

In May 1730 the Bishop of Isfahan travelled via Shiraz because

“the more direct and convenient route from Hamadan to Baghdad was closed by the
“invasion of the Ottomans, who came to protect Hamadan, which the Persians threatened
“to besiege . . .”¹

between that and 22.9.1730, when he again wrote from Shiraz:²

“some time ago the rumour was spread that the Persians were going to besiege Basra, and
“many vessels were already being got ready on the sea-coast. . . .”

Then from Baghdad, 1.10.1731,³ Fr. Emmanuel of S. Albert informed the Cardinal Prefect that

“a courier arrived today from Persia with the news of the entire destruction of the Persian
“army, 3,000 having been killed on the field of battle, as further of the capture of Hamadan
“by the Turks. Thus for a third time the poor mission at Hamadan is ruined. . . .”

Fr. Urban of S. Elisaeus, from Isfahan, in the course of a letter dated 13.6.1733⁴ observed:

“. . . In September last year Tahmasp Khan, general of the Persian army, and the
“second person in the kingdom, imprisoned his own king and sent him off to the province
“of Khurasan, putting him in a fortress: and he caused to be proclaimed Shah a child of
“that king, aged three to four months. Then he left Isfahan to lay siege to Baghdad: and
“this siege has been now going on for some months, and he will take it very easily if the
“Grand Turk does not relieve it with his army. . . .”⁵

*Chron. Basra*⁶ is explicit as to the date of the beginning of the first siege:

“7.1.1733. . . . On that same day Tahmasp Quli Khan, general of the Persian army,
“began to besiege Baghdad from the Persian side. . . . In the month of February” (1733)
“with the assistance of the chief of the Bani Lam Arabs he brought his army across the
“river, and the Persians had fighting with the Turks, with whom were some Arabs and
“Ibn Man’a; but the Turks fled, so Tahmasp Quli Khan with his army was master of that
“side of Baghdad: and therefore the siege grew more severe. After some days part of the
“Persian army proceeded and took Hillah together with a huge stock of wheat and
“barley. . . .”

Fr. Leander’s account in the *Secondo Viaggio* mentions that the Afshar general marched on Hamadan with 100,000 men. Ahmad Pasha retired on Baghdad, and was followed by Tahmasp Quli Khan, who blockaded Baghdad,⁷ not permitting victuals to enter; but when he had already got a footing in a part of the city, he received news that his own cousin Ab-bashi [? sic] Khan, whom he had put as governor of Shiraz, had marched on Isfahan, with the intention of freeing Shah Tahmasp. So the Afshar strategist concluded an armistice with Ahmad Pasha, the governor of Baghdad, one condition being that two large cannon buried

¹ Bishop Fedeli, O.P., 6.6.1730, *S.N.R.*, IV, p. 539.

³ *Idem*, pp. 2, 548.

⁵ The East India Company’s diary from Gāmbnun gives under:

“December 1732. The Caun’s affairs at present are in a declining condition, the Lur and Hawaizch Arabs having rebelled and got together great numbers of troops, which has obliged Tahmasp Quli Khan to call the greater part of his forces from the frontier: . . . and Ahmad Bashaw” (i.e. the Pasha at Baghdad) “now bids him defiance. . . .”

⁶ Folio 440 of original MSS.

⁷ The diary from Gāmbnun gives under March 1733:

“Advices from Spahan of 20.2.1733: little or no trade and money very scarce. By the last news from the camp Thomas Caun had approached very near to Baghdad, tho’ with great loss of men.”

² *S.N.R.*, IV, p. 542.

⁴ O.C.D. 242 h.