

“is, as they say, the body of one of their greatest saints, named Imam Husain, his prophet!”

“This project of the king of Persia becoming known in the districts and provinces bordering those of the Turks, the Pashas and governors of the latter wrote to their master exhorting him to be the first to begin the war: and (they said), should it please his Majesty to attack, he should give them leave to proceed to do so, because they would then go off and inflict injury on the districts and provinces of the king of Persia. When the news reached Constantinople, the Sultan at once summoned to him his Pashas and took counsel with them regarding the course to be followed: they in their advice replied that for the honour of his Majesty it would be well for him to be the first to attack the Persian provinces and that, when the Persians should become alarmed at his onset and ask the reason for the war he was making, an answer could be given them that they (the Turks) were demanding (the surrender of) the artillery, arms and treasure, which the Persians took from Sultan Bayazid, uncle of Sultan Murad. This would be a good excuse for war then being waged without further ado. So forthwith he had letters written to all the Pashas in the provinces that they should set themselves about making warlike raids, and inflicting damage on the Persians, and capturing and sacking all the places they could, until he sent them a general from Constantinople. Immediately the Sultan looked around for a general, and chose Mustafa Pasha, on whom he enjoined that he should take measures to march with an army against the enemy in the direction of Erzerum, in order to seize the district of Shirwan and the provinces of the Georgians, Christians and friends and confederates of the Persians. He (the Sultan) also directed Sinan Pasha, one of his Wazirs, to prepare with a force to make contact with the enemy in the direction of Baghdad.”

This was on 17.1.1578.¹

The account in C of the preparations made by the Turks for the ensuing campaign, the numbers and composition of the troops assigned to the various Pashas, the march and penetration into Georgia, which follows, is far too lengthy to be reproduced here in its entirety: some extracts are given, besides an abstract, in order to show the course, result and duration of hostilities.

“On 13.4.1578 the general had embarked on 5 galleys and 2 lighters a number of Janissaries and artillery, ammunition, arquebuses and other armaments, with orders that these should be disembarked at Trebizond in the Black Sea, as being a place near the localities where he intended to proceed with all the army. That same day he went to take leave of his master, accompanied by all the Pashas and principal personages of the Court of the Sultan, coming into the presence with many ceremonies which on such occasions they are wont to use: and he (the Sultan) gave him his blessing and bestowed on him a robe of gold brocade and consigned to him the standard with his commission as general, and at once gave him leave to depart.”

After Mustafa Pasha had remained 20 days at Scutari ordering his troops,

“his master seeing that he was delaying so long in departing decided to cross the strait, and to go to a palace of his near by, where he had his general, on his coming, divested of the dress of gold brocade which he was wearing, and a pair of gold embroidered trousers, called by the Turks ‘shalwar’, used by them for riding, and he sent him together a jewelled scimitar and a horse, impressing on him that he must march immediately, inasmuch as the weather did not admit of his dallying so much. . . . And so on Wednesday, the 5th

¹ The year was then reckoned as beginning in March: i.e. this would be 1579 by modern reckoning, but from the letter of Mustafa Pasha, following, it seems clear that the year really was 1578.