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## **THE TRADE RELATIONS OF THE AZERBAIJAN SAFAVIDS STATE AT THE END OF THE 17TH CENTURY – THE FIRST DECADES OF THE 18TH CENTURY (ON THE BASIS SOVIET HISTORIOGRAPHY)**

*According to the primary resources, the economic crisis that started in the second half of the 17th century was first reflected in internal trade in the Azerbaijan Safavids Empire. The study of trade relations in Azerbaijan, during the period from the end of the 17th century to the first decades of the 18th century which has a fairly wide trade network, reveals interesting points on the basis of Soviet historiography. Historians who were careful in their political approach to the history of Azerbaijan during the Soviet period were more productive in economic and trade issues and conducted in-depth research. We can get enough information from the historical literature written in the Soviet period about the internal and domestic trade routes, more circulating products, upper social classes, as well as the relations between merchants, artisans and the rural population, as well as the effect of the economic stagnation and recession in the Azerbaijan Safavids state on trade.*

*The transfer of trade circulation between the East and Europe from land to oceans led to an economic crisis in all eastern countries, and therefore the stagnation of the Azerbaijan Safavids state at the end of the XVII – early XVIII centuries was not only due to internal reasons. Starting from the second half of the 17th century, the international trade relations of the Azerbaijan Safavids state became quite diverse. The issues related to the international trade relations of the Azerbaijan Safavids state were sufficiently covered in the historical literature of the Soviet period. The Kyzylbash central authorities, which received enough incomes from such trade, had to try to ensure the security and continuity of the goods circulation in the country. As we have seen, in the literature of the Soviet period, it was concluded that the Safavids government took an active step in establishing foreign relations, was interested in the entry of foreign capital into the country, and tried to ensure the security of trade circulation.*

*During the Middle Ages, the caravan routes extended from the territory of the Azerbaijan Safavids Empire to Asia Minor, the Turks controlled the transit trade between the East and Europe, and there was a large trade turnover. Ottoman Empire did not want to lose or give any privileges to someone. During the researched period, the trade relations between Azerbaijan and the Ottoman Empire were characterized by their stagnation, and we can see that the caravan routes passing through the country are gradually disintegrating. The great geographical discoveries, the transit of products through the oceans, and the decline of land trade had a negative impact on trade relations with the Ottomans.*

**Key words:** international trade, caravans routes, merchants, imperial plans, Azerbaijan Safavids Empire, soviet historiography.

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## **ТОРГІВЕЛЬНІ ВІДНОСИНИ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСЬКОЇ ДЕРЖАВИ САФАВІДІВ КІНЦЯ XVII – ПЕРШИХ ДЕСЯТИЛІТТЬ XVIII СТ. (НА МАТЕРІАХ РАДЯНСЬКОЇ ІСТОРІОГРАФІЇ)**

*Згідно з первинними джерелами, економічна криза, що почалася в другій половині XVII століття, вперше відбилася на внутрішній торгівлі Азербайджанської імперії Сефевідів. Дослідження торгових відносин в Азербайджані в період з кінця XVII до перших десятиліть XVIII століття, який має досить широку торговельну мережу, виявляє цікаві моменти на основі радянської історіографії. Історики, які обережно політично підходили до історії Азербайджану радянського періоду, були більш продуктивними в економічних і торговельних питаннях і проводили глибокі дослідження. З історичної літератури, написаної в радянський період, ми можемо отримати достатньо інформації про внутрішні та внутрішні торговельні шляхи, більш обігову продукцію, вищі соціальні класи, а також про відносини між купцями, ремісниками та сільським населенням, а також про вплив економічної стагнації і спад в державі Сефевідів Азербайджану на торгівлю.*

*Перенесення торгового обігу між Сходом і Європою з суші на океани призвело до економічної кризи в усіх східних країнах, і тому застій Азербайджанської держави Сефевідів наприкінці XVII — на початку XVIII століть був обумовлений не тільки внутрішніми причинами. Починаючи з другої половини XVII століття міжнародні торговельні відносини Азербайджанської держави Сефевідів стали досить різноманітними. Питання, пов'язані з міжнародними торговельними відносинами Азербайджанської держави Сефевідів, достатньо висвітлювалися в історичній літературі радянського періоду. Центральна влада Кизилбаша, яка отримувала достатні доходи від такої торгівлі, повинна була постаратися забезпечити безпеку і безперервність товарообігу в країні. Як ми бачили, в літературі радянського періоду робився висновок про те, що уряд Сефевідів активно діяв у налагодженні зовнішніх зв'язків, був зацікавлений у проникненні в країну іноземного капіталу, намагався забезпечити безпеку торговельного обігу.*

*У середні віки караванні шляхи простягалися з території Азербайджанської імперії Сефевідів до Малої Азії, турки контролювали транзитну торгівлю між Сходом і Європою, існував великий товарообіг. Османська імперія не хотіла втрачати чи надавати комусь якісь привілеї. У досліджуваній період торговельні відносини між Азербайджаном та Османською імперією характеризуються стагнацією, і ми бачимо, що караванні шляхи, що проходили через країну, поступово розпадаються. великі географічні відкриття, транзит продуктів через океани, занепад сухопутної торгівлі негативно вплинули на торговельні відносини з османами.*

**Ключові слова:** міжнародна торгівля, шляхи караванів, купці, імперські плани, Азербайджанська імперія Сефевідів, радянська історіографія.

**Statement of the problem.** Azerbaijan has been important as a craft and trade center since ancient times in the East, and during the Middle Ages, internal trade relations between regions within the country were close, trade relations between cities and villages were already formed, and the state treasury received a large amount of incomes from the circulation of goods. According to the primary resources, the economic crisis that started in the second half of the 17th century was first reflected in internal trade.

**The purpose of the article.** The study of trade relations between the end of the 17th century and the first decades of the 18th century in Azerbaijan, which has a fairly wide trade network, reveals interesting points on the basis of Soviet historiography. Historians who were careful in their political approach to the history of Azerbaijan during the Soviet period were more productive in economic and trade issues and conducted in-depth research. We can get enough information from the historical literature written in the Soviet period about the internal trade routes, more circulating products, upper social classes, as well as the relations between merchants, artisans and the rural population, as well as the effect of the economic stagnation and recession in the Azerbaijan Safavids state on trade. In the end of 17th century and early 18th century, decline of agriculture, daily increase of taxes, as well as famine and natural disasters reflect the main features of this period. Due to these reasons, as well as the bankruptcy of merchants and artisans who provide the exchange of goods in the cities, led to the crisis of trade within the country.

**Research analyzes.** In this period, the political situation of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan, internal and external trade relations, the state of traditional caravan routes and the state of the country's economy in general were important problems. Although many

research works have been written about this period, but until now, these issues have not been objectively evaluated. Unfortunately. European historiography approached the issue subjectively and only exaggerated the negative points. In Soviet historiography, which I am involved in the research, the situation is even more deplorable. The Soviets unequivocally implemented a policy to discredit the Turkish empire, the Safavids, with Azerbaijan. This is clearly reflected in his historiography. In addition, while the Ottomans and Safavids are shown as the maximum enemies, Russia's policy of aggression is described in an almost softening manner.

**Presenting main material.** In the monograph "Iran from the earliest times" it was noted that "rural bankruptcy led to a decrease in internal trade and weakening of economic relations between individual regions" (History of, 1958:308). Unlike the Russian authors, the Azerbaijani historian S. Mammadov reports a large trade turnover despite the recession and crisis at the end of the 17th—beginning of the 18th century (Mamedov, 1993: 72–75). I.P. Petrushevski connected the economic crisis of the Kyzylbash Safavids state at the end of the 17th century with the discovery of the sea route by Europeans and the transfer of Asian-European trade to the oceans (Petruşevsky, 1949: 83). "As a result of great geographical discoveries, the transition of transit trade from land to water caused economic decline in the countries of Central Asia" (İvanov, 1977: 74). As we have seen, the transfer of trade between the East and Europe from land to oceans led to an economic crisis in all eastern countries, and therefore the stagnation of the Azerbaijan Safavids state at the end of the XVII – early XVIII centuries was not only due to internal reasons. Despite the fact that there is stagnation within the country due to internal and external fac-

tors, S. Mammadov showed on the basis of primary sources that “Azerbaijan’s agriculture is diversified, there are separate specialized fields and differentiated trade-market relations (Mamedov, 1993: 5)”. This is an indicator that trade is not underdeveloped and is sustainable. We would like to note that the English-language literature is distinguished by a different approach: “A few months after taking office, Fatali Khan introduced a new tax of 3/5 Mahmudi for every gold ducat leaving the country. At the beginning of 1720, the Dutch reported that the price of the Venetian ducat had increased significantly, and Fatali Khan (he was grand vizier of Kizilbash-S.H.) ordered the merchants to buy as much gold as possible, regardless of the price. (Matthee, 2012: 209) We see that the prime minister, who increases his personal income in this way, is far from taking care of the economic situation and trade in the country. Starting from the second half of the 17th century, the international trade relations of the Azerbaijan Safavids state became quite diverse. The issues related to the international trade relations of the Azerbaijan Safavids state were sufficiently covered in the historical literature of the Soviet period. Regarding our research period, in the monograph “Iran from the earliest times” it was shown that due to the transfer of European trade with the East to the oceans, the caravan routes were out of order and the land trade declined (History of, 1958:308). Ioannisian notes that there was a stagnation in trade with Persia in recent times, that the Persian Exchange produced only 2,000 pounds of raw silk instead of 79,000 pounds of raw silk (Ioannisyan, 1958: int. 22). However, F. Aliyev shows that during this period there was a lively trade in Azerbaijan, the cities with the main trade centers and the varieties of goods brought for sale (Matthee, 2012: 38; 43; 47). We see the same thoughts in the works of S. Mammadov (Mamedov, 1993:71). A. Guliyev also mentions that there was mutual trade, different types of raw materials were exported from Azerbaijan, and manufactured goods were brought instead, as well as the names of different types of goods were mentioned here (Guliyev, 1958: 15; 21). Ioannisyan notes that Asian trade had brought Russia raw silk, cotton, leather and so on, had provided paint and other necessary products. Russia, in turn, imported products such as fur, iron, copper items, linen, and mahud. (Ioannisyan, 1958: int. 22) When talking about trade with the British, the author notes that “since the 16th century, English merchants have been actively trading in the Safavids Empire’s territory, bringing linen, mirrors, watches and other items, and in return, they primarily transported raw silk” (Ioannisyan, 1958: int. 35).

Of course, the Kyzylbash central authorities, which received enough incomes from such trade, had to try to ensure the security and continuity of the goods circulation in the country. S. Mammadov notes that the Azerbaijan Safavids shahs were interested in foreign trade, so they protected large merchants and caravan routes. Local magistrates were held accountable for robbing merchants. In the early eighteenth century, in decline, both the royal government and local magistrates oppressed the lower class to fulfill their “duty” (Mamedov, 1993: 71). As we have seen, in the literature of the Soviet period, it was concluded that the Safavids government took an active step in establishing foreign relations, was interested in the entry of foreign capital into the country, and tried to ensure the security of trade circulation.

During the reigns of Shah Abbas II (1642–1666) and Shah Suleyman (1667–1694), the European states tried to get more trade privileges from the government of Qizilbash, thereby gaining political influence and impaction the local ruling families due to their power in the economy. If we turn to English-language literature, we will see that Dutch merchants had wide privileges among the K izilbash Safavids, and they managed to win the government over to their side by means of “gifts” whenever they needed, and to get laws to be passed according to their interests: He (Etimaduddov means Fatali Khan-S.H.), and also the maritime companies questioned his agents as to the legality of the commercial privileges, and only after the Dutch had paid 6,900 ducats was 6,000 of this sum granted to him personally. In 1716, the production of gold and silver wire, the weaving and wearing of clothes made of gold and silver thread, as well as the use of horse covers were banned. This ban was lifted after the artisans who worked with gold thread offered gifts to Fatali Khan and the Shah’s personal physician, hakimbashi, influential Rahim Khan, and instead they were forbidden to make goat skin. The money of the Shah and his treasury continued until the last days of his tenure (Matthee, 2012:209).

During the reign of Shah Sultan Husayn, the government of Kizilbash began to look for alternative ways to increase the income from foreign trade, as well as to reduce the power of the merchants of the Dutch East India Company, who were trying to achieve a monopoly in trade with the East, in the empire. The force that could stand against the Netherlands was France. At the same time, Versailles, which was defeated by the British in the direction of India and lost its colonies, did not want to be completely excluded from the eastern trade. Shah Sultan Hussain’s government tried to use this conflict to its advantage. In the 16th and 17th centuries,

French capital, which had completely taken over the Turkish economy, controlled transit trade with the Safavids through the Levant trading company. This situation prompted France to turn to the Safavids at the beginning of the 18th century. (Ioannisyanyan, 1958: int. 28–29) France, which had captured Asia Minor through trade, was now targeting the Azerbaijan Safavids Empire. During this period, due to mutual interests, two trade agreements were signed with France in 1708 and 1715. In both treaties, the French merchants were given great concessions compared to the Dutch, exempted from duties and customs control, and the right to extraterritorial trial, that is, any conflict between local and French merchants meant that the trial of the French would be carried out by the French consul. In Soviet historiography, this agreement was deeply studied and evaluated as a positive step taken in the direction of trade during the reign of Shah Sultan Hussein (History of, 1958:308). If we turn to the work of the Armenian author A.R. Ioannisyanyan, who evaluated the agreement politically, we will see the trade agreement signed by the French representative Michel with the Safavids government in September 1708, granting rights to large merchants, as well as a number of privileges to the French representatives (Ioannisyanyan, 1958: XLI). On the other hand a “treaty of friendship and commerce” was signed by Muhammad Reza Bey in Versailles, which gave France more rights. As the author notes, “Actually, this treaty was more favorable to France, but this treaty was not ratified. the reason for this was the events that happened in the Safavids in 1722. Nevertheless, France was doing its best to fight against Russia and England in the region (Ioannisyanyan, 1958: XLI). It should be noted that it is impossible to disagree with this approach of the author, since, although it was a treaty concluded on trade, it was also a basis for a political agreement and was more in line with the interests of France.

Russia was one of the foreign trade destinations of the Azerbaijan Safavids state at the end of the 17th century and the first decades of the 18th century. Relations between these two states, which were based on trade throughout the Middle Ages, had a stable character until the 17th century. A. Guliyev, who looked at Russia’s attitude towards Azerbaijan until the 17th century, pointed out that “after taking Constantinople, the Ottoman raids on neighboring countries and the union of Transcaucasian peoples with Russia against this” (Guliyev, 1958: 13). If we look at this period, Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus in general were first under the rule of Bayandurlu, and after 1501, under the rule of the Qizilbashs, these Turkish dynasties fought alone in the face of other

threats than the Ottomans, and there was no question of Russia’s military, political, or economic power during this period. he couldn’t go. In any case, in the 15th and 16th centuries, relations between Russia and Azerbaijan were based only on trade, and Russian historian Y. Zevakin expressed his attitude to this issue: “Throughout the 17th century, relations between Russia and the Safavids were only of an economic nature and focused on the development of trade... The economic decline of the Safavids his doing caused the loss of Russia’s interest here” (Zevakin, 1929: 5–7). Although the issue of building relations on trade is confirmed by primary sources, it is impossible to agree with the issue of Russia’s loss of interest in the Safavids, mainly in Azerbaijan. If we take into account Russia’s aspirations and military plans in the direction of the South Caucasus in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, we can see that the political activity and steps taken by Petersburg in this direction became more intense. When we look at V. Barthold’s course of lectures, we will once again see that Russia pays special attention to both the Caucasus-Persia and Turkestan lines in trade with India, and that the Caspian Sea is of great importance for Russia (Bartold, 1924: 147). We see confirmation of this in F. Aliyev: “The Russian tsar Peter I considered the Caspian Sea the main means of establishing trade relations with Eastern countries and thought that the trade extending from India to Europe should be directed through this sea (Aliyev, 1964: 61). For this, significant efforts were made to establish a special commercial enterprise, the Julfa trading house. S. Mammadov states that he mediated the Safavid-Russian trade, that in 1710 and 1720, this company received the right to permit transit trade based on the contract with Russia (Mamedov, 1993: 74). A. Guliyev writes that “in 1711, major Armenian merchants signed an agreement with Russia and obtained the right to transit silk” (Guliyev, 1958: 21). These agreements, which coincided with the era of Shah Sultan Hussein, show the active activity of the Kizilbash government in this direction and the mutual interest of the upper circles in trade with Russia. It should also be noted that according to A.R. Ioannisyanyan’s conclusion, the British, who widely used the Volga-Caspian road, were preparing plans to occupy this road. However, Russia’s sharp resistance to the British in this direction caused them to retreat and look for new trade routes. (Ioannisyanyan, 1958: int. 35) This step once again shows how ambitious Russia is in the direction of Azerbaijan. Despite the recession, Ivanov, a Soviet-era historian of Central Asia, assessed Russia’s activities in the region as important and stated that Russia had a high role in the revival of trade with Eastern Europe

(Ivanov, 1977: 75). A. Guliyev somewhat exaggerated the role of Russia in increasing the role of the South Caucasus in eastern trade (Ioannisyan, 1958: 20–21). Of course, it is an indisputable fact that at this time Russia created conditions for the development of trade in the region based on its own interests. In the historical literature of the Soviet era, the Azerbaijan Safavids state gave more space to trade and economic relations with Russia in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, and the reduction of the role of other states in trade was due to ideological demands.

**Conclusion.** Based on primary sources, we can observe that during the Middle Ages, the caravan routes extended from the territory of the Safavids of

Azerbaijan to Asia Minor, the Turks controlled the transit trade between the East and Europe, and there was a large trade turnover. During the researched period, the trade relations between Azerbaijan and the Ottoman Empire were characterized by their stagnation, and we can see that the caravan routes passing through the country are gradually disintegrating. S. Mammadov notes that "transit trade lost its importance at the end of the 17th – beginning of the 18th century" (Mamedov, 1993:70). As we mentioned earlier, the great geographical discoveries, the transit of products through the oceans, and the decline of land trade had a negative impact on trade relations with the Ottomans.

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