

“persons who began to shut their booths on account of the rioting. The governor got together and armed a large number of the citizens, in order to overawe everyone. He even removed from the fort, where the king’s treasury is, all the Georgian slaves, and placed there men from the city, so that there should be no revolt. Then he took Sām Mirza, who was to be king, and put him inside the haram, i.e. the place where the women are kept, setting reliable guards there. . . .”

In 1624¹ Fr. John Thaddeus had drawn up, by instructions from his superiors, a long report² on the “Mission of the Discalced Carmelites in Persia”: the eighth chapter of it contains an appraisal of Shah 'Abbas, then still alive, all the more deserving of attention, because it comes from a European of sober judgment, who had been *persona grata* with Persians and the Shah himself and living in close touch and frequent conversation with that sovereign for nearly twenty years. It is, moreover, both complementary to and amends the impressions he and his fellow-pioneer, Fr. Paul Simon, had recorded after their first few months in the country in 1608, already quoted:

“The king takes great pride in the nobility of his birth, saying that he is descended from Muhammad. . . . The Quran both Persians and Turks hold . . . but in the interpretation of it they differ and even wear different costumes—the Turks wearing white, the Persians red³ turbans.

“ . . . The king of Persia is 63 lunar years of age, but 60 in solar years. He dresses in Persian style, with simplicity, in a long robe: very rarely does he use gold brocade in his clothing unless he be wearing the crown and royal robes in all his majesty. On some of his festival days for the most part he wears red⁴ silk, with a scarlet tunic: in time of warfare red twill and cotton only,⁵ going poorly clad and wearing even rope shoes.

“He is of small stature, with large eyes and a straight nose, and rather fat. Some of his front teeth are missing. He goes with his head completely shaven, contrary to the custom of the Turks, who allow some few hairs to remain on the top of the head. He has very big moustaches and is of a dark complexion. . . . He is quite grey, has his face very burnt and bronzed by the sun (although they say that the skin of his body is white).

“He is bright-witted, martial, mercurial, strong, skilful, healthy, resolute, with a good memory, and sagacious in business.

“ . . . He has a very great number of slaves, artisans of all kinds by trade, who work for him. He greatly dislikes lazy people and vagabonds, but particularly beggars. He takes great pleasure in horses. He is very clear-sighted, and it is sufficient when discussing business to drop a hint for him to understand everything; and he penetrates to the smallest niceties. He often makes use of stratagems and strange devices in time of war.

“In countenance he is jolly when in a good mood; but when angry he outdoes the raging of lions. According to the opinions of his astrologers he will shortly die.

“The king has always been most fortunate in his undertakings, because not only has he subjugated those who had rebelled against his father, and caused his feudatories to pay the tribute they had previously refused to pay, but he has taken away from the Turks

¹ He refers in his letter of 26.7.1625 from Shiraz to it:

“Of the great report (on our Mission) another copy is being made for the Visitor also to take away. I have also sent a report on the martyrs with three prints of their history. The account, which was printed there, has many striking mistakes. . . .” ² It is to be found in *S.R.*, vol. 209.

³ and ⁴ In the twentieth century (i.e. before the War of 1914) the wearing of red clothing and turbans by grown men, Shiahs, in Persia was taboo, almost to the degree of a religious prescription: the Jews on the Persian Gulf had a distinctive dark red turban, however.

⁵ See the portrait. As regards the painter, Bishndas, the translation of the *Memoirs of (the Mogul Emperor) Jahangir*, by Rogers & Beveridge, vol. II, p. 107, 1909, gives in the Emperor Jahangir’s own words:

“At the time I sent Khan Alam to Persia I had sent with him a painter of the name of Bishan Das, who was unequalled in his age for taking likenesses, to take the portraits of the Shah and the chief men of that State and bring them. He . . . especially had taken that of the Shah my brother exceedingly well.”

Khan Alam was the chief envoy sent in 1613. The painter was rewarded by the Emperor after his return with an elephant!