

“maintained with the deceased Shah. He gave me back the letter of the Pope for it to be translated into Persian. After a few days we returned again to the king with the translation of the letter, to which he listened, afterwards causing us to be informed by word of mouth of his chief secretary that we should be of good cheer, that we should receive greater favours and kindness than those in the past, and that he would also send a reply to His Holiness. On this occasion he kept us in conversation for about an hour, we sitting in front of the king, while he was all the time looking at us with a kindly eye.

“After some days we presented to the king two petitions, the one for a confirmation of” (the tenure) “of the church and houses we have, and of the burial-ground assigned to us many years ago by the Wazir, the other that our Religious might freely go and come in these parts of Persia. Both these were granted to us in more ample form than the deceased Shah had given them.

“On account of the great concourse of people that has gathered and is still collecting daily in Isfahan, there has been and continues to be a great scarcity of foodstuffs. In order to house the people coming it has been necessary for some—even of the magnates of the city—to leave their own houses and go and reside in houses not so commodious. It is our Lord’s doing alone which has preserved the two churches, those of the Augustinian Fathers and our own, intact from being profaned.

“*The king has shown himself kindly to all Christians*—familiar even with the Armenians: he has gone many times to the houses of Khwajeh Nazar and other leading men of Julfa to eat in their houses. It is true that they have made and continue to make him substantial gifts of money, and of other things.

“When the king was made Shah he was about 19¹ years of age: of fair height, and dignified presence: his face long, with large eyes, and he is somewhat pitted with smallpox on the face which gives him a certain look: he is rather white in complexion and gives many signs that he should succeed and rule with benignity and prudence. . . .

“ . . . The king is leaving Isfahan, and his chief governor, or ‘duke’, called Rustam Khan, when we visited him (as he is also going with the Shah) has left us a ‘farman’ to the effect that his officers should give and grant the Fathers whatever they may ask: in these affairs of ours with the Shah it is he who has been our protector. . . .”

Another letter² of the same date, 18.9.1629, but addressed to Fr. John Thaddeus in Rome, signed by both Frs. Dimas and Balthazar, but in Spanish and in the latter’s handwriting, adds to the information:

“ . . . All the princes and governors in the kingdom came to do homage to, and congratulate the new king. Imam Quli Khan has been here some months and recently he left for Shiraz; although we believe that he should return soon to the king, because by command of the deceased monarch, Shah ’Abbas, he is to manage the government as councillor to the new king for some years. The king for some days has been living in tents outside Isfahan: they have brought the news to us that he is going to Farrahabad. Among the particular confidants of the new king is Khusru Mirza, the former Daruga of Isfahan. They have changed his name, and call him Rustam Khan—it has been conferred on him by the new Shah, because of the tranquillity and high ability with which he governed this city at such a critical time: and it was he who first placed the new sovereign on the throne. The said Khan left today in company with the Shah. . . .”

¹ In a postscript of 1629 to his ‘Report on the Mission of the Carmelites in Persia’, 1624 (*S.R.*, vol. 209), Fr. John Thaddeus stated that Shah Safi was eighteen years of age. He added the curious detail:

“This king has not yet been circumcised; and, when the notables pressed him to be, he made excuses, saying that he was too old and could not bear such great pain.

“He comes of Christian stock, because his grandmother was a Christian, and it is understood that he wants to take to wife the daughter of the king of Georgia . . . the greater part of his armed forces, though renegades, are Georgians and well inclined towards the Christian religion, many of them having in secret been reconciled to it, and practise it. . . .”

² Fr. Dimas, O.C.D. 237 b.