

It was in these circumstances that, 30.1.1646, Pope Innocent X (Pamfili) appealed for solidarity to Shah 'Abbas II:

"Illustrious and most puissant king, greeting and the light of Divine grace. The fame of the warlike ability of Your Highness being spread far and wide over the world, even as it has not only gained for your royal name the highest esteem in the regard of all men, so does it also give a firm promise that very frequent victories will be gained by You. Certainly, however, You who provide Your realms and fortify them with those defences, with which not only the invasions of enemies are repulsed, but their forces and boldness are completely broken by the weapons set in motion against them, will be able now to effect this much more seasonably against the Tyrant of the Turks, the most implacable enemy of the whole universe and in particular of Your royal House. He indeed, with whom it is the wonted practice to break his plighted word to kings and princes, as it shall have pleased him, and to keep it with one just so long as he is waging war and inflicting injury on the other, only to return soon afterwards to his faithlessness, has lately broken the peace and, in no wise provoked thereto by hurt done him, with a vast fleet making an attack on the famous Republic of Venice and, greedy for the land of Crete which is in their possession, has unexpectedly assaulted and occupied the town of Canea, exerting himself to successively greater acts of ruination for the common bane.

"Therefore, while the Christian princes have enough to do in opposing exceeding strenuously their forces to his nefarious attempts, it will be an extremely prudent plan for Your Highness, having got together a powerful army, to commence hostilities against his border territories.

"With them there will be repaired by You the losses inflicted on the Persian sceptre in the past, and those" (places) "which he himself had unjustly seized will be in time recovered. Certainly less of the forces, however huge they might be, which he will see occupied with battling against the Christians and presently, as We hope, with the kindly aid of God cut up and overthrown, will be able to be transferred by him to that" (i.e. the Persian) "front for offering a resistance.

"To do this We on Our part, watchful aforehand for the public weal with Our care and solicitude as Pontiff, ardently exhort thereto Your Highness, the exceptional strength of whose empire and notable might upheld by so many troops of most warlike races and everywhere fruitful in victories and greatly to be feared by its enemies themselves, once now military operations are begun, will both gain for itself marvellous fame in the eyes of all and the greatest advantage and security for its territories.

"For it is not hid from You what great dangers the Tyrant of the Turks can create for those same territories if—and may the goodness of God forbid it—he grow more proud and more daring by the overthrow of the Christians. Meanwhile We continue to desire Our efforts to stand out with greater predilection for the policy and advantage of Your Highness: and We most earnestly beseech of Almighty God, Who gives fortitude to kings, an increase of strength for You and happiness of years against the most detestable common enemy. He who will bring You these letters and in whom We desire You to have entire confidence will in Our name explain very many things relative to this matter to Your Highness.

"Given at S. Peter's, 30th January 1646 in the second year of Our Pontificate."¹

When petitioning the Sac. Congregation in 1649 regarding his own necessitous circumstances Fr. Ferdinand Gioerida (nephew by marriage of Pietro della Valle and already cited in this work as having accompanied Bishop Bernard of Baghdad to Isfahan and then returning to Rome in 1642 for his interrupted studies) reminded them that:

¹ Arch. Secr. Vat., *Epist. ad Princ.*, vol. 25, p. 19. There was another Brief, dated 31.8.1647, [to Shah 'Abbas II, also inciting him to hostilities with the Turks: *Epist. ad Princ.*, vol. 55, p. 396 (also Arm. XLV, vol. 29, p. 250, for which also see the appendix).