

mentioned, copied in Misc. Arm. II, vol. 74, p. 241: and from it a few extracts may too be given:

A

“Since in accordance with the command given me recently by your Highness I, Vincenzo degl’Alessandri, have to put in writing all that I have carefully observed, besides what I have written in my letters in the course of the 21 months from the day when I left your feet to go into Persia, your Lordships must not expect from me, so little proficient in such craft, either that style of writing, or that orderliness which perchance the business required, in what I have to relate, but should be satisfied with the best I can do. . . .
 “. . . To begin with the person of the king. You should know that he is named Tahmasp, of the lineage of the Sayyids,¹ a family with a nobility 980 years old, descending in direct line from ’Ali, son-in-law of Muhammad, their prophet. . . .”

B

“. . . The first (of the Safawi line) was Shaikh Saif, who following the cult of ’Ali was persecuted by the Turks, who observe the creed of ’Umar, Abu Bakr, ’Uthman. He fled to these regions, to the town of Ardabil, where living an exemplary life and considered a saint by all the people round, he came to be held in such reverence by everyone that he brought many of the inhabitants there over to the sect of ’Ali, and to obeying him, as he was deemed to be their head.
 “(After his death) there succeeded Shaikh Junaid² [*sic*], who either through evil habits, or because he was not constant in that creed of theirs, was poisoned by those people: and there succeeded him Shaikh Haidar, who did not live long, because he was killed in a war, leaving Shaikh Isma’il as his heir. . . .”

A

“(Tahmasp) was the son of Isma’il the first, whose father was named Shaikh Haidar, a man of small wealth in worldly goods, but of great goodness and religious learning, and considered by them a saint: and it was said that many years previously he had predicted that his son would become a king, although Isma’il, after having promised fealty to the son of the daughter of the king Uzun Hasan, with small fear of Allah made himself master of the kingdom, causing the head of the said son (or grandson of Uzun Hasan) to be cut off. If in that fortune favoured and prospered him, he had in the course of his reign, however, much travail from the Ottoman emperors, he having been the first who began to tame the greatness of that empire and to be allowed to set foot in the principal fortresses there were of Sultan Sulaiman. He made himself master of Karkamish,³ a town of the greatest importance abounding in all necessaries, very populous, full of many craftsmen and situated in a magnificent site, so that while naturally strong now by the industry of the Ottomans it has been made far stronger: in this town there is stationed a Pasha of high rank, as there depend on that place many lands and forts, which, as I have said, were all taken by this Isma’il, such as Mardin, Urfa, Ersinjan, and Tokat, together with a great number of hamlets and villages depending on those towns and forts. . . .”

B

“This” (Isma’il) “was the first who after the aforementioned had the title of king in Persia, of which he made himself almost entirely master, subjugating many provinces and districts which had been under Turkish rule. He fought Sultan Selim in the plains of Kaldaran, and was beaten by the (Turkish) artillery. He was most liberal, and particularly on his soldiers he would spend all he had, of which at his death evidence was provided by his being found in possession of very little gold. He was warlike, and delighted above measure in hunting, as is testified by a mosque in the city of

¹ Sayyid, not Shaikh, as the copyist seems to have read.

² and ³ Readings doubtful owing to corrupt spelling in manuscript copy.