

Article

The Meeting of Russians with Manchus on the Amur River

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The previous part of the article described how the Russian authorities tried to find ways to distance China. This was largely due to the activity of Western Europeans to find a short way to an exotic country for them. Therefore, in the second half of the 16th century, the British and Dutch tried to go east along the Arctic Ocean, and at the beginning of the 17th century, the British government actively pushed the Moscow authorities to allow their merchants to search for ways to China through Siberia. The search for ways to China, initiated by the Russian government, seemed to be successful. After several attempts to pass through the Mongolian lands to the Chinese state, the Cossack Ivan Petlin, sent from Tomsk, nevertheless reached Beijing¹⁾. He even managed to get a message from the Chinese emperor to the Russian Tsar, which, due to the lack of an interpreter, lay in the archive for 56 years.

However, further moves towards the establishment of diplomatic and trade relations between Russia and China then stopped. This was due to the fact that the Romanov dynasty that reigned on the Russian throne faced serious problems on the western borders of the Russian state: it was necessary to solve the problems that had accumulated over two decades (during the Time

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of Troubles²⁾) with Poland and Sweden and stabilize the situation inside the country. Therefore, the problem of establishing any relations with distant China at that time faded into the background.

Nevertheless, after the detachments of Russian service people crossed the Yenisei River to Eastern Siberia, some information about the Amur River, the peoples living on it, and the Chinese state located relatively close, again began to reach the Siberian administration. One of the previous articles already talked about the campaign in 1639–1640 of a detachment of Yeniseisk service people led by *ataman* Maxim Perfiriev on the river Vitim (the right tributary of the Lena River) and his collection of information about them³⁾. It was he who received information from the local *Tungus*⁴⁾ that some "bread people" live at the mouth of the Shilka River (a tributary of the Amur River), who have "a lot of all kinds of livestock," and these people trade with Chinese people.

Almost simultaneously with the campaign of M. Perfiriev, another Cossack, Pentecostal Ivan Moskvitin, took place from Yakutsk. Going with his detachment in 1638 along the right tributary of the Lena River, Aldan, he walked along its tributary, the Maya River, and a year later, crossing the portage⁵⁾, and went out to the Ulya River. He went along it to the shore of the Sea of Okhotsk, where he founded the Okhotsk *ostrozhek*⁶⁾ in 1639. It became the first Russian

2) Time of Troubles – a period in the history of Russia from 1598 to 1613 (there are other versions of periodization that bring the chronology of the Troubles to 1618), marked by natural disasters, the civil war, the Russo-Polish and Russian-Swedish wars, and the most severe state-political and socio-economic crisis.

3) Brodnikov A., Podalko P. Russia and Siberia: Russian Entry into Transbaikalia and the Amur Region // The Aoyama Journal of International Politics, Economics and Communication, No. 110. May 2023. Pp. 1–20.

4) *Tunguses*—in the 17th century numbered about 40, 000 people and occupied the areas of Eastern Siberia from the Yenisei River to the Sea of Okhotsk and from the tundra zone to the right bank of the Amur River. Currently, their descendants (*Evenks and Evens*) in Siberia number about 40,000 and 20,000 people, respectively. About 40,000 *Evenks* live in China

5) Portage—an isthmus between two rivers or two other reservoirs, where ships and their cargo were dragged from one to the other along a dry path.

6) *Ostrozhek*—little *ostrog*. *Ostrog* was a small wooden fortress with towers (blind and passable), ditches, and other defensive fortifications. The walls of the fortress could be in the form of vertically dug sharpened logs, like in the *ostrozhek*, but they could also be "*gorodny*"—a chopped wall, sometimes double, with a space filled with stones.

settlement, or fortified point, on the shores of the Sea of Okhotsk. From local Tungus, he also received information about the river Amur and its tributaries—the Zeya and Sungari rivers—about farmers and cattle breeders living on the *Amur Daur*s and *Duchers*⁷⁾, and about the wealth of these lands. Thus, information about the new rich lands was confirmed, and the departure of another detachment of service people there was a matter of time.

It was this information that was an incentive for the first Yakut *voivodes*⁸⁾ Pyotr Golovin and Matvey Glebov, to organize campaigns to find ways to a new, not yet known river. The *voivodes* made their first, unsuccessful, attempt to find a way to China back in 1641. A detachment of Cossacks, numbering 55 people (for Siberia at that time—a rather impressive force), led by the *Pismenny golova*⁹⁾ Enalei Bakhteyarov, was sent along the path of M. Perfiriev. He advanced much further along the Vitim River than earlier M. Perfiriev with his detachment but still could not reach Amur—the rapids through which it was impossible to drag heavy ships prevented it. Nevertheless, E. Bakhteyarov not only confirmed the previous information of the *Ataman*¹⁰⁾ Perfiriev but also received from the Tungus living in the tributaries of Vitim new information about the paths to Shilka and, arriving in Yakutsk, provided the Voivodes with a map of the area

7) The *Daur*s were Mongol-speaking peoples who lived until the middle of the 17th century on the Amur River from the Shilka River to the Zeya River, its left tributaries. They had a highly developed agriculture. After the beginning of the confrontation with the Russian state, the Manchus were resettled on the Sungari River. Currently, more than 130,000 *Daur*s live in China. *Duchers* were *Tungus*-speaking people related to the Manchus. They lived along the Amur River below the *Daur*s, from the mouth of the Zeya River. By the middle of the 17th century highly developed agriculture. Like the *Daur*s, they were resettled by the Manchus on the Sungari River and after two generations were assimilated by them.

8) *Voivode*—a military leader, senior in the army, appointed from among the representatives of the nobility. In the 16th century to the first half of the 18th century, in the Russian state, this word meant an official who managed the administrative territory. The city of Tobolsk, built 18 km from the city of Isker, the former capital of the Siberian Khanate, inherited the status of the main city of Siberia, and representatives of the aristocracy were appointed by the Tobolsk *voivodes*.

9) *Pismenny golova* (“the literary head” or “the written head” in Russian) – a rank of the officials who formed the regional administration of the Moscow state and is subordinate to the city (*uyezd*) voivode. They were appointed from among the nobles.

10) *Ataman*—an elected leader of the free Cossacks.

he visited.

After that, the *voivodes* P. Golovin and M. Glebov began organizing campaigns to find alternative, shorter, and more convenient ways to this river and further to China. As a result, in 1641–1642 Cossack detachments were sent from Yakutsk at least three times, with the goal of finding out what other rivers can be used to enter the Chinese state and how long the waterway will take and how much is dry, including between the rivers.

Despite the failures of these campaigns, interest in still unknown lands, rumors of which only increased, persisted. The detachments sent by the governors did not reach the Amur, but they were able to collect information about possible routes to this river which was quite sufficient to organize a large campaign. As a result of collecting information about the Amur land, on July 15, 1643, P. Golovin and M. Glebov again sent a large detachment of 130 Cossacks from Yakutsk to the Amur, led by another Pismenny golova, Vasily Poyarkov. Most of these Cossacks—100 people—were only accepted for sovereign service, and the campaign on the Amur was their first official action. Moreover, the detachment consisted not only of Cossacks but also of volunteers in the amount of 15 people recruited in Yakutsk: the opportunity to enrich oneself at the expense of the expected wealth of the new land was very attractive. The governors took care of providing the detachment with a sufficient amount of food and ammunition. Cossacks were even allocated a cast-iron gun and 100 cores for it, weighing half a pound¹¹⁾.

Poyarkov was supposed not only to collect information about the new lands and to bring the population of these lands into *yasak*¹²⁾, but also to find out information about the territories neighboring them and the peoples living there. From the local Tungus living in central Yakutia, the organizers of this campaign managed to find out that it was possible to go to the Amur in a different, shorter way—climbing up the river Aldan, the right tributary of the river Lena, from which lay the path to the Amur basin.

Passing along Aldan, the participants of the campaign collected *yasak* from the groups of Tungus that came across along the way. So, they passed from Aldan to its tributaries of the Uchur River and, further, the Gonam River. Having

11) Russian pound, approximately 410g.

12) *Yasak*—a natural tax, tribute levied on furs.

walked up the Gonam for about 200 km, the Cossacks of Poyarkov faced a serious problem: the river was very shallow and had rapids. Ships with cargo had to be dragged over numerous rapids, often pulling them ashore. There are more than 60 such rapids on this river. As a result, by the end of September, Poyarkov's detachment was able to rise only to the upper reaches of Gonam, where he was forced to stop for the winter because of the *zabereg*¹³⁾ that appeared on the river and build a *zimovye*¹⁴⁾ (winter hut) for this purpose.

But two weeks later, V. Poyarkov still decided to move on. He left part of his detachment, 40 people, in the winter hut with the main supplies of food and ammunition, ordering them in late winter or early spring to transfer all supplies through the portage and follow him. He took 90 people with him and went with them further up the Gonam, loading a small part of the supplies on the *narty*¹⁵⁾ and moving along the ice of the river. So, the Cossacks reached the portage, which was a difficult passage through the mountain range—the Stanovoy Range, which is the watershed between the Lena and Amur basins. Having overcome the portage, the participants of the campaign went to the Giluy River, the right tributary of the Zeya, along which, also on ice, transporting their supplies with *narty*, they began to descend the river.

When V. Poyarkov's detachment, having traveled about 200 km along the Zeya, went to the mouth of the Umlekan River, its left tributary, on December 13, 1643, the campaign participants saw a rather densely populated area along the banks of this river with equipped and fortified settlements. They found wooden houses of a strong structure with windows covered with oiled paper. It became clear that the preliminary information collected in 1639–1642 by M. Perfiriev, I. Moskvitin, E. Bakhteyarov, and other leaders of the Cossack detachments about the new lands is largely true. It was clear that the lands reached by the Poyarkov detachment were fertile, and with developed agriculture, the

13) *Zabereg*—ice that appeared along the banks, which prevented the movement of ships.

14) *Zimovye*—a temporary dwelling built by hunters for the winter period. Until the 18th century, these were fortified buildings that made up the original settlements of Russian *promyshlennye lyudi* (see below) and Cossacks in the Urals and Siberia and could subsequently grow until they received the status of a city, like Irkutsk.

15) *Narty*—wooden sleds of various types, which in Siberia were harnessed to northern deer and dogs and could be used for manual transportation of goods. When moving manually on a flat surface—the ice of a river or lake—they could set a sail.

settlements of the Daur were well equipped and looked quite prosperous in comparison with the level of well-being of other peoples of Eastern Siberia. The *Daur*s had stocks of bread, legumes, and other products, and many livestock and poultry. The *Daur*s themselves wore clothes made of silk and cotton fabrics, which indicated a fairly developed trade relationship with China.

Having built a *zimovye* to accommodate his detachment, Poyarkov decided to wait in it for the remaining part of his detachment with supplies. At the same time, he began to send his Cossacks to the surrounding territories for reconnaissance. In the very first village, the Cossacks captured the *kniazec* of the Daur. A few days later, residents of other villages began to come to Poyarkov, and not only Daur, but also Ducher and Tungus living in more remote places, bringing them *yasak*. Like the *kniazec* of the first village, Poyarkov ordered to leave all those who came as *amanats*¹⁶⁾. Soon the Cossacks learned from the prisoners about the Daurian *ostrog* located nearby, four days away on foot. Poyarkov immediately sent a detachment of 50 people to him.

The inhabitants of the *ostrog* met the Cossacks with respect, putting three yurts for them at the walls of their *ostrog* and providing a sufficient amount of food—10 bulls, 40 boxes of oatmeal, and other supplies. But the leader of the detachment, Yuri Petrov, began to demand that the *Daur*s let the Cossacks inside the *ostrog*. Hearing the refusal, the leader of the detachment began to threaten reprisals against the *amanats*. As a result, the inhabitants of the *ostrog*, who, as it turned out, had a significant superiority in numbers, attacked the detachment. During this battle, many of the Cossacks were wounded, and 10 people were seriously wounded and captured. In addition, one of the *amanats* during the battle killed his guard and was able to go into *ostrog*.

After losing the battle, the Cossacks came to their senses in their yurts for three days, surrounded by numerous armed Daur. Only on the fourth day, under cover of night, did they manage to escape from the encirclement and leave for the remnants of their detachment in the Pismenny Golova to Poyarkov.

Thus, the relations of the participants of the campaign with the local population

16) *Amanat*—a hostage taken from a tribal group by military serving people and was in a Russian fortified point. The capture of an *amanat*, usually the son, younger brother, or nephew of the *kniazec* (tribe leader), guaranteed the payment of *yasak* by the ancestral group. In this case, the relatives themselves came to such a point with *yasak*.

from the very beginning of their stay only on the tributaries of the Amur did not work out, which was, above all, the fault of the Russian explorers themselves. Their actions were distinguished by rudeness and treachery, accompanied by violence and robbery. It must be assumed that this was due to the fact that the participants in the campaign were guided primarily by personal enrichment and not by the "consolidation" of new territories for the Russian state. It is known that volunteers, including people who entered the service as Cossacks on the eve of the campaign, purchased all kinds of equipment, weapons, and property at their own expense to participate in it (some borrowing funds at a high percentage). As a result, they sought to obtain in this way "income" not as a result of the entire campaign, the prospects of which were still vague, but "here and now," while there was an opportunity. The old Cossacks participating in the campaign, and the leader V. Poyarkov himself, did not differ in their behavior towards the indigenous population. As a result, the local population began to scatter, learning about the appearance of strangers from the north.

As a result, the Cossacks who went ahead with V. Poyarkov, hiding from the *Daur*s who besieged them in the fortified winter quarters, did not have the opportunity to engage in hunting and fishing all winter and began to experience serious hunger. Hunger stopped only when Poyarkov, in the spring, after opening the rivers from ice, was approached with food supplies by the participants of his campaign, which were left to them at the beginning of winter for portage. However, he had already lost more than half of his squad from hunger and disease.

After the ice drift, in the spring of 1644, Poyarkov with the remnants of his detachment went to the Amur River and continued to rob the local people who did not manage to escape from his path. When preparing his campaign, it was assumed that he would go upstream the Amur River to search for deposits of silver ore, which had previously been reported by the leaders of previous campaigns. However, the furs received from the *Daur*s led Poyarkov to the decision to go downstream of the Amur and focus on collecting *yasak*. It must be assumed that this decision was influenced by the personal interest of the participants in the campaign, including the interest of Poyarkov himself.

Moving on ships down the Amur, the Cossacks continued to clash with the local population, which is why the number of the detachment continued to decrease.

At the mouth of the Amur River, the Poyarkov detachment stopped for a second winter. All this time, they had clashes with the *Nivkhi* (*Gilyaki*)¹⁷ — the campaign participants continued to rob the local population, incurring, among other things, their own losses. Nevertheless, as a result of this winter, the Cossacks collected 480 sables and 16 sable fur coats from the *Nivkhi* as *yasak*. They collected quite a lot of fur for themselves.

After another ice drift, Poyarkov, with his people, in the spring of 1645 set off from the mouth of the Amur River to the north, along the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk. After 12 weeks, they managed to reach the *zimovye* located at the mouth of the Ulya River, built in August 1639 by the Cossack Ivan Moskvitin, where the Poyarkov detachment spent the winter. In the spring, leaving 20 people in this winter hut, Poyarkov moved with the remnants of his detachment up the Ulya River. Along it, he moved to the Nudimi River, and then, going downstream on ships, he went to the Maya River and, passing along Aldan to Lena, reached Yakutsk on June 12, 1646. Of the 130 people who went camping with him, less than half returned.

The result of V. Poyarkov's campaign on the Amur was the following: he confirmed the previous rumors about the wealth of the region, said that the local peoples did not pay *yasak* to anyone, and gave the Yakut *voivodes* Vassily Pushkin and Kirill Suponev, who had replaced P. Golovin and M. Glebov by that time, recommendations for consolidating the new territory in Russian citizenship. In his opinion, for the final subordination of “Dauria” (as he began to call the territory of the Amur region, by the name of the *Daur*s living there), a well-armed detachment of 300 people will be enough, which can become garrisons in several *ostrogs* built there.

But as there were more than 30 thousand people living on the Amur, most of them being farmers of *Daur*s and *Duchers*, the Poyarkov's estimation seemed to be too optimistic, if not just wrong. Also, he did not realize that the participants in his campaign (including himself) already embittered the local population and turned it against the Russians. More importantly, Poyarkov did not understand during his campaign the political situation that existed in the Amur region:

17) *Nivkhi* (*Gilyaki*) are an autochthonous (indigenous) population of the Amur Region, Sakhalin Island, and neighboring small islands. *Nivkhi* belong to the Paleoasian type of the Mongoloid race. Currently, there are about 4,600 *Nivkhi*.

that this territory had long-standing cultural ties with China, and now with the growing strength of the Manchu Qing empire.

Meanwhile, in the Amur region, the Manchu influence in the first half of the 17th century was very significant, despite the fact that by the time the detachment of V. Poyarkov appeared on the Amur, the power of the Manchus extended only to the central and southern parts of Manchuria. Nevertheless, the peoples of the Amur region were forced to occasionally supply people to the Manchu army and pay tribute to the growing strength of the young state.

Making a retreat, we note that the Manchu tribes, consolidated throughout the 16th century, captured most of modern Northeast China by 1616. The Manchu khan Nurhaci, who later became the founder of the Qing dynasty, declared himself the heir to the Jurchen Jin empire and, from 1626, made the city of Mukden his capital. From this time until the beginning of the 1640s, several campaigns of the Manchu army on the Amur followed. The Daurians themselves told V. Poyarkov about these campaigns: if any Daurian people do not give that khan yasak and do not trade with him, then he sends his people to them on Zeya and Shilka and fights two or three times a year. During these attacks, the Manchus sent detachments of two to three thousand soldiers.

Nevertheless, in the Amur region, the Manchus did not seek to gain a foothold and annex this territory to their state. The sole purpose of their occasional campaigns was military robbery and capture of people. The Manchus themselves did not consider the Amur regions conquered, and their population was not included among their subjects. At this point, they faced more important tasks. In 1636, Nurhaci's son Khan Abahai took the title of emperor, giving his state a new name—the Qing Empire. Since that time, the Manchus waged a continuous war with the Ming Empire. In 1644, they managed to capture Beijing, after which they moved their capital there. After that, the main task of the new dynasty was the conquest of all of China. Therefore, all Manchu troops, almost the entire male population, were sent to the southern provinces of the collapsed Ming empire. That is why the Cossacks of V. Poyarkov's detachment did not have meetings with the Manchus, who, moreover, had rarely entered the left bank of the Amur before.

The troops of the Qing empire successfully advanced to the south of China, subordinating the territories that were fragments of the former Ming empire

but whose population provided fierce resistance to the conquerors. In this situation, the government of the Qing empire was not yet prepared to the new challengers in the northern territories, where previously unknown people suddenly began to appear in relatively small amounts. Probably for this reason, unknown Russia was not perceived by the Qing for a long time as a real military threat. Of course, they did not know anything about the embassy of the Cossack I. Petlin, who visited Beijing in 1618 in the government of the new dynasty. In addition, despite successful military operations, the Manchus were far from immediately able to establish their dominance throughout China. For more than 30 years, the Chinese population, relying on the southern provinces, fought the invaders. Therefore, from the mid-1640s to the early 1650s, Manchu raids in the Amur region ceased.

During the stay of V. Poyarkov's detachment on the Amur, the search for other, more convenient routes to this river did not stop. And by the time he returned in 1646 with the remnants of his detachment to Yakutsk, *promyshlennye lyudi* (or *promyshlennyki*)¹⁸ had explored a more convenient way to the Amur—along the Olekma River, another right tributary of the Lena. As it turned out, it was possible to walk along the Olekma from Yakutsk to the Amur within one summer. In May 1647, the *promyshlennyk* Grigory Vizhevtsev, who returned from the upper reaches of Olekma, who was engaged in fur trade in that area during the winter, confirmed this information to the new Yakutsk voivodes V. Pushkin and K. Suponev. He only noticed that the Olekma River is very rapid, and it is necessary to send people along it in small mobile vessels.

It should be noted that by 1647 three main routes to the Amur were already known: 1) from the Selenga River in Transbaikalia, through the river Khilok to the lake Ingen and further, to the river Ingoda, a tributary of the Amur; 2) along Aldan and its tributaries to the Stanovoy Range and further, along the Zeya River to the Amur River, along which V. Poyarkov passed; 3) up the Olekma River and its tributary Tungir to the Apple Ridge and further along the river Urke down to the Amur.

The Yakutsk *voivodes*, having accepted the information, did not dare to send

18) *Promyshlennye lyudi*—people engaged in the trade of hunting for fur-bearing animals or the organization of such a business, sometimes on a large scale, attracting dozens of people for this at their own expense.

a large expedition along Olekma at once but decided to once again conduct reconnaissance of this path. In early June 1647, they sent a small detachment of Cossacks along the new route, led by experienced explorers Pentecostal Vasily Yuryev and foreman Alexei Olen, who had served in Yeniseisk in the early 1620s. G. Vizhevtsev, who had previously passed along this path, went with them as a guide. Having reached the upper tributaries of Olekma, the participants of the campaign, in search of portage, examined the slopes of the mountains, finding traces of the Daurs staying there on the tributaries of the Amur. The result of their campaign was to find out the exact path to the Amur, which really turned out to be shorter and more convenient. Moreover, it turned out that from the upper tributaries of Olekma, there are several crossings along the rivers to the tributaries of the Amur.

The next trip to the Amur was organized and, to a large extent, financed by Erofei Khabarov, whose monument now stands in the city of Khabarovsk. E. Khabarov, a native of Veliky Ustyug in the north of the European part of Russia, was a very enterprising person. In documentary sources, he was first found in the Siberian polar city of Mangazeya in the 1620s. In the 1630s he is found on Lena, where he first successfully hunts a fur beast, having gone from an ordinary hunter to the organizer of a hunting *artel*¹⁹. Gradually, he goes over to trading activities, buying furs in fishing areas from hunters and selling them in bulk to merchants who had already exported furs to Moscow. With the proceeds, he bought goods that he resold in more eastern areas, where they cost significantly more.

In 1637, E. Khabarov discovered in the lower reaches of the river Kuta (the left tributary of the Lena in its upper part) a salt deposit, which in Siberia promised a good income: salt for the needs of the Russian population of Siberia was mined in the steppe on salt lakes near the current city of Pavlodar in Kazakhstan. Participants in salt campaigns were regularly attacked by nomads, which made salt mining dangerous and expensive. A year later, having received permission from the Yeniseisk voivode, Khabarov began organizing

19) *Artel*—a voluntary association of people for joint work or other collective activities, often with participation in common income and common responsibility on the basis of mutual responsibility.

the salt industry. In 1640, his salt *varnitsa* (saltworks)²⁰⁾ began to produce salt. From the same year 1640, E. Khabarov took up the development of agriculture on the Lena (in the same place, not far from the Ilimsk), using hired labor. The first harvest of his plowing amounted to more than 1300 *puds*²¹⁾ of rye. In fact, already in the early 1640s, E. Khabarov had an agricultural enterprise of a capitalist type. The following facts speak of the volume of its production: the first Yakutsk voivodes, P. Golovin and M. Glebov, who passed through this territory, borrowed 3,000 pounds of grain from Khabarov in 1641 for official needs (for issuing to service people). Later, Khabarov moved his plow down the Lena to the area of its other tributary, the Kirenga River.

On his way down the Lena, E. Khabarov, on March 1649, met with the new Yakutsk voivode Dmitry Frantsbekov, who was advancing to his place of service, to whom he expressed his thoughts on organizing an expedition to the Amur. At the same time, he proposed to make the way to this river along Olekma. In addition, E. Khabarov asked the voivode to allow him to organize this campaign at his own expense and allow him to recruit 150 volunteers from among *promyshlennye lyudi*. Since the treasury of Yakutsk was sorely lacking in funds, the voivode Frantsbekov seized on Khabarov's proposal to organize an expedition at his own expense. Moreover, the voivode himself began to lend money to Khabarov at a high interest rate (at least 50%), formalizing this with bonded records. Thus, initially the expedition of E. Khabarov to the Amur became an enterprise focused on the material gain of its organizers and participants.

However, with the funds received, E. Khabarov was initially able to recruit only a few dozen people. But small, similar groups led by the organizers of hunting, who also provided for their people at their own expense, immediately began to join him. Nevertheless, when Khabarov's detachment set off from Ilimsk in the spring of 1649, he had only 70 people. Having climbed Olekma to the mouth of its tributary, the Tungir River, Khabarov's detachment stopped to rest and prepare for further hiking. A *zimovye* was built, where the campaign participants

20) *Varnitsa* (saltworks)—a place for boiling salt by boiling salt water until it is completely evaporated and the salt itself is obtained.

21) *Pud*—an outdated unit of mass measurement of the Russian system of measures. It was used in Russia before the transition to the decimal system of measures. Pud = 16,38 kg.

lived until mid-January 1650. On January 19, E. Khabarov's detachment left the *zimovye* and moved on—up the Tungir River. Light boats were pulled on ice on sledges. Reaching the headwaters of the Tungir, the participants of the campaign overcame the mountain range lying between the Lena and Amur basins and reached the headwaters of the Urka River, a tributary of the Amur. Going down the ice of this river, after 10 days the detachment reached Amur.

Soon, the participants of the campaign discovered a small fortification left by its inhabitants. Apparently, it was a Daurian town. The fortification was a small fortress, measuring approximately 45x30 m., made of *zherdi* (poles)²²⁾, the walls of which were covered with clay on both sides. Khabarov assessed these walls as follows: they protect from arrows, but they can be shot from a gun. The fortress had five towers. All fortifications were surrounded by a moat up to 1.5 m wide. Inside the fortress were large wooden houses, the windows of which were covered with paper. The houses consisted of one room. According to Khabarov, each house could accommodate up to 60 people. Three days on the way, Khabarov's detachment met two more such empty fortified towns. In the last, third Daurian town, the participants of the campaign decided to stop for a rest. Guards were posted on the towers of the town.

Soon, five horsemen were seen near the walls of the town. Khabarov went to meet them, taking with him the *Tungus tolmach* (interpreter). In a conversation with the riders, it turned out that the eldest among them was *Kniazec* Lavkai, on whose territory, according to news received earlier in Yakutsk, there should be silver deposits. Lavkai was accompanied by his two brothers, son-in-law, and servant.

Having entered into a conversation with the *Daur*s, Khabarov introduced himself as a *promyshlennye lyudi* and commercial person, and tried to find out the reason for the fight of Lavkai and his people. As it turned out, about a month before the arrival of Khabarov's detachment, a *promyshlennyk* named Ivan Kvashnin visited those places and warned the *Daur*s about the imminent arrival of Russian people. He told them that there was a large detachment of 500 men, followed by a detachment of even larger numbers. The Russian military people of the *Daur*s will beat everyone, the property will be looted, and their wives and children will

22) The *zherdi* pole is a thin, long tree trunk, cleared of branches, used in the construction of hedges, awnings, roofs, and more.

be taken prisoner. Since the Manchus always acted in this way, the Daurs chose to leave their places of residence and escape. Khabarov tried to convince Lavkai that this was not the case: he was the messenger of the great sovereign, and his task was to persuade the Daurs to accept Russian citizenship and pay *yasak*. For this they will be provided with protection from enemies. However, he did not receive any intelligible answer from Lavkai, after which the Daurian horsemen rode off.

Khabarov's detachment set off on the trail of Lavkai, having intentions to convince him to return with his people to the abandoned towns, live there, and pay *yasak*. A day later, the participants of the campaign approached the fourth town, which also turned out to be empty. They continued on their way, and the next night and half of the day reached the fifth town, which was also empty. However, in one of the houses they found an elderly woman named Mogolchak, who turned out to be Lavkai's sister and the wife of another *kniazec*—Shilginei. She confirmed that the departure of the Daurs is connected with the information that I. Kvashnin gave them. She also said that Lavkai's *ulus*²³⁾ was the largest among the *Daurs*. Three weeks before the arrival of Khabarov's detachment, he left with his men on 2500 horses in the *uluses* of two other *kniazeces* with whom he went to meet with Khabarov. They could now jointly field up to 1,000 horsemen.

In addition, Mogochak reported that earlier a certain Prince Bogdoy collected sables from the *Daurs*, making armed raids on them. During one of these raids, she was captured and taken far away to a city with stone walls. Bogdoy's warriors had guns and many other weapons. She heard, being in captivity, that in this city, in houses, food is served on tables in gold and silver dishes. Her brother and husband bought her out of captivity for a large payment.

Khabarov concluded that Lavkai mistook his detachment for reconnaissance. The raids of the Manchus forced the Daurian *kniazec* to treat unknown aliens with caution, and the story of I. Kvashnin intensified the fears that arose. For Khabarov, it was obvious that his 70 people on foot would not be able to catch up with a large number of riders. He decided to return with his detachment to the first Daurian town, which belonged to Lavkai himself, as it was the most

23) *Ulus*—among Kalmyks and Siberian peoples it means villages, a collection of residential huts, sedentary or nomadic yurts, cabins, or a camp.

fortified and was closest to the path of possible retreat. Having settled in the town, Khabarov's people found large pits with grain reserves, which Lavkai's people did not manage to take out. Khabarov left 52 people in the town. At the beginning of March 1650, with a small detachment, he went to Yakutsk, taking with him, a sample of Daurian bread, as evidence of the attractiveness of the Amur land for agriculture.

Two and a half months later, on May 26, E. Khabarov arrived in Yakutsk. Having transferred the furs collected during his campaign, he told the *voivode* D. Frantsbekov about the region favorable for agriculture, its vast meadows for grazing, the abundance of fish in the rivers, and the dense forests along the banks of these rivers. He also provided a prepared drawing of the Amur River and the locations of five Daurian towns. Khabarov said that the development of agriculture on the Amur will lead to the fact that it will not be necessary to carry bread from the Yeniseisk to Yakutsk, since it will be much closer to carry it from the Amur.

All this information interested Voivode Frantsbekov. Actually, they confirmed the information previously received from the Tungus about the wealth of the land along the Amur River. This time, the voivode decided to give Khabarov's activities a state character. He handed over to the *promyshlennye lyudi* about 20 Cossacks led by the foreman Tretyak Chechigin. From the stocks of weapons of the Yakutsk *ostrog*, they were given three guns (one copper and two cast iron), a large supply of lead and gunpowder, and hand firearms. In addition, at the request of Khabarov, 12 people from his detachment, who arrived with him in Yakutsk, were enrolled in the Yakutsk garrison, became military service people, and were now entitled to a sovereign salary. Thus, it turns out that the composition of service people in the Khabarov detachment increased to 33 people. Now the actions of E. Khabarov on the Amur were given an official character. He himself became appointed as *prikazshik*²⁴⁾, endowed by the voivode with the appropriate powers. Moreover, his detachment was now called "army" or "regiment" in the documents.

24) *Prikazshik* (clerk)—an administrative position of the first level appointed by *voivodes* from among the commanding staff of military serving people in Russian fortified points (*ostrozhki*) to control the collection of yasak from the aboriginal population or oversee the performance of various duties by Russian peasants.

In addition, the *voivode* Frantsbekov allowed E. Khabarov to additionally recruit people for his "regiment." If a year earlier Khabarov had to invite people to him with promises of the success of the campaign, now he did not need advertising and had the opportunity to select from among those who wanted to. In Yakutsk, he recruited 105 people, again providing at his own expense. To do this, he had to borrow another 2,900 rubles from the *voivode* at the rate of 50% per annum. In the meantime, his detachment traveled up the Olekma River, and another 20 people joined him.

Since Khabarov's campaign was now given an official character, the *voivode* Frantsbekov formulated official requirements for him in writing. Now E. Khabarov had to strengthen the Lavkai's town, transforming it into a Russian *ostrog* and installing guns on the towers. Then he continued to send his people from that fortress to collect *yasak* from the *Daur*s. The *voivode* demanded that Khabarov also find and bring Prince Bogdoy into Russian citizenship, promising him mercy and patronage on behalf of the Russian sovereign. For this, Frantsbekov even drew up a special letter for transferring it to Bogdoy.

Going from Yakutsk on July 9, 1650, with a new, more strong detachment, E. Khabarov, worrying about the comrades he had previously left in Lavkai's town, left some of his people from the new detachment (40 people) on Olekma with cargo, and he himself, light, hurried to Amur. Not finding the participants of his first campaign in Lavkai's town, Khabarov went down the Amur, where he caught up with his comrades besieged by the *Daur*s in a hut near Albazin town.

After E. Khabarov left for Yakutsk in March 1650, the following happened to his people on the Amur. The participants of the campaign left by him on the Amur, as they were ordered by the leader, were entrenched in Lavkai's town. They left it to collect *yasak* and call on the *Daur*s to accept Russian citizenship. For this purpose, they made 12 trips during the spring and summer. During the absence of Khabarov, people from his detachment collected 160 sables and a sable fur coat from the local population. Most of the sables were sent by Lavkai's brother, *kniazec* Shilginei, whose wife and son were captured by Khabarov's people in *amanats*.

Until September 1, the participants of the campaign lived in Lavkai's town, and then, due to the depletion of food supplies, they decided to move down the Amur River to another town owned by Lavkai's son-in-law, *kniazec* Albaza.

Approaching the town, they demanded that Albaza pay *yasak*. But Albaza, seeing the small number of Russian people, categorically refused to pay them *yasak*. The participants of the campaign decided to attack the Daurian town but were fired upon from bows and lost 4 people. They had to sit in a hut built and fortified to repel the enemy, waging a circular defense. The sudden appearance of a new, more numerous, detachment of Russian people near Albazin forced the *Daur*s to move down the Amur. They retreated without a fight, not accepting the battle. However, later Khabarov, in a written message to the voivode D. Frantsbekov, reported a bloody assault on this Daurian town, in which many *Daur*s died, and in Khabarov's detachment there were no losses; only 20 people were injured.

Having occupied the Albazin town, he sent a chase group from among the volunteers for the departed *Daur*s. The next morning, they caught up with the *Daur*s at the town of *kniazec* Atuy. Seeing the pursuers, the *Daur*s set fire to their town and, sitting on horses, went down the Amur. As trophies, the Russian people got a herd of cattle of 117 heads, which was driven to Albazin. Khabarov also told the voivode false information about these events: that a battle took place with the *Daur*s, in which many of them died, and 9 people were wounded among Khabarov's people.

Khabarov decided to spend the winter of 1650/1651 in Albazin. The township was fortified. It had, according to various sources, from 8 to 11 residential buildings. Large supplies of bread were discovered in the town.

E. Khabarov remained with his people in Albazin for 7 months. During this time, his people actively walked up and down the Amur, collecting *yasak* from the local population and calling him into Russian citizenship. One of the small detachments sent by Khabarov at the beginning of 1651, climbing the Amur, reached the Shilka River²⁵⁾. It was said to collect information about the new land and its environs in the written order of the voivode received by Khabarov. However, the main occupation of people from Khabarov's detachment during this time was sable hunting. There were a lot of sable and other fur-bearing animals in the Amur taiga. Documentary sources are silent about this, since the participants of the campaign and the Yakutsk voivode D. Frantsbekov

25) The Shilka and Argun rivers, merging, form the river of Amur.

himself, who lent Khabarov huge funds for his organization, were interested in receiving fur. However, it is known from other sources that in the winter of 1649/1650, only one group of *promyshlennye lyudi* mined more than 1000 sables. Of these, two thirds took Khabarov. In the future, presumably, these sables fell, along with another Amur fur, into the hands of *voivode* D. Frantsbekov and were an incentive to organize further activities of E. Khabarov on the Amur. Nevertheless, in addition to delivering the collected furs to Yakutsk, Khabarov's envoys (three people from his detachment were sent from Albazin on March 25, 1651) handed over to the *voivode* samples of Daurian bread received from the population of the Amur region and information about the Bogdoy land, which, as it turned out, was ruled by Tsar Shamshakan.

Having received another batch of furs from Khabarov, the *voivode* Frantsbekov soon sent another detachment to him: 30 Cossacks and 107 volunteers from among *promyshlennye lyudi*. With this detachment, large stocks of lead and gunpowder, a supply of food, and a letter to the ruler of Bogdoy land were sent with a proposal to accept Russian citizenship.

Khabarov, having sent his representatives with fur to Yakutsk, himself took up the construction of new ships and repair of old ships in Albazin. After their preparation, he and his people moved down the Amur on June 2, intending to call the local population into Russian citizenship and collect *yasak* from him. However, the next day, having reached the town burned by the *Daur*s themselves, he decided to go up the Amur.

Passing Albazin, Khabarov's detachment marched upstream for three more days, reaching the fortified city of *kniazec* Gaigudar. The well-fortified city consisted of three parts, each of which could independently hold the defense. It was evident that all the fortifications were built recently. The town, in which a large number of *Daur*s from the surrounding villages gathered, was surrounded by a double moat more than 2 meters deep.

Khabarov's detachment approached the town on ships, and the *Daur*s tried not to let them go to the shore and fired from bows. However, the volley of guns that followed from the Cossacks, which put up to 20 people, forced the *Daur*s to hide outside the walls of the town. Subsequently, it turned out that at that time the *Daur*s had about 50 "Bogdoi people" (Manchus) who came to them for trade. When the shootout between the *Daur*s and the Russians began, they drove away

from the town on horseback and from there watched the events taking place. Khabarov made an offer to the *Daur*s who went to their town: in order to avoid bloodshed, surrender and accept Russian citizenship, and pay *yasak*, for which they will receive protection from any enemy from sovereign people. However, *kniazec* Gaigudar categorically rejected this proposal, and the *Daur*s from the walls of their fortress began to fire continuously at the Cossacks. In response, people from Khabarov's detachment began to fire at them with guns, and at night, with the help of their three cannons, they pierced a breach in one tower, where they attacked at sunrise. By the end of the day, all three fortifications were taken. The *Daur*s fought back fiercely, especially in the third fortification, where it came to hand-to-hand combat. As Khabarov reported about these events, as a result of the capture of the fortress, 641 people from among the *Daur*s died—the entire male population of the town. Among the Cossacks, only 4 people died and 45 were injured. Inside the fortress, 243 women of different ages and 118 children were found by Cossacks in special pits. Among the seized property were large food supplies, 231 horses, and 113 cows.

Khabarov found out from the captured women what the Manchus were doing with them. As the *Daur* women said, around 50 Manchus were with them constantly, periodically replacing each other. Their goal was to collect fur tribute from the *Daur*s in favor of their king, Shamshakan. They also brought goods that they traded with the *Daur*s. *Kniazec* Gaigudar demanded help from the Manchus, but they refused, citing the fact that their king, Shamshakan, did not tell them to start wars with the Russians.

The next day, the Manchus sent their envoy to Khabarov to the captured town. The leader of the Russian detachment paid due respect to the messenger at the meeting. The Manchu representative spoke a lot, but his speech was impossible to understand due to the lack of a Russian translator. Only with the help of Daurian women, who understood the Manchu language very little, with great difficulty, manage to understand in general terms what he was talking about. However, since the Cossacks had serious problems with the translation from the Daurian language, the result of communication with the Manchu envoy turned out to be very peculiar. In the view of E. Khabarov, the "*Bogdoi people*" sought to assure him that their ruler had the most peaceful intentions and was ready to recognize Russian citizenship. Therefore, the leader of the Russian detachment

endowed him with gifts on behalf of the Russian sovereign and released him into his land.

After living in the captured town for 6 weeks, Khabarov decided to move down the Amur. This time, a number of horses were taken with them on ships for a more convenient search of the population in coastal areas. Slowly, with stops, moving along the river, the Cossacks were looking for potential payers of *yasak* and studying the area. In this way, they learned about the large villages of the *Daur*s along the Zeya River, the left tributary of the Amur. Thus, Khabarov's detachment approached along the Amur River to the place where V. Poyarkov's detachment began its advance down the river.

A little below the mouth of the Zeya River was the last fortified point of the *Daur*s. Next lay the lands of *Goguli*, branches of the *Daur*s. Khabarov decided to climb the Zeya. After some time, the Cossacks saw a large, fortified city on the riverbank with a double row of walls surrounded by three deep and wide ditches. Khabarov sent a small reconnaissance detachment, which was able to silently stick to the shore and imperceptibly approach the town. To the surprise of the scouts, there were few people in the city, and they did not show any resistance. Thus, the Daurian town was in the hands of Khabarov's detachment. The bulk of its inhabitants at that time feasted in a neighboring settlement, which, according to E. Khabarov, was just a short distance from the town ("as short as a distance of an arrow flight", as he wrote himself). Seeing the Cossacks on the walls and towers of the town, the *Daur*s, led by their *kniazec*s, first rushed to liberate their fortress. However, when the rest of Khabarov's detachment joined the shore and fired from their three cannons, the attackers panicked and began to run away towards the forest. A very small part of the *Daur*s, led by the *kniazec*s, attempted to resist and locked themselves in a yurt. Khabarov suggested that they stop resistance in order to avoid bloodshed, accept Russian citizenship, and pay *yasak*. Considering this, the Daurian *kniazec*s decided to surrender and left the yurt ("settlement").

According to Khabarov, about 100 people of noble *Daur*s were brought to the fortress, where they took an oath of allegiance to the Russian sovereign saying that they would pay fur tribute annually. After that, Khabarov ordered the release of all captured women and children from the fortress, leaving only the most noble *Daur*s who agreed to this voluntarily as *amanats*.

After that, seemingly completely peaceful relations were established between the Russians and the *Daur*s, who began to provide Khabarov's detachment with food. They had the opportunity to freely enter the fortress. Cossacks fearlessly visited their yurts. Even the *Amanats* felt completely free and could leave the fortress, going to the dwellings of their relatives. The Cossacks began to form the idea of staying in this fortress on an ongoing basis, making it a Russian stronghold on the Amur.

However, as it turned out, the *Daur*s only pretended to obey the Russians. Waiting for the moment when Khabarov's people did not expect this at all, all the *Daur*s fled. The few *amanats* who remained in the power of the Cossacks were ready to sacrifice themselves in the name of the freedom of their relatives. After that, E. Khabarov decided to burn the town and go down the Amur to his detachment. On September 7, the Cossacks set off.

Moving along the river on ships, Khabarov's detachment passed the left tributary of the Amur River, the Bureya River, with fairly densely populated lands, where *Goguli*, related to the *Daur*s, who were also engaged in agriculture, lived. Further, from the mouth of the right tributary of the Amur, the Sungari, lay lands inhabited by *Duchers*, whose language was close to Manchu. *Duchers* were also engaged in agriculture, but the basis of their economy and culture was still cattle breeding and fishing. The left bank of the Amur here was low and, in places, swampy, unsuitable for settlement. Khabarov did not dare to land on the right mountain bank. *Ducher* settlements were followed by the lands on which the *Achans* lived, part of the Tungus-speaking *Nanai*, who were mainly engaged in fishing.

Only on September 29, 1651, did the Cossacks see on the left bank of the Amur River a place suitable for their winter camp, towering above the rest of the area. There is no consensus among researchers about where it was. According to one version, this place is located about 170 km lower along the Amur from the modern city of Khabarovsk; according to another, about 400 km below Komsomolsk-on-Amur. In a few days, Khabarov's people built an *ostrog*: walls with three towers were erected, of which only one was made a roadway. A deep ditch was dug around the *ostrog*, and an earthen rampart was poured. Inside the *ostrog*, huts were set up for Cossacks to live in.

To procure food for the winter on October 5, Khabarov sent 100 people down

the Amur River to harvest fish. This did not go unnoticed by the *Achans*. Already on October 8, the *Achans* with *Duchers*, with a total number of about 800 people, attempted an attack—they tried to set fire to the walls of the *ostrog* from all sides. The Cossacks who remained in the *ostrog* managed to repel the attack. An important role in this was played by their firearms.

Nevertheless, during the winter, Khabarov's people conducted campaigns up and down the Amur to the nearest villages of *Achans* and *Duchers*, calling them into Russian citizenship and collecting *yasak*. However, in the spring, a new, more serious test awaited the Cossacks. On the morning of March 26, 1652, Manchu military units of up to 2,000 people appeared near the walls of the *Achan ostrog*, of which almost half were *Daur*s and *Tungus*, previously forcibly taken away for service in the Manchu army. They began shelling an *ostrog* of 6 guns and hand firearms. In addition, the Manchus had special devices for undermining the walls. Apparently, the plan of the attackers was to capture a number of Cossacks, then to find out all kinds of information about the plans of the Russians.

However, the retaliatory shooting of the defenders of the *ostrog* did not allow the Manchus to immediately capture the *ostrog*. The battle dragged on until the end of the day, when the Manchus were still able to get to the walls of the *ostrog* and cut a passage in it in one place. However, the Cossacks sent their cannon into this passage and deployed other guns standing on the towers. A volley of guns stopped the Manchu attack and put them to flight. A total of 150 Cossacks, led by Khabarov, rushed after. Due to the onset of twilight, the Manchus did not have an idea of the number of Cossacks pursuing them and could not provide the necessary resistance.

As a result, in hand-to-hand combat, the participants in the sortie recaptured two iron guns and many other weapons from the Manchus, including guns, and captured 8 banners. A convoy with food was captured, and 830 horses and several people were captured, among whom was a Chinese man previously captured by the Manchus and now forced to be in their army. Khabarov received detailed information about China itself from him. As E. Khabarov later reported to the Yakutsk voivode, in that battle the Manchus lost 676 people. In the Khabarov detachment, 10 people were killed, and 76 people, including Khabarov himself, were injured.

After the Manchus attacked the Russian *ostrog*, E. Khabarov understood that

it was dangerous to stay in a place very remote from a possible connection with Russian possessions. He decided with his squad to go up the Amur and set off along the river on April 22, shortly after the ice drift. The mouth of the Sungari was able to pass quickly on sails. A few days later, the Cossacks managed to catch the Manchu military scout. From him it became known that a detachment of 6,000 people was waiting for them in the lower Sungari. The military scout himself pursued the Cossacks from the mouth of the Sungari in order to find out where they would stop for the winter in order to capture them with large forces.

In June, somewhere near the Bureya River, Khabarov's detachment met with a detachment of Cossacks and volunteers of 117 people who had already spent the winter on the Amur a year earlier from Yakutsk to help him. With them were large supplies of lead and gunpowder, food, and other necessary supplies. Now Khabarov's army exceeded 300 people. Stopping at the mouth of Zeya, Khabarov's detachment began collecting *yasak* from the *Daur*s and *Duchers*.

Meanwhile, information was increasingly received from the local population that the Manchus were preparing a campaign against the Cossacks. After the battle with the Manchus in the Achan *ostrog*, Khabarov understood that this was a very serious opponent. Nevertheless, guided by the initial instructions of the Yakutsk voivode D. Frantsbekov, he continued to make attempts to involve the Manchu ruler “*Bogdykhan*” (the “Great Khan”) in Russian citizenship, sending envoys to him with letters from the voivode. However, the *Daur*s, refused to act as guides, stating that Khabarov's envoys would not return from the Manchus.

The information that E. Khabarov transmitted to the Yakutsk was later transmitted to Moscow by voivode D. Frantsbekov. Since Khabarov portrayed all the events in a favorable light for himself, in Moscow *Sibirskii Prikaz* (the Siberian Order)²⁶⁾ got the impression that the Amur Region, at least Dauria, had already become part of the Russian state. Consequently, in this territory it was necessary to organize the real, active administration, build several *ostrogs*, start arable land, and normalize the *yasak* paying regime, establishing stable relations with the local population. Another serious problem was a lack of information about *Bogdykhan*, which was still not associated with the Chinese

26) The Siberian Order was the central body (Ministry) that ruled Siberia in the 17th century.

state either in Moscow or in the local Siberian administration. Therefore, in the Moscow government, the desire to bring *Bogdykhan* under the “high hand of the Russian tsar” still remained unchanged.

To solve these problems, a certain nobleman Dmitry Zinoviev was sent from Moscow to the Amur region. To become more capable to fulfil his tasks, he was also endowed with power of *voivode*. In Moscow, Zinoviev was appointed a commander of a detachment of 150 *Strelec*²⁷⁾. Moving through Siberia, he received another 150 Cossacks from various garrisons, who were sent under his subordination. When his detachment advanced through the territory of Eastern Siberia, another 30 people joined him—volunteers. Thus, the detachment of D. Zinoviev began to number 330 people.

On August 25, 1653, near the mouth of the Zeya, D. Zinoviev's detachment met with E. Khabarov's detachment. Despite the existing powers, Zinoviev decided not to stay on the Amur. He handed Khabarov an order from the Siberian order to go to Moscow, appointed instead of him the leader of the Cossacks, Khabarov's ally Onufry Stepanov, and he himself, taking 150 *Strelec* with him, went to Moscow, taking with him all the furs collected by Khabarov, all the documentation, and even several Daurian women and teenagers. He took with him to Moscow D. Zinoviev and a Chinese person captured by Khabarov's detachment from the Manchus during the battle at the Achan *ostrog*. In Moscow, this Chinese person converted to Orthodoxy and then was sent to Transbaikalia. Subsequently, he served in the Nerchinsk *ostrog* as a translator.

The Cossack detachment remaining after Khabarov's departure continued to collect *yasak* from the local population. O. Stepanov sent different numbers of groups up and down the Amur. Having wintered in the lower reaches of the Amur, not far from the place of the Achan *ostrog*, they decided to go along the Sungari River, where they had not yet been, and hoped to collect a large *yasak* and replenish bread supplies. Since groups of Russian people began to come

27) *Strelec* (Sagittarius)—military servicemen in the 16th—early 18th centuries, who served in the state *Strelec* units and were armed with “fire arms,” usually an infantry, less often riding infantry. The *Strelec* troops in Russia formed the first permanent professional army. Some foreigners called them “Musketeers” or “Arquebusiers.” The *Strelec* centurion was the commander of a unit of 100 people. As senior officers, centurions were put in charge of detachments of serving people who went to the “new lands” and appointed to minor administrative positions.

to the Amur from 1653, who adjoined Stepanov's detachment, the number of Russian people by May 1654 was already more than 500 people.

On May 20, the detachment entered the Sungari River. The voyage lasted 16 days. *Ducher* warned the Cossacks that the Manchu army was coming towards them. The meeting with the Manchus took place on June 6. As a result of the shootout from firearms, it became clear to the Cossacks that they would not be able to resist superior forces, and they decided to withdraw.

During the remaining warm months, the Cossacks continued to collect *yasak* from the local population. However, it was discovered that the Manchus were taking him from the Amur to their inland territories. Thus, farming on the Amur ceased, and the Cossacks faced the problem of hunger.

On November 2, 1654, when frosts had already begun and snow fell, the Cossacks set up an *ostrog* on the left bank of the Komara River, as the Russians called it (the Humaerhe River—the right tributary of the Amur), at its confluence with the Amur. Expecting a Manchu attack, they built the *ostrog* much more fortified than the previous *ostrog*. In the reply of O. Stepanov to the Yakutsk *voivode* M. Lodyzhensky, who had replaced D. Frantsbekov by that time, a description of this *ostrog* was preserved. A ditch more than 2 meters deep and about 4.5 meters wide was dug. The excavated soil was used to fill a shaft at least 3 meters high, on which guard walls were installed, in which there were upper and lower loopholes. On the inside, the walls were reinforced with a mound of earth and stones to withstand artillery shelling. Sharpened stakes were installed around the moat, around which, in turn, arrowheads collected from the local population were stuck and covered with leaves. Protruding towers were made in the corners of the *ostrog*, which made it possible to fire at the advancing enemy along the walls. In the center of the *ostrog*, a structure for cannons was built, where they could be turned in any direction. A well with gutters brought to four sides was dug in the *ostrog*, which made it possible to supply water to the walls in case of arson of the walls. From the inside, long boards were attached to the walls of the *ostrog*, which protruded outward and were supposed to prevent the enemy from installing stairs in the event of an assault.

The winter for the Cossacks was calm. They continued to collect *yasak* from the local population, going in small detachments in different directions from their

ostrog. But on March 13, 1655, a multinational Manchu army besieged the *ostrog*. The troops included, in addition to the Manchus, the Mongols, Chinese, *Duchers*, *Daur*s, *Tungus*, and representatives of some other Amur peoples. This army consisted of up to 10,000 men with 15 cannons and many small firearms. The first dead at the hands of the Manchus were 20 Cossacks, who outside the *ostrog* were engaged in logging for the construction of ships.

On March 20, the Manchus began shelling the *ostrog*. However, only on March 24 was there an attempt to simultaneously attack the *ostrog* from all sides. However, the Cossacks opened fire on the attackers, then made a sortie as a result of which they captured two cannons with ammunition and several *ostrogs* from the attackers.

The Manchus continued to shell the *ostrog* until April 4. Then they lifted the siege and withdrew. Surprisingly, apart from twenty people captured and killed by the Manchus on the first day, the Cossacks had no other losses. In the process of defending the *ostrog*, only one person received a wound from a cannonball. In any case, so it is said in the record filed later by the Cossacks in the name of sovereign Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich.

In the years 1655-1658, the development of the Amur and the surrounding territories by Russian people continued. O. Stepanov sent detachments to collect *yasak* not only along the banks of the Amur; the Cossacks collected *yasak* along the Sungari and Ussuri rivers. The furs collected by the Cossacks were sent by the Stepanovs to Moscow.

The nobleman D. Zinoviev, who reached Moscow, reported information about the Amur land in the Siberian order. As a result of the information collected over several years in Moscow, a decision was made to create a special *uyezd*²⁸⁾ in Transbaikalia and the Amur region. His first *voivode* was Afanasy Pashkov, the former *voivode* in Yeniseisk, appointed in 1654. It was decided to make the Nerchinsk ostrog the center of the new *uyezd*, originally built in 1653 by the Yeniseisk serviceman, Peter Beketov, then burned in 1655 by the Tungus of kniazec Gantimur, but already restored by A. Pashkov in 1658. According to the tsar's decree, all Russian people who were in Transbaikalia and on the Amur were to become subordinate to the *voivode* Pashkov.

28) *Uyezd*—a territorial and administrative unit, the basis of the administrative division of the Russian state before 1917.

O. Stepanov learned about the appointment of A. Pashkov as *voivode* only in the fall of 1657. However, at that time he was in the lower reaches of the Amur, in the land of the *Nivkhy*, and did not have the opportunity to join the *voivode*—it was necessary to stay there for the winter.

In the spring, Stepanov's detachment continued to collect *yasak* on the Amur. In mid-June, he released a detachment of 180 people to collect *yasak* along the banks of the Amur River from the *Duchers*, and he and the rest of the people went up the Amur River to meet with the *voivode* Pashkov. However, on June 30, 1658, near the mouth of the Sungari River, Stepanov's detachment stumbled upon a Manchu flotilla consisting of 47 ships armed with cannons and hand firearms. Manchu vessels appeared from an ambush and immediately began to fire. Several Russian ships immediately got holes and sunk to the bottom. Escaping from sinking ships. Cossacks began to land on the shore, where Manchu soldiers were also waiting for them. In this battle, about 270 Cossacks and O. Stepanov himself were killed.

The surviving Cossacks joined forces with a detachment of 180 people previously sent by Stepanov to collect *yasak*. Most of them decided to try to find the *voivode* A. Pashkov on the upper Amur. Others decided to go to Yakutsk along the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk, along the path of V. Poyarkov. The search for the *voivode* was unsuccessful, so the Cossacks, numbering more than 200 people, who already did not have supplies of food and ammunition, decided to return to the Lena along the path that they used when they went to the Amur.

Thus, the desire of the Russian government, the Siberian *voivodes* administration, and ordinary Russian people to go to the Amur, as legends about its “places of wealth” were by the end of the 1640s spreading throughout Siberia, was actively realized as a result of the campaigns of Erofei Khabarov. Although he himself was removed from the further development of the Amur Region, the people who followed him continued to develop new lands. After Khabarov's associates left Amur, people from all over Siberia continued to come to this territory. They were engaged not only in the extraction of fur-bearing animals but also began to engage in the cultivation of land. The Amur region became part of the new Nerchinsk uyezd, and in 1682 it was separated into an independent Albazin uyezd.

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