

letter delegated a Persian to accompany Diego de Miranda to Europe, and that he was retaining da Costa at his Court, and also with the statement that da Costa had been introduced to the Shah by the Augustinians,¹ seeing that da Costa himself had left Persia about June 1604, i.e. "3 years he had been in Astrakhan" when Fr. Paul Simon found him leaving there in July 1607.²

When they first arrived 'Abbas had been as well disposed and courteous to these Augustinians as he had been to their fellow-subjects, da Costa and Miranda, coming from Rome: he had questions to settle with the Portuguese of Goa and Hurmuz, as will be related hereafter, in addition to his hope—politically as an ally against the Turks, and commercially in the matter of a market for Persian silk—of closer relations with Philip III of Spain (and Portugal): according to the statement of Fr. Antonio da Gouvea during his later journey of 1608,³ on his first arrival:

"the other time I was here he (the Shah) had been very affectionate with me, having kissed me on the neck more than 10 times, embraced me an infinite number, many times he gave me to drink with his own hand, and paid me many other politenesses. . . ."

Fr. Paul Simon of Jesus Mary asserts⁴ that:

"by the Augustinian Fathers the king of Spain promised to send him ('Abbas) artillery-gunners, engineers, artillery, if he ('Abbas) allowed the Holy Gospel to be preached in his realm. . . ."

and elsewhere in the same account:

"It is true that when the Augustinian Fathers went to Persia the king showed himself extraordinarily affectionate with them, and gave many signs of being well disposed towards the Christian Faith and of wanting to embrace it. . . . In notifying to the king the objects of their mission, *the Augustinian Fathers told him that they came to show him the True Faith, and to baptize him.* He answered that he would discuss that at more length when he had the opportunity. Almost always he kept them near him. He left it to their option to choose a house. He gave them 2,000 scudi yearly for their subsistence, and entertained them several times at banquets, always making them sit near him, and he took one of them into the haram of his women (the andarun), which was an exceptional mark of favour, since he did not even allow his own son to enter it, he made some of them (the women) "dance. When the Fathers proposed to him" (that he should adopt) "our Faith, he made show to agree to everything. He gave them, sealed with his small seal,⁵ and also by the prince his son and three of his councillors who alone were present at this, a writing in which he promised to construct a church with bells in every town he should capture from the Turks, to allow the Gospel to be preached, if the King of Spain kept to that which he promised him ('Abbas) by the same Fathers, i.e. to take up arms against the Turks, and to send him artillery and engineers, which up till now has not been fulfilled. As evidence that he still had the mind to fulfil what he was promising, he said that on the following day he would go to their church—as in fact he did, and with his own hands decked the altar. The writing given by the king is with the Augustinian Fathers and I have read it. The Mihmandar told us that the king wanted to make a great bell and a church for the Fathers in Isfahan, asked the Fathers for relics and a piece of the wood of the Cross, and that they gave it to him. When he drank, and in public

¹ Vide Fondo Borghese, Ser. II, n. 20, pp. 219-23, a report by Fr. Paul Simon. ² *Idem*, and *En Persia*, vol. II, p. 79.

³ Vide O.C.D. 236 a.—a report itself undated, but which from its contents must have been begun between May 1608 and January 1609.

⁴ O.C.D. 234 b. Report by Fr. Paul Simon.

⁵ The private seal, which, it will read later, helped to authenticate for the recipients 'Abbas' personal authorship—as opposed to the great seal "of state".