

“and the robbers found; but, still, no proceedings were taken against them in the tribunals  
 “to have them punished, the king showing that he did not care a jot. Besides this, a  
 “merchant and subject of the Turk, named Khwajeh Sarafintin [*? sic*], went to come to  
 “this town, being in a caravansarai in the bazar and the Qurchis, who are those that  
 “guard the person of the king, having heard that he was very rich, they seized the occasion  
 “to invite him to a meal, occupying his attention while their companions who had hired  
 “a shop just adjoining the caravansarai in question broke through the wall and entered  
 “and robbed him of 12,000 ducats in cash. The merchant in question came to his room and  
 “at once became aware of the fact and went to the gate of the palace: being on friendly  
 “terms with many officers, he was allowed in and lodged complaint against the Qurchis,  
 “who had invited him, of complicity in this business. The king summoned the Qurchis,  
 “who denied it and, when the merchant insisted that they should be put in prison and  
 “their depositions taken separately, the king said that he would have done this to satisfy  
 “him (the merchant), but then that, in case of the guilty parties not confessing, he would  
 “have him beheaded, thinking by this that the merchant would not want further to follow  
 “up the case. A few days later it happened that a young man discovered how the thieves  
 “had committed the theft. The merchant had witnesses examined by the magistrate of  
 “the town of Qazwin and their statements presented to the king with 400 scudi in gifts,  
 “so that the matter should be promptly dealt with by his Majesty. The king sent for those  
 “Qurchis, in whose possession the money was found—they had spent very little of it—and  
 “he gave orders that the money in question should be placed in the Treasury, bidding that  
 “Sarafintin [*? sic*] should no more be brought into his presence.

“This result gave very great occasion to all the people to reflect and talk, and lament  
 “the scant justice they received, although every day similar cases were being seen to occur,  
 “Shah Tahmasp caring little at hearing his subjects complaining on such grounds. One  
 “day the king said to the old Qurchi, his jester, who slept in the antechamber, that his  
 “Majesty had slept all the better that night for having heard him (the jester) sing. The  
 “jester answered that he did not know that his singing would have the power to put his  
 “Majesty to sleep, because, had he known it, he would never have opened his mouth, in  
 “order that the king might remain awake to hear the wailing and lamentations which his  
 “poor subjects were making all night on account of the murders perpetrated on them in  
 “the streets, as also in their own villages and lands; and he said that in the books of claims  
 “and complaints for the 8 years previously till that date there had been entered the names  
 “of more than 10,000 persons who had been put to death.

“This speech greatly displeased the king, and with an angry spirit he said that the first  
 “thing requisite was to have him (the jester) and his companions hung; as from them  
 “all the crimes proceeded, meaning the Qurchis. Nor is that a marvel, because they are  
 “given no pay, and are forced to go into the streets and do such deeds, the more so as  
 “they see that to doing justice and punishing wrong the king pays not the least heed nor  
 “thought, as I have said. So it comes about that throughout the kingdom the roads are  
 “unsafe, and inside their houses even people run great risks, and almost all the judges  
 “allow themselves to be won over by force of money.

“It can be said truthfully that this king has never had the slightest inclination for warlike  
 “enterprises (even though he discourses excellently about them in the proper terminology):  
 “he is a man of little courage, and, if indeed on some occasion he has shown himself with the  
 “army on campaign, he has only done it under compulsion, having never dared to show  
 “his face to the enemy. On the contrary, to his great discredit, in his time he has lost  
 “Baghdad, a city of the greatest importance, near the river Euphrates: Bitlis, which be-  
 “longed to a lord . . . of some people called Kurds . . .” (another few names, unrecog-  
 nizable, of towns also lost, follow).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Narrative B states:

“The Persian people was far from obedient in the time of Shah Tahmasp. This arose from the discords between  
 “the chief ‘sultans’ (governors); but after the sagacious princess” (i.e. Piri Khanum, sister of Isma’il II) “had joined