

“19.10.1736, confirmation of the king’s victory over the Lurs (he) having taken prisoner “their ‘king’, Shah ‘Ali [? sic], whom he had killed in a most barbarous manner. His “Majesty is now in Spahan preparing for his expedition to *Kandahar and India . . .*”<sup>1</sup>

and again

“28.11.1736. Latest advices from Shaw Nadir are that he was sett out of Spahan, and “was to be entertained with his whole army at Deh Girdu.”

Perhaps that was only the preliminary moving out from the city into camp, for the Carmelite Fr. Leander puts the actual start of the expedition four months later, writing that on 3.6.1737

‘Nadir Shah moved off the force he had been preparing for months past, and fitting out (having posts put at wells in the Lut desert) against Kandahar, where he had heard the ‘Afghan Shahs had hid much booty taken from Isfahan and other towns. His investment ‘of Kandahar began at the end of August 1737. For sixteen months it was ineffective and ‘he was delayed over the obstinate defence, as the Afghans made constant sorties.’

Rapidly to trace the course of this Asiatic war-lord in the next few years without going into the details of his deeds in India, which are recounted in several histories, it will be sufficient to note that after marching with a force, said to have numbered 80,000, through Khurasan and Sistan to the siege of Kandahar, Nadir Shah (according to Fr. Leander’s *Secondo Viaggio*) finally gained a foothold in that strong position

‘by a trick, proposing the exchange of hostages and from his own camp sending into the ‘town his cousin Lutf ‘Ali with instructions to go slowly and seize and hold on to a point. ‘Then, having prepared in advance a position outside and fired off a cannon, he had cut ‘off the heads of the Kandahari hostages already in his hands, assaulted the town and utterly ‘destroyed the old city.’

On its capitulation late in 1738 he occupied his forces first in dealing with Central Asian principalities. While his son Riza Quli crossed the Oxus river, defeated the Uzbaks and caused Balkh to surrender, Nadir Shah pursued the fugitive Kandaharis through Ghazni to Qabul (garrisoned from Delhi at that period) which was carried by storm towards the end of the year.

According to Fr. Leander’s narrative it was before he launched himself into India that

‘Nadir Shah sent orders to his son, Riza Quli, governor of Khurasan, who had Shah ‘Tahmasp II Safawi in ward, to kill the prisoner and make his death known in such manner ‘that the population of the country in general would accept it as a fact that the Safawi ‘dynasty was extinct. The prince, his son, promptly had all the women of the ‘andarun’ ‘of Shah Tahmasp killed, and the children in it, and, lastly, Shah Tahmasp II strangled.

‘Then Nadir Shah turned on the dominions of the Mogul Emperor of Delhi, who at ‘that time was warring with the Mahrattas, advancing through Gandumak to Pishawar, ‘crossing the Attock and the Jhelum rivers to Lahore, which soon surrendered, and finally ‘he defeated the Mogul emperor Muhammad at Karnal north of Delhi in February 1739.’

Fr. Leander’s account in *Secondo Viaggio* differs substantially from others here: briefly he makes the emperor invite Nadir Shah to a banquet, and then the Persian autocrat gave in his tents a return feast, in the midst of which a large part of the Persian force aided by traitors made a *coup de main*, and seized and secured the gates of Delhi, whereupon Nadir Shah arrested

<sup>1</sup> From which it is clear that the descent on to the plains of India was no afterthought of his operations round Kandahar, but deliberately schemed several years in advance.