

## MILITARY-POLITICAL CONFRONTATIONS IN THE KHANATES OF THE SOUTH CAUCASUS IN 1768-1774 AND EREKLE II\*

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### Abstract

In 1768, Fatali Khan of Quba together with Hussein Khan of Shaki took Shamakhi. Soon, however, the former also tried to subdue the Shaki Khanate. For this purpose, Fatali offered King Erekle II of Kartli-Kakheti and Ibrahim Khan of Karabakh to campaign against the Shaki Khanate. But failed to get their consent. For his part, the Khan of Shaki asked Erekle II for help. The King demanded that Fatali Khan reconcile with the Khan of Shaki and threatened to provide military assistance to Hussein Khan.

Ibrahim Khan of Karabakh also asked Erekle II for help in case of Fatali Khan's aggression. Thus, an alliance between Erekle II, Hussein Khan and Ibrahim Khan against Fatali Khan was formed. The allies aimed to restore the rule of Aghasi Khan in Shamakhi, even on the condition of vassalage to Fatali Khan. In case of refusal, they intended to return the Quba Khanate to its former borders.

The Russian government tried to limit the activity of Erekle II in the ongoing confrontation between the South Caucasian Khans. Nevertheless, in 1770, Erekle II sent an army to Ibrahim Khan of Karabakh to repel the attack of Fatali Khan. As a result, Fatali Khan's campaign in Karabakh ended in failure.

In November-December 1773, the Avar Khan Muhammad-Nutsal IV, along with Hussein Khan and Aghasi Khan, campaigned to Shamakhi. King Erekle helped the Avars militarily. Erekle II sent a detachment of Muslim Borchaly Kazakhs against Fatali Khan, in order to make the participation of his subordinates less noticeable. But this did not go unnoticed by Russian intelligence.

At the same time, it is incorrect to name Erekle II as an ally of the Dagestani leaders united against Fatali Khan in the subsequent campaign of 1774. The King's participation in the hostilities during this campaign is not confirmed by any source.

**Keywords:** King Erekle, South Caucasia, Quba, Fatali Khan, Khanate, Shaki, Shamakhi, Karabakh, Muhammad-Nutsal.

From the second half of the 1760s, significant political shifts started in the Khanates of the South Caucasus. This was manifested first by the considerable strengthening of Fatali Khan of Quba and his subjugation-oppression of the neighboring khanates, and then by forming various military-political coalitions against him, in which King Erekle II of Kartli-Kakheti was more or less involved.

As early as 1759, with the help of neighboring Dagestani leaders, Fatali Khan conquered the Derbent Khanate [15: 129; 1: 202].<sup>1</sup> Derbent Khanate could not

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boast of a large territory or population, but its strategic and economic importance was immense.

Later, Fatali Khan turned his forces against Shamakhi, that is the Shirvan Khanate.<sup>2</sup> However, the success of Quba Khan in this direction was greatly hindered by Hussein Khan of Shaki (1758-1780) [13: 92]. Fatali managed to win Hussein Khan over and got him to change sides. Apparently, Fatali Khan promised Hussein Khan a large share in the event of conquering the rich Shirvan Khanate - located between their possessions. In the summer of 1768, as a result of the complete mobilization of its own forces and those of the allies (including Daghestani mercenaries), Shamakhi, attacked simultaneously from the west and east, surrendered. The brothers ruling Shamakhi were captured (subsequently, Muhammad Said Khan was imprisoned in Derbent jail by Fatali Khan. Aghasi-Khan, as a younger and more energetic opponent, had his eyes gouged out).<sup>3</sup> According to the agreement, the Shirvan Khanate was divided between Fatali Khan and Hussein Khan and Naibs (governors) were appointed by the respective parties to govern each area. Very soon, Fatali Khan ousted Hussein Khan's Naib from Shamakhi and took over all of Shirvan. This made Hussein his mortal enemy [5: 160; 21: 11-12; 1: 224-225]. On 10 September, 1768, Temir Khamzin - the ruler of Enderey, wrote to Potapov - the commandant of Kizlyar, that a quarrel had broken out between Fatali Khan and the Khan of Shaki and the governors appointed by the son of Haji Chalabi (Hussein) had been expelled from Shamakhi [19: 121].

Fatali Khan was not satisfied with the conquest of Shirvan and set his sights on Shaki. In August or early September, 1768, the Khan of Quba and Derbent proposed to King Erekle II of Kartli-Kakheti and Ibrahim Khan of Karabakh, that they all attack Shaki together.<sup>4</sup> Erekle II, for whom the appearance of an aggressive and dangerously growing state in the vicinity of his kingdom was unacceptable, did not accept the proposal of Fatali Khan. Ibrahim of Shushi was well aware of the example of Fatali Khan betrayal of the khan of the Shaki. Ibrahim Khan had significant reasons for concern, as by annexing Shirvan, Fatali Khan created an advantageous foothold against the Khanates of Shaki and Karabakh [1: 215]. Although Russian spies reported that they were unaware of the addressees' response to the offer, subsequent events make it clear that this method of Fatali Khan did not work. He failed to involve either the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti or the Khanate Karabakh in this adventure.

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<sup>1</sup> Different years are given as the date of Derbent's capture by Fatali-Khan: 1758 [3: 78], 1760 [10: 6; 12-13], 1765 [7: 378; 8: 250].

<sup>2</sup> The khanate, with Shamakhi as its capital city, was also called the Shirvan Khanate.

<sup>3</sup> These stories are narrated in the works of different authors [7: 429; 5: 160; 10: 8: 253; 3: 79-80; 21: 10-11; 15: 130; 1: 217-222]. It should be noted that 1766 [7: 429], and 1767 [5: 160; 10: 3: 79-80] are mentioned as different dates for the taking of Shamakhi and conquest of the Khanate.

<sup>4</sup> On September 10, 1768 Russian Consulate Official I. Matveev, merchant S. Sharipin from Astrakhan and clerk E. Zamyatin sent to Shirvan to clarify Fatali Khan's plans reported to Russian consul Sulyakov. For this document, see [2: 160].

Nevertheless, Fatali Khan did not give up his plans to take Shaki and for this, he again resorted to the tried and tested path - he started recruiting Dagestani mountaineers to use them against Hussein Khan.<sup>5</sup>

Obviously, it was at this time that Hussein Khan asked King Erekle for help. The Governor of Astrakhan reported about this request to the State Collegium of Foreign Affairs. It is also mentioned that “after that Erekle sent a man to Fatali Khan, to encourage him to reconcile with Shaki Khan, but if he did not agree to that, Erekle would help Hussein Khan, no matter where they would fight each other”.<sup>6</sup> Apparently, King Erekle also prepared an army to be sent to Shaki. This provided good results. In the description of the environs of his state, which was supposed to be handed to Count N. Panin, in June 1769, Erekle II noted: when with the help of the Dagestanis, the Khan of Quba “took Shirvan, he attacked Shaki Khan and defeated him. When we heard about this, we helped Shaki Khan with his army, and thanks to our help Quba Khan had to give up his ambitions. He decided on reconciliation and they reconciled” [16: 359].<sup>7</sup> Consequently, this time King Erekle announced military support for Hussein of Shaki in the event of an attack by Fatali Khan.

Besides Hussein Khan, Ibrahim Khan of Karabakh also asked Erekle II for help in case of an attack by Fatali Khan. The king also encouraged him to provide appropriate assistance when needed.<sup>8</sup> Thus a political alliance of three rulers - Erekle II, Hussein Khan and Ibrahim Khan was formed in order to stop the rise of Fatali Khan. The former ruler of Shamakhi, Aghasi Khan, also joined this alliance. At the time, the deposed khan and his loyal supporters had settled on the banks of the Kura River (apparently within the Karabakh khanate). G. Bogolyubov, the consul of Russia in the city of Anzali, reported on this alliance and its goals on 28 May, 1770: “When Fatali Khan of Derbent took over Shamakhi in the last two years and announced his intentions to move further together with the Lezghins, the concerned Khans of Shaki and Karadagh (sic. should be Karabakh - D. M.) called on Erekle to unite and unanimously demanded that Fatali Khan, although he kept Shamakhi under his subordination, would permit the robbed and expelled previous khan of Shamakhi to be its proprietor and that in the case of resistance, the two mentioned [khans] with the common forces and especially Erekle himself, wanted to bring Fatali back within the borders of the old dominion and confiscate something more from them” [17: 270-271]. Thus, the goal of the allies, concerned about the unbridled aggression of Fatali Khan, was to restore the abolished Shamakhi Khanate, and return Aghasi Khan from exile as its ruler. If Fatali Khan agreed to

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<sup>5</sup> Potapov, the commandant of Kizlyar, reported this to the Foreign Ministry on September 17, 1768. See [19: 122].

<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, G. Abdullayev, who refers to the quote from the relevant document, does not indicate the date of the mentioned report, see [2: 72], and we have not yet been able to see this document in full, which is stored in the Russian archives (РГАДА, ф. Перс., д. 16, л. 279).

<sup>7</sup> For the Russian translation of the letter at the time, see [20: 435; 4: 93-97].

<sup>8</sup> РГАДА, ф. Перс., д. 17, л. 44 [2: 72].

this request, the allies would also agree to leave Shamakhi Khanate in a position subordinate to Fatali Khan (of course, with the maintenance of complete internal autonomy), but if Fatali Khan resisted, with joint forces they would capture the territories conquered by Fatali Khan, i.e. return the Quba Khanate into its former borders.

Meanwhile, conspiracies of the locals against the rule of Fatali Khan did not subside in Shamakhi. Behind these conspiracies were the restless Aghasi Khan, on the one hand, and Hussein Khan of Shaki, on the other. In the summer of 1769, after suppressing one of these conspiracies, Fatali forced Hussein Khan to swear allegiance to degrading conditions, which also included the obligation to protect the borders of Shamakhi Khanate appropriated by Fatali Khan.<sup>9</sup>

By this time, the Russian government had already managed to persuade Erekle II to get involved in the Russo-Ottoman war. Because of this, the king's activity in the ongoing confrontation between the khans became a matter of concern for Russian diplomacy. It was for this reason that in May of the following year, consul Bogolyubov advised the Council of Foreign Affairs that the Russian imperial court persuade King Erekle not to interfere directly in the confrontation between the neighboring khans and to be satisfied with only moral support for the khans of Shaki and Karabakh. It is noteworthy that at the same time the consul understood perfectly well that the interests of Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom demanded that Fatali Khan not be further strengthened by the conquest of Shaki and Karabakh and he even emphasized this in his letter. In addition, G. Bogolubov believed that the king should care about establishing peace between the Khans, not about kindling enmity [17: 271].

From the above, as well as from the situation of the time, it can be concluded that the advice of the Russian consul was based on two circumstances: 1. At that time, the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom was an ally of Russia in the war against the Ottomans and its military activity, even formal, within Iran's sphere of influence, could have irritated Karim Khan, neutral in the ongoing war, which was undesirable for Russia. The neutrality of the Iranian ruler was important for Russia under the ongoing war with the Ottomans; 2. Fatali Khan was considered a political friend and economic partner of Russia and St. Petersburg was interested in maintaining this relationship. The Ottomans tried very hard to turn the Daghestani and Transcaucasian rulers against Russia. In this regard, any more or less large-scale action would have been impossible without Fatali Khan's participation.

Hence, the difficult situation in the region significantly increased Fatali Khan's political weight [15: 132]. King Erekle was well aware, that Fatali Khan was trying to establish himself as a reliable ally for Russia, which was accompanied by a certain restriction by Russia on the King's activity against the strengthening of the Khan. The desire to undermine Fatali Khan's credibility in the eyes of the Russian

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<sup>9</sup> This was reported to the Russian Foreign Ministry by Sulyakov - the Russian consul in Salyan. See [2: 163].

government must be explained by the emphasis in Erekle' letter to the Imperial Court during the Russo-Ottoman War that Fatali Khan had conquered Shamakhi under Ottoman influence on the condition that the Khan would reinforce naval fortresses [16: 359]. Presumably, the King's words imply that Fatali would close his ports in the Caspian Sea for Russian warships.<sup>10</sup>

Erekle II allied with the Khan of Karabakh as a counter to Quba Khan's rising power. Fatali Khan was able to more or less annex almost all the Transcaucasian khanates north of the Kura River and also extended his influence to the West Caspian Khanates south of the Kura (Javad and Talish or Lankaran Khanates). The Karabakh Khanate hindered Fatali Khan's expansionist plans for the other Khanates in the South Caucasus [1: 514]. Therefore, in addition to Shaki and Shirvan, it was necessary for him to conquer Karabakh as well [cf. 8: 253]. However, the military-political alliance of King Erekle and Ibrahim Khan posed an insurmountable obstacle to Fatali Khan's plans. Thanks to the support of the Georgian king, Ibrahim Khalil Khan turned his Khanate, located between the lower reaches of the Kura and Araks rivers, into an impregnable fortress inaccessible to Fatali Khan and extended his influence to other neighboring khanates (Ganja, Karadagh). Consequently, Fatali was very hostile to Ibrahim Khan of Karabakh. He was also very dissatisfied with the fact that King Erekle zealously sought to subjugate some of the Khanates (Ganja, Yerevan, Nakhichevan) south of the Kura.

It was not difficult to see that having neutralized of the resistance of the Khan of Shaki, Fatali Khan took up arms against the Khan of Karabakh. As M. Sulyakov - the consul of Russia in Salyan noted in his report, after receiving the oath of allegiance from Hussein Khan, Fatali Khan ordered his troops to be ready for a "secret operation". This operation most likely meant a campaign against the Karabakh Khanate [2: 163].

Despite warnings from the Russian authorities, Erekle II could not simply wait to see how Fatali Khan's campaign in Karabakh would end. How important it was for the king to protect Karabakh from Fatali Khan is also evidenced by the fact that in March 1770, when the King of Kartli-Kakheti and his army set off to campaign against the Ottomans in Akhaltsikhe pashalik, he still managed to send another army of 4,000 to Ibrahim Khan to repel Fatali Khan's impending attack. According to Erekle II himself, this army consisted of Armenians, Tatars and a small number of Georgians [16: 546].<sup>11</sup>

The sources have it that Fatali Khan campaigned in Karabakh in early April 1770. On April 12, Bogolyubov, the consul of Russia in the city of Anzali, reported to the Russian Foreign Ministry that Fatali Khan had crossed the Kura and was ravaging the villages of Karabakh with the army of the Lezghins. He even ap-

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<sup>10</sup> It is difficult to say how true this statement of Erekle II was. It could have been a diplomatic maneuver.

<sup>11</sup> In his report to Count N. Panin from 5 April, 1770, nobleman Mouravyov wrote about this assistance provided to Ibrahim Khan by Erekle [20: 216; 16: 555].

proached the city of Shushi to besiege it. Fatali Khan pursued very far-reaching goals. According to consul Bogolyubov, there were rumors that after taking Shushi, Fatali Khan was going to continue his way to Tabriz or even directly to Karim-Khan's domains themselves [16: 566].<sup>12</sup>

Fatali Khan indignantly wrote to Queen Catherine II that when he sent the troops assembled from various places against the Khan of Karabakh, to help the latter, Erekle II sent his son with the Georgian army<sup>13</sup> [2: 72].

Undoubtedly, the above-mentioned military assistance provided by the King of Kartli-Kakheti was the reason why Fatali Khan's campaign in Karabakh ended in failure. This is why upon his return to Shamakhi, the unsuccessful Khan, by threat and force took the money to pay the mercenary army from locals [17: 459]. The military assistance of Erekle II to the khans opposed to Fatali Khan did not end there. The South Caucasian khans opposed to Fatali Khan, had a new ally in the person of the Khan of Avaria. On December 15, 1773, nobleman Andrei Filatov, informed the Commandant of Kizlyar that Erekle had sent his subordinate Tatars called Borcaly Kazakh (Борчалы Казак) to help the Khan of Avaria, when the latter, together with the Khans of Shaki and Ganja and Aghasi Khan campaigned against Shamakhi. However, the number of these auxiliary troops remained unknown to the Russian officer. Additionally, he seems to have heard that the King's son was with them as well.<sup>14</sup>

Based on this reference, G. Abdullayev dates these events to the end of November or December 1773. In his words, the leaders of the Avar army, Bulach Mirza and Muhammad Mirza, were killed on the battlefield during this unsuccessful expedition [1: 520-522].<sup>15</sup>

Here G. Abdullayev makes two critical errors. The first inaccuracy is the date of the battle. It is known that the Transcaucasian Khans organized two joint campaigns with the participation of the Avar army to expel Fatali Khan from Shamakhi. In the first campaign, the Avars were indeed commanded by Bulach and Muhammad.<sup>16</sup> At that time, the Avars were hired by Hussein Khan of Shaki and by

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<sup>12</sup> G. Abdullayev, quoting a small passage from this letter, points to June 15, 1770 as the date of Bogolyubov's report. Apparently, he did not use the original document, unlike V. Macharadze, who points to the archival data different from Abdullayev's when publishing main part of the report, where it is stated that the document is the original.

<sup>13</sup> РГАДА, ф. Перс. д.15, л.135.

<sup>14</sup> See the relevant document in the book: [2: 167].

<sup>15</sup> A. Murtazaev also dates this battle to 1773 [18: 148]. In the earlier published work, G. Abdullayev dated the campaign, supported by Erekle II, to 1774: "In 1774, the combined forces of the Shaki and Karabakh Khans, the former Aghasi Khan of Shirvan, and a number of feudal lords of southern Dagestan, with the support of Erekle II, came out against Quba Khanate. Severe battles took place at Shamakhi springboard. Quba was the winner." [2: 73].

<sup>16</sup> They are often referred to as the sons of the Khan of Avaria [3: 80; 14: 376; 15: 131], but also as the brothers of the Khan of Avaria [5: 160]. However, Muhammad-Mirza was a younger brother of Muhammad-Nutsal IV and the co-ruler of Avar Khanate, and Bulachi (junior) - his son [12]. The fact



November 1771 they had already arrived in Shaki [9: 195; 19: 138-139]. Before February 6, 1772 a decisive battle had already been fought between them and Fatali Khan. On this day - Shamkhal of Tarki Murtazali informed the Governor of Astrakhan about the battle and its consequences [19: 139-140].<sup>17</sup> Therefore, this battle is presumed to have taken place not in 1773, but earlier, in the winter, December-January 1771-1772.

Second is the issue of Erekle's military assistance to the Allies. It is clear that in his letter, Filatov refers to the second campaign to Shamakhi, when Avar Khan Muhammad-Nutsal IV (1735-1774), aka Nursal-Beg the ruler of Khunzakh,<sup>18</sup> also driven by the thirst for revenge, participated in the subsequent campaign to Shamakhi with his army. According to Filatov, King Erekle sent part of his army to the Avar Khan to assist him. Initially, the allies managed to take Shamakhi, but later they were defeated by reinforcements from Fatali Khan. Earlier, the Khan, who was invited to negotiations in the enemy's military camp, was treacherously killed.<sup>19</sup>

Filatov's letter does a great service in dating the aforementioned events. It shows that at the time of the writing the letter i.e. by 15 December, 1773, the allies had already taken Shamakhi, and Fatali Khan had sent a courier to Shamkhal of Tarki to hire Dagestani mercenaries, in order to expel his opponents. Therefore, taking Shamakhi away from Fatali Khan with the participation of the troops sent by Erekle probably occurred in November or early December 1773 (during the expedition led by Muhammad-Nutsal and not by Bulach and Muhammad), but Fatali Khan may have taken Shamakhi back by early 1774. Consequently, the dating of the Avar Khan's expedition in 1774 does not seem justified [cf. 15: 132; 2: 73; 1: 522; 11: 107-108].<sup>20</sup>

It seemed remarkable to G. Abdullayev, that in order to prevent the strengthening of Fatali Khan, Erekle II went so far as to support the Avar Khan, even though the latter "constantly bothered Georgians with his attacks" [1: 520]. In this case, apparently, it has not been considered that after the second campaign of the Dagestanis to Georgia under the command of Muhammad-Nutsal which ended in

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that these individuals were the brother and nephew of the Khunzakh ruler is confirmed by primary and more reliable data [9: 195; 19: 138-139].

<sup>17</sup> On 2 March, 1772, Muhammad-Nutsal Khan, the ruler of the Avaria, himself wrote to Commandant Parker of Kizlyar.

<sup>18</sup> "Nutsal" was the title of the Avar Khans, the variety of which is "Nursal" in Georgian sources. However, it sometimes became a supplement to a proper name. In such cases, in neighboring countries, "Nutsal" was often considered a proper name. P. Butkov also refers to the above-mentioned Nutsal as Mersel-Khan. As for Khunzakh, it was the center of the Avar Khanate and because of this the whole region was referred to by that name.

<sup>19</sup> We get detailed information about these events from 19<sup>th</sup>-century authors [5: 161; 10: 3; 81].

<sup>20</sup> We also encounter 1773 as a general date for the campaign of the Nutsal of Avaria [14: 376]. P. Butkov incorrectly dates the mentioned events to 1772 [8: 254].

failure (at Kvareli fortress, 1755), Nutsal decided to reconcile with Erekle II and later he even received wages from the king [16: 360-361; 20: 437].

It is noteworthy that Muhammad-Nutsal had already been to Djaro-Belokani a year earlier to take revenge on Fatali Khan. At that time due to the lack of food caused by bad harvest, the Avar Khan was forced to withdraw most of his accompanying army. So, he asked King Erekle for food and auxiliary troops to utilize against Fatali Khan [20: 491]. Erekle II did not refuse, but he set his own conditions. It became difficult to reach an agreement between the King and the ruler of Khunzakh. Due to the lack of sufficient military forces, Muhammad-Nutsal demanded monetary compensation from Fatali Khan in exchange for the blood of his killed relatives and, in case of refusal, threatened to attack in future [20: 492]. As it turns out from subsequent events, Fatali Khan did not agree to pay the compensation, and Nutsal returned the following year with a large army, in search of revenge. It is noteworthy that Russian military officials in Georgia demanded from Erekle II “not to touch the Persian Khans for any reason” [20: 492]. Presumably because of this situation, King Erekle sent a detachment of Muslim Borchaly Kazakhs against Fatali Khan, so that in this way his participation in the anti-Quba coalition would be less noticeable. However, as we have seen above, even this covert military move by the King did not go unnoticed by Russian intelligence.

Fatali Khan’s revenge on Muhammad-Nutsal in an unacceptable manner gave an additional excuse for the unification of Dagestani leaders, who had already had eyes on the lands of the neighboring Khanates (Nukha, Quba, Shamakhi) of the South Caucasus, against the Khan of Quba. Eventually, most of the Dagestani rulers: Muhammad Khan of Kazi-Kumukh (1743-1789); Omar Khan of Avaria (1774-1801 - the son and heir of the murdered Nutsal); Muhammad Tishsiz (toothless), the ruler of Kazanish; Rustam Kadi of Tabasaran and others, gathered around Amir Hamza [15: 133].

In the same 1774 on Gavdushan valley this alliance of the Dagestanis severely defeated Fatali Khan, who lost most of his possessions.

It is incorrect to name Erekle II, who allegedly “opposed Fatali Khan in alliance with the Khans of Karabakh and Shaki”, a member of the union of Dagestani leaders, united against Fatali Khan [მდრ. 14: 377]. It should be noted that there is no indication on the basis of which source this conclusion was made. It is noteworthy that the King of Kartli-Kakheti and his allies (the Khans of Shaki and Karabakh) are not at all mentioned when talking about subsequent expeditions against Fatali Khan with the participation of the Avars. Apparently, their names were mistakenly associated with a later expedition.

Historical sources do not confirm King Erekle’s participation in the Dagestani allied war against Fatali Khan (e.g., the battle of Gavdushan, etc.) after the death of Muhammad Nutsal.

Thus, Fatali Khan became the main rival of Erekle II in the fight for supremacy in the Eastern Caucasus. Therefore, after Fatali Khan became the sole ruler of Shamakhi and posed a threat to the Khans of Shaki and Karabakh, King



Erekle expressed political support for the latter two and even provided military support to Ibrahim Khan, during Fatali Khan's attack on Karabakh. The Georgian king is also believed to have been in the alliance of the Nutsal of Avaria and rulers of the South Caucasus, aimed at expelling Fatali Khan from Shamakhi. The army sent by King Erekle also participated in the battle that took place at the time, though somehow disguised, because the Russian government called on him to refrain from interfering in the confrontation between the Transcaucasian Khans. But at the same time, participation of Erekle II in the second coalition, formed against Fatali Khan, in which the leading forces were entirely Dagestani rulers, is not observed.

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**ՌԱԶՄԱՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆ ՀԱԿԱՄԱՐՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ  
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ԹՎԱԿԱՆՆԵՐԻՆ ԵՎ ՀԵՐԱԿԼ II-Ը**

*Դավիթ Մերկվիլաձե*

**Քանալի բառեր՝** Հերակլ արքա, Հարավային Կովկաս, Ղուբա, Ֆաթալի խան, խանություն, Շաքի, Շամախի, Ղարաբաղ, Մուհամմադ-Նուցալ:

1768 թվականին Ղուբայի Ֆաթալի խանը Շաքիի Հուսեյն խանի հետ միասին գրավեցին Շամախին: Շուտով նա փորձեց իրեն ենթարկել նաև Շաքիի խանությանը: Այդ նպատակով Ֆաթալի խանը Քարթլի-Կախեթի թագավոր Հերակլ II-ին և Ղարաբաղի Իբրահիմ խանին առաջարկեց արշավել Շաքիի խանության դեմ: Սակայն այդ համաձայնությունը չկայացավ: Իր հերթին Շաքիի խանը օգնություն խնդրեց Հերակլ II-ից: Վերջինս պահանջեց, որ Ֆաթալի խանը հաշտվի Շաքիի խանի հետ և սպառնաց ռազմական օգնություն ցույց տալ Հուսեյն խանին:

Ղարաբաղի Իբրահիմ խանը նույնպես օգնություն խնդրեց Հերակլ II-ից ընդդեմ Ֆաթալի խանի: Այսպես ստեղծվեց Հերակլ II-ի, Հուսեյն խանի և Իբրահիմ խանի դաշինքը ընդդեմ Ֆաթալի խանի: Դաշնակիցները նպատակ ունեին վերականգնել Աղասի խանի իշխանությունը Շամախիում, նույնիսկ Ֆաթալի խանին նրա ենթարկվելու պայմանով: Հրաժարվելու դեպքում նրանք միացյալ ուժերով մտադիր էին Ղուբայի խանությանը զրկել իր նվաճած տարածքներից:

Ռուսաստանի կառավարությունը փորձեց սահմանափակել Հերակլ II-ի գործունեությունը հարավկովկասյան խաների միջև շարունակվող դիմակայությունում: Այնուամենայնիվ, 1770 թվականին Հերակլ II-ը բանակ ուղարկեց Ղարաբաղի Իբրահիմ խանի մոտ՝ Ֆաթալի խանի հարձակումը ետ մղելու համար:

Արդյունքում Ֆաթալի խանի արշավանքը դեպի Ղարաբաղ ավարտվեց անհաջողությամբ:

1773 թվականի նոյեմբեր-դեկտեմբեր ամիսներին ավարական խան Մուհամմադ-Նուցալ IV-ը Հուսեյն խանի և Աղասի խանի հետ միասին արշավեց դեպի Շամախի: Հերակլ թագավորն օգնեց ավարական խանին: Հերակլ II-ը Ֆաթալի խանի դեմ ուղարկեց Բորչալուի մուսուլման ղազախի ցեղերից բաղկացած մի ջոկատ, որպեսզի հնարավորինս չընդգծի իր անմիջական մասնակցությունը պատերազմին: Բայց դա աննկատ չմնաց ռուսական հետախուզության կողմից:

Միննույն ժամանակ, սխալ է Հերակլ II-ին անվանել դադստանցի առաջնորդների դաշնակից, որոնք միավորվել էին Ֆաթալի խանի դեմ 1774 թվականի ռազմական գործողությունների ժամանակ: Թագավորի մասնակցությունն այս ռազմարշավին չի հաստատվում ոչ մի աղբյուրով: