

“enquired from them in the same way whether they had finished their respective translations and they answered that they had completed these, and had brought them in order to have the honour of presenting them, as they then did by passing the manuscripts to him by the hands of the officials, by whose mouths they had spoken. . . .

“Having received the translations, without glancing at these he caused them to be asked whether they had been well lodged and when they replied in the affirmative he dismissed them, saying that he would notify them when he wished them to return—although they were never afterwards summoned. But he had 100 Tumans given them to divide among themselves, and they received orders to depart each to his own abode, and there remain and await any tidings. The division of the money was made in proportion to the numbers of the translators: our missionaries, three in number, had 15 Tumans: the Jews, who were four, 20; the Armenians, who were five, 25; and the Persian Mullas, who were eight, received 40.<sup>1</sup>

“Fr. Urban, a Religious of my Order from the province of Piedmont, sent me in a letter the account of what I have related above, and gave it the title: ‘Story of the Neckties missed’, in allusion to the halters with which they had seen those eighteen men strangled: he thought that he too with his companions ought to have finished their lives there in order to prove by their deaths the truth of the Gospel, and displayed great displeasure at having lost so fine an opportunity of making such a happy transit from this vale of tears to the land of eternal happiness.

“I cannot say what object the Shah-in-Shah really had in wanting that translation made, and for that reason cannot judge why afterwards he failed to take any decision with regard to it. But it is very probable that, disturbed in mind by the fresh rout of his people by the Uzbaks, who killed another cousin of his, and on the other hand suspecting that the Sultan of Constantinople might be about to declare war on him in view of the fact that the latter had been reinforcing garrisons and getting armies ready at Kars and Erzerum, his thoughts turned back to the political and military government of his dominions, and he abandoned his religious ideas, to which, as it was rumoured, he had never given real attention.

“Thereupon he at once devoted himself to getting ships ready, buying some from the English, others from the Dutch and the Mahrattas, and having others still built at Bandar Abbas, i.e. Gāmbnun in the Persian Gulf. He appointed admiral of this naval armada Monsieur la Porterie, a French engineer, and had the tale spread that both by sea and by land he was intending to proceed to seize Makkeh, should the Sultan of Turkey refuse to agree that they should in turns, year by year, send the great carpet to cover the tomb of Muhammad. . . .”

Several months, and perhaps a year, before this incident of the ‘cravats’ or neckties, described in such lively language by Fr. Leander, Fr. Thomas Aquinas of S. Francis, then

<sup>1</sup> Later, more is heard of this version of the Gospels—strangely enough the Bishop seems to have been unaware from the archives of the convent at Isfahan of the translation already made about 1619 by Fr. John Thaddeus, or of any copy of that work: and back from his visitation in the north, 28.4.1746, Bishop Philip Mary informed the Cardinal Prefect (*S.N.R.*, V, p. 167):

“On this journey I had the fortune to find again the book of the translation of the holy Gospels done in Isfahan: as I informed your Eminence, the Persian ‘translator’ had refused to give me the copy, saying that he would not give it me without orders from the reigning monarch. I have had one copy made of it, and now here in Isfahan I am having a second made, so that in accordance with the instructions of the Sac. Congregation the book may reach Rome, and that, whether I bring it with me or send it by another opportunity, should one copy be lost, the other copies will always remain, and I am having it done by one of those scribes who were of the number of the translators and, although I have written that the translators of the holy Gospel were Persians, all the same I repeat once more that it was neither I nor the missionary Fathers who made the translation, but Persians alone from the Arabic text of the Vulgate, with the constant help, however, of the Armenians as well as of myself with some other missionary Fathers.”

Then Count David Shariman from Leghorn, 29.1.1748 (*S.N.R.*, V, p. 223) notified the Cardinal Prefect that a certain Arachiel son of Paul who had proceeded from Isfahan to Smyrna, had from the latter place “forwarded to me the enclosed letter for the late Card. Petra, and also a book containing the translation of the holy Gospels in the Persian language to be sent on to the said Cardinal. . . . Your Eminence will please instruct me how to let you have the book in question. . . .” (It was dated Isfahan, 20.9.1746.) The historic, if unscientific translation definitely reached Leghorn, therefore: and it would be interesting to trace what afterwards became of it.