

“When, therefore, we had sat down on our stools they brought me a great tray of comfits and other sweetmeats. A little later they brought water spiced with cinnamon and sugar to the Shah, who after drinking a small coffee-cup sent one to me. At a further interval of a quarter of an hour later they began to spread the cloths for the dinner and one of brocade, as were the rest, was spread in front of me. They carried the foodstuffs first to the king: there were 15 to 20 valets, each with a royal dish, some of the dishes being of gold, others of majolica from China or, as we should say, porcelain; but all the dish-covers were of gold. The first dish was so large that it might rather be termed a great pot of gold, very heavy with its companion lid, and was borne by two valets, because one alone could not carry it. To each of the guests, as to myself, they brought seven royal dishes, four of gold and three of majolica, but all with a great golden lid and brim full of many kinds of food. The king began to eat, and all the rest were eating, so that I was obliged to do likewise. The meal lasted about half an hour, but was so well ordered, and with such ceremony and absence of noise that it seemed like in a refectory full of monks. When the meal was at an end, the cloths were taken away and they brought round gold and silver jugs and basins for us to wash our hands: after this all rose and each went his way, as also did I, having first bowed to the Shah. The next morning I sent a greeting to the king’s interpreter, and begged him to translate faithfully and correctly the letters, promising that I would show myself grateful for his labours. . . .”

The name of the new chief minister of state is not given in the Bishop’s letters, nor in Fr. du Cerceau’s work, but the former, 6.12.1721, considered:¹

“. . . for the rest, the Shah is very courteous and inclined to favour Europeans in particular, the chief Minister, ’Itimad-ud-Dauleh, is disinterested and very affable. . . .”

Owing to the instructions received from Rome with regard to the Briefs and letters from European princes being delivered in connection with oppression in the northern provinces, a considerable outlay of money became necessary:

“I am bound, however, to spend much money in order to obtain anything from the subordinate officials, e.g. secretaries and interpreters. . . . Your Eminences must not be astonished that already almost 500 scudi have been spent in 16 months’ work”;

and there is on record² an interesting bill of charges in connection with the two journeys of Fr. Judas Thaddeus Krusinski—so he signed his name to it—and the presentation of letters by the Bishop in Isfahan:

“The expenses incurred in dispatching the letters, sent by the Sovereign Pontiff to Fr. Barnabas, Bishop of Isfahan, to be presented to the Persian monarch”; and there were three letters: “(a Brief from the Sovereign Pontiff himself, a letter from the Emperor and another from the king of France),”

dated 9.6.1721. It is lengthy, so only points will be noticed:

	scudi
“For his journey with one servant to Tihran . . .	21·0
“To the Consul’s servants, who accompanied me on horseback	2·50
“For the brocade to wrap round the letter	2·80
“For the Shah’s interpreter (two payments)	45·00
“To the Secretary, Mamidek [? sic, for Muhammad Baig] three payments	
“in all	367·50
“To the Mihmandar himself	22·50”

¹ *S.N.R.*, III, p. 525.

² *Idem*, p. 531.