

Three letters regarding Fr. Simon's mission are on record in the Vatican archives,¹ in Portuguese, Italian and Latin respectively.

On 20.10.1582 he wrote from Kashan to king Philip II that a few days before his arrival there had also reached Kashan an Armenian messenger, dispatched years before by the viceroy of Naples, Don Iñigo Lopez de Mendoza, in order to get news of Persia: and this man had offered a present to Shah Muhammad Khudabandeh so well received that it was decided by the Persian Court to send a present in return. The fleet had, however, already sailed for Portugal when the messenger came to Goa with that present, and the captain of Hurmuz, Francisco Mascarenhas, had requested him to turn back to Persia in company with Fr. Simon of the Conception, by whom from Kashan he was sent on with king Philip's letter to the Shah, who had then gone off to Khurasan, thirty days' journey distant. In a narrative appended the messenger in question, "a dweller in Hurmuz, vassal of his Majesty", gave a list of the presents sent by the viceroy to the Shah. At that time the Khan of Hurmuz, "vassal of His Majesty" (i.e. of Spain and Portugal) had died, his heiress being his sister, married to the Khan of Lar: and the latter proceeded to occupy several places round Hurmuz on the mainland, including Shamil, but had been defeated by the Portuguese. Fr. Simon had informed the writer that the *Shah desired king Philip would take hostile action against the Turks*. Tiflis, which had a Christian king, who paid tribute to the Shah, and had a daughter married to the son of the Shah (i.e. the future Shah 'Abbas), four years previously (1578) had been taken by the Turks.² A strong relief expedition had been sent by the Shah, and with the Georgians had cleared the country of the enemy, capturing 62 loads of coin and killing many.

In the letter to Pope Gregory XIII,³ also dated 20.10.1582 from Kashan, Fr. Simon of the Conception wrote:

"Be it known to Your Holiness that not long ago I was sent by the viceroy of the said province as an envoy or bearer of the letters which the Catholic king wrote to Shah Muhammad,⁴ emperor of the Persians, regarding a pact to be concluded between them against the common enemy of the Christian name. By God's will I have reached this town of Kashan, situated in the middle of Persia, where I have settled to winter, as I have learnt that the aforesaid emperor, the Shah, has left for a district very far off, and is like to remain there a very long time. After the report of my arrival in the town had been bruited, there soon came to me Joseph, a Jew by race speaking Spanish, who having often filled the office of letter-carrier to the kings of Portugal had arranged to make a journey to Europe.

"So at once I determined to write these present letters to inform Your Holiness that Shah Muhammad, the emperor of the Persians, has it in mind in no wise to slacken his warfare against the Turk, nor to arrange peace with him, and all the more so if he can know for certain that the sovereigns of Christendom will do the like, with regard to which he sent to the Catholic king an envoy, who on reaching Goa was unable to sail for Portugal, as he found all the cargo ships had already left for that country. . . ."

Evidence of further overtures to Persia during the pontificate of Sixtus V (24.5.1585 to 27.8.1590) has not been observed in the course of preparing the present compilation—that great pope directed his efforts to a rehabilitation of the influence of the Papacy in the councils of Europe, and the attack of the Spanish Armada on England was prepared and occurred in his time—nor in the brief reigns of the three next occupants of the Holy See. But with Clement VIII (30.1.1592 to 5.3.1605) relations became reciprocally active—Shah 'Abbas I was already settled on his throne: no less than twelve Briefs are catalogued as dealing with Persian affairs between 1600 and 1605. More detailed reference to some of those Briefs will be needed in due course.

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¹ *Vide* Misc. Arm. II, 117, pp. 130, 142 and 154, in Vat. Arch.

⁴ In Latin dative "scripsit *Xio Mahmetano*": "Caixao" = Kashan.

² *Idem*, p. 154.

³ See p. 76.