

So easily influenced to display zeal as a Muslim ruler, it is not surprising to find him making pilgrimages—but on a vast scale! Fr. du Cerceau's book speaks of one

“which not only completely drained his exchequer, but also ruined all the provinces through which he passed . . . to Mashhad, which is above 200 leagues from Isfahan, attended by all the women of his ‘Haram’ and followed by a train of 60,000 men. . . .”

The Dominican Fr. Peter Martyr from Parma, writing from Julfa, 30.10.1706, gave the description of another:¹

“On the 28th August” (1706) “the king at last came out of his palace in the city, and left the city with all pomp and magnificence and a most numerous retinue of soldiers and officials, as also of all the nobles of the Court, and with all the requisites for a long journey, being determined to visit various places in his kingdom, in particular the tombs of his father and his ancestors, which are in the town of Qum between Isfahan and Tabriz and to gird on the sword (a ceremony wont to be performed by these kings only there), and then to pass on elsewhere. He quitted the city and, after having remained for several days in certain of his gardens in the neighbourhood, on 23.9.1706 he departed to about ‘three leagues’ distance and then with his people and pavilions taking up as much (from what I have heard from an eye-witness) as another two leagues of countryside, planting wherever he halts a large movable town altogether composed of tents. (It is true that, having himself fallen ill and many of his people as well, of whom not a few died, among whom his grandmother of very advanced age who travelled with him, determined that she too would go to visit the tomb of her son, king Sulaiman, it wanted little for him to turn back, but later he plucked up courage and continued on his way slowly. . . .”)

“It is the custom in Persia,” so runs the account in the *Krusinski Memoirs*; “that, when the king removes from Isfahan along with the ladies of his ‘Haram’ to any of his pleasure-houses, a proclamation is made three days beforehand of the hour in which he intends to go abroad and the streets through which he is to pass. This proclamation is called the *Kuruk*: and it is to forbid every man from staying in the houses that look into the streets, through which the king is to pass, or in the country for two leagues round. . . . The law, which banished men from all places through which the king passed . . . did also keep off his own guard: he could have no other but his eunuchs, who surrounded the whole troops with guns and swords . . . not to mention those that were employed either to search the houses by which they passed to see if no man lay hid there, or to scour the country, in order to put to the sword any they found within the limits prohibited by the *Kuruk*. . . .”

The Carmelite Lay Brother, Francis Mary of S. Sirus, in his MSS. *Vita P. F. Elia a S. Alberto*² provides confirmation of this death penalty. When on their way back from Hamadan to Isfahan in July 1695 Bishop Pidou of Baghdad and Fr. Elias were

“approaching Isfahan they could not enter because the Shah had ordered a *Kuruk*, when no one is allowed to pass (for 24 hours or two or three days) on pain of his life: when the Shah leaves the palace with his concubines, passing from one garden to another, for several leagues round anyone found on the road has inexorably to be killed by the eunuchs and soldiers of the guard. So for three days they had to remain in the tent on the banks of a stream. . . .”

So, too, 19.11.1700³ Bishop Pidou wrote:

¹ S.R., vol. 559, pp. 549-50.

² O.C.D. 320 e.

³ S.N.R., II, p. 380.