

“We pray the Divine Providence, Most Holy Father, to preserve for long a Pope so
“worthy to govern his Church,

“Written at Fontainebleau 25th September 1714,

“Your devoted Son, the king of France and Navarre, Louis.”

There had been a native Persian envoy in France, during the last years of the ‘Grand Monarque’, and of his exploits an interesting contemporary account has been published: the French cardinal de la Trémoille had asked for the release of the Georgian prince, Vaqtan or Vactanga: in reciprocity it had been decided to dispatch as resident consul in Isfahan a civilian and secular: while a letter of that Monsieur l’Abbé Richard of the Seminary for Foreign Missions, whose name has already been cited as having been a short while in Persia, 26.12.1715, speaks¹ of:

“ . . . Monseigneur the Duke of Orleans” (i.e. the Regent) “being favourably disposed . . .
“he has confirmed in the appointment as consul for the whole of Persia Monsieur Gardanne
“de Sainte Croix, and caused him to set out a few days ago. . . .”

Of this successor to Bishop Pidou as consul for France a glimpse is given in the diary of the Residence of the Carmelites at Aleppo² for 1716, which sheds light on conditions under which European trading communities worked in Turkish towns during those years of strained relations in Europe: for, after Charles XII of Sweden had been vanquished at Poltava and sought refuge in Turkey, in 1711 the Turks had marched into Moldavia to meet the troops of Peter the Great, and they compelled the Czar to surrender with all his army on the right bank of the Pruth, with the result that Azof had to be relinquished: in 1715 Daud ‘Ali Pasha won back the Morea from the Venetians: in the following year, viz. 1717, Prince Eugene laid siege to Belgrade:³

“Towards the end of this year” (1716) “there arrived here” (i.e. in Aleppo) “Monsieur
“de Gardanne with his brother and four other persons in his service. This gentleman was
“being sent to Persia by the king of France with the style of an ‘ambassador’, and orders
“to remain there afterwards as ‘Resident’ or ‘Agent’ of the French Company, which was to
“be established there: and he had instructions from the Court not to disclose to anyone
“where he was going or why he was going, the conviction being that it was possible by
“means of secrecy to pass with safety through the Turkish dominions without being stopped
“or molested as had occurred on other occasions with such personages.

“After stopping for two months in Aleppo he pretended that he was going to stay with
“his suite in a garden” (i.e. outside the town) “where he remained for some time, occupying
“himself in the chase and other recreations, meantime providing his party with clothes
“after the costume of the country, good horses, and men accustomed to the journey he
“was going to make. At last one night, everything necessary having been got ready, he
“left suddenly with all his suite and a Capuchin Lay Brother, who was also going to Persia.
“When the news of this spread later among the ‘Franks’ they all praised his method of
“procedure as being that of a prudent man. But all that device and cunning availed them
“nothing, because such a flight becoming immediately known some of the notables of the

¹ S.R., vol. 603, p. 344.

² *Études Carmelitaines*, January–June 1925, p. 162.

³ In his Brief of 10.10.1722 (*Epist. ad Princ.*, vol. 99, p. 98 *et seq.*) Pope Innocent XIII sounded the tocsin of alarm over Malta to the Emperor, to the kings of France, Spain and Poland, to the Republic of Venice, Genoa and the Swiss Cantons:

“ . . . super speculum Domini sumus et super custodiam Nostram ut, cum viderimus gladium venientem, buccina
“insonemus et excitemus robustos et bellatores ut aemulatores sint legis, et exurgant in proelium pro domo Dei. Cum
“igitur grave bellum ab immanitate Turcarum Christiano populo instare luculentis indicibus conjiciamus ac jure vereamur
“ne primo tempore terras et insulas Christianorum invadere ac Melitensibus potissimum de Christiano nomine optime
“meritis obsidionem incursionemque moliantur, Christianorum principum subsidium operamque paterna sollicitudine
“requirimus, ne videamus factam in conculcationem et sponsam Christi in luctum et humilitatem. Armis enim et
“potentia quibus eos ornavit et instruxit Princeps regum terrae septam esse voluit vineam Suam ne fieret hostibus in
“dirptionem. . . .”