to the throne of France, but after the murder of Henry III in 1589 was compelled to maintain an attitude of reserve. In 1588 Philip II of Spain had launched the great armada against Protestant England. With the election of Gregory XIV, 5.12.1590, the League and Spain recovered their influence at Rome.

After the death of the Cardinal King Henry of Portugal in 1580, partly by force partly by bribery Philip II of Spain secured election to the crown of Portugal at the Cortes of Thomar: for the next 40 years Portuguese possessions in India and interests in the East were governed from the Spanish Court. Hardly had the French internal and religious struggle subsided, and the seventeenth century opened, than the situation in Germany began to effervesce, and a German league came into existence with Duke Maximilian of Bavaria beginning negotiations for the formation of a union of the Catholic states of the Empire, a conference being held at the Imperial diet of Ratisbon, 5.5.1608: and the next year, 5.7.1609, the participating states concluded an alliance for the defence of the Catholic religion and peace within the Empire. The first general meeting took place at Wurzburg, 10.2.1610, all the principal states except Austria sending representatives: after that date the confederacy became really a Catholic league, with the Pope and Spain favourably disposed, and from 1613 Austria enrolled in it.

This was the prelude to the Thirty Years War, which, though peculiarly German and slightly later than the initiation of the Carmelite mission to Persia, was important for all Europe and about 1630 became a European conflict—one which will need to be borne in mind when causes of the slackening and cessation of attempts at collaboration against the Ottoman Sultans between the Christian princes, Holy See, and Persian kings come to be considered in so far as they affected the position of the Carmelites. By 1612 Venice, too, was at war with Austria and the Empire. Over the whole century there had brooded the rivalry between France and the house of Hapsburg: if the Holy See inclined to one for support and response in its call to rally Christendom against the Turk, it was sufficient to bias the other against participation: France indeed had its own deep religious cleavage to attend and heal.

The few preceding pages, in the outline, may serve to recall to the reader somewhat of the turmoil in Europe, the currents that distracted it from dealing radically with the Turkish advance and menace during and at the end of the sixteenth century, and as the seventeenth opened.

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The Popes, however, did not lose sight of it and whenever the opportunity offered, or the threat seemed graver, not only tried to stimulate and unite forces in Europe to meet it, but also worked diplomatically to secure support from the eastern neighbour of the Turks against them. Popes and statesmen had become aware of the differences of religious tenets, and the always latent, almost hereditary hostility of the two Muslim rulers and their nations, and conceived the plan of simultaneous operations on the eastern frontiers of the Ottoman Empire, so as the more readily to break the power of the Sultans and make them evacuate their conquests in Europe. To that end intercourse was opened between Rome and distant Isfahan—doubtless there had previously passed other letters, for the Republic of Venice repeatedly in the sixteenth century sent its envoys to the Persian Court, as also to that of the Grand Signor during years of truce, to watch the internal situation in each country, and their reports are detailed and thorough; but it must suffice here to quote the Brief[1] which Pope S. Pius V wrote to Shah Tahmasp I Safawi after the victory of Lepanto, calculating on that news having drifted across Asia Minor and creating a profound impression:

"To the illustrious Shaikh Tahmasp,[2] most puissant king of the Persians, We beg the "enlightenment of the spirit of truth!

[1] S. Pio V. Brev. ann., IV–VII, Arm. XLIV, 19, p. 434, Vat. Arch. See appendix for text.
[2] The Latin is "Scieco Tahamaso", perhaps "Shah" is meant.