

## **HISTORY OF THE FIRST EMBASSY SENT ON A MISSION UPON THE INITIATIVE OF KING BORIS GODUNOV TO THE SAFAVID STATE**

### **Abstract**

The primary objective of the present work is to highlight the embassy organized by the Muscovite State to Safavid Iran at the beginning of the 17th century. The embassy, whose history is presented differently in the academic literature, played a significant role in strengthening the diplomatic relations between these two states. This embassy, established between 1600 and 1603, was the first sent to the Shah of Iran on the initiative of the new King of the Muscovite State, Boris Godunov (1598-1605).

**Keywords:** *Safavid Iran, Muscovite State, Ottoman Empire, Zhirovoy-Zasekin, Zasetsky, Per Quli Beg, King Boris Godunov, Shah Abbas I.*

It should be noted that the Ottoman-Iranian War began in 1578 and ended in 1590 with the Treaty of Istanbul, causing significant discontent in both the Muscovite State and Western European countries. As a result, diplomatic relations between the Muscovite State and Safavid Iran were temporarily severed.

In the 1590s, the issue of establishing a military-political alliance with Safavid Iran was again raised in the Muscovite State. That's why the Muscovite State re-established the interrupted relations with Iran and attempted to form a military alliance with the Safavid State against their common enemy, the Ottoman Empire. In 1594, King Fyodor (1584-1598) sent his embassy to the Shah of Iran in an effort to restore diplomatic relations, which was followed by a reciprocal embassy to Moscow from Shah Abbas (1587-1629). After that, diplomatic relations between these two states became more frequent and deeper for several years.

In 1600, at the initiative of King Boris Godunov, an embassy was sent to the Shah of Iran, headed by Alexander Fyodorovich Zhirovoy-Zasekin and Temir Vasilyevich Zasetsky. The primary objective of this embassy was to negotiate a bilateral treaty with Iran, which would entail broad cooperation in all areas, including military affairs. This political alliance was primarily aimed at the Ottoman Empire, which was attempting to make peace with Austria and subsequently intended to direct all its forces against Iran. Additionally, the ambassador was required to inform the Shah that the Tarki Shamkhal had demanded the demolition of the fortress on the Koysu River. It is noteworthy that in 1589-1590, the mouth of the Koysu River was seized by the Russians, who built a fortress and placed a garrison there in 1594. As for the issue of Kakheti, A. F. Zhirovoy-Zasekin had to negotiate on this topic only when the Shah himself would initiate the discussion. Additionally, if there was an Indian ambassador in Iran at that time, the Russian ambassador was obligated to

establish relations with them. Additionally, A. T. Zhirovoy-Zasekin was tasked with examining Iran's domestic and foreign affairs.

It is noteworthy that the Zhirovoy-Zasekin embassy (1600-1603) was preceded by an embassy sent to Moscow by the Shah of Iran under the leadership of Per Quli Beg (1599-1601). It is known that this ambassador was supposed to congratulate the new King of the Muscovite State, Boris Godunov, on his accession. The embassy was also tasked with resolving trade issues with the Muscovite State. It should be said that the embassy of Per Quli Beg laid the foundation for an alliance with the Muscovite State against the Ottoman Empire, because soon after this event, namely, by the decision of the government of the Muscovite State on September 12, 1600, a reciprocal embassy was sent to Iran under the leadership of A. F. Zhirovoy-Zasekin. The Russian embassy, together with the embassy of Per Quli Beg, left for Iran. Together with them was also sent the ambassador of the Iranian Shah, Hadi Beg (Andi Beg), who had been arrested in Moscow in 1598.

It should be noted that at the court of the Muscovite State, they were in a hurry to send Zhirovoy-Zasekin's embassy. This was because, a few years earlier, in the spring of 1597, an embassy led by Prince Vasily Vasilyevich Tyufyakin and Semyon Emelyanov had been sent to Iran on behalf of King Fyodor. The embassy was intended to inform Shah Abbas of King Fyodor's proposal to start a joint war of Iran and the Muscovite State against the Ottomans, but this embassy failed, as both Tyufyakin and Emelyanov died on the way, and the remaining members of the embassy, left without a leader and not authorized to negotiate with the Shah of Iran, returned in 1599. It should be noted that the Muscovite State royal court took this fact into account and granted more members of the Zhirovoy-Zasekin's embassy the authority, in addition to A. Zhirovoy-Zasekin and T. Zasetsky, secretary I. Sharapov and his assistant, P. Danilov, also had the authority to negotiate with the Shah of Iran.

It seems the authorities of the Muscovite State attached great importance to this embassy. This is clearly evident from the valuable gifts that were provided for the Shah of Iran and his son.

There are different opinions in the scientific literature regarding the history of the embassy of A. F. Zhirovoy-Zasekin and T. V. Zasetsky. According to one version, this embassy did not achieve its goal because, for unknown reasons, it was returned from Astrakhan to Moscow. According to another version, this embassy reached Iran and held negotiations with the Shah of Iran. It appears that the Russian and Iranian embassies continued their journey together, and in mid-June 1601, they set off by sea from Astrakhan to Iran, arriving in Iran. The Russian embassy then began negotiations with the Shah of Iran in the fall of 1601. The primary objective of Zhirovoy-Zasekin's embassy, as mentioned above, was to negotiate an agreement between the Muscovite State and Safavid Iran against the Ottomans. Negotiations were held between them, but it seems that no agreement was concluded between these countries.

After comparing the data of various historians, we believe that the embassy of Alexander Zhirovoy-Zasekin and Temir Zasetsky managed to reach Iran and hold negotiations with the Shah of Iran. We believe that the response to this Russian embassy was the fact that Shah Abbas immediately sent his embassy to Moscow, thereby informing King Boris Godunov that the Iranian side was starting a war against the Ottoman Empire. The embassy of Lachin Beg (1602-1604), along with the embassy of Zhirovoy-Zasekin,

departed Iran for the Muscovite State in the fall of 1602. It arrived in Moscow on August 28, 1603, and in early September, it appeared in the audience with King Boris Godunov.

We would also like to add that shortly after these events, in the autumn of the same year 1603, after proper preparation, the Safavid State renewed war against the Ottoman Empire.