

“’Ali Baig, who came in Your name to us with the object of bringing about a friendship between us. From that letter of Ours, written at great length, You will understand abundantly how with ready good will We reciprocate the like to You in all kindness of regard, and how ardently We desire Your glory and safety. And because Husain ‘’Ali Baig said that he wanted to proceed to Our very dear son in Christ, Philip the Catholic king of the Spains, whereas Anthony said that he wanted to set off direct to Your Highness, so that, as quickly as might be, he might reach You, this plan of his was of great satisfaction to Us, and We have given to him separately this letter to be delivered to You along with another of greater length. For it will please Us greatly that You should learn the more speedily how greatly We desire to cement most closely with You a sincere friendship, and frequently to send envoys and letters to You, so that We may often get news of Your welfare and promote Your success, as much as We can with God. Other matters Your Highness will learn more fully, as We have said, from that previous letter of Ours handed over to the said Anthony. Given at (the Basilica of) the Holy Apostles, Rome, under the Fisherman’s ring, 17.5.1601, in the tenth year of Our Pontificate.”

The Pope helped even to the extent of writing a Brief, 25.5.1601, to the Captain General of Hurmuz to assist Sir Anthony when he returned by that route (see appendix of Latin Briefs). Then, as regards the Persian joint-envoy, less than a month later the Pope wrote to explain to ‘Abbas I why three of the suite of Husain ‘Ali Baig might not return to Persia: it is to be doubted, however, whether that Shah did receive the news with the pleasure the Pope presumed. Dated 6.6.1601 (Arch. Vat. Arm. XLIV, vol. 45, p. 216) this Brief ran:

“After that he had been with Us for a number of days, the highly respected personage, Husain ‘Ali Baig, whom Your Highness sent to Us and whom We have seen with much pleasure and treated with every consideration together with all his companions, when he had already been kindly and honourably received by Us in farewell audience, and was about to depart from this dear City of Ours, his three companions said that they wished to become Christians and to be regenerated by the sacred laver of baptism. These are Shah Husain, Riza and ‘Ali, who when carefully questioned openly and publicly answered that they wanted to receive the Christian Faith and be baptized. Therefore, since they are grown men and possessed of the faculty of reasoning, and without any force or fear of anyone whatsoever, but of their own free will and voluntarily desire to profess the Christian religion, We, who from Our office are bound to open to all seeking it the gate of life and eternal salvation by baptism, could not repel and reject them. For, when it be a question of the salvation of the eternal soul, We are unable not to receive those coming voluntarily to Christ the author of life and salvation. So, just as it has happened, We write to tell Your Highness of the matter, so that You may not be surprised if, the three men above-named do not return to Persia with Husain ‘Ali Baig; but We trust of Your magnanimity and of that goodwill, which You openly bear towards Us, and which We in turn have made manifest in respect of You and Yours in every way that this will be in no wise annoying to You, but acceptable and pleasing rather, in that for this cause, so long as some of Your people are with Us, so much the more will be the bond of affection between Us, and friendship grow firm, which We also much desire of You.”

Meanwhile in Persia, in June 1599, during the time that a certain Fr. Emmanuel de Santos, a Portuguese friar from Goa, was crossing the country (he stopped 20 days at Isfahan¹):

“there arrived at two or three days’ interval, one after the other, three ambassadors sent by the Sultan to the Persian king: they were demanding the latter’s eldest son as a hostage, and guarantees of friendship. He” (Fr. Emmanuel) “says that the Persian king

¹ *Vide* Fondo Borghese, Ser. II, n. 20, p. 149. He had left Goa in February 1599, and in May took the road to Lar. The report is dated 27.1.1601, and indirect, coming from another Religious in Italy.