

Just a month later, 9.10.1609 (Arch. Vat. Arm. XLV, vol. 5, p. 57) the Pope wrote again to Shah 'Abbas I (as will be read in full further on), and mentioned that:

“Your Highness’s envoy, the respected and well-born 'Ali Quli Baig, had departed a few days previously,¹ when Our dear son, the gentle-born Robert Sherley the Englishman, “Your other envoy, reached Us.”

So that Sherley’s arrival in Rome must have taken place in the latter part of September 1609. Dated 24.3.1609 (Arm. XLV, vol. 4, p. 159) some six months before that arrival of the younger brother in Rome, there happened to have been issued a Brief in answer to a letter the Pope had received from the elder brother, Sir Anthony Sherley, who evidently from Spain, or wherever he then was, had written to Robert about the latter’s mission from Persia:

“We derived great comfort in the Lord from your letter, for We learnt in it what great mercy God had done to you not only in leading you out of the darkness of eternal death to the light of the life in Heaven, but also in converting that energy, with which previously you persecuted Holy Church, into zeal for the propagation of the Catholic religion. With gladness therefore We read what you have written to Us about your pious wish, and also what you have written at length to (your) brother about the conduct of the mission to Us and to Our most dear sons, the Emperor-elect and king of Spain, which the King of the Persians has entrusted to him. You have admonished him prudently indeed, and conscientiously. We, indeed, in everything which We can in the Lord, shall show favour to your brother and Our officials and those of this Holy See will attentively assist him in those matters which shall appertain to the glory of God and increase of the Christian Faith, and when he shall reach the City We shall receive him with the gladdest of hearts. But We exhort you, dear son, in gratitude and mind of the benefit you have received from God to strive daily more to win for yourself the Divine grace. . . . Our fatherly love indeed you have bound to yourself by the zeal, care and attention with which you strive to mend the ill-use made of your past life . . .”

According to the document in the Vatican Archives², Robert Sherley on 4.10.1609 dated the ‘note verbale’ or memorial which he laid before Pope Paul V, a document of all the greater interest because of the marginal notes, which are thought to be in the handwriting of the great Borghese Pope himself:

“HOLY FATHER,

“The ‘Grand Sufi’, king of Persia, my master, in the letter, which he has written to Your Holiness begs You to give credit to what I shall say to You in his name, and has ordered me to put in writing these paragraphs and heads, in order that the reply may be given point by point.

“1. The king of Persia has sent me to assure you of the regard and great affection he has for Your Holiness: and he has expressly bidden me to try to learn most precisely what Your Holiness desires of the king, my lord, who affirms himself to be devoted to You and ready in every matter that Your Holiness may command.

“2. He returns infinite thanks to Your Holiness for the fine offer and promise You have made to him through the intermediary of the Carmelite Fathers, to form a union of the Christian Princes at sea against the common enemy; and the king, my master, begs You to have it executed forthwith, in order that the Turk may not have the time to resist so unforeseen and irreparable an injury.

“3. And because the king of Persia is well informed that no sovereign can injure the

¹ Briefs dated 11.9.1609 (Arm. XLV, vol. 15 c) to the Bishop of Brescia, Duke of Bavaria, Archduke Maximilian warmly recommended 'Ali Quli Baig returning to Persia.

² Fondo Borghese, Ser. IV, 52, p. 338.