

“ships ready and their journey and voyage expedited be attended to with all briskness and speed, so that those labourers, whom Our beloved son, the Provincial of the Society in India, shall delegate on the instructions of his General to leave for Persia, may be helped by the advice of that same Viceroy and the Captain (-General at Hurmuz), so that as soon as they have embarked they make for Hurmuz and thence proceed straight into Persia, and so, as far as it should be allowed, safely, commodiously and quickly to the Court of the king himself for much indeed depends on speed. . . . But We have given instructions to Our venerable Brother, the Archbishop of Sipontium, Our Apostolic Nuncio, with respect to the very many letters of the same style to be written and sent to Us with all haste, then to deal with Your Majesty, as in a matter particularly dear to Ourselves. . . . Given at S. Peter’s, Rome, under the Fisherman’s Ring, the 4th day of September, in the Jubilee year 1600, the ninth year of Our Pontificate. . . .”

The Latin of Clement VIII’s reply to ‘Abbas I under the seal of the Fisherman’s Ring, 2.5.1601, is given in the appendix: here is an English version of it:<sup>1</sup>

“Clement the VIIIth, Pope, to the most puissant prince, the illustrious king of the Persians.

“Most puissant and illustrious king, greeting and acceptance with whole heart of the light of the divine grace offered by God,  
 “In these last days there have reached this dear city of Ours, ark of the Christian religion and port of the nations, those whom, as they themselves report, You have sent to Us, the nobleman Anthony Sherley and the distinguished Husain ‘Ali Baig, whose arrival was very pleasing to Us since they came to Us from so great a king, and a prince of such might and endowed, as We hear, with so many embellishments of mind and body, and from so far distant and remote regions, and brought to Us (as they themselves affirm)<sup>2</sup> Your most welcome letters, which We have received with singular delight, whilst on those, who handed them to Us in Your name, We have gazed with a joyful countenance, and We have welcomed them with all benignity and ordered that they should be treated with every courtesy by Our dependents—which they will be able to report to Your Highness much more copiously: and lastly We made a point of listening benevolently and attentively to those matters which they related to Us in Your name. For the like in affection We reciprocate to You, and just as You by Your letters and by word of mouth through Your envoys profess that You are seeking Our favour and friendship, so We in turn, with an equal sentiment of goodwill, make reply to You from out this Our friendliness and concord, as it were from some fountain, We perceive that great boons can flow abundantly, both for the benefit and glory of the whole Christian estate and for Your own and that of Your illustrious Crown—a fact of which You, of Your good sense, are not ignorant but very well understand (then too it is peculiar to the Divine power and wisdom) that just as from a small seed huge trees are produced, so too from trifling beginnings great things are brought to pass by it. For the ways of God are not like the ways of men, but He does whatsoever He wills in heaven and on earth; and it is much to be hoped that in the supreme goodness of God, if we shall only be willing to be of brave and lofty spirit, the time has come when the most monstrous tyrant of the Turks, whose insatiable lust for domination is confined by no limits, not only will be restrained, but completely conquered. Of this fact there are manifest evidences, since in the last years he has suffered great defeats at the hands of Christian princes on land and sea. For that reason so much the more Your most lofty spirit ought to be excited and inflamed against the most foul and arrogant enemy who has inflicted very serious injury and losses on You Yourself, and Your ancestors too: and We indeed deal with You as the Supreme

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Brev. Clementis VIII*, in Arm. XLIV (45), p. 105, No. 124.

<sup>2</sup> Note the apparent caution and doubt of the Pope as to the genuineness of the Letters of Credence presented: “Tuasque, quemadmodum ipsi affirmant”; perhaps there was a lack of orientalist able to read Persian at the Papal Court.