

Father Nicholas Melo

and

Brother Nicholas of St. Augustine, Martyrs, O. E. S. A.

No man ever follows his own road to martyrdom. The road is God's alone, and sometimes His Providence causes it to go so deviously that our human judgment is utterly bewildered. No better example can be given than the strange road that led Father Nicholas Melo, a Portuguese hidalgo, and Brother Nicholas of St. Augustine, the first Japanese to make profession in our Order, to death for Christ in the heart of imperial Russia.

The early years of the 17th century are known in Russian history as the « Time of Troubles ». The disorders were caused by the lamentable appearance of two pretenders to the throne who are known under the name of « Pseudo-Demetrius ». In the course of these disturbances the Poles overran Russia, or better Muscovy, the rapidly expanding grand dukedom of Moscow, without being able to agree among themselves on the purpose of their intervention. By a combination of many circumstances, in themselves insignificant, the two Augustinians became involved in the conflict and achieved martyrdom.

Sources

The importance of Father Melo and the impact he had upon his time can be measured from the abundant source material on him. The story of his heroic martyrdom has been written over and over again. Yet it was deemed useful to undertake the present study because some manuscript material has only recently become

available, and the English sources, some of them primary, have never been used by the writers of the Order. Thus it will be possible to correct and delimit better some dates in Father Melo's biography.

Without doubt, the principal source, to which all other writers make reference, is the letter which the Discalced Carmelite, Father John Thaddeus of St. Eliseus, sent to Archbishop Alexius de Meneses, O. S. A., on the death and martyrdom of Father Melo and Brother Nicholas of St. Augustine ¹⁾. Father John Thaddeus shared the last years of Father Melo's life and is thus an immediate witness of the years the Augustinian spent in Russia. He has his information directly from the martyr. This important document is extant in two copies. One is a transcript of the Portuguese original in the Archives of the Propagation of the Faith in Rome. The other, among the papers left by Father Diego de Guevara, O. S. A. ²⁾, is a somewhat free Spanish translation with sundry omissions. Father Santiago Vela suggests that this translation was most probably made by Father Melchior of the Angels, O. S. A. ³⁾, who had spent some years in Persia. If this is correct we may surmise that the translation was made for Father's Melchior's personal use while writing his story on the martyrdom of Father Melo. This would also explain the very cursory rendering of some passages, e. g. the one on Don Juan de Persia, which the translator did not think very necessary for the purpose he had in mind.

Next in importance is the full-length biography of Father Antonio de Gouvea, O. S. A. ⁴⁾. He had personally known both

¹⁾ MS Arch. Congr. Propag., Lettere antiche, vol. 189, fol. 271^r-272^v (former numeration 184^r-185^v). Appendix I.

A great debt of gratitude is due to the Very Rev. R. Schraml, O. S. A., Subsecretary of the Order, who obtained and checked repeatedly the manuscripts from Roman archives and libraries, and to the Rev. Casiano Garcia, O. S. A., of the College of Ntra. Sra. del Buen Consejo in Madrid, who provided all the manuscripts from Spanish archives. Both brethren have shown continual courtesy and patience with my many inquiries.

²⁾ MS 1269 Bibliotheca Nacional, Madrid, fol. 131. App. I.

³⁾ G. DE SANTIAGO VELA, O. S. A., *Ensayo de una Biblioteca Ibero-Americana de la Orden de San Agustin* (Madrid 1913 ff.) III 270 (This work will henceforth always be quoted EBIA).

⁴⁾ ANTONIO DE GOUVEA, O. S. A., *Glorioso Triunfo de tres martires españoles de la Orden de San Agustin, y uno Castellano hijo de Madrid* (Madrid 1623). EBIA III 270 has this on Gouvea's narrative: «La presente obrita es de gran

martyrs, and had received letters from Father Melo, while the latter was in Astrakhan, above all an exact report on the imprisonment on Solovetski and the death of Brother Nicholas ⁵⁾). An English translation of Chapter III of Gouvea's work, dealing with Father Melo's journey into Russia, was published by Laurence Lockhart ⁶⁾). A good description and evaluation of this biography is contained in Santiago Vela's *Ensayo* ⁷⁾).

The earlier sketch by Fernando Becerra, O. S. A., could not be made available. It was based upon the letter of Father John Thaddeus to Archbishop Meneses and the reports on the martyrs' deaths which had come to Manila ⁸⁾).

The two principal sources are supplemented by several letters of Father Melo's. One of them, written from Gilan in Persia on May 24, 1599 and addressed to the General of the Order, is contained in the Bibliotheca Angelica in Rome ⁹⁾). It is of special interest, as it certainly is the original copy. It is written in Italian, but signed in a different handwriting in Spanish. A copyist would hardly have employed another person for the signature. Besides, the letter shows all the original creases and stitchmarks through which the thread for sealing the letter had been passed. Doubtlessly,

valor histórico e informativo sobre los venerables mártires y debe prestársela toda la atención » (GOUVEA, *op. cit.* always refers to this work).

⁵⁾ EBIA V 376.

⁶⁾ L. LOCKHART, 'El glorioso triunfo de tres martires españoles', *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 18 (1931) 570 ff.

⁷⁾ EBIA III 268.

⁸⁾ F. BECERRA, O. S. A., *Relacion de el Martirio de el S. F. Hernando de S. Joseph, en Japon, y del S. F. Nicolas Melo en Moscovia, de la Orden de nuestro P. S. Agustin* (Bacolor 1618). Carlos Alonso, O. S. A., quotes this work in footnotes 11 and 19 of his very recent article « El P. Nicolás de Melo, O. S. A., Embajador y Martir ». *Missionalia Hispanica* XV (Madrid 1958) 219 ff. However, he does not give either folio or page.

⁹⁾ MS A-6-19 bound together with P. CHIRINO, S. J., *Dictionarium Sino-Hispanicum*. Appendix II. This letter arrived at Venice November 28, 1599. It was carried by Michael Angelo Corrai of Aleppo. E. D. ROSS, *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian adventure* (London 1933) 25 f. has the examination of Corrai at Venice. It is an interesting report on sending letters before postal service was established. Through Turkey Corrai carried his mail hidden between the stock and barrel of his arquebus. The Duke of Mantua reported on the arrival of this letter to the Spanish ambassador at Rome and the latter to the King of Spain (Letter of Sessa Vaena to King of Spain, *Archivo Historico Hispano-Agustiniiano* 17 [1922] 154 f. [This review will henceforth be quoted AHHA]).

therefore, we have here Father Melo's own handwriting and the signature shows his own spelling of his name. The latter point is of importance because the name has been handed down both as Melo and as Mello.

The rest of Father Melo's letters, preserved in the Archives of Simancas and published in the *Archivo Agustiniano*¹⁰⁾, are addressed to the King of Spain, to Cristobal de Mora, and to the Spanish ambassador at Rome. These three letters, and a few more¹¹⁾, all written before Father Melo's departure from Persia, describe the purpose of his mission in the Persian embassy to Europe.

After these letters had been received in Rome the Duke of Sessa Vaena, the Catholic King's ambassador, wished to obtain information on Father Melo's character and qualifications. Father Marquez, O. S. A., who had worked with Father Melo more than ten years in the Philippine Islands and just then happened to be in Rome¹²⁾, reported favorably on his conduct. The Duke of Sessa Vaena sent a summary of this report with a letter of his own to King Philip III. These documents are included among the letters of Father Melo.

Besides these sources there are a good many shorter biographical sketches on Father Melo¹³⁾, some of which have confused

¹⁰⁾ AHHA 17 (1922) 150 ff.

¹¹⁾ The letter of the ambassador Sessa Vaena to the King, AHHA 17 (1922) 154 f., mentions also letters Father Melo gave to Corrai addressed to Don Alvaro de Cortona, Juan de Ibarra, the Procurator General of the Order, and maybe also to the Pope (no se para el Papa). The letter to the Procurator General is also mentioned in Father Marquez' letter to Sessa Vaena AHHA 17 (1922) 156.

¹²⁾ For biographical notes on Father Marquez see EBIA V 231 f.

¹³⁾ e. g.: GASPAS SAN AGUSTIN, O. S. A., *Conquistas de las Islas Philipinas* (Madrid 1698) I 537 f. (In EBIA I 344 Santiago Vela discusses the controversy whether San Agustin copied Becerra's work (*supra* note 8) *ad pedem litterae*. This had been the opinion of A. M. DE CASTRO, O. S. A., *Osario Venerable*, [new ed. M. Merino, O. S. A., Madrid 1954] 132). T. HERRERA, O. S. A., *Alphabetum Augustinianum* (Madrid 1644) has two separate sketches: Nicholas of St. Augustin 179 f. and Melo 180 f.; J. OSSINGER, O. S. A., *Bibliotheca Augustiniana* (Ingolstadt 1768) 579; E. GARCIA, O. S. A., *Cronica de la Provincia Augustiniana del Santisimo Nombre de Jesus de Mexico* (Madrid 1918) V 138; E. J. PEREZ, O. S. A., *Catalogo Bio-bibliografico de los Religiosos Agustinos de la Provincia del Santisimo Nombre de Jesus de las Islas Filipinas* (Manila 1901) 27 ff.; G. MAIGRETIUS, O. S. A., *Martyrographia Augustiniana* (Munich 1628) 187 f. N. CRUSENIUS, *Monasticon Augustinianum* (Valladolid 1890) 166 ff.; J. LANTERI,

the two Nicholases and thus misinterpreted the chronology ¹⁴). From among them Father Grijalva's report in his chronicle of Mexico deserves to be emphasized ¹⁵), as it contains some details concerning Father Melo's years in Mexico, which are not found elsewhere.

Worthy of special mention are two biographical sketches on Brother Nicholas of St. Augustine. They were written by the two Jesuit missionaries Luis Pinheiro ¹⁶) and Nicholas Trigault ¹⁷). These authors wrote at a time when martyrs of Japanese descent were not yet too common. They extol in the person of the Augustinian Lay Brother the quality of Christians Japan is able to produce ¹⁸). Brother Nicholas may have been pointed out as an example to some of his suffering compatriots and may have been an inspiration to them in their hour of trial. The report of Pinheiro is especially valuable as it is based on the reports of Father John Thaddeus and the now lost relation of Father Melo on the imprisonment and death of Brother Nicholas ¹⁹).

Two manuscripts, found in the Archives of Simancas, hold a

O. S. A., *Postrema Saecula Sex Religionis Augustinianae* (Tolentino 1859) II 346; D. BARBOSA MACHADO, *Bibliotheca Lusitana* (Lisbon 1752) III 495; A. DE VASCONCELLOS, S. J., *Anacephalaeoses, id est, summa capita actorum regum Lusitaniae* (Antwerp 1621) 493 f.

¹⁴) e. g. CRUSENIUS, *loc. cit.*, and S. SAINT-MARTIN, *Histoire de la vie du glorieux Père St. Augustin... et de plusieurs Saints et saintes de son Ordre des Ermites* (Toulouse 1641) 717 ff.

¹⁵) J. DE GRIJALVA, O. S. A., *Cronica de la Orden de N. P. S. Augustin en las Provincias de la Nueva España desde el año de 1553 hasta el de 1592* (Reprinted Mexico 1926) 602 ff.

¹⁶) L. PINHEIRO, S. J., *Relacion del sucesso que tuvo nuestra santa fe en los reynos del Japon 1612-1615* (Madrid 1617) 446 ff.

¹⁷) N. TRIGAULT, S. J., *De Christianis apud Japonios Triumphis* (Munich 1623) 288 ff.

¹⁸) e. g. PINHEIRO, *op cit.* 446: « avia particular razón de consuelo, que se viesse que la gracia divina, no sólo es poderosa con los Japonés estando en sus tierras, donde a vista de sus parientes, y conocidos mueren con tanta constancia por Christo... »

¹⁹) *Ibid.* 477: « Todo lo que aqui se dixere assi del uno como del otro, se supo por muy ciertas informaciones, que los Padres de la sagrada Religion de S. Agustín, con muy exacta diligencia hizieron, y particularmete, por cartas que el mismo Padre Fray Nicolas escribió, refiriendo sus trabajos, y el martirio del mismo Japón, y también de otra del P. Fr. Juan Tadeo de San Eliseo... de las quales se sacó con fidelidad todo lo que se refiere ».

quaint place in the literature on Father Melo. They are letters written by Father Francisco d'Acosta to Pope Clement VIII ²⁰). The copies extant in Simancas were apparently prepared in Rome for the Court of Spain. This accounts for some typical Italian errors in spelling: che, orden, bone etc. The first one describes the embassy the Shah of Persia had sent to the Pope. The second document, a detailed report on Father Melo promised in the first letter, contains a number of moral charges which we shall consider in their proper place. The importance attached to these communications in Rome can be surmised from the fact an Italian résumé was prepared of both letters which today is available in the Secret Archives of the Vatican ²¹). While the originals are undated, the Italian transcript shows the date August 4, 1600 ²²).

In connection with Father da Costa's letters we must mention

²⁰) MS Archivo General de Simancas, K 1630 (C 36) fol. 69-70. Appendix III. D'Acosta (also de Costa and Da Costa) was a Goa-born ex-Jesuit. cf. A. GOUVEA, 'Histoire des grands Progrès de l'Eglise Catholique en Orient' (in S. SAINT-MARTIN, *op. cit.*) 146 b: « François de la Coste, qui avoit esté autrefois Jesuite ». Also: A. GOUVEA, *Relation des Grandes Guerres et Victoires obtenues par le Roy de Perse Cha Abbas* (Rouen 1640) 145: « En ce temps le P. François de Costa originaire de Goa estoy a Rome, lequel avoit esté outre fois de la Compagnie et en avoit esté rejeté depuis quelques années ».

²¹) MS A Simancas K 1630 (C 36) fol. 69 is contained in Arch. Vatic., Fondo Borghese, ser. II, vol. 20, fol. 158-159. Informatione di Francesco di Costa, Sacerdote Portugheze, venuto dall' India, alla Santità di Nro. Signore intorno all Ambasciata del Persiano.

MS B Simancas K 1630 (C 36) fol. 70 is in Arch. Vatic., Fondo Borghese, ser. II, vol. 20, fol. 160 and 167. Informatione di Francesco da Costa, Sacerdote Portugheze, venuto dall' India, alla Santità di Nostro Signore intorno di Fra Nicolò, Agostiniano. After this article was already in the printer's hands much new light was thrown on the origin of these manuscripts by C. ALONSO, O. S. A., 'Clemente VIII y la fundación de las misiones catolicas en Persia' *La Ciudad de Dios* 171 (Escorial 1958) 196 ff. Father Alonso found the diary of Cardinal Santorio, the head of the cardinalitial commission *de propaganda fide* under Pope Clement VIII, in the Archives of the Propaganda, Misc. com. vol. 17, fol. 86. From it we glean the following: On August 4, 1600 Cardinal Santorio received through Cardinal Aldobrandini the two Portuguese originals of Da Costa. After Santorio had read them he found them too obscure, and asked Da Costa to prepare the Italian résumé « more clearly and distinctly » so that the other Cardinals of the commission could understand what they contain. ALONSO, *loc. cit.*, 206.

²²) Both MSS mentioned in note 21) are signed in a different hand: « Accepi die IIII Augusti MDC., missam ab Illmo. et Revmo. Dno. Card. Aldobrandino ». ALONSO, *loc. cit.* 206 explains that this must be the hand of Cardinal Santorio.

an undated manuscript of the Fondo Borghese in the Vatican Archives. It is the interrogation of Alfonso Cordero, a Franciscan lay brother, who traveled in Father Melo's company from Goa to Moscow ²³). It consists of ten questions apparently drawn up for the Brother's examiner by the interested authorities, and the Brother's answers to these questions. Its great import for the biography of Father Melo is the refutation of one of the principal charges made against the martyr's character by Francisco da Costa.

We are extraordinarily well informed on Father Melo's journey from Persia into Russia. Several of his companions on this trip have left us their reports. The outstanding and most detailed among them is Don Juan de Persia's work *Relaciones* ²⁴). It was published 1604 at Valladolid. An English version was made available by Guy le Strange ²⁵). Don Juan was one of the private secretaries of the Persian ambassador Husejn Ali Beg. His Persian name was Urudsch and he assumed the name of Don Juan after his conversion to the Church. His narrative was dictated in Spanish from notes he had kept in Persian ²⁶). Don Juan cannot always be relied upon and in several instances he is in conflict with facts established through the available primary sources.

Next we have a number of reports from persons who traveled in the company of Sir Anthony Sherley, who had been appointed fellow ambassador of the Shah with Husejn Ali Beg. Of Sherley himself we have two letters. One is to be found among the letters of Father Melo in the Archives of Simancas ²⁷). The other letter written to Anthony Bacon February 12, 1600 is contained in the Public Record Office, Calendar of State Papers, Russia I, p. 121-

²³) MS Arch. Vat. Fondo Borghese III, 124 D, fol. 300^r-301^v (*infra* App. VI). Father Carlos Alonso, O. S. A., Rome, brought this MS kindly to my attention. This Franciscan companion of Melo is usually referred to as « Padre Alfonso ». This cannot be maintained. MS cit. n. 1 says plainly: « ... che é Lego ». Also MS Simancas K 1630 fol. 70: (*infra* App. III): « partio (Melo) em companhia de hum Padre Armenio da orden de S. Gregorio e vinha iuntamente com elle outro frade leigo da orden de S. Francisco ». Also SHERLEY, *His Relations* (*infra* App. V) 122: « In this time came unto me a Portingal Frier, named Alphonso Cordero, of the Order of the Franciscans Secular... ».

²⁴) DON JUAN DE PERSIA, *Relaciones de Don Juan de Persia divididas en tres libros donde se tratan las cosas notables de Persia* (Valladolid 1604).

²⁵) G. LE STRANGE, *Don Juan of Persia, a Shi'ah Catholic* (London 1926).

²⁶) ROSS, *op. cit.* xxiii.

²⁷) AHHA 17 (1922) 150 f.

127. It was published by Evelyn Sherley ²⁸). Anthony wrote further *His Relations of his Travels into Persia* (London 1613). In both these documents Anthony attempts to justify his shameful behavior towards Father Melo by vilifying him.

Not less biased are the reports of the members of Sherley's company on the journey, who left us their reports. Extant are the memoirs of William Parry ²⁹), George Manwaring ³⁰) and of the Frenchman Abel Pinçon ³¹). Recently Boies Penrose has combined the three narratives into one story, *The Sherleian Odyssey*, without, however, checking the reliability of his statements on Father Melo from other sources ³²).

Besides we have MS 4023 in the Harleian Library, *Genealogica Historia Domus Sherley*, written by the third Sherley Brother, Sir Thomas Sherley of Battlebridge in 1632. We have a partial English translation of this narrative by Maj.-Gen. Briggs, 'A short account of the Sherley Family' in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1841) 80ff.

To show that Father Melo is still given attention also outside the Augustinian Order it may be well to mention here a sketch by Paul Pierling ³³), an article by Lieut.-Col. Sir Arnold T. Wilson ³⁴),

²⁸) E. SHERLEY, *The Sherley Brothers, by one of the same House* (Chiswick 1848). Appendix IV.

²⁹) W. PARRY, *A new and large discourse on the travels of Sir Anthony Sherley, Knight, by Sea, and over Land to the Persian Empire* (ed ROSS, *op. cit.*, London 1933) 98-136.

³⁰) G. MANWARING, 'A true discourse of Sir Anthony Sherley's Travel into Persia', *Retrospectiv Review* 2 (1820), ROSS, *op. cit.*, 175-226.

³¹) A. PINÇON, *Relation d'un voyage de Perse fait és années 1598 et 1599 par un gentilhomme de la suite du Seigneur Scierley, Ambassadeur du Roy d'Angleterre* (Paris 1651). English translation in ROSS, *op. cit.*, 137-174.

³²) B. PENROSE, *The Sherleian Odyssey, being a record of the travels and adventures of three famous brothers during the reigns of Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I* (Taunton 1938). On page 81, note 2 he writes: « the dissolute friar, alternately but wrongly called a Don, Capuchin and Franciscan appears to have been born about 1545. First sent as missionary to Mexico and then to the Philippines, he was journeying home across Persia at this time, presumably returning to recruit more workers ». Yet in the text to which this very note refers he states that Melo had claimed to be a bishop in Spain. Penrose should have seen that his source of information was not reliable, as it is hardly conceivable that a bishop would be sent as a missionary to Mexico and then to the Philippines.

³³) P. PIERLING, *La Russie et le Saint-Siège* (Paris 1901) III 235.

³⁴) A. T. WILSON, 'Early Spanish and Portuguese Travellers in Persia', *Asiatic Review* 23 (1927) 138 ff.

and especially the well-documented account by Francisco Mendes da Luz in his work on the Council of India ³⁵⁾.

Early years

At least five Portuguese cities have been called the birthplace of Father Melo. He was most probably born at Belmonte ³⁶⁾, a town of Portugal, about the year 1548 ³⁷⁾. His father was Francisco Antúñez and his mother had been Isabel Moran, both belonging to the higher nobility of Portugal. We have but a scant insight into his life before he entered the Order. Gouvea relates that « he abandoned higher studies and came to New Spain. We do not know at what time this took place, but he must have been very young » ³⁸⁾.

³⁵⁾ F. P. MENDES DA LUZ, *O Conselho da India* (Lisbon 1952) 310 ff.

³⁶⁾ GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 4^r: Fue Melo y Cabral de los de Belmonte, lugar conocido en Portugal. En el nacio nuestro glorioso martir, aunque no se crio en el, sino en la villa de Cubillam, que es muy cercana. VASCONCELLOS, *op. cit.*, 494: ... Belmonte, onde sahiò à luz do mundo. Belmonte is also given as Melo's birth place by BARBOSA MACHADO, *op. cit.* III 495, and by MANOEL DA AVE MARIA [Ferreira], O. S. A., *Manual Eremitico da Congregação da India Oriental dos Eremitas de N. P. S. Agostinho* (publ. by A. DA SILVA REGO, *Documentação para a Historia das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente, India* 11 [Lisbon 1955] 296). John Thaddeus, *Ms cit.*, *infra* app. I, who apparently had his information from Melo himself, has Covillam, the town in which, according to Gouvea, Melo grew up. Gil Gonzalez Davila, the chronicler of Philip III, lets him be born at Coimbra (*Teatro de las Grandezas de Madrid corte de los Reyes Catolicos de España* [Madrid 1623] 57). MAIGRETIUS, *op. cit.* 179 has Lisbon. GRIJALVA, *op. cit.* 602, seconded by SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* I 538 with the words: « whom I give greater credit », says he was born at Corinchan. J. SICARDO, O. S. A., *Christiandad del Japon* (Madrid 1698) 40 b, and most recent authors make this opinion their own (e. g. EBIA V 373; PEREZ, *op. cit.* 27; GARCIA, *op. cit.* 139; DE CASTRO, *op. cit.* 246).

³⁷⁾ Without quoting their sources HERRERA, *op. cit.* II 181 gives 1548, and MAIGRETIUS, *op. cit.* 179 records 1549 as the year of Melo's birth, reckoning in all probability from the year of his death which, according to all sources, occurred in the 66th year of his life. At any rate they are close to the facts as Father da Costa writes in his letter (1599 or 1600), *MS cit.* fol. 70, *infra* app. III: « Era de nação hispanhol de sincoenta e tres, ou sincoenta e quatro años de idade ». According to EBIA V 373 several authors state that during his novitiate (1577-78) Melo was already 30 years old. This would bring us to 1547 or 1548. Assuming 1614 or early 1615 as the year of Melo's death and allowing that he died about 66 years old, we have again 1548 or 1549 as his birth date.

³⁸⁾ GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 4^r. Also SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* I 538: « No se sabe

This account is not worthy of much credit, for he is known to have served at the court of King Sebastian of Portugal ³⁹). Besides Father Marquez had known him at Seville in the employ of a merchant ⁴⁰). In 1577 he received the Augustinian habit at Puebla de los Angeles and « was during his year of probation the mirror of the whole convent » ⁴¹). On June 28, 1578, the first definite date in Father Melo's biography, he made his profession to Father Antonio de Mendoza, Prior of the venerable monastery ⁴²). It is interesting to note that he signed the conventual register of the professed using the maternal name of Moran ⁴³), although for reasons unknown to us he later on chose to be known as Melo. In 1581 he was « student

en què tiempo passasse à las Indias, però debì de ser muy mozo... », and SICARDO, *op. cit.* 40 b: « adonde (Mexico) le llevaron sus padres de muy tierna edad ».

³⁹) Letters of Marquez AHHA 17 (1922) 156 and of Melo to Cristobal de Mora, *ibid.* 153.

⁴⁰) AHHA 17 (1922) 156. From this detail C. ALONSO (*Missionalia Hispanica* XV 220) infers against the unanimous tradition that Melo could not have been of noble origin. In an age when fortunes were easily made and even more easily lost many a hidalgo died a poor man, more so in the Portugal of Melo's day during the change of the dynasties. It seems that Melo was distinguished by his loyalty to the royal house of Portugal. Cf. Anthony Sherley's statement (Letter to Anthony Bacon, Feb. 12, 1600, *infra* App. IV): « seing that he found that I was an Englishman of a nacyon so freindly unto Don Anthonio (the Prior of Crato) of which he was a nere member he desired not to trouble any business begoune by me... » The changing fortune of Portugal may have spelt a change in the circumstances of the Melo family and perhaps have been the reason for Melo's emigration to Mexico and the later change of his name.

⁴¹) SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* I 538.

⁴²) *Ibidem*, and GRIJALVA, *op. cit.* 602; DE CASTRO, *op. cit.* 246. Against these weighty authors, one from the Province of which Melo was a member, and the other two — San Agustin and de Castro — from the Philippines, Gouvea holds that Melo entered the Order in Spain, *op. cit.* fol. 4^r: « de donde (Covilham in Portugal) passò a Castilla, y en ella tomò el habito de la Orden de N. P. S. Agustin ». Still more remarkable is Manoel da Ave Maria, *op. cit.* 297., where he quotes as one of his references Faustino da Gama Graça, who correctly has in his *Brevilogio* n. 198 that Melo was a son of the Mexican Province, while Manoel follows the opinion of Gouvea.

⁴³) GRIJALVA, *op. cit.* 602, where he also proves the identity of the person who used both names, by adducing Fr. Lorenzo de Leon as witness, who was a fellow student of Melo's and later his companion in the Philippines. Also San Agustin heads his chapter on Father Melo, *op. cit.* 537: Del glorioso martyrio del P. Fr. Nicholàs Moràn, o Melo.

of Grammar » at the monastery of Aculma ⁴⁴). Father Grijalva assures us that during his student years he helped gladly with the work in the monastery kitchen ⁴⁵). In 1582, already a priest ⁴⁶), he went to the Philippines as a member of the mission led by Father Juan de Valderrama ⁴⁷).

In the mission field he showed the talents of a good missionary and able superior. He was profoundly religious and had a pleasing manner ⁴⁸). On arriving in the Philippines he studied the Bisaya language so assiduously that he soon was able to preach in it with great effect. He filled the office of Prior in Aclan and Antique ⁴⁹). In both mission stations he demonstrated his ability as a superior so thoroughly that he was transferred by the Provincial to the vicinity of Manila, where he could devote some of his energies to assisting in the administration of the Province. His work here was with the Tagalas, in whose language he also became very proficient and whom he served well for many years. Of his missionary success Father Gouvea tells us :

With his good knowledge of the language and his prayers and good example he produced much fruit. He is aware, as he told me one day, of having baptized 7000 pagans with his own hands ⁵⁰).

As an exemplary religious he was chosen Master of Novices at Manila ⁵¹), and in the Intermedium, celebrated August 29, 1597, he was appointed Procurator in both Curias, i. e. the official representative of the Philippine Province of the Order with the Holy See and the Spanish Court at Madrid, with the right to vote in the General

⁴⁴) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 40 b: « sus padres fueron Francisco Antuñez y Isabel Moràn, con cuyo apellido le hallé nombrado para el curso de Grammatica de nuestro convento de Acolman en el capitulo Provincial de Mexico el año de 1581 ».

⁴⁵) GRIJALVA, *op. cit.* 603.

⁴⁶) *Ibidem* and PEREZ, *op. cit.* 27. The assertion of EBIA V 373 that Melo went to the Philippines « sin haber terminado sus estudios » does not imply that he was not yet a priest at the time. GRIJALVA, *loc. cit.*, states plainly that he was ordained in Mexico. « Ordenose de sacerdote, y salió à pueblos de Indios con desseo de apprender la lengua Mexicana y llamavale Dios para mayores cosas... ».

⁴⁷) PEREZ, *loc. cit.* 27.

⁴⁸) SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* I 538.

⁴⁹) *Ibidem* and DE CASTRO, *op. cit.* 246.

⁵⁰) GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 5^r.

⁵¹) DE CASTRO, *op. cit.* 246.

Chapter ⁵²). This appointment of a new Procurator in the Intermedium was made necessary because the Fathers Juan Tamayo and Diego de Guevara, elected in the previous Provincial Chapter, had gone to Japan ⁵³). It can justly be said that Father Melo's fifteen years in the Philippine Islands were characterized no less by Christlike zeal than by extraordinary human ability.

Father Gouvea mentions that in those days the usual route for the voyage between the Philippines and Spain was to go by way of Mexico, but that in this instance the superiors thought Father Melo's business would be expedited if he would travel by way of India ⁵⁴). It may be that there was not another boat within a year for the trip to Acapulco in Mexico. Yet just as well the real reason for the superiors' choice may have been that Father Melo had already been appointed as the priest who was to accompany the candidates for Holy Orders to Macao or Malaca ⁵⁵), as there was no bishop in the Philippines. Father Marquez makes mention of this detail in his letter of recommendation, while omitting the fact that Father Melo had been elected Procurator. Father Marquez had

⁵²) SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* I 538; GRIJALVA, *op. cit.* 603 f.; DE CASTRO, *op. cit.* 246. The office of Procurator in both Curias and its importance is described by BERARDO MARTINEZ, O. S. A., *Apuntes Historicos* (Madrid 1913) 1 ff. and G. SANTIAGO VELA, 'Facultades de los antiguos Comisarios de Filipinas', *AHHA* 16 (1921) 92 ff.

⁵³) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 40 b; DE CASTRO, *op. cit.* 246. On the unexpected landing of the two Augustinians at Hirado aboard the ill-fated *San Felipe* in October 1596 see DE CASTRO, *op. cit.* 70 ff. and 502 f.

⁵⁴) Thus GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 5v.

⁵⁵) C. ALONSO (*Missionalia Hispanica* XV 221, note 20) affirms that at the time of Melo's arrival there was no Augustinian house at Malaca or Macao. LUBIN (*l. ibid. cit.*) does not warrant that statement. He only asserts that he found Macao and Malaca entered in the *Registra* of the General for the first time under the year 1604. M. DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 159 gives 1587 as the year of the foundation of Malaca, which is confirmed by the list of the Priors on the following page and in the biographical note on Fr. Luis do Paraizo, p. 238, during whose term as Provincial the foundation was made. Macao was accepted Apr. 25, 1587 by the Prov. Chapter of the Philippine Province and Francisco Manrique was made the first Prior (G. SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* 444; A. DE CASTRO, *op. cit.* 464; E. PEREZ, *op. cit.* 16) 1589 the house was transferred to the congregation of India at the request of the King of Spain. M. DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 161, list of Priors 163, and 238: « no anno de 1589 mandou (Luis de Paraizo) a Macau para tomar posse do dito convento de mão dos religiosos castelhanos da Provincia de Manila... ».

left the Philippines in July 1597 ⁵⁶⁾ and could not have known of the latter appointment. We have here just another of those little details which led Father Melo to a martyr's death. At any rate the superiors arranged to send the Father to Goa, from where he was to sail to Spain and return via Rome.

In Persia

Father Melo left Manila in November 1597 ⁵⁷⁾. His companions were the eighteen-year-old lay brother Nicholas of St. Augustine and a lay servant, perhaps a tertiary or an oblate of the Order, whose name has not been preserved. Brother Nicholas was a Japanese by birth. When he was but a child his family had migrated to Manila and had been converted to the Catholic faith by Father Melo. Out of veneration for the Augustinian the boy was given in Baptism the name of his spiritual Father. When he later entered the Order, he added to his baptismal name that of St. Augustine, made his novitiate under Father Melo's direction, and in 1597 he pronounced his vows in the monastery of St. Paul at Manila ⁵⁸⁾. These two Nicholases and the servant remained companions on their whole long and strange road to death for Christ.

Unluckily, when they arrived at Goa in 1598, the annual convoy from Portugal had not arrived. Since the season of favorable winds had gone by ⁵⁹⁾, there were no ships until the following year. To return to Europe by ship would thus entail more delay than Father Melo's business as Procurator permitted; accordingly, he chose to travel overland. Archbishop Alexius Meneses, O. S. A., the Primate of India, as well as the Viceroy, Count of Vidiguerra, aided him in making his arrangements. Meanwhile the Guardian of the Franciscan monastery at Goa, Father Simon of St. Francis, had

⁵⁶⁾ AHHA 17 (1922) 156: «ambos estuvieron en aquella provincia hasta el año de 1597 que el P. Marquez se bolvio a Mexico i le (Melo) dexo de partida para Malaca o Macao donde el Provincial le enviara con ciertos religiosos que ivan a ordenarse por no aver obispo en las Filipinas».

⁵⁷⁾ DE CASTRO, *op. cit.* 482.

⁵⁸⁾ SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* I 537. On the controversy concerning the date of the Brother's investiture and profession in the Order see DE CASTRO, *op. cit.* 482 n. 74 and 496 n. 92.

⁵⁹⁾ For optimum sailing date and hazards of the voyage see JAMES DUFFY, *Shipwreck and Empire* (Cambridge 1955) 95 ff.

approached Father Melo with the request to allow one of his lay brothers to join Melo's party on their way to Rome ⁶⁰). Thus Brother Alfonso Cordero, a Portuguese by birth, traveled with Father Melo and Brother Augustine and became their companion for more than a year.

Father Melo left Goa in February 1599 ⁶¹). From there he sailed to Ormuz, the Portuguese island emporium, where he intended to stop over. On his arrival he learnt of the presence of two ambassadors at the court of Shah Abbas I of Persia, who had been reported to be ambassadors of the King of Spain ⁶²). Resolving to travel with these ambassadors home to Spain Father Melo continued his journey in greatest haste, leaving Ormuz in the same month of February 1599 ⁶³). In April he arrived at Isfahan, the capital city of Shah Abbas, and heard that the two were not ambassadors, and much less Spaniards, but rather two English gentlemen. Just at the time of Father Melo's arrival the Shah was engaged in promoting a daring scheme of world diplomacy. While his predecessor, Shah Ismail I, had tried to seek a union with Charles V against the Turk ⁶⁴), Abbas attempted no less than an alliance of all the powers of Christendom with Persia in war against the restless and expanding Ottoman empire. He had suffered so much from Turkish aggression that he was eager for the friendship of European princes and consequently hospitable to all Christians ⁶⁵). Among the Europeans attracted to his court was a Venetian merchant by name of James Faba. He had learnt of the Father's arrival, and introduced him to the Shah. Abbas received him well and recognizing Father Melo as a man with avenues of access to the Pope and the King of Spain wooed him assiduously. He frequently invited him to the Palace, several times even for dinner, and listened to him atten-

⁶⁰) Interrogation of Br. Alfonso. MS Fondo Borghese III, 124 D, fol. 300^v, *Infra* App. VI, n° 4.

⁶¹) GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 7^r.

⁶²) This detail correctly reported both by Melo himself, letters to King of Spain, Don Cristobal de Mora, and Sessa Vaena, AHHA 17 (1922) 150, 152, 153, and by A. Sherley in his letter to Anthony Bacon (note 28 *supra*).

⁶³) MS Simancas K 1630 fol. 70: « De Ormuz partio em Fevereiro 1599 ».

⁶⁴) The correspondence between Ismail and Charles V is contained in K. LANZ, *Correspondenz des Kaisers Karl V* (Leipzig 1844) I 52 f., 168 f., 292-296.

⁶⁵) BRIGGS, *op. cit.* 88; GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 7^r: « el qual (Abbas) en los principios de su reynado favorecia estraordinariamente a los estrangeros y con mas particularidad a los Christianos, ocasion que traia muchos a su corte ».

tively. Although Father Melo was not the first friar in Persia ⁶⁶), he was the first the Shah met personally. He asked the Augustinian many questions as to his manner of life, and concerning the faith. Father Gouvea's account leads us to believe that the wily Mohammedan seemed on the brink of conversion. It is possible, too, that Father Melo envisioned how magnificently he might serve the Church by helping this near-Christian King find European allies against the Turkish infidel ⁶⁷). Since he was visiting Madrid and Rome anyhow, why should he not put in a good word for Persia? One wonders whether such reasoning combined with the prospect of a real role in the embassy moved Father Melo to ask the Shah to be appointed his ambassador to both courts ⁶⁸). In any case the blandishments of the Shah caused Father Melo to set his feet in a path leading to imprisonment, torture and death.

The trouble was that the Shah acted on the principle: the more ambassadors, the better. He had already appointed a Persian nobleman, Husejn Ali Beg, as his ambassador to the rulers of Europe ⁶⁹). Then there were in the Persian court at the time the two

⁶⁶) Father Simão da Conceição de Morais was there before him. MANOEL DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 231; AMBROSIUS A. S. THERESIA, *Hierarchia Carmelitana* (Rome) fasc. I 9; MENDES DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 309.

⁶⁷) This thought is suggested in Melo's letter to the General of the Order, app. II: « si vede in queste bande una pianetta che promette gran bene a tutta la Christianità... A questo negozio io non sono stato disutile benchè io lo trovassi ben incaminato ».

⁶⁸) Besides GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 8^r f., also the Persian report by Don Juan, LE STRANGE, *op. cit.* 233, states that Father Melo himself obtained the letters appointing him ambassador to the Pope and King of Spain. This is contradicted by Sherley who claims that he obtained the letters for Melo. Cf. Sherley's letter to A. Bacon, app. V *infra* « I told him... that he might make himself great, by bearing a part in such a holye servyce, therefore that I would procure him a perticuler lettre bothe to the Pope and King of Spayne in which he should have equall authoritye with me ». There is no evidence for the statement of MENDES DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 312, that Cordero had received letters to the King of Spain and the Holy See together with Melo. It was Melo's appointment as fellow ambassador with Sherley, and consequently his special place in the embassy, which aroused the displeasure of Sherley towards him. His attitude towards the Franciscan was altogether different. See his praise of him towards the end of App. V *infra*.

⁶⁹) To a great extent this reasoning of the Shah's was caused by his ignorance of European conditions. Cf. MS Fondo Borghese III, 124 D, fol. 300^v, *infra* App. VI: « praticando alcuna volta con loro (the Persian Ambassadors) intese, che il suo Re non sa, che sia Inghilterra, ne Fiandra, ne Re di Spagna, ne tiene più notitia di loro, che i soli titoli,... ».

above mentioned English adventurers, the Sherley brothers, Sir Anthony and Sir Robert. Their father Thomas had been a distinguished figure at the court of Queen Elizabeth. Their mother had remained attached to the Catholic faith. Anthony had been closely associated with the ill-starred Earl of Essex and had spent a good deal of his father's fortune in the Dutch wars, so that Sir Thomas the Elder had been imprisoned as a bankrupt by order of the Queen ⁷⁰). In December 1598 the two knights had presented themselves to the Shah as cousins of James VI of Scotland ⁷¹). They had already proved their worth as military advisers, and now Sir Anthony wanted to represent the Shah before the crowned heads of Europe. The Shah had meanwhile entrusted his noble Husejn with the same mission, but thought it a fine idea to send the worldly-wise Sir Anthony along as fellow ambassador. The much traveled Englishman soon began to take the leading part. When finally the Shah asked also Father Melo to be his representative at the courts of the Pope and the King of Spain there were necessarily aspects of rivalry in the situation that the priest was perhaps too unworldly to appreciate ⁷²). Thus he was to lose not only his life, but his good name as well.

⁷⁰) *A Chronicle of the Camelites in Persia* (London 1939). The work is anonymous, but the author's presentation copy to the Discalced Carmelites in Rome gives his name on the fly-leaf: Chick Herbert (This information by courtesy of the Rev. F. X. Martin, O. S. A., Suffolk, England). Vol. I 69 quotes Fondo Borghese, ser. II, 20 in translation: « He (Anthony) began to roam the seas with several ships, and in the year 1595 left with seven ships for the Indies, seized a certain port, but obtained little money from it. So much of his father's money had he spent on the Dutch wars and through this expedition that Sir Thomas the elder became bankrupt, and the Queen put him in prison, where he still is, while the exchequer has seized his property ». *Cal. of State Papers, Dom. Ser., 1598-1601* (ed. M. A. Everett Green, London 1869) 130: His (Anthony's) father, Sir Walter, is in the fleet prison, having fallen into the hands of old creditors, who caught him at Lambeth.

⁷¹) LE STRANGE, *op. cit.* 232: (Anthony said) that all the Kings of Europe had recognized him as such (James' cousin) and had now empowered him as their ambassador to treat with the King of Persia, who should make a confederacy with them in order to wage war against the Turk ».

⁷²) Corrai, better versed in the ways of the world than Melo, sensed the situation which had arisen even before the embassy had left the Persian soil. When he arrived with Anthony's and Melo's letters at Venice, he was questioned by the Signoria of Venice among other things also on the importance of the various ambassadors. He replied: « Among these there is one Assan Ali Beg, a

Father Melo was mercilessly slandered in Sir Anthony's letters to England. Also the Englishmen traveling in his company, who left us accounts of the journey, presented a thoroughly Protestant « wicked friar » account, accusing him of gross immorality, misuse of the confessional, and even violation of the seal, all favorite topics in the days of the English Reformation, in order to justify Sir Anthony's behavior towards him.

More damaging to Father Melo's reputation was the gossip that emanated from the ex-Jesuit Francisco da Costa. This itinerant priest, a native of Goa, had known the Augustinian during his stay in India. Just at the time when the first reports on the probability of a favorable disposition of the Shah of Persia towards Christianity were circulated in Rome ⁷³) he happened to arrive in the eternal city. To further his own ambition he composed at Rome the two above mentioned letters to Pope Clement VIII ⁷⁴). By intermingling truth with his sinister insinuations and by adducing persons, who

man of standing. Nevertheless this man may not command anything, because everything is ordered according to the will of the said Antonio and of a Portuguese friar, I believe of the Franciscan or Capuchin order, who is called Friar Nicolao Demego, and even he obeys the orders and commands of Signor Antonio; in lodging and at table ». ROSS, *op. cit.* 26.

⁷³) A consequence of the letters Angelo Corrai had brought from Persia (*supra* note 9) and the letters the Bishop of Pistoia had sent to some Cardinals of the Roman Curia. Cf. GOUVEA, *Relation des Grandes Guerres* 140 ff., part of which is extant in English translation in ROSS, *op. cit.* 31 ff. Also ALONSO, *La Ciudad de Dios* 171 198 ff. While the Pope entertained high hopes for an alliance between the King of Persia and the Christian Princes a Persian merchant, Assad Beg, arrived at Venice who claimed to have been sent by the Shah to report home how the Persian ambassadors were being received. He carried letters from the Shah to the *Signoria* of Venice. Some Portuguese merchants recognized him and one of them, Diego de Miranda, introduced him to the Bishop of Pistoia, who was fond of hearing reports on the countries of the East. Assad Beg told the bishop of the Shah's readiness to receive Catholic missionaries into Persia and that the Shah his family were ready to become Christians. Gouvea (*ibid.*) points out how exaggerated, and even wrong, these reports were. However, Assad declared himself willing to go to Rome to inform His Holiness and to receive Baptism in witness of the truth of what he had said. The Bishop of Pistoia approved the plan, but the Doge of Venice, fearing the news might spread that the Shah had sent him an ambassador, thwarted the matter and made Assad Beg embark for Persia against his will. The Bishop of Pistoia, then, sent Miranda with a full report of all that had happened, to Rome.

⁷⁴) *Supra* note 21.

had known Father Melo, he produced a certain semblance of credibility which took even the authorities in Rome unawares ⁷⁵).

While on his way to Rome on a Holy Year visit da Costa had met an Armenian priest at Isfahan who figures also in Sherley's report. This priest had traveled with Father Melo from Ormus and served as his interpreter ⁷⁶), but had not been invited to join the embassy on its way to Europe. He may well have been on fire with jealousy and may have made some statements detrimental to his former employer.

According to da Costa the Armenian priest had stated that Father Melo carried 5000-6000 *scudi* worth of diamonds and rubies to use them as presents for the Shah and other princes, and

« he pretended with all the princes of being Procurator of your Holiness and the Catholic King, and stated that he was sent by them, and, in order to confirm this fact, he lived splendidly » ⁷⁷).

Apparently this is misquoting the friar who may have said quite correctly that he was sent as Procurator to His Holiness and the

⁷⁵) Also PASTOR, *Geschichte der Päpste* XI (Freiburg 1927) 222 & 490 was not able to sift truth from falsehood, e. g. 490: « Im Herbst 1600 berichtete der portugiesische Jesuit Francisco da Costa dem Papst, der Schah sei den Christen sehr wohl gesinnt... ».

⁷⁶) MSS of Simancas, app. III *infra*. How da Costa gained access to Clement VIII through the Spanish Ambassador, the Duque of Sessa, and the ambassador of the Catholic King, and exerted his influence upon the Pope is related in A. GOUVEA, *Relation des Grandes Guerres* 145 f. ALONSO, *loc. cit.* 204, adds the revealing detail that da Costa had to commit the character assassination of Father Melo and the Persian ambassador in order to be appointed ambassador of the Pope to Persia. Gouvea's own estimate of the reliability of D'Acosta's report is contained in his words: « De cecy (from the fact that Da Costa was a free lance, without responsibility to any one) on peut colliger combien ces informations contenoient de verité ». GOUVEA, *Relation* 146. MS Arch. Vat., Fondo Borghese, ser. II, vol. 20, fol. 125: Ex relatione Petri Antonii Abioso... de Fre. Emmanuele de Sanctis, O. P., Portugallensis: « Dice il predetto frate che col Persiano era anco un frate di S. Gregorio di Gierusalem, Armeno, che si chiamava frate Nicolao, il quale era venuto da Ormuz con un altro frate di S. Agostino, chiamato fra Nicolao Melo, che si era partito col ambasciatore Inglese (D. Antonio)... ». MS Fondo Borghese, ser. II, vol. 20, fol. 160 (note 21 *supra*) says that Melo used the Armenian priest as interpreter. The Portuguese original is silent on this detail.

⁷⁷) Translated from the Italian résumé, MS Fondo Borghese, ser. II, vol. 20, fol. 160: « Con tutti i Re e Capitani si faceva Procuratore di V. Beatitudine e del Re Catolico, affermando d'esser stato spedito da loro per quelle parti, dalle quali tornava, et per dar più riputatione alla cosa, viveva splendidamente ».

King of Spain. We cannot easily assume that, while Melo introduced himself accurately to da Costa himself at Goa ⁷⁸⁾, he acted differently at Isfahan. The charge of living splendidly has been made more than once by natives against missionaries from Europe, who applied to them the yardstick of their own very simple economy. At any rate, neither da Costa nor the Armenian should have made a point of the diamonds Father Melo was carrying as they were well acquainted with the high traveling expenses of their own day ⁷⁹⁾.

The Armenian priest continues that Father Melo came to Isfahan, dwelled with the English ambassadors, futher, that the Shah received him and appointed him his Procurator with the Pope and the King of Spain. Presents were exchanged between Melo and the Shah, the latter presenting the friar with a golden cross, which was adorned with diamonds and rubies worth more than 2000 scudi. He reports then that Father Melo praised the Englishmen as good Christians and states that the King was satisfied until the friar had left.

The report continues with severe moral charges against the Augustinian, namely that on his travels he had not lived as a Christian and much less as a religious,

« for he ate meat during Lent and had escapades with women and with a servant, and at Isfahan he had become a scandal to all, because he was seen entering a house of ill fame. He had purchased two young Armenian Christians whom he abused. When they could not bear it any longer they went to the King and complained. But he (the King) did nothing about it as he considered him a Procurator of your Holiness and had nominated him as his own » ⁸⁰⁾.

Moreover, the Armenian relates, Robert Sherley, who had remained as hostage in Persia, had produced credential letters drawn up by the Augustinian to the effect that he and his brother Anthony were Catholics and that as such they were to travel. As to this accu-

⁷⁸⁾ MS Simancas K 1630 fol. 70: « Este frade eu ò vi e conheci em Goa... veio a Goa das Philippinas, dizendo que vinha por Procurador das Philippinas, e que traha negocios con vuestra Santidade e con el Rei de Hispanha ».

⁷⁹⁾ For his own trip to Persia da Costa asked and received from the Pope the grant of 4000 scudi and did not get along on it. Cf. Fondo Borghese, ser. II, vol. 20, fol. 219-228, quoted from the English translation in *Carmelites in Persia* I 90 f.

⁸⁰⁾ MS Simancas K 1630 fol. 70, *infra* App. III.

sation it is very probable that Anthony joined the Church of his mother in 1598 ⁸¹⁾ and we have proof that Sir Robert lived in public as a Catholic, received Confession and Communion and attended church services. He had even his Moslem slave baptized « persuaded by the Augustinian Fathers » ⁸²⁾.

Da Costa finally overreached himself when he claimed to have received a letter from Brother Alfonso, the Franciscan, « written near Moscow » ⁸³⁾, which supposedly he sent to the Armenian who was to sent it on to his (Alfonso's) superior in India. The Armenian, guessing at its contents, had opened it and « gave it to me for translation as it was written in Portuguese ». The contents were of such a nature that they resolved to destroy it, « lest it offend the ears of your Holiness and our respect towards the Order of St. Augustine ». In retrospect it is not easily understood how the officials of the Secretariat of State could be taken in by this web of intrigue ⁸⁴⁾. The travel conditions of the time made it practically impossible for a

⁸¹⁾ E. SHERLEY, *op. cit.* 3, has that Anthony's father deserted the Catholic faith and became a Protestant in 1578, when Anthony, born in 1565, was already 13 years of age. May it be too far off the road to venture the opinion that Anthony, whose mother « had always remained attached to the Catholic religion » (*Carmelites in Persia* 69), may have been baptized in the Catholic faith? He seems to have presented himself as Catholic or Protestant as the occasion demanded. Father Parson writes from Rome to « one Eure in England » (E. SHERLEY, *op. cit.* 32 f.): « He (Anthony) denyeth himselfe to have been a Protestant ever since his first being at Venice for yet there he was reconciled, as he sayth, by D. Tourant now dead ». Could we also read into the word *reconciled* the meaning that Anthony returned to a faith he had once possessed?

⁸²⁾ *Carmelites in Persia* I 143.

⁸³⁾ This detail appears only in the Italian résumé, MS Fondo Borghese, ser. II, vol. 20, fol. 160: « Dapoi, io lessi una lettera che il suddetto francescano, compagno di fra Nicolò, scriveva da un loco preso Moscovia... ».

⁸⁴⁾ However in vindication of Pope Clement VIII it should be made plain that the Pope himself did not trust da Costa. Cf. GOUVEA, *Relation des Grandes Guerres* 145 f.: « Or ayant eu cognoissance de la relation que Diego de Miranda avoit apportée au Cardinal S. George et à sa Sainteté, il (da Costa) dressa aussi un memoire de sa part lequel par le moyen et la faveur du Duc de Seza pour lors Ambassadeur du Roy Catholique parvint és mains de sa Sainteté lequel (selon la confession mesme de ceux qui apportèrent le brefs) fut tousiours plein de doutes e ce fait, comme le tesmoignent les paroles du brief qu'il fit expedier au Roy de Perse. Mais comme Pasteur prudent il ne voulut pas qu'on luy pust reprocher d'avoir rien negligé en une chose si importante au service de Dieu voyant combien il se reconroit de circonstances qui obligeoient à donner quelque croyance à ce qui se raportoit par des moyens si considerable ».

letter to get from Moscow to Persia in the short time elapsed between the arrival of the embassy at Moscow and the departure of da Costa from Persia. How is it that no one asked where the Franciscan could obtain information on Father Melo's conduct in the Philippines ? How it happened that nobody became wary of the fact that a man hired as interpreter for a Portuguese traveler needed somebody else to read and interpret a filched letter to him which was written in Portuguese ?

It is to be regretted, and it certainly has harmed the cause of our martyr, that Father da Costa, driven by ambition, allowed his imagination to see things out of proportion and to report them without further investigation. A recent critic of his influence in Rome speaks of « the importance attached to the imaginative fictions of this itinerant priest » and adds : « How much responsibility Father da Costa must bear for all the sequel of misunderstanding in Rome » ⁸⁵). Perhaps this is ascribing too much weight to da Costa. In all probability he would not have succeeded to prevail upon Clement VIII and his Secretariat of State unless the road had been prepared by the Bishop of Pistoia, Octavio Abbioso, who had already passed on to Rome information he had received from a Persian merchant at Venice, which had contained the same information of the Shah's readiness to embrace the faith ⁸⁶).

By a strange coincidence Alfonso Cordero is used also by the English group of the embassy to besmirch Melo's character. Anthony Sherley writes in his letter to Bacon that he himself « undertook to divide the other friar, his companion from him (the Franciscan) » ⁸⁷). Small wonder that Abel Pinçon relates :

« It seems to me that mortal hatred had grown up between the two friars, to such an extent that the Franciscan Alfonso laid all his colleague's misdeeds before Sherley telling him how Fra Nicolao had spent his life most lewdly in the Indies, how Philip of Spain had banished him because he was so bad an influence and finally how he had cozened a gift from a friend at Ormuz which he had given to Abbas as a present from himself. These relations caused the Englishman to throw Nicholas into irons » ⁸⁸).

In reporting this seizure of Father Melo Sherley wrote to Bacon

⁸⁵) *Carmelites in Persia* I 80.

⁸⁶) Cf. note 73 and ALONSO, *La Ciudad de Dios* 171 198 ff.

⁸⁷) E. SHIRLEY, *op. cit.* 24, *infra* App. IV.

⁸⁸) B. PENROSE, *op. cit.* 88.

« for male or female of all sorts I think under heaven there lives no such a villain »⁸⁹). He adds that he undertook the arrest easily « and with good confidence because I was in a country in league with my mistress, and where his master is not so much as known »⁹⁰).

It is very hard to assume that the Provincial Definitorium of the Philippines elected a man of such description as Procurator in both Curias, « an office next in importance only to being Provincial »⁹¹). It is especially difficult to see how it would send a man to represent it at the court of a King who had banished him. May it be too far-fetched to submit that Anthony, who admittedly « put the friars against each other », spread the imagined misdeeds of Melo ? The maze of fancy tales which originated in the English quarter of the embassy points to the fact that Sherley was very successful in justifying the murderous attempts he would make upon the priest. Brother Alfonso was given ample opportunity to voice any complaints he had against Father Melo during his interrogation at Rome. He was asked expressly to say what he knew about Melo. In his replies we do not even find a hint of a tension between him and Melo and much less of unbecoming conduct on the part of the Augustinian⁹²).

Further, Father Marquez who had spent years with him in the missions praises his virtuous life there⁹³) and the Augustinian writers Gaspar San Agustin, who had facilities to get firsthand information on him in the Philippines, and above all Gouvea, who lived in the very years in Persia when the reported information was circulated, speak of him in the highest terms. Of greater significance is the Carmelite, John Thaddeus of St. Eliseus, who made efforts to free Melo at Moscow, and lived with him over two years at Astrakhan near the end of the martyr's life. He became Father Melo's most important biographer, and certainly would not have commended him as highly as he did, had he given any credence to

⁸⁹) E. SHIRLEY, *op. cit.* 24, *infra* App. IV.

⁹⁰) *Ibidem.*

⁹¹) MARTINEZ, *op. cit.* 2: « La mision estaba expuesta a un sinnúmero de contratiempos y suponía tal trabajo y delicadeza en la quasi totalidad de las gestiones, que bien puede decirse ser aquel cargo de una responsabilidad nada inferior a la de los mismos Provinciales ».

⁹²) MS Fondo Borghese ser. III, 124 D, fol. 300^r f. *infra* App. VI.

⁹³) AHHA 156.

the rumors with which his long stay in Persia doubtlessly had acquainted him. The best character witness for Father Melo, however, is the perseverance of his two converts, the Japanese lay brother and the other servant, whom he could inspire to the death of martyrdom. If the saying is true that nobody is a hero to his valet, then Father Melo passed this test well.

We might also add that Father Melo's time at Isfahan was very limited ⁹⁴). He came in greatest hurry from Ormuz, in order not to miss the reputed Spanish ambassador and arrived when the embassy was about to leave. Brother Alfonso avers in his interrogation that Melo spent only a few days with the Persian King ⁹⁵). With all the official business of making contacts and introducing himself to the Sherleys and the Shah there was not much time for stylish living and visiting bawdy houses. Regrettably, some thrown mud always sticks. And some did stick to the reputation of Father Melo.

Sir Anthony had arranged with the Augustinian that the priest and his party were to leave the embassy once Russia had been reached and were to travel in advance of them. When agreement had been reached they called upon Shah Abbas and asked his consent. This the Shah granted gladly, and when he had been informed of Father Melo's plan to go in advance of the others he gave to the Father letters addressed to the Pope and the King of Spain. The Shah asked him also to keep the princes well disposed towards his ambassadors, so that they would receive them in better spirit. On this occasion the Shah gave to Father Melo the above mentioned golden cross and a tassel from his headpiece ⁹⁶). The Englishman, however, was not well pleased with these arrangements of the Shah. Gouvea writes that :

« he was under the impression that the priest would impair the authority of his embassy and reap all the benefit which he wished to obtain, as he came to the various courts before him. Yet outwardly he pretended to be well pleased with the company of Father

⁹⁴) How long leisurely travel would have taken we see e. g. in Fondo Borghese, ser. II, vol. 20, fol. 125 where Pietro Abioso relates that the Dominican E. de Sanctis left Goa in February 1599 (perhaps with Father Melo or at about the same time) and arrived at Isfahan in June, after Melo had already left.

⁹⁵) MS Fondo Borghese III, 124 D, fol. 300^v, n° 3: « dapoi di essere stato là alcuni di ».

⁹⁶) Melo's letters to the King of Spain and C. de Mora, AHHA 151 and 152.

Nicholas, as he was convinced that on such a long journey opportunity would not be lacking to take the letters from the Father and even his life. He would certainly have done so, as he also stabbed the Moslem ambassador. He was very anxious to carry the embassy alone and get all the credit for the good news he bore and the benefits it would bring »⁹⁷⁾.

Journey to Moscow

Towards the end of April, 1599⁹⁸⁾ the expedition left Isfahan on its way to Russia. Father Melo's business would have been

⁹⁷⁾ GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 7^r f. Also the Persian report emphasizes that Melo obtained these letters himself (LE STRANGE, *op. cit.* 233). Contrasting with these details is the report of Sherley. A. SHERLEY, *His relations*, 122 ff.; E. SHERLEY, *op. cit.* 24, App. IV; (*supra* note 65). See also Manwaring's report in ROSS, *op. cit.* 224, where Melo is introduced as Bishop of Aromause (Hormuz) who asked of Sherley that he obtain him the favor from Abbas that « he might go in his own weed or habit » which favor « Sir Anthony did obtain of the King ». A very interesting remark was made by the Armenian interpreter of Melo to da Costa (MS Simancas K 1630 fol. 69, *infra* App. III). As soon as Sherley had met Melo he asked the friar to put him into the good graces of the Shah, and above all not to tell him that he was a Protestant. On this condition he would take him to Europe on his own expense (« Agasalhado o frade com os Ingleses pediolhe dom Antonio, o quisesse abonar e acreditar com o Rej e lhe não dissesse que elle era contra a igreja Romana, porque elle era muito bom Catholico... E que elle o levaria a o Rej... e tambem o levaria a Europa em sua companhia sem elle fazer ninhuma despesa »).

⁹⁸⁾ Boies PENROSE, *op. cit.* 82. Gouvea has (*op. cit.* fol. 7^r) : « partio de Goa en Febrero de 99 y en Junio del mismo año llego a la ciudad de Aspan ». Pier Duodo, the Venetian Ambassador to Germany, *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Venetian Series*, vol. IX, 427, doc. 922 written Oct. 23, 1600: « They (Anthony and his party) left Isfahan on the 24th of May, 1599, and travelling by Kaswin and Gilan they came to Rudsir (Rudesar) on the Caspian Sea ». Don Juan de Persia (LE STRANGE, *op. cit.* 234) gives July 9, 1599 as the date of departure from Isfahan. Neither of the last three can be right. Father Melo's letters from Gilan in Persia, AHHA 17 (1922) 150 ff. are dated May 24th. Corrai interviewed by the Signoria in Venice, *supra* note 72, was asked whether he knew when Signor Sherley was to leave Persia and which route he could take. He replied: « He (Anthony) was to leave 6 days after me, and was to go by the route of Muscovy ». To reach Gilan required many a day. We have a detailed report of Juan de Persia (LE STRANGE, *op. cit.* 235): « The journey from Isfahan to Kashan occupied us four days. We rested there and went on to the town of Qum. The next morning we reached the city of Savah. From Savah we travelled during three days, coming to the city of Qazwin. We remained there eight days to procure certain gifts ». From Qazwin they traveled in five days to Gilan. They were in port ten days

better served by a journey through Turkish territory to the Mediterranean, but such a route was impossible for a political mission from the Persian Government which had the purpose of seeking an alliance against the Turk. The group was comprised of the official ambassador Husejn Ali Beg's four secretaries and fifteen servants, Sir Anthony with five interpreters and fifteen Englishmen, and Father Nicholas Melo with Brother Nicholas and a servant, and Brother Alfonso Cordero. Thirty-two camels were laden with the presents of the Shah to the princes of Europe, « besides the needful number of riding horses »⁹⁹). For the first few days, as far as Dawlatabad, the Shah accompanied the caravan with Sir Robert Sherley and fifteen other Englishmen who had remained in Persia as hostages¹⁰⁰).

Husejn, who missed the caravan at Isfahan, finally joined it at a Caspian Sea port (possibly at or near Resht)¹⁰¹) where they had been waiting for him. Their first attempt to cross the Caspian Sea, beginning in early July, was frustrated by unfavorable winds that drove them back to Gilan. On their second try they reached the Mangyshlak peninsula, where they were becalmed and accepted the hospitality of the native Tartars for a fortnight while they waited for a wind favorable to the continuation of their voyage. When

while the necessary preparations were made. Pinçon adds this detail (ROSS, *op. cit.* 165) « We had with us letters patent from the King addressed to a merchant of Rudassen (Rudesar, a town of Gilan) who has control of all the traffic of the Caspian Sea, commanding him to equip a vessel immediately and to furnish it with a good pilot, with provisions and with everything of which we might have need. This was performed in seven to eight days » Therefore the caravan must have left Isfahan towards the end of April or early in May. This agrees with the statement of da Costa, Fondo Borghese, ser. II, vol. 20, fol. 158, « Giunsi ad Aspan a XII di Luglio passato (1599)... il quale (Anthony) due mesi avanti il mio arrivo in Aspan, si partì per Europa ».

⁹⁹) LE STRANGE, *op. cit.* 234.

¹⁰⁰) L. BELLAN, *Chah Abbas I, sa vie, son histoire* (Paris 1932) 97. BRIGGS, *Journ. R. As. Soc.* (1841) 97: « So we took leaves of Isfahan, and the King brought us two days journey. The King kissed Sir Anthony three or four times, and kissed us all, and said, that if we did return again, we should receive great honour ». Before they left « his Majesty had already granted the needful credits with orders for cash to pay our travelling expenses, and the same was done for the Englishmen, all to be thus defrayed at the charge of the King of Persia (LE STRANGE, *op. cit.*, 234).

¹⁰¹) Manwaring and Pinçon suggest it was perhaps Lenkoran (PENROSE, *op. cit.* 82, note 2).

the winds became somewhat less adverse they began to battle their way close inshore to the mouth of the Volga, which they reached in early September. Abel Pinçon adds this detail of interest to one of his reports on the storms they encountered :

« On one particular day we were assailed by such a storm, such heavy rain and so devilish a wind that many of my companions, who had sailed the greater part of the Indies and the European seas, said they had never seen the like ; one of our helms was broken and we were nigh capsizing in the confusion. One heard a dreadful medley of voices and prayers. We of the Religion prayed in one way ; there were some Portuguese monks who threw figures of the *Agnus Dei* into the sea to appease it, and muttered certain words, repeating « Virgin Mary », « St. John », and the *In Manus*. The Mohammedans invoked : « Ali, Ali, Mahoet », but instead of all these I feared that the devil come and carry this rabble to hell. But when we had been three hours in this storm God cast on us His eye of pity and delivered us » ¹⁰²).

Don Juan adds for his countrymen :

« We Persians are so entirely unused to seafaring, that most of us were either unapprehensive of either danger and death. We laughed heartily at the Portuguese friars, who had fallen to weeping, being prepared to die » ¹⁰³).

At the mouth of the Volga they transferred themselves and their goods into galleys, in which they were rowed up river to Astrakhan. They arrived in mid-September. Because the Governor was taking his siesta they were obliged to await his pleasure, and they waited not in a palace anteroom, but in a bustling and malodorous market place. Such treatment of the ambassadors of a sovereign by a provincial governor seems almost unbelievably offensive and provocative, but in this case it reflected nothing worse than the complacency of an unimaginative bureaucrat ; when the great man awoke he received them amiably and saw to it that they were comfortably lodged ¹⁰⁴).

¹⁰²) ROSS, *op. cit.* 167. The Portuguese friars seem to have carried the *Agnus Dei* for emergencies on the sea (cf. DUFFY, *op. cit.* 115).

¹⁰³) LE STRANGE, *op. cit.* 236.

¹⁰⁴) Abel Pinçon (ROSS, *op. cit.* 165) seems to have taken the whole affair in stride: « On the fourteenth or fifteenth of September the heat was excessive, and we were so afflicted and stung by gnats and midges that, in my opinion, the road from the garrison to Astrakhan was a veritable hell. I was sent on ahead to

After two weeks ¹⁰⁵⁾ he sent them on to Moscow. On October second they set out in five *stroogs*, 150 ton barges propelled by oars and sails, which had been furnished at the expense of the Tsar ¹⁰⁶⁾. Whenever the oarsmen tired they stopped rowing and the *stroogs* were made fast to the shore, with the result that the 1300 mile journey took seven weeks. They were also accompanied by an escort of one hundred soldiers. These kept watch at night while the passengers slept in the fields ¹⁰⁷⁾. When the wind blew down the river their horses were used to tow the galleys with long ropes.

During the journey murderous thoughts were growing in Sherley's head ; in fact, we have record of two attempts by Sherley against the life of the Augustinian friar. Sherley's predominant motive seems to have been fear that Father Melo, proceeding to Europe while he himself was still negotiating with the Russian Court, would arrive in the other great capitals ahead of him and steal his glory ¹⁰⁸⁾. A secondary motive was that of the common robber. According to a story that Gouvea had from the mouth of Husejn, Sherley made one attempt during a stop on the riverbank :

The Englishman who wanted to get rid of him (Melo) looked for an occasion when he could do so unseen by the rest of the company. One day the two went apart from the rest walking along the riverbank and talked to each other. They kept on walking far enough to be out of earschot. When Sherley believed himself to be out of sight, he pushed Father Nicholas into the water and held him under. By mere chance Ali Beg, the Persian ambassador, was near the spot, unaware that somebody had preceeded him. He found the priest half dead at the hands of the Englishman who with some

announce the arrival of the ambassador from Persia to the governor of the place. It was an hour after noon when I arrived. I think that everyone in the town was asleep, excepting these who could not rest for hunger, for it is the custom of the country of this great prince to sleep from noon until four o'clock, when the bells begin to sound vespers... We had to wait in the middle of the public square, surrounded by a great crowd of idlers who took much delight in gazing on us, until the governor should awake ».

¹⁰⁵⁾ LE STRANGE, *op. cit.* 241 : « We remained 16 days at Astrakhan ».

¹⁰⁶⁾ ROSS, *op. cit.* 172. The Englishmen and the friars traveled in one boat, Husejn and his party in another, Pir Quli Beg, the Shah's official ambassador to the Tsar, required three boats for his numerous train and bulky freight (ROSS, *op. cit.* 24).

¹⁰⁷⁾ LE STRANGE, *op. cit.* 243.

¹⁰⁸⁾ GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 10^r f.

of his followers was drowning him. There is no doubt had he come a little later he could have been of but little help, as the priest already lacked strength to get out of the river, and had much less strength to defend himself against his enemies. When these saw the ambassador coming they left him in the water and tried to hide among the trees ¹⁰⁹).

The Moslem shocked at such wickedness pulled the Father from the river and had him brought into his boat. Gouvea adds the detail, of interest because the slanders against Father Melo pretend that the Shah was very angry with him on account of his wicked deeds and would have put him to death but for Sherley's intercession :

« As he (Husejn Ali Beg) knew the trust his King had placed in him, he walked ahead of the Father out of precaution » ¹¹⁰).

Ali Beg's nephew, Don Juan of Persia, tells of another attempt on board ship ¹¹¹). He describes the motive as plain robbery : Father Melo had « lent » Sherley (or more probably deposited with him for safekeeping) a thousand *escudos* and ninety small diamonds, and the prospect of returning money and stones was distasteful to the English knight. From other unimpeachable sources we know that he had definitely made up his mind to keep the friar's money ¹¹²).

¹⁰⁹) *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁰) *Ibidem*, 10^v.

¹¹¹) LE STRANGE, *op. cit.* 258. WILSON, *Asiatic Review* 23 (1927) 138 ff., seems to imply that both attempts on Melo's life deal with the same incident, so that they are only different versions of the same happening. However, considering the fact that Sherley had the friar in bonds, and tried to inveigle the Franciscan against him, and the very different circumstances of the two reports, — one happened ashore, the other aboard ship — the opinion of Santiago Vela seems preferable (EBIA V 374, note 2) that Sherley made several attempts on Melo's life. This opinion is also shared by A. SANZ PASCUAL, O. S. A., *Historia de los Agustinos Españoles* (Madrid 1948) 257: « un inglés llamado Antonio Sherley le tomó tal odio que, por dos veces, quiso asesinarlo, una en la bodega del bargo, la segunda en terra... ».

¹¹²) *Carmelites of Persia*, 19: (the quotation could not be verified in the General Archives of the Carmelite Order, Rome, under the number given in the text) « Father Nicholas Melo had lent certain moneys to Don Anthony, the Englishman, and, as they were due to separate in the city of Moscow, he had to go on by sea, the other via Poland to Italy, the Father asked for them. Whether for this or some other reason I know not, but Don Anthony accused him to Boris

In late November or early December they arrived at Kazan, a riverport, marking the beginning of shallower water. After a week's rest they embarked in seven vessels of little draft and rowed up to

of being a traitor and a spy. So they looted him, and put him away into the Solovietzky monastery on the frozen sea, where he is still according to a report of the Father in question, which he (Melo) dispatched to a Prince Gustave, a great favorite with Boris and known to him (Melo). The Muscovites took from him (Melo) in jewels and money 60000 dinars... Significant is also the remark Don Juan de Persia adds to his report of the murder attempt in the ships galley (LE STRANGE, *op. cit.* 234): « Some months later, when the mission was about to leave Moscow, the friar could not be found », and concludes « we suspect that Don Antonio caused him to disappear ». There can be no doubt that Anthony Sherley had made up his mind once and for all to keep the friar's money. An interesting side light on the subject is a letter Sherley wrote to Richard Colthurst (*The travels of John Sanderson in the Levant*, ed. W. Foster (London 1931) 176 f.). Colthurst writes to Sanderson July 26, 1599: « Instantly (I) have received letters from Sir Anthony Sherley, who is returned for Ingland by way of Ruscia; hath had wonderfull great intertayment of the King, with many exceeding rich geifts from the King and 8000 ds towards his chardges. God grant his vioag turne us to good, but yet he turneth us no money ». Add to this *Cal. of State Papers, Dom. series, 1598-1601* (ed. M. A. Everett Green, London 1869) 130: « Sir Anthony has wrung 400 fl. from our merchants at Constantinople, and has scraped together 500 fl. more at Aleppo, with which he has charged Lord Essex by his bills... », and you have proof that Anthony had debts wherever he was, and his creditors fear non-payment even where he has been financially successful. In the end he got away even with the presents the Shah had sent to the Christian princes. See the report of Juan de Persia (LE STRANGE, *op. cit.* 282): « He (Anthony) told us that he had a great friend in Archangel, an Englishman, who was master of a very fine stout ship, and that he would take charge of our cases (the presents), and deliver them to us again safely when we got to Rome », and *ibidem* 283: « In Siena our ambassador had a quarrel with Sir Anthony Sherley, and matters would have come to a bad pass, had not the Cardinal been present. The cause of this quarrel was in the matter of the 32 chests of presents, which had been given in charge of the English shipmaster to be brought directly to Rome. The ambassador was now demanding of Sir Anthony due delivery of these chests, in order that he might make his Holiness a suitable present from what was in them, which, indeed, would have been a gift of much magnificence. It now appeared that the whole affair had been a cheat, for no chests had ever been brought to Rome, Sir Anthony having sold or bartered away their contents... Afterwards we had notice how our pieces of brocade and clothes had been sold publicly by the English merchants in Muscovy ». This report of Don Juan's is confirmed in a dispatch by Giovanni Mocenigo, Venetian ambassador to Rome, of April 14, 1601. *Cal. of State Papers, Venetian Series*, vol. IX (ed. H. F. Brown London 1897) doc. 974. Small wonder that even as partial a critic as Franz Babinger ('Sir Anthony Sherley's persische Botschaftsreise (1599-1601)' *Mitteilungen des Seminars für orientalische Sprachen an der Friedrich-Wilhelms-*

Cheboksary, where they had to transfer to sleighs because the river was frozen over. At Nishni Novgorod ¹¹³) they stopped again for several days ; here Sherley had a violent altercation with Ali Beg, putting the Persian ambassador in fear of his life. What a chafing thing it must have seemed to Sherley that Ali Beg's credentials were as good as his own, if not better ! And indeed, when the representative of Tsar Boris arrived he treated the Persian as an ambassador and the Englishman as the ambassador's companion ¹¹⁴).

On arriving in Moscow in late December or early January, 1600 ¹¹⁵), the Persians were sumptuously entertained while the Europeans were clapped into prison ¹¹⁶). This harsh treatment was the

Universität zu Berlin 35 (1932) 2. Abteilung, 100 ff.) sums up his study (p. 127): « Es muss ernstlich bezweifelt werden, ob dieser (Anthony) jemals die wirkliche Absicht hatte, die Botschaftsreise im Sinne ihres Auftraggebers, des Shahs Abbas, durchzuführen. Sein Verhalten spricht schon in Russland dagegen und erst recht, als er auf deutschem Boden die einzelnen Höfe heimsuchte und allerorten riesenhafte Schulden hinterliess. Die Türken waren damals der alte Erbfeind Persiens ebenso wie Deutschlands. Aber niemals ist es zu einem gemeinsamen, planmässigen Vorgehen gegen den gemeinschaftlichen Gegner gekommen. Dass zu einem Zeitpunkt, wo ein solches Unternehmen die meiste Aussicht auf Erfolg hatte, diese Absicht vereitelt wurde, ist, so darf man heute wohl behaupten, das fast ausschliessliche Verschulden Sherley's, der seinem persönlichen Eigennutz, seiner grenzenlosen Geltungssucht und seiner ungezügelten Phantasie zuliebe ohne Bedenken die Zukunft des Abendlandes aufs Spiel setzte ».

¹¹³) W. Parry (ROSS, *op. cit.* 129) relates: « As soon as we had arrived there (Nishni Novgorod), an order came from the Duke of Muscovy that we should delay a month. Being come to Negson, we stayed there nearhand a month. Toward the end of which the emperor sent a great man of his court ».

¹¹⁴) Although Anthony and Husejn visited the court of Boris Gudonov it was not as ambassadors. Among the princes to whom they bore letters from the Shah the Tsar of Moscow was not included. Pir Quli Beg had been sent two weeks in advance of Anthony to Moscow to congratulate Boris on his accession to the throne. As we have seen (*supra* note 106) Quli Beg traveled with Anthony out of Astrakhan. ROSS, *op. cit.* 24.

¹¹⁵) John THADDEUS, MS cit. App. I: « en año 1600 ».

¹¹⁶) Parry reports in ROSS, *op. cit.* 128: « At Moscow we were shut in prison fourteen days; yea, all access of others to us, or we to them, was utterly barred. In which time we sent to entreat that either our English merchants might be permitted to come to us, or that we might go or send for necessaries ». They were not sent for ten days. The Persian ambassador first, next Husejn, then Sir Anthony. Anthony refused to go, as the order of precedence was not to his liking. « By which refusal he purchased the emperor's displeasure ». Now the friar was set free and the Tsar sent his dukes to examine Sir Anthony daily « upon diverse frivolous particularities ». BERGER DE XIVREY, *Collection de Docu-*

Russian law for foreigners who were always presumed to be spies. Sherley, still refusing to take second place, protested his diplomatic status so vigorously that Boris Godunov, who was thoroughly annoyed and who had been informed of the knight's animus against Father Melo, had the latter released. Gratified over his freedom to walk the streets of Moscow he was not slow in appearing with Ali Beg before the Tsar ¹¹⁷), thus adding fuel to the rage of his enemy. Eventually Boris called the friar and Sherley to be examined before his commissaries, where Sherley tried to win his argument with crude force :

« Soon after Sir Anthony and the friar were brought before the commissioners to be further examined ; where Sir Anthony, being inflamed with choler by reason of his exceeding ill-usage demanded whether the emperor did ever purpose to send any ambassadors to any other countries ; protesting, if ever he met with them in any part of the world besides their own, he would endeavor to let them know he was not half so well treated in Russia... Whereupon the friar in terms thwarted Sir Anthony, whose blood already boiled with the excess of his choler's heat, which as then abounded, and being by that graceless and ungrateful friar further provoked, he, not able, though instantly he should have died for it, to suppress his heat, gave the fat friar such a sound box on the face, his double cause of choler redoubling his might, desire of revenge withal augmenting the same, that down falls the friar, as if he had been struck with a thunderbolt ; which being done with that courage and high resolution which well appeared in his looks, words and deeds, they forthwith gave over examination, because they had too far examined Sir Anthony's patience ; which well they with fear, as I think, saw, and the friar, almost past fear, did far better feel » ¹¹⁸).

ments Inédits sur l'Histoire de France : Recueil des lettres missives de Henri IV (1839-1853) V 334 has a letter of Henry IV to Monsieur de Breves in which it is stated that Anthony was kept a prisoner four to five months. This may give some indication of Melo's stay at Moscow.

¹¹⁷) The conjectured purpose of this call is thus described by Parry (Ross, *op. cit.* 128): « The Persian ambassador withal, setting on the friar, underhand, to devise all the villainy he could against him, as to say he knew Sir Anthony was but a man of mean parentage, and also that he was come but as a spy through the country for purposes tending to his own good, and not of Persia and Christendom, as he pretended. Whereupon they took all the King's letters from him and opened them, to know the purpose thereof ».

¹¹⁸) Ross, *op. cit.* 131. This scene did not further the cause of Anthony, as we have seen that he was not freed from prison (*supra* note 105).

From that time on Father Melo was unable to live with Sherley and found lodgings with a Catholic physician from Milan, one Doctor Paolo ¹¹⁹). In the doctor's house he regularly celebrated Mass and brought to the Latin Catholics living in Moscow the consolations of their religion, of which they had been deprived for a long time. Soon an occasion arose which put him completely in the power of his enemies : he baptized his host's eight-day old daughter in the Latin rite. This scandalized the Ruthenian Christians, who held that a child must not be baptized before the fortieth day of its life. The Ruthenians became enraged against Father Melo and all the Catholics in Moscow ¹²⁰). Representations were made to the Grand Duke of Muscovy, Boris Godunov, who had the friar arrested and sent to the monastery island of Solovetski ¹²¹) without a hearing. It is not known exactly what Sir Anthony contributed to this development, but Paul Simon, O. Carm., who learned about the matter in Moscow while memories were still fresh, states flatly that Sir Anthony engi-

¹¹⁹) John THADDEUS, MS cit. App. I.

¹²⁰) Among the English merchants at the court of the Tsar there were a good many Protestant Englishmen who had been there since the days of Ivan the Terrible (cf. D. H. DALTON, *Verfassungsgeschichte der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche in Russland* (Gotha 1887) I 4 ff.). GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 12^r, reports that « from them Sherley learned of the hatred that existed between the Latin Catholics and the Ruthenians. They even suggested, perhaps more out of bigotry than for real reasons, that he was compromising himself with the friar as a fellow ambassador. They also told him that he lived in the Italian doctor's house. The shrewd Sherley was not slow in using this information to his advantage. He went to the owners of the house and told them that he regretted having brought along a man who might cause annoyance to the average Ruthenian and all the more to the Grand Duke by acting against the laws and ancient customs of the country. He suggested very deftly that he knew very well that the friar was not an ambassador of the Shah of Persia, and that it was not of the least importance to his service to be rid of him. There is no doubt that the English detested Melo not only because he was a Catholic, but also, and perhaps more, because he was a Spanish subject. As soon as the Ruthenians had become aware that the Father did not have the protection of Sir Anthony, they reported immediately to the Duke that a Latin priest had entered his realm without his permission and had said Mass and baptized against the laws of the country ». Melo was aware of the role Sherley and the English merchants had played in his arrest. See his letter MS 1269 Bibl. Nacional, Madrid, fol. 131^v, *infra* App. I.: « Sufrimos tantos tormentos, afrentas y martirios de los Moscovitas, solicitados por nuestros enemigos los Calvinistas Yngleses ».

¹²¹) Paul PIERLING, *La Russie et le Saint-Siège* (Paris 1901) III 235, adds in a note to his remarks on Melo: « La présence de Mello à Solovki est constatée par le Solovetski Sbornik ». KAZAN, *Académie eccl.*, n. 18, f. 7).

neered Father Melo's arrest and imprisonment ¹²²). Years later, in a letter written October 16, 1613, the Augustinian himself states very clearly that he and his companions suffered the many torments which the Muscovites heaped upon them « who had been instigated by our enemies, the English Calvinists » ¹²³). Apparently Father Melo's « heresy » was dressed up as evidence of some kind of Popish plot endangering the throne.

Imprisonment

Solovetski, the monastery in which Father Melo, together with his lay servant and Brother Nicholas, was confined was in the hands of monks of the Order of St. Basil. The Tsar commanded them to bring about the apostasy of their three prisoners. The schismatic monks of those days were well known for their cruelty against Catholics and also for the stubbornness with which they held to their own heresy. Add to this that the monastery of Solovetski was obliged to Tsar Boris as a benefactor ¹²⁴), and it is easy to imagine the hardships of the three prisoners. The dungeon into which they were thrown in itself was a very severe punishment. It had no protection or accommodations against the bitter cold. For six months in the year the sun did not shine and during this long winter's night the prisoners did not receive a light for their very narrow and dank cells. When they saw one it only heralded another session of indoctrination and abuse. For on certain Russian feast days ¹²⁵) the abbot ¹²⁶) had them brought into the refectory, where the monks

¹²²) Cf. *supra* note 101.

¹²³) MS 1269, Bibl. Nac. Madrid, fol. 131^v. *Supra* note 120.

¹²⁴) A. BODDY, *With Russian Pilgrims* (London 1893) 322: « The Tsar, Boris Gudonow, likewise showed favor to the monastery, made it a present of a bell of 700 poods (about 28000 pounds) which has his name, and sent 2000 rubles for masses for the soul of Tsar Feodor ». The embassy witnessed the solemn procession of the bell through Moscow. We have no indication whether Melo saw it too (ROSS, *op. cit.* 132).

¹²⁵) John THADDEUS, MS cit. App. I: « em algumas pascoas o dias solemnes que aqueles scismaticos celebravão... »

¹²⁶) The abbot in question was most probably the Archimandrite Isidor who later became Archbishop of St. Sophia. He ruled Solovetski for seven years during the reign of Boris Gudonow (cf. BODDY, *op. cit.* 321).

tried to persuade them to renounce their allegiance to Rome ¹²⁷). The arguments were not on a high level, for the monks were almost abysmally ignorant; many did not know the Lord's prayer, the Hail Mary, the Apostles Creed, or the Ten Commandments ¹²⁸). The Archimandrite held out to them the example of the ancient Saints. Father Melo, of course, had to be champion of his little flock. He always wound up his remarks with the statement that he would consider it a great mercy of God to suffer death for the confession of the holy Catholic faith. The disputations invariably ended in a flood of insult and ridicule. Then they were beaten and sent back to prison wounded and in chains. But in a period of six years their tormentors were unable to accomplish the brainwashing the Tsar had commanded.

Freedom came not in death but through a political and social upheaval that put a convert to Catholicism, called Demetrius, on the throne of Boris Godunov early in 1605. This pretender had married Marina Mniszech, a Polish noblewoman, and had come with an army of Polish and Cossack mercenaries to gain the throne which he claimed under the pretext of being the supposedly murdered son of Ivan the Terrible. With a Polish woman on the throne of the Tsars and a Polish army in Moscow, the Catholic clergy in Poland, but also the Papal Court, were greatly impressed with the opportunity of bringing the Orthodox church back into the fold ¹²⁹).

Just then three Carmelite missionaries to Persia, Fathers Paul of St. Simon, John Thaddeus of St. Eliseus, and Vincent of St. Francis, came to Moscow with a letter of Pope Clement VIII. On the feast of the Epiphany 1606 they were received in audience by the Tsar and used the opportunity to ask for Father Melo's release ¹³⁰).

¹²⁷) SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* I 539, remarks that it seemed at times as if the sessions had been arranged for the entertainment of the community.

¹²⁸) The ignorance of the Russian Orthodox monks of these days did not only amaze our heroes, but was common knowledge (e. g. A. POSSEVINI, S. J., *Supplementum ad Historica Russiae Monumenta* [Petersburg 1848] 24 ff.).

¹²⁹) A. TURGENEV, *Historica Russiae Monimenta* (Petersburg 1841) II 55 ff. contains Pope Clement's various attempts. See also L. PASTOR, *Geschichte der Päpste* (Freiburg 1927) XI 416 ff.

¹³⁰) SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* I 540, makes us believe that Pope Clement himself took the initiative to have Melo released. « Tuvo tambien la Santidad de Clemente Octavo noticia de los trabajos que en Moscovia padecian los insignos soldados de Christo, fray Nicolàs y su compañero; por lo qual diò especial orden à unos Religiosos Carmelitas Descalços, que enviaba a Persia, que hiziessen su camino

Demetrius granted the request at once and gave orders that Father Melo and his companions be brought before him.

por Moscovia, y visitassen de su parte al Duque Demetrio, y le pidiessen de los confesores de Christo... » The same view is expressed by PINHEIRO, *op. cit.* 449. Also HERRERA, *op. cit.* II 179 has: « Clementis VIII precibus ». However, neither Gouvea nor the *Historica Russiae Monimenta* contain information to this effect. GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 18^r states plainly that the Carmelites asked on their own initiative, after they had known at Moscow of Melo's imprisonment: « Como ellos (Carmelites) tuviessen mucha virtud y caridad, teniendo noticia de la prision del padre Fray Nicholas, y sus compañeros, no quisieron perder tan buena ocasion, y dia de los Reyes en nombre de su Santidad, le suplicaron fuesse servido de mandar poner en libertad â un padre Catholico con dos servidores suyos... » In TURGENEV, *op. cit.*, we would expect to find mention of the Pope's efforts in letter XXXIII, p. 55, of Clement VIII to Boris, or in letter XXXIV, *ibid.*, of Cardinal Aldobrandini to the same. Further, it would not be in harmony with the reserve this Pontiff had shown towards the cause of the False Demetrius (cf. PASTOR, *op. cit.* XI 420) to have sent him a letter while his predecessor was still on the throne of the Tsars. The Pope died two months before Boris, and there was little hope that this Tsar would release Melo. However, there is no doubt that Rome was informed of Father Melo's imprisonment. We do not know, if before the departure of the Carmelites from Rome, which took place July 6, 1604 (*Carmelites in Persia* II 921) as da Costa, MS cit. fol. 69, *infra* App. III, does not know Melo's whereabouts and believes him dead. The first news, of which we know that it reached Rome, are contained among the *notizie* of the Polish Nunzio, Claudio Rangone, Fondo Borgh., III 90 b, fol. 266, where the Nunzio reports to Cardinal Aldobrandini on his efforts to free Melo: « Parlai par la recuperatione del Frate spagnuolo Agostiniano captivo in Moscovia e si resto di trattare col Vicecancelliere del mezzo da tenersi per la liberatione sua del quale se si troverà buone non scorderò io sollicitare l'effetto » (October 23, 1604). A week later, Oct. 30, 1604, we read in another dispatch of the Nunzio, *ibid.* fol. 279: « Del Frate Agostiniano spagnuolo captivo nel paese di Moscovia ha parlato sua Maestà col Vicecancelliere di Littuania qual penserà 'l modo che si possa tenere per redimerlo, ed io le ne ho mandato memoriale dopo haverlo parlato ». The Nuncio at Prague, Mons. Giovanni Ferreri, wrote on Oct. 4, 1604 from Prague to Cardinal C. Aldobrandini (MS Fondo Borghese III, 113 C-D-E, fol. 21): Mons. Nuntio di Colonia (!) me ha avisato... mi ha fatto anche intendere che Sua Maestà darà ordine all'Ambasciatore che andará in Persia che faccia officio col Gran Duca di Moscovia per la liberatione di quel Padre Melo Agostiniano (in) prigionie nella Torre di Salom nel mar glaciale raccomandato da Nostro Signore ». Finally we know that also the Augustinian family brought the matter to the attention of the Holy See. Cf. Letter of Nuncio at Cracow, Mons. Claudio Rangone to Cardinal C. Aldobrandini (MS Archivio Doria Pamphili, Rome, Fondo Aldobrandini, vol. 11a [no foliation]): De questo padre Provinciale delli Agostiniani ci è stata presentata una lettera di V. S. Illma delli V di Giugno in favore del padre fra Nicolò Melo Spagnolo, per la liberatione del quale mancherò adoperarmi quanto sarà possibile, et a suo tempo ne darò conto ». The Carmelites themselves quote

While the Tsar's emissaries were on the way back from Solovetski with Father Melo and his servants the fast moving events of these turbulent years of Russian history caught up with them again. Demetrius procured the coronation of his Polish empress, Marina, on May 8, 1606. Ten days later he was dead at the hands of an assassin. Fanned by the orthodox Holy Synod there was a great reaction in popular feeling against the Pope, the Catholics and Poland for having tried to foist Demetrius on their nation. The Boyars took advantage of the people's dislike of the usurper and the Catholic tendencies of his protectors, and placed one of their own class, Basil Shuiski, on the throne.

Father Melo was already near Moscow¹³¹⁾ when the men that took him there learned of the recent events and the accession of Tsar Basil. They resolved, therefore, to wait until they had learned the mind of the new ruler. When Basil Shuiski had heard the details of Father Melo's case he offered the priest an archbishopric in Russia on the condition that he be baptized in the orthodox church. When Father Melo declined the offer, Basil had him whipped¹³²⁾ and gave orders that he be confined in a strict prison. He was consequently taken to Nishni Novgorod. As he had spent six years on Solovetski, so he was now to spend four more years in the prison of Nishni Novgorod.

The only human consolation that remained him was his faithful servant Nicholas, the Japanese Lay Brother, and the other convert of his who had traveled with him. As on Solovetski so also in his new prison Father Melo instructed them continuously in the faith and prayed for them. Later on he stated that he was sure that the Lord gave them the grace of perseverance in martyrdom because of these prayers¹³³⁾.

After he had suffered some years in his second prison the

against the « bias of the Augustinians and the King of Spain » their « own diligence which we used in order to get Father Melo freed » (*Carmelites in Persia*, 166, note 4). Perhaps we could say that they received instruction to use their own judgement and see what they could do for Father Melo (The last two references from the Roman archives are due to the courtesy of Father C. Alonso, O. S. A., Rome).

¹³¹⁾ John THADDEUS, MS cit., *infra* App. I: « E, estando ia livre e vinto a cidade reale, no mes de majo seguinte do mesmo anno... » (1606).

¹³²⁾ TRIGAULT, *op. cit.* 290.

¹³³⁾ GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 19^v

Ruthenians believed they would find the priest more pliable without the company of his own ¹³⁴). So they confined him in a separate cell and made greater attempts to shake his constancy. Finally one day they told him now was the time to make up his mind. Father Melo answered : « In ten years of torture you did not succeed in deceiving me. What I have endured for such a long time, I shall be able to suffer for a much shorter time ». He refused the hour of grace they gave him. His only regret was that he had but one life to give for the truth of the Catholic faith and in token of his obedience towards the chair of St. Peter. The schismatics were infuriated at this show of constancy and thought that the sight of an impending horrible death would change his mind. On the feast of St. Andrew, November 30, 1610, they had him taken to the public square. He walked there from the prison half naked, as time had consumed the greater part of his habit. Only a few rags remained. These, tied about his loins, reached down to his knees. His hair had grown below his shoulders, his beard had become grey and very long. He walked barefoot with his hands tied and his head uncovered. A mob had gathered about the prison gates, and when they saw him come out they greeted him with many insults against the Roman Pontiff. The crowd perhaps believed that they could show their faith in God in no better way than by adding to the punishment of the « heretic ». Thus insulted and ridiculed Father Melo walked to the town square where a large pile of wood was ready for him.

When he was in plain view of the woodpile the henchmen set fire to it and, to frighten him still more, they stepped back and lit some rubbish left purposely in the place where the priest stood. Yet neither this small fire, nor the burning pyre frightened him. Steadfastly he looked at the flames which burned before his eyes, paying no attention to the burning rubbish about his feet. When the small fire had died down his tormentors approached him again, told him to turn finally into himself, give up the errors of the Latins, and accept the light of the true faith of Christ. In case he refused they would throw him into the blaze which he saw ready for him. Father Melo told them simply they were just wasting their time. « Throw us into the flames, Catholics do not deny the truth they possess for many deaths ». The henchmen shoved and pushed the

¹³⁴) *Ibidem*.

Father closer to the flames. Although the fire did not burn him, he felt its heat. When they could not shake his constancy they granted him another stay.

While this was going on Brother Nicholas and his companion had been kept separated from their spiritual Father. The Orthodox turned their attention now to them. In dissembled joy they told them that the priest had already given in, renounced his former errors, had accepted the Ruthenian faith and had already been re-baptized. He had also sworn loyalty to the Duke, who, in turn, had promised him great rewards. They should do the same and consider their eternal welfare. The brave Japanese Lay Brother did not pay any attention to the promptings of the seducer and answered : « What you tell me about my master and spiritual Father are nothing but lies. The whole world cannot take from me the faith of Christ, which, as I have learned from childhood, is the Roman Catholic faith. If the Father has become an apostate, he has blasphemed for the last ten years. If you really tell the truth, and the Father is still alive, bring him here before me, that I can hear the truth from his own lips. You do not produce him, for surely he must be dead. I am very sorry that I could not accompany him in death, as I have so many years during my life » ¹³⁵). Here tears began to choke his words and he said he did not wish to hear more. The Ruthenians were very disappointed at their failure. They took Brother Nicholas and his companion to the public square and be-headed them before Father Melo's eyes. They put the Brother's head into a sack and showed it to Basil Shuiski. The bodies they threw to the dogs. However, the dogs did not touch them. As these dogs were accustomed to eat the bodies of condemned men, the populace considered this circumstance as bordering on the miraculous. The leaders of the Orthodox began, therefore, to say : « Even the dogs abhor this cursed and excommunicated flesh » ¹³⁶). Some German and Polish traders who were present finally obtained permission to inter the remains. They placed markers on the grave, as they hoped a time would come when it would be venerated. Father Nicholas was filled with holy joy when he heard of the triumph of his two servants. He spent almost another year in the prison of the same town.

¹³⁵) GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 23^r f.

¹³⁶) GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 23^v f.

Meanwhile a complicated civil war was in progress. Also Basil Shuiski's usurpation had no popular support. The rising class of small landlords had now more influence than the boyars. Still more dangerous for Basil were the Cossacks and the fugitive serfs. One of the serfs started a social uprising in the south. In the midst of this turmoil appeared another pretender who claimed to be the real Demetrius. Although his imposture was still more evident than that of the first Pseudo-Demetrius, he succeeded in recruiting 18,000 Polish adventurers and in June 1610 he established a camp near Tushino, whither the ambitious Marina hastened to acknowledge him as her husband. For a brief period this second False Demetrius held the throne. In December 1610 he was murdered, and Marina, again a widow, withdrew to Astrakhan, a city which had always shown devotion to the cause of her husband. With her traveled a Franciscan friar who was her confessor, and many of the Latin Catholics who had come with her from Poland. On the way she passed through Nishni Novgorod where she learned of Father Melo's imprisonment and obtained his release through an officer¹³⁷⁾ who had served as one of her late husband's colonels.

Death in Astrakhan

Thus Father Nicholas Melo came to join Marina's entourage¹³⁸⁾. He found a good companion in her confessor, with whom he recited the Divine Office. In Astrakhan they were joined by the Carmelite, Father John Thaddeus of St. Eliseus, who had been sent to the European courts by Shah Abbas and who had remained stranded in the midst of the Russian wars. The three priests lived as far as possible the common life of the cloister. The Augustinian

¹³⁷⁾ According to PINHEIRO, *op. cit.* 454, the name of this colonel was Juan Martino. Thus also Maigretius, *op. cit.* 180: « Marina hat ihn aus dem zweiten Gefängnis gebracht. Als ihr Gatte tot war, hat sie ihren Wunsch dem Obristen Joannes Martino ihres Gemahls geoffenbart. Dieser hat den Gefangenen befreit ».

¹³⁸⁾ *Carmelites in Persia*, 71 has that Melo was alive at Astrakhan October 12, 1611, for on that date he signed as witness the document which testified to the ill-treatment Father John Thaddeus had suffered at the hands of the Governor at Astrakhan. This document gives greater weight to Gouvea, who, *op. cit.* fol. 20^v, assigns St. Andrew's Day 1610 as the death day of Brother Nicholas. TRIGAULT, *op. cit.* 290; DE CASTRO, *op. cit.* 246; PEREZ, *op. cit.* 69, have 1611; PINHEIRO, *op. cit.* 452 has December 31, 1611.

was especially gratified by the opportunity to engage once more in priestly work. The Tsarina's aunt, Barbara de Casanovsk¹³⁹), had accompanied her from Poland ; Father Melo imbued her with great love for the Augustinian way of life, received her into the Augustinian Third Order, and clothed her in the habit of the Order. When the Tsarina erected a new oratory in her residence dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Father Melo said the first Mass in this chapel on the feast of St. Augustine 1613.

In the same year Michael Romanov, with enough backing to give swaggering assurance to a much more timorous man, was proclaimed the new Tsar. This meant the beginning of a new dynasty. And it meant the end of Marina and her three-year-old son, the Tsarevich. Michael's regiments could overcome her cossacks, which they did in a year's time. As soon as Marina had become aware that her supporters could not hold out much longer, she proposed that one or two of the Fathers should go to Persia¹⁴⁰), to beg help from the Shah. Both priests excused themselves saying that it was not proper to leave her alone. She, however, insisted ; and when Father John Thaddeus had been selected, Father Melo took leave of him and gave him some letters and recommendations for the Augustinians at Isfahan. Father Gouvea relates :

To me he sent a long report of all he had suffered, as also a prayerbook, just as if he knew beforehand that I would have to guard them as relics of a martyr¹⁴¹).

Soon after the Carmelite had departed the emissaries of Michael Romanov caught up with Marina and imprisoned her. Soon they put her to death either by hanging or by drowning, and they hanged also her son, the last pretender to the throne. When the henchmen stormed the palace of the Duchess, they found Father Melo there. Together with Marina's aunt he was thrown into prison, and shortly afterwards they both were condemned to death.

Towards the end of 1614 or early in 1615¹⁴²) the sentence was

¹³⁹) This name is obviously misspelled. It was impossible to verify it. A suggested spelling may be Kazanowska.

¹⁴⁰) According to A. HIRSCHBERG, *Maryna Mnischowna* (Lwow 1906) 334 the purpose of this mission was to promise to the Shah Astrakhan in exchange for help.

¹⁴¹) GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 28^v.

¹⁴²) SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* I 544 ; DE CASTRO, *op. cit.* 247 ; PEREZ, *op. cit.* 29, give November 1, 1616 as the date of Melo's death. Diogo BARBOSA MACHADO,

carried out. Lady Barbara went to the place of burning laden with chains. Behind her walked Father Melo, stripped of all his clothes so as to suffer as much as possible from shame and cold. In his hands he carried a wooden crucifix, as he had done when the fire was made ready at Nishni Novgorod. In his progress to the public square where the fire already raged, he was much cursed and beaten. Then, while the crowd delighted in the cruel spectacle, the soldiers cast the two living bodies into the flames. Father Nicholas Melo's last words were a cry to the Mother of God ¹⁴³).

Was Father Melo truly a martyr? While his first arrest can be attributed to the rancor of Sherley, there can be little doubt that after his release from Solovetski in 1606 the hatred of all things Latin, which followed upon the Polish invasion, played its part ¹⁴⁴).

op. cit. III 495 a and MANOEL DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 297, have January 2, 1616. EBIA V 375 has January 28, 1615. The *Liber Defunctorum* of the monastery of the Holy Child on Cebu says he was martyred in 1615. This is also the opinion of GRIJALVA, *op. cit.* 609: « al principio del año 1615 ». TRIGAULT, *op. cit.* 292: « ea res in hunc annum 1614 quod incidit huic loco studio est a me reservata ». We can safely assume that the martyrdom of Father Melo took place either late in 1614 or in the early part of 1615. John Thaddeus left Astrakhan October 28, 1613 (cf. MS cit. App. I: « saindo de Astracam dia dos Apostolos S. Simão e Judas 1613 »). According to HIRSCHBERG, *op. cit.* 334 Marina was taken in bonds to, Moscow in July 1614. GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 29^r avers that Father Melo's imprisonment at Astrakhan was only of short duration. In August 1615 two Persian merchants returning from Astrakhan brought news of Father Melo's death to Isfahan (cf. John THADDEUS, MS cit. App. I). Sicardo's statement, *op. cit.* 24, that Melo suffered « el mes de Agosto 1615 » may have its origin in John Thaddeus' report. Considering the traveling conditions of the time, we must allow at least six months for the return trip of the merchants (John Thaddeus took about six, arriving at Isfahan on the eve of Pentecost 1614 (*Carmelites of Persia*, 197). ROSS, *op. cit.* 272, followed by MENDES DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 314, give 1613 as the year of Melo's death. Michael Romanov had been proclaimed Tsar February 21, 1613. Making due allowance for an army being sent to Astrakhan and the following imprisonment of Melo, albeit short, it is hard to accept 1613 as the year of Melo's death.

¹⁴³) MAIGRETIUS, *op. cit.*, 199, « Diese Geschichte wurde bestätigt durch eine Handschrift des P. Melo, deren etliche ein Jüngling von Antorff aus Moscovia in einem holländische Schiff heimkehrend mitgebracht. Er hat sie einem Dominikaner übergeben und dem ehrwürdigen P. Gratiano aus unserem Konvente, dieser dem Erzherzog und der dem Kaiser Rudolph zugeschickt ».

¹⁴⁴) In order not to mislead it must be stated that the hatred of the Latins was not only the result of the Polish invasion in connection with the change of

On Solovetski and at Nishni Novgorod he proved his readiness to die for the Church of Christ. In 1610 he was as ready as his two companions to lay down his life rather than apostatize and long before he could have attained freedom by accepting the orthodox faith. To have remained loyal to the See of Peter in conditions as these three men did, where they had to endure harrowing sacrifice, and not only here or there in isolated instances, but constantly, almost every hour of the day ; sacrifice, moreover, borne by men weakened in body and spirit, cut off from the fellowship of the members of their Order, and even the whole Catholic world — this demands heroic fortitude. It may be that the troops of Michael Romanov arrested him at Astrakhan as much for his association with the Polish Tsarina as for his Catholic faith. However, his death was not that of a political criminal, else he would have been put out of the way quickly like Marina and the Tsarevitch. Father Melo's very death by fire, accompanied by humiliating nakedness, is witness to the fact that he was martyred for the same reason for which he had suffered imprisonment for so many years and for which he had been ready to die on the pyre of Nishni Novgorod. If we could discern a trace of worldly ambition in him ¹⁴⁵), it certainly was purged away by the trials and humiliations of so many years. On the mission field in the Philippines, as well as during the years of imprisonment, Father Melo did not seek worldly advantage and acknowledgment. What sustained him there was nothing but the hope of God's reward in heaven. Earthly fame came to him only after death. As early as 1643 his heroism was the theme of a drama played at Brussels ¹⁴⁶), and his deeds were preserved in many biographies.

Concluding and summing up we can agree with Father Gouvea :
 « Although there must be many who excel him in glory, I do

the dynasty. J. KONCEVICIUS, *Russia's Attitude towards Union with Rome* (Washington 1927) makes it very plain that « the Russian hostility toward the Latins had at no time diminished but, on the contrary, had steadily grown until now [under Ivan the Terrible] it was at its height, and the very name of Latin Catholic was anathema to the Russians. They believed the Latin Church was without unity and divided into many sects, and the Pope they designated as the Anti-Christ ». However, the Polish invasion intensified this attitude.

¹⁴⁵) See note 64.

¹⁴⁶) EBJA V 377.

not believe that there are many who surpass him in the punishments he suffered and the severity of his martyrdom, especially if we take into consideration its details such as the long span of time he suffered, which was about 16 years, his advanced age, which approached seventy, and the number and variety of the torments in question » ¹⁴⁷).

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(to be continued).

¹⁴⁷) GOUVEA, *op. cit.* fol. 5^r f.: « Lo que afirmo es, que aunque deva aver muchos que le excedan en gloria, no creo que pueden ser muchos los que se le ayan aventajado en la pena y rigor del martirio, pensadas las circunstancias del, como son la prolixidad del tiempo que padecio, que fueron cerca de diez y seis años, su edad que se llegava à los setenta, la multitud y variedad de tormentos, de que se trata ».