

a memorable report¹ to the Company in India in which he asserted, as regards the dispatch of Sir R. Sherley to Madrid by 'Abbas I, that Sherley

“had instructions to contract with the Spaniards to receive all the silks of Persia, and took
“a grant permitting them to fortify on the Persian coast.² Mr. Connock augurs a great
“increase to the wealth and power of Spain, if this plan of transferring to her all the com-
“merce of Persia were effected. There being no time to receive the instruction of the East
“India Company on the subject, he had taken on himself to endeavour to counteract it.
“He had commenced his opposition by representing to the Shah of Persia the many dangers
“to which he will expose himself, if once he admit the Spaniards to have a footing in his
“country, and that after giving them forts, which they will connect with Hurmuz and
“Goa, he cannot drive them out at pleasure. . . . He” (Mr. Connock) “*intends to propose*
“*to that monarch to take Hurmuz.* Sir R. Sherley was inadequately rewarded by the king
“of Persia on returning from his first embassy and would gladly live in England, had he
“but the means of a poor gentleman. . . .”

Two other noteworthy items of news are set down on 8.5.1617: the Persian Court had already jumped at the opportunity for intrigue and playing off one foreign nation against the other, and (even if, as asserted above, Sherley's instructions did include the conclusion of a monopoly of sale of Persian silk to Spain),

“. . . the king's lieutenant had already offered to the Company silk on credit to the value
“of £100,000 . . .”:

secondly,

“the Portugall ambassador” (i.e. Don Garcia de Silva) “arrived at Hurmuz. . . .”

Edward Connock, it should be mentioned here, died about June 1618, for P. della Valle, chap. XXI, p. 369, on 25.7.1618 wrote:

“the Prior of the Augustinian convent, Fr. Melchior, later told us of the death of the
“English Resident,³ Edward Connock, which—there is news—happened on the Persian
“coast near Hurmuz, where he had gone to meet and receive the ships of his nation. And
“his death was confirmed, as a matter of certainty, to have been due to poison. . . .”

Of Mr. Connock's religion an interesting fact is revealed in part of Fr. John Thaddeus' long letter of 3.1.1619:⁴

“. . . Your Reverence asks what Franks there are now in Isfahan. . . . There are
“also some English. . . . The archbishop” (i.e. of Goa) “also writes that in India people
“are scandalized at us for having dealings with the English, who are heretics; but, if they
“knew the manner in which we are having dealings with them, the rather they should be
“edified. I do not say this by reason of the authority and privilege that we hold from His
“Holiness for this, but because of the fruits obtained from it and the hopes we have. . . .
“Several Catholics there are in secret among them: very often, though in secret, they come
“to us for confession and Communion in our church. If they had not this liberty to come
“to our house they might easily be lost and perverted; but, thanks be to the Lord God,
“they are keeping to the Faith and are excellent Catholics.

“Among these English today residing here is one young man of good breeding and fine
“temper, who was nephew to their late ambassador: this young man is a good Catholic,

¹ *Catalogue of Factory Correspondence*, E.I.C., No. 464.

² This seems unlikely to be true after the attack on the fort of Gāmbnun.

³ An early instance in Persia of the historic rank and title, 'British Resident'.

⁴ O.C.D. 237 m.