

“other places. He is in relations with, and on him there depends a prince named — ruler over the Georgians, who pays him 20,000 scudi yearly as tribute, and his country lies near the Caspian Sea: in time of war this prince should be able to serve under the king with 10,000 mounted Georgians, all men of valour. There are also some petty Turkish lords called Kurds, who inhabit some mountains in Lesser Armenia in the direction of that mountain range which lies towards Georgia and is owned by the Turks on the side towards the Black Sea. . . .”

Vincenzo degl’Alessandri ends his account by stating that he was also submitting to the Doge plans of the chief ports and places on the Black Sea, where he had noticed preparations of shipping being actively made in readiness for the coming year: and by referring to his sufferings on his Persian journey,

“having been cruelly bastinadoed on the soles of my feet¹ at Erzerum because of some Turkish merchants who were taking copper into Persia without having come to an agreement with the Nazir, i.e. supervisor: I was taken and beaten and paid for myself and servant 2,000 aspri, which equal 400 scudi.”

Narrative B gives, as it were, the sequel to Alessandri’s account:

“This Shah Tahmasp was a most cruel tyrant who deprived everyone he saw rich, and with any influence in his kingdom, of their goods and, if he did not deprive them of life, had their eyes put out. He had confidence in no captain or knight of his nor did he want anyone’s advice. He was most miserly, so that to gain money he would send to the bazars his own clothing. He kept back the pay, which he had promised his soldiers, so that 15,000 and more of them abandoned Persia, making themselves vassals of the Tatars, others of the king of India, in order to be no longer subject to such a tyrant. He was wont to renew the coinage from year to year, causing first less than half to be recovered, then when he had it coined, he would prohibit circulation of the first, which almost all later was cast into his mint . . . from this he may well have had many times in his city of Qazwin 400,000 or 450,000 ducats a year. He would not make a concession of it to anyone, saying that what those people wanted to gain in profits, he wanted for himself. In this way he extracted an enormous sum of money out of it, which is not included in the statement of his revenues. At his death there were found in his possession in gold and silver and jewels (a thing which appears impossible to credit, and confirmation of it has been given me from several quarters) 80 million ducats, among which 17 millions coined in gold marks. I omit horses, mules and camels to the number of 100,000.

“He died on the 11th May, 1576,² having reigned 50 years, as has been said.

“But before he died he drew up his will, in which he declared as his successor Isma’il, his second son,³ because Muhammad Khudabandeh, the present king, was given over to matters of religion and was short-sighted, and because he had learnt on one occasion that he (Muhammad Khudabandeh) wanted to kill the Daruga, or governor of the city, who was the fourth Wazir, created over and above the ordinary, named Absalom Baig Sinjabi [*? sic*], who had planned to kill him (Tahmasp) and Shah Isma’il his son, and put on the throne Sultan Haidar, his third son, born of a Georgian woman. “This was only because he (Absalom Baig) had as his ward another son of the king

¹ Till 1908 in Persia the bastinado was still a common method of punishment, and money had to be given to those administering it.

² Narrative C (Misc. Arm. II, 74, p. 241), states that he died at Qazwin, in June 1577—perhaps a copyist’s mistake as to the year, a reign of 52 years, going by E. G. Browne’s *Catalogue of Manuscripts in Cambridge University Library*, he having succeeded 22.5.1524.

³ Fr. du Cerceau’s edition of *Krusinski’s Memoirs*, 1740, states that Tahmasp nominated for his successor Haidar Mirza; but the above, B, is a contemporary narrative.