

“decided that it would not be suitable for him” (Fr. Vincent) “to leave without first paying his respects to the king (for whom, besides the duty of politeness by which he was bound on his return from Hurmuz to go and salute and notify him of his arrival, he was bringing letters from the Captain of Hurmuz and the brother of the king” (i.e. Shaikh) “of Hurmuz, and also to whom in any case he had to speak about the Shaikh there), it was resolved therefore that, as both grounds coincided in indicating it as necessary, Fr. Vincent should have a talk with the Shah as soon as might be.

“The latter, as already mentioned, had left to join his army some days previously and, since there was no news of his returning then, it was decided that Frs. Vincent and John (Thaddeus) should go off to the (encampment of the) army to find him, as in fact they did at a place called Lugdun [*sic*], some two days’ distance from Isfahan, for which place they took horse one day; but, learning on the road the second day that the Shah was coming back to Isfahan and already *en route*, they determined to turn back too to Isfahan, where two days afterwards they were able to speak to the king, whom they found in a garden of his, on Thursday 9.7.1609.

“The Shah was on horseback there, and, when the Fathers had done homage and kissed his hand according to the custom, and been greeted by him with a joyful countenance, Fr. John Thaddeus spoke, saying that Fr. Vincent, who months previously had gone to Hurmuz on the service of the Pontiff and his Majesty, having now got back had come to pay his respects and to bring to him letters from the Captain and the brother of the ‘king’ (i.e. Shaikh) “of that island. Fr. John handed these letters to the king, who took them and had them immediately read by his interpreter: afterwards the Father added that he intended to dispatch Fr. Vincent at once to Rome, and he had come to communicate this to his Majesty, so that, should he (‘Abbas I) have any business for Europe, Fr. Vincent would readily be able to be of service to him.

“In answer the Shah at once demanded to know which Father was to leave, and for what purpose: to which Fr. John replied that he himself was sending Fr. Vincent, and that they had received certain information as to the letters, which he had written to Europe, having been for the most part opened in Aleppo: and for that reason, as there (in Europe) they did not know of many matters which it much behoved them in the service of God and his Majesty fully to understand, he had determined to dispatch Fr. Vincent, who being well-informed would act as a living letter and would report everything to the Pontiff, and to the other Christian princes in minute detail. The king at once enquired who were the persons in Aleppo opening the letters: to this Fr. John returned that they were curious persons who out of an insatiable curiosity to know other people’s business and what his Majesty was doing in his country occupied themselves in doing this, and further that so little could one trust the individuals making the journey to and from Aleppo, that many of the letters entrusted to them had not passed through safely. Next the Shah asked what route Fr. Vincent would take and if he would go via Hurmuz, to which Fr. John replied that that way would not be to the interest of his Majesty, or suitable on account of its great length: the Shah assented to that, saying that it was true, but once more enquired the route which Fr. Vincent would take. Fr. John replied that he would go by whichever one his Majesty directed, and enquired whether the king had any commission for Europe, since the dispatch of Fr. Vincent would be forthwith. The Shah answered ‘good’, showing as if he wanted to think about it, and then asked what news they had of Europe.

“Fr. John rejoined that there was a good deal of news from Europe, but, since many falsehoods were written about affairs in those parts, not every item could be passed on to the king, to whom one ought to speak only after the truth of a matter had been learnt with all exactitude. After that the Shah enquired whether it were true that the Dutch had made peace with the king of Spain: Fr. John answered that he had so understood: the Shah however rejoined that he did not believe it, and that it was improbable, seeing that the ships of the Dutch continued in Indian waters to do such damage to the Portuguese, subjects of the king of Spain, and in that connection the king asked whether the Dutch