

EX IPSO FONTE

IN CO-OPERATION WITH
THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM

PETER THE GREAT MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY
RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES



Manuscripta Orientalia

International Journal for Oriental Manuscript Research

Vol. 29 No. 1 2023

St. Petersburg

Manuscripta Orientalia

Efim A. Rezvan (St. Petersburg), Editor-in-Chief,
Maryam E. Rezvan (St. Petersburg), Deputy Editor-in-Chief
Anna Yu. Kudriavtceva (St. Petersburg), Editor

Advisory Board

Malachi Beit-Arié (Jerusalem) —
Alexander B. Kudelin (Moscow) — *Pavel B. Lurje* (St. Petersburg) —
Annabel T. Gallop (London) — *Mikhail B. Piotrovsky* (St. Petersburg) —
Anton D. Pritula (St. Petersburg) — *Alessandro Gori* (Copenhagen)

English Editor

Natalia Denisova

Copyright

© Copyright 2023 Manuscripta Orientalia, Russia

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher.

Subscriptions

Subscription orders may be made directly to the publisher by E-mail: manuscripta.orientalia@mail.ru.

Subscription orders are accepted for complete volumes only, orders taking effect with the first issue of any year. Claims for replacement of damaged issues or of issues lost in transit should be made within ten months after the appearance of the relevant issue and will be met if stocks permit. Back issues are available.

For further information, please, visit our web site under: <http://manuscripta.ru> or <http://manuscripta-orientalia.kunstkamera.ru>

The journal is registered by North-Western regional office of the RF State Committee for Press.

Date of registration: . Registration number: .

E-mail (subscription): manuscripta.orientalia@mail.ru

“Lema”. Address: 28, 1st line, 199004, St. Petersburg, Russia

V. Shorokhov

St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russia
E-mail: v.shorokhov@spbu.ru

S. Krasutsky

St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russia
E-mail: lgd1987@yandex.ru

DOCUMENT IN TURKIC WITH SHAH ‘ABBĀS II CONCLUSION TOWARDS SELLING SALTPETRE TO RUSSIA (NEAR APRIL, 29 1647)

Abstract. The Turkic document below fixed the position of the government of the Shah ‘Abbas II to the end of long and hard negotiations with Russian diplomatic representatives towards selling Iranian saltpetre to Russia. Multiple attempts to buy this strategic raw material for the Tsar's defence industry took place since the middle of 1630ies and gained a little success. The written answer given to Russian ambassadors S. I. Kozlovsky and I. Zinoviev gives a short overview of the difficult talks and puts an end to envoy's expectations of obligatory promises to supply Russia some fixed amount of Safawid's saltpetre. At the same time purchases of that kind by Russian official trade representatives were definitely permitted.

Key words: Russian-Iranian relations, Russian-Iranian trade, Shah ‘Abbas II, Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (RSAAA), archival documents, registers, saltpetre, negotiations

Acknowledgments. The study was supported by the research grant of the Russian Science Foundation No. 18-78-10052 “The Documentary History of the Russian Strand of Safawid Diplomacy (1501—1722)”, <https://rscf.ru/en/project/18-78-10052>

Potassium nitrate is one of the strategic raw materials of the black powder era. It is about three-quarters saltpetre [1]. The process of production of this substance in the north of Eurasia was for a long time very archaic and inefficient. Moreover, cold climate is not suitable for the massive natural formation of nitrate of potash. Russia (along with the other pre-modern countries) striving to increase production of gunpowder faced, among other things, a shortage of saltpetre [2]. The Tsar's government sought to solve the problem in several ways: by purchasing the substance abroad, creating state-owned factories, concluding contracts with private suppliers.

The first documented negotiations on the saltpetre issue with Iran took place in 1636 during the embassy to the court of Šafī I by S. Islen'ev and M. Griazev. The Shāh promised to send saltpetre to the Russian state if possible, and Russian ambassadors and merchants received the right to buy it on the market if they could find it [3]. Ambassadors S. Volynsky (“Shchepa”) and S. Matveev, who arrived in Iran when ‘Abbās II had already ascended the throne (1643), won confirmation of their material consent to the sale of the strategic good to Russia [4]. However specific commitment on the volume and cost of potassium nitrate supplies was not reached. The first saltpetre delivery from Qizilbāsh state to Russia took place in 1646, accompanied by the Shāh's messen-

ger Murātkhān-bīk [5]. It was enough considerable (about 8.5 tons) to encouraged the Russian side. Therefore, the mission of S. I. Kozlovsky and I. Zinoviev (1646—1648) tried to buy 50,000 pounds of saltpetre in Šafawīd realm. The course and results of the negotiations that took place in April 1647 in Iṣfahān are summed up in the document published below.

File 1647.1 from the fund 77 of the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (RSAAA) consists of 589 folios and has an extensive title: “The Report of the Russian Ambassadors to Persia Prince Saveliy Ivanovich Kozlovsky and *D'yak* [“Clerk”] Ivan Zinoviev. Seven Copies of Shāh's Letters in Persian Graphics to Some European and Asian Rulers Are Attached. The Initial Part is Lost”. It contains 13 letters in a Turkic language, as well as letters of the Shāh to the Pope and the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. The file mostly deals with the details of the mission of 1646—1648. During numerous audiences with the Shāh's close courtiers, many questions were raised by Kozlovsky and Zinoviev and many discussions took place. The documents of our interest are the answers of Shāh ‘Abbās II's people to the Russian ambassadors. All letters were translated at the same time that the originals were written.

This paper considers a letter on fol. 103. It has no direct translation, but its essence is set forth in ff. 99—100.

This text constitutes an official response of *Shāh* to the ambassadors. It deals with negotiations on the sale of saltpetre from the Qizilbāsh state to the Russian Tsardom. In the beginning, the *Shāh*'s courtiers say that the Russian Tsar asked the *Shāh* to facilitate selling 50 thousand *poods* [6] of saltpetre per year. Further, they tell that during three audiences, the ambassadors asked to sell saltpetre, but each time the amount decreased first from 40 to 30, then to 20, and finally to 10 thousand *poods*. The issue was reported to the *Shāh*, who refused to sell saltpetre, arguing that the demand for it increased in his own country and not every year its amount is enough for home consumption.

The text is written quite legibly in nine lines. This letter is probably not finished, or its continuation, if any existed, has been lost. At the end of the answer there is a sentence starting a new thought, but it is quite difficult to translate because it is cut off. The next document in

the same language on fol. 104, as well as the Russian language documents surrounding this answer, aimed strengthening Russo-Iranian relations. They do not provide any information about niter.

The language in which these documents are written is also interesting. Dative case forms *ya / ga*, third person singular pronoun as well as the demonstrative pronoun *ol*, the verbal form *gan*, the genitive form *niḡ*, etc. indicate the Kypchak group of Turkic languages [7]. It can be assumed that this language is Old Tatar. This, in particular, may be indicated by the fact that the text contains the postposition *birlān* ("with", "together"), which is characteristic of the Tatar language [8]. This version could be also supported by the fact that the text contains the form of the subjunctive mood *yr idi*, which is also characteristic of the Tatar language [9]. However, it remains not entirely clear why were these letters written in the Turkic Kypchak language.

The Original Text of the Letter [10]

و نه کیم سیز ایلیچیلار خان اعظم حضرتلارنیک امرینجه یقین کشیلاری
برلان جوابده اولدوغونکر زمانده شوره سببلی سویلادی نکز نه کیم شاه (1)
حضرتلاری خان اعظم حضرتلاری نیک کراکیر اقلارنه شوره نی هر یل
ساین ایلی شار میک پوط ستارغه بیورغای ایردی دیب ایکنجی جوابده
سویلادینکر (2)
کیم شوره نی ساتیب آلورغه قرقار میک پوط و یا اوتوزار میک پوط و یا
یکرمی شار میک پوط نه هیچ اولمسه یکرمی شار میک پوط هر یل ساین
اوجونجی جوابده سویلادینکر هر یل ساین هیچ اولمسه اونار میک پوط (3)
ساتیب آلورغه دیب و آنیک سببلی اوج کره جوابده اولدوغونکر زمانده هر
تورلوک جوابلار برلان آنیک برلان آنیک ایچون سویلادینکر (4)
و کوب تالاکلار برلان و پادشاه حضرتلار نیک بز یقین کشیلاری اول
ایلیچیلار نیک سویلاکان جوابلاری نکزنی افندیمر الغ پادشاه شاه عباس
حضرتلارنه (5)
یتکورددک حضرتلاری ده بولسه آنی بیورمادیلار نه کیم هر یل ساین نجه
پوط شوره ساتیب آلورغه دیب سویلاشیب تعیین اتمکا بیورمادیلار آنیک ایچون
کیم (6)
اول شوره شاه عباس حضرتلاری نیک ولایتلارینده خرجی چوق اولادور و
هر یل اول شوره هم اولمایدور و نه کیم اول شوره اولاری نیک خرجیدن (7)
آرتوب زیاده بولغانی ایچون شاه حضرتلاری آنیک سببلی قرینداشلاری
افندیمرکز الغ پادشاه غه آنیک ایچون تورماسدور دیب و اول (8)
خان اعظم حضرتلاری نیک کراکیر اقلارینه هر یل ساین اوزی نیک فارس
ولایتلارینده ستارغه بیوردیلار

The English Translation

And you, the ambassadors, by His Majesty the Tsar's command, during a meeting with the close people [of the *Shāh*] talked about saltpetre, so that His Majesty the *Shāh* ordered to sell fifty thousand *poods* of saltpetre per year to the *kirakyarāqs* [11] of His Majesty the Tsar. At the second meeting, you talked about buying forty or thirty or twenty thousand *poods* (at least twenty thousand *poods*) of saltpetre per year. At the third meeting, you talked about buying at least ten thousand *poods* per year. And therefore, meeting with us three times, for this you discussed all the options. We, the close people of His Majesty the *Shāh*, reported to our Master, the Great Monarch, His Majesty the *Shāh* 'Abbās about everything that you, the ambassadors, said, together with all the requests. His Majesty [the *Shāh*] did not order that any amount of saltpetre should be sold every year and did not order to agree on and set [the price?], because saltpetre is used a lot in the possessions of His Majesty the *Shāh* 'Abbās, and not every year its amount is enough (?). Since the consumption of saltpetre for his own needs has increased, His Majesty the *Shāh* will not provide it to his brother, your Master and Great Monarch. He said to the *kirakyarāqs* of His Majesty the Tsar that he ordered to sell [saltpetre] every year in his Persian provinces...

Notes

1. Veber, 1917: 1—4.
2. Solov'ev, 1990: 293; Losik & Shherba, 2008: 75—76.
3. Shorokhov, 2022: 605, 610—611.
4. RSAAA, f. 77, inv. 1, 1647, file 1, fol. 77.
5. *Ibid.*, fol. 83—84.
6. RSAAA, f. 77, inv. 1, 1647, file 1.
7. One *pood* in Russia varied from 14.04 kg to 16.38 kg.

- See: Cherepnin, 1944: 67—68; Shost'in, 1975: 19, 75—76, 258.
8. Tenishev, 2002: 308, 318, 332.
 9. Budagov, 1869, vol. 1: 254.
 10. RSAAA, f. 77, inv. 1, 1647, file 1, fol. 103.
 11. A person who care of the demands of the *Shāh*'s court. Usually *kirakyarāk* was a trade representative of *Shāh*. See: Doerfer, vol. 3: 593.

References

- Budagov, L. Z. (1869), *Sravnitel'nyj slovar' turecko-tatarskih narechij* [Comparative Dictionary of Turkish-Tatar Dialects], Vol. 1, St. Petersburg: Printing house of the Imperial Academy of Sciences.

- Cherepnin, L. V. (1944), *Russkaja metrologija* [*Russian Weights and Measures*], Moscow: Pervaja tipografija Transzheldorizdata.
- Doerfer, G. (1967), *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, Bd. 3, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner.
- Losik, A. V. & Shherba, A. N. (2008), “Proizvodstvo poroha v Rossii ot ego vozniknovenija i do XX v.” [“Gunpowder production in Russia from its origin to the 20th c.”], *Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta*, series 2, issue 4, part 2, pp. 74—82.
- Shorokhov, V. A. (2022), “Materials of the Russian diplomatic mission to Iran by Islen'ev and Griaev”, *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. History*, vol. 67, issue 2, pp. 599—615.
- Shost'in, N. A. (1975), *Ocherki istorii russkoj metrologii XI—XIX veka* [*Essays on the History of Russian Weights and Measures in 11th—19th cc.*], Moscow: Izdatel'stvo standartov.
- Solov'ev, S. M. (1990), *Sochineniia. V 18 knigah. Book V: Istoriia Rossii s drevnejshih vremen* [*Collected Writings. In 18 Books. Book 5: Russian History Since the Earliest Times*], vols. 9—10, Moscow: Mysl'.
- Tenishev, E. R. (2002), *Sravnitel'no-istoricheskaja grammatika tjurkskih jazykov. Regional'nyye rekonstrukcii* [*Comparative-Historical Grammar of Turkic Languages. Regional Reconstructions*], Moscow: Nauka.
- Veber, V. (1917), “Selitra” [“Saltpeter”], *Estestvennye proizvoditel'nye sily Rossii*, vol. 4: *Poleznye iskopaemye*, Petrograd: Gosudarstvennaja tipografija, pp. 1—12.
-