

India Company on 8.9.1733, as mentioned in the footnotes, and confirmed not only by *Chron. Basra* as quoted just above but also in a letter of the Carmelite Fr. Emmanuel of S. Albert dated Aleppo, 29.9.1733:¹

“. . . With my companion I shall leave here . . . when the roads are opened because, notwithstanding the victory which the Turks had over the Persians about *three months ago* ‘at six hours’ distance from Baghdad, no caravan has yet dared to take the risk, which leads me to think that that victory was not so complete as the Turks have proclaimed. It is further said that the Persians have returned very near Baghdad, while it is only a few days away from the Ottoman army and it is not doubted but that there will shortly be a second action. . . .”

In that prognostic the pro-Vicar Apostolic was correct, for Fr. du Cerceau’s account continued:

“. . . The effect of this action was the raising for the present of the blockade of Baghdad. The governor of the place, Ahmad Pasha, reduced to the last extremity for want of provisions, sallied out upon the few’ (i.e. Persian) ‘troops left in the trenches, put them to the sword and carried the provisions of the Persian camp in to his garrison.

‘The Persian general, being joined by a fresh body of 40,000 men, returned towards Baghdad: and on 22.10.(1733) there was said to have occurred a fresh encounter—that was the news spread in Constantinople. Actually, it appears that Tahmasp Quli Khan laid an ambush in a pass near Kirkuk (is this the battle of the Diala mentioned by Fr. Leander?), the main body of Turks pursuing some 12,000 Persians, who had feigned flight, into the pass was hemmed in, and in a sanguinary battle near Kirkuk (?) 50,000 Turks were killed, including the commander-in-chief and nine Pashas, while the Persians lost 30,000 killed and wounded. Quli Khan himself was said to have had five horses killed under him and to have been wounded in both arms. After the battle Quli Khan returned to the blockade of Baghdad, not having it in his power to make a regular siege for want of heavy artillery . . . he remained master in the field . . . tho’ he himself was forced soon after the battle of Kirkuk to return to Isfahan and to march thence into the province of Shiraz, in order to reduce a rebellious Khan,² which he did in a few days after his arrival. . . . He made an offer of peace to the Porte on terms which were said to be not unreasonable . . . they were not relished by the Turks who . . . prepared to renew the war with the utmost vigour in order to extort from him conditions yet more favourable to themselves. Their obstinacy did them no service: for on 28.2.1734 Quli Khan’s army entirely defeated 45,000 Turks who came to relieve Baghdad: 20,000 were killed on the spot and the rest got into the city which remained close blockaded. This action cost the Persians 10,000 men. . . .’³

¹ *S.N.R.*, IV, p. 278.

² Compare the East India Company’s diaries from Gāmbnun:

“October 1733. Attacks and raids all round by *Baluchis*, etc.

“January 1734. Thomas Caun has made peace with the Turks, and thereupon marched directly from Baghdad in quest of Mahmud Khan *Baluch*, whom he met and defeated in a place called Bahboon” [? *sic*, Bihbihan].

It is, however, somewhat difficult to reconcile the dates—Fr. du Cerceau’s 22.10.1733 for an engagement with the Turks near Baghdad followed by the battle with Topal Uthman Pasha—with a pursuit by Tahmasp Quli Khan of a rebellious chief in southern Persia over by or before January 1734, and yet by 28.2.1734 Tahmasp Quli Khan was back and had defeated another Turkish army marching to relieve Baghdad. It is true that Fr. Leander asserts that after Tahmasp Quli Khan’s first reverse and retirement on Hamadan “in 27 days he had already collected a fresh force, and for the third time was marching on Baghdad. . . .”

³ Baghdad continued to be invested at least loosely, and communications cut until February 1734 at least, for another letter from Fr. Emmanuel, dated Aleppo, 5.3.1734 (*S.N.R.*, IV, p. 299) noted:

“I have had the honour to write various letters to your Eminence giving you information about all the warfare in Persia. . . . Having penetrated as far as Urfa . . . I was obliged to come back to Aleppo . . . the latest news from Baghdad is that the city is still, as before, besieged by the Persians. The Turks have caused a great quantity of troops to be sent over to relieve it, which has up till now made traffic impracticable; for two years past trade and caravans have in fact been interrupted. But it is hoped that before long the great caravan from Basra will arrive here by the desert route. . . .”