

in Vatican archives: for the sake of the calligraphy and the brocade purse and seal some dilettante in oriental tongues may have obtained it from the Pope. But there does exist a three-paged Latin purport of it, mentioned by Fr. Epiphanius, in the archives of the Sacra Congregation: and with it also Latin versions—again unfortunately no Persian copies—of the two ‘Farmans’, granted by Shah Safi as reported by Fr. Dimas in his letter of 18.9.1629, the one for the Carmelite Fathers to be allowed freely to come and go in Persia, dated 19.3.1629, i.e. Rajab 1038 A.H., the other of the same date renewing the tenure of the two houses and the graveyard, previously granted by Shah ‘Abbas.<sup>1</sup> Of the latter a re-translation will be found in the other section of this work, dealing with the separate Residences at Isfahan, etc.: and here allusion will only be made to references in it to the former ‘farman’ of Jamadi II, 1027 A.H. (A.D. 1617), ordering the Daruga of Isfahan to provide the ‘Frank’ Fathers with two houses adjacent to one another: to the fresh orders by Shah Safi to the then Daruga to confirm the assignment of the abode to the Discalced Carmelite Fathers

“appertaining to the Majesty of the Pope of Rome, so that they shall now too continue to dwell therein and perform Divine worship, according to their own religion, law and customs, not suffer any violence or oppression or be disturbed by anyone: and that in the *burial-ground near the Armenian cemeteries*, where up till now they have buried their dead, they may likewise still continue to bury them. . . .”

The ‘Instructions’ of the Definitory General in Rome to the Visitor General, 6.1.1630,<sup>2</sup> directed that an effort should be made to retain the place granted for burying their dead, and permitted that such Catholic Christians as wished might be buried therein by the Carmelites, and that the place should remain uncultivated; but, whether the Armenians at that time possessed a burial-ground near Isfahan city or the now extensive Christian cemetery near Julfa is intended, there is no means of judging from the documents inspected.

Having begun with a rebellion in Gilan, a province which had enjoyed virtual autonomy till Shah ‘Abbas annexed it, the new reign was hardly less constantly marked by warfare than the last. In 1630 there was not only famine in Persia, but there materialized that attack of the Turkish forces, which Fr. Dominic of Christ in his letter of 6.12.1628 had reported as already gathering with the design of recapturing Baghdad. Before making the principal movement the Turks flooded Persia with raiding detachments and by bribing the Persian commander occupied the important town of Hamadan, only six days’ march from Isfahan. The youthful Shah was unable to raise an army large enough to resist such a widespread invasion. In his *Voyages d’Orient*, Fr. Philip of the Most Holy Trinity, in Persia at that juncture,<sup>3</sup> stated:

“It is true that this” (i.e. the capture of Hamadan) “was recognized as due to the treason and treachery of the general of the Persian army, Zain-ul-Abidin Khan: and the Shah, coming to know that Hamadan had been pillaged and almost levelled to the ground, threw himself on his general and killed him with his own hand by a blow from an axe. There is little doubt but that, if the Turkish army had invested Isfahan at this moment, when all was confusion and many had camels ready to escape, they could easily have taken it. But, instead, they lacked the boldness and went on to besiege Baghdad (the walls of which had been almost all broken down), and after 40 days lack of provisions caused the Turkish army to withdraw and raise the siege.”<sup>4</sup>

In his work Fr. Philip refers to the standard Persian method of warfare with the Turks,

<sup>1</sup> S.R., vol. 115 (VI), p. 372, ‘Lettere di Levante’.

<sup>2</sup> O.C.D. 284 g.

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Philip had arrived in Isfahan, 19.8.1629: he left it, 19.5.1630: on pp. 39–40 he wrote:

“Nine months after my arrival in Persia I received orders to leave. At the same time the Grand Signor, desiring to recover the country of Babylon from the Persians, sent a great army . . .,” i.e. the Turkish invasion and advance to Hamadan was about May 1630. He repeats: “It is then very clear, as I have already stated, that it was only because of the perfidy and treason of the general of the Persians that the army of the Turks advanced this time up to Hamadan.”

<sup>4</sup> *Voyages d’Orient*, chez Antoine Jullieron, Place du Confort, Lyon, 1669.