

“are 500,000 scudi.) The Shah does not make gifts suitable with his rank: he is not very liberal in giving: he takes them from the Treasury: the expenditure (on the upkeep) of his palace must be small, some of his nobles living with greater show than the sovereign.

“He is very valiant and has a great liking for warfare and weapons of war, which he has constantly in his hands: we have been eye-witnesses of this because, whenever we were with him, he was adjusting scimitars, testing arquebuses, etc.: and to make him a present that will give him pleasure is to give him some good pieces of arms. This is the great experience which he has obtained of warfare over so many years, that he makes it in person and from the first it has made him a fine soldier and very skilled, and his men so dexterous that they are little behind our men in Europe. He has introduced into his militia the use of and esteem for arquebuses and muskets, in which they are very practised. Therefore it is that his realm has been so much extended on all sides—on the East he has taken Khurasan from the Tatars and other provinces and made the rest tributary to him, taken from the Mogul Emperor Kishmir:¹ on the North the principality of Gilan, where there was a very powerful prince, possessed of great treasure because of the ports which there are on the Caspian Sea, and the principality of Mazandaran also: on the South the principality of Lar, where was another prince of considerable wealth: and he has made himself master of the Persian Gulf, and of many other small ports of the Arabs, and of the island of Bahrain where they fish the pearls, which was belonging to the king of Spain: on the West he has taken from the Turks many territories—Ardabil, Erivan, Nakhchiwan, Erzerum . . . Tabriz, Shirwan, Kurdistan, Georgia and other regions, and the fortress of the ‘Iron Gates’ (=Darband, Demirkapu). He has made tributary the Christian king of Georgia and the Tatars dwelling between the ‘Iron Gates’ and Muscovy. In the victories he has had over the Turks he has made himself master of many artillerymen, engineers, and of 400 pieces of artillery, which he has carried off to his city of Isfahan, where I have seen them. The king of Persia has become puffed up with conceit by these successes, but far more so on account of the hope he has of gaining greater ones any day by reason of the low water in which the Turks now are. After the king of Persia broke them . . . beyond Tabriz, the Sultan of Turkey has never sent another army against him, nor is he able to send one on account of the many rebels he has all over his dominions—in Baghdad, Syria, Anatolia and other provinces—in such numbers that they do not give him” (i.e. the Sultan) “breathing-space, but put him in danger of losing all he possesses. On the 2nd June last (1608), while I was in Aleppo, fifty thousand of them sacked and burned Smyrna. Thence these men marched on Brusa with the intention of passing over to Constantinople, five days’ journey away from Brusa: for that reason the Sultan summoned in haste his captain-general, who was at Aleppo with 60,000 men, the Agha of Janissaries, three Baiglarbaigis (those of Greece, Anatolia, etc.), which was all he was able to get together. (They had been 8 months in Aleppo, and he did not dare to leave fearing lest the rebels outside in the country might once more occupy it.)—The Sultan of Turkey, I repeat, summoned him to return to Constantinople with his army, fearing some rising there. In Mecca, in the Red Sea and in Egypt traders who come from there say that all is ruined, because the Sultan of Turkey had commandeered and removed to Constantinople the camels, horses and men there. The rebels grow daily on account of the Janissaries and others who in large numbers join them: and they have taken as their protector the Shah of Persia, who not to lose the occasion is to march towards Brusa.

“His militia is divided into three kinds of troops: one of the Georgians, who will be about 25,000 and are mounted: they are entitled to pay throughout the year, and have a general commanding: this is the old-time militia of the kings of Persia for the guarding of their persons. The present king has introduced the second force, which is made up of slaves of various races, many of them Christian renegades: their number will be as many again, and they are more esteemed than the first cited, both because they are

¹ Thus perhaps is to be read the “Chesimir” in the manuscript.