

From these lights on Shah Sulaiman's character and the persecution of non-Muslims during his reign it is time to turn to his foreign 'policy' (if so it may be termed) or that of his chief Wazirs, and to the position beyond the frontiers affecting the Carmelite and other missions. Firstly, as to the Turks, seeing that once more for Catholic Europe the Turkish question became fraught with anxiety, Muhammad IV was in the midst of his forty-year long, militant sultanate: most of Crete had been occupied by a Turkish force for years (since Canea had been seized in 1644), but the Venetians had defended Candia for 25 years when it at last fell, 'attacked by sea, by land and underground', in September 1669: and before that rueful day Pope Clement IX had written to Shah Sulaiman, 9.6.1668,¹ to announce the peace concluded between the sovereigns of Europe and the hope that the town of Candia in Crete and the whole island would now be delivered from the hands of the Turks in the following terms:

"Pope Clement to the illustrious and most puissant king of the Persians greeting and the
"light of Divine grace.

"We lately gave Our venerable Brother Matthew, Archbishop of Nakhchiwan, a letter
"for Your Highness. But it has indeed happened conveniently that before he departed
"tidings were brought to Us about the peace between the most puissant kings of Christen-
"dom which has been entirely completed and published. For, even as We trust that from
"it (with God's mercy vouchsafing it) not only the town of Candia will be liberated from
"the unjust assaults of the common foe, but also that by the influx from all quarters of strong
"relieving forces from the Christian princes the whole of that island will be snatched out
"of his grasp, so too We desyre therein an occasion ready to hand for Your renown (which
"We do indeed ardently favour). By turning Your arms against him that quality will
"reveal itself more and more notably, and to the praises of justice and distinguished bravery
"it will bring aid to Your best friends, and at the same time the losses inflicted on it by the
"very hostile foe will be avenged.

"Since of a certainty on the one hand at present the universal Christian commonwealth
"is at concord in a general peace (which for long past has never occurred elsewhere) and
"on the other even this very example set by the Venetians (who almost alone have been
"strong enough for so long to endure and repel all the forces and attempts of the Turks)
"sets before one's eyes that their strength, however huge that may seem, still at this juncture
"is undoubtedly not so to be feared. Yet should it happen, which God forbend, that this
"monstrous enemy get possession of the bulwark of Candia, it would be to be feared that
"he would then turn against You and Yours all that perpetual and insatiable hunger of his
"for devouring everything, increased as it would be by fresh successes and strength.

"Therefore whether for Our own sake or for Your Highness' also, We wished to write
"this second letter to You and (as We do with all Our heart) particularly to beg that You
"will in no wise suffer to slip out of Your hands so great an opportunity as this of curbing
"a most savage foe and of recovering from him what had been so unjustly seized by him,
"as also of spreading still more the invincible valour and celebrated renown of the Persians,
"according as the same Archbishop will in Your presence explain more extensively, in
"whose words You will kindly have full confidence just as if they had been Ours.

"For the rest We greatly desire that with a very kindly and willing spirit You will accept
"and recognize in a small gift a huge proof of Our especial affection and esteem for such a
"great king. . . . Given at S. Mary Major, Rome, under the Fisherman's ring, the 9th
"day of June 1668, in the first year of Our pontificate."

The whereabouts at Rome of Shah Sulaiman's answer (if it was preserved) are not indicated: that it was dispatched is evident from an allusion in a letter of the Prior of the Carmelites at Isfahan, 5.7.1670:²

"Fr. Antonio, companion of Monsignor Matthew, Archbishop of Nakhchiwan, is leaving

¹ Arch. Secr. Vat. *Epist. ad Princ.*, No. 67, p. 718.

² Fr. Angelus of S. Joseph, O.C.D. 236