

“building. Since the putting to death of Mir Muhanna, the rebel and despot of Kharg,¹ he (Karim Khan) has had entry to Persia opened to traders, and sent for all the scattered Julfa people, making them large promises. So it is hoped that some Catholic families too will return, and that the small flock will grow. But he (Karim Khan) is disgusted with Europeans,² believing that the English befooled him in the operations against Kharg, in which they had promised to capture the savage tyrant, whereas with 11 vessels they gained no success at all, and the tyrant was” (finally) “slain by the Turks. . . .”

The tranquillity continued, more or less, in certain parts for some years yet: on 10.5.1772 an Armenian Uniat priest, a former student at the Urban College in Rome, whom in 1760 Bishop Cornelius had taken there, John son of Isaac, gave his testimony:³

“As to the condition of the country, thanks to God, it is quiet and peaceful; we are not molested by the Muslims: on the contrary they are very pleased for any community to be here, and allow the free practice of the Christian religion. . . .”

After his retirement to Italy and arrival in Rome, in 1772 Bishop Cornelius of Isfahan drew up a lengthy report⁴ which is headed:

“On the present condition of Persia, and the Missions there: Report presented to the Sac. Congregation de Prop. Fide by Mgr Cornelius of S. Joseph, Discalced Carmelite, Bishop of Isfahan, month of December 1772.”

Much of the ground under the section ‘Temporal State’ had been already covered in similar wording by his report of 2.5.1765 already quoted *in extenso*: here therefore only new historical factors and developments will be set down. For instance, after mentioning the three potentates, among whom the former Persian empire was divided—all surviving, if not flourishing, in 1772—the Bishop added with regard to Shah Rukh and the province of Khurasan:

“This province together with the territories dependent on it after the death of the tyrant was occupied by the above-named Ahmad Shah, monarch of the Afghans who ceded it

¹ Under the year 1769 *Cont. Basra Chron.* tells the career and end of this pirate, as notorious for daring and cruelty in the Persian Gulf as our Captain Kidds and the buccaners had been in the West Indies:

“On 25.3.(1769) what Mir Muhanna had sowed he at length reaped at Basra. The second son of Mir Nasir, the Shaikh of Bandar Rig, in savagery he became so abominable that with his own hands he assaulted and killed his own father, who was not in the least suspecting such cruelty.”

(The diary of the East India Company at Gāmbur on Saturday, 3.8.1754 mentioned: “Mir Nasir, the Shaikh of Bandar Rik, we hear was killed some time ago by one of his sons: the cause of it is said to arise from the father taking one of his female Georgian women from him, and giving her to Mynheer Kniphhausen”—but that may have been biased anti-Dutch gossip.)

“On this parricide being committed all traders and honest men fled from Bandar Rig, where at that time owing to the attention of Mir Nasir commerce had been in a very flourishing state, and among them his eldest son, brother of Mir Muhanna, who finally gained over by the repeated promises of the parricide returned to Bandar Rig, but, when he had spent only a few months in ruling that township, he met with a very miserable end, not unlike his father’s, at the hands of his brother who was envious of the chieftainship and whose thirst for blood was only slaked by a general slaughter of his relatives. . . . This Arab-Persian, an object of fear to Turks, Persians and Europeans, puffed up by so many successful *coups*, ruled in the island of Kharg from 1766 . . . and he began to break out again into such unmitigated severities against his own fellow-fighters that they at length grew weary of his rule, and in order to shake off the yoke broke out in revolt against him: with difficulty he escaped from their hands: with a few of his own people he took to the sea in a skiff, and not liking to trust himself to the shores of Persia, fled hither” (to Basra): “he had already made the river” (i.e. the Shatt-ul-Arab) “and had disembarked in the neighbourhood of Basra, 14.2.(1769), with the intention of entering the services of some Shaikh of the Arabs in the desert; but the Mutasallim (of Basra) being forewarned of this immediately got to horse with his guards and cut off the escape of Mir Muhanna, whom *nolens volens* he took off to his palace and kept in the inner ward, where he was treated with much respect and kindness until the Pasha of Baghdad prepared for him a halter worthy of him, in which he had his reward this night” (i.e. 25.3.1769).

² All these circumstantial accounts contradict the usual statement in histories that Karim Khan was the friend of the Europeans—particularly the impression derived from his so-called treaty with the English.

³ *S.R.*, vol. 788, p. 270.

⁴ *S.N.R.*, VIII, p. 6.