

“as You would do to myself, seeing that he stands in our place and represents Our person. He similarly will inform Us by letters of events occurring and whatever Your Holiness may wish and desire, and We shall carry it out immediately We are apprised by Your hint. There is nothing further to say except only to wish You health and everlasting happiness.

“Given from the city of Isfahan in the month of Ramazan of the year of Muhammad 1016.”¹

There crossed this letter and messages from the Persian monarch to the Sovereign Pontiff on the subject of joint operations against the Turks two Papal Briefs, both dated 11.3.1608 (Arch. Vat. Arm. XLV, vol. 3, pages 163 and 168 (Nos. 424 and 425)), the one entrusted to Archbishop Matthew Erasmus of Nakhchiwan returning to his diocese, the other to a Spaniard, John of Avila: in each case the Pope encouraged 'Abbas I to continue to harass the Turks, referring to his previous Brief carried by the Carmelite Fathers. They said in fact:

“Illustrious and most puissant Shah 'Abbas, king of the Persians greeting and the light of Divine grace.

“By the opportunity of this venerable brother of Ours, Matthew Erasmus, Archbishop of the province of Nakhchiwan in Greater Armenia, who with Our blessing is returning to the flock given into his trust, We in accordance with the singular kindness with which We attend Your Highness were desirous to salute You with this letter of Ours in order to tell You of Our especial goodwill for You, of the eagerness and longing that holds Us to continue those offices of affection and regard with which Our predecessor of happy memory, Clement VIII, and You, most puissant king, mutually used to cherish Your friendship.

“Now this desire of Ours We have also sufficiently indicated from the start of Our Pontificate by other letters of Ours which We gave to be handed You to Our beloved sons, the Religious, servants of God, Paul Simon, John Thaddeus and Vincent, priests and brothers of the Carmelite Order, who at that time were by Our command pursuing their journey into Persia which they had begun at the bidding of Our predecessor.

“From this venerable brother of Ours, therefore, You will understand how great a debt We acknowledge to owe You on account of the kindness and benevolence with which You treat Our sons, the faithful of Christ, dwelling in Your far-flung realms, and how heartily We desire to be able in some degree to repay You an equal favour. Since We cannot do this in any other fashion, We beg for You from the Lord with the greatest affection of which We are capable that He give you true happiness.

“And, since We gather that the war You are waging against the most savage Ottoman tyrant is proceeding prosperously, We do not cease to beg Almighty God to strengthen and increase by the right hand of His power the might and bravery of Your soldiers, but on the other hand to crush and scatter the armed forces of Our mutual enemies; even as We likewise exhort Our dearest sons of the Christian kings to get ready themselves to march against him in Europe while You bravely and nobly keep the enemy tied in Asia. For trusting in God's mercy We hope that this will come to pass one day, especially if peace continue between Us and Your arms make successful advances. But more anon both concerning these matters and concerning Our regard for You will be told Your Highness by the same venerable brother Archbishop Matthew, whom We earnestly commend to You as Our brother and a faithful servant of God, and very fond of You and esteeming You, as likewise We commend to You with all the bowels of Our love the whole body of Our Christian sons who live in Your very broad and mighty kingdom, so that helped by Your kindness and favour they may be able to serve to greater advantage

¹ The first part of January 1608 fell within Ramazan 1016 A.H.: the Italian text is responsible for the changes from the first person singular to first person plural: 'Abbas' style (more in the plural form) is to be seen in his letter *re* Miranda quoted.