otnosheniakh 1620-kh — 1630-kh godov // Novoe Proshloe = New Past. 2021. No. 2. P. 28–41.

¹⁹ See: RGADA. F. 77. Op. 1. Stolbtsy 1638. D. 2: Priezd persidskogo posla Imam-kuli-beka, otpravlenie ego v Golshtiniuu, vozvrashchenie v Moskvu i otpusk v Persiiu. L. 1–2.

²⁰ See: Ibid. Stolbtsy 1634. D. 2: Priezd ot persidskogo shakha gontsa Ustala Alla Berde s prosheniem o pozvolenii iskupit' v Nogaiskoi orde tysyachi verbludov. Tut zhe i otpusk gontsa sego s otvetnoiu gramotoiu; Stolbtsy 1640. D. 1: Priezd persidskogo gontsa Ali-beka s gramotoiu ot shakha o untii kazakov, proizvodivashchikh grabezhi v zemliakh ego i v proезде kuptsov, tut zhe otpusk gontsa sego s otvetnoiu ot gosudaria gramotoiu.

²¹ Ibid. Stolbtsy 1639. D. 1: Priezd ot persidskogo shakha ptichnika Talybeka dlia zakupki k shakhovoi okhote ptits.

²² See e.g.: Ibid. Stolbtsy 1629–1632. D. 5: Rospis' obidnym delam, uchinennym v Persii rossiiskim torgovym liudiam i poslannikam Korob'inu sotovarishchi. Otpiski astrakhanskikh voevod o priezde v Astrakhan' persidskogo kupchiny Agi Asana s izvestiem o smerti shakh-Abbasa i vstuplenii na prestol vnuka ego Sefi. Otpuski na onye gosudarevykh gramot ob otpravlenii k novomu shakhu rossiiskikh poslov stol'nika Andreia Pleshcheeva i d'iaka Nikifora Talyzina; Stolbtsy 1635. D. 1: Otpusk byvshego v Moskvie persidskogo posla Adzhi-beka i otpravlenie v Persiiu rossiiskikh poslov Stepana Istlent'eva i d'iaka Miny Griazeva.

It should also be pointed out that the diplomatic legacy of the trade missions does not give a complete picture of bilateral relations. There was a constant exchange in correspondence between the Russian central and local administration and a number of major Safavid officials. The most intense correspondence was with the Beglerbeg of Shirvan (the Shemakhi Khans, according to the Russian sources)²³.

Amid the vigorous Russian-Safavid contacts described above, the embassy by Stepan I. Islen'ev and Mina K. Griazev set several aims. First, it was in response to the mission of Hājji-bek (who had been granted a farewell audience on 19 May 1635), and carried rich gifts to the Shah of Qizilbash. Second, the ambassadors had to discuss very specific problems of bilateral relations: the abuse of merchants by regional authorities of both countries, the exchange of runaway subjects, the construction of fortifications on the river Koisu and in the Tarki (Abbas I had previously requested it from the Russian rulers), relations with local rulers of the Eastern Caucasus, coordination of policy towards the Crimea and the Porte, etc. A separate issue for discussion was the veracity of the rumor about the presence of niter deposits in the shah's lands. The tsar asked the shah to examine the possibility of selling it to the royal envoys and provide them with wagons as well as the price. It was planned to pay for the niter with the requested amount of goods²⁴. Apart from those tasks, the envoys received instructions about purchasing precious stones (sapphires, red spinels, garnets, and turquoise)²⁵ and horses "for the sovereign's use"²⁶.

The list of royal gifts addressed to his Qizilbash ruler is indeed remarkable. In addition to customary and highly valued in the Middle East sables, game birds (28 gyrfalcons and a pair of hawks "with outfit"), European cloth, mica, and a "fish tooth" (walrus tusk), the gifts included items from the Kremlin Armoury: three rifles and one smoothbore gun made by Russian craftsmen Ivan Luchaninov and Maxim Davydov²⁷, as well as two pairs of pistols, twenty-one pounds of gunpowder, an ornate flask, and a drinking horn. The list of gifts also included sixteen velvet upholstered "stools"²⁸, not to mention birds and their "attire". The estimated value of Mikhail Fedorovich's gifts to the shah, according to documents, was about 4257 rubles.

As for the personal composition of the embassy, it had a total of thirty-two people. The leaders of the mission — Stepan I. Islen'ev and Mina K. Griazev — should, of course, be described in more detail.

Tut zhe otpiski i stateyni spisok rossiiskikh poslov o bytnosti ikh v Persii; Stolbtsy 1636. D. 1: Stateyni spisok rossiiskogo poslannika Alekseia Ramanchukova, byvshego v Persii s golshtinskimi poslami; Stolbtsy 1642. D. 1: Otpравlenie k shakhu Sefiiu poslov Semena Volynskogo i d'iaka Sergeia Matveeva. Otpiski ikh i vozvrashchenie s gramotoiu d'ia shakha Abbasa izvestitel'noiu o smerti roditelia ego i o vstuplenii ego na prestol.

²³ See, e. g.: Ibid. Stolbtsy 1637. D. 3: Priezd persidskogo kupchiny Bezhim-beka. Perevody gramot k gosudariu ot shakha Sefi, ot shemakhinskogo khana i ot viziria. Tut zhe otpusk onogo kupchiny obratno v Persiiu. L. 102, 108.

²⁴ Ibid. Stolbtsy 1635. D. 1. L. 224–256, 547–685.

²⁵ Ibid. L. 414, 416–418.

²⁶ Ibid. L. 533.

²⁷ See: *Larchenko N. M. Novye dannye o masterakh-oruzheinikakh Oruzheinoi palaty pervoi poloviny XVII veka // Gosudarstvennye muzei Moskovskogo Kremliа: materialy i issledovaniia. Moscow, 1976. No. 2. P. 27–32; Orlenko S. P. O kadrovom sostave Oruzheinoi palaty XVII v. Drevniaia Rus' // Voprosy medievistiki. 2021. No. 1 (183). P. 104.*

²⁸ RGADA. F. 77. Op. 1. Stolbtsy 1635. D. 1. L. 358–359, 366–367, 369–372.

A nobleman Stepan Ivanovich Islen'ev²⁹ joined the service of the emperor no later than the reign of Vasilii Shuiskii³⁰, who took part in the fight against Polish invaders under Dmitrii Pozharskii³¹. He was mentioned in the court registers in January 1621 as “*pristav*” (escort official) of the Safavid ambassador Bulat-bek³². In 1625–1627, Stepan I. Islen'ev was appointed the *voevoda* of Tara, then served in the Stoneworks Prikaz, and during the Smolensk War, he led battles to defend the capital against the Tatars³³.

Mina Kirillovich Griazev appears to have been considerably younger than his colleague. He began his service first as a *voevoda* in Kaigorodok (1627–1629), then in Vym Iarenskaia (1631)³⁴. In 1632/1633 or 1633/1634 he was promoted to clerk and then served in various chanceries³⁵.

The analysis of the careers of these mission leaders enables to state that both were fully-established high-level officials, one of whom also had experience in dealing with the Qizilbash diplomats.

Apart from ambassadors, a mission consisted of the “Tatar” language interpreter Murza Imralei Koshaev³⁶; three clerks; five interpreters; five merlin trainers; six falconers; four hawkers; four horsemen; and two ‘*tselovalniks*’ (swornmen) for transferring sable³⁷.

A curious fact showcasing the intersections between politics, economy and logistics was the simultaneous journey of the Russian embassy with that of the Safavids who were returning to their homeland. The latter was three times as numerous as the former³⁸. In addition, the representatives of the Qizilbash had their own ideas about the preferred route. The local administration, therefore, had to deal with a number of interrelated tasks on the way of the diplomats to provide high-level official delegations with guards, “*pristavs*”, food, and transport.

The route of the embassies through the lands of Mikhail Fedorovich took the whole summer and most of the autumn of 1635. For example, according to the documents, the Qizilbash delegation was constantly accompanied by five Russian officials and a group of 50 armed guardsmen (from Moscow to Nizhnii Novgorod and then from Nizhnii Novgorod)³⁹. Four members of the Safavid embassy started their return journey from Iaroslavl⁴⁰. As for the Islen'ev-Griazev mission, from the very beginning its weakest point was the gyrfalcons, or rather their attendants. Some of the birds could not bear the difficulties of logistics, especially in the winter months. By the time of the presentation of gifts

²⁹ Ibid. D. 1. L. 222.

³⁰ Vypiska Pomestnogo prikaza s izlozheniem skazki Stepana Ivanovicha Islen'eva o ego opale pri ts. Vasil'e Shuiskom. Okolo 1629. 3.03 // Akty sluzhilykh zemlevladel'tsev XV — nach. XVII veka. Vol. 2. Moscow, 1998. No. 511. P. 437.

³¹ Latukhinskaia stepennaia kniga. 1676 / eds N. N. Pokrovskii, A. V. Sirenov. Moscow, 2012. P. 699–700.

³² Dvortsovye Razriady. 1612–1628. Vol. 1. St Petersburg, 1850. P. 467–468, 512.

³³ Knigi razriadnye, po ofitsial'nym onykh spiskam izdanny s vysochaishago soizvoleniia II-m ot-deleniem Sobstvennoi Ego Imperatorskago Velichestva kantseliarii. Vol. 2. St Petersburg, 1855. P. 370, 517; Spiski gorodovykh voevod i drugikh lits voevodskogo upravleniia Moskovskogo gosudarstva XVII stoletii po napechatannym pravitel'stvennym aktam / ed. by A. Barsukov. St Petersburg, 1902. P. 227.

³⁴ Knigi razriadnye... P. 94, 201, 362, 689; Spiski gorodovykh voevod... P. 90, 284.

³⁵ Veselovskii S. B. D'iaki i pod'iachie XV–XVII vv. Moscow, 1975. P. 137–138.

³⁶ Kunenkov B. A. Posol'skii prikaz v 1613–1645 gg.: struktura, sluzhashchie, deloproizvodstvo: dis. ... kand. ist. nauk. Briansk, 2007. P. 158, 171, 178, 192, 203, 212, 465; etc.

³⁷ RGADA. F. 77. Op. 1. Stolbtsy 1635. D. 1. L. 362a–363.

³⁸ Ibid. Stolbtsy. 1632. D. 2. L. 91; Stolbtsy 1635. D. 1. L. 224.

³⁹ RGADA. F. 77. Op. 1. Stolbtsy 1635. D. 1. L. 364–365.

⁴⁰ Ibid. L. 363–364.

from the Russian sovereign, one “*Red Gyr Falcon*” and few more birds had survived. The rest were presented as feathers and tails only⁴¹.

The toponyms are listed in detail, so the entire journey of the embassy can be reconstructed without lacunae. They crossed the Russian border by ‘*river Bystraiia*’ (apparently, the Terek) and arrived in Tarki on January 7, from where they reached Shemakha on February 7. They stayed in Shemakha until mid-April 1636. On the way they were met and accompanied by the people of the Utsmiy of Kaitag, who gave them a pair of sables. In early May the delegation and the Persian ambassador Ḥājji-bek, crossed the Kura river. Then a discussion arose about their further way to the city of Ganja. Ḥājji-bek assured Islen’ev and Griazev that the shah’s escort servicemen who had led them from Shemakha would take them down “*a crooked road*”, while the ambassador himself would take “*a straight road*”. The offer was to follow him but to pay for the guides, as Ḥājji-bek did not have enough “*guides*” to keep. After the discussion with the shah’s escort, the Russian ambassadors decided to follow the route where the guides were prepaid by the shah⁴².

Then Mamet Kuli-Khan, the local governor of Ganja, invited them to stay with him until May 17. The ambassadors politely declined the invitation referring to their credentials (the manuscript stated “*that they shall not be in a hurry in doing that*”). Nevertheless, they had to stay for a few days until the shah ordered the ambassadors to urgently go to a place on the river Aras, between Ardabil and Tabriz. They were met there by shah’s ambassador Ḥājji-bek, who was familiar to them; he ordered to proceed to Ardabil⁴³. On May 29 the mission stopped at a distance of some 15 kilometers from Ardabil. Here they were met by the “*shah’s centurion*” with “*drinks and vegetables*”. The next day, when they were five kilometers away from the town, horses “*with saddles and bridles*” were sent to them so that they could ride into Ardabil. In three kilometers they were met by shah’s treasurer Magmet Seli-bek accompanied by three hundred men on horses as well as by “*many men on foot without rifles*”. Thus, on May 30 the delegation solemnly arrived in the ancient capital of the Safavid dynasty. From that time on, their salary was increased to “*12 rubles and a half*” (according to the manuscript, the ambassadors themselves recalculated the money they were given per day: “*one and a half tiumen’ and 15 abas*”)⁴⁴.

For about a week the ambassadors stayed in the ambassadorial court in the town; then traditional bickering and intriguing related to diplomatic ceremonies started to emerge. On June 7, Ḥājji-bek arrived to instruct Islen’ev, Griazev, and their men to leave the embassy yard and stay at the roadside, while the shah was returning from hunt and intended to pass by, thus giving the members of the mission a unique opportunity to “*see his shah’s eyes*”. The reply from the Russian side was that to follow the shah’s will would mean to infringe the ceremony rules and inflict “*disgrace and dislike*” on the tsar’s majesty. As a result, the meeting “*on foot*” did not take place. A shah’s servant, who appeared later, disavowed Ḥājji-bek’s words and on behalf of shah Safi handed over two deer shot by the sovereign during the hunt.

The highest audience was held on 11 June. It is described in some detail in the manuscript. Ḥājji-bek and Ali-bek arrived at the ambassadorial court with horses for the ambassador’s men and conveyed the shah’s command to Islen’ev and Griazev to be ready for

⁴¹ Ibid. L. 747.

⁴² Ibid. L. 370

⁴³ Ibid. L. 371–372.

⁴⁴ Ibid. L. 733.

the reception. Then Magmet Seli-bek, the treasurer, arrived and escorted the embassy “to the *shah’s court*”. On his way he warned the tsar envoys that “*it is the shah’s custom*” for ambassadors and envoys to kiss the governor’s feet⁴⁵. In reply, Islen’ev and Griazev alluded to a preceding diplomatic practice of 1588–1589 mission by Vasilchikov as well as to the ceremonial reception of Qizilbash ambassadors by Russian sovereigns and reiterated that there was a threat to of “fraternal” love between the shah and the tsar. The treasurer interpreted the ambassadors’ words to the shah and the latter agreed to lay his hand upon the tsar’s representatives during the reception, much alike the Russian sovereigns⁴⁶. The Russian diplomats again protested, pointing out that all previous representatives of the Russian sovereign had kissed the shah’s hand. The reply followed that the shah would allow them to kiss his hand after the ceremony, but that they had depart “*without further ado*”⁴⁷. Perhaps, given the growing irritation of the Qizilbash ruler, the delegation immediately set off in the direction of his residence. Upon arrival, the ambassadors and their men sat in front of the shah’s tent, from where Jani-Khan, “*the shah’s butler*”, came out to meet them. They were invited inside the tent. On entering, Islen’ev “*ruled the bow*”, enumerating all the titles of the sovereign and delivered words of welcome on behalf of Mikhail Fedorovich⁴⁸. He then presented the tsar’s letter, which the shah took, laid it beside himself and enquired about the tsar’s health.

Islen’ev replied that at the time of their departure the sovereign was in good health. Afterwards, there was presentation of gifts. Known for his passion for hunting, Safi held the only remaining gyrfalcon on his arm for a long time, took off the cloak and was evidently very appreciative of the gift. He gave the rest of the surviving birds and the feathers of dead gyrfalcons to his falconer Khusrov Sultan⁴⁹. According to the document, after the gifts had been presented, Islen’ev on behalf of Mikhail Fedorovich informed about the acceptance of Hājjī-bek’s embassy mission; about the tsar’s readiness “*to be in brotherly and strong friendship and love more than before*”⁵⁰; about the protocol benedictions. In addition to these formalities, the ambassador officially informed Safi about Patriarch Filaret’s death⁵¹.

Griazev was the second to take the floor. He added that Mikhail Fedorovich asked the shah to inform the ambassadors about all important issues of bilateral relations and, in his turn, to listen to the Russian position on a number of issues. This was followed by a protocol request to release the royal diplomats without delay.

Towards the end of the audience, a misunderstanding regarding ceremonial matters arose again. The shah allowed only two ambassadors, the embassy mission leaders, to kiss his hand. The others were required to kiss the shah’s feet. On this occasion, Islen’ev and Griazev protested again, referring to the embassy by Pleshcheev and Talyzin, demanding

⁴⁵ Ibid. L. 737.

⁴⁶ RGADA. F. 77. Op. 1. Stolbtsy 1635. D. 1. L. 739.

⁴⁷ Ibid. L. 740.

⁴⁸ Ibid. L. 742

⁴⁹ Ibid. L. 743.

⁵⁰ This formula was consistently used by both Qizilbash and Russian parts. It might be interpreted in a rough way as a declaration of the mutual understanding, equality, and strategic partnership between two rulers, whose relations were supposed to be developing at a deeper level later on. For more details on the meaning of “ethical” categories in the diplomatic relations in Western Eurasia during the Middle Ages, see: *Filiushkin A. I. Tituly russkikh gosudarei. Moscow; St Petersburg, 2006. P. 220–238.*

⁵¹ RGADA. F. 77. Op. 1. Stolbtsy 1635. D. 1. L. 744.

that all the sovereign's men should also be allowed to kiss the hand. The shah did not give consent to the latter, and the two sides agreed that each of them would go up to the shah and bow. After that the ambassadors sat down on the right side of Safi, while the latter was looking at the birds and their remains presented to him. Then the most important event began — the eulogy: first to the health of Safi, then to the health of Mikhail Fedorovich. The whole audience was held in the middle of the shah's garden in the tent⁵².

On June 19, the ambassadors requested information from the close associates of the Qizilbash ruler about the start of negotiations on the current bilateral agenda. Two days later the shah replied that he would receive the ambassadors once he had time⁵³.

On June 24, gifts were sent to the shah's inner circle. Under the same date in the manuscript, diplomats' attempt to buy horses for sovereign's stables is mentioned. For this purpose, they delegated interpreters to horse trading places. However, the ambassadors were told that in the conditions of war with the Turks, the shah forbade selling horses to foreigners without a personal supreme permission. The next day the ambassadors asked for permission through a bailiff Ali-bek. The reply was received on July 3. The shah said that his neighbors dissuaded him from issuing the permit, explaining it by the prohibition for the *kirakiyarāks* to buy white gyrfalcons and hawks in Russia. It is known that the tsar's authorities did not advertise this prohibition, and in the case of insistence, merchants pointed out that possession of such birds was the prerogative of the Russian sovereign, and, in addition, that birds of this category had already been sent to the shah as diplomatic gifts. Safi also indicated that horses had been sent to the Russian sovereign as his diplomatic gifts. In addition, the military operations going on in his country were a sufficient explanation. However, "for the sake of friendship and love" he still allowed buying fifteen horses (but not mares). The trade was to be conducted through Magmet-Seli-bek. Already on 4 July the first batch of horses was sent, which the ambassadors rejected after inspections they were "too small and most common". Afterwards other horses were also rejected as there were no "good" among them⁵⁴.

On the same day, an incident happened with the Russian interpreter Vasilii Gryzlov, who was "hit with a sword on the neck" while returning from the market to Ambassadors' yard by a Qizilbash man. The ambassadors ordered the bailiff to inform the receiving party of the incident. It turned out that the shah had already been informed and had ordered his magistrate to investigate the incident⁵⁵.

On July 9, a letter arrived from Derbent from a Russian merchant Nadeia Ofonasiev. He informed about the murder of a tradesman Ivan Seluianov, who was carrying the "treasury" of the State of Qizilbash, by a *strelets* from Astrakhan. The governor arrested the murderer, but a shah's order was required for the transfer of the tsar's property to Nadeia and his release from Derbent to Terek. The property problem was quickly solved. Safi ordered the murderer to be handed over to representatives of the sovereign, which was confirmed by a mandate sent to the governor of Derbent⁵⁶.

On July 11, the ambassadors again raised the issue of a reception with the sovereign of Qizilbash. The next day they were invited to discuss the sovereign's affairs with the vizier.

⁵² Ibid. L. 745–748.

⁵³ Ibid. L. 748–749.

⁵⁴ Ibid. L. 749–754.

⁵⁵ Ibid. L. 754–755.

⁵⁶ Ibid. L. 755–756.

The ambassadors rejected the invitation pointing out the need to talk to the shah himself, which was the order of Mikhail Fedorovich. An invitation to the shah did not follow until July 27. The next day the ambassadors arrived at his court, but there they were met by the shah's men who said that the shah had ordered the embassy to expound the matter to them, and that they in turn would convey everything to him. This time the ambassadors did not object⁵⁷.

At the reception Islen'ev and Griazev outlined several matters:

1. The first issue concerned the merchants who sold their own goods along with the shah's goods, while they were accompanying the shah's embassy, receiving fodder as ambassador's men without paying duty. The same happened on the Russian side, which caused mutual losses. It was suggested that henceforth there should be a strict accounting of the goods and the composition of the embassy, so that all the goods except the shah's goods should be taxed, and the trading men should not be paid as ambassador's men.

2. The second issue regarded the Gilan merchants living in Astrakhan and the Terek. During the embassy of Magmet-Seli-bek in Moscow, the possibility of their deportation to the shah's land was discussed. It was explained that the tsar fulfilled this request and "*did not order to detain shah's people in his country henceforth*". If, however, there was anyone else left, of whom the tsar was not aware at the time, he gave instructions to governors to delegate them with Hājji-bek.

3. As far as niter was concerned, the rumour of its availability in the shah's lands had reached Mikhail Fedorovich. The tsar asked the shah to consider the possibility of selling it to the royal envoys and allocate wagons therefor, as well as to name the price according to which the shah would send goods in return. Mikhail Fedorovich also asked not to sell niter to other states "*besides Moscow*".

4. Issue 4 concerned the story of the "*tsar's Majesty gost*" [trade representative] Nadeia Sveshnikov, who due to rumors about the appearance of "*the Prince of Gilyan*"⁵⁸ was deprived of his goods by the shah's men (in 1629) and told that he would put them into the shah's storage "*for safety*". At the same time, "*the Sopian saltan Baram Guliy and his 500 warriors*" were delegated to Gilan. Riots broke out, during which Baram, vovoda Murza Abdulla, and kalantar Memurat left Gilan, taking the goods of Nadeia with them. When the riot was quelled, Nadeia tried to find out the fate of the goods without success and eventually learnt that they had been credited to the salary of Baram Gulia. The question regarding these goods was raised during the embassy by Andrei Pleshcheyev and Nikifor Talyzin, and the shah ordered a search. The Nadeia's men who accompanied Pleshcheyev and Talyzin were partially compensated for their losses with 114 rubles in goods and money, but the rest was never returned. The issue was particularly acute because the goods in question had been taken from the tsar's treasury. The embassy put forward a request to the shah to solve the situation and to further safeguard the security of the Russian merchants, which was, as was especially emphasized, ensured for the shah's merchants staying in the Russian land even during the interregnum in the reign of Abbas and Safi.

The shah's men, having listened to all the questions, promised to pass them to the shah. Their request for the possibility of seeing Safi was rejected, and they were promised

⁵⁷ RGADA. F. 77. Op. 1. Stolbtsy 1635. D. 1. L. 757–759.

⁵⁸ About the Gilan rebellion that accompanied the accession of Safi see: *Petrushevskii I. P. Narodnoe vosstanie v Gilne v 1629 g. Uchenye zapiski Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR. 1951. No. 3. P. 226–256; Andreev A. A., Kopaneva D. D. Paradoxes and Realities... P. 11–12.*

that the meeting would take place later. The wait lasted for more than a month, during which, however, the members of the embassy were bestowed with rich gifts from the shah's treasury⁵⁹.

On August 30, the shah summoned the ambassadors to his house for dinner, and a holiday was appointed for September 1. The ambassadors were notified that they were supposed to wear attires sent by the shah. They replied that "*the shah's allowance and attires were made according to his own custom and would not fit the tsar's custom*"; however, not wishing to insult the shah, they decided to go to the reception wearing "*gold-brocaded velvet topcoats*" over their own clothes⁶⁰.

The document describes in detail the procedure of the reception and the respective ceremonies that took place "*in the tents*", according to the already established tradition. After them, the shah presented the ambassadors with letters for Mikhail Fedorovich, giving assurances of "*brotherly friendship and love*" and of his intention to be in touch) "*as done before*". The shah also pointed out that his ambassador would soon be sent to the Russian sovereign⁶¹.

On September 6, the ambassadors were informed that the shah had left Ardabil for Qazvin and were given written responses to the questions that had been addressed at the reception. The text and translation are listed below⁶².

The reply begins with assurances of mutual intentions for co-operation.

Regarding the question about merchants, the shah replied that in order to avoid unnecessary tax benefits he agreed to supply the embassies with a list of accompanying persons and property. The same measure was expected from the Russian side.

As for niter, it was pointed out that the information available to the shah was incorrect and that there were in fact no deposits thereof in the shah's lands. However, the shah promised to send niter to the Russian State if possible, and the Russian ambassadors and merchants were given the right to buy it in the market if they were able to find it.

Regarding situation with Nadeia, the shah referred to another disputed case when a Russian man had been reimbursed for his loss at his command. He also reminded the tsar of a situation when the shah's merchants in Moscow lost their goods, which were stole during the fire extinguishing actions. On this basis, the shah replied that until this situation was investigated and the property of his men was recovered, there would be likewise no refund for the Russian merchants.

On September 10, the embassy left Ardabil and headed back through Shemakha, where they were met by Arap-khan and provided with fodder and horses. Then the ambassadors travelled via Shirvan to Derbent, asking to be escorted by the "*Utsmiy of Qaydatts*", who had met them on their way to the shah. This time, however, Utsmey refused⁶³.

On October 28, the mission reached Tarki, where Surkay-Murza approached the ambassadors saying that he had been appointed Shamkhal of Kumyk and wished to serve the tsar, like his predecessors had done. By the shah's order, he escorted the ambassadors from Tarki to the river Bystraia.

⁵⁹ RGADA. F.77. Op. 1. Stolbtsy 1635. D. 1. L. 769–770.

⁶⁰ Ibid. L. 770–771.

⁶¹ Ibid. L. 771–773.

⁶² Ibid. L. 774–779.

⁶³ Ibid. L. 780–783.

On the same day, Islen'ev's mission was met by Alexei Romanchukov and his subordinate Ivan Skobeltsyn delegated by Mikhail Fedorovich to the shah with a letter⁶⁴. During this meeting a curious situation occurred. Romanchukov and Skobeltsyn told Islen'ev that they were also carrying the sovereign's charter for the Embassy by Islen'ev but that it "had become wet". When the ambassadors asked to give them the soaking letter, they were told that it had been "lost". Apparently not believing the answer, the ambassadors continued to insist that the charter should be given to them; the negotiations came to nothing. Later, copyist Merkur Krylov was sent to Romanchukov and Skobeltsin to resume the dialogue; the latter did show the tsar's letter addressed to Islen'ev and Griazev. However, messengers Romanchukov and Skobelitsyn gave a clear-cut answer: "Although the tsar's letter is not lost, they will not give it to the ambassadors".

The same date is recorded for the arrival of the embassy mission to Koysu. An attempt was made to negotiate with Surkay-Murza of Tarki to transport them across rivers Koysu and Aksai. The mission was charged since transportation was carried out by Kumyk people; a respective record was made in the expense ledgers⁶⁵.

The final travel notes record the arrival of the embassy to the river Terek on November 9, 1636⁶⁶.

As for the results of the mission of Islen'ev and Griazev, they can be regarded as rather positive.

Firstly, a high level of the bilateral relations and affinity between two monarchs ("friendship and love") were confirmed.

Secondly, the Safavid side agreed on written verification of the composition of diplomatic and trade missions, although it did not change situation of the excessive number of members in the Qizilbash official delegations caused by disingenuous merchants.

Issues of compensations for losses were finally settled favourably for the Russian side only in 1641. However, the first payments were made during Romanchukov's visit mentioned above⁶⁷.

The case that requires a special consideration is the tsar's attempt to purchase niter in the shah's lands, which failed for some obscure reason. The cooperation between the Romanovs and the Safavids in the area that is nowadays commonly defined as "the exchange of sensitive products and technology transfer" was by no means limited to this episode.

Another example of that kind was a visit of shah's messenger Ustad Allah-Bardi in August 1634. In Moscow he delivered an urgent request of Safi for granting his *kirakyarāq* Muhammad-Muqym a permission to buy one thousand camels from Nogais. The haste of the mission can be proved by the reduction in the formal procedure of the farewell audi-

⁶⁴ The visit of the royal messenger Alexei Savvich Romanchukov to the Qizilbash state in 1636–1637 took place simultaneously with the Holstein embassy of Otto Bruggemann, well known thanks to the book of its participant Adam Olearius. See: *Shorokhov V.A., Yastrebova O.M., Rezvan M.E., Pischurnikova E.P., Andreev A.A.* Shāh Šafi I Safavid's 'Missing Manuscript' Addressed to Mikhail Fyodorovich Romanov // *Manuscripta Oriental.* 2018. Vol. 24, no. 2. P. 62–67; *Andreev A.A., Kopaneva D.D.* Paradoxes and Realities... P. 13–14.

⁶⁵ RGADA. F. 77. Op. 1. Stolbtsy 1635. D. 1. L. 783–784.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* L. 753.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* Stolbtsy 1641. D. 1: Dela, proiskhodivshie v Moskve s Sarykhan-begom po smerti brata ego persidskago posla Asan-beka. Fol. 177–178; D. 30, 31: Perevod s dvukh gramot shakhovykh k poslu ego v Moskve Asan-beku: 1) chtob zaplatil v gosudarevu kaznu za propashchie v Lagazhane tovary 342 tiumeni 44 abasu dengu i 2) po kreposti shemakhinskago Faruk-khanova cheloveka zaplatit' zhe i vziat' v tom rospisku, chtob vpred' sporu ne bylo.

ence. The referral was very likely brought about by the escalation of the Safavid-Ottoman armed conflict. In spite of being at peace with the sultan, Mikhail Fedorovich granted the request⁶⁸.

A decade before these events, technology transfer took place in the reverse direction. In 1621–1624 Qizilbash state was visited by the mission of V. G. Korob'in and A. Kuvshinov. Their embassy was joined by the craftsman of the Kremlin Armoury Timofei Luchaninov, who was assigned with the task to “learn culverin and sabre smithing”⁶⁹.

Therefore, there had been cooperation in economy, warfare, and technologies between Russia and Safavid for a long period and it was taken for granted. Failure in niter requirement was just a particular case.

The embassy of Islen'ev and Griazev was an ordinary diplomatic mission with regard to its political objectives and results, as well as concerning the travel routine of the official delegation. In my opinion, this is where its scholarly value lies. Sustainability of the bilateral agenda and the presence of well-known “stumbling blocks” in its framework contributed to the regularity of Russian-Safavid ties in the same way as verified procedures for escorting, guarding and providing for ambassadorial caravans. Eventually, even the declarative promises made throughout the 1630s began coming into fruition: the Safavid authorities started to compensate for the damage suffered by the Russian tradesmen; tsar's government moved from one-time punitive actions against the “renegade” Cossacks to the real integration of the Iaik Cossacks “under the sovereign's hand” (its crucial moment was the foundation of the Guriaev fort at the mouth of the Iaik in 1640). However, the resolution of existing contradictions did not lead to the beginning of an era of complete mutual understanding. Russian-Qizilbash confrontation in the Eastern Caucasus with the conflict around the Sunzhensky ostrog (dungeon?) of 1651–1653 as its apogee was already looming on the horizon.

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⁶⁸ Ibid. Stolbtsy 1634. D. 2: Priezd ot persidskogo shakha gontsa Ustala Alla Berde s prosheniem o pozvolenii iskupit' v Nagaiskoi orde tysiaci verbludov. Tut zhe i otpusk gontsa sego s otvetnoiu gramotoiu. L. 33–37.

⁶⁹ *Larchenko N. M. Novye dannye o masterakh-oruzheynikakh Oruzheinoi palaty... P. 32; Bushev P. P. Posol'stvo V. G. Korob'ina i A. Kuvshinova v Iran v 1621–1624 gg. // Iran. Ekonomika. Istorii. Istoriografiia. Literatura. Moscow, 1976. P. 124–155.*

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