

“unexpectedly: in this he is assisted by the very common clothing he wears, and owing to that mien of his, so little dignified, he is not recognized and has every facility for talking and getting to know anything—which he does with a patience indescribable. He is of great strength and exceptionally courageous: and by his lively temperament so active that, unable to remain quiet, whether indoors or out of doors he is always busy with something so that at many mechanical occupations he excels above the average.

“Of the two male children of this king known, one is aged 25¹ years or more, the eldest born, very tall and stout in body, but of a flaccid nature and generally considered to be a man of a peaceable spirit and not very active: the other will be about 14 years of age,² very like his father in looks and temperament and a marvel in vivaciousness. . . .”

As with other letters of Shah 'Abbas I, the original Persian of this one mentioned as sent with Fr. Vincent is not (apparently) extant in the Vatican archives—with its ornate wrapping and seal it may have been regarded as a curiosity and have gone to the Borghese or other private collection: it is to be doubted whether the version in Italian made by the Carmelites be at all literal or exact; but, with that reserve, it is here given (omitting the prelude of honorifics):

“. . . The letters which I have received from Your Holiness, full of sentiments distinguished by their spirit of goodwill and lovingkindness, have been in the highest degree pleasing and welcome to Me. In like manner We have expressed to You Our reciprocal goodwill, friendship and concord, and by the intermediary of Your envoys or of Our ambassadors We have received no reply to them from which We could know for certain whether they have reached You. Desirous therefore, as best may be, to make up for the failure of those letters, I write this afresh to Your Holiness, in order to notify and inform You that by the favour of the grace of Almighty God I have at last recaptured and once more placed under my rule the very extensive districts, which the Ottoman despot had taken and usurped from Our ancestors contrary to the law of nations and unjustly.

“But I cannot conceal My bitter resentment, nor omit to complain very greatly, that the Christian princes on their part have failed in their promises made to Us so many times, in the fulfilment of which they have not given Me the smallest aid. Notwithstanding this I alone, trusting in the most powerful army of my soldiers, have recovered what was Mine, restoring it to My ancient and rightful authority. The Christian princes ought to do the same, as every duty of correct policy or, as it is said, interests of state, oblige them after My example to claim back by just and praiseworthy force of arms that which the Turk had seized from them and unjustly occupied. The more so as, if I, a follower of the same religious faith as he, am nevertheless for long past his implacable enemy, so for all the greater reason they, who with zeal and sincere love profess the faith of Christ, are bound to hate him the more intensely and fight against him the more manfully, in order to introduce, to carry back and uphold the faith in those places, whence the tyrannies and violence of that accursed and insatiable usurper have driven them for so long past. If they had done this, besides the advantage and glory that they would have necessarily acquired they would have shown and proved by deeds their faithful accomplishment of the obligations, to which the motive of inviolable friendship concluded between us bound them: and, by lending Me the aid of their forces and drawing off from Me a part of the Turkish might, they would have opened for Me a very easy road to subdue it and indeed destroy it. But since very many Christians, who are now groaning beneath the hard slavery of the Turks, always see the vain promises of the Christian princes finish in smoke, they incur very grave reproach from this and do not dare to shake off the hated and most

¹ i.e. Safi Mirza, born about 1584, whereas Fr. Paul Simon's report quoted of 1608 made him then about 22 years, i.e. born in 1586, a more likely date.

² This is only one year different from the age given in Fr. Paul Simon's report, so that Khudabandeh Mirza was born about 1595.