

For any historian to hide the mistakes of these Portuguese Fathers, as revealed in the reports to Rome here quoted, would be to cloak the truth and one reason why 'Abbas I changed his attitude towards Catholic missionaries, revoked his offer to the Pope.

Meanwhile, during the three and a half years ensuing between the departure of the first Carmelites from Rome in 1604 till their arrival in Persia at the end of 1607, much had happened in the respective military and political situations of Persia and Turkey. War had broken out again, for one thing: for another, the internal situation in Turkey was so disturbed as to put the Ottomans in an inferiority for the time being. In 1605 'Abbas I had attacked both in the Caucasus, i.e. Shirwan, and in Mesopotamia.

According to a letter from Constantinople of 10.6.1606:¹

"The Bustanji² Pasha has crossed to Brusa with his army including 12,000 Janissaries and 8,000 Spahis, in order to march against the Persians . . . it is even rumoured that the Sultan himself in person wants to go, but has remained out of fear lest some rising against him in Constantinople should occur, because before the departure of the said Bustanji Pasha every day there were big uproars and fighting among the Janissaries and Spahis, and many times the Janissaries refused to eat the rations the sovereign gives them . . . and the said Bustanji Pasha has received orders to take troops from every place where he goes, so that altogether it is reckoned that he will be able to engage men up to a total of 40,000. It is said that the Persians are excellently equipped.

"News from Constantinople, 22.6.1606: The rebels against the Sultan in Asia have once more defeated Nasuf Pasha, who with difficulty was able to escape with a few men, the rebels having 20,000 with them. In Persia reinforcements for the forces of the Turks are being constantly demanded, because the enemy is too strong. All the supplies sent are short and insufficient, whether for the Persian front, or for the Hungarian, or against the rebels in question.

"The king of Poland has taken the field with a very extensive army against the Tatars, about which the Sultan will have been informed.³

"Report from Constantinople, 3.12.1606: Asia is ruined to such an extent that all the Qazis have fled . . . and the Persians have captured all Shirwan with the exception of Demirkapu and Shamakha, which they have now besieged. Nasuf Pasha has gone off to recover Aleppo, as he was unable to enter Baghdad, where the rebel" (leader) "having died, the citizens masters of the city have chosen in his stead his son. . . ."⁴

A report by Francis Zaneti of 16.1.1607 spoke of:

"the disobedience of the soldiers of Sultan Ahmad I, who do as they please" . . . "the great risings throughout Asia which is in revolt. . . . Asia is full of rebels, apart from the Persians who by Divine providence have attacked three provinces, i.e. Mesopotamia, that of Tarsus, and the Kurdish chiefs, who have revolted against the Sultan, and gone over to the allegiance of the King of Persia."⁵

"Report from Pera (Constantinople), 24.1.1607: I have reported to you the (loss by) capture of all those strong places which this monarch" (i.e. the Sultan) "had on the frontiers towards Persia, which have been recovered by the Persian (king) in a short space of time, and which the Sultan had won in the space of 15 or 16 years. This winter will decide matters for this year."⁶

"From Constantinople, 8.2.1607: The Tatars promise to make peace with the Persians. It is said that the Persian (king) has taken Baghdad.

"From Constantinople, 9.2.1607: The rebels in Asia have sacked Smyrna."⁷

¹ Fondo Borghese, Ser. IV, p. 316.

³ Fondo Borghese, Ser. IV, p. 319.

⁶ *Idem*, p. 352.

² The Bustanji Bushi was the "Prefect", i.e. governor of Stambul.

⁴ *Idem*, p. 370.

⁵ *Idem*, p. 86.

⁷ *Idem*, p. 353.