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Report of the Brigadier A. Veterani to the Emperor Peter I: A New Document on the Expedition
of Russian Troops to the Village of Endirei in Dagestan (1722)

Abstract

The article and publication of archival sources is devoted to one of the chapters in the Persian
campaign (1722–23) of the Emperor Peter I on the territory of Dagestan. The author focuses on

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the military expedition of Russian troops commanded by Brigadier Andrei Veterani against one of the Dagestan rulers – the Endirei ruler Aidemir (July 23, 1722). The expedition was undertaken on account of his anti-Russian position; the Dagestan ruler had repeatedly made forays to Cossack towns and to the fortress of Terki. The Astrakhan governor A. P. Volynsky personally convinced the tsar of the necessity to punish Aidemir; he was a supporter of active military actions against Dagestan rulers who were not loyal to the Russian side. The publication of a new source (1722) from the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts — report of the Brigadier A. Veterani to the Emperor Peter I on the results of expedition to the village of Endirei in Dagestan — highlights details of the first battle of the Russian troops with the Dagestan detachments during the Persian campaign of 1722–23. The published archival document contains valuable information on command structure of the Brigadier A. Veterani's corps, consisting of dragoons, Ukrainian Cossacks, and Kalmyks; it provides data on the number of detachments and their tactics, as well as (which is very important in any battle) on the losses of the Russian troops. Unfortunately, the document does not contain any information about the Endirei losses. Another document introduced by the author into scientific use, "Description of the campaign of Emperor Peter the Great to the Persian provinces lying on the Caspian Sea" from the Russian State Military Historical Archive (RGVIA), also contains information about the Endirei expedition. There is data complementing the A. Veterani report, in particular, about the arrival of Colonel Naumov with his squad and about the brigadier's tactical mistake. Both documents reconstruct a quite comprehensive picture of the campaign of the imperial troops in Enderi, its assault and capture. The author concludes that before the battle of Enderi, Russian military leaders underestimated combat capabilities of the Dagestan detachments and did not take into account geographical features. In future, lessons were learned: heeding geographical features in combat operations allowed the Russian troops approaching Derbent to avoid heavy losses in the next battle with another Dagestan ruler, Sultan Mahmud Utamyshsky.



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Keywords

Historical sources, Persian Campaign of 1722–23, Emperor Peter the Great, expedition to the village of Endirei in Dagestan, Brigadier A. Veterani, battle of Endirei, 1722, archival document.

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