

“—either that the king (of Persia) will fix in advance one year out of the next two or three, in which he pledges himself to renew the war, so that immediately His Holiness learnt by letters, or his men, that he (the Shah) is really set on doing it, he (the Pope) would procure the Turk being harassed by sea and by land, and would send into Persia all the assistance he could from every side—or else if his Highness did not wish to bind himself to that, he might limit himself to promising on his royal honour that, when the Turk moved either by sea or by land against the Christians in Europe, he (the Shah) would be disposed and ready to open hostilities in Asia. For, should he (the Shah) have given a binding promise for that, if the case arose, men would be dispatched with money, so that by means of this financial aid, which (as we shall state lower down) he will be able in each of the said two alternatives to have first received, he will know how to wage war with greater success than he is doing today, or any Asiatic king or prince has done in the past from the time of Timur-i-lang onwards.

“Should this prince condescend to make a list on paper, either in the one way or the other (seeing that to two heads are principally restricted all those things of which he might have need for the war against the Turk, i.e. money and offensive weapons such as artillery, arquebuses, and the men to serve and to make such-like arms), negotiations with him will have to be conducted in the manner specified below:

“As to money, it will be needful to see what he asks, because His Holiness would be confident of being able to find up to the sum of 100,000 sultanini yearly so long as he” (i.e. the Shah) “were making war; but from 100,000 upwards it would be necessary to go with caution. It is very true that, should the king promise to make war whenever the Turks should be about to open hostilities against the Christians, or have already done so, he could in such case be promised up to 150,000 scudi, and something over. Everything, however, that matters lies in disposing him to utilize this opportunity, and in gauging well how far capital can be made of his promises. And to conclude this section which concerns finance, it would be needful to ascertain whether he wants the money in ingots, or in Portuguese ducats, or in Turkish ducats. Above all else, there would be need to discuss the manner in which it should be dispatched and, in order that you may be able the more to facilitate the business, give notice that His Holiness will always be able to deliver the money in Muscovy within four months.

“Therefore, if the king has a good understanding and safe communications, even in time of war, with the Muscovite, you will perhaps find that the money can be speedily and safely delivered by that route. As for the artillery and arquebuses, should he want” (them) “in that too he will be made happy up to a limit of 2,000 arquebuses, and up to 5,000 or 6,000 hand-arquebuses, and up to 15 or 20 pieces of field artillery, provided he indicate the route by which they can be sent.

“Promises, however, are not to be made to him as absolutely certain, unless and until he make a return in one of three courses, i.e. either to continue the war already begun, or speedily to initiate a new one, or to harass the common enemy in Asia immediately he” (i.e. the Turk) “starts to harass the Christians by sea or by land.

“In the event of the king of Persia going on to speak of the union of Christians against the Turk, and showing that he considered it necessary and was desirous of it, the answer should be given him that to do this there was no easier method than the continuance of the war by Persia, and that, His Holiness having the intention of uniting Christendom against the Turk, in order to carry this out it was of moment that the king should have the means of continuing the war in Asia: and he” (the Pope) “was with good reason sending to know everything of which he” (the king) “might have need, and to offer him the help.

“Should it be the will of God that the king take this embassy in good part and wish to have sure and continual intercourse with the Christians in Europe (whence it may be deemed of great advantage to have prompt aid, whether in money or in offensive weapons, as specified above), you might be able to induce him to send with you someone who would