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Research paper

Sharafutdin A. Magaramov,
Cand. Sci. (History), Senior Researcher
Institute of History, Archeology of Ethnography
Dagestan Federal Research Center of RAS, Makhachkala, Russia
sharafutdin@list.ru

PERSONAL CONTACTS OF PETER THE GREAT WITH THE RULING ELITES OF DAGESTAN

Abstract. A historiographical analysis of the events of the Petrine era in the Caucasus demonstrates that the problem of personal contacts of Tsar Peter I with the ruling elites of Dagestan during his campaign in 1722 remains one of the poorly developed historical aspects. The tsar's personal contacts with foreign elites were part of his imperial policy of expanding the territories of the Russian state, involving new subjects in the sphere of the political and legal space of the empire, ensuring their loyalty in the conditions of multi-ethnicity and political fragmentation of the Caucasus. Such ensuring was achieved by involving local elites in the social structure of the empire, in its economic system. Peter the Great's contacts with the Dagestan rulers took place during the Persian expedition – his last major foreign policy campaign, as a result of which the southwestern Caspian region was briefly conquered and annexed to the Russian Empire. The conducted study made it possible to identify the reason that determined the pro-Russian position of one or another Dagestan ruler, their attitude to Peter I, in particular. The contacts of the parties were accompanied by giving each other expensive gifts, awarding ranks to the ruling elite that had passed into Russian citizenship, confirmation in positions, assignment of salaries to its representatives, etc. The study is based on the analysis of retrospective documentary information collected from documents of scientific archives of Russia and historiographical sources. The source base of the study, in addition to archival documents, are the materials of direct participants and eyewitnesses of the meeting of Peter I and a number of Dagestani rulers: "The War Diary of 1722", compiled in the middle of the XIX century based on the diary entries of Peter I, travel notes of the Scottish doctor J. Bell and Artillery Captain Peter Bruce. The last two sources in this study are used in the original.

Keywords: Peter the Great; Persian campaign; Dagestan; ruling elites; personal contacts; interethnic relations; offerings; gifts.

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Исследовательская статья

Шарафутдин Арифович Магарамов
к.и.н., старший научный сотрудник
Институт истории, археологии этнографии
Дагестанский федеральный исследовательский центр РАН, Махачкала, Россия
sharafutdin@list.ru

ЛИЧНЫЕ КОНТАКТЫ ПЕТРА ВЕЛИКОГО С ПРАВЯЩИМИ ЭЛИТАМИ ДАГЕСТАНА

Аннотация. Историографический анализ событий Петровской эпохи на Кавказе показывает, что проблема личных контактов государя Петра I с правящими элитами Дагестана в период его похода в 1722 г. остается одним из слабо разработанных исторических аспектов. Личные контакты царя с иноэтничными элитами были частью его имперской политики по расширению территорий Российского государства, вовлечению в сферу политико-правового пространства империи новых подданных, обеспечения их преданности и лояльности в условиях полиэтничности и политической раздробленности Кавказа. Обеспечение лояльности местных элит достигалось путем вовлечения их в социальную структуру империи, в ее экономическую систему. Контакты Петра Первого с дагестанскими владетелями имели место во время Персидского похода – последней его крупной внешнеполитической акции, в результате которого юго-западный Прикаспий ненадолго был завоеван и присоединен к Российской империи. Проведенное исследование позволило выяснить, чем определялась пророссийская позиция того или иного дагестанского владетеля, их отношение к Петру I, в частности. Контакты сторон сопровождались одариванием друг друга дорогими подарками, пожалованием чинов перешедшей в российское подданство правящей верхушке, утверждением в должностях, назначением ее представителям жалованья и пр. Исследование проведено на основе анализа ретроспективной документальной информации, извлеченной из документов научных архивов России и историографических источников. Источниковой базой исследования, кроме архивных документов, послужили материалы непосредственных участников и очевидцев встречи Петра I и ряда дагестанских владетелей: «Походный журнал 1722 г.», составленный в середине XIX в. на основе дневниковых записей Петра I, путевые записки шотландского врача Дж. Белла и артиллерийского капитана Питера Брюса. Последние два источника в данной работе использованы в оригинале.

Ключевые слова: Петр Великий; Персидский поход; Дагестан; правящие элиты; личные контакты; межэтнические отношения; подношения; подарки.

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The year of 2022 marks the 350th anniversary of the birth of the first Russian Emperor Peter the Great. In this regard, the study of various historical episodes related to the Petrine era is of particular relevance. The current year is also notable for the fact that exactly 300 years ago Peter the Great carried out the Persian campaign with the aim of conquering the Caspian Sea basin and turning this space into an important communication hub with eastern countries. Anniversaries always excite scientific research about this or that event, or an outstanding figure. A historiographical analysis of the events of the Petrine era in the Eastern Caucasus has shown that the problem of personal contacts of Tsar Peter I with the ruling elites of Dagestan during the Persian campaign remains one of the poorly developed historical aspects. The historiography notes that in the process of personal contacts of the tsar with ethnic elites, there was a mutual representation of power and subjects, which was a form of interethnic relations in the Russian Empire, as well as the repeated expression of submission by residents of the national outskirts [1, pp. 6-7, 152]. In addition, the participation of regional elites in events related to the meeting and stay of senior statesmen, as noted by the American historian, specialist in the history of the Russian Empire R.S. Wortman, "involved the heads of the conquered lands and the local court nobility in the ceremonial representations of the imperial elite" [2, p. 195]. In this regard, the study of the problem posed in the article is of particular scientific interest.

Personal contacts of Peter I with the "foreign-faith" elite were part of the ethnic policy of the Russian state, which in this article are considered from the perspective of imperial power and new subjects. The first position allows us to study symbolic techniques and ways of involving foreign peoples in the orbit of Russian statehood, in the imperial political and legal space, methods of ensuring their loyalty. The second position involves an analysis of the "presentation" of oneself to the imperial power, demonstrating one's uniqueness and value for the Russian state [1, p. 15].

On July 27, 1722, the sovereign, having sailed from Astrakhan, landed on the Dagestan coast in the Agrakhan Bay. After him, the landing of the army began. Further, the path of the imperial troops lay overland along the western shore of the Caspian Sea. A few days before the landing of Peter I, a meeting of Russian troops with the detachments of the Endirei ruler Aidemir had taken place. A.P. Volynsky, a supporter of active military operations in the Caucasus, had earlier convinced the tsar to "take revenge on the Endirei rulers" for their anti-Russian position. On July 23 , 1722, an expedition was undertaken against the residents of the village of Endirei under the command of Brigadier A. Veterani, which resulted in significant losses among the imperial troops[1]. Nevertheless, the expedition led to the fact that in October of 1722 Aidemir assures the commandant of the Holy Cross fortress L.Ya. Soymonov that he will faithfully serve the Russian authorities and emphasizes that "my father Amziy served the sovereign faithfully in the past"[2]. In turn, Commandant L.Ya. Soymonov in November of the same year reports to the Cabinet Secretary A.V. Makarov, that Aidemir "desires to be faithful to his imperial majesty after his death... and told him that no offense will be made towards them from our people"[3].

1. For more information about the expedition of Russian troops to Dagestan Endirey, see: [3].

2. Inventory of books included in the Cabinet by letter from different people in 1722 // RGADA. Ф. 9. Inv. 4. File 61. P. 308-309.

3. Ibid. P. 308.

The first among the Dagestan rulers, who decided to meet Tsar Peter I, was shamkhal of Tarki Adil-Girey. He was accepted into Russian citizenship on the eve of the campaign. On August 5, Shamkhal arrived at the place where the Russian army crossed the Sulak River. Admiral-General F.M. Apraksin informed the tsar about the arrival of Adil-Girey in the camp of Russian troops, and showed the Russian regiments to the guest [4, p. 118]. According to the British military engineer Peter Henry Bruce, a participant of the Persian campaign, the imperial army greatly impressed Shamkhal: "After our army passed by him in good order, he seemed to be much surprised at the regularity and fine discipline he observed they were under, having never seen any regular troops before" [5, p. 267].

The next day, August 6, shamkhal Adil-Girey went out to meet Peter I, disarmed, as well as his entire retinue. Shamkhal assured the emperor of his loyalty to the throne: "until now, I have served His Majesty with utmost loyalty, and now I will serve His Majesty even more faithfully". The Tsar, in turn, assured the shamkhal, "that for his services he (Adil-Girey – *auth*.) at the mercy of His Majesty", for which Shamkhal thanked Peter I [6, p. 108]. Together with shamkhal, another Dagestan ruler, Aksai Sultan Mahmud, arrived to meet the tsar, who also confirmed his loyalty, "promising every obedience to his commands". Peter I, for his part, confirmed all the rights and advantages granted to him earlier [7, p. 484]. The benevolent attitude of the sovereign to the local rulers is noticeable from the information provided by the Scottish doctor John Bell, who accompanied Peter I in the campaign: "August 2d, the chief named Aldiggerey came to pay his respects to the Emperor, who gave him a gracious reception; as he did to several other chiefs (most likely, he means Sultan Mahmud Aksai and other princes – *auth*.), of less note, who came in a friendly manner" [8, p. 340].

Shamkhal gave the tsar 600 oxen in teams, another 150 – for provisions for the army and 3 Persian horses, while Sultan Mahmud – 100 bulls and 6 "fair" Persian horses[4]. In the 19th century, the Russian emperors were given thoroughbred horses by Cossacks and Kalmyks, who had long traded Russian cattle [1, p. 142].

The next meeting of shamkhal Adil-Girey with Peter I took place on August 12 during the advance of the Russian army to the Shamkhal possessions at a distance of five versts from Tarki. Shamkhal arrived to meet with his immediate entourage of about a hundred horsemen. He dismounted from his horse and, approaching Peter I, congratulated him on his arrival to his possessions. For his part, the sovereign reassured the shamkhal in his mercy and assured him that his subjects would not be offended or harmed by the imperial army, and that they have nothing to fear. Then shamkhal approached the carriage of the tsar's wife Ekaterina Alekseevna, greeted her with a bow and also congratulated her on the successful arrival [9, p. 110]. Probably during this meeting, shamkhal invited the emperor to visit his house, and he accepted his invitation.

On August 13, Peter the Great, accompanied by military ministers and generals, entered the residence of Shamkhal, where he first decided to inspect the mountain above Tarki, where the watchtower with one cannon was located. In honor of the distinguished guest, a shot was fired from this cannon. Then the emperor, walking with shamkhal through his various courtyards, suddenly asked him if he had been to Endirei and what buildings there were. Shamkhal's replied that he "had been there and the buildings

4. Campaign of Emperor Peter the Great in Persia // RGVIA. F. 846. Inv. 16. File 1540. Part 1. P. 69. Henry Bruce reports about 600 carts harnessed to two oxen each, and 500 oxen for the army (Bruce P. H. Op. cit. P. 267)

there were mainly mud huts (made of bricks mixed with clay and straw)" [9, p. 112]. The curious emperor was interested in Endirei for good reason: apparently, the first clash of his troops with the enemy and significant losses among them greatly upset the sovereign.

Shamkhal invited the emperor to one of his courtyards, "where his wives" lived. The first thing that surprised the tsar was the abundance of elegant and varied dishes with which the table was served. The sovereign asked the shamkhal about the origin of the dishes. Shamkhal replied that the dishes were Persian and made in the city of Mashhad. As it turned out later, the tsar was interested in expensive dishes in the Shamkhal house in order to arrange its supply to Russia. As G.S. Fedorov notes, literally a couple of years later, dishes from Mashhad had already been sold in Astrakhan and listed in the register of Russian merchants who traded with Eastern countries [10, p. 85].

The guests sat at dinner according to the Oriental custom – on pillows on the floor, covered with carpets. The sovereign was introduced to two Shamkhal wives who came into the room together with six other wives of noble people. All of them greeted the distinguished guest with a bow. Then a tablecloth was laid on the floor and a variety of food was served. The emperor stayed with the shamkhal for a short time, and soon returned to the camp. Seeing off the tsar, Adil-Girey thanked him for visiting his house and presented him with a gray argamak with a golden horse headdress [9, p. 113] and a silk Persian tent. As a sign of gratitude for the warm welcome, the sovereign presented shamkhal with a gold watch borrowed for this occasion from the chamber-junker Willem Mons [11, p. 254]. Shamkhal offered his entire army to the emperor, but he took only a few experienced riders. For his part, the tsar sent an honor guard of 12 soldiers to shamkhal, who remained in Tarki until the death of Peter I [12, p. 9].

The next day, on August 14, his wife Ekaterina Alekseevna, who accompanied Peter I on the campaign, was visited by the wives of shamkhal Adil-Girey. They were received by the Empress in the tent and rendered her "a worthy citizen's respect, and brought Her Majesty gifts, several brocades and fruits" [9, pp. 113-114]. The details of this meeting are given in the memoirs of Henry Bruce: "the shafkal's ladies, attended by other ladies of rank and fashion, came to wait on her majesty; they came so close shut up in coaches that they could not be seen; when they arrived at the empress's tent, they were seated on cushions of crimson velvet, laid on Persian carpets, that were spread upon the ground, and there they sat cross-legged according to their custom. Her majesty had ordered, that when one company of the officers had gratified their curiosity, they should retire and make way for others. By which means the visit of the ladies lasted till it was pretty late at night, when they were attended back to the city by her servants, with abundance of torches, highly pleased with their reception. And not only being informed, but also seeing how unconfined our women live, they certainly were as much taken with it as those of our host…" [5, p. 273–274].

This meeting made a great impression on both sides, as it brought people from completely two different civilizations together. For the wives of shamkhal, it was more significant, since most of the time they were isolated in their environment and, unlike the Russian Empress, did not travel outside their homeland [13, p. 894].

The pro-Russian position of shamkhal Adil-Girey, the attitude towards Peter the Great in particular, was caused by his desire to assert his exceptional position among the rest of the Dagestan rulers, the political status of the tsarist subject was supposed to

contribute to this. Shamkhal was interested in Russian help and support in the princely feud. In correspondence with the central government, he asked not to appoint his opponent Murtazalei as the ruler in Kazanishche, suggested to arrest him as an opponent of the Russian government and an accomplice of utsmiy of Kaitag and Lezgin ruler Hadji Davud. The Russian authorities limited themselves to refusing Murtazalei's request to appoint him as the governor of Kazanishche [6, pp. 262-265]. In addition, shamkhal's plans included expanding the territory of his possession by establishing power over the nomadic Nogais in the Sulak area, over the "Okochans" (an ethnic group of Chechens – *auth.*) residing the area of Terek and returning five villages in the Myushkur region south of Derbent, granted him by the Safavid Shah, under his control. The right to own the lands of the Utamysh Sultan Mahmud was also recognized by the Imperial authority by the letter of Peter I dated September 21, 1722 to shamkhal [6, pp. 267-268]. Adil-Girey dreamed of being the ruler of all Dagestan. Subsequently, shamkhal became disillusioned with the actions of the Russian authorities, who did not approve his exclusive role among the rest of the Dagestan rulers, and became an opponent of Russian interests in the region. For his anti-Russian activities on May 21, 1726, shamkhal Adil-Girey was arrested[5] and sent into exile to the Arkhangelogorodsk province, where he died in January 1732[6].

Nevertheless, Peter I's visit to the residence and house of shamkhal was a special honor for Adil-Girey, a sign of the manifestation of royal mercy to him. Memories of this historical event were kept in the Shamkhal house after more than a century, and the room where the reception took place eventually turned into a mnemonic place. Russian orientalist I.N. Berezin, who visited Dagestan and shamkhal's house in 1842, writes: "In the second courtyard, located in a row with the first, there is an oblong quadrangular room on the left side, also with a swimming pool, remarkable for the fact that the shamkhal of Emperor Peter took part in it during his stay in Tarkhu. Now this room is completely empty, its walls are blackened, windows and doors are locked, but the memory of the Great guards it from people and from time" [14, p. 75].

Military historian V.A. Potto, in connection with Tsar Alexander III's visit to the Caucasus with his family in 1888, also cites traditions preserved in Dagestan folk memory about similar historical events in the past. He writes that old-timers are still alive and enthusiastically tell how they met Emperor Nicholas I in 1837; even more of those who remember how they blessed Tsar Alexander II in 1861 during his visit to the Caucasus. The author also mentions the legend of the meeting of shamkhal with Ekaterina Alekseevna, which is surprising, and not with Peter I himself. This legend, deeply imprinted in the memory of the "natives", tells how Tarkovsky shamkhal, who went to meet the Russian tsarina, was struck by the greatness of this moment and, "reverently dismounting from his horse, kissed the ground on which the foot of the empress stood" [15, p. 2-3].

On the basis of this legend V.A. Potto draws parallels in the moods of representa-

5. "Records from the Nizovoy Corps for 1725, 1726 and 1727 on the search for the malevolent Persians and Mountain peoples". Reports of military operations against the Persians and mountaineers of the following generals: Mikhail Matyushin, Gavrila Kropotov, Prince Vasyli Dolgorukov from May 1725 till July 1727. // RGVIA. F. 20. Inv. 1/47. File 9. P. 81-82.

6. Reports of the Arkhangelogorodsk, Astrakhan, Kazan, Novgorod and Smolensk provinces, Sevsk and Vologda provincial chancelleries on the collection of information for the Senate, on the number of the population enrolled in the per capita salary after the end of the General Census, the amount of the per capita salary collected and the institutions receiving this money // RGADA. F. 248. Inv. 13. File 781. P. 85.

tives of local communities during meetings with Russian tsars in different historical epochs. Calling shamkhal Adil-Girey in the characteristic spirit of the pre-revolutionary historiographical tradition "half-barbarous", the author notes that "if such were the feelings that involuntarily seized the half-barbarous shamkhal then, how much should these feelings have affected" in 1888, when "in the hearts of those peoples whom ... Russia fraternally accepted into the powerful embrace of the victorious eagle..." [15, p. 3]. At the same time, the author omits the fact that deputations from local peoples for meetings with Russian tsars were carefully selected, and that there could not be random people among them. On the other hand, it is quite understandable that the sacred person, like the image of any sovereign, inspired superstitious reverence among the highlanders.

Further, the path of the Russian army to Derbent ran through the possessions of the Kaitag utsmiy Ahmed Khan, who did not show obedience to the tsar. He did not himself prevent the passage of the imperial army through his possessions, but managed to set up an attack with the hands of a neighboring ruler. On August 19, 1722, Peter's army in the area of the Inchkhe River was attacked by detachments of the Utamysh ruler Sultan Mahmud. Henry Bruce explains the attack of the troops of the Sultan of Utamysh as a response to the punitive expedition of dragoons led by A. Veterani against the village of Enderei. He writes that the order of Peter I to hang one of the rulers of Endirei brought to the camp "for an example to others. This irritated the other chiefs of the Dagestans to such a degree, that they were determined to be revenged, which brought us into no small trouble" [5, p. 268]. As a result, Major General G.S. Kropotov attacked Sultan Mahmud's possessions and burned them; the same fate befell the sultan's residence, the village of Utamysh. The losses among the locals numbered 600 or 700 people, 40 people were taken prisoner, among whom was a Muslim cleric who was involved in the brutal massacre of Cossacks sent to aid the Sultan of Utamysh. Another prisoner, brought to the interrogation tent, remained silent, after which he was ordered to be stripped and flogged. However, having received the first blow with the whip, he snatched the sword from the officer and rushed with it straight at Admiral F.M. Apraksin, whom he would certainly have killed if not for two sentries standing in front of the tent, who plunged their bayonets into him. Falling, he grabbed the musket of one of the sentries and bit off a piece of flesh from his hand when he tried to snatch the gun from his hands. When the sovereign entered the tent, the admiral said that he had not come to this country to be devoured by mad dogs; having never had such a fright before in his whole life. The Emperor, smiling, replied: "if the people of this country understood the art of war, it would be impossible for any nation to cope with them" [5, p. 281].

Before Derbent, Peter I was waiting for a more solemn meeting organized by the Derbent ruler (naib) Imam Kuli-bek, who decided to voluntarily surrender the city to the sovereign. It is possible that the position of the naib could be influenced by the difficult situation around Derbent: the city was constantly attacked by detachments of Dagestan rulers who fought against the Persian government. Naib had to defend the city on his own. Imam Kulibek was also a naib under the previous Persian administration, when Derbent was the center of the Persian viceroyalty in Dagestan. In 1721, at the height of the anti-Iranian movements, the shah's governor in Derbent, leaving the Naib as the sole ruler in the city, fled to Isfahan [16, p. 70].

On August 23, at a distance of a couple of versts from the city, the naib, together with

the local nobility, met the sovereign and delivered a loyal speech [12, pp. 11-12]. The Naib's speech is notable for the fact that in it Peter the Great is compared with Alexander the Great, and the actions of the Russian emperor emphasize the antique entourage. As a sign of submission, the naib presented the emperor with a silver key to the city[7].

The sovereign was delighted with the warm reception of his Derbent nobility, led by the Naib and the townspeople. He reflected his impressions of the meeting with the Derbent residents in a letter to the senators dated August 30, 1722: "... these people accepted with unfeigned love and so for the sake of us, as if they rescued their own from the siege" [17, p. 36].

While in Derbent, the inquisitive monarch continued his acquaintance with the city, inspected the Naryn-kala fortress, outlined a place for the construction of a harbor, visited bath-houses [6, pp. 113-115]. Peter I's stay in Derbent ended with a feast in his tent, where he invited the Naib to share dinner with him [15, pp. 73-74].

Imam Kuli-bek presented Tsar Peter I with thoroughbred argamak horses, carpets and a manuscript of the chronicle "Derbend-nameh", which later became widely known among orientalists.

Before leaving Derbent, Peter I, for the "faithful services" rendered to him, approved the Imam of Kulibek in the same position of naib, appointed the head of the "native" army, granted the rank of major general, determined on a permanent basis an annual salary of 3 thousand rubles and awarded his own portrait decorated with diamonds[8]. Derbent residents were equalized in rights with Russian merchants, received the right to trade in Russian cities and markets [7, pp. 485-486].

The capture of the city of Derbent was given the same strategic importance as the conquest by Peter the Great in 1702 of the Swedish fortress of Noteburg on Lake Ladoga, which was emphasized in his speech by Archbishop Feofan Prokopovich, who met the emperor together with members of the Synod and Senate in Moscow[9] in front of the Triumphal Gates [18, pp. 313-315], which depicted Derbent.

Peter I's meetings with the other two Dagestani rulers – Hadji-Davud of Myushkur and Surkhai Khan of Kazikumukh – could not take place, because they were declared "rebels", from whose actions Russian merchants suffered in Shamakhi in 1721, and that episode was the official reason for the campaign. These owners, fearing the punishment of the Russian authorities, came under the protection of the Ottoman Empire.

In all fairness, it should be noted that Hadji Davud, since the mid-1720s, as in 1721 [6, pp. 240-141], repeatedly asked for Russian assistance and patronage. However, the imperial authorities, in order not to violate the terms of the peace treaty of 1724 with the Turks, decided this time to deny him Russian citizenship. In the resolution of March 28, 1728, the commander of the Nizovoy Corps of Prince V.V. Dolgorukov to the General A.I. Rumyantsev in Baku was instructed "not to accept him (Hadji-Davud to Russian

7. Documents and letters to Count F.M. Apraksin on the Persian campaign: on military operations; on the navigation of ships; on the delivery of supplies; on relations with the highlanders. Preparations for the arrival of Peter I in Derbent // RGAVMF. F. 233. Inv. 1. File 211. File 209.

8. Decrees of the Empress, letters and translations of letters of Bragunsky, Bolshaya and Malaya Kabarda, Tarkovsky, Tersk and Chechen rulers on monetary wages and arable lands // CSA RD. F. 379. Inv. 1. File 203. P. 85.

9. Both F.I. Soymonov [19, p. 105] and I.I. Golikov [18, p. 313 –314] point out that when entering Moscow in December 1722, the emperor was given a solemn reception in front of the Triumphal Gates. However, the dates of the reception of the sovereign vary among the authors: Soymonov gives the date of December 13, while Golikov, commenting on the clarification of the date for December 18, notes that he followed the data of the manuscript stored in his possession, the authenticity of which he does not doubt.

protection. – *auth.*), because we do not see any profit from it"[10].

Thus, Tsar Peter I did not have meetings with all Dagestan rulers during the Persian campaign. Shamkhal of Tarki Adil-Girey, Aksai ruler Sultan-Mahmud and Derbent naib Imam Kuli-bek were among those who expressed obedience to the Russian emperor and with whom the tsar had personal contacts. The other Dagestani rulers – utsmiy Ahmed Khan of Kaitag, Sultan Mahmud of Utamysh, Aidemir of Endirei, Lezgi ruler Hadji Davud and Surkhay Khan of Kazikumukh took a hostile position towards the imperial power, the last two rulers having came under the protection of the Turks. The Tabasaran rulers sent their envoys to meet with Peter I in Derbent. The mountainous part of Dagestan at that time was not included in the sphere of Russian interests, and therefore the contacts of the Avar ruler Umma Khan with Peter I did not develop. A little later, in 1727 Umma Khan swore allegiance to the Russian state [20, p. 74]. The positions of the rulers who showed loyalty to the Russians and recognized the citizenship of the tsar were determined primarily by the desire to preserve their political status, the integrity of their possessions, to be under the patronage of a strong power, to receive trade privileges. The ruling elites, whose possessions were adjacent to the Caspian lowland, had no point and no chance to resist the many thousands, well-armed imperial army. In this regard, the most far-sighted was the political position of the Naib of Derbent, who retained his former political status and achieved the provision of food to the citizens by the new government and obtaining trade privileges for them. The Russian authorities, in turn, highly appreciated the position of the Naib, showing favor not only to the Naib, but also to all citizens. The special status of the naib allowed him to visit the imperial court in St. Petersburg in 1726-1727, during which he addressed the Empress Catherine I and the ministers with petitions, which were satisfied[11].

The meetings of Tsar Peter I with the Dagestan rulers were part of ethnic policy, an important means of building relations with ethnic elites. The imperial power manifested itself through a system of awards – ranks, cash payments, trade privileges, gifts, etc. Ensuring the loyalty of local elites was achieved by involving them in the social structure of the empire, in its economic system. Local elites, being in Russian citizenship, strengthened their political status, received the patronage of the authorities in civil strife and had the opportunity to report their needs to the tsar. The meetings of Peter I and the Dagestani rulers were no different from the meetings of the sovereign with other eastern figures, in particular, if we consider his meetings with the Kalmyk Khan Ayuka in 1722, one can find many parallels.

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