

## ОТЕЧЕСТВЕННАЯ ИСТОРИЯ

**Paradoxes and Realities of the Iranian Politics of the First Romanovs***A. A. Andreev, D. D. Kopaneva*

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The paper based on materials from Fonds 77 “Relations between Russia and Persia” of the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts describes numerous episodes related to robberies and other conflicts between Russian and Iranian subjects in the context of the common amiable policy of their monarchs. Almost every letter from Shah Safi I (1629–1642) which was addressed to Mikhail Fedorovich contained assurances of a friendly attitude (“loving friendship”). The strategic line chosen by the two monarchs aimed at preserving and developing trade contacts between the two states was noticeably limited to tactical actions for the personal benefit of Russian and, to a larger extent, Iranian officials, representatives of the regional administration. The uprisings on the periphery of the Safavid state, in particular in Gilan, were accompanied by numerous cases of robbery of the tsar’s subjects. The Cossack raids, which intensified in the Caspian in view of Moscow’s ban on “going” to the Black Sea coast in the early 1630s, were al-

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ready one of the main obstacles to Iranian trade. At the same time, the example of the embassy of the merchant (in Russian — *kupchina*, tsar's or shah's trade representative) Khvaji Rakhmat (1630–1631), the attempts of the Astrakhan governors to stop the robberies of the Cossacks on the Caspian coast, as well as the actions of the Shah to compensate for the property robbed in Lakhidjan, demonstrate that the two sides intended to maintain the “loving friendship”, albeit with varying degrees of success.

*Keywords:* Russian-Iranian relations of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Mikhail Fedorovich, Safi I, *kupchina*, A. I. Romanchukov, Shemakha, Gilan, Cossacks.

## Парадоксы и реалии иранской политики первых Романовых

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В статье на материалах фонда 77 «Сношения России с Персией» Российского государственного архива древних актов рассматриваются многочисленные эпизоды, связанные с грабежами, разбоем и иными конфликтами между российскими и иранскими подданными в контексте общей дружеской политики их монархов. Практически в каждой грамоте от шаха Сефи I (1629–1642) на имя царя Михаила Федоровича содержалось заверения в дружественном отношении. В ответных посланиях Михаил Федорович сообщал о приверженности партнерским отношениям с Ираном, основы которых были заложены в период правления шаха Аббаса I (1588–1629). Выбранная двумя монархами стратегическая линия, направленная на сохранение и развитие торговых контактов двух государств, заметно ограничивалась тактическими действиями, мотивированными личной выгодой российских и, в большей степени, иранских чиновников, представителей региональной администрации. В Иране наибольшим волюнтаризмом отличался представитель шаха в Эрдебиле, о чем свидетельствуют многочисленные жалобы на него русских купцов, часть которых публикуется впервые. Восстания на периферии державы Сефевидов, в частности в Гиляне, также сопровождалось многочисленными случаями грабежа подданных русского царя. Были и более оригинальные примеры узурпации собственности, связанные с переходом купчин (торговых представителей) в ислам и присвоением царской казны. Казачьи набеги, усилившиеся на Каспии в виду запрета Москвы в начале 1630-х гг. «ходить» на Черноморское побережье, были одним из основных препятствий уже для иранской торговли. Вопрос приобрел особую значимость к 1634 г., когда со стороны Сефи I прозвучали завуалированные угрозы разобраться с казаками самостоятельно. Вместе с тем на примере судьбы посольства купчины Хваджи Рахмата (1630–1631), попыток астраханских воевод пресечь разбойные вылазки казаков на Каспийское побережье, равно как и компенсации шахом стоимости утраченного в Лакхиджане имущества, прослеживается стремление двух сторон поддерживать добрососедские отношения, пусть и с переменным успехом.

*Ключевые слова:* русско-иранские отношения XVII в., Михаил Федорович, Сефи I, купчина, А. И. Романчуков, Шемаха, Гилян, казаки.

One of the distinctive features of the early modern or “pre-modern” time was the relative weakness of the state in what concerned control over activities of its governing bodies on the periphery. This, on the one hand, gave impetus to severe measures to obtain loyalty and prompt obedience, which came at a price traced in the bloody pages of the world

history, from England to Iran and the Ottoman empire, all the way back to 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. On the other hand, the geography, the multistructurality of economies, the cultural and ethnic diversity across Eurasia were a great obstacle on that path.

The examples of the Russian Tsardom and the Safavid Iran in 1630s demonstrate how good will of the two monarchs crashed as a wave against private time-serving interests of their subjects in what concerned good neighbourly relations as conditioned by strategic convenience and the advantage of trade relations.

The decade is also of interest as very little is known about the history of the Iranian aspect of the diplomacy of Mikhail Fedorovich Romanov (1613–1645), as well as the corresponding Russian “vector” of external politics of Shah Safi I (1629–1642) during the given period. Imperial historians (N. I. Veselovskii<sup>1</sup>, V. V. Bartold<sup>2</sup>, A. Ia. Shpakovskii<sup>3</sup>), Soviet (I. P. Petrushevskii<sup>4</sup>, E. S. Zevakin<sup>5</sup>, A. A. Zonneshtral-Piskorskii<sup>6</sup>, P. P. Bushev<sup>7</sup>, N. G. Kukanova<sup>8</sup>, A. P. Novoseltsev<sup>9</sup>) and post-Soviet scholars (I. V. Bazilenko<sup>10</sup>, I. V. Magilina<sup>11</sup>, T. K. Koraev<sup>12</sup>) limited their research due to various reasons, to the reign of Shah Abbas I (1588–1629) or Qizilbash rulers of the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>1</sup> N. I. Veselovskii finished his famous “Pamiatniki diplomaticheskikh i torgovykh snoshenii Moskovskoi Rusi s Persiei” by events which happened in 1618 (Pamiatniki diplomaticheskikh i torgovykh snoshenii Moskovskoi Rusi s Persiei: Vol. 3: Tsarstvovanie Mikhaila Fedorovicha (prodolzhenie). St. Petersburg, 1898).

<sup>2</sup> Bartold V. V. Raboty po istoricheskoi geografii i istorii Irana. Moscow, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Shpakovskii A. Ia. Torgovlia Moskovskoi Rusi s Persiei v XVI–XVII vekakh. Kiev, 1915.

<sup>4</sup> I. P. Petrushevskii in 1951 published a fragment from A. Fumani’s “History of Gilan”, which covered in detail the suppression of the Gilan uprising in 1629 by the Shah Safi I (Petrushevskii I. P. Narodnoe vossitanie v Giliane v 1629 g. // Uchenye zapiski Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR. 1951. No. 3. P. 226–256.)

<sup>5</sup> Zevakin E. S. Persidskii vopros v rusko-evropeiskikh otnosheniakh XVII v. // Istoricheskie zapiski. 1940. Vol. 8. P. 129–161.

<sup>6</sup> Zonneshtral’-Piskorskii A. A. Mezhdunarodnye torgovye dogovory Persii. Moscow, 1931.

<sup>7</sup> P. P. Bushev planned to publish four volumes of the “History of the Embassies and Diplomatic Relations of the Russian and Iranian States” for the periods 1586–1612, 1613–1639, 1639–1722, 1722–1796 (Bushev P. P. The history of the embassies and diplomatic relations of the Russian and Iranian states in 1586–1612 (according to Russian archives). Moscow, 1976. P. 17). As a result, two volumes were published, the first, as planned, ended with the events and documents of 1612. The upper limit of the period of the second volume was 1621 — during the reign of Shah Abbas I (1588–1629) (Bushev P. P. Istoriiia posol’stv i diplomaticheskikh otnoshenii russkogo i iranskogo gosudarstv 1613–1621 gg. (po russkim arkhivam). Moscow, 1987). N. I. Veselovskii and P. P. Bushev at the same time remain the only researchers who have studied the colossal volume of diplomatic documents of the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries on the history of Russian-Iranian contacts.

<sup>8</sup> In the work by N. G. Kukanova several documents from Shah Safi I are mentioned, including “a letter to the Astrakhan governors” and his letters to his own representatives who came to Mikhail Fedorovich — a merchant Agi Asan, a messenger Ali-Bek, an ambassador Asan-Bek and a merchant Agi Magmet (Kukanova N. G. Ocherki po istorii rusko-iranskikh torgovykh otnoshenii v XVII — pervoi polovine XIX v. Saransk, 1977. P. 31). N. G. Kukanova spells the names using a hyphen and then a capital letter “Bek” as part of the name.

<sup>9</sup> A. P. Novoseltsev mentions a letter from Shah Safi I about the search for the fugitives and their return to Iran, dated 1636 (Novoseltsev A. P. Rusko-iranskie otnosheniia v pervoi polovine XVII v. // Mezhdunarodnye sviazi Rossii v XVII–XVIII vv. Moscow, 1966. P. 105).

<sup>10</sup> Bazilenko I. V. Pravoslavnaiia Rossiia i shiitskii Iran: po stranitsam istorii otnoshenii // Khristianskoe chtenie. 2011. No. 2 (37). P. 139–185.

<sup>11</sup> Magilina I. V. Diplomaticheskaiia missiia monakhov-karmelitov v moskovskom gosudarstve v epokhu smuty nachala XVII v. // Vestnik VolGU. Serii 4. 2007. Vyp. 12. P. 164–169.

<sup>12</sup> T. K. Koraev fragmentarily outlines the Iranian direction of Russian diplomacy in the 1630s, and the attempt of Holstein (Holstein) to achieve trade privileges and participation in Russian-Iranian trade (Koraev T. K. Moskovskaia Rus’ i Safavidskii Iran v Prikaspii XVI–XVII vv: Sosedstvo, sopernichestvo, sosushchestvovanie // Istoricheskii vestnik. 2015. No. 11 (158). P. 185).

English historiography on the whole tends to focus on the external and internal policies of Shah Safi I. The most complete description of the reign of the sixth Safavid shah is found in the encyclopedic articles (R. Matthee<sup>13</sup>, H. Roemer<sup>14</sup>) and the famous monography by R. Matthee<sup>15</sup>. The successor of Ábbas I has not been paid much attention to by Iranian historians either. A. H. Barāziš I an exception. In his landmark book “Political and diplomatic relations between Iran and the world countries during the Safavid rule” he analyzes Mikhail Fedorovich’s policies pertaining to Iran in the context of the conflict between Russia and Poland and the peace with the Ottoman empire which was to follow, and describes the events of the so-called “silk crisis” of 1633–163 presenting interesting statistical information concerning purchasing of silk by Russian merchants<sup>16</sup>.

Very recently, within the framework of the Russian Scientific Foundation project, a number of analytical articles and sources have been published regarding microhistory of the Russian aspect of diplomacy of Safi I: in particular, missive letters from Shah Safi I to Mikhail Fedorovich and his voivoda in 1638<sup>17</sup>, as well as humble petitions from his merchant Khvadji Rakhmat<sup>18</sup>. A special attention was paid to the fate of the Crimean kalga Şahin Geray, little known to a wide circle of researchers in the context of Russian-Iranian relations<sup>19</sup>.

There exists a significant number of published sources from the so called “decade of loving friendship” between Mikhail Fedorovich and Shah Safi I. On the Iranian part, these are mostly works of contemporaries of the events described — Eskandar Beg Torkamān Monšī, ‘Abd al-Fātiḥ Fumanī and Muhammad Ma’sum bin Khwajagi Isfahani<sup>20</sup>. European residents of the Shah’s court in Isfahan also provided valuable evidence as they described a detailed picture of the situation in the Qizilbash state: such were records from Carmelites<sup>21</sup> and secretary of the Holstein embassy Adam Oleariy<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Matthee R. *Şafi, Shah of Persia // Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*. Vol. 10: Ottoman and Safavid Empires (1600–1700) / ed. by D. Thomas, J. Chesworth. Leiden; Boston, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> The Cambridge History of Iran: in 7 vols. Vol. 6. Cambridge, 1986.

<sup>15</sup> Matthee R. *Persia in Crisis: Safavid Decline and the Fall of Isfahan*. London, 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Barāziš A. Ḥ. *Ravābiṭ-i siyāsi-diplumātik-i Īrān va dījhān dar ‘ahd-i Şafaviya*. Tihriān, 1392.

<sup>17</sup> Shorokhov V., Yastrebova O., Rezvan M., Pischurnikova E., Andreev A. Shah Safi I Safavid’s “Missing Manuscript” addressed to Mikhail Fyodorovich Romanov // *Manuscripta Orientalia*. 2018. No. 24/2. P. 62–67; Shorokhov V. A., Slesarev T. A. Firman persidskogo shakha Abbasa I astrakhanskomu voevode iz fondov RGADA // *Klio*. 2019. No. 4 (148). P. 28–33.

<sup>18</sup> Kostikov S. E., Yastrebova O. M. Chelobitnye iranskogo kupchiny Khvadzhi Rakhmata tsariu Mikhailu Fedorovichu (1613–1645) iz Rossiiskogo gosudarstvennogo arkhiva drevnikh aktov // *Pis’mennyye pamiatniki Vostoka*. 2019. No. 37 (2). P. 122–145; Yastrebova O. M., Pischurnikova E. P., Kostikov S. E. Iz istorii rusko-persidskikh iazykovykh kontaktov epokhi Sefevidov. Russkie zaimstvovaniya v chelobitnykh kupchiny Khvadzhi Rakhmata // *Uchenyye zapiski Petrozavodskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*. 2019. No. 4 (181). P. 48–55; Yastrebova O. M., Kostikov S. E. Bondsman of Two Monarchs: Documents on the Persian Kirakayaraq Khwaja Rahmat’s Mission to Moscow in 1629–1631 // *Manuscripta Orientalia*. International Journal for Oriental Manuscript Research. 2019. Vol. 25, no. 2. P. 37–46.

<sup>19</sup> Shorokhov V. A., Slesarev T. A. Archive Files on the Şahin Geray’s Contribution to the Russo-Persian Relations // *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. History*, 2020. Vol. 65, iss. 2, pp. 618–632.

<sup>20</sup> Fumanī ‘Abd al-Fātiḥ. *Tārīkh-i Gilān*. Rašt: az intişārāt-i andjuman-i sāl-nāma va ta’lifāt-i dabiristān-i Şāhpūr. [s. l.], 1314; Monshi E. *History of Shah Ábbas the Great (Tārīk-e ‘Ālamārā-ye ‘Abbāsi)*: in 2 vols. Vol. II. Colorado, 1930; *Isfahani’ Muhammad Ma’sum bin Khwajagi*. *Khulasat al-siyar: Tarikh-i ruzgar-i shah Safi-yi Safavi*. Tihriān, 1368 (for help in working with this source, the authors of the article are grateful to S. E. Kostikov).

<sup>21</sup> A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia and the Papal Mission of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries: in 2 vols. Vol. 1. London, 1939.

<sup>22</sup> Olearii A. *Opisanie putesthestviia v Moskoviiu i cherez Moskoviiu v Persiiu i obratno*. St. Petersburg, 1906.

In the body of documents (mostly unpublished) stored in the Russian state archive of ancient acts in fonds 77, “Relations between Russia and Persia”, seventy one (according to two inventories) pertain to diplomatic correspondence from the reign of Safi I. Out of these, seven are addressed personally to Mikhail Fedorovich<sup>23</sup>, eleven “firmans” are addressed to representatives of regional administrations, primarily that of Astrakhan. The first letter addressed to Mikhail Fedorovich personally is a letter in the Persian language dated by 1037 AH<sup>24</sup>. There is a Russian translation of the letter made by an unknown translator<sup>25</sup>. In addition, there are the “loving” missive letters sent along with ambassadors Khadji-beck (1634–1635)<sup>26</sup> and Imam-kuli-beck (1637–1638)<sup>27</sup>. The succession of documented professions of “love and friendship” (the expression was mentioned in the context of decree) is completed with a missive letter of 1641 from Shah Safi I to his ambassador Asan-beck<sup>28</sup>.

“The list of insulting affairs about which we wrote to our sovereign, tsar and grand prince Mikhail Fyod[orovich] of all of Russia, the sole ruler, from Terki and Astrakhan and Kazan boyars, voivodas and clerks, about tsar’s trade people who went to Qizilbashi with their own and tsar’s goods and what insults and severities they suffered in the shah’s towns from shah’s officials and collectors of duties”<sup>29</sup> is also of interest as far as unpublished documents are concerned. The unpublished and unique in its style (the author is one of the few famous poets of Russia of the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) list (*stateiniy spisok*) by A. S. Romanchukov<sup>30</sup> is noteworthy.

## About the “loving friendship” between Shah Safi I and Mikhail Fedorovich

In 1629, shah Safi I sent merchants, his own trade representatives, to Russia<sup>31</sup>. Those who delivered shah’s missive letter were Aga Asan and his son Shakhmurat (“Agasanov’s son Shamurat”). They were accompanied by three other merchants: Molla Rakhmet, “Al-lahbudash” and Shamsuddin (“Shamshaddin”)<sup>32</sup>. In the missive letter delivered by them on 7 September of 1630, Shah Safi I communicated that “between them, sovereign of all

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<sup>23</sup> Pervod s gramoty shakha Sefi I ego poslu Asan-beku s ukazaniem zaplatit’ v gosudarevu kaznu // Russian state archive of ancient acts (RSAAA). F.77. Op. 2: 1642. D. 30. L. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Gramota shakha Sefi I Mikhailu Fedorovichu 1629 g. // RSAAA. F.77. Op. 1: 1629–1632. D. 5. L. 92.

<sup>25</sup> Pervod gramoty shakha Sefi I Mikhailu Fedorovichu 1630 g. // Ibid. L. 93–94.

<sup>26</sup> Pervod gramoty shakha Sefi I... L. 333–337.

<sup>27</sup> *Shorokhov V., Yastrebova O., Rezvan M., Pischurnikova E., Andreev A.* Shah Safi I Safawid’s “Missing Manuscript” addressed to Mikhail Fyodorovich Romanov. P. 62–67.

<sup>28</sup> Pervod s gramoty shakha Sefi I ego poslu Asan-beku 1641 g. // RSAAA. F.77. Op. 1: 1641. D. 30. 31. L. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Rospisi obidnym delam, o kotorykh pisali gosudariu, tsariu i velikomu kniazuiu Mikhailu Fed[dorovichu] vsea Rusii samoderzhtsu s Terki i iz Astorakhani i s Kazani boiare, voevody i diiak o gosudarevykh torgovykh liudekh, kotorye ezdili v Kizylbashi z gosudarevymi i s svoimi tovarami i kakie im uchinili v shakhovykh gorodekh” ot shakhovykh prikaznykh liudei i ot poshlinnikov obidy i nasil’stva // Ibid. Op. 1: 1629–1632. D. 5. L. 1–32.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. Op. 1: 1636. D. 1. L. 1–124. — Summary of the materials of the report by A. S. Romanchukov: *Lukichev M. P.* Boiarskie knigi XVIII v. Trudy po istorii i istochnikovedeniui. Moscow, 2004. P. 300–311.

<sup>31</sup> Chelobitnaia Mikhailu Fedorovichu ot astrakhanskikh liudei s soobshcheniem informatsii o priezde v Astrakhan’ shakhovykh liudei Ibragima Aidarova shemakhintsia i Khozia Nurmuradbekova kaz-bintsa // RSAAA. F.77. Op. 1: 1629–1632. D. 5. L. 83.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. L. 90.

of Russia, in former times, there was friendship and love with my grandfather". The new ruler, citing the covenants of his grandfather Shah Ábbas I, urged to "institute the friendship" again and send even more ambassadors and merchants. At the end of the letter, shah asked to help his merchant Aga Asan<sup>33</sup>.

Mikhail Fedorovich patronaged shah's people and organized his own mission in return. In November 1630, the tsar sent a stolnik Andrei Pleshcheev and a clerk Nikifor Takyzin to Iran. They were accompanied by ambassador sent by Ábbas I himself, Magomed Salibek (Magmet) and a merchant sent by Safi I, Aga Asan, "with associates"<sup>34</sup>. In fact, it was upon their arrival described in detail in the lists (*stateinye spiski*) made by them that the nominal acquaintance of the Iranian shah and the Russian tsar actually took place. There are brief overviews of their arrival found in works of shah's historiographer M. Isfakhani. He reports that the ambassadors arrived in 1630 and brought with them 17 gyrfalcons, several Russian sables, gold cups, "fish teeth" (walrus tusks) and other goods. Shah Safi I accepted them "graciously"<sup>35</sup>. Shah's hospitality and his personal qualities are the subject of a considerable body of historiography and their full description is outside the scope of the present article. In "Cambridge history of Iran", H. Roemer describing the personality of Safi I, recapitulated that even given his superficial charm, during the first years of his reign shah engaged in "systematic" extermination of his relatives, including those who were previously blinded by his grandfather<sup>36</sup>. However, in one of humble petitions to Mikhail Fedorovich studied by us, Shah Safi is characterized in a rather favourable way: it is said that Qizilbash people "love and admire" the new shah, and the shah himself is "kind and clever", and there were no "atrocities" on his part as of then<sup>37</sup>.

According to the practice established apparently by Ábbas I, his grandson Shah Safi I (as well as his vicarious rulers) sent his letters not only addressed to the tsar but also addressed to voivodas of Terki, Astrakhan and Kazan. Among those documents, the missive letter from Shah Safi I to "honoured Terki and Astrakhan and Kazan" voivodas sent in 1630 should be pointed out. In the text of the letter, he professes continuation of the friendly politics established in the times of Ábbas I and the desire to develop it further in regard to Mikhail Fedorovich<sup>38</sup>.

The expression of "love and friendship" is unfailingly present in all missive letters from Shah Safi I addressed to tsar Mikhail Fedorovich. We can present a fragment of one of the vivid complimentary missives to the Russian tsar. In the missive letter delivered by ambassador Imam-kuli-beck in 1637, the following statement can be found: "out of the fullness of [our] heart and shared understanding, let him accept the gift of praise signifying [our] affection which prepare the foundation for friendship and loyalty and strengthen the pillars of our good graces and solidarity. All [our] sincere intentions were and are

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<sup>33</sup> Perevod gramoty shakha Sefi I... P.93–94.

<sup>34</sup> Gramota Mikhaila Fedorovicha v Astrakhan' stol'niku i voevodam s soobshcheniem informatsii o posylke v Iran stol'nika Andreia Pleshcheeva i ob otpushchennom s nim iranskom posle shakha Abbasa Magmet-Selibeke i kupchiny Aga-sane // Ibid. L. 127.

<sup>35</sup> *Isfahani' Muhammad Ma'sum bin Khwajagi*. Khulasat al-siyar: Tarikh-i ruzgar-i shah Safi-yi Safavi.

<sup>36</sup> The Cambridge History of Iran in seven volumes. Vol. 6. Cambridge, 1986. P.278–288.

<sup>37</sup> Chelobitnaia Mikhailu Fedorovichu ot astrakhanskikh liudei... L. 86.

<sup>38</sup> Gramota shakha Sefi I k terskomu, astrakhanskomu i kazanskomu voivode // Ibid. Op. 1: 1630–1631. D. 1. L. 26–29.

aimed at enhancement of greatness and glory of the blessed tsar. Let his aspirations and desires be fulfilled to satisfaction of the Gifting [God]<sup>39</sup>.

All this was not simply a formula of state-to-state politeness of the time. Taking into account the context of the external policy of the Safavid power in 1630s (war with Ottomans, with Uzbeks of Mawarannahr, conflicts in Transcaucasia and on the eastern borders), maintaining peace and trade relations with Russia was a strategic necessity.

### Misfortunes and extortions of Russian merchants in Iran during the last years of reign of Shah Ábbas and in the days of Safi I

It has long been common understanding in corresponding historiography that Russian-Iranian economic relations in the 17<sup>th</sup> century were exceptionally important and mutually beneficial<sup>40</sup>. The trade between Qizilbash power and Russia was fairly, to a large extent, defined by E. S. Zevakin as the main subject of the bilateral diplomatic contacts<sup>41</sup>.

The sources bear testimony that Russian merchants and those forced to travel with them (former Ottoman captives) often became the insiders who provided voivodas in Astrakhan and Terki with the latest information. For instance, news about the death of Shah Ábbas I was communicated to the Astrakhan administration by “townsman Fed’ka Grigor’ev” and “Ivashka Ivanov, a peasant’s son from Zakomaritskiy volost”<sup>42</sup>. The particulars of how the “youngest grandson” (youngest son of the oldest son) of Ábbas the Great came into power, perhaps “legendary” and unreliable, were conveyed to voivoda Y. P. Bunosov-Rostovskii by “Syuen Akhmatov, a Terki Kumik, a man of kniaz’ Ildar”<sup>43</sup>.

His information could be compared to that related by historiographers of the Safavid times, which is the main source for contemporary researchers. Natives of the Terki relate that “...the previous Shah, Ábbas I, died and left his youngest grandson, son of Sufimurz-in, to rule; the eldest grandson, Emshitsha, son of Sufimurz-in<sup>44</sup>, he blinded”. Having been blinded, he was taken to Gilan lands and hidden there by his kinsmen, and “doctors of Gilan” recovered his eyesight. And when Ábbas I died, citizens of Gilan made him their shah, after which Emshim-shah started a war against his brother<sup>45</sup>.

Evidently, this refers to the Gilan uprising of 1629 described in sufficient detail in Safavid sources<sup>46</sup> and studied by I. P. Petrushevskii<sup>47</sup>. The narrative of legitimization of the Gilan ruler (albeit under a different name) is noteworthy. According to Syuen Akhmatov, he was the legitimate ruler by order of the line of succession. In fact, if Fumani and Munshi are to be believed, there was an attempt by the local aristocracy to return the status

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<sup>39</sup> Shorokhov V., Yastrebova O., Rezvan M., Pischurnikova E., Andreev A. Shah Safi I Safavid’s “Missing Manuscript” addressed to Mikhail Fyodorovich Romanov. P. 65.

<sup>40</sup> Matthee R. Şafî, Shah of Persia. P. 573–581.

<sup>41</sup> Zevakin E. S. Persidskii vopros v russko-evropeiskikh otnosheniakh XVII v. P. 157; Kukanova N. G. Ocherki po istorii russko-iranskikh torgovykh otnoshenii... P. 33.

<sup>42</sup> Chelobitnaia Mikhailu Fedorovichu ot astrakhanskikh liudei... L. 34.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. L. 40–42.

<sup>44</sup> In fact, this means Shah-Dzhemshid-khan, the son of the penultimate khan Biyya-pas (part of Gilan), which is described below.

<sup>45</sup> Chelobitnaia Mikhailu Fedorovichu ot astrakhanskikh liudei... L. 40–42.

<sup>46</sup> Fumani ‘Abd al-Fātiḥ. Tārīkh-i Gilān...

<sup>47</sup> Petrushevskii I. P. Narodnoe vosstanie v Giliane v 1629 g. // Uchenye zapiski Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR. 1951. No. 3. P. 226–256.

previously held by Biya Pas (part of Gilan), which was held by it prior to the definitive conquest of the given part of the Caspian region by Ábbas I. This being said, among insurgents there was a Shiite form of legitimization of the uprising — proclamation of the real leader, Adil-shah, a ruler in the house of “sheikh of time”<sup>48</sup>.

The uprising in Biya Pish (another part of Gilan) had an effect on the Russian-Iranian trade relations and was discussed in missive letters of both the tsar and the shah as well as their subjects. Property of Russian merchants suffered damage in the first hours of the uprising (according to I. P. Petrushevskii, it happened already on April, 14, 1629), when Lahijan was occupied. At the outset, the house of “kalantar” (town head appointed by the shah’s government from among local feudal lords or prominent merchants) was burgled<sup>49</sup>, then — houses of treasurers. Near the houses of the latter — according to a Gilan historian — “there were numerous goods brought in from Moskova by sea... and all government property and goods were plundered and ruined”<sup>50</sup>.

Astrakhan voivoda Y. P. Buinosov-Rostovskii and his associates S. I. Volynskii with G. Nechaev continued to observe the situation. Trade people (“teziks”) Ibrahim Aivarov from Shemakhi and Khodji Nurmuratbekov who arrived on 12 August from Qazvin were specific and said that the insurgents “made shah out of a son of a... townsman named Kharip, but they say they called him // son of Gilan Yumshit-khan<sup>51</sup>”. The fact that they call the leader of the Gilans “Kharip” (“garib” means “tramp” in Arabic) testifies that the informants were on the side of the new shah. “Yumshid” refers to Shah-Jemshid-khan, son of the last but one khan of Gilan (Biya-Pas) of the Iskhakhid dynasty<sup>52</sup>. Then the “teziks” give a relatively detailed and reliable account of how the uprising was stifled, which is outside the scope of the article.

We would only like to note that Russian merchants were robbed for the second time when “warriors” of the new shah took the towns of Rasht and Lahijan back by force. Terki voivoda knyaz Ivan Dashkov and his associate Bogdan Priklonskii passed on the words of Bagyshko Aliev, uncle of Kabardian knyaz Sholokh Sunchaleevich. The latter conveyed that the new shah “won over Gilan warriors just outside Lahijan”, the town was taken over and “Russian trade people who happened to be there” were robbed by Qizilbash warriors. The robbed merchants complained to Shah Safi I, who then promised to return the goods<sup>53</sup>.

We do not have certain information that the losses were recompensed to the merchants. We only have “humble petition to Mikhail Fedorovich from the people of Astrakhan” dated August 1629 where they write about the good will of Shah Safi I to compensate the Russian merchants from his own treasury (it is safe to assume that the intention was realized some ten years later, which we will return to at the end of the article). The document in question cites the words of an Astrakhan townsman Martyn Kondrat’ev who arrived from Shamakhi. The Russian merchants who were in Gilan went to complain to the new shah and he “asked cordially who was robbed of how many goods” and intended to give out a “note” (“skaska”) from his own treasury<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> *Petrushevskii I. P. Narodnoe vosstanie v Giliane v 1629 g.* P. 226–256.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* P. 240.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*; *Fumanī ‘Abd al-Fātiḥ. Tārīkh-i Gilān...* P. 51.

<sup>51</sup> Chelobitnaia Mikhailu Fedorovichu ot astrakhanskikh liudei... L. 78–79.

<sup>52</sup> *Petrushevskii I. P. Narodnoe vosstanie v Giliane v 1629 g. // Uchenye zapiski Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR.* 1951. No. 3. P. 229.

<sup>53</sup> Chelobitnaia Mikhailu Fedorovichu ot astrakhanskikh liudei... L. 43–45.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* L. 88.

Martyn Kondrat'ev also conveyed that Shah Safi I abolished silk duties. "And now they say, oh tsar, your Russian people who bought silk were not collected duties from according to the shah's order"<sup>55</sup>.

Abolition of duties and return of control over Gilan did not become the safety guarantee for Russian merchants. In the "List of insulting affairs" there is a whole list of complaints by the latter concerning arbitrary treatment by Shah Safi's I administration and subjects. The scale of mistreatment can be seen clearly from the document, in addition to the evident presence of a whole Russian trade network in the larger towns of the Safavid state. Unfortunately, exact dates of the events described are unknown but, judging from the context, it could be stated that the years referred to are 1628–1629, i.e., during the transition time in Iran: the last year of reign of Ábbas I and the first year of reign of Safi I.

Cases of robberies and mistreatment were multiple. In particular, in Astrabad, "prikaz people of the shah" took duties from a citizen of Yaroslavl, Griaznov-Selivanov, "in Iranian and Russian money"<sup>56</sup>. The most rowdiness was displayed by the son of — evidently — vicarious ruler (governor) of Ardebil, "Sultan Allahul". He took from a citizen of Kazan, Semyon Deyev, his goods and paid less than due, closed down the shop and intended to murder the merchant himself<sup>57</sup>. The aforementioned relative of the shah's official failed to pay the full price of the goods to another citizen of Kazan, Semen Tret'iakov, and when the former complained, he was beaten and put in jail<sup>58</sup>. A similar event occurred to yet another dweller of Kazan, Oleg Chernopenkov. This merchant was only set free after he paid a bribe<sup>59</sup>. Such cases were not unseen in Ardebil<sup>60</sup>. The town itself had sacred significance to the Safavid dynasty and was their own seigniory<sup>61</sup>, from which we can assume that Shah Safi was aware of what was going on in town.

The last ambassador sent by Ábbas I, Magmet Sali-beck, who was in Russia in 1629–1630, was also notified about the increasing frequency of robberies and mistreatment — to which he replied that shah knew nothing about the situation that had developed<sup>62</sup>. In this regard, it is of interest to draw a parallel between the tenure of clerk Alexei Savvich Romanchukov in Iran in 1636–1637, who on numerous occasions became a witness of mistreatment on the part of some of the shah's officials. The message about the "plundered government goods" and Shah Safi's promise to recompense all are found in his list (*stateinyi spisok*)<sup>63</sup>. Concurrently, A. S. Romanchukov also reported that cases of unfair treatment of merchants were not known to Safi I, to the best of his knowledge. The same source bears evidence of a curious discussion he had with the head of the Holstein mission, Otto Brugman. The latter asserted that "previously, during the reign of Ábbas shah, or currently, during the reign of Shah Safi, it happens that merchants of the great tsar are converted into Islam, and having taken their goods, ambassador suffers violence and dishonor, like you did". A. S. Romanchukov warded off — "it was done unbeknownst to

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. L. 87–88.

<sup>56</sup> Rospisi obidnym delam... L. 1.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. L. 2.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. L. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. L. 5, 6.

<sup>61</sup> *Petrushevskii I. P. Ocherki po istorii feodal'nykh otnoshenii v Azerbaidzhane i Armenii v XVI — nachale XIX veka. Leningrad, 1949. P. 68.*

<sup>62</sup> Rospisi obidnym delam... L. 21.

<sup>63</sup> Otryvok iz stateinogo spiska A. Romanchukova // RSAAA. F. 77. Op. 1: 1636. D. 1. L. 32, 35.

the shah and his close circle by malefactors, and shah said to me that all the lost property's worth shall be sent to his majesty the tsar with a shah's ambassador". Otto Brugman offered the following line of defense in continuation of the discussion — "every ambassador or a messenger bears the person of their monarch upon them, and are to be honoured as their monarch, and the close circle should not act on their own will and only the monarch to whom he was sent should know about him, and he who trusts ambassadorial affairs with other states to his subjects and does not know about such himself cannot be considered true monarch"<sup>64</sup>. Taking into consideration the crime for which the head of the Holstein mission was executed upon his return, his reply is utterly ironic.

During A. S. Romanchukov's time as a message deliverer in Iran, there happened a curious case of "legal" theft of the tsar's property. A merchant named Savelii Arapov, being on a tsar's trade mission in Shamakhi, laid his hands on tsar's property ("15 pack loads of silk, some tents, and 13 camels"<sup>65</sup>) and adopted Islam. The messenger, in addition to his "high" diplomatic goals, received the order to return Savelii to his homeland. The latter, in his turn, asked for protection of the local government, and they took the convert's side, whereas it was A. S. Romanchukov who had to deal with the difficulties which arose.

**"...let those thieving Cossacks come to your bow so that they do not steal anymore, we are going to chasten them so that henceforth they no longer steal..."<sup>66</sup>**

Already the first year of Shah Safi's reign was marked by massive assaults by Cossacks on Iranian Caspian shore. The case became so widely known that even the voivoda of Astrakhan received news about it. In the spring of 1629, Cossacks in four river boats approached the village of "Lengerkunen" (currently town of Lankaran, Republic of Azerbaijan), debarked and presented themselves as people of Mikhail Fedorovich's ambassador. After that they killed the head of the village (kalandar), his wives and children<sup>67</sup>. Further on, two *busas* (trade boats) were plundered on the shore of Gilan, after which the Cossacks headed towards Baku, where after a short battle with the shah's "warriors" they left the Iranian shore<sup>68</sup>.

Apparently, in the following years there were more raids with even more dire consequences. Judging by a humble petition from voivodas of Astrakhan sent to the tsar in the spring of 1631, some of the Cossacks of Don moved to Volga's estuary and began to prepare for a raid of the Caspian shore. The document also indicates dates and facts of assaults on Iranian trade *busas*<sup>69</sup>. The Caspian parts of the Safavid state began to suffer assaults due to the change in external policy. In 1632, after Moscow removed its disfavor towards the Cossacks of Don, they were prohibited to "make war upon" the Black and Azov sea regions<sup>70</sup>. Insofar as it was not prohibited to make raids to the south and west of

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<sup>64</sup> Otryvok iz stateinogo spiska A. Romanchukova. P.91–92.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. P. 1.

<sup>66</sup> Perevod gramoty shakha Sefi I... L. 333–337.

<sup>67</sup> Chelobitnaia Mikhailu Fedorovichu ot astrakhanskikh liudei... L. 84.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> [Sukhorukov V. D.] Istoricheskoe opisanie Zemli Voiska Donskogo: in 2 vols. Vol. 1. Novoherkassk, 1869. P. 225–226.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

the Caspian Sea, the Cossacks began assaulting Iranian trade boats and settlements situated between Derbent and Gilan. In 1634, there was yet another prominent raid into the regions of Derbent, Baku and Gilan<sup>71</sup>.

It is reasonably safe to suggest that it was exactly due to these raids that ambassador Khadji-beck, who arrived in Russia in 1634, brought the words of Shah Safi I calling to take measures against the Cossacks whose threats, apparently, implied shah's raids into the tsar's territories: "And if it is not your will to let those thieving Cossacks come to your bow so that they do not steal anymore, we are going to chasten them so that henceforth they no longer steal..."<sup>72</sup>

Another obstacle in the way of maintaining friendly relations between the two sovereigns, apart from the Cossacks' raids, was arbitrary treatment on the part of representatives of the Russian administration. These incidents are described in detail in documents pertaining to shah's merchant, Kvadji Rakhmat, who stayed in Russia. His misfortunes, sometimes of rather comical nature, his complaints concerning them, the semantics and linguistic borrowings from the Russian language in his texts in the Persian language were studied in detail by O. M. Yastrebova and S. E. Kostikov<sup>73</sup>. We are only going to briefly touch upon the range of issues which the trade representative of Safi I had to face.

His problems began as early as Astrakhan. According to his own documents, the position that Kvadji Rakhmat held was that of "kirakyarak" (merchant), i. e., shah's trade representative whose mission was to sell the shah's goods and with the proceeds to purchase what was required by his sovereign<sup>74</sup>. However, shah's letter contained no information about the number and names of the shah's goods. F. F. Kurakin, voivoda of Astrakhan, paid immediate attention to that fact ordering a *pristav*, a small landowner (son "boiarskii") Andrei Tarbeev to make a list of the shah's goods. The merchant did not allow the *pristav* in, made his own list and passed it on to voivoda without, however, letting him verify the property according to the list. As voivode put it, there was "great disobedience on his part in Astrakhan"<sup>75</sup>. During Kvadji Rakhmat's stay in Astrakhan, the administration arrested 15 people of the merchant's party "per force". The list was not checked and the stubborn kirakyarak with twenty four of his people was sent to Kazan<sup>76</sup>. Prior to his departure from Astrakhan, there was a fire in the caravanserai during which two Qurans were stolen from him. The theft was discovered later on in Kazan.

In Nizhniy Novgorod, the merchant had conflicts with other merchants in the stalls at a fair. The roof of his stand was brought down, goods were piled with snow, and, in addition, 30 roubles were stolen<sup>77</sup>. A fight with "muzhik Afanas" (that is how his opponent is referred to in a humble petition) that occurred in Moscow could be listed among Kvadji Rakhmat's comical adventures. The former did not let the latter and his people into a *bania* despite his status of a guest and the tsar's order. The fight was followed by beating of the merchant's dragoman, his falconer, the tsar's dragoman and watchmen; and then

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Perevod gramoty shakha Sefi I... L. 335.

<sup>73</sup> Kostikov S. E., Yastrebova O. M. Chelobitnye iranskogo kupchiny Khvadzhi Rakhmata... P. 122–145; Yastrebova O. M., Pischurnikova E. P., Kostikov S. E. Iz istorii russko-persidskikh iazykovykh kontaktov epokhi Sefevidov. P. 48–55.

<sup>74</sup> Kostikov S. E., Yastrebova O. M. Chelobitnye iranskogo kupchiny Khvadzhi Rakhmata... P. 122–145.

<sup>75</sup> Chelobitnaia astrakhanskogo vovody F. F. Kurakina // RSAAA. F. 77. Op. 1: 1630. D. 1. L. 18.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. L. 19.

<sup>77</sup> Chelobitnaia Mikhailu Fedorovichu ot Ivana Voinova // Ibid. L. 60–61.

Kvadji Murat's emerald went missing. He found the insult so great that the shah's representative asked that the perpetrator be punished in as many as 5 humble petitions addressed to the tsar<sup>78</sup>.

The beating case was studied thoroughly by clerks Fedor Likhachev and Maksim Matyshkin. They paid immediate attention to the fact that the emerald was not on the list, i. e., in contemporary terms, was not "declared". Moreover, according to a "trade man of *Sukonnaia sotnia* Ofonas Dmitriev", the merchant and his people broke into the yard and upset the lock. Then "that merchant's murza and his people beat me, your orphan child, and foul-mouthed me"; other guests of the court listed in the humble petition also received their share of the beating. A famous participant of the First Volunteer Army and the Second Volunteer Army — Boris Stone necklace<sup>79</sup> was among the beaten guests.

Following the results of investigation, the emerald was returned to its owner, and Afanasii Dmitriev was, upon the clerks' petition, released on recognizance, and no penitentiary measures were applied to him.

## Conclusion

In 1641, Shah Safi I by sending a merchant Asan-beck to Russia attempted to mitigate the existing animosities and ordered him to pay to the tsar's treasury — "...eight hundred forty two *tumans* and forty four *abbases* of money", which was evidently performed accordingly<sup>80</sup>. In particular, it was stated that the money was, in part, the payment for the "losses" in Lahijan. It is difficult to assert definitively that it was the compensation for what had happened ten years ago (we have at our disposal no documents verifying that Shah Safi I recompensed the Russian merchants for the goods lost in the course of the double robbery, in money). Apart from that, Asan-beck brought with him "remembrance gifts" (presents) (rugs, saddlecloths, gold-cloths (*izarbafs*), "kutnya" (*aladzha*) at the total amount of 3479 roubles<sup>81</sup>.

The cases studied by us in the present article are "only" microhistory of diplomatic, political and trade contacts, of the problems in the relations between the two states. On the one hand, it allows to trace the difficulties arisen by the inability of the state formations of that time, burdened with weak, ineffective institutions and regional peculiarities, to exercise full control over execution of orders of the supreme authorities. On the other hand, it enables to trace the reactions of the local governments, their expediency and actual attitudes towards "imperial" edicts.

Insofar as Russia is concerned, the weakness of state is greatly exemplified by the defied attempts to eliminate the raids of the Cossacks. In what followed counteracting the plunder in the Caspian region was going to be more and more severe. The local authorities, despite the fact that they were often slow to take action, were more given to abide to — let us call it so — the protocol for reception of shah's embassades and trade missions taking into account the tsar's laws supporting the trade.

The state system created to a considerable extent by Shah Ábbas I suffered significant erosion during the reign of his grandson Safi I despite the large-scale repressions. Such

<sup>78</sup> Chelobitnaia Mikhailu Fedorovichu ot Ivana Voinova // RSAAA. F. 77. Op. 1: 1631. L. 167, 180, 187.

<sup>79</sup> Chelobitnaia Afanasiia Dmitrieva // Ibid. L. 170–171.

<sup>80</sup> Perevod s gramoty shakha Sefi I ego poslu Asan-beku 1641 g. // Ibid. Op. 1: 1641. D. 30, 31. L. 1.

<sup>81</sup> *Kukanova N. G. Ocherki po istorii russko-iranskikh torgovykh otnoshenii... P. 48.*

erosion was conditioned by both uprisings within the country and, to a great extent, the self-willed attitudes of the shah's vicarious rulers (beglerbecks) and officials towards foreign ambassadors and especially merchants. Both of these factors continued to threaten the development of trade as the number of petitions and warnings to Iranian ambassadors grew during audiences, there began to occur attempts to compensate the losses by means of payments to the tsar's treasury.

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