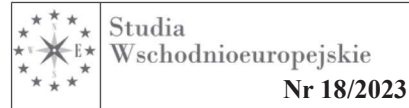


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From the history of safavid-poland relations in the first half of the 17th century

Introduction

Today, our sovereign Azerbaijan, an equal member of the world community, is writing the glorious pages of independence history. The fortune of our freedom and the democratic society we are building, is, of course, closely linked to a successful foreign policy. Naturally, foreign policy is based on historical experience and traditions. Many countries which we have established contacts with and those which seek to establish relations with us, especially big states, have rich experiences and traditions in foreign policy. Like history, politics also is repeated. Therefore, it is very important to study the interrelations of the Safavid state of Azerbaijan with Poland and to draw appropriate conclusions.

Maiden political and diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Poland began in 1471 with the establishment of relations between the Aghgoyunlu ruler Hassan Padshah and King of Poland Kazimir IV. The following year, the delegation sent by Hassan Padshah to Krakow was headed by a certain Spanish Jew by name Isaac. Political relations that were established between the two countries did not continue after the death of Hassan Padshah. The Jagiellonian Palace in Krakow began to pursue a very cautious policy against the Ottoman sultan.¹ Thus, although the Safavid state, the legal successor of the Azerbaijani Aghgoyunlu state founded in 1501 had established diplomatic relations with the papacy, the Holy Roman Empire, Portugal, Spain, Venice, England and a number of other Christian countries, failed to establish political ties with the Polish kings.

¹ D. Kolodziejczyk. The relations between the Polissii-Lithuanian commonwealth and Safavid Iran. Some comments on their character and intensity/EasternEurope, Safavid Persia and the Iberian world. *Frontiers and Circulations at the Edge of Empires*. Albatros 2019, p. 35-36.

This was due to the fact that, unlike the Habsburgs, the Polish king, main enemy of the Ottoman Empire in the West, made “eternal peace” with the Ottoman Empire in 1533 and maintained friendly relations between the parties during the 16th century.² Friendly relations between Poland and the Ottoman Empire continued during the reign of Stefan Bator (1576-1586), a voevode (governor of a province), a former Ottoman vassal of Transylvania who was elected to the throne by the citizens of the alliance in 1576.

The main reason for the lack of political correspondence and contacts between Poland and the Safavid palaces in the 16th century should be sought in the fact that these contacts were not of interest, at least to the Polish side. Commenting on the relations between the Safavids and the European states, C.P.Rubies notes that “the idea of a military alliance between the Latin Christian world and the Safavids against the Turks was the main motive power behind diplomatic exchanges”.³ It should be noted that about 1600 such forces was not significantly in the case of Poland.

However, after the election of Sigismund III Waza (1587-1632) as a king, since a pro-French faction, friendly to Ottoman among a large part of the citizens of Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth had faced with the desire of inveterate catholic king to get closer to the Habsburgs, the strongest enemy of the Ottomans, the situation began to change. Sigismund III Waza acted inconsistently with the historical attempts of the Christian rulers to ally with the distant Safavid state against the closer Islamic states, and naturally saw the Safavids as potential allies in future wars with the Ottoman Empire.⁴ In this article our target is to clarify the Safavid - Poland relations during the mentioned period.

The emergence of Safavid-Polish political relations during the reign of Shah Abbas I

Therefore, at the end of the 16th century, Shah Abbas I took an important initiative to establish diplomatic relations with Poland. Thus, although the “Great Embassy” headed by Huseynali bey Bayat he sent to the Christian rulers of Europe in 1599, which had to pass through Moscow to the palace of the Holy Roman Emperor and on the way meet with King of Poland Sigismund III Waza, and deliver the shah’s letter and gifts, they did not reach the

² D. Kolodziejczyk. *The relations...*, op. cit., p. 36.

³ Joan-Pau Rubiés. *Political rationality and cultural distance in the European embassies to Shah Abbas*, “*Journal of Early Modern History*” 20 (2016): p. 354; *The Relations of the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth with Safavid Iran and the Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin*. Warsaw 2017, p. 69.

⁴ M. Połczyński. *The Relacyja of Sefer Muratowicz: 1601–1602 Private Royal Envoy of Sigismund III Vasa to Shah ‘Abbas I*, “*Turkish Historical Review*”, 5, no. 1, Brill 2014, p. 61.

royal palace.⁵ French Abel Pinchon also confirms that the Safavid Shah's delegation headed by Huseynali bey Bayat to Western Europe had to visit the King of Poland and deliver a letter addressed to him.⁶ Sigismund III Waza and his advisers suspected that the Tsar of Moscow Boris Godunov forcibly changed the direction of the Safavid envoys, and therefore no contacts between the Safavids and Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth whose interests coincided with those of the Ottoman Empire, was not established.⁷ The main reason for the de facto absence of political correspondence and contacts between Poland and the Safavid palaces in the 16th century was that the establishment of these relations did not seem important, at least for the Polish side.⁸

But, King Sigismund III Waza's (1587-1632) desire to get closer to the Ottomans' most powerful enemy, the Habsburgs, as well as historical tensions for the Ottoman Empire's rule over Moldova, led the Polish king to accept the Safavids as potential allies in future wars with the Ottoman Empire.

In 1601, King Sigismund III, a supporter of the Habsburgs, hoping to damage Safavid-Moscow relations and restore dialogue with a potential ally against the Ottomans appointed Sefer Muratovich a special royal envoy to the Safavid palace. Sefer Muratovich's visit led to the establishment of Safavid-Polish diplomatic relations and their further development during the reign of Shah Abbas I and his successors (Shah Safi and Shah Abbas II).

In 1601, King Sigismund III sent Sefer Muratovich to the Safavid court as a private merchant and royal envoy. The status of Sefer Muratovich, a subject of the King of Poland and the Ottoman sultan, as well as his ability as an experienced merchant, allowed him to operate effectively between the palaces of Warsaw and Isfahan. Although Sefer Muratovich was sent for trade, there were hidden political motives behind the mission - the desire to maintain open and regular contact with a potential ally against the Ottoman Empire was the main reason for the Polish king's attempt to establish friendly relations with the Safavids in the early 17th century.⁹

⁵ Книга Орудж-бека Байата дон-Жуана Персидского. Перевод с английского, введение и комментарии И.Н. Окталя Эфендиева, к.и.н. Акифа Фарзалиева. Элм, Баку 1988, с. 142-143; Y.M. Mahmudov. Azərbaycan diplomatiyası. Təhsil, Bakı 2006, s. 280.

⁶ Lambert César and Claude-Barthélemy Morisot. Trois relations d'Aegypte, et autres memoires curieux dessingularitezduditpays. Relation d'unvoyage de Persefaitésannées 1598 & 1599. Augustin Courbé, Paris 1651, p. 142.

⁷ M. Połczyński. The Relacyja..., op. cit., p. 62.

⁸ D. Kolodziejczyk. The relations..., op. cit., p. 37.

⁹ M. Połczyński. The Relacyja..., op. cit., p. 64.

The status of a subject both of the King of Poland and the Ottoman sultan, as well as his ability as an experienced merchant, allowed him to present himself as an ideal agent. He managed to convey the message of friendship of the King of Poland to Shah Abbas I. Muratovich's initial report on the trip sheds light on the establishment of political ties between the two countries.

Tsar Boris Godunov, who came to power in February 1598 with the death of his young predecessor Feodor I, sought to secure Moscow's reign in the region by preventing the establishment of friendly relations between the Safavids and the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth based on mutual interests. King Sigismund III was aware of the order given to Safavid mission to visit the palace of Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth and believed that the tsar had forced the Safavid envoys to change their route. Due to Sefer Muratowicz, Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth and the Safavid state had gained an opportunity to participate in talks on cooperation against the Ottoman state.¹⁰

As a result of Muratowicz's mission, Shah Abbas I became aware of the friendly intentions of Sigismund III and was duly informed that the Tsar of Moscow had disrupted the Safavid embassy sent to the rulers of Christendom in 1599. Interestingly, Pirgulu bey, who returned to Isfahan from Moscow after ending his mission, said nothing about the embassy that did not go to Poland and this indifference cost him dearly.

Sefer Muratowicz's "Notes" give a complete picture of the reasons why the "grand embassy" delegation of Shah Abbas I did not go to the Polish palace, and why the Shah's gifts and letter were not delivered to King Sigismund III.¹¹

It is difficult to explain this strange step of Tsar B. Godunov, the ruler of Moscow, against the Safavid envoys. I.V. Mogilina writes about the reasons why the Russian tsar took such a position against the Safavid ambassadors: *"Why did the ruler of Moscow, Tsar Boris Godunov, take such a strange step against the envoy of Shah Abbas I, whom he called 'brother'?" The reason is very simple. For the past 12 years, Boris Godunov has personally and unsuccessfully been involved in the creation of the anti-Ottoman league. Godunov succeeded in this delicate diplomatic game and both sides recognized his "irreplaceable" role. However, reaching the peak of his diplomatic activity, Godunov could not control his imperial appetite. In negotiations with the shah, he began to link the recognition of the "high hand" of the Moscow state by the shah and the creation of a broad anti-Ottoman*

¹⁰ M. Polczyński. *The Relacyja...*, op. cit., p. 70-71.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 85.

propaganda".¹² Although Shah Abbas I, who, as a far-sighted and prudent politician got the nickname "Great" in history and fully deserved it, became aware of the diplomatic games of B.Godunov, he did not want to disturb the alliance with his northern neighbor. Therefore, the shah avoided the Russian tsar and tried to negotiate directly with the Europeans to form an anti-Ottoman alliance, to conceal his position on the current situation. Therefore, while sending an embassy of only 43 people to Europe, a delegation of 300 people was sent to Moscow and B.Godunov was presented with the golden throne of the Sassanid emperors.¹³

Naturally, B.Godunov did not like the initiative of Shah Abbas I. Since the establishment of direct contacts between European countries and the Safavids could lead to the removal of B.Godunov from a position of favorable mediation between them. Therefore, the Safavid delegation was kept in Moscow for up to six months. Tsar B.Godunov had managed to create a conflict between Anthony Shirley and members of the embassy and arrested him. "As a result of Sherli's arrest, *all the letters sent by the Shah to European countries were taken from him and opened to get to know their contents*".¹⁴ B.Godunov wanted to know whether Shah Abbas I was playing a double dealing and doing things with the "European monarchs" that would harm the interests of the Moscow state. After learning that the Shah did not plan such a thing, the delegation was allowed to go to Europe.¹⁵ Although Pirgulu bey, the envoy sent by Shah Abbas I to Moscow, after his return to Isfahan informed the Shah about the events in Moscow, but said nothing about the embassy delegation that did not go to Poland.

It is appears from Sefer Muratowicz's "Notes" that it was from Muratowicz Shah Abbas I learned that his letter and gifts to King Sigismus III had not reached his address. Then Shah questioned Robert Shirley, who knew that his brother Anthony was in prison in Moscow. Robert Shirley said that Tsar had released Anthony only after receiving a promise on giving up the idea of going to the palace of Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth. S.Muratowicz noted that Polish royal palace and Pan Dzerzhik, who was fluent in Eastern languages, knew about the Safavid mission sent to the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Pan Dzerjek told me that ship of friendship of His Majesty the King of Poland could have been more useful for His Majesty the Safavid Shah than any other Christian ruler. He also instructed me to meet

¹² И.В. Магилина. Россия и проект антиосманской лиги в конце XVI - начале XVII вв. Волгоград: 2012, с. 196.

¹³ И.В. Магилина. Россия и проект антиосманской лиги в конце XVI - начале XVII вв. (1604-1612 гг.). Волгоград: 2016, с. 78-79.

¹⁴ В. Парри. Проезд через Россию Персидского посольства в 1599-1600 г. М.: 1900, с. 7.

¹⁵ И.В. Магилина И.В. Россия и проект антиосманской лиги в конце XVI - начале XVII вв., с. 80.

with His Majesty the Safavid Shah and to get him acquainted with His Majesty the King of Poland.¹⁶ During the meeting of S.Muratowicz with Safavid Shah, it was revealed that Pir-gulu bey, who arrived in Moscow at the same time as the staff of the “Grand embassy”, did not inform the Shah about the events that took place there.

It is known from Sefer Muratowicz’s “Notes” that at a feast for ambassadors Shah Abbas I raised his glass in honor of the King of Poland.¹⁷ S.Muratowicz writes that after the feast in the palace, the Safavid Shah approached him and said, “... *deliver this letter to His Majesty the King and ask him to send response letter through you or another envoy. I promise that if God wills, if I return from this war^{18*}, I will send him a messenger with letters and gifts*”.¹⁹

Thus, with the mission of S.Muratowicz, diplomatic relations between Poland and the Safavid state were established. Due to the activities of Sefer Muratowicz Poland and the Safavid state had the opportunity to participate in cooperation talks against the Ottoman Empire. Under the direct influence of Muratowicz’s unofficial mission to the Safavid palace, diplomatic relations between Poland and the Safavid Empire were established and revived.

In 1604, Pope Clement VIII (1592-1605) decided to send members of the Carmelite Order including the Italian Paolo Simone, the Spanish Juan Tadeo, Vincent, and Francisco Rioddid de Peraela to Isfahan, although it was a delayed reaction to Hussein Ali bey Bayat’s embassy. Arriving in Prague on August 1, the delegation met with the Safavid ambassador Zeynal khan Shamli, who was in the palace of Rudolf II at that time.²⁰ On August 25, 1604, the Carmelites, together with Zeynal khan Shamli, reached Krakow, the capital of the Kingdom of Poland. Here they were solemnly welcomed by the Pope’s representative, Monsieur Rangoni.²¹

During their stay in Krakow, they were given letters and luxurious gifts to deliver from the Polish palace to the Safavid shah, including an illustrated Bible presented to King Louis IX of France by Cardinal Bernard Matseyowski, Bishop of Krakow.²² However, because Tsar Boris Godunov did not allow them to enter Russian lands, the priests returned to Vilnius and from there to Warsaw. Although a representative of the papacy in Poland wanted to

¹⁶ M. Polczyński. The Relacyja..., op. cit., p. 74.

¹⁷ M. Polczyński. The Relacyja..., op. cit., p. 91-92.

¹⁸ * At that time Shah Abbas I was preparing to go on a trip to Balkh.

¹⁹ M. Polczyński. The Relacyja..., op. cit., p. 93.

²⁰ Jesús Florencio del Niño. A Persia (1604-1609): peripecias de una embajada pontificia que fué a Persia a principios del siglo XVII. Ramón Bengaray, Pamplona 1930, p. 30, 32.

²¹ A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia: The Safavids and the Papal mission of the 17th and 18th centuries. Vol.1 Ed. Chick H, Matthee R. London: I.B.Tauris, 2012, p. 173.

²² The Relations..., op. cit., p. 73.

change the way of the missionaries across the Black Sea, the election of Paul V (1605-1621) in 1605 and the death of Tsar Boris Godunov in the same year changed the situation and the Carmelites refused to change their way. They passed through Smolensk, Moscow and Kazan and reached Isfahan only in December 1607. On January 3, 1608, members of the delegation were received by the Shah and presented their gifts.²³

In June 1604, after the victories of liberation of Iravan Zeynal khan Shamli, and at the end of the same year after the victory on the Ottoman front Mehdigulu bey Turkmen together with the envoy of Emperor Rudolf II Tektander were sent to inform the European monarchs about the victory of Shah Abbas I in the military operations against the Ottomans demanding to join the anti-Ottoman coalition. In 1605, Shah's envoy Mehdigulu bey arrived at the Polish palace in Warsaw with the news of the Turkmen Shah's victories over the Ottoman sultan.²⁴ V. Pilipenko writes that in the archives of Rachinsky library in the fund of the unknown nobleman there are copies of the letters sent by Shah Abbas I to Sigismund III. The Safavid Shah rejoiced at the good relations between the King of Poland and the German Emperor Rudolf II and suggested: *"from now on, friend of Rudolf II is my friend, and his enemy is my enemy. We must be a united army against our common enemy"*.²⁵ Shah Abbas I hoped this news would induce the king to join a coalition against the Ottoman state. However, the parliament still wanted peace with the Ottoman Empire. King of Poland Sigismund III faced a noble uprising (1606-1609) that strongly opposed plans to centralize power. Although the king had previously seriously considered the Habsburg alliance with the Safavids as part of his grandiose plans to strengthen his domestic and foreign political influence and secure the throne in Stockholm and Moscow, his dreams were dashed by changes in the international and domestic situation.²⁶

In spite of the efforts of Mehdigulu bey and Zeynal khan Shamli, who at the time, were negotiating with Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, in 1606 Germany made a separate peace with the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the Safavid allies in Europe once again allowed the Ottoman Empire to direct all its military forces to the Eastern front. So, the Safavid state was forced to wage war against the Ottoman Empire in private.²⁷

²³ A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia, Vol. I, p. 174.

²⁴ A. Strzylecki. Sejm z r. 1605, Kraków: 1921, s. 45.

²⁵ В. Пилипенко. Перед лицем ворога. Польська антитурецька література середини XVI – середини XVII ст. Інститут української археографії та джерелознавства ім. М.С.Грушевського НАН України, Київ: 2014, с. 130.

²⁶ D. Kolodziejczyk. The relations..., op. cit., p. 38.

²⁷ Y.M. Mahmudov. Azərbaycan diplomatiyası, s. 287.

On February 22, 1608, the pope's envoy Paolo Simone with the Shah's new envoy Robert Shirley was sent to Europe. Although Robert Shirley had to travel to Europe with Paolo Simone, they eventually chose separate routes: Robert Shirley left Isfahan on February 2, 1608, to go to Poland via Moscow. He had to deliver letters from the Shah proposing the creation of an anti-Ottoman coalition covering Spain, England, France, the Holy Roman Empire, Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth and Moscow. Robert Shirley arrived in Warsaw in February 1609 and brought two letters addressed to the king and the nobles of Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth.²⁸ The plan proposed by Shah Abbas I in a letter to King Sigismund III Waza from January 1608 provided for a meeting of the united Christian forces with the Safavids in Aleppo. The Shah proposed the Europeans, seize the Syrian shores together with Aleppo, and attack on land and sea together with the Safavid troops advancing through Mesopotamia and Diyarbakir to Anatolia.²⁹

The second letter (decree) of Shah Abbas I addressed to the Polish nobles said: "... *Let the great or small emirs of Poland, honored by the grace of a respected, high, enduring and boundless padishah, know that there is ...complete love, friendship, unity and harmony between our happy imperial majesty and their nobles, and envoys from both sides keep coming and going*". "Including recently, a number of grandfathers (the priests sent by the pope are meant – T.N.) have been sent to strengthen the love and friendship between us, to come to an agreement to destroy the Turkish army and to act in accordance with that which is true".³⁰ It is evident from the content of both letters that the Safavid Shah was interested in strengthening friendly relations with the King of Poland, and, intended to involve Poland in the war against the Ottoman Empire like other Western countries.

In May 1609, Robert Shirley received in Krakow a very indefinite answer from the King of Poland. Sigismund III was only able to offer the shah his personal friendship, as through his ambassador Gregory Kochanovsky he had recently restored peace with the Ottoman sultan.³¹ Robert Shirley was unable to reach an agreement on alliance proposals in Krakow, or later in Prague, Rome, or even Madrid, where he arrived in 1609. He ended his mission in 1611 by delivering the Shah's letter to King of England James I.³²

Aligulu bey, envoy of Shah Abbas I sent together with the Portuguese Jesuit Francisco de Acosta in 1605, had had to wait in Astrakhan for a long time due to the internal turmoil

²⁸ J. Reychman. *Związki Iranu z Polską*, "Kultura i Społeczeństwo", tom XV, no. 4, 1971, s. 82.

²⁹ The Relations..., op. cit., p. 121-124; D. Kolodziejczyk. The relations..., op. cit., p. 38.

³⁰ The Relations..., op. cit., p. 140-141, 143-145.

³¹ J. Reychman. *Związki Iranu z Polską*, s. 82.

³² The Relations..., op. cit., p. 75.

in the Moscow principality. They arrived in Poland only in 1609, about the same time as Robert Shirley.³³

The political fiasco of Robert Sherley's embassy prompted Shah Abbas I to pursue an alternative anti-Ottoman policy, to change the direction of the silk trade in order to deliver silk to European buyers through Moscow and Poland, thereby depriving the Ottoman treasury of customs revenues. Shah Abbas I persuaded Juan Tadeo, a Carmelite priest who had gained the Shah's trust by mastering the Persian language since arrived in the Safavid palace in 1607, to deliver the plan of changing the route of the silk and carpet trade leading from the Ottoman lands to Europe to the line "*Moscow, Poland and other European countries*" to the Prince of Moscow, the King of Poland, and the Papacy, and in 1611 he sent him as his envoy to Europe.³⁴ But he was arrested in Astrakhan and was released only in 1614, thanks to the intervention of Tsar False Dmitri's former Polish wife Marina. Leaving his mission unfinished and returning to Isfahan Juan Tadeo continued to serve as trusty person of Shah Abbas I and court interpreter.³⁵ In his diary, priest Florencio del Niño Jesús noted in his diary that the strategy of Shah Abbas I on changing the course of the silk trade "*aimed to weaken the most effective ways of supporting the Ottoman war*".³⁶

In this situation, Shah Abbas I not only expanded his relations with the Western countries against the Ottoman state, but also tried to enter into peace negotiations with the Ottoman Empire. More precisely put, the Safavid ruler tried not to be alone in the war against the Ottoman Empire, and did not want to miss the opportunity to conclude a peace treaty with the Ottoman sultan if the European states would not help him. Of course, this second line of the Shah's foreign policy, that is, his tendency to improve relations with the Ottoman state, did not satisfy the Western countries at all.³⁷ However, since the Safavid ruler's plan to involve European states in the anti-Ottoman coalition failed, he decided to conclude a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire. On November 20, 1612, a peace treaty was signed in Istanbul.³⁸ Peaceful relations were established between the two countries, albeit temporarily. But as before, this agreement did not completely eliminate the Safavid-Ottoman conflicts.

³³ Ibidem, p. 76-77.

³⁴ J. Cutillas. *Şah I. Abbas'in Bir Akdeniz Politikası Var mıydı?* (Çev. İlker Külbilge). "Cihannüma Tarih ve Coğrafya Araştırmaları Dergisi", Sayı II/2 – Aralık 2016, s. 204-205.

³⁵ The Relations..., op. cit., p.77.

³⁶ Jesús Fray Florencio del Niño. En Persia (1608-1624): su fundación, sus embajadas, su apostolado. Pamplona: Ramón Bengaray, 1930, p. 71-72.

³⁷ Y.M. Mahmudov. Azərbaycan diplomatiyası, s. 290.

³⁸ T.H. Nəcəfli. Azərbaycan Səfəvi dövlətinin xarici siyasəti. Bakı: Turxan NPB, 2020, s. 119.

Taking advantage of the peace relations established with the Ottoman Empire, the Safavid ruler sent his diplomats to Europe in 1613 to expand trade relations with Western countries.

It was at this time that a new treaty was signed between King of Poland Sigismund III Waza and Emperor Matias Habsburg I, promising to help each other against the rioters. The Treaty of 1613 caused a scandal in Poland, because the king signed the treaty without consulting the Sejm and tried to keep it secret. Under the treaty, the king would be able to neutralize the troops wandering in his territory after Poland's intervention in Moscow, and the emperor would soon be able to fight rebellious Protestant subjects in Bohemia and Hungary and recruit troops to help repel the occupation of Prince of Transylvania Gabor Betle. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the latter was a vassal of the Ottoman Empire and the involvement of Habsburg troops to Poland in Lithuania violated the Polish-Ottoman peace, increased tensions between the king and the sultan.³⁹

In this situation, the Polish ambassador Teofil Szemberg was sent to the Safavid palace. It is possible that this mission was connected with the Treaty of Poland-Habsburg in 1613, which forced the king to look for additional allies against the Ottoman state.⁴⁰

It is also evident from the letter of Shah Abbas I addressed to King of Poland Sigismund III in October 1615 that the king's envoy, Theophil Schemberg, had indeed visited the Safavid Shah. In his letter Shah Abbas I states: "*In accordance with the requirements of kindness and friendship between the two sides, we ordered to treat him well, with kindness and respect, and to allow him to return to his country. And the friendly letter sent to the service of the above-mentioned His Majesty will become a stimulator of the chain of friendship*".⁴¹ At the end of his letter, the Safavid Shah conveyed to his Majesty, the King of Poland that the path of friendship and unity requires friendship and bone-deep bonds, the king must send an envoy, keep the door open for mutual correspondence. If they are looking for any work to be solved in this country, they should apply to the alliance and announce that this can be resolved.⁴² The continuation of correspondence between the parties during this period shows once again that Safavid-Polish diplomatic relations have maintained their intensity.

In the autumn of 1624, letter of Shah Abbas I in Turkish addressed to King Sigismund III was delivered to the Polish palace.⁴³ In his letter the Safavid Shah wrote: "*Recently,*

³⁹ The Relations., op. cit., p. 78.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 79-80.

⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 153-155.

⁴² Ibidem, p. 155.

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 159-167.

a high-ranking and respected *balcıbaşı* (“head mead cupbearer”) has come to my highest threshold by the nobility of the awakening of glory and justice, the throne of supremacy and sovereignty, the throne of greatness and luxury. “My brother Shahin Geray khan (may God grant him all his wishes), riding a horse in the racings of Luristan, sitting on the throne of Genghis Khan, asking for the grace and help of his Lord, on the principles of sovereignty, grandeur, luxury and mutual gratitude; Reminding you of the path of friendship and trust that existed between you [Sigismund III Waza and Shahin Geray] inspired an increase in kindness and love, and received my royal approval. Since the path of brotherhood has been chosen between His Majesty and the mentioned valorous khan, the task of friendship is to comply with the requirements of unity and friendship between you [Sigismund III Waza and Shahin Geray]”.⁴⁴ Shahin Geray khan, mentioned in the letter of Safavid shah, seeing that his cousin Janibey Geray khan, who was at enmity, was strengthened in the Crimean khanate with the help of the Ottoman sultan, took refuge in the palace of Shah Abbas I in 1614.⁴⁵ He was able to return to Crimea only after his brother Mehmed Geray khan III came to power in 1623. Iskender bey Munshi writes in this regard: “...the kingdom of the Tatar tribe and the honor of being the *fərmanfərması* (firman issuer) of the dynasty of that country fell to the lot of Shahin Geray khan’s elder brother Muhammad Geray khan. The great men of the Tatars accepted his kingdom, which they called “Golgay” in Tatar, and his brother Shahin Geray as successor to the throne, and recalled him the prince. The prince asked the Shah for help and took the way to his province, everything turned out as he wished, and all the Tatar nobles accepted the kingdom of Muhammad Geray and Shahin Garay as successor to the throne”.⁴⁶

According to Iskender bey Munshi, Shahin Geray’s envoy had been received by Shah Abbas I and the letter he sent was handed to the shah. According to the envoy, the Ottoman sultan offered Shahin Geray amount on hand and many valuable gifts, and although he was invited to remain loyal to the Ottoman state and hostile to the Qizilbash, he refused because he was a staunch supporter of the Safavid Shah.⁴⁷

Apparently, the letter of the Safavid Shah in Turkish to the King of Poland was written after this event. Because the letter contains promises about the support of Shah Abbas I to the Tatar prince Shahin Garay, who lived in the Safavid palace for nine years. Taking into account the fact that Shah Abbas I recaptured Baghdad from the Ottomans namely

⁴⁴ The Relations., op. cit., p. 163-165.

⁴⁵ İsgəndər bəy Münşi. Dünyanı bəzəyən Abbasın tarixi. II Kitab, s. 1802.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, p. 1802-1803.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 1803.

at that time, Shahin Geray, who acted as a *naib* (successor) of his brother, the Crimean khan Muhammad Geray III, tried to form an anti-Ottoman coalition with the participation of Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth and Ukrainian Cossacks, the shah's letter was undoubtedly considered as an invitation to war against the Ottomans.⁴⁸ *"Since the path of brotherhood was chosen between the King of Poland Sigismund III Waza and Shahin Geray khan", "compliance with the requirements of unity and friendship between the parties"* was emphasized in the letter of Shah Abbas I. However, this time the King of Poland preferred to be cautious, and although he was pleased to see that the Ottomans to be worried in the east, he did not risk his plans. The Safavid Shah's plans for Shahin Geray met with no response.

Safavid-Polish political relations during Shah Safi and Shah Abbas II

In January 1629, Shah Abbas I died. Since he executed his son Muhammad Bagir Mirza in 1615 his grandson ascended the throne under the name of Sam Mirza Shah Safi (1629-1642). As the Ottoman-Safavid war was still going on during this period, Shah Safi immediately sent an envoy to Europe trying to announce his accession to the throne. The letter sent by the Safavid Shah in the summer of 1629 to Sigismund III, King of Poland, also was written in Turkish as the letter of Shah Abbas I dated 1624.⁴⁹ At the beginning of the letter, the Safavid Shah praised King Sigismund III Waza, along with noting that he had come to power after the death of his grandfather, he recalled the establishment of friendly relations between the Safavid state and the Kingdom of Poland during the reign of Shah Abbas I. He emphasized that he based his policy on friendship and expected the other side to do the same, and stressed the importance of sending ambassadors and letters to develop these relations. Recalling the establishment of friendly relations between the Safavid state and the Kingdom of Poland during the reign of Shah Abbas I, he noted that he based his policy on friendship and expects it from the other side, and stressed the importance of sending ambassadors and letters to develop these relations. *"To consider the same tradition, the path of friendship, alliance and unity with the highest dignity, out of the need for even more good intentions..., we must respect the traditions of close relations between us and reject the ways of conflict. Therefore, this letter, which was kindly marked in order to demonstrate friendship and come to friendly relations, was written with the pen of unity"*. At the end of the letter, it was specially stated, *"If they have any needs in*

⁴⁸ The Relations., p. 80-81; D. Kolodziejczyk. The relations., op. cit., p. 39.

⁴⁹ See: The Relations., op. cit., p.170-179.

this country, let them know for the sake of unity, so that our imperial grace may meet them generously".⁵⁰

After the death of King Sigismund III in 1632, his son Wladyslaw was elected King of Poland. The first two years of the reign of Wladyslaw IV (1632-1648) were marked by military conflicts with the Ottoman sultan, the Grand Duke of Moscow and Sweden. The conflict with the Prince of Moscow failed, and Wladyslaw IV had to relinquish his claim to the Moscow throne. The conflict on the border with the Ottoman sultan in 1633 was soon resolved, and negotiations between the parties ended in 1634 with the signing of a peace treaty. In 1635, the Ottomans made peace on the border with Poland, launched a major attack on the Safavids in the South Caucasus, and captured the fortress of Iravan. In those years, the Polish king's war with Sweden also failed, and Lithuania was lost.⁵¹

Despite of certain relative peace, Poland hetman was still anxious, so he took the opportunity to renew relations with the Safavids. He instructed the Dominican priest Giovanni da Lukka, who had traveled through Poland to the Crimea and the Caucasus, to visit the Shah and carry out a semi-official mission. Meeting with the Safavid Shah in Tabriz, Lukka delivered the hetman's letter to Shah Safi, and then in the spring of 1636 accompanied the Shah's army on a march that resulted in the liberation of Iravan.⁵² In response to Da Lukka's mission, Shah Safi sent the Dominican Armenian priest and Catholic Archbishop of Nakhchivan Ogotinos to Poland. The envoy arrived in Warsaw in February 1637. It was at this time that the overly ambitious King Wladyslaw IV signed a treaty with Emperor Ferdinand Habsbur III, hoping to get help from the emperor to restore the Swedish throne, which had been lost many years ago. In return, Wladyslaw IV agreed that the Habsburgs would take part in the future war against the Ottomans.⁵³

A week after the signing of the treaty, the King of Poland prepared the staff of envoys to be sent to the Shah of Safavid, appointed the experienced Teofi I Szemberg as his ambassador, and was accompanied by Archbishop Bajenc'. Along with the letter to be presented to the Safavid Shah, Schemberg also received written instructions from the king. Thus, the ambassador had to apologize for the delay in sending the royal embassy as a result of the wars waged by Wladyslaw IV from the beginning of his reign. At the same time, he was

⁵⁰ Ibidem..., p. 177.

⁵¹ История Польши в трех томов, том 1. М.: Изд-во Академии Наук СССР, 1954, с. 234; The Relations..., op. cit., p. 82.

⁵² See: Eszer Ambrosius Klaus. *Giovanni Giuliani da Lucca O.P. Forschungen zuseinem Leben und zuseinen Schriften*. In. "Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum", Vol. 37, 1967, p. 412-420; The Relations..., op. cit., p. 82.

⁵³ The Relations..., op. cit., p. 83.

instructed to refer to the upcoming marriage of the king to sister of Emperor Ferdinand III Cecilia Renata as a sign of rapprochement between Warsaw and Vienna, which promised the future of co-operation against the Ottomans sister.⁵⁴

Departing in June 1637, T. Schemberg traveled through Smolensk and Vyazma, arrived in Moscow in July and was twice received by the tsar. The Polish ambassador, who left Moscow, passed through Kazan and arrived in Astrakhan on September 12. On January 9, 1638, while traveling from Qazvin to Isfahan, Schemberg met the ambassador of Holstein-Gottorplu, Frederick III, who had returned from Isfahan, in a caravanserai in the south of Qazvin, and this meeting was recorded by the embassy's secretary, Adam Oleari. Thus, we can assume that Schemberg reached Isfahan in late January or early February 1638.⁵⁵ The Polish ambassador, Theophil Schemberg, met with Shah Safi and presented the king's letter to the Shah. During his stay in the Safavid capital, he participated in the blessing of the Carmelite Church on June 7, 1638. When the Polish ambassador T.Schemberg returned, he was accompanied by the Safavid ambassador Musa bey. While the embassy was passing through Dagestan, the fortress village on the road from Derbent to Tarku was attacked by residents of Boynak village, many members of the Polish embassy, including the ambassador, were killed and Musa bey was arrested. The news of the embassy's fate reached Isfahan and angered the Shah, as it was a humiliating blow to his government. Shah Safi ordered to capture some locals and to subject them to the traditional punishment, and sent some to Poland to be punished there.⁵⁶

Despite the assassination of the Polish ambassador T.Schemberg, Musa bey somehow managed to gain freedom and returned to Isfahan, keeping at least some of the letters. On May 17, 1639, the Safavid-Ottoman war ended with the conclusion of the peace of Qasri-Shirin. Apparently, in the autumn of that year, Shah Safi sent Musa bey back to Poland and other European palaces aiming to convey the necessary information.⁵⁷

After the death of Shah Safi in May 1642, his young son Sultan Muhammad II came to power under the name of Shah Abbas II (1642-1666). In 1647, Shah Abbas II sent a special letter to King Wladyslaw IV to announce his accession to the throne.⁵⁸ In his letter, Safavid Shah along with mentioning the Safavid-Polish friendship and noting interest in developing

⁵⁴ Ibidem.

⁵⁵ Hulasat as-siyar. Der Iran under Schah Safi (1629-1642) nachder Chronik des Muhammad Ma'sum b. Huağaği Isfahāni, ed. G.Rettelbach. Munich 1978, p. 238-239; Korespondencja Stanisława Koniecpolski ego hetmana wielki ego koronnego 1632-1646. Cracow 2005, p. 515-516; The Relations..., op. cit., p. 84.

⁵⁶ The Relations..., op. cit., p. 85-86.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 87.

⁵⁸ See: The Relations..., op. cit., p. 182-189.

relations between the two countries wrote: “*It is the duty of friends always to respect these well-known foundations, to have more ways for coming and going than before, and to renew the foundations of friendship and unity by sending friendly letters. And if there is anything they need to say on behalf of [our] unity on this side, let them be friendly to get it*”.⁵⁹

It should be noted that if during the reign of Shah Abbas I, the Shah usually offered joint military operations to European monarchs against the Ottoman Empire and was intolerant to the inadequate reaction of European partners, but the situation gradually changed under his successors. After the signing of the Peace of Qasri-Shirin between the Safavid and Ottoman empires, the Ottoman issue receded into the background in the Safavid Shah's relations with European states. On the contrary, as military operations resumed between the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire, and Venice was forced to fight hard against the Ottoman occupation in Crete, it began a vigorous diplomatic campaign, trying to form an anti-Ottoman coalition. In 1645, Giovanni Tiepolo was sent as ambassador to Poland, and Domenico di Santi was sent to the Safavid palace with letters by Doge, the Roman Pope, the emperor, the Polish king and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany addressed to Shah Abbas II.⁶⁰ In Poland, J. Tiepolo was met with ceremonial welcome by King Wladyslaw Wasa IV, and he hoped that by joining the anti-Ottoman alliance, he would be able to assemble a strong army with Venetian money and strengthen the royal power. But he did not find the necessary support inside Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth to strengthen the government, so he felt the need to look for such support outside.⁶¹ Therefore, trying to implement his plans, Wladyslaw IV sent his mission to the Safavid palace under the leadership of Jerzy Ilyicz, who arrived in Isfahan a few months after Di Santi. The Polish ambassador was accompanied by Venetian diplomat Giovanni Tiepolo.⁶²

Departing from Warsaw on October 2, 1646, Polish Ambassador Jerzy Ilyicz arrived in Isfahan on September 15, 1647, but the ambassador died on October 7 and was buried the next day in a Carmelite church. After Jerzy Ilyich's death, members of the Polish embassy elected Antonio di Fiandr, a Dominican priest who had previously served on special missions in Iravan and Crimea, to replace the late ambassador. On October 18, Antonio, along with another Dominican priest living in Isfahan, Paolo Piromalli, was received by Shah Ab-

⁵⁹ Ibidem, p. 189.

⁶⁰ G. Rota. *Safevî İrani ile Venedik Cumhuriyeti Arasındaki Diplomatik İlişkilere Genel Bir Bakış*, “Türkler”, c. 6. Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, İstanbul 2002, s. 601; D. Kolodziejczyk. *The relations...*, op. cit., p. 39-40.

⁶¹ История Польши, том 1, с. 235.

⁶² *The Relations...*, op. cit., p. 88.

bas II and were presented letters addressed to the King of Poland and other officials.⁶³ The decrees of Shah Abbas II, addressed to Polish Chancellor Jerzy Ossolinski and Grand Hetman Mikolay Potoski, dated November 1647,⁶⁴ along with saying that Polish Ambassador Jerzy Ilyich had “*said goodbye to this transient world at the foot of the highest throne*”, also the king’s letter was delivered to His Majesty the Emperor, informing him of that his deputy was accepted at heaven, and the revival of friendly relations, and the sincere sacrifice and good intentions of the great leaders’ support became clear.⁶⁵ Apparently, along with King Wladyslaw IV, the Polish Chancellor and Grand Hetman had addressed to the Safavid Shah, so Shah Abbas II also sent a reply letter to them. Letters of the Safavid Grand Vizier, Khalifa Sultan to the Polish Chancellor Jerzy Ossolinski and the Grand Hetman Mikolay Potoski⁶⁶ dated October 1647 once again confirm that in the current situation the Safavid state showed a serious interest in developing relations with Poland. These letters emphasized the interest of the two countries in maintaining and further strengthening friendly relations.

Before returning of the delegation sent to the Safavid palace, the Polish Sejm forbade the king to be prepared for war and ordered him to disband his already assembled troops. It was during this period that the two embassies in Isfahan brought letters from the Safavid Shah to the King of Poland and other high-ranking officials, but since these letters were of general nature, if taken into consideration the difficulties the king faced in domestic administration, it was of no use. The worse was that, the discouraged Ukrainian Cossacks seduced by promises of King Wladyslaw IV with secret booty and privileges in exchange for political support, revolted when they received the news that their war plans had been failed.⁶⁷

It is interesting while comparing the relations between the Safavid Shah and Kings of Poland Sigismund III Waza and Wladyslaw IV and the diplomatic initiatives aimed at establishing military cooperation it appears that these initiatives of both father and son were not connected with the Ottoman threat, but primarily with internal problems, or rather with the strengthening of the royal power.⁶⁸

⁶³ Ibidem, p. 199.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, p. 192-199.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, p. 198-199.

⁶⁶ See: The Relations, p. 212-227.

⁶⁷ D. Kolodziejczyk. The relations., op. cit., p. 40.

⁶⁸ Ibidem.

Conclusion

It should be noted that in the first half of the 17th century, political relations between the Safavid state and Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, with the exception of a few points where both sides, or at least one of them, seriously considered military cooperation, was not continuous in terms of intensity. While there was a serious interest in the establishment of such an alliance during the reign of Shah Abbas I. King Sigismund III Waza saw Poland's joining to the negotiations between the Habsburgs and the Safavids as a means of strengthening his domestic situation and international position. After the conclusion of the Qasri-Shirin peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire in 1639, the Safavid Shahs were not interested in cooperating against the Ottomans, so political relations between the parties began to lose intensity.

Streszczenie

Należy zauważyć, że chociaż Szach Abbas i nawiązał stosunki dyplomatyczne z papieżem, Świętym Cesarstwem Rzymskim, Moskwą, Wenecją, Anglią i wieloma innymi państwami Chrześcijańskimi, od czasu wymiany ambasadorów między Uzun Hassanem (1453-1478) i Kazimierzem Jagiellończykiem (1440-1492) w 1471 roku, królom polskim i szachom Safawidzkim nie udało się dokonać wymiany ambasadorów.

Niemniej jednak Szach Abbas i pod koniec XVI wieku podjął ważną inicjatywę nawiązania stosunków dyplomatycznych z Polską. Tak więc, pomimo faktu, że w 1599 roku jego delegacja "Wielkiej Ambasady", wysłana przez chrześcijańskich władców Europy pod przewodnictwem Huseynali-bek Bayat, musiała przejść przez Moskwę do pałacu cesarza Świętego Cesarstwa Rzymskiego. Pomimo otrzymania od Szacha instrukcji spotkania się po drodze z królem Zygmuntem III, przekazania mu listu i darów, Moskiewski Car Borys Godunow siłą zmienił kierunek ambasadorów Safawidów, aby delegacja nie mogła udać się do Warszawy.

Król Zygmunt III Wazy (1587-1632), zwolennik Habsburgów, w nadziei na zepsucie stosunków Safawidzko-moskiewskich i przywrócenie dialogu z potencjalnym sojusznikiem przeciwko Turkom, w 1601 roku mianował Safara Muratowicza specjalnym wysłannikiem Królewskim do Pałacu Safawidów. Wizyta Safara Muratowicza doprowadziła do nawiązania safawidzko-polskich stosunków dyplomatycznych, ich dalszego rozwoju pod rządami Szacha Abbasa I i jego następców (Szacha Safiego i Szacha Abbasa II). W tym artykule chcemy rzucić światło na interakcję Państwa Safawidzkiego z Polską w tym szczególnym okresie.

Słowa kluczowe:

Państwo Safawidów, Szach Abbas I, Polska, król Zygmunt III, Szach Sefi, Szach Abbas II.

Keywords:

Safavid state, Shah Abbas I, Poland, King Sigismund III, Shah Sefi, Shah Abbas II.

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