

letters of State performed with small sense of responsibility. The Mihmandar assigned to provide for the journey and supplies as far as the frontier extorted much from the villagers on the way, who complained to the Bishop and obtained some restitution through him. On 7.11.1699 the party reached Shamakha, where they had to remain the whole winter, as they found the passes to the Caspian blocked by snow—the route for that time of year had been ill chosen. They left Shamakha, 10.5.1700, to reach, 28.6.1700, Astrakhan, where they were well received by a Boyar. Having set out by the Volga, 26.7.1700, they came to Moscow, 20.9.1700, only to find the Czar Peter the Great away on a campaign against the king of Sweden.¹ In his Memorial to the Doge and Senate of Venice² Bishop Elias of S. Albert tells the sequel:

“When I arrived in Moscow after our looted advance-courier had been sent onwards, Prince Boris Galitzin, who was governing with absolute authority in the absence of the Czar, who had gone to besiege Narva, sent to summon me: and he demanded of me the letter from the Shah of Persia for the Czar, saying that he had instructions to take and send a translation of it to the Czar. I was obliged to rely on his word, but I pointed out that apart from the contents of the letter I had to make some verbal communications to his Majesty. I repeated this in a memorial after I had stayed there three months: and this prince, who for the rest is a great enemy of the Catholic religion and Religious, took this as all the greater reason for his anger, as also that I refused to send for him to see the other letters from the Shah of Persia for the other Christian sovereigns mentioned, which had been given into my charge, as I feared that he would detain and withhold them, as he had done with those sent by the advance courier.

“Venting his fury he sent to put me under arrest together with all my attendants, placing a military guard at the gate of the lodging which they had given me in the house for ambassadors. That, however, did not last more than four days, after which he had the guards taken off and the arrest ceased. But, when the Czar was on his way back from Narva, preventing me from having access to him, in the course of which there might have been revealed (to the Czar) what he—Prince Galitzin—wanted to keep hidden through the interception of those letters and to what extent he was involving the Czar with the king of Persia and with the other allied princes by this, he sent me away with orders to quit Moscow immediately, that same day, without any of the usual compensation for the expenses incurred by me during the six months since my arrival in Moscow. On the contrary, at my own expense he had me and all my companions conducted to Kiev, a journey of more than two months (whereas by way of Lithuania one could have reached Warsaw in fifteen days) on the pretext that the latter route was disturbed by civil warfare; but he did this the rather to prevent me from denouncing the sooner in Poland and elsewhere what we had seen and experienced in Moscow. (But before our arrival in Vienna the Emperor had learnt from our advance courier, on the latter reaching there, of the letters for him having been seized and had complained to the Czar, asking for them to be sent on: he received no other satisfaction, however, than a brazen-faced denial of the fact “by Prince Boris). . . .”

The *Vita P. F. Elia a S. Alberto*, however, affirms that Shahnawaz Khan, brother of Gurji Khan the Georgian prince who for five years had been warring against Shah Sultan Husain's forces (and of whom more will be heard in this book), was at that time at Moscow and in favour with the Czar: well inclined towards Bishop Elias he obtained permission for the latter and his party to leave. It was then 24.1.1701: and they reached Kiev, 15.2.1701,³ Leopoli in Poland where they had an audience of king Augustus, 18.3.1701.⁴ Then by way of Przemysl

¹ This itinerary is from *Vita P. F. Elia . . .* by Lay Brother Francis Mary, O.C.D. 320 e. ² *S.R.*, II, p. 414.

³ Since it was 20.9.1700 that they had arrived in Moscow, Bishop Elias' "six months" in Moscow in his above account was an exaggeration, as also that the journey from Moscow to Kiev was "two months", since he got to Kiev in 22 days.

⁴ *S.R.*, vol. 538, p. 464, cites two letters, 13.4.1701 and 20.5.1701, from the Nuncio at Warsaw in which he reported the arrival at Leopoli of Mgr Elias. It adds: "rumour having spread that he had been put under arrest in Moscow, the Sac. Congregation had written letters to that Nuncio and to the one in Vienna to obtain his liberation."