

Nigar R. GOZALOVA \* (ANAS, Baku, Azerbaijan)

## Russian diplomatic representatives in the Afshars' state

<https://doi.org/10.34739/his.2025.14.14>

**Abstract:** *The issue of studying the history of diplomatic missions, consulates and embassies is particularly important for the study of international relations in the 18th century. In the absence at that time of a tradition of permanent diplomatic embassies in the Afshars' state, the exchange of missions and the establishment of consulates, together with and diplomatic correspondence were the main forms of establishing and maintaining intergovernmental contacts. This article describes the Afshar and Russian diplomatic missions and consulates.. The paper relies on official and semi-official historiography, contemporary mainly Russian accounts, and archival dates, as well some secondary sources. Considering this data is of utmost importance, as our previous knowledge was predominantly based on Iranian sources, which are highly biased and frequently present a distorted narrative in their content.*

**Key words:** Afshars' state, Russia, Iran, Nadir Shah, Councils, Diplomatic Missions, Residents, Embassy

### Introduction

The Safavid state's crisis culminated in its collapse in the 1720s, with rebellions throughout the country playing a significant role. The demoralized Safavid monarchy's inability to effectively handle external dangers led to the Shah's court capitulating to Afghan leader Mir Mahmud, forcing Shah Sultan Hossein (1694-1722) to cede power to the Afghans in 1722.<sup>1</sup> The period of Afghan rule was characterised by violence, looting, urban decay, and widespread destruction throughout the country. Following the Afghan uprising in Gandahar and the subsequent internal conflicts, Russia and the Ottoman Empire took advantage of the Safavid state's catastrophic situation and intensified their policies in the region. As a result, Russia (during Peter the Great's Persian campaign from 1722-1723) and the Ottoman Empire (between 1723-1726) seized parts of the Safavid territories. The Caspian Sea's narrow strip came under

---

\* Corresponding Author.  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2749-9556>. [nigargozelova@anas.az](mailto:nigargozelova@anas.az); Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

<sup>1</sup> In February 1725, believing a rumour that one of shah Soltan Hossein's sons, Safi Mirza, had escaped, Mahmud ordered the execution of all the other Safavid princes who were in his hands, except for Soltan Hossein himself. In the autumn of 1726, Mahmud's successor Ashraf had Soltan Hossein's head cut off (Axworthy, 2006: 65-66).

Russian rule, while the rest of the southeastern Caucasus, including much of the province of Azerbaijan, and western Iran came under Ottoman rule.<sup>2</sup>

After escaping from Isfahan in June 1722, Tahmasp, Shah Hossein's son, declared himself Shah Tahmasp II in November of the same year with the support of eight hundred Qajar's. For the next 7 years (1722-1729) the Safavids partially retained power only in the northern parts of the country. Nonetheless, the estimations of the compliant acceptance of the weakened Safavid state to external force was deeply flawed. Moreover, Shah Tahmasp II did not recognize either of the treaties between Russia and the Safavids (1723)<sup>3</sup> or Russia and the Ottoman Empire (1724)<sup>4</sup> while the local population of the occupied territories refused to submit. The occupations of Afghanistan, Ottoman, and Russia had severe consequences, leading to a liberation movement against the invaders. A key figure in this resistance was Nadir, a brilliant commander from the Afshar Turkic tribe.

In 1729, Nadir liberated capital from the Afghans and restored Safavid power in Isfahan by crowning Shah Tahmasp II. With the revival and strengthening of the Safavid state, it naturally tried to recover all its former possessions. Immediately after entering Isfahan, Nadir demanded from the Ottoman and Russian Empires return of all lands previously held by the Safavids. As a result of the conflict over the Polish throne and the threat of Caucasian warfare, the Russians withdrew their forces from the Caspian region, turning the Safavid state from potential adversary to friend. The treaties of Resht (January 1732) and Ganja (March 1735) required Russia to cede all of Peter's conquests in the region to the Shah, in line with Russia's eastern policy of preventing Turkey from gaining strength in the region. In return for Russia's goodwill, Nadir promised to be Russia's ally and not to negotiate peace with the Ottoman Empire without its consent.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> See: Gozalova, 2010: 43-65.

<sup>3</sup> In August 1722, the Russian consul S. Avramov successfully convinced the young Shah Tahmasp to dispatch an ambassador Ismail Beg to St. Petersburg to establish a cordial treaty. (Berkhgofts, 1860: 135-139). The Safavid ambassador Ismail Beg signed a treaty in St. Petersburg on September 12, 1723, without obtaining the permission to do it. This treaty "guaranteeing Russia's everlasting friendship and support" to the Safavid state in their struggle against rebel forces; for this assistance, Safavid state agreed to cede to Russia the towns of Derbend and Baku, with their adjoining districts, and the three coastal provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran and Astarabad. Finally, each power was to consider the friends and enemies of the other as their own. It is important to note that neither Shah Soltan Hossein nor Shah Tahmasp ratified the treaty (Golikov, 1789: 272-277; Kurukin, 2023; Gozalova, 2024).

<sup>4</sup> In 1724, Russia signed the Istanbul Treaty with the Ottoman Empire, which confirmed the terms of the Petersburg Treaty (1723) and divided the Safavid territories between the two empires (Binark, 1992: 28-35).

<sup>5</sup> The first Russian consulates in the Safavid state (in Isfahan and Shamakhi) appeared after the conclusion of the treaty in 1717 (see: Bushev, 1978: 274-277; Speranskiy, 1830: № 3097). In December 1720, Semen Avramov was appointed as consul to Isfahan, and Captain Alexey Baskakov was appointed to Shamakhi. The specific aim of their mission was to obtain support for Russian merchants in procuring and shipping raw silk to Astrakhan without interference. Unofficially, they were also responsible for acquiring military and political intelligence (Kurukin, 2010: 42).

Taking advantage of the Shah's unsuccessful military action against the Ottomans' and the unfavourable peace treaty, Nadir overthrew Shah Tahmasp II in August 1732 and proclaimed the young Abbas III, his son, the Shah. Despite Russian efforts, Nadir, after the start of the Russo-Turkish War (1735-1739), entered unilateral peace negotiations<sup>6</sup> with the Ottoman Empire and in fact by 1736 fully restored the borders of the Safavid state. Having consolidated his power and influence in the country, Nadir (1736-1747) called the assembly on the Mugan steppe a *Quriltāy* (assembly of nobles) and proclaimed himself Shah, or *Vali-Neiyamat*, in March 1736, overthrowing the Safavid dynasty.

### **Main problems of Russian and Safavids diplomacy**

Initially, it's important to clarify the process of establishing diplomatic relations between Russia and Safavids during that time. It should be noted that throughout the 18th century Russian diplomats did not have a permanent place of residence in the Safavid state. Permanent representation only appeared after 1723.<sup>7</sup> In reality, neither country had a permanent ambassador in the other's court. Instead, both countries appointed extraordinary and temporary envoys.

Consequently, in August 1734 Russian's court appointed an extraordinary envoy, Prince Sergei Dmitrievich Golitsyn to the Safavid state to conclude a peace treaty, which was signed in March 1735 near Ganja.<sup>8</sup> Subsequently, from 1745 to 1748, a relative of the preceding envoy, who was the Astrakhan governor in 1740-1744, Prince Mikhail Mikhailovich Golitsyn, was the next envoy. Also, Russian interests at the Afshar Court were represented by the permanent residents: Ivan Petrovich Kalushkin<sup>9</sup> from 1735 until 1742, and then Vasily Fedorovich Bratyshev<sup>10</sup> from 1742 -1747. Additionally, there was a Russian consul in Resht, of which at the relevant time was held by Lieutenant Semyon Arapov<sup>11</sup> from 1735, followed by Vasily Mikhailovich Bakunin<sup>12</sup> from 1744 to 1748.

---

<sup>6</sup> Peace treaty based on the Treaty of Zuhab, also called Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin, was an accord signed between the Safavid Empire and the Ottoman Empire in 1639, finally settled the Ottoman-Safavid frontier, with Iraq permanently ceded to the Ottomans.

<sup>7</sup> Turilova, 1996:105.

<sup>8</sup> On March 10, 1735, Gen. V.Y. Levashov and Prince S.D. Golitsyn, with the approval of the Russian government, signed the Treaty of Ganja with Nadir on the return of the Caspian regions and part of Dagestan to the Safavid government with the withdrawal of Russian troops beyond the Sulak River. It is interesting that the Treaty of Ganja was signed by Prince Golitsin and *Vekil* (regent) Nadir-Ali Khan, therefore he did not use the name Tahmasp-qoli Khan; see: Yuzefovich, 1869: 202-207; Speranskiy, 1834: № 6707.

<sup>9</sup> Ivan Kalushkin, from 1735 resident in the Safavid state, replacing the deceased Semyon Avramov.

<sup>10</sup> Since 1736 he was sent to Afshar state, first as a student to the council in Gilan, then as a translator under the resident I.P. Kalushkin. Following Kalushkin's passing in 1742, was appointed Russian resident in Derbend.

<sup>11</sup> Butkov, 1869: 132.

<sup>12</sup> Ulyanitsky, 1899: 511, 483.

The first official emissary<sup>13</sup> appointed by Nadir Shah Afshar to Russia was Hulefa Mirza Mohammed Kafi,<sup>14</sup> with the mission of proclaiming Nadir Shah's accession to the throne. The ambassador of the new Shah, Hulefa Mirza Kafi, who arrived in St. Petersburg in June 1736, presented the empress with valuable gifts (910 grains of the best pearls, 177 pieces of "brocades and izarbafs<sup>15</sup>").<sup>16</sup>

In 1738-1739 to the Russian Empress Anna Ioannovna<sup>17</sup> arrived two more ambassadors from Nadir Shah, Mohammed Riza Khan Qajar and Teip (Teyup) Khan Afshar.<sup>18</sup> The embassy arrived in the capital in early November 1738 and stayed until the end of December 1739.<sup>19</sup> On December 2, 1739, they had a farewell audience with the Russian Empress,<sup>20</sup> Ambassador Hulefa Mirza Kafi also attended that audience.<sup>21</sup> The embassy's primary objective was to offer mediation to the Russian court for the conclusion of peace with the Ottoman Turkey during the ongoing conflict between Russia and Turkey (1735-1739).

Finally, the most magnificent embassy, was sent by Nadir Shah from India. Overall, Nadir Shah reached the peak of his power by 1739. By that time, the Russians and the Ottomans were expelled from all the formerly possessed Safavid areas, Khiva and Bukhara were conquered and the Mughal emperor, who had been accused of aiding the Afghans, was overwhelmingly defeated. Following the takeover of Delhi, the victor seized control over the entire treasury and the untold wealth of the Mughal dynasty. While in Hassan Abdal, Nadir Shah delegated exuberant ambassadorial missions to Istanbul and St. Petersburg in the fall of 1739. The ambassadors embarked on their long trip on October 23, 1739. In Delhi prior to sending the mission, he instructed his secretary and historiographer Mirza Mahdi Khan Astarabadi to send a letter to the Russian resident representative in Isfahan, Kalushkin. A list of gifts slated for Anna Ioannovna, her sister and niece was attached to the letter. That letter was included in Kalushkin's report to the Russian government and its copy was later found in

---

<sup>13</sup> In 1734, being a *vekil* (regent) Nadir-Ali Khan (future Nadir Shah) appointed Ahmet Khan as an ambassador to Russia, to announce the accession to the throne of Safavid Shah Abbas III (eight-month-old son of Tahmasp II) in 1732 (Adamova & Printseva, 2015: 23).

<sup>14</sup> It is known that during this embassy (1736) he was accompanied by a noble Dagestani Migr-Ali bey; (Khartanovich, 2014: 112); According to the source, (in the original spelling): "The envoy Migr-Ali-bey was sent by Shah Nadir to Russia with the news of the death of Abass III and Nadir's ascension to the Persian throne. From that time, he began to call himself Shah Nadir." (Bronevskii, 1996: 80).

<sup>15</sup> Izarbaf (zarbaf, Persian). Silk fabric woven with metallic threads, either gilded or silver.

<sup>16</sup> See *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 1736.

<sup>17</sup> Anna Ioannovna, also russified as Anna Ivanovna, ruled as Empress of Russia from 1730 to 1740.

<sup>18</sup> During the Russian-Turkish war (1735-1739) Nadir Shah, "sent ambassadors Mohammed Riza Khan of Qajar and Teib Khan of Avshar to the Russian court with a proposal for mediation with the Ottoman Porte." (Bronevskii, 1996: 80).

<sup>19</sup> Kochubinskii, 1899: 493.

<sup>20</sup> A detailed description of the embassy's reception ceremony can be found in the archival materials, see GAAO, f. 394, op. 1, d.13, sh.46, 47-49.

<sup>21</sup> Soloviev, 1993: 84.

the Astrakhan archives.<sup>22</sup> Sardar Bey Kirklou was appointed to lead the embassy in Russia. However, due to the delay with the embassy in Kizlyar, Sardar Bey had to return and was replaced by Muhammad Husayn Khan.<sup>23</sup>

Since the death of Empress Anna Ioannovna, to whom the Iranian mission was sent, they were received by infant Emperor Ivan VI (Ioann Antonovich) and his mother, Regent Anna Leopoldovna. The Afshar Ambassador was officially accepted by Ruler Anna Leopoldovna on 2 October 1741 in a grand ceremony. The gifts of Nadir Shah included a total of 22 items, 15 rings and 14 elephants.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, in 1740, after the capture of Khiva, by the order of Nadir Shah Russian prisoners were returned home without any ransom.<sup>25</sup> When Elizabeth ascended to the throne having overthrown infant Emperor Ivan VI, the embassy was still in Russia. The ambassador and his entourage were invited to Moscow to participate in the coronation ceremonies.<sup>26</sup> Finally, the delegation returned to Iran in November 1742 with friendly letters from Empress Yelizaveta and gifts, which mostly included wines and vodka.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, despite Empress Elizabeth Petrovna's decree in April 1745 to send a return embassy to the Shah,<sup>28</sup> it was not executed until 1747. By that time, Iran was already in a state of turmoil.<sup>29</sup> However, Nadir's campaigns in Dagestan and an attempt to build a naval fleet on the Caspian Sea led to a concentration of Russian troops on the border.

### **The beginning of disagreements**

The deterioration of relations between the two countries after the embassy of Nadir Shah in 1739-1742 was due to Nadir Shah's dissatisfaction with the Russian monopoly on the Caspian Sea and the Russian side's refusal to provide ships and necessary equipment for shipbuilding. At that time, only Russia had a fleet on the Caspian Sea. The Russian government took measures to prohibit the development of local shipping. Russia prohibited the import of weapons, gunpowder, lead, sulphur, saltpeter, ship timber, ship supplies, and precious metals in the region. The policy aimed to

---

<sup>22</sup> Ivanov, Lukonin & Smesova, 1984: 11-12.

<sup>23</sup> Manstein, 1875: 212.

<sup>24</sup> Ivanov, Lukonin & Smesova, 1984:12.

<sup>25</sup> Kurukin, 2012: 174.

<sup>26</sup> One of the engravings in Elizabeth Petrovna's coronation book depicts members of the Afshar embassy on the square in front of the Assumption Cathedral in the Kremlin. The embassy entourage is easily recognizable in the engraving by their characteristic headdresses, which are crowned with four sharp protrusions and were only worn during the reign of Nadir Shah (Trubecki, 1744: No. 30; Adamova & Printseva, 2015: 26).

<sup>27</sup> See Gozalova, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Protocols of Empress Elizabeth Petrovna's meetings with the executives of the Collegium of Foreign affairs record that after a decree signed by Elizabeth in April 1745, hunting birds and gyrfalconers were to be dispatched to the Shah with the return embassy to Iran. Sent with the embassy of Mikhail Golitsyn were twenty-two gyrfalcons, twelve hobbies and twelve falcons (Vasilyeva, 2020: 287).

<sup>29</sup> Ulyanitsky, 1899: 563.

discourage the development of defense systems, construction of ships, equipping of troops, and production of naval equipment. The Russian government was aware that a powerful Caspian fleet posed a significant threat to Russia's regional conquests.<sup>30</sup> It was in Russia's interests not to allow "another power, no matter who's, to establish itself along the Caspian Sea".<sup>31</sup>

In response to the instability in the Caucasus region, Nadir Shah prioritised the strengthening of the Caspian fleet. His aim was to weaken Russia's military position in the area. Prior to acquiring his own ships, Nadir Shah was heavily reliant on Russian vessels to transport food to his army by sea, resulting in Russian merchants earning substantial profits. In July 1742, Nadir Shah formed a partnership with British trade agent Elton to challenge the Russian traders' monopoly on the Caspian Sea and acquire provisions for a Dagestan campaign. The objective of the campaign was to obtain seaborne victuals.<sup>32</sup> In 1741, Nadir Shah sought to disrupt the monopoly held by Russian traders in the region. To achieve this, he approached the Russian resident I.P. Kalushkin and arranged for the hiring of ten Russian ships. Some of these ships were to be used in operations against the Dagestani rebels, while others were to transport food from Astrakhan. However, Kalushkin cautioned the government that if they granted Nadir Shah these ships, he would retain them indefinitely, as he intended to construct his own fleet. As a result of Kalushkin's warnings, the Russian government declined to fulfil Nadir Shah's request.<sup>33</sup> The Russian resident in Afshars' court, Kalushkin, regularly reported on Nadir Shah's threat to conquer Russia. Following the deterioration of bilateral relations, the Russian Empress dispatched a reinforced corps,<sup>34</sup> commanded by Lieutenant-General Tarakanov, to the border area. Another reason for the tension was Russia's unwillingness to have another powerful Muslim neighbour, along with the Ottoman Empire. The subsequent Russian course of action in the region aimed to diminish the influence of the Afshar state.

Looking back, the Russian fleet had complete control over the Caspian Sea, making it nearly impossible for the Shah to challenge Russia. However, this dynamic could change significantly if the Shah were to build up his navy. It was never Nadir Shah's intention to invade the Russian borders. As early as January 1743, he had already moved on from the Caucasus and was focused on besieging Baghdad, which was then part of the Ottoman Empire. Elton's shipbuilding activities continued to pose a threat, even though the possibility of invasion to Russia had passed.

In the early stages, bilateral relations were positive and cordial. However, with Nadir's increasing influence and the consequences of his Dagestan campaign, relations

---

<sup>30</sup> See: Gozalova, 2019: 300-314.

<sup>31</sup> Ataev, 1991: 53.

<sup>32</sup> Avery, 1993: 44.

<sup>33</sup> Lockhart, 1938: 204.

<sup>34</sup> Lockhart, 1938: 210-211.

began to deteriorate. This was mainly due to Russian support of the Caucasian highlanders, and opposition to Nadir's efforts to construct a navy on the Caspian Sea.

### **The role of Russian residents and consuls in these disagreements**

The presence of permanent residents within the Afshar court gave Russian diplomacy substantial influence and allowed Russia to pursue its regional foreign policy more actively. Russia's policy placed a significant reliance on both its residents and consuls at the Afshar court, as well as the governors-generals of Astrakhan. Astrakhan provincial governors served as coordinators for the Russian foreign policy department's involvement with the Afshar State. They were given permission to engage in independent communication with Afshar envoys and local leaders. The diplomatic affairs of Astrakhan governors have been a significant aspect of their duties, dating back to the first governor, A. Volynsky, who had personally led an embassy to the Safavid state in 1715-1717 before assuming that position. Russian consuls and residents were responsible for informing both the Astrakhan and St. Petersburg governments of any changes within the Afshar state. Through the assistance of all the gathered information, the Astrakhan governors could devise their own strategies to handle any issues that may arise in the relations between the two nations. To increase effectiveness in addressing multiple issues, central government entrusted local authorities to autonomously implement the country's regional foreign policy.

According to almost all Russian sources, the relations between the Consuls (Arapov and Bakunin, who succeeded him) and the Residents (Kalushkin and Bratyshev, who succeeded him) at the Afshar court were rather strained, and sometimes became openly hostile. According to Arapov's account, the Afshar authorities were always inclined to treat him with respect in their personal dealings, "but the Russian Residents not only contributed to this; on the contrary, because of the hatred and disgust that had been instilled in them towards the Consulate, they wished and always wished to see it destroyed and despised."<sup>35</sup>

While Kalushkin was serving at the court of the Afshars from 1735 until his death in 1742, Nadir Shah was launching military campaigns in the Caucasus region. All of Nadir Shah's appeals to the Russian court for ships or supplies were not supported by Russia because of Kalushkin's disapproval of its policies.<sup>36</sup> Bratyshev continues the policy of his predecessor and in all his reports on Nadir Shah's Caucasus campaign warns the Russian government of a possible attack by the Shah. Bratyshev took over from him, and he constantly warned the border authorities, including Lieutenant

---

<sup>35</sup> Ulyanitsky, 1899: 511-512.

<sup>36</sup> Russian resident Kalushkin succumbed to illness in 1742 and in April and May 1742, during his illness and after his death, the translator V. Bratishchev fulfilled the duties of the resident. On 13 May 1743, he was officially appointed resident in Afshar state.

-Colonel A.M. Kishensky, the Kizlyar commander, and Astrakhan Governor V.N. Tatishchev, of the potential threat of an attack by Nadir Shah.

A “supreme order” to detain Afshar couriers at the Russian border, i.e. to quarantine them in Kizlyar, was issued in connection with this danger. During one quarantine, Afshar’s citizens expressed their displeasure to Commander A.M. Kishensky. In response, the commander explained that the Russian resident, Bratyshev, had reported “a plague that has appeared in the camp of the Shah”. The message was passed on to the Shah’s ministers and eventually reached Nadir, leading to a significant increase in the Shah’s dissatisfaction with Bratyshev and Russia.<sup>37</sup> As a result, the reputation of the Russians at the Afshar court was greatly diminished at this time. Various circumstances led to this, namely Bratyshev’s ugly drunkenness, which even drove him to madness; the delay in sending the extraordinary embassy (Prince Golitsyn) promised to the Shah as early as 1745, which served as a reason for the Shah’s displeasure with the Russian government; and finally, the internal turmoil in the Afshar state, which began in late 1745 and ended in the summer of 1747 with the assassination of Nadir Shah.<sup>38</sup>

At the same time, the governor of Astrakhan, V.N. Tatishchev, did not share Bratyshev’s<sup>39</sup> fears about Nadir Shah’s preparations for war with Russia.

Despite numerous messages from Russian residents about Nadir Shah’s imminent invasion of Russia’s borders, Tatishchev was a staunch opponent of a military clash with the Afshar state. Tatishchev’s reasoning was that the resident, being young and inexperienced, was not well enough informed to make highly credible reports.<sup>40</sup> The events that came after confirmed the Astrakhan governor's complete righteousness. The Shah had no desire to cross Russian borders, especially given the fragile state of his rear in the mountainous Caucasus.

Meanwhile, Prince Mikhail Mikhailovich Golitsyn, appointed plenipotentiary ambassador to the Afshar state, reached Resht in 1747, but soon learned of Shah Nadir’s death in Khorasan and sailed back to Astrakhan that year.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Tikhvinsky & Tikhvinsky, 2011: 352.

<sup>38</sup> Ulyanitsky, 1899: 562.

<sup>39</sup> In 1748, Bratyshev was recalled from Iran. The Foreign Ministry reviewed the reports of consul I.I. Bakunin as part of this process. Bakunin had accused Bratyshev of promoting Iran's interests and receiving bribes and favors from the Shah. However, after an investigation, these allegations were found to be unfounded and questionable.

<sup>40</sup> Tikhvinsky & Tikhvinsky, 2011: 352.

<sup>41</sup> Bronevskii, 1996: 82.

## Conclusions

Throughout the first half of the 18th century, Nadir Shah had quite intense diplomatic exchanges with Russia. The aggravation of Russia's relations with the Ottomans and the deterioration of its internal international position after the death of Peter I led to the conclusion of two Russian-Safavid treaties, one of the main conditions of which was the cession to the Safavid state of the Caspian territories captured during the Persian campaign (1722-1723). Although no official treaties were ever signed between the Afshar state and the Russian Empire, Nadir was personally involved and actually dictated the terms of the Russian-Safavid treaties of 1732 (Resht) and 1735 (Ganja).

Nadir Shah sought to normalize relations with the Russian Empire to implement further conquest plans. He demonstrated the significance he placed on maintaining these relations by sending three official embassies (1736, 1738-1739 and 1739-1742), one of which carried exceptional gifts that surpassed all previous missions in luxury. Nadir had grand ambitions to showcase his might to Russia and successfully deter any potential attacks from the north into the Caucasus. He gave explicit instructions to his ambassadors, including guidelines for selecting ship foremen, in his efforts to develop his own shipbuilding and shipping enterprises in the Caspian Sea.

In the early stages of their relationship, cooperation was seen as mutually beneficial for both nations. However, neighboring countries grew cautious due to the rise of the Afshar state as a dominant political force in the Middle East. It is evident that the ties between the two states were situational, with neither side considering the other a vital strategic ally or military partner. Their relationship was based on pragmatic cooperation whenever possible. At the same time, the Russian government and local authorities were uncertain and divided about the potential development of relations with Nadir Shah. The reports from Russian residents and consuls in the Afshar state provided contradictory and confusing information regarding the Shah's intentions to go to war with Russia, as well as the collapse of his army due to disease and internal strife. One of Nadir Shah's major initiatives was his ambitious plan to build a fleet in the Caspian Sea, which eventually strained relations. However, it should not be assumed that a military confrontation between the two nations was imminent. The Russian Empire viewed the Afshar state as a strategic territory to counter Turkish influence in the region, rather than a valuable ally in its geopolitical calculations.

## Bibliography

### Sources

Berkhgolts, F.V. *Dnevnik kamer-iunkera Berkhgoltsa vedennyi im v Rossii v tsarstvovanie Petra Velikogo 1721-1725. Perevod s nemetskogo I.F. Ammona, Part 3: 1723* [Diary of chamber-junker Berchholz, kept by him in Russia during the reign of Peter the Great: 1721-1725. Translated from German by I.F. Ammon, Part 3: 1723]. Moscow: Katkov i K., 1860. (in Russian)

Bronevskii, S.M. *Istoricheskie vypiski o snosheniakh Rossii s Persieiu Gruzieiu i voobshche s gorskimi narodami v Kavkaze obitaiushchimi so vremen Ivana Vasilevicha donyne*. [Historical extracts on Russia's relations with Persia, Georgia and in general with the mountain peoples of the Caucasus from the time of Ivan Vasilyevich to the present day]. Edited by I. K. Pavlova. St. Petersburg: Centre "Petersburg Oriental Studies", 1996. (in Russian)

Butkov, P.G. *Materialy dlia novoi istorii Kavkaza s 1722 po 1803 gg. Chast' I* [Materials for the new history of the Caucasus from 1722 to 1803. Part I.]. St. Petersburg: Imp Akad Nauk, 1869. (in Russian)

*Dogovory Rossii s Vostokom Politicheskie i torgovye* [Treaties of Russia with the East. Political and commercial]. Edited by T.D. Yuzefovich. St. Petersburg: O.I. Baksta, 1869. (in Russian)

GAAO – Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Astrakhanskoi oblasti [State Archive of the Astrakhan Oblast], f. 394, op. 1, d.13, sh.46, 47-49. [<https://archive.astrobl.ru/page/virtualnaya-arhivnaya-vystavka-dokumentov-azerbaydzhan-iran-kazahstan-rossiya-turkmenistan>; accessed on January 27, 2023]. (in Russian)

Golikov, I.I. *Deianiia Petra Velikogo mudrogo preobrazovatel'ia Rossii sobrannye iz dostovernykh istochnikov i raspolozhennye po godam. Chast' 9* [The works of Peter the Great, the wise transformer of Russia, collected from reliable sources and arranged by year. Part 9]. Moscow: V Universitetskoii Tipografii u N Novikova, 1789. (in Russian)

*Letopis Kunstkamery. 1714-1836* [Chronicle of the Kunstkamera. 1714-1836]. Edited by M. Khartanovich. St. Petersburg: Muzei antropologii i etnografii im. Petra Velikogo (Kunstkamera), 2014. (in Russian)

Manstein, Ch.H. *Zapiski Manshteina o Rossii 1727-1744* [Notes of Manshtein on Russia, 1727-1744]. Edited by V.V. Timoshchuk, M.I. Semevski. St. Petersburg: V.S. Balashev, 1875. (in Russian)

*Obstoiatelnoe opisaniie torzhestvennykh poriadkov blagopoluchnago vshestviia v tsarstvuiushchii grad Moskvu i sviashchenneishago koronovaniia eia avgusteishago imperatorskago velichestva vsepresvetleishiia derzhavneishiia velikiia gosudaryni imperatritsy Elisavet Petrovny samoderzhitsy vserossiiskoi ezhe byst vshestvie 28 fevralia koronovanie 25 apreliia 1742 goda* [A detailed account of the solemn order of the safe entry into the ruling city of Moscow and the most sacred coronation of Her Imperial Majesty, Great Empress Elizabeth Petrovna of Russia, the entry to be on February 28, the crowning on April 25, 1742]. Edited by N.Yu. Trubecki. St. Petersburg: pechatano pri Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1744. (in Russian)

*Osmanlı devleti ile Azerbaycan Türk Hanlıkları arasındaki münasibetlere dair arşiv belgeleri. Cilt II. Karabağ-Şuşa, Nahçıvan, Bakü, Gence, Şirvan, Şeki, Revan, Kuba, Hoy, (1575-1918)* [Archive documents on the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Azerbaijani Turkic Khanates. Volume II. Karabakh-Shusha, Nakhchivan, Baku, Ganja, Shirvan, Sheki, Revan, Kuba, Hoy, (1575-1918)]. Edited by İ. Binark. Ankara: T.C. Başkanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1992. (in Turkish)

*Polnoye sobraniye zakonov Rossiyskoy Imperii. Sobraniye Pervoye. Tom V. 1713-1719 gg. Tom IX. 1733-1736 gg* [Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. Vol. 5: 1713-1719. Vol. 9: 1733-1736]. Edited by M.M. Speranskiy. St. Petersburg: Tip. II Otdeleniya Sobstvennoy Yego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Kantselyarii, 1830-1834.

*Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v XVIII veke. Dokumenty i materialy. T. 6: Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia 1752-1765* [Russian-Chinese relations in the 18th century: Documents and Materials. Vol. VI: Russian

-*Chinese relations: 1752-1765*]. Edited by S.L. Tikhvinsky. L. Tikhvinsky. Moscow: Pamyatniki istoricheskoi mysli, 2011. (in Russian)

*Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti. (Primechaniia k Vedomostiam) [St Petersburg Vedomosti, Notes to the Vedomosti]*: St. Petersburg: Publishing House of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1736. Addition to the St. Petersburg Gazette on July 13, 1736. (in Russian)

## Literature

Adamova, A.T., Printseva, G.A. (2015). *Panorama Persii: ot Anzali do Tegerana [Panorama of Persia: from Anzali to Tehran]*. St. Petersburg: Publishing House of the State Hermitage. (in Russian)

Ataev, K.H. (1991). *Torgovo-ekonomicheskiye svyazi Irana s Rossiiyey v XVIII-XIX vv [Trade and economic relations between Iran and Russia in the 18th-19th centuries]* Moscow: Nauka. (in Russian)

Avery, P. (1993). Nadir Shah and Afsharid legacy. In P. Avery, G. Hambly, C. Melville (Eds.), *The Cambridge history of Iran. Vol. VII: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, (pp. 3–62). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Axworthy, M. (2006). *The Sword of Persia: Nader Shah, from Tribal Warrior to Conquering*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Bushev, P.P. (1978). *Posolstvo Artemiya Volynskogo v Iran v 1715-1718 gg [Embassy of Artemy Volynsky to Iran in 1715-1718]*. Moscow: Nauka. (in Russian)

Gadzhiev, V.G. (1996). *Razгром Nadir Shakha v Dagestane [The defeat of Nadir Shah in Dagestan]*. Makhachkala: Tip Mininformpechati RD. (in Russian)

Gozalova, N.R. (2010). *Voprosy istorii Azerbaidzhana XVIII v na osnove svedenii angloiazychnykh istochnikov i istoriografii [Issues of the history of Azerbaijan of the 18th century based on information from English sources and historiography]*. Moscow: Iris Group. (in Russian)

Gozalova, N.R. (2019). Anglo-Rossiiskoe protivostoianie i plany Nadir Shakha Afshara po sozdaniiu voenno-morskogo flota na Kaspiiskom more [Anglo-Russian confrontation and plans by Nadir Shah Afshar to create a navy on the Caspian Sea]. In D.V. Vasiliev (Ed.), *Tsentral'naya Aziya na perekrestke yevropeyskikh i aziatskikh politicheskikh interesov: XVIII-XIX vv.: sbornik nauchnykh trudov mezhdunarodnogo seminar, Alma-Ata, 19-23 avgusta 2019 g. [Central Asia at the Crossroads of European and Asian Political Interests: 18th-19th Centuries: Collection of Scientific Papers of the International Seminar, Alma-Ata, August 19-23, 2019]* (pp. 300–314). Moscow: OntoPrint. (in Russian)

Gozalova, N.R. (2016). Svedeniya o posol'stvakh 1739-1741 gg Nadir Shakha Afshara v rossiyskikh i turetskikh arkhivakh [Information about the embassies of Nadir Shah Afshar in Russian and Turkish archives (1739-1741)]. In I.V. Bazilenko, O.A. Vodneva (Eds.), *Traditsii rossiyskogo kavkazovedeniya, Vypusk 1* (pp. 103–121). St. Petersburg: Institut vostokovykh rukopisei RAN. (in Russian)

Gozalova, N.R. (2024). The Russian-Safavid relations and Russian diplomacy in 1715-1735. *Reconstructing the Past: Journal of Historical Studies*, 2(2), 40–53. <http://dx.doi.org/10.54414/GQHH5884>

Ivanov, A.A., Lukonin, V.G., Smesova, L.S. (1984). *Iuvelirnye izdeliia Vostoka Kolleksiia Osoboi kladovoi otdela Vostoka Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha [Jewelry of the East. Collection of the Special Pantry of the Department of the East of the State Hermitage]*. Moscow: Art. (in Russian)

Kochubinskii, A. (1899). *Graf Andrei Ivanovich Osterman i razdel Turtsii. Iz istorii vostochnogo voprosa. Voina piati let 1735-1739 [Count Andrei Ivanovich Osterman and the partition of Turkey. From the history of the Eastern question. The War of Five Years 1735-1739]*. Odessa: Tipografiia shtaba Odesskogo voennogo okruga. (in Russian)

Kurukin, I.V. (2010). *Persidskiy pohod Petra Velikogo. Nizivoy korpus na beregah Kaspiya (1722-1735) [The Persian campaign of Peter the Great. The Lower reaches corps on the Caspian coast (1722-1735)]*. Moscow: Kvadriga; Ob'edinenennaya redaktsiya MVD Rossii. (in Russian)

- Kurukin, I.V. (2012). *Anna Leopoldovna* [Anna Leopoldovna]. Moscow: Young Guard. (in Russian)
- Kurukin, I.V. (2023). “Oriental Affairs Secretary” Semyon Avramov. Peter the Great’s diplomat in Iran and the Caucasus [“Oriental affairs secretary” Semyon Avramov. Diplomat of Peter I in Iran and the Caucasus]. *Orientalistica*, 6(1), 87–96. (in Russian)
- Lockhart, L. (1938). *Nadir Shah. A critical study based mainly upon contemporary sources*. London: Luzac & Company.
- Soloviev, S.M. (1993). *Sochineniya. V 18 knigakh. Kniga XI. Istoriya Rossii s drevneyshikh vremen* [The works. In 18 books. Book XI. History of Russia since Ancient Times]. Moscow: Misl. (in Russian)
- Turilova, L.S. (1996). Rossiyskiye diplomaticheskiye predstaviteli v Persii i Turtsii v XVIII veke [Russian diplomatic representatives in Persia and Turkey in the 18th century] *Annaly. Bulletin of the Institute of Oriental Studies*, 4, 104–118. (in Russian)
- Ulyanitsky, V.A. (1899). *Russkie konsulstva za granitsej v XVIII veke* [Russian consulates abroad in the 18th century]. Part 1. Moscow: Publisher: Type. G. Lissner and A. Geshel. (in Russian)
- Vasilyeva, D. (2020). Elephants as Diplomatic Gifts: Nādir Shāh’s Embassy of 1739-1742. In N.N. Dyakov, A.S. Matveev (Eds.), *Proceedings of the International Congress on Historiography and Source Studies of Asia and Africa. Vol. 1. XXX Congress. St Petersburg University, 2019* (pp. 281–310). St. Petersburg: NP-Print Publishers.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

**To cite this article:** Gozalova, N.R. (2025). Russian diplomatic representatives in the Afshars’ state. *Historia i Świat*, 14, 231–242. <https://doi.org/10.34739/his.2025.14.14>



© 2025 The Author(s). This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-ND) 4.0 license.