

William of St. Augustine and His Time.

One morning, early in 1614, three men rode horseback through the district of Nakhchevan in Armenia. One, dressed in the Augustinian habit, went ahead of his two companions reciting his priestly prayers. He was William of St. Augustine, who did not have the heart to abandon the war-ravaged Armenians whose missionaries had been compelled to leave the country.

The road was empty except for two moslem henchmen, sent by the governor of the district to get the hated priest out of the way. While Father William was absorbed in his prayers and unaware of their approach, one of them suddenly closed in on him and cut off his head. So ended a missionary career marked by unselfish dedication, patience in adversities, and charity for all of God's children.

To trace the events that led to this disastrous end, we must go back at least a hundred years.

HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT

In the course of the sixteenth century, as a consequence of the Reformation, the ultimate allegiance once given to the universal Church was being transferred to secular sovereigns and later to the national state. The doctrine of the divine right of kings was in the air and the period belonged to the monarchs. The early sixteenth century saw the Christian states more occupied than ever with internecine rivalries, and their attention was distracted from any common effort.

In this era of everchanging political alliances and contests of strength, while Spain enriched by her new colonies contended for European leadership and was occupied in France and Holland, while France was engaged in healing its own religious cleavage, while religious and dynastic wars tore Italy and Central Europe in twain and the Church was agitated by the ferment of the Reformation, the supremacy of Christianity was challenged as at no time since the moors had crossed the Pyrenees in the eighth century. Sultan Selim I had become master of Syria and Egypt. His son had conquered Hungary and in 1529 laid siege to Vienna. It was universally felt among Catholics

and Protestants alike that if Hungary and Vienna were lost, Germany as well as Europe with it would have been left defenseless before its sworn enemy. In view of the political dangers presented by the Moslem countries and of the exhaustion of the powers of Europe in their contest for supremacy, the Popes making themselves the foremost champions of the Christian countries sent legates to rally the Christian princes. Yet the Turks moved up the valley of the Danube. This was more than a war of conquest. It was an ideological war which would be fought to exhaustion. A whole civilization was at stake. The Popes and some of the Christian rulers thought of gaining the upper hand over their dangerous adversary by a war on two fronts. For this purpose they endeavored to establish communications between the capitals of Europe and the distant Isfahan, the capital of the Shahs of Persia.

Indeed, the first steps of approachment, as far as we know, had been taken by Persia ¹⁾. Already in 1515 Pope Leo X informed King Sigismond of Poland that the Grand Master of Rhodes had been requested by Shah Ismael I (1505-1524) that « he should make every effort to contact all Christians and stir them up to take arms against the Turk » ²⁾. After the victory of Lepanto Pope Pius V wrote to Shah Tahmasp (1534-1576) a remarkable letter inviting him to take advantage of the victory and

« boldly and briskly to follow and embrace smiling fortune so that, while the enemy lies stupefied in consternation, it (the army to be called up) may make good the damage and insults too often deeply branded and inflicted by the savage Ottoman » ³⁾.

¹⁾ Concerning the approaches between Shah Ismael and the Viceroy of India see Lopes DE CASTANHEDA, *Historia do Descubrimiento e Conquista da India pelos Portugueses* (Coimbra 1928) III 309, 333, 353 and *passim*. A summary is contained in F. Mendes DA LUZ, *O Conselho da India* (Lisbon 1952) 305 ff.

²⁾ Ms. Secr. Arch. of the Vatican, Brev. Min. 1515-23 in XL Arm. 4, No. 95 p. 57.

³⁾ Ms. Secr. Arch. Vat., S. Pio V Brev. Ann. IV-VII, Arm. XLIV 19, p. 434. Publ. in *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia* (London 1939) (This work will be quoted as *Carm.*) II 1273 f. « ... ut capta subito oblata occasione ardentem fortunam audacter alacriterque sequi et amplecti velis, ut dum ille (hostis) gravissima clade obstupefactus consternatusque iacet, detrimenta et contumelias ab efferato Othomano saepius iniustas et inflictas aliquando rependere et sarcire (exercitus) valeat ». It is also useful to see that on the opposite side the English government of the 16th century deliberately sought a military alliance with the Porte against Christian Spain. See to this question F. BAUMER, « England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom », in : *The American Historical Review* (Richmond, Virginia Oct. 1944) 26 ss.; E. PEARS, « The Spanish Armada and the Ottoman Porte », in : *English Historical Review* VIII (London 1893) 439 : « The

When the same Pope wished to send Matthias Furtado to the Shah with this letter, Furtado wrote to Don Juan, the victor of Lepanto, that a more important person should be entrusted with this diplomatic mission. He suggested that this could best be done by way of the Portuguese Indies ⁴). When finally Philip II of Spain, and after 1580 also of Portugal, tried to establish communications with Shah Khudabanda (1577-1587) by way of India through his viceroy in Goa the Augustinians were almost predestined to play their part. King Sebastian had sent them in 1572 to India because he needed priests to staff Hormuz ⁵), the island emporium which the Portuguese had taken in 1515 to prevent other nations to challenge their trade routes with India. The Augustinians' predecessors, the Jesuits and then the Dominicans, had left the inhospitable island with its difficult climate ⁶).

idea of an alliance with the Porte (in order to preserve the balance of power in Europe) was a natural one». There was also a religious undertone: the Anglican Bishop of Salisbury, John Jewel, wrote to Bullinger, the Swiss Reformer, on March 2, 1571: «The Turk, who now threatens Italy, will at least bridle the ferocity of Antichrist». See: *Zurich Letters* publ. by the Parker Society (Cambridge 1842) 239. Elizabeth I herself tried to establish an alliance with the Turk. See her letter to the Grand Vizier of Nov. 15, 1582, publ. by Pears in *English Hist. Rev.* VIII n. 7. Even the Emperor, Rudolf II, a Habsburg and a Catholic, found himself chafed by Spanish successes and pretensions. About the same time (1571) also Venice made an effort to entice Tahmasp to open war on the Turk who threatened to seize Cyprus from the Venetians. Vincenzo D'Alessandri was sent as ambassador, but failed in his mission. (P. SYKES, *A History of Persia* (London 1930) II 169 f.).

⁴) Ms. Arch. Vat. Spagna, Misc. Arm. II 116, Memoranda of Matthias Bigudo Fontado, Naples, March 2, 1573. An English translation is in *Carm.* 21.

⁵) Felix OF JESUS, O.S.A., *Primeira Parte da Chronica e Relação do Principio que teve a Congregação da Ordem de S. Agostinho nas Indias Orientais e da Honrra e Gloria que seus primeiros Fundadores naquellas partes com continuos trabalhos ganarão para Deos nosso Senhor na convercao das almas*. Relatione delli servitii che li Religiosi di Sant'Agostino hanno fatto e fanno nell'India Orientale, e particolarmente nelle missioni di Persia, Gorgistano, Bazora e stretto d'Ormuz».

⁶) Cf. the description of Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.*, 23 f., who lived there; *Memorial das Missões dos religiosos que mandou a nossa provincia de nosso P. Sancto Augustinho de Portugal a este Congregação da India, e das couzas em que se occupão, feito pello P. Frey Antonio de Moraes Vigario Provincial que foy da dita Congregação* (henceforth DE MORAES, *op. cit.*), publ. by A. DA SILVA REGO, *Documentação para a Historia das Missões do Padroado Portugues do Oriente, India 12* (Lisbon 1958) 109. A. DA SILVA REGO, *Curso de Missionología* (Lisbon 1965) 403, proposes the opinion that the Jesuits left because they saw no possibilities for future development: «A Companhia de Jesus, todavia,

Immediately upon the Augustinians' arrival in Goa Father Simão de Moraes ⁷⁾ proceeded with the foundation of the monastery at Hormuz ⁸⁾. By the time Francisco Mascarenhas, the viceroy, needed an envoy for Persia, de Moraes had acquired a working knowledge of the Persian language and was thus the natural choice for the embassy ⁹⁾.

We have instructions for an envoy to be sent to the Shah in a document extant in the Vatican Archives which is an undated draft of directions for an envoy to Shah Khudabanda. We may very well assume that they were more or less the directions which were also given to Simão de Moraes ¹⁰⁾.

abandonou esta missão, pois não lhe oferecia perspectivas de continuidade». There was nothing in the locality itself, beyond its situation at the mouth of the Persian Gulf and its possession of two good harbors, to recommend it as a site of a city. DE MORAES, *op. cit.* 176 : « Parece que todo elle (the strait of Hormuz) se guardou para os religiosos de N. P. S. Agostinho pois só elles o puderão sustentar ». Frei Paulo DA TRINDADE, O.F.M., *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente* (Lisbon 1964) 30 reports that in 1568 King Sebastian had asked the Franciscan Pedro da Madalena to open at Hormuz a house for the service of the Portuguese. But « por ver quão desacomodada era aquela terra para os nossos frades, porque pela mui demasiada quentura não se pode andar nela senão com vestidos leves e finos, nem se pode dormir debaixo do telhado senão nos eirados, não quis fundar aí casa ». P. D'AVITZ, *Le Monde, ou la Description Générale de ses quatre parties* (Rouen 1644) 210, mentions also a disease which he ascribes to the water the people of Hormuz drink.

⁷⁾ On Simão de Moraes see 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* [supra note 6] *India* 11 [Lisbon 1955]) 231. (Henceforward Manoel DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.*). Also DE MORAES, *op. cit.*, 102. The name is handed down as de Moraes and de Morais. This article follows the spelling of Felix OF JESUS, e.g. *op. cit.* 29.

⁸⁾ The Augustinian Convent at Hormuz was established in 1573. Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 23 f.; Manoel DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 147 f.; DE MORAES, *op. cit.* 170 f.; Ms. *Memorias da Congregação Agostiniana na India Oriental*, Bibl. Nacional of Lisbon, F.G. No. 177 (publ. by A. DA SILVA REGO, *Documentação, India* 12) 12. (This Ms. will be quoted *Memorias*). Hormuz, attacked in 1507 and finally conquered in 1514, was at the time the Augustinians arrived a dominion of Portugal. The hereditary ruler, who had to pay from his revenues — he took all the customs' revenues — a yearly tribute to Portugal, continued to be the instrument of government.

⁹⁾ Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 29. There is a discrepancy on the exact date of this embassy. Felix gives the year 1583 as the year of the departure of Simão de Moraes from Goa. However, the letters of de Moraes, all written from Kashan to the King of Persia and the Pope, are dated in 1582. See appendix II and III.

¹⁰⁾ Vat. Arch. Misc. Arm. II 117, Spagna p. 135. (Extant in Engl. Translation in *Carm.* 23 ff.).

The Vatican Archives preserve three letters ¹¹⁾ regarding the mission of Father de Moraes into Persia. From them we know that he did not have to make many efforts to incite the Shah to war against the Turks. The Shah conveyed his wish to de Moraes that King Philip take hostile action against the Turk. De Moraes also sent his own letter to the Pope :

« ... I determined to write these present letters to inform Your Holiness that Shah Muhammed (Khudabanda's first name), the emperor of the Persians, has it in mind in no wise to slacken his warfare against the Turk, nor to arrange peace with him, and all the more so if he can know for certain that the sovereigns of Christendom will do likewise, with regard to which he sent to the Catholic King an envoy, who on reaching Goa was unable to sail for Portugal, as he found all the cargo ships had already left that country » ¹²⁾.

As Father de Moraes is the first Augustinian to enter Persia and, at that, in the capacity of an ambassador, it has been said repeatedly that the Augustinians came only as diplomats without a mission by the Holy See. « Had they been Italians or Frenchmen, or of any other race by nationality, the situation (tensions with the Shah and the Carmelites) would never have arisen. However, they were Portuguese and *not there as missionaries of their Order*, but purely as diplomatists to push the interests of the Portuguese authorities in Hurmuz and Goa, and to act as agents for Portugal » ¹³⁾. There is also a letter of the Jesuits reporting to the Congregation of the Propaganda in 1745 :

« ... est etiam in civitate Conventus Augustinianorum ... sed isti non sunt proprie missionarii, sed missi a Vice Rege Portugalliae, qui residet Goae, tanquam consules ... » ¹⁴⁾.

Such sweeping statements are, to say the least, a historical oversimplification, charged with emotion, born of clashes and frictions among the various missionary orders, and thus immediately open to suspicion. Here is only space to hint shortly at the theological problem involved. At the time there were theologians who held that the King of Spain had received Papal delegation and that for work in the missions, even the administration of the sacraments, the royal licence

¹¹⁾ Secr. Vat. Arch. Misc. Arm. II 117 f. 130, 140r-140v (app. III) and 142.

¹²⁾ Ms. Secr. Vat. Arch. Misc. Arm. 117 f. 159r (*Infra* appendix II).

¹³⁾ *Carm.* 96.

¹⁴⁾ Ms. Congr. Prop. Fide, Scritture non riferite V, p. 360.

to go there was sufficient ¹⁵). We can further say frankly that neither the individual Augustinians, nor the Order, came to Hormuz to gain something for themselves. King John III had asked the Augustinians repeatedly to send missionaries to India, but the Order did not have sufficient manpower. It was a variety of circumstances that had led the Portuguese into Hormuz and, in consequence, the Augustinians into Persia. Albuquerque had conquered the island at the entrance to the Persian Gulf for the Portuguese to secure their trade routes to India ¹⁶). Shortly afterwards the conquest of Egypt by the Turks ¹⁷) had partly thwarted this effort, yet the Portuguese did not give up the emporium as long as they could hold it. At the request of King Sebastian the Augustinians accepted the care for the sick and the Portuguese garrison, when other Orders had left. Life on Hormuz was a continued hardship because of the unbearable climate and because all water had to be brought by boat from the neighboring island of Qishm or the mainland ¹⁸).

As we shall see, before they ever went into Persia as ambassadors, the Augustinians had worked there ten years among the garrison and in the hospital and had lost no time either to exert their energies also among the native Moslem population. If the Pope used them initially in Persia primarily as legates to forward his policy, the Augustinians had in mind the conversion of the infidels, the reconciliation of schismatics, and the preaching of the Gospel ¹⁹). We must admit that the

¹⁵) The very complicated question of the *Padroado Real* has been thoroughly studied by A. DE EGANA, S.J., His book *La Teoria del Regio Vicariato Español de Indias* (*Analecta Gregoriana* 95, Roma 1958) contains also the principal bibliography. See also the contemporary view of Alonso DE VERA CRUZ, O.S.A., Ms. iii-K-6 Escorial (extant in English translation in A. ENNIS, O.S.A., « Fray Alonso de Vera Cruz, O.S.A. », *Augustiniana* VII [Louvain 1957] 156 ff.). Fr. Ennis' very appropriate comment on Egaña is in *art. cit. Augustiniana* V (December 1955) 369.

¹⁶) Mendez DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 303 f. For the history of the arrival of the Portuguese and the first years of occupation see Abbas FAROUGHY, *Histoire du Royaume de Hormuz* (Bruxelles 1949) 52 ff.

¹⁷) Cairo was taken January 20, 1517 and Selim of Turkey proclaimed Sultan of Egypt.

¹⁸) Cf. the Discourse of Melchior of the Angels, O.S.A., published in Mendes DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 593 : « ... sofriendo en el berano los maiores y excesivos calores que otra tierra en el mundo ». And 594 : « Ormus es una isla que solo tiene de suio sal y asufre sin tener agoa ... todo le biene de fuera ».

¹⁹) See e.g. the passage of Gouveia's farewell address to Shah Abbas, Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 98 : « ... saberas grande monarcha de Asia que a causa de minha vinda e de meus

first Augustinians in Persia were not free agents, but doing another's bidding. This dual role colored their work and the results accordingly. To spend days in public attendance at court, to be with the Shah at his camps, to follow his military expeditions and eat and drink with him, and mix with the seculars from European countries may have been remote from the life of the missionary. Yet as most Europeans they may also have seen a real mission in helping to overthrow the Turkish power and its terrible menace to Christendom at the time. Like most Spanish diplomats of their day, they have seen the power of Spain as the chosen instrument for bringing all Europe back to the faith. The interests of Spain and the interests of God's holy Church honestly seemed to them to be the same.

We do not deny that the Augustinians were from the beginning in an embarrassing and delicate position as members of the conquering nation. They were under the handicap of having to use diplomacy in view of the fact that the Christian princes did not support the Shah. The selfishness of the Portuguese merchants and the immorality of the soldiers made their work at times very difficult. The people were not always able to distinguish between the officer of the state and the officer of religion, even when the latter was not an official ambassador. We must also admit that the Portuguese at Hormuz were the object of much bitterness and dislike to various Shahs, and especially to Abbas, because they dominated the Persian Gulf and monopolized its commerce ²⁰). In this light we must appraise the relations, apparently friendly, of the embassies the Persian sent to the European courts. Looking back at the situation as it existed we doubt very much that the Carmelites would have been allowed to enter Persia at all

companheiros a teu Reyno não foy só a guerra que contra o Turco te pressuadimos the gora, mas isso tomamos por meyo para virmos tratarmos de tua salvação e dos teus ». It may be noteworthy to add here that Simão de Moraes did not take his dignity as ambassador too seriously. He calls himself «delator literarum» and «tabellarius», a man who was simply used to take a letter along, when he went on his mission. *Infra*, appendix II, p. 209 f.

²⁰) E.g. *Carm.* 162 where Fr. Paul Simon says in 1608 that the Persians resent the Portuguese Fathers because of the injuries done to themselves at Hormuz. Also *Carm.* 131 the letter of Abbas to the Pope, where the Shah complains that the captain of Hormuz carries off the property of Mohammedan merchants. See also Paul V's letter to the King of Spain of Oct. 16, 1608 in which he «gives due warning of the evil and overbearing conduct of the Portuguese officials in Hormuz towards Persia» (*Carm.* 142).

if the road had not been opened by the Augustinians and through the circumstances of the time.

We could go further and speak of a missionary mystique on the part of the Portuguese. The beginning of the Padroado, the Portuguese expansion into Africa, had been a long and logical result of the completion of the reconquest of the Spanish peninsula and the conquest of Ceuta in 1415. The simple idea of fighting the Moslem on their own soil was linked with more complicated motives: the search for a Christian ally in the half-true, half-fabled realm of Prester John ²¹⁾, the wish on the part of Portugal and Spain to gain more strength by extending their possessions. They desired to spread Christianity and still felt the crusaders' urge to defeat or convert the infidels, they shared the curiosity of the age, the desire to explore; and they wanted their slice of the oriental trade monopolized by the Italians, especially the way to the spices of the Indies. Cheaper goods, larger profits, political prestige, and the satisfaction of having extended the boundaries of Christendom, all these purposes were gradually combined in forming the rationale of their enterprise. These varied hopes made for a unity of mission and politics, a kind of system for life and action. Perhaps as in the case of their contemporaries, the Richelieus, the Mazarins, Borgias and Medicis, we cannot always discover which phase of the mystique of the Padroado predominated. It was always present in its entirety as an unanalyzed whole of great depth and breadth. It often became apparent only as a shift of emphasis according as the individual official was a soldier, sailor, politician or missionary. The merchant stressed commerce, the missionary Christianity, the soldier conquest and the politician national renown. Yet in each individual the other motives were in the background like the harmony accompanying the melody. The years of discovery must have been full of thrills and always beckoned the soldier, trader, government official and missionary alike.

Upon their very arrival the Augustinians began their missionary work. With the eyes of the missionary Simão de Moraes saw the difficult

²¹⁾ Prester John, as the name implies, was a priest, a legendary figure who recurs as a priest-king in Asia and in Africa. The legend has been traced back to the 12th century. In the legends Prester John is a warrior priest-king who conquers for Christianity. In the 14th century it seems to have been decided that Prester John was an Ethiopian. (See V. SLESSAREV, *Prester John, The Letter and the Legend* [Minneapolis, U. of M. Press 1959]).

position of the many Latin and schismatic Armenian Christians who lived as merchants or slaves among the Moslem. But his main care belonged to the crown prince Hamzeh Mirza whom he knew how to befriend. Through this friendship he hoped to remove official resistance to Christianity, even though he would not be able to open the doors. He was unable to carry his plans through, as on a mission to Spain with a Persian ambassador he lost his life in a shipwreck ²²).

By reason of the war between Spain and England (Armada 1588) and several short Pontificates, the next ten years were without official envoys. Also in Persia these years were filled with turmoil. The crown prince Hamzeh Mirza ²³) was murdered and his younger brother Abbas (1587-1629) had gained the throne. He had to consolidate his power and defend his realm against the Uzbeks and the Turks. Two Englishmen arrived on the scene, the Sherley brothers, to train his army and

²²) Simão de Moraes perished 1585 in the wreck of the « Boa Viagem » together with the Persian ambassador whom he accompanied. Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 33; D. DO COUTO, *Da Asia de Diogo do Couto, dos feitos, que os Portugueses fizeram na conquista, e descubrimiento das terras, e mares do Oriente*, Decada Decima (Lisbon 1787) II 24; Manoel DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 231; A. DE GOUVEIA, O.S.A., *Relation des grandes guerres et victoires obtenues par le Roy de Perse Chah Abbas etc.* (Rouen, Loyselet 1646) 10. (This work will be quoted GOUVEIA, *Relation*).

²³) There is much fanciful thinking on the part of the Augustinian writers of the time on the death of Hamzeh Mirza. Some of them, e.g. Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 28; Peter OF THE SAINTS, *op. cit.* AA XXV (1962) 307; GOUVEIA, *Relation* 5 and 10, are of the opinion that Hamzeh was on the brink of becoming a Christian and open the doors of Persia to Christianity. They explain this as the fruit of the work of De Moraes. GOUVEIA, *Relation* 5, tells us that Abbas himself told him that the Mohammedans had killed his brother because of his interest and love in the Christian religion. Gouveia already doubted the sincerity of this statement: « ... encor qu'on n'en sçach pas la cause que son frere m'a contée ». On page 10 he says: Mirza tué par trahison, yet even here he repeats that Abbas had told him the real cause was Mirza's leaning towards Christianity. But L. BELLAN, *Chah Abbas I, sa vie, son Histoire* (Paris 1932) 12 ff. describes the power play and court intrigues that preceded Hamzeh's death, and says that Hamzeh died dead drunk on December 1, 1586 (*ibidem* 14). Accused of the murder were the triumvirate of Châmlû and Ostâdilû, Mohamadi and Esmail Quuli. *Carm.* 67 gives 1585 as the year of Hamzeh's death. Also Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 33: Morreo neste tempo na Persia o Principe Ansa Mirza a treisão par hum barbeiro ». See to the whole question J. MACOLM, *The History of Persia* (London 1815) I 521 f., with footnote, where he examines the variants of the incident as reported by Gouveia, Anthony Sherley and the Persian minister of Abbas. On Mirza's « conversion » and murder consult also P. SYKES, *A History of Persia* (London 1930) II 171.

teach the Persians the military science of Europe and, above all, the use of artillery ²⁴).

Contact with Persia was resumed again only in 1598, when Nicholas Melo, the mission procurator of the Spanish Augustinians in the Philippines, went to Europe by way of India and Persia ²⁵). He came neither as missionary nor as ambassador, but passed through the country only by accident. But he took the opportunity to congratulate the new Shah for his success against the Ottoman and encouraged him to continue his war effort against the Turk, assuring him also that the Pope would organize a league among the Christian princes. Moreover, he pointed out to Abbas the advantage of having Christian missionaries in his realm. The Shah was so pleased that he sent Melo with the Englishman Anthony Sherley and his own ambassador to Europe ²⁶) which Melo never reached, as he died a martyr's death in Russia. A consequence of the letters he sent from Persia to Goa was that many young Augustinians volunteered to go to Persia ²⁷).

As a result of this embassy to Europe the annual ships from Lisbon brought in 1601 a letter of Philip III to the Viceroy at Goa with final destination to the Shah of Persia ²⁸). It contained an invitation for the Shah to open war on the Turk and allow Christian missionaries into his country. The Viceroy selected again Augustinians as his envoys. On this occasion the Provincial named the three men who were to become the founders of the Augustinian mission in Persia: Fathers Jerome of the Cross ²⁹), Antonio de Gouveia ³⁰), the later chronicler of this mission

²⁴) The Sherley Brothers, Anthony and Robert, arrived just when Abbas had regained Mashed from the Uzbegs and driven them also from Shirvan. The Count of Essex had sent them to search for possibilities to ally the Shah against the Turks and to open a trade route between Persia and England. Angelo Corrai introduced them and served as their interpreter. BELLAN, *op. cit.* 88 ff. GOUVEIA's extensive report in *Relation* 463 f.

²⁵) Cf. A. HARTMANN, O.S.A., « Father Nicholas Melo and Brother Nicholas of St. Augustine, Martyrs, O.S.A. » (Henceforth, Hartmann, Melo) *Augustiniana* IX (Louvain 1959) 118 ff. and the other sources quoted there.

²⁶) Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 62 f.

²⁷) *Ibid.* 63.

²⁸) *Ibid.* 83.

²⁹) Jerome of the Cross was born at Pombal in the diocese of Coimbra about 1539. He made his profession at Lisbon, was novice master of Archbishop Menezes, and was elected Provincial, an office which he did not accept. Earlier he had been appointed infirmarian to a galleass of the Armada. He died May 5, 1609 at Hormuz. The date given in Manoel DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 254 is an evident printing mistake, as the entry under Mathias DO ESPIRITO SANTO, *ibid.* 268, plainly proves. Manoel DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 253 f.; DE MORAES, *op. cit.* 135 f.

³⁰) Antonio de Gouveia was born at Beja, Portugal. His parents were Lazaro

and a major historian of the period, and Christopher of the Holy Spirit ³¹). They left Goa on February 15, 1602 and arrived at Hormuz in a boat so overloaded that the gunwales were only slightly above water, on the octave day of Easter April 10. ³²). They found the city in a state of unrest. The Sultan of Shiraz ³³) had taken the Portuguese

Ribeiro and Maria de Gouveia. He made his profession at Lisbon on June 4, 1591 and came to India in 1597. He taught philosophy at Tana in India and theology at Goa. He became rector of the college and then Prior of the monastery of our Lady of Grace. On January 20, 1612 he was consecrated bishop of Cirene, was later captured by the Saracenes. Freed in 1620, he died August 18, 1628 at Manzanares. MANOEL DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 254 f.; DE MORAES, *op. cit.* 136 f. Was Gouveia the Superior of the first group of missionaries? Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 84 seems to suggest Jeronimo, for he says: « Derãolhe por companheiro ao P. Frey Antonio de Gouveia ». Peter OF THE SAINTS, AA XXV (1962) 308, on the contrary states: « Antonio de Gouveia ... che era prelato, perche il P. Fr. Girolamo non ha voluto ». BELLAM, *op. cit.* 120 speaks of the three Augustinians who came in 1602, « dont ce dernier (Gouveia) le chef ». The name has come down in various forms: Gouvea, Govea and Gouveia. The latter form has been adopted by the recent Portuguese sources.

³¹) Christopher of the Holy Spirit was a Spaniard and a late vocation. Having served in the Spanish army, he came to India in 1595 and was confessor to Archbishop Menezes. He died June 30, 1631 on one of his mission journeys and was buried at the roadside. MANOEL DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 249 f.; DE MORAES, *op. cit.* 134.

³²) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 15; Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 86. Gouveia, indeed, says: « Nous partismes de Mascaté le 23 de Mars et arivasmes à Ormuz la dernière Octave de Pasques, qui fut le dixiesme d'Avril ». Felix of Jesus has the same date. However, according to A. CAPPELLI, *Cronologia, Cronografia e Calendario Perpetuo* (Milano 1930) Easter in 1602 was according to the Julian Calendar on April 4 (p. 106), according to the Gregorian Calendar on April 7 (p. 68). The latter date would make Ascension day, May 16. This date is confirmed in Gouveia (p. 45). The date given in Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 87, « vinte e seis de Mayo » must originate from a misreading of a numeral in an earlier text.

³³) He was Allah Verdi Khan, like his counterpart Sinan (*infra* note 48), a janissary. He originated from Georgia and was a renegade Christian Armenian (*Carm.* 130). The Shah made him chief of his janissaries and appointed him governor of Fars with headquarters at Shiraz. He became an emir and member of the supreme council. His son was Iman Quli Khan. BELLAN, *op. cit.* 62; GOUVEIA, *Relation* 68 ff. The external occasion for the attack on the Gulf islands centers around Noured-Din, the famed convert Nordim of the Augustinian writers (cf. Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 34 ff. and 53 f.). He had been legal heir to the sheikhdome of Hormuz. But the old sheikh Farrokh had abdicated in favor of Mahmud Shah, a nephew of Nourad-Din. The Portuguese, however, declared Firuz Shah legal heir, who was illegitimate. His arrival on the throne caused Rokned-Din-Masud to revolt and through his relative and compatriote Khaja Moined Din, a dignitary in the suite of Allah Verdi Khan, he asked the Persian army for help. Once this help was granted, Khaja Moined Din advanced upon Bahrain. (Cf. FAROUGHY, *op. cit.* 91 ff.).

possessions of Bahrain on the Arabian coast, and held Gambrun, now called Bander Abbas, an advance fortification of Hormuz, under siege. The pleas of the missionaries to be allowed to continue their embassy to the Shah combined with the threat of an approaching Portuguese naval squadron, had the effect that the siege was discontinued. Anthony Barreto ³⁴), one of the Augustinian chaplains with the beleaguered troops, had better insight. He knew that Allah Verdi Khan, the Sultan of Shiraz, wanted only to divert the forces of the Portuguese from Bahrain. He had no designs on Gambrun. The ambassadors resumed their journey on May 16 ³⁵), the day of the Ascension. They passed through Lara, where Gouveia reconciled a fallen-away Christian with the Church, and were stopped again at Shiraz where Allah Verdi Khan held them until he got word of the Shah's approval. Finally, on September 4 they reached Mashed, the Shah's headquarters. Abbas received them in solemn audience. Felix, the chronicler, tells us that the presents of the Viceroy to the Shah, mostly from China, were brought in one by one, while a Persian announced the arrival of each piece by name ³⁶). As representatives of the viceroy they first spoke with the Shah on the Turkish war, but did also present him their plans for a mission. Abbas was well disposed and courteous. He had questions to settle with the Portuguese of Hormuz. But he also had hopes of closer relations with Philip III. Politically he needed an ally against the Turks and commercially a market for Persian silk. Thus Abbas offered to build for the Augustinians a church and a monastery. He also gave them for their upkeep a yearly allowance of two thousand scudi. This second offer the Augustinians refused because of their vow of poverty, perhaps also,

³⁴) Anthony Barreto (Manoel DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 259; DE MORAES, *op. cit.* 138) came to India in 1599 and was stationed at Hormuz. He died from injuries suffered when he fell from a window. Barreto had been the regular chaplain of the troops. Later, during the siege, when the soldiers threatened mutiny, Pedro Coutinho, the Governor of Hormuz, sent new troops and with them the Augustinians Manoel Faya and Manoel Santos. Because of the unbearable heat and sickness the situation deteriorated to such an extent that the troops threatened to kill Faya because he insisted too much on still greater efforts and was the chaplain on duty. GOUVEIA, *Relation* 42, adds that these men « ont esté la principale cause, qu'il n'y soit arrivé disgrâce, ou diminuation de la reputation de la nation Portugaise ». *Ibid.* 39 f.

³⁵) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 44 ff.; the journey is described at length in Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 87 ff.

³⁶) *Ibid.* 89.

or more likely, in order not to awaken the suspicion that they had come for another purpose than to promote the war against the Turks. On the occasion of his second visit Gouveia told the Carmelites, who had come to Persia in 1607 ³⁷):

« ... the other time I was here the Shah was very affectionate with me. He kissed me on the neck more than ten times, embraced me an infinite number of times, many times he gave me to drink with his own hands, and paid me many other forms of courtesy ... » ³⁸).

As soon as the church and the house were ready for use the Shah came occasionally in person to assist at the services. He himself reports to Pope Clement VIII:

« Now that their Reverences the Padres, namely the most selected of mystics and monks Fra Antonio and Fra Cristo and Jeronimo, have come to these parts on behalf of his royal Majesty, we have accorded them a hearty welcome and paid them whatever courtesy and regard were due. In sooth, they are most accomplished, and their conduct has met with approval; they performed whatever were the precepts and tenets of their faith, and the rites of their creed, and they were very particular and precise in executing the duties of piety and prayer and the ceremonies of worship and religious observances and abstinence. Since they have discarded the world, they absolutely declined to accept whatever worldly chattels we offered them and marks of affection we wished to show them » ³⁹).

One of the courtesies mentioned was that one of the Augustinians received the exceptional favor of being admitted in the harem of the Shah's women.

The chief result of this mission for the Augustinian Order was the foundation of the monastery of Isfahan, the main outcome for the Church the opening of the first mission in Persia since the days of Mohammed. The Augustinians also brought it about that Abbas opened war upon the Turks. The Shah kept in his hands Bahrain ⁴⁰),

³⁷) « Li tre Padri Carmelitani Discalzi ... entrarono hieri in questa citta ». Letter of Diogo of St. Anne of Dec. 3, 1607. AA XXIV (1961) 190.

³⁸) *Carm.* 93; Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 93 ff., reports in detail the topics the Augustinians discussed with Abbas. A resume is contained in a report of Fr. Paul SIMON, O.C.D., *Carm.* 93.

³⁹) In the Persian original reproduced in *Carm.* II 1351; in English *ibid.* I 95.

⁴⁰) Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 98: « (O Xah) logo escreveo ao Soltão que restetuisse as terras firmes a el Rey de Ormuz que lhe tinha tomado com tal condicão que a armada dos Portugueses não passase a Barem e la deixasse possuir livremente e como o Viso

a foreboding that he had lost sight of neither Hormuz nor the Portuguese who deprived him of his income in the Persian Gulf. Thus one of the most difficult mission territories in the Church came into the hands of the Augustinians. Gouveia himself wrote later in the introduction to his history:

« Most of the inhabitants of Persia are Mohammedans who are so difficult to convert that nobody has preached the faith to them for fear of accomplishing nothing »⁴¹).

While the three Augustinians were still at the court word was received of the arrival of a Portuguese squadron near Hormuz. The

Rey tinha dado ordem ao capitão de Ormuz que não levantasse guerra alguma e que trabalhasse por conservar a paz e amizade com o Persa se fez assim como o Xa ordenou ». Philip III was unable to perceive this intention of the Shah. In March 1604 he wrote to Aires de Saldanha from VALLADOLID, *Boletim da Filmoteca Ultramarina* (Lisbon 1954) (hereafter *Boletim*) commanding his Viceroy to find some way to reconquer the fortress of Bahrain. This is followed by another letter to Martim Afonso de Castro, Lisbon, Feb. 26, 1605 (*Boletim* 518) in which he asks the Viceroy to have Abbas restore Bahrein by peaceful means. In case this cannot be accomplished he should have the isle blockaded so that neither supplies nor merchandise could get there. See also the King's letter to Abbas (*Boletim* 500, s.d., but inserted among the letters of Dec. 1606) in which he congratulates the Shah on his victories and adds that Abbas advise the Sultan of Shiraz to return Bahrein to the King of Hormuz.

⁴¹) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 1 f.: « C'est une chose recogneue par tout l'Inde ... que la Perse est la plus difficile, pour ce que la plus grande partie des habitants d'icelles sont Mahometans, la conversion desquels est si inespérée, qu'il n'y a personne qui leur presche la foi, pour le peu ou point de fruit qu'on en tire ». In the light of this introductory passage we must understand Gouveia's statement on the following page that Moraes has made a « great number of converts, some of whom are still alive and bear witness to the holiness of his life ». On page 7 he says that some of the Persians came with Moraes to Goa to be baptized there, a sure indication that Baptism was difficult in a Moslem country. On page 20 he reports that almost daily some inhabitants convert to Christianity, but he complains of the great cost, because they « have to be fed, clothed, and married off ». But he also speaks of some noble converts, Noured-Din, his sister, and Alexius, a son of Shah Rukh's of Badakshan. Neither was the work among the Portuguese of Hormuz too easy. His remark on page 38 insinuates this: « All came (to Hormuz) to get rich very fast. Therefore all who come, complain ». Yet Francisco Pereyra, O.S.A., (at the time court preacher for Pope Paul V, later Provincial of Portugal and Bishop of Miranda; T. HERRERA, O.S.A., *Alphabetum Augustinianum* [Madrid 1644] I 243 a), says that the annual report to the King of Spain on work done at Hormuz in 1602 has the news that 1676 Moslems had received Baptism. (Ms. Simancas, Secretaria de estado, leg. 981, publ. in *Archivo Historico Hispano-Augustiniano (AHHA)* 11 [1919] 162). This report was written about 1606, for it says: « Abra tres años y medio (Filipe III) enbio tres religiosos por sus embajadores al Xa ».

Shah became alarmed and asked one of the Fathers to go immediately to Hormuz and settle with the governor any problems which might lead to further misunderstanding and thus endanger the common effort against the Turk. The Shah made the stipulation that the Portuguese would receive back their possessions on the mainland if the fleet would not advance on Bahrain. This again was a sure indication that throughout all the years of the occupation the Persians never had lost sight of their main objective, to drive the Portuguese from the islands and that the Shah had his eyes definitely on the problem of the access to the Persian Gulf and yielded to major force only for the time being. Gouveia was selected for this mission. He was to be accompanied by a Persian, Allah Viridi Beg, and was expected to go on to India to discuss the problem with the viceroy ⁴²).

Even while Gouveia was still with Allah Viridi Beg at Shiraz in Persia on the way to Hormuz the Shah opened war on Turkey ⁴³). The actual outbreak of hostilities was due to an attack on Salmas by the Turkish garrison of Azerbaijan. Shah Abbas, having already decided to break the peace ⁴⁴), and perhaps also to assure Gouveia of the sincerity of his intentions, marched rapidly from Isfahan and after pushing back the Turkish army besieged Tabriz. After the fall of the city the inhabitants received him with open arms and helped him in the slaughter of the Turks. One after another the chieftains of Azerbaijan yielded to the Shah's pressure, until he was ready to close his grip on Erivan which he took after a six months' siege. He also occupied Shirvan and Kars. Ali Pasha sent now five thousand troops against the Shah which were slain at Sofian ⁴⁵). After this, many other chieftains of Azerbaijan submitted without a struggle. Thus Abbas was able to advance upon Nakhchevan. There he found only 150 Ottomans who surrendered. When later the conquered territories were occupied (1604) Maqsur Sultan was nominated Sultan of Nakhche-

⁴²) Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 97 f.

⁴³) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 189 ff.; BELLAN, *op. cit.* 121.

⁴⁴) It surely was a misrepresentation when the Shah told Gouveia that he began the war against the Turk on account of the embassies and letters of the King of Spain (*Relation* 472). See e.g. K. BASMAJIAN, *Histoire moderne des Armeniens* (Paris 1922) 28, where the author states plainly that the Armenians had asked Abbas to free them from the yoke of the Turk. BELLAN, *op. cit.* 123, has it that Abbas had gone to the formality to ask his council of Emirs on the beginning of hostilities and all had agreed. To cover up his intentions he went hunting.

⁴⁵) BELLAN, *op. cit.* 124.

van ⁴⁶⁾, who was to become the murderer of William. During the siege of Erivan began the great torment of the Armenian people. The men were used in large number to erect the earthen siege works and assault ramps and to dig the shafts to undermine the walls. About twelve thousand died ⁴⁷⁾.

Meanwhile Sultan Mohammed III of Turkey had died, and upon the accession of the youthful Ahmad (1603-1617) large Turkish forces were organized for a Persian campaign. The Shah saw that he was no match for these forces led by the Sultan's ablest field commander, Sinan Pasha ⁴⁸⁾. Realizing that for the time being he could not reconquer Armenia he wisely decided to make a halt. When he ceased from active warfare in 1604 and ordered a retreat, he did so from fear that the Turk would return to retake the land he had held so long under his sway. Therefore he ordered all dwellings and stores of grain and fodder to be destroyed, the fields to be burnt and laid waste, the cisterns to be broken and the wells closed up. In one word, following the scorched-earth-policy of later conquerors, he made the country a barren waste. It was his intention to fall back as far as Tabriz and make a stand there. If the Turks should try to dislodge him from his fortified camp they would at least not find any commodity or fortification in the whole of greater Armenia for the support of their war effort ⁴⁹⁾.

Great harm had been done to the Armenian Christians. Etchmiadzin, the See of the Armenian Monophysite Katholikos ⁵⁰⁾, lay in ruins.

⁴⁶⁾ *Ibid.* 131; *Carm.* 211.

⁴⁷⁾ GOUVEIA, *Relation* 350: « Le Roy ne pouvant avoir les villes principales que par de long sieges, et en faisant des grandes mines ou grandes levées de terre à l'entour en quoy il avoit besoin de si grande quantité de pionniers qu'au siege d'Ervan il en fallut plus de douze mil, tout ce qui estoit necessaire estoit fourni de ces pauvres miserables, dont il mouroit iournellement quantite de faim, de froid et de canonnades ... le neige estoit si abondante qu'elle les faisoit mourir ».

⁴⁸⁾ Sinan Pasha Djighale-Zade (commonly called Cingala by the writers of his day) a Genoese, born at Messina — GOUVEIA, *Relation* 338, says that he was the son of the Viscount of Sicily — was taken prisoner by the Turks together with his father. The father was killed in prison, the son brought up a Moslem. He attained the highest rank among the Sultan's janissaries and fought in Hungary, but could not forget his mother. By negotiating with the Spanish Viceroy at Naples a meeting was arranged. When the news reached Clement VIII he thought that after the death of Mohammed III (Dec. 22, 1603) he could win him back to the faith and induce him to desert the Sultan.

⁴⁹⁾ See GOUVEIA, *Relation* 263 ff.; and 351.

⁵⁰⁾ The title Katholikos is bestowed upon the heads of the Armenian and Georgian churches, at the period of this narrative it was identical with Patriarch.

Many churches had been destroyed, others had been spared only to serve as stables. Not a few of these had been shrines of the martyrs of former persecutions and contained their relics. Most of all, the population had suffered terribly from the frequent advance and retreat of the armies between Persia and Turkey. The country had been ravished, the people had seen their homes destroyed and their herds dispersed. The fields, trampled by too many armies, were going back to weeds and brambles ⁵¹).

This was the historical setting and environment into which God led one of the great Augustinian missionaries of the time, Father William of St. Augustine, to help the downtrodden Armenians and achieve martyrdom in his efforts. We had to be somewhat explicit in portraying this situation for a genuine understanding of mission history in general and of an individual missionary in particular, cannot be had without the backdrop of the economic, political, and social factors against which the apostolic activity unfolds.

SOURCES

The most important source for William's life we possess and the only full biography of him was written by Bishop Antonio de Gouveia who was William's teacher and companion on the mission field for several years ⁵²). The bishop had on hand also the records of a hearing which he himself had called and over which he presided at Hormuz in 1615 to establish the martyrdom of Father William. These records must be given the next place in importance for they consist of the statements made by four eyewitnesses of William's life and death. They have recently been published by Carlos Alonso, O.S.A. ⁵³). Thus

⁵¹) BELLAN, *op. cit.* 134 adds the following details: More than twenty thousands Armenians became prisoners and were made slaves. Their children were forced to become Mohammedans and enter ultimately the janissaries. Three thousand families near Erivan were allowed to keep their faith, but were moved away from their homes to Isfahan.

⁵²) A. DE GOUVEIA, O.S.A., *Glorioso Triunfo de tres martires españoles, dos Portugueses, y frailes de la Orden de S. Agustin, y uno Castellano hijo de Madrid* (Madrid 1623). (Henceforth, GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires*).

⁵³) C. ALONSO, O.S.A., « Misiones de la Orden de San Agustin en Georgia (1628-1639). Documentación inédita ». *Analecta Augustiniana* XXVIII (Rome 1965) 222 ff.

the biography by Gouveia has the greatest historic value. Gouveia refers to some of his sources on folio 15:

« The truth of this report is vouched for by the letters of the Archbishop Matthaeus, the letter of Father Magister Paul Cittadino of Bologna who was sent to Persia by order of Pope Paul V ⁵⁴); also by the testimony of Fray Augustine of Abraner ⁵⁵), and another companion of his, all Catholic friars of the Order of St. Dominic. Fray Juan Thadeo of St. Eliseus, Vicar General of the Discalced Carmelites in Persia, ⁵⁶) reports the same; and there are many more witnesses ».

It is to be lamented that Gouveia, for reasons we can well understand, omitted altogether the tragic part he played in the events which led to William's death by taking along on his embassy to Spain a shipment of silk. It would be interesting and helpful to have his own comment on the incident. Perhaps the year 1622, the time of the biography, was still too close to the events to understand the interconnection of cause and effect.

Almost equal to these primary sources must be considered the chapters dealing with William in the extensive history of the Armenians under Abbas written by Arakel of Tabriz, an Armenian priest ⁵⁷). He had the opportunity to meet the Armenian companion of William who succeeded in escaping the massacre. From him he received an eye-witness report on William's martyrdom. His references to the earlier years of William's life are also interesting because they show how the Armenians looked upon William's activity and confirm the historical authenticity of Gouveia's work.

⁵⁴) Paolo Maria CITTADINI, O.P., was sent by Paul V to Armenia as Apostolic Visitor and became later Archbishop of Nakhchevan (1627-30).

⁵⁵) He is Father Augustin Baseri, O.P., who was Archbishop of Nakhchevan from 1630 to 1653. His testimony is in *AA* (1965) 263 ff.

⁵⁶) This refers to the report which the Discalced Carmelite, Father John Thaddeus of St. Elisaeus, sent to the Archbishop of Braga, and formerly of Goa, Aleijo de Menezes, O.S.A. John Thaddeus had worked by the side of Father William in Isfahan from the time he came to the capital city of Abbas until New Year's Day 1611. This document is extant in three copies, the Portuguese original (publ. in *AA* [1965] 228 f.), a somewhat free Spanish translation, most probably made by Melchior of the Angels after his return from Persia at San Felipe el Real (Ms. 1269 No. 37, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid), and a beautifully written Italian translation (Arch. Congr. Prop. Fide, Lettere Antiche, vol. 189, fol. 273r-275v).

⁵⁷) Arakel OF TABRIZ, *Livre d'Histoires* (Amsterdam 1669) translated into French and publ. by M. BROSSET, *Collection d'Historiens Armeniens* (St. Petersburg 1874).

Another important report by a personal acquaintance of William is No. 37 of MS 1269 of the Biblioteca Nacional of Madrid ⁵⁸). It is anonymous and written in Spanish. Besides highlighting William's life, it introduces much of the background on which this life unfolded. Santiago Vela affirms that the treatise is without doubt from the pen of Father Melchior of the Angels ⁵⁹) which is borne out by Manoel da Ave Maria who lists among the writings left by Melchior: *Historia do Martyrio de Fr. Nicolão de Mello: e de Fr. Guilherme de S. Agostinho, por espaço de 14 annos*. Manoel adds: Written at Isfahan, February 20, 1616. Evidently we have here a translation of the Portuguese original. The story itself is that of a prime witness and an account that is simple and direct without great pretence of a literary style. It was the evident desire of Melchior to preserve the most exact details of the work of the Augustinians in Persia as he had witnessed and partly directed it.

Similar in character is a work of Father Peter of the Saints ⁶⁰), extant in an Italian translation ⁶¹). It is a report on the state of the Augustinian missions in Persia which Peter handed in to the Congregation of the Propagation of the faith on the occasion of his journey to Rome in 1640. Although the narrative contains many apparent errors of details, which the author had only from hearsay, it gives a vivid picture of the Augustinian Congregation and its work in India.

For the beginning of the Augustinian missions in Persia and the

⁵⁸) *Infra* p. 184. Appendix I.

⁵⁹) Melchior of the Angels Soares was born at Lisbon about 1563. He entered the Augustinian Order in India on Dec. 24, 1586. In 1606 he became master of novices and in 1608 he was sent by Viceroy Joao de Pereira as ambassador to Persia. He was Prior of Isfahan. 1643 he was named court preacher by Philip IV. He had made great efforts to obtain this title already in 1614 during the reign of Philip III, but without success. (*AHHA* [1951] 271 ff. contains the correspondence between Melchior and the Spanish court, and also the opinions the King's councillors had of the petitioner's qualifications, or their lack, for this honor). He died 1644. Manoel DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 353. His own account of his services and embassies is in his letter to the King in *AHHA* (1951) 269 ff.

⁶⁰) Peter of the Saints was of Belgian or Dutch birth and educated in Spain and Portugal. He entered the Augustinian Order at Goa as a lay brother. He was sent to Persia and became the indefatigable companion of Fr. Ambrose of the Angels, assisting him in the foundation of the monasteries at Shiraz and Gori. We have two of his interesting travel reports in SILVA REGO, *Documentação* (*supra* note 6), *India* 12, 200 and 217. Because of his outstanding labors in the missions he was ordained a priest. In 1639 he accompanied Manoel of the Purification to Rome where he handed the Congr. of the Prop. of the Faith his relation.

⁶¹) *Supra* note 5.

early labors of William we have the History of Felix of Jesus ⁶²⁾, who as Prior of Hormuz was also an eyewitness of some of the events.

More important, of course, is the monumental work of Gouveia on the history of the period ⁶³⁾. It has remained to this day one of the essential sources for the history of the wars of Abbas the Great. Gouveia wrote during his stay in Spain in 1608 a quick report which was printed at Lisbon in 1609 ⁶⁴⁾ and enlarged two years later into his notable work *Relaçam*. Both these works have been used here and are quoted from their French translations ⁶⁵⁾.

Besides these we have on hand a fair number of more or less official documents on William's martyrdom, a letter from Goa written by the Provincial João da Rocha to the Prefect of the congregation for the Propagation of the faith ⁶⁶⁾, a letter by Ambrose of the Angels of 1629 to the same ⁶⁷⁾, followed shortly by another one of the same writer. Also a letter by Archbishop Agostino Bascri of Nakhchevan ⁶⁸⁾.

By a happy accident we saw in the Archives of Simancas a document which throws some light on the circumstances which surrounded William's death ⁶⁹⁾. Bernardo de Azevedo ⁷⁰⁾, who had left Isfahan together with William wrote, on his return from Marseilles, a report on the happenings in Persia in the form of a letter to the Archbishop of

⁶²⁾ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁾ *Supra* note 21.

⁶⁴⁾ A. DE GOUVEIA, O.S.A., *Relação breve de algumas cousas mais notaveis, que os Religiosos de Sancto Augustinho fizeram na Persia em serviço da Sancta Igreja Romana e de Sua Magestade, ate o anno de 1607* (Lisboa 1609).

⁶⁵⁾ *Brieves Relations des Progres de l'Evangile au Royaume des Perses en la conversion des Mores, preparation des Perses à la moisson Evangelique, et en la reunion des Armeniens avec l'Eglise de Rome, par les freres heremites Religieux de S. Augustin* (Liège 1610). The translation was made by George MAIGRET, O.S.A. Although we have followed here the opinion of G. DE SANTIAGO VELA, O.S.A., *Ensayo de una Biblioteca Ibero-Americana* (hereafter *EBIA*), vol. III (Madrid 1917) 263, the work should be considered anonymous. On page 15, describing the sending of Moraes, the author says: « comme le décrit Gouvea »; p. 17 he calls Gouvea « aucteur de l'histoire Oriental »; 21: this is verified by letters of Father A. Gouvea etc. The author would not express himself in this way about his own person. This work will be quoted as *Brieves Relations*.

⁶⁶⁾ *AA* (1965) 232 ff.

⁶⁷⁾ *Ibid.* 246 ff.

⁶⁸⁾ *Ibid.* 263 ff.

⁶⁹⁾ Archivo de Simancas, Estado Portugal, Leg. 436. *Infra* p. 13 f, Appendix V.

⁷⁰⁾ Bernardo de Azevedo came to Persia in 1605 and became Prior of Isfahan Nov. 13, 1612. Manoel DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 267 and 206.

Braga, Aleijo de Menezes, O.S.A., Menezes, formerly Archbishop and viceroy of Goa ⁷¹), passed the letter on to the Duke of Lerma, Francisco Gomez de Sandoval e Rojas, whom Philip had entrusted with the direction of the government. He in turn submitted it to the Council of Portugal and then to the Council of the State of India. This document makes the martyrdom of William stand out in all its heroic greatness ⁷²).

A rich source of background material for the whole period is the anonymous *Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia* ⁷³). It must be used with caution, as the author has several fixed ideas which will become apparent. One of the reasons of this present study is to correct this chronicler's approach to the Augustinian missions in Persia.

Of great help is also the work of Mendez da Luz on the Council of India ⁷⁴). It contains several primary Augustinian sources.

Many of the letters mentioned are catalogued and shortly described in *Boletim da Filмотeca Ultramarina Portuguesa* ⁷⁵) which has become a most valuable source of information for the study of this period. There we find in outline the important state papers of the Archives of Goa.

A valuable mine of information on the Augustinians' relations with the Armenians are two letters by Diogo of St. Anne written in Isfahan in 1607 and 1608 respectively ⁷⁶). They are written right on the scene and contain many details of the missionary labor and the political efforts of the Augustinians. The second letter was sent to Rome through the kind services of Fr. Paul Simon, a discaled Carmelite, and signed by all the Fathers of the Augustinian community of Isfahan. It is partly an answer to a letter Pope Paul V had sent, and also information on the most recent developments. The two letters relate the experience of the Augustinians with the Shah and the Moslems. Diogo describes the Shah's change of heart, if there ever

⁷¹) He was Archbishop of Goa 1595-1610; Viceroy June 3, 1606 to May 27, 1609.

⁷²) For it proves beyond doubt that William could have found safety as well as his Prior, Father Bernard.

⁷³) *Supra* note 3. Although this work is anonymous, the author's presentation copy to the Discaled Carmelites in Rome gives on the flyleaf his name: Chick Herbert.

⁷⁴) F. Mendes da Luz, *O Conselho da India* (Lisbon 1952).

⁷⁵) *Supra* note 40.

⁷⁶) S. LOPEZ, O.S.A., and C. ALONSO, O.S.A., « Due lettere riguardanti i primi tempi delle missioni Agostiniane in Persia' AA XXIV (Rome 1961) 152 ff.

was any. It took the Augustinians all their years up to Diogo's time before they realized that a man like Abbas was not ready for the Gospel.

EARLY YEARS

William of St. Augustine, the son of noble parents, was born in the town of Ansan ⁷⁷⁾ in the county of Monsanto of the Diocese of Coimbra. His father was Roger Fernandez, his mother Angela Gaspar, a marchioness of Herrera. William attended the schools of his home town and at the age of seventeen he entered the Augustinian Order at Santarem. He made his profession in 1598 ⁷⁸⁾ so that we can conclude that the year of his birth must have been about 1570. Shortly after his profession he was sent to India where he traveled with a group of missionaries sent out in the year 1599. He studied arts and theology and was ordained at Goa ⁷⁹⁾. Lanteri, the Augustinian chronicler, reports that he obtained the degree of Master in Sacred Theology ⁸⁰⁾. However, as he is the only source for this assertion and in view of the fact that William went to Persia almost immediately after his ordination, there seems to have been but little time for further studies. Father Gouveia, who was his teacher in both faculties at Goa says: «Already at that time he could have been my teacher in virtue» ⁸¹⁾.

Father William's life was completely changed and directed on a new course with the return to Goa of Hussain Ali Beg, the Shah's ambassador to Spain ⁸²⁾. He brought assurances from King Philip of a league of Christian princes against the Turk. On his way to Persia an ambassador of the Spanish King, Luis Pereira de Lacerda ⁸³⁾, was

⁷⁷⁾ Thus GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 31r. Both Ms. *Memorias* 39 and DE MORAES, *op. cit.* 139 assign him Tentugal, «two leagues from Coimbra» as birth place. Gouveia, on the contrary, says that William's mother was born at Tentugal.

⁷⁸⁾ *Memorias* 39 and DE MORAES, *op. cit.* 139.

⁷⁹⁾ *Ibid.*, and GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 31r.

⁸⁰⁾ J. LANTERI, O.S.A., *Addimenta ad N. Crusenii Partem Tertiam Monastici Augustiniani* (Vallisoleti 1890) 666. It is worthy of note that Crusenius himself (*Monasticon Augustinianum* [Munich 1623] 243) does not make that statement.

⁸¹⁾ GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 31v.

⁸²⁾ Husejn Ali Beg went to Spain and Rome accompanied by the Anthony Sherley and Nicholas Melo. On his embassy see A. HARTMANN, *Melo* 142 and *passim*. Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 110; *Carm.* 79 and 152.

⁸³⁾ Mendes DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 319 ff.

to join him and assure the Shah of the King's efforts in promoting war on Turkey, a promise which, as we know, was never kept. According to the King's express instructions this ambassador was to be accompanied by two Augustinians ⁸⁴). At the time the Provincial of the Augustinian Congregation of India, Father Michael of the Angels ⁸⁵), was absent from Goa. So it fell to Antonio de Gouveia, as Prior of the monastery, to select the two companions of the ambassador.

« Following my best judgment », he writes, « I thought of the Fathers Melchior of the Angels and the blessed Father William of St. Augustine, as I knew very well his talents and his virtues » ⁸⁶).

They sailed for Persia in the suite of the King's ambassador on February 14, 1604. With them traveled Father Diogo Moraes who had volunteered to work in Persia ⁸⁷). They were able to set out from Hormuz on April 22nd in search of the Shah who was still engaged in his campaigns. Moving from place to place they covered much of Greater Armenia. On Sundays and the feasts of the saints they always celebrated Mass in a tent. They also began immediately their mission work by admitting people who asked to attend their various acts of worship. Once in Armenia, they saw with their own eyes the ruined land, the devastated cities and the profaned churches of which they had heard before. They met many of the priests and bishops of the

⁸⁴) Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 110; GOUVEIA, *Relation* 13 gives two reasons for this choice: « Il (the Viceroy) resolut qu'ils (the ambassadors) fussent religieux de nostre P. S. Augustin, tant à cause que ceste conquiste nous apartenoit, qu'à cause de la commodité du couvent que nous avons en Ormus ».

⁸⁵) Michael of the Angels, elected Vicar of India in Portugal 1579 (Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 26), arrived in Goa in the same year. When his term of office expired in 1584 he returned to Portugal and returned late in 1603, again as elected Vicar Provincial (*ibid.* 107). He died on the last day of April 1606 (*ibid.* 135) and was reelected Provincial in Lisbon a third time in 1607 as the news of his death had not yet reached Portugal. Michael had not yet arrived at Goa when the appointment of Lacerda's companions had to be made.

⁸⁶) GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 31v.

⁸⁷) Diogo of St. Anne Moraes was born at Villa Nova de Lampazes near Braganza, made his profession at Lisbon Oct. 21, 1594 and came to India 1595 in the company of Archbishop Menezes. He was ordained at Goa, helped to found Bazain and became Prior of Isfahan. He served three terms as master of novices, was rector of the college of Goa and was elected Provincial Dec. 16, 1620. He died at Goa October 6, 1644. On his various publications, among them a dictionary of the Persian language, see *EBIA* VII 293 ff. Manoel DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 250 ff.; HERRERA, *op. cit.* I 202; DE MORAES, *op. cit.* 134.

country who lamented the loss of so many relics of their early saints. From them they also learnt the story of wholesale human misery, of people driven from their homes and many children sold into slavery ⁸⁸). This calamity had come about in June 1604 when Abbas had received information that Sinan Pasha Cigala had arrived in Erzerum with a large army ⁸⁹). The Shah resolved to fall back behind the river Aras. If he had to fight the Turk and his superior forces, it could be better done from the other side of the river. At the same time he wanted to see what his burnt-earth-policy, and later the winter, would do to the army of Cigala.

During his campaign north of the Aras in Greater Armenia Shah Abbas perpetrated a cruel crime against the Armenians as Christians and a race, deporting them from their homes about Erivan. He issued the strict order that all inhabitants of the Province would have to leave the country within two days from the date of publication. The population was to assemble in the plain of Ararat and march from there to Persia ⁹⁰). They were to find new homes south of Tabriz toward the interior of Persia. Some moved near the capital, others scattered throughout Gilan. Most of the small colonies perished or were engulfed by Islam ⁹¹).

⁸⁸) Like their Turkish neighbors, the Persians had an army of janissaries. They were called *tufanghis* (riflemen). These boys and young men, taken away by force and brought up in the strictest discipline in the Moslem faith, formed the elite of the Moslem armies. This human « tithe » exacted for the purpose of recruiting was the most painful ordeal of the Armenians. Some of these boys faced a worse fate by being selected for the Shah's harem of boys. (Cf. to this Diogo's statement in *AA* [1961] 160 ff.) The rest of the population were made tributaries of Islam; they had to pay for their relative freedom by submitting to a kind of poll tax. This explains the great efforts of both Augustinians and Carmelites to purchase children, or to take them off the ships when they were brought into Persia via Ormuz.

⁸⁹) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 262 ff. and 351. BELLAN, *op. cit.* 133 ff. The news arrived on June 25, 1604.

⁹⁰) BASMADJIAN, *op. cit.* 29.

⁹¹) BELLAN, *op. cit.* 134 reports that more than 20.000 Armenians became prisoners and were made slaves. Their children were forced to become Mohammedans and join ultimately the janissaries. Three thousand families from the vicinity of Erivan were allowed to keep the faith, but were moved near Isfahan. GOUVEIA, *Relation* 347, is more explicit: « plus de vingt bonnes villes et fort peuplées furent cruellement et inhumainement mises à sac sans compter les bourgs et les villages dont il y a si grand nombre et si remplis de peuple qu'au seul territoire d'Ervan il y en a plus de quinze cens, aucuns desquels ont quatre et cinque cens, habitants ». See also A. BAUDRILLART, *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclesiastiques* IV (Paris 1930) s.v. Armenie, col. 323 f.; ARAKEL's very detailed description of the expulsion of the Armenians is in *op. cit.* 286 ff.

An exception was made with the inhabitants of the town of Julfa on the bank of the Aras river ⁹²). Perhaps the Shah had towards them a greater obligation, or because they were the richest merchants, he wanted to give his country the benefit of their talents ⁹³). They were assigned a particular place to build themselves a town on the opposite shore of the Zayinda Rud, Isfahan's river, joined to the city by the celebrated Allah Verdi Khan bridge. While others had to devise their own ways and means of conveyance, the Shah had given them camels to help them carry their baggage to ease the great sorrow at leaving their homes. In less than a month they began to build the new town of Julfa, which at the time Gouveia wrote his story, counted five thousand inhabitants, had seven parishes, two bishops and a number of priests. While they were able to build good homes for themselves the other refugees, especially the poor, were not so well off. When the Turkish army approached the vicinity of the city of Tabriz the Shah forced the people to leave at sword's point. Then he had their villages burnt. Gouveia tells the story of women who had lost their husbands during the siege, some with five or six children to support « too big to be carried, too young to march » ⁹⁴). They had to walk without the proper clothing under the hardship of winter just setting in. Many froze to death. Some had their feet, ears and noses frozen. Another privation was lack of food. Mothers saw their children die without being able to help them. « There was no one who would not eat the flesh of their dead kin » ⁹⁵). The Augustinians walked into this misery and what they witnessed touched, above all, William's heart.

⁹²) The transfer of the various groups of Armenians can be found in BELLAN, *op. cit.* 134 ff. When Abbas came to the Dadi river, while giving way to Djighale, he had Maqsd transfer the people of his district to Qarad'jadagh and sent Tahmasp Quli Beg, one of his janissaries, to take the Armenians of Julfa on the Aras river to Isfahan. Also GOUVEIA, *Relation* 266).

⁹³) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 52 : « Abbas favorise les marchands, qui y negotient, cognoissant bien l'utilité qui en revient à son pays ».

⁹⁴) *Ibid.* 354 : « Trop grands pour les pouvoirs porter, et trop petits pour faire chemin ».

⁹⁵) *Ibid.* Peter OF THE SAINTS, *AA* (1962) 309 : « Venero a tale che proprii padri e madri costretti dalle necessita doppo haver mangiato le proprie cavalcature, et quando havevano mangiato anco li proprii figlii, e s'alcuno moriva, subito dividendolo, quello mangiavano ».

« Father William was so tender-hearted and possessed so much natural sympathy that he hardly heard of anything which caused grief to others without shedding tears of compassion. It is, therefore, no wonder that he wanted to do something to alleviate the misery of the afflicted people » ⁹⁶).

On the staff of the embassy he played only the part of chaplain to Luis Pereira. He said Mass for him daily, received in turn his fare from him and carried no greater possession on the trip than his breviary ⁹⁷). We may well surmise the opinion Pereira had of the young priest. The instructions sent by the King for the ambassador read that he discuss his business with « them » ⁹⁸), i.e. both the priests; but he scorned the advice of the younger man.

« Not once did the ambassador admit him to his council. When he needed advice or wished to discuss the purpose and plans of his embassy he talked with Father Melchior » ⁹⁹).

So much the more William had time to give his attention to the problems of the displaced Armenians and thought of ways and means to come to their aid.

At Isfahan the ambassador and the Fathers were received with great pomp and ceremony. The governor and the five Augustinians who resided in the capital had come to conduct them in procession into the Shah's city on the feast of Corpus Christi ¹⁰⁰). They spent a few days in the little monastery where many people came to have them pray and read the Gospel over them and bless their sick. Many Armenians and homeless Christian foreigners came for material aid. Indeed, the Augustinians had begun this material aid with the arrival of the Armenian refugees. Although they were in the midst of building their own monastery and had been obliged to stop the building operations for lack of funds, they thought that whatever they had should be used first of all to alleviate the need of the refugees.

⁹⁶) GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 32v.

⁹⁷) *Ibid.* 33r.

⁹⁸) Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 110.

⁹⁹) GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 33r. On the purpose of Lacerda's mission see Mendes DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 319 ff. and the report of Melchior 390 f.

¹⁰⁰) Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 111. According to A. CAPPELLI, *op. cit.* 90. Corpus Christi in 1604 was on June 25.

« They reasoned that four to five thousand scudi which God had placed at their disposal was the emergency provision God had wanted to entrust into their hands that they might come to the aid of these poor people » ¹⁰¹).

They purchased rice and other eatables and distributed them. Some who had joined the Moslem faith asked to be reconciled with the Church. The new arrivals began immediately to study the language of the country and, in turn, taught Armenian children to read and speak Portuguese.

The Shah, however, was not in residence but was with his troops near Erzerum. So, after a few days, the embassy continued to the Shah's headquarters. They spent the whole time from August 1 to October 17, 1604, in search for the Shah who received them on that day with all due formality ¹⁰²). He went out of his way to make his guests comfortable and introduced them to his grandees, who had found them outlandish in their great hats and black habits ¹⁰³). The Shah put his nobles at ease by telling them that in spite of their appearance the friars were the same type as the fathers he had at Isfahan. William made a pleasant impression on Abbas as a musician. He knew how to play the lute very well, so that « the Shah became very fond of him and could not be without him » ¹⁰⁴). Abbas told the priests he needed more missionaries on account of the many Armenians who were now in the country. He received very happily the King's letters and presents while two Turkish Pashas, who had been taken prisoners in the recent battles, looked on.

The following day Abbas gave a banquet in honor of the ambassador and then sent him and the Fathers to rest at Casbin where he

¹⁰¹) AA (1962) 310.

¹⁰²) Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 112, followed by Mendes DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 320. Yet the report of Council of India (*Ibid.* 390) has it that the Augustinians, who accompanied the ambassador, stated that they arrived on Oct. 10 and gave to the Shah their letters on the same day. Gouveia just says that Abbas' spies had brought the news of the arrival of Djighale at Erzerum on June 25 and a few days afterwards (*peu de jours apres*) Lazerda arrived at the camp. *Relation* 262.

¹⁰³) It is not immediately apparent why the Augustinians wore on that occasion their black habit. In Moslem countries they usually wore their white one. For that reason they were even called the « White Fathers » by their own compatriots. Cf. HARTMANN, *Melo* 280 note 4. Also J. SICARDO, O.S.A., *Christianidad del Japon* (Madrid 1698) 21 b : « Son llamados (los Agustinos) delos menos politicos, Frailes blancos, por causa de usar de este color; porque el negro es odioso a los Mohametanos ».

¹⁰⁴) DE MORAES, *op. cit.* 139; GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 36r.

would forward him his dispatch very shortly. Apparently Lacerda asked the Shah on this occasion for means of transportation. He was refused the camels he asked for. Seeing that his funds were limited, the ambassador had a meeting with all the men of his staff to discuss the best way to proceed. « To all », consequently also to the Augustinians, « it seemed that he should yield to the Shah, although it would involve extra effort and expense, but the honor of the embassy demanded it » ¹⁰⁵). Thus Pereira went to the Shah and asked for his dispatch. Abbas answered there was no good reason to come one day and depart the next. The Ambassador then wanted to accompany the Shah to his military camp and witness the end of the campaign. This was not granted. The day after he received a letter which commanded that he be given food and lodging in Casbin. They arrived there on the eve of the feast of St. Andrew.

Three months passed ¹⁰⁶). Lacerda became restless and wrote the Shah through the Mihmander ¹⁰⁷), the Wazil (mayor) and Allah Verdi Khan, the Grand Vizier, asking for an answer to his embassy. Two months later the Mihmander brought him the Shah's answer by word of mouth. These evidently were delaying tactics. The wily Shah awaited the result of the war with the Turks in order to know how to answer the Portuguese in the question of the Isle of Bahrain ¹⁰⁸). Tired of waiting longer and fearing to put his embassy in a bad light because his funds were running low, Lacerda sent Father Melchior to Tabriz which by this time was definitely in the Shah's hands and where he had made his headquarters.

¹⁰⁵) Ms. Simancas, S. Ples. 1749 f. 6, Relação do Conselho da India sobre a embaixada de Luis Pereira de Lacerda a Persia, (Publ. by Mendes DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 390 f.).

¹⁰⁶) We follow here the Relação of Simancas, *ibid.* 391. Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 112, says five months passed. Apparently, like Mendes DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 321, he added the two months the ambassador had to wait after the message was sent to the Shah.

¹⁰⁷) The Mihmander is more or less a guest master. Cf. Diogo's letter AA (1961) 177 : « Mihmander, ch'e come l'apostendadore, o sia foriero ». It was his duty to see that no offense was offered to ambassadors, to refer to the Shah what they desire, and to accompany them when they go out of doors. Father Paul SIMON, O.C.D., *Carm.* 121 and 130 says that he gets the tenth part of whatever the Shah bestows on his guests.

¹⁰⁸) How well Lacerda looked through the Shah can be seen from his report, Mendes DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 392, that he does not consider the Shah reliable in his friendship with the King of Spain. « Sera siempre tan fino enemigo como el Turco ». On the other hand it could not elude a man as shrewd as Abbas that Spanish interests alone occupied the minds of those who sent the ambassadors. See the superficial reply planned to the embassy in the consulta of Jan. 10, 1608, Mendes DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 490 f.

Melchior left on March 10, while William was left alone with the ambassador. According to Melchior's report the road was deeply covered with snow. The ruts of the wagon wheels and the horses' footprints were at times for distances of ten or twenty leagues the only imprints in the fresh snow. Those not wearing goggles suffered from inflamed eyes. When it became necessary to pass another vehicle the horses sank to the breasts into the snow. As the journey occurred during Lent the priest suffered much as he found in the caravansaries only milk and bread. When he heard that March 21 was Naurus, that is New Year's day, on which the Shah used to celebrate and appear in public, he wasted no time to use this occasion to meet the Shah and urged his men to greatest speed. When he finally arrived at the Shah's headquarters he found him in a large tent in a camp surrounded by all the princes and his court. He met the Shah standing about in discussion. Melchior approached and said that he wanted to take this opportunity to wish the Shah a Happy New Year on behalf of the ambassador and the King of Spain. Abbas received him kindly and asked him to sit by the side of the Pope's ambassador, where a special seat had been prepared, and had him a meal served. After the dishes had been removed the Father rose and went near the Shah with the ambassador's letter in his hand. The chief doorkeeper saw it and wanted to interfere. But the Shah wanted to see the letter, and had it read by the chief wazil. Asked by the Shah what he desired, Melchior requested a reply to the embassy so that the ambassador could return home. The Shah assured him that he would get it ready without delay¹⁰⁹).

Once more several days passed and Melchior learnt that the Shah was going to visit one of his nobles. He resolved to wait at the door for the Shah to appear. The latter recognized the priest from a distance and beckoned him to approach. He began by being very critical of the King of Spain. While Philip had made promises, up to now he had made no real war effort¹¹⁰). They talked for a long while, the Shah explaining that he was about to begin another campaign and he hoped

¹⁰⁹) Melchior's trip is described in Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 113 ff.

¹¹⁰) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 198. This display of anger was an accomplished master piece of diplomacy, as it prevented the ambassador to submit the case of Bahrein. In fact, the Shah made Philip wait just as long. In a letter of Jan. 27, 1607, the King complains that he has not heard from Abbas since the return of Lazerda. Mendes DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 321.

Christian princes would attack the Turk from the other side. Melchior finding himself in a difficult position tried to stall by saying the Christian princes would do their duty, but to start such a war would take them more time and more preparation than the Shah needed. While they got ready Abbas should continue his march of victories and in due time the King of Spain would follow. The Shah expressed the hope to see all the Christian rulers united, including England ¹¹¹). Such a league, the Shah continued, only the Pope could establish. How little he knew, or pretended to know, the contemporary situation of Europe! « But », countered the priest, « the King of Spain is the most powerful ruler of Europe ». Therefore, to effect such a union the Shah should send his envoy and continue in the meantime his war efforts. The Shah shrewdly replied: « This is what delays me, to find an envoy to go with you ». Melchior reminded him that the monsoon did not permit a delay and it might be necessary for his envoy to spend a whole year at Goa in case he missed the opportune time.

Two days later the Shah and the Father met again in the presence of the Pope's ambassador. The Shah stepped aside and told the wazir Tam Beg, who was Abbas' secretary ¹¹²), that the Father was to be dispatched within ten days. Then he returned and told the priest: your dispatch will arrive very soon. The next day Tam Beg approached the Father to find out what present the King of Spain would appreciate. « Nothing better than new victories over the Turk ». « But our ambassador cannot come with empty hands ». « In that case, I believe, what he would appreciate most after a victory over the common foe would be a bow, a quiver filled with arrows, a sword, and a Persian dagger. Thus the King would see the arms which won victory over the Turk ». The nobles present were amazed at this request, for « what they most esteemed in embassies were the presents » ¹¹³).

Meanwhile the Persian army had fought and won the decisive battle near Lake Urmia and precisely at that moment Father Melchior learned that an envoy of Cigala had come to discuss terms for surrender and peace. Melchior hurried at once to Allah Verdi Khan, the Shah's field commander, and told him that it was unworthy of the Shah's greatness to have peace talks with the Turk before it was certain

¹¹¹) Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 115.

¹¹²) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 266.

¹¹³) Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 116.

what the King of Spain and the other European heads of state would do, as right now great efforts were under way to wage war against the Turk ¹¹⁴). Allah replied: « Grant God, that it is true that the Christian princes make an effort, for the Shah will do his part and I shall do mine ». Melchior then visited the other princes and spoke in the same tenor. A Kurdish prince who was present resented the behavior of Melchior bitterly. « This Christian Kashish » ¹¹⁵) he remarked, « is the cause of the death of many Moslems ». The chronicler reports that each time he passed the Father he scowled at him.

While all this was under way, the Shah disappeared one night with all his troops, some fifteen thousand horsemen. It aroused general surprise as it was midwinter. Rumor had it that he had gone to defend his territories. When Father Melchior had waited seven or eight days and saw that nothing happened, he got ready to leave and look for the Shah wherever he might have gone. He had already mounted his horse when he was told the Shah had returned the night before. Melchior waited for the time when the Shah would go to the bath. Still the Shah received him in a friendly manner and told him that he had his ambassador Iman Quli Beg ready ¹¹⁶). The day after Melchior met the Shah at the Maidan to bid him farewell.

While waiting for Father Melchior's return William had been preaching wherever and whenever he found an audience. His themes were the creation of the world, man's fall and redemption. He also spoke of the necessity of Baptism and salvation ¹¹⁷). His efforts surely bear witness to the zeal burning in his heart to bring to his listeners salvation in Christ. But in judging this type of preaching from the point of view of modern missiology we must know that in William's

¹¹⁴) *Ibid.* On the special efforts the Pope and the Christian princes made just at this time see L. PASTOR, *The History of the Popes XXIII* (London 1952) 301 ff. After these efforts failed, partly because of the wrangling between the Emperor and Cardinal Aldobrandini about the best course to follow, the Pope gave large sums of money, *ibid.* 304, which again were spent in vain because of mismanagement. Pastor concludes: « All this took place again during the year 1604, during which no advantage was taken of the favorable circumstances: the rising of the Turks in Asia, the victory of the Shah of Persia, Abbas the Great, and the death of Sultan Mahomet III ». For further efforts see the information in note 1 on page 307 *ibid.*

¹¹⁵) Kashish is a Moslem clergyman. The incident is reported in Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 116.

¹¹⁶) BELLAN, *op. cit.* 136; Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 117.

¹¹⁷) Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 1290.

time people still had the notion that exposure to faith was all that was needed for conversion. They did not realize that it was useless to offer conclusions of faith to those who do not possess the prerequisites of faith.

CHAPLAIN AT HORMUZ

When Luis Pereira had the Shah's answer he started on his way back to India together with the two Augustinians who had come with him. When they stopped over at Hormuz Father William found an order waiting for him to remain there ¹¹⁸). The chaplaincy of the island's hospital had been entrusted to the care of the Augustinians and William was to fill that post. He was very happy at this appointment as it afforded him an outlet for the charity which was so natural to him. But even while giving himself wholeheartedly to this work, he could not get the impressions of his recent trip through Armenia out of his mind. He always thought of the poor Armenians and their despoiled churches.

Pedro Coutinho, the captain and governor of the fortress of Hormuz, often visited the monastery and in return the Augustinians went to see him in his home. Father William used these visits to acquaint him at length with the conditions he had found in Armenia. He succeeded in interesting the Governor in the two concerns uppermost in his mind: the misery of the Armenian children who were traded like cattle from one Moslem nation to the other with immense harm to their faith, and the profanation of the relics which could be so easily moved from the unbecoming places where they were right then. Coutinho considered these two causes worthy of his support, gave the priest a thousand ducats, and a promise to support his intentions to return to Persia and work among the Armenians. He left him also a note of credit for any needs he might have in Persia « in connection with a certain business with which he had entrusted him » ¹¹⁹).

¹¹⁸) GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 33v.

¹¹⁹) *Infra*, Appendix I, p. 188. GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 35r. Coutinho could easily afford to do this. J. LINSCHOTEN, *Histoire de la navigation aux Indes Orientales* (Amsterdam 1638) I 17 reports: « While I was at Goa the gouvernor of Hormuz was Pedro Coutinho. It was said that on his return from Hormuz he had accumulated a wealth of more than 600,000 crowns »; and on page 11: « After the governor of Moçambique there

Having obtained such prominent support Father William got busy to prepare for this trip and wrote to the Provincial in Goa, Antonio da Graça ¹²⁰), that he would be very happy if he could be allowed to return to Persia.

We have at this point a somewhat troublesome gap of information in Williams biography. Gouveia seems to insinuate that William never returned to Goa since his arrival in Persia. On the other hand Amador of St. Anthony ¹²¹) assures us in his testimony, on William's martyrdom that he had William as his submaster in the novitiate at Goa for over a year. We know from Manoel da Ave Maria's catalogue that Amador made his novitiate in 1604-1605 ¹²²). At this time William was still with Pereira in Persia. But professed students of theology as well as novices lived in the same building ¹²³). Pereira returned to Goa in March 1605. So it could be that William was occupied in Goa as submaster until about 1607. The details reported by Amador are too precise to be invented ¹²⁴). They give the impression of an exact memory of what happened. Antonio de Moraes in his sketch of William tells us that William spent several years in Persia and then returned to India to

is no other in all India who earns as much as the governor of Hormuz. The one of Moçambique earns 3,000 ducats which are nine tons of gold ».

¹²⁰) Anthony of the Grace came to India in 1594. He was a Master of Sacred Theology and was elected Provincial (Nov. 10, 1607-Oct. 13, 1610). He was Provincial again 1616-1619, and then elected Bishop of China. He died at Goa August 3, 1621. Manoel DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 247; DE MORAES, *op. cit.* 131.

¹²¹) Amador of St. Anthony was born Luis da Ponte e Goes at Lisbon. He emigrated to India and entered the Augustinian Order at Goa Sep. 14, 1604, eighteen years old. In 1615 we find him again working as a priest in Lisbon.

¹²²) Manoel DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 379.

¹²³) The inquest held at Hormuz in 1615 contains the statement, AA (1965) 223 : « Sendo elle dito Fray Amador professo no noviciado ».

¹²⁴) AMADOR, *ibid.*, attests to the outstanding piety of the young priest. He relates that he never came to the Father's cell for any of the many permissions professed clerics have to obtain without finding him in prayer. He also says that on many occasions William expressed his desire to shed his blood for Christ. The desire must have become a basic attitude of the priest. For the Venetian merchant Alexandro Studendolo testified under oath that also to him William had frequently mentioned that he desired to shed his blood for Christ. He recalls one particular situation : He had told William of a very profitable business deal he had made with the Shah. The priest answered : I am very happy about your gain, and wish you further good luck. But my business is none other than to seek an occasion where I can shed my blood for Christ. He was so overjoyed that he held Studendolo's hand between his own as he told this.

go once more to Persia ¹²⁵). Some time before September of the year 1607 William must have returned to Hormuz ¹²⁶). For when he heard that Gouveia was sent on another mission to the Shah he wrote his former professor to take him along to Persia. Gouveia himself describes it thus:

« He pressed me so that when Father Provincial had assigned me one companion and had left the choice of the second one to me, I chose Father William who then made ready for the glorious martyrdom that awaited him » ¹²⁷).

MISSIONARY IN PERSIA

Gouveia left Goa on February 20, 1608 ¹²⁸), and arrived at Hormuz about the time when Coutinho was to end his term of office and was getting ready to embark for India. Before he left he called the factor ¹²⁹) and charged him to give to Father William the thousand ducats he had promised him, and credit to the amount of five thousand ducats so that he could get in Persia all the money he needed for a « certain business » ¹³⁰).

Antonio de Gouveia and Father William arrived at the court of the Shah at the end of June 1608 ¹³¹). Their arrival and the introduction to the Shah is best given in Gouveia's own words:

« We came to the court of the Persian, gave him the letters and the present which His Majesty had sent him. If my memory does not deceive me, I believe that on the very day I spoke to him, he urged me

¹²⁵) DE MORAES, *op. cit.* 139.

¹²⁶) For Gouveia reports (*Relation* 429) that some time in September 1607 there came from Spain an instruction that two Augustinians were to go to the Shah's court. By that time William must have left Goa, else there would have been no need of writing.

¹²⁷) GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 34v.

¹²⁸) Mendes DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 322; GOUVEIA, *Relation* 432.

¹²⁹) The English, as well as the Spaniards and Portuguese, called the chief business agent of a company or nation at a place of trade « factor » and the place of business « factory ».

¹³⁰) GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 35r.

¹³¹) Mendes DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 322; the Shah was not too disposed to receive Gouveia on this occasion, as Gouveia himself reports (*Relation* 434 f.). Also Juan THADDEUS says (*Carm.* 166): « When the King of Persia learned that this Father was coming, he did not give orders for any mark of respect to be shown to him; Nor did the Mihmander go out to receive him, as is the custom, nor have they assigned him a house ».

that I return and treat with His Holiness and His Majesty concerning the war he was planning against the Turk. Although I brought forth many excuses against the trip, he did not accept any. In order not to displease him, I had to accept. The Shah usually is very affable and generous towards ambassadors at the time he is sending them off. As I knew this habit of his I had not to do more than to petition favors for our Fathers and especially for Father William, my companion. I added that I left him in my stead, so that he could show him the favors which he desired to bestow upon me. The first favor I asked was that he give him permission to visit a few churches in Armenia and to authorize him to remove from them the relics of our saints, and to bury them with greater decency than was possible in buildings ravished by war. I take God as my witness that he gave it to me, while adding with much laughter that I could dig up the whole of Armenia, as so he wished it done. I can still recall that at the request of Father William we got this authorization signed by his own hand (although in my opinion it should have been sufficient that it was backed by the word of a king). I left for Spain with his ambassador and the Father remained with him. As he knew the Turkish language very well, which is commonly spoken at the Persian court, and had other good assets which the Persian enjoyed, he had him always about him to the surprise and envy of his own courtiers »¹³²).

WORK AMONG THE DISPLACED ARMENIANS IN PERSIA

By this time much had happened to the displaced Armenians. Years before the wars of Abbas forced them from their homes, efforts had been made to unite the schismatic Armenians with the Holy See. Although invited to attend the Council of Basle (1433) they had not accepted, but were represented at the Council of Florence (1439). A few years later a rent occurred in the Armenian Church which meant a setback for the plans of reunion. Armenia was divided into two large jurisdictions, Sis in Cilicia and Etchmiadzin in Greater Armenia. Etchmiadzin, whose Patriarch was considered as a kind of Armenian Pope, was desirous of reunion with Rome. One of its Patriarchs, Mar Abraham, had come to Rome under Pius IV (1560-1565), another one, Mar Joseph, to Portugal in the time of Catherine¹³³). After they

¹³²) GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 35r.

¹³³) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 367, showing perhaps his personal preference, calls her « Queen ». She was the Duchess of Braganza, whose claims to the throne had been swept aside when Philip II became King of Portugal.

returned home they kept nothing of what they had promised. A few years later an Armenian Patriarch sent the Bishop of Tiflis to Pope Clement (1592-1605). He requested that Augustinian monasteries be established in Armenia and that his nephew be given the Augustinian habit ¹³⁴). None of these attempts produced a lasting effect.

In 1587 David IV (1587-1629) had become Patriarch of all the Armenians. Gouveia describes him as lax and ignorant, « a man who was able to read and write only his own language ». He was a monk of St. Basil and resided at Etchmiadzin. After he had ruled for several years he saw the persecutions against the Church on the increase, also his diocese weakened financially because of the sums of money the Turks had requested from him under various pretexts. Unable to cope with the situation ¹³⁵) he resolved to vacate his office. In 1593 he adopted Melchisedech (1593-1628) ¹³⁶), a priest of his diocese, as his coadjutor and shortly afterwards renounced the Patriarchate. Just about this time war broke out between the Persians and the Turks. When the law of emigration came into effect Melchisedech looked for a district not subject to it and went to reside in a Basilian monastery which depended on him. David meanwhile had gone with the emigrees to Julfa. Melchisedech then appointed him as his Vicar for the new settlement and recommended the Armenians to his special care. David accepted the charge for the time of Melchisedech's absence. But, then, be it that Melchisedech was tardy in coming or that David was sorry for having abdicated, he resumed again the office and title of Patriarch of all the Armenians. In this he enjoyed the favor of the Shah. Shrewd politician that he was, Abbas followed the old Roman political stratagem: Divide and rule. He also wanted to be lord of all that he surveyed ¹³⁷). Melchisedech, on the other hand, proceeded to have himself recognized Patriarch by the twenty-four bishops and the clergy of the Armenians living outside Persia. Diogo, the Augustinian Prior of Isfahan (1605-1609), describes the unsettled situation well:

¹³⁴) Thus GOUVEIA, *ibid.*

¹³⁵) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 370.

¹³⁶) John Thaddeus in his *relacion* (*supra* note 56) 229, calls him a man of great virtue and common sense — *pessoa de muita virtude e prudencia*, — who made his profession of faith under Clement VIII.

¹³⁷) Felix OF JESUS, *op. cit.* 90, perceived this already: « He Senhor absoluto de tudo o que a Persia tem », and Diogo (AA '1961] 178): « (Abbas) ha pigliato occasione di qua di non volere che sia Patriarca se non quello che egli vuole », and: « pensa ch'egli non ha da ripartire con Vra Santita quel che tiene solo sopra i suoi vassalli ».

« This schism has reached the point where each of the two (Patriarchs) has a seal and title of the same lettering as Patriarch of Armenia. The people, both those who remain in those regions and those who live here, obey absolutely and quite openly Melchisedech and consider him their true Patriarch; but the Armenians of this neighborhood of Isfahan outwardly have recourse to David. So great is the fear they have of the Shah's order that there is no one who dares to contradict him, even though there is no lack of murmuring among them » ¹³⁸).

The five Augustinians of the family of the house of Isfahan found themselves face to face with this complicated problem. Gouveia would say later on: God sent us here, He wants us to do something for these people ¹³⁹). They had long been acquainted with the Armenians and worked among them and for them. Their means were never abundant enough to do what they would have wished they could do. They also had applied to Goa and the Archbishop had sent them thousand *crusados* to help the needy ¹⁴⁰).

Now they saw in the religious problems again the finger of God. God sent us here, held also in this regard. He assigns us work. Of course, they would have liked to see the Armenians reconciled with the See of Rome. In true reverence of their common priesthood they went to meet David and his clergy as soon as they learned of their arrival in a suburb of Isfahan. They knelt before the Patriarch showing him the same respect they were wont to show their own bishops and kissed his ring. The Armenians were surprised, so much the more as they knew that the Augustinians resided in Persia in the capacity of ambassadors. The Fathers promised to plead their cause in Rome, in Spain and with the other Christian sovereigns. When they saw the extreme need of these men, and in some cases also of their families, they forgot their own poverty and gave them all they had in their store, which could not have been too much, as they themselves had only a 100 ducats a year which the crown allotted them out of the revenue of Hormuz. They further had a church built for them and gave them one of the two chalices they had. They also fed and clothed some children which the Armenians sent them. They gave a special allowance of the alms to the Patriarch and the priests. The alms

¹³⁸) On the history of the schism as well as the passage quoted see the letter of Diogo in *AA* (1961) 178 ff.

¹³⁹) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 373 f.

¹⁴⁰) *AA* (1965) 167.

brought the people in ever larger number to their church and filled even the galleries and the street in front of the church. Still for all that there was not enough room for everybody. Of course, there was never enough money and food. The Fathers had to appeal to their friends. Aside from the Archbishop of Goa, donations came also from Peter Coutinho, Manoel de Souza Correa, the Vicar of Hormuz, and the Prior of the Augustinians of Hormuz. Even that was not enough for so many ¹⁴¹).

The Patriarch and people recognized this good will, but another and even greater need was looming. Although the Shah had given orders that no Armenians be enslaved, it was impossible to enforce his will while he was absent on his wars, and those in the power of the Mohammedans could not be freed. Children and young women could be redeemed only at the expense of large sums of money. The works of charity of the Augustinians surprised the Armenians, for in their own opinion they were supposed to be enemies. As a consequence the Patriarch and his bishops came often to the church of the Order.

« They observed the way we said our office and the nobility sent us their children for instruction. The more talented among them began soon to serve Mass and learn our language. Also a Mohammedan in our neighborhood followed their example and sent his son » ¹⁴²).

The Armenians found the Augustinians so different from what they had been told to expect from Latin priests. Thus they became more amenable to the faith of Rome. The day came when Father Diogo dared to ask the Patriarch whether he had made his profession of faith to the Roman Pontiff. He received the answer that while David's predecessor had done so, he had been unable thus far because of the many disturbances which had plagued the country ever since he had become Patriarch ¹⁴³). Diogo then asked his priests to double their prayers, offer their Masses for the Armenians and observe special days of fast and abstinence. The Fathers realized that once the clergy would end the schism, the people would gladly follow. But they also understood that the clergy were so lacking in formal education that they

¹⁴¹) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 379 ff. In the *Breve Relatione* of 1682 (AA [1911] 390), as we read: « Per mezzo dell' elemosine si siano ridotti molti schismatici all' obediencia della chiesa Cattolica ». See also Melchior's report of 1614 (AHHA [1951] 267) that the Fathers in Isfahan need more royal subsidy.

¹⁴²) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 382.

¹⁴³) *Ibid.* 383.

would never be convinced with arguments. They would not easily give up their conviction that each of the twelve apostles had been assigned one church and that consequently there were twelve churches and not only one ¹⁴⁴). They could be approached only through human interest and would be amenable only to the language of the heart.

In their conversations the Fathers had learned that the greatest difficulty was the fear that they would have to give up their particular customs and language. The Prior tried to make them understand that if they acknowledged the Pope as head of the Church they would not have to make changes in their customs. When they wanted this detail inserted in their act of submission to the Holy See Father Diogo said: One does not make an act of obedience with reservations ¹⁴⁵). They should first make their act of obedience wholeheartedly and then afterwards they could ask the Holy Father for permission to follow their ancient customs. They could be sure that their request would be granted.

These talks continued until Ashwednesday, February 8. Coming for his usual alms that day, the Patriarch said: It is time that we compose our differences. He had talked the matter over with his priests, bishops and elders. Diogo answered the main difficulty would be to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pontiff. David replied: if it is really as easy as you tell us, I shall submit in all things ¹⁴⁶).

Diogo and the others kissed the Patriarch's hands and he embraced them all. Diogo then explained that this act must be made in writing and should be done in public, so that all the Patriarch's spiritual subjects were aware of it. A few days passed during which the Armenians discussed in what form they should make their submission. Then, on Saturday, May 12, 1607, the Prior ordered all his priests to say the Mass « Pro tollendo schismate ». The Portuguese and the Venetians of Isfahan were assembled. The Patriarch vested and went to his throne. The Prior celebrated Mass. He himself reports what happened:

¹⁴⁴) M. ORMANIAN, *The Church of Armenia* (Oxford 1912) XIX : « She (the Armenian Church) believes that no church, however great, in herself, represents the whole of Christendom; that each one, taken singly, can be mistaken, and that to the Universal Church alone belongs the privilege of infallibility in her dogmatic decisions ».

¹⁴⁵) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 382 and 400.

¹⁴⁶) *Ibid.* 402.

« 110 priests had come to this monastery, among them the Patriarch, six bishops and other priests, both married and unmarried. After I had spoken to them on the obedience due to the Pope ¹⁴⁷, the Roman Primacy and the universal Vicarship of our Lord Jesus Christ in the whole Church on earth, I had the oath read to them ¹⁴⁸). After the Communion the Patriarch came and said that he and his bishops wished to be the first to swear. After they had done so, they signed the oath, namely the Patriarch, the bishops and the clergy » ¹⁴⁹).

When David made his submission to Rome, his oldest bishop, the bishop of Julfa, was absent. Between him and David there had been a misunderstanding for some time. He had not been present perhaps because of his ill humor or, what in the opinion of Gouveia is nearer the truth, « because he had not been invited » ¹⁵⁰). He complained that he, the oldest bishop of the Armenians, had been bypassed in a matter of such importance. This jealousy between the Patriarch and the bishop stirred up « quite a bit of dust ». Diogo, the Prior, however, saw the real reason. It was to be found in the lay control of the Armenian church. As soon as David and his colleagues had signed their act of submission the leaders of the laity came to him and asked him to justify his action ¹⁵¹). Living in an age of absolute clerical control in the Latin Church, Diogo was unaware of the extent to which the Armenian Church, including the Patriarch, was subject to lay control ¹⁵²). Thus it was beyond the comprehension of Prior Diogo, the chief agent on the Roman side, why all this had to come about.

¹⁴⁷) *Ibid.* 405.

¹⁴⁸) The text of the Oath, signed May 12, 1607 is in GOUVEIA, *Relation* 407 ff.

¹⁴⁹) *Ibid.* 408 contains the letter David sent to Rome on this occasion. It is signed : Isfahan, May 13, 1607.

¹⁴⁹) *AA* (1965) 166.

¹⁵⁰) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 414.

¹⁵¹) *AA* (1961) 167 : « Subito che il Patriarca David congli altri suoi si sottoscrissero alla detta confessione proposta in questo convento, furono da lui i principali di questi mercanti a domandargli conto di quel che aveva fatto ».

¹⁵²) ORMANIAN, *op. cit.* XIX : « All the actions of this high ecclesiastical dignitary (the Patriarch) are subject to detailed control, and the administration of the Church is entirely in the hands of the laity ». It is interesting to point here at the parallel results of former attempts to restore unity between the Eastern and Western Churches. In 1274 at the second Council of Lyons, and in 1439 at the Council of Florence, the acts of the union were drawn up and signed, the liturgy was solemnly celebrated together. Yet union was broken in either case a few years later under the pressure of the people in Constantinople. Even in matters of doctrine the laity had a say. Diogo in *AA* (1961) 187 : « Li ponti delicati della nostra santa fede li lasciano trattare da mercanti e ch'essi li risolvano ».

« We remain in the dust and desolation of our pretension and prevarication. We suspect more than ever that it was the almighty hand of the Lord which began to move this terrible mountain of difficulties and permits the events which happen at present that we may come to better knowledge of His wisdom and infinite almighty power and that we understand more clearly that we pretend to build in vain if He is not the builder » ¹⁵³).

It is always easier to accept defeat at the hands of God than at the hands of men, and especially as a consequence of one's own lack of insight. Looking back from the vantage point of the second Vatican Council we conclude that Diogo should have added that it was in vain to expect that difficulties based on centuries' old prejudice could have been removed in a short time. It takes a good deal more patience of laying a more solid foundation and a meeting of minds and hearts on both sides before « such a terrible mountain of difficulties » can be cleared away. Also, new teachings will not be absorbed in five minutes. Yet Diogo himself admits: the truth is that their bishops know little of the Catholic doctrine and of the Holy See ¹⁵⁴).

When the Fathers had understood the situation they asked the Patriarch to go to Julfa and try to appease the angry bishop. But the latter insisted, because of the pressure of the laity, that he would not take the oath the others had taken. He would swear only on his own formula which stipulated a guarantee of their old customs. The Augustinians tried to reason with him for five solid hours, but in vain ¹⁵⁵). When the whole argument was aired in public the laity got into the fray and believed that their bishops had attempted to sell them to the Latins. They even insinuated that the Patriarch wanted to make them Latins by force for the sake of a handsome financial reward he expected for his services from the Fathers. We cannot clear Diogo entirely from having acted against human prudence when he connected the meetings for reunion with the distribution of alms. It may have suggested their way of reasoning.

At any rate, Diogo had another session with the Armenian bishops in Julfa. He himself reports on the proceedings. The subjects taken up ranged from the primacy of the Pope to the theological questions about which there had been old disputes between the Orientals, the Arme-

¹⁵³) *AA* (1961) 167.

¹⁵⁴) *Ibid.* 168.

¹⁵⁵) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 414; also *AA* (1961) 169 f.

nians in particular, and the Roman Church, namely the nature of Christ and Purgatory.

« I returned after I had spent six or seven hours trying to enlighten these worldly and beclouded hearts in the sacred doctrine; beclouded by ignorance and condemned by their malice. But I leave them to whom it appertains, for I cannot but weep over this calamity and procure to remedy it, as far as I am able and as long as I am in this place » ¹⁵⁶).

The misfortune was that some of the rich and powerful merchants of Julfa sided with the two bishops. Even the Patriarch became now uncertain and Diogo offered to go to see the Shah ¹⁵⁷). He was informed right then and there that he had already been forestalled by one of the principal merchants who had written to the Shah ¹⁵⁸), and the town treasurer of Julfa had told the Shah that the « Frank priest » of Isfahan had made an attempt to convert the Armenians by force. Especially he emphasized that the Augustinians wanted to make them Latins by force, which sounded to the Shah like subjects to a foreign power ¹⁵⁹). Some of the Shah's advisers insinuated that this could be an attempt to have the Armenians revolt against the Persians in case of an invasion by a Christian nation and there was considerable ill-feeling. This information was passed on to the Shah while he was at Shamakha. He took great offence and said that after his return to Isfahan he would set things in order ¹⁶⁰).

¹⁵⁶) AA (1961) 170.

¹⁵⁷) On this incident we have the reports of two Carmelites, John Thaddeus and Paul Simon. Thaddeus blames the Augustinians for the Shah's ill humor. Simon is broader and gives various reasons for Abbas' disagreeable mood. He sees that in the beginning the Shah had been only pretending (*Carm.* 101 f.). Diogo had sensed that some of his opponents would give the Shah a slanted report. AA (1961) 173: « Temendo che fosse data al Re qualche sinistra informazione di queste cose e che io gl'inquietassi i suoi vassalli, mi risolsi con consiglio dei Padri, di andare da questo Xaa ».

¹⁵⁸) ARAKEL, *op. cit.* 355 f.: Immediately upon the signing of the submission to the Holy See Khodia-Safar informed his brother Khodia-Nazar, who was at the time at the Shah's court at Tabriz, and went to see the Shah. It was, therefore, a bending of the facts when the Patriarch complained to the Carmelites of the harm done by the Augustinians who showed the Shah the Armenians' document of submission to Rome (*Carm.* 101).

¹⁵⁹) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 414.

¹⁶⁰) That the Shah's apprehension was real can be seen from the question he asked Sherley, whether the Carmelites had come to negotiate for the union of the Armenians with the Holy See (*Carm.* 122). Sherley advised the Carmelites not to mention anything

On account of these developments the Patriarch David lost his nerve and became downhearted. He regretted the action he had taken and requested the Fathers to return the oath he had signed and the letters he had given them. He claimed that he never had the intention to change the Armenian customs and had sworn to his declaration with this reservation in mind. He asked the Fathers not to make use of his documents without his express consent. In other words, the Patriarch wanted to gain time. In his heart he may have been as loyal to Rome as in the beginning of the negotiations. Now he was afraid to lose his patriarchate, if not his life, unless he sided with the majority of his people ¹⁶¹). When the Augustinians became fully aware of this turn of events Diogo thought of approaching once more the merchants of Julfa. He wanted also to combine this meeting with the usual presenting of the alms to the two bishops. He asked them on this occasion to call a meeting of the principal merchants requesting especially the presence of Khodia-Safar, « the most influential merchant among the Armenians of Julfa » ¹⁶²). From contemporary reports it also appears that Khodia-Safar was the center of lay resistance to submission of the Armenians to Rome. Diogo promised to obtain for the Armenians the abolition of certain special rates they had to pay for their merchandise at Hormuz ¹⁶³), and that he would even go as

about the Armenians or the Church on the occasion of their audience with the Shah (*Ibid.* 123). The Audience took place in the presence of the Augustinian Prior and two other members of the Order on January 3, 1608. The Shah asked the Carmelite Paul Simon whether the Pope had ordered the Augustinians to change the faith of the Armenians and make them Portuguese.

¹⁶¹) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 418.

¹⁶²) *AA* (1961) 171.

¹⁶³) The Archives of Simancas contain an interesting document which deals with this question. (Ms. Secretaria de Estado, leg. 981, publ. in *AHHA* XI [1919] 357). It is a letter written by Gouveia to the King of Spain. Was it perhaps a result of an approach by Diogo? Gouveia asks the King that the Armenians be exempted from certain taxes they have to pay at Hormuz, the so-called *curujos*, which the vassals of the Turks have to pay if they wish to take their merchandise through the straits of Arabia. As the Armenians have now been for six years (important for the dating of the document) vassals of the Persians, they ought to be exempted. Gouveia proposed that the Armenians be charged only one fourth, which fee would be divided among the Armenian Patriarchs and would amount to about 1,000 ducats. This exemption should not be enjoyed by Armenians who were not Catholics. The Prior of the Augustinians should make out certificates verifying those who belonged to the Catholic Church. Thus the Armenians would be more inclined to accept the religious doctrine of the Fathers because they

far as Rome to obtain for their bishops and priests a decent support. In this discussion Diogo stressed that they should imitate their Patriarch. When the merchants replied that David was not their Patriarch because he had abdicated, Diogo judged correctly that the argument was so involved that it had come to a standstill. He placed the customary alms at the feet of the bishop. It is always difficult to dole out alms without hurting feelings, yet Diogo said he could not have acted otherwise, lest they would say they did not get the alms like the people who were more amenable to the «Franks». It was almost impossible for the missionaries not to be patronizing, and it was not their fault, but that of the situation in which they had to work ¹⁶⁴).

David asked Diogo to draw up another document with conditions attached that the Holy See would respect their rites and customs emphasizing that not even the Moslems had been able to make them give up their ways. We let Diogo himself continue:

«I saw that things had turned for the worse, that it was a fact that these people would rather become Turks and Moors than Franks, that they thought the alms sent by the Archbishop was a bribe and my concern for them ambition. I realized thus that I could not reap great dividends from this case and did not make in our monastery big speeches about the success obtained. Fearing the Shah might be wrongly informed about these events and that I was about to disturb his vassals, I resolved with the advice of the Fathers to go to the Shah. I feared that the Shah in his desire to rule had heard all this and doubted that our alms were not meant to be a bribe and our efforts for the souls earthly machinations» ¹⁶⁵).

Diogo adds here another lament on the Devil's efforts to obstruct the Augustinians' work of conversion among the worldly hearts who cannot even guess the spiritual and the sublime. It should have been only a small step from this insight to the discovery that all good things need time. The Armenians were tenacious of their racial isolation and their traditional rites ¹⁶⁶). It also escaped the good missionary

depended upon them. (A very interesting parallel to the opening of the ports of Japan only to the Christian Daimyo, cf. A. HARTMANN, O.S.A., *The Augustinians in 17th Century Japan* (King City, Ont. 1965) 20 ff.).

¹⁶⁴) AA (1961) 171 f.

¹⁶⁵) *Ibid.*, 172 f.

¹⁶⁶) They had told Diogo to his face that they would rather become Mohammedans than Latins. *Ibid.* 171.

altogether that he, too, held to a narrow assumption that his world and its culture was the whole world, a state of mind which in recent years has been called Europeanism. It is incapable of recognizing the values inherent in other cultures and religious expression. Although the missionaries were unaware of it, it proved a constant irritant to the sensibilities of a people who, as in our case, were dependent upon them in their need. The thought of preevangelization, the thought of making contact with unbelievers in order to move them to search for truth in a climate of openmindedness, had not yet been conceived.

The Augustinian community of Isfahan sent their Prior, Father Diogo, and Bernard de Azevedo to the Shah. The two set out to meet Abbas who was then about a forty days' march from the capital. They started on their journey June 15, 1607, and traveled with a caravan ¹⁶⁷). Because of the Shah's scorched-soil-policy they had difficulty of finding even enough food on the way. They found the Shah occupied with the destruction of Shamakha. He showed them the siege works he had constructed to take the town. When the Shah asked them why they had come they said to rejoice with him on the occasion of his great victory and to ask him, as a friend of the Pope, to persuade David to make his obedience to the Roman Pontiff. The Shah replied he would not only ask, but command him, for he knew that whoever did not obey the Pope could not be a good Christian.

Just at this moment the news reached the camp that peace had been made in Constantinople between Sultan Ahmet and the Emperor Rudolf ¹⁶⁸). This changed the whole situation. A few days later the Fathers wished to see the Shah again, but though they made several attempts they were not admitted. The Shah had meantime left Shamakha and gone to Tabriz where they found him. He tried to dissimulate his displeasure but did not succeed. He told them the Emperor could not have done this without the knowledge of the Pope. He did not admit them again and left for Mashed and the priests returned to Isfahan.

¹⁶⁷) Diogo left us a detailed description of this trip, *ibid.* 173.

¹⁶⁸) GOUVEIA, *Relation* 423. Peace had been signed in November 1606. (Mendes DA LUZ, *op. cit.* 323). The Shah showed Gouveia the letter of Rudolf in which the Emperor had assured him that he would never make peace with the Turk. On page 425 Gouveia leaves us his personal reflections and blames Germany for having lost such a great opportunity to end this menace to Christendom.

When the news of the bad result of the journey became known the Armenians were unsure about what had happened between the Shah and the Fathers and for a long time did not call on them. Later, when they heard how little had been accomplished they mocked the priests. When the Augustinians, notwithstanding the bad turn of events came to see them in their homes they excused themselves pleading fear of the Shah ¹⁶⁹). These experiences, as well as some others, may have moved Diogo to write in his letter to the Pope in December 1607 the bitter words:

« Concerning the Shah's inclination to Christianity one can easily see his true attitude from the impurity of his life. I say it is hatred, not affection; deception, not piety; self-interest, not love; astute maneuvering for the friendship with Christian princes, not sincerity of his unbelieving heart » ¹⁷⁰).

These events cast their shadow on the future of Father William. As we have seen, he arrived with Gouveia at the court of the Shah towards the end of June 1608. While enjoying the Shah's favor he had not forgotten the business which had brought him to Persia. When Abbas went north again William thought his time had come to take leave of him. The Shah confirmed once more the permission he had given and offered to send him to Nakhchevan to a son of the Sultan Maqsud, as there he would be safer. William accepted the offer gladly and kissed the Shah's hand in appreciation. Because he came to Nakhchevan with the Shah's recommendation the Sultan received him well and gave many banquets in his honor ¹⁷¹).

INTO GEORGIA

In the vicinity of Nakhchevan were several towns and villages of Catholic Armenians whom the Dominicans, especially Bartholomew of Bologna, had brought under the obedience of Rome. This small sector of Armenia had been exempted from the Shah's command of universal deportation. These people, therefore, had been able to keep their homes and farms. The principal town was Abraner, where the

¹⁶⁹) AA (1961) 182.

¹⁷⁰) *Ibid.* 162. The Carmelites reached the same conclusion: « God only knows whether the signs of not being averse to our faith come from his heart » (*Carm.* 161).

¹⁷¹) GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 36v.

Dominicans had their monastery known to William already from his first visit. At that time the Dominicans had told him of the many relics buried in the churches destroyed by war. He was well received by the priests, for the high esteem in which the Shah held him gave them hope that through him they could obtain remission of the high tributes they had to pay the Persians ¹⁷²). Their hopes were not ill-founded. As soon as William had become acquainted with the situation he returned to the Persian army camp at Tabriz and was granted by the Shah not only the remission of new taxes and the favor that the Catholic Armenians would not be taxed beyond the usual assessment of the country, but the Shah exempted the Catholic Armenians also from the jurisdiction of Nakhchevan ¹⁷³). To alleviate the lot of the many prisoners of war William asked the Shah to enforce an edict published some time before which forbade Armenian prisoners of war to be kept in slavery. On this occasion he freed also many children from captivity and restored them to their parents. Occasionally he had to bribe their masters with the funds Coutinho had left him, or he used his friendship with Abbas to threaten them with the Shah's wrath.

The continued favor of the Shah and his own good conscience made him so confident that he traveled through Persia, Armenia and even into Georgia accompanied only by two Armenians, without giving as much as a thought to potential enemies. Yet he had made one, and a powerful one at that, in the person of the Sultan of Nakhchevan whose guest he had been as often as he passed through his territory.

Once again William had been invited to a banquet and after the meal he found himself in a group of people who discussed the Catholic faith ¹⁷⁴). He took part in the conversation, and well versed in the language of the country, he pointed out to them that they were deceived by the teaching of their false prophet and were in need of

¹⁷²) Archbishop Basori, O.P., of Nakhchevan says in his letter on the martyrdom of William (*AA* [1965] 263) that William arrived in 1610 at Nakhchevan with a letter of recommendation from Abbas addressed to Maqsud Sultan.

¹⁷³) In a letter to the Prop. of the Faith the Augustinian Vicar Provincial, Juan de Rocha (*AA* [1965] 234), states that William achieved the reduction of the tax for the Armenians from five to one *veneziano* per year. Also the Carmelites laid claim to have obtained the reduction of these taxes (*Carm.* 211).

¹⁷⁴) We follow here Augustine D'Abreu who was an eyewitness on the scene. John Thaddeus' report is in *AA* (1965) 230 and a report from the Armenian view point in *ARAKEL, op. cit.* 362 f.

the faith the Lord had taught. The Sultan, who had controlled his anger and displeasure up to that point, remarked that he was well aware of the doctrine of the Catholics, but it had always been a riddle to him how educated men who claimed to be wise, could really believe that Christ was the Son of God, as if it were possible for God to generate sons, and to have to do with women while he had no body. William explained how here was a stumbling block of the Mohammedan faith. True faith could not enter the soul without the light of divine grace. « I wonder that the moors, who are so ready to believe the fables which Mohammed taught them, show themselves so difficult about the truth which Christ taught us ». At these words the Sultan's anger boiled over and he struck the Father a heavy blow and put his hands about his throat. He surely would have choked him had not the bystanders interfered and come to the priest's aid. As the Augustinian was so well known to the Shah they all feared the consequences of the Sultan's rash act and prevailed upon him to ask William's pardon. Many Catholic Armenians had been witnesses of this affront. We have the testimony of the Syrian Augustine D'Abreu, who accompanied William on his trips and had the story from William himself. He adds the detail that Maqsud lost heart at his misdeed and was afraid William would report him to the Shah. He therefore asked and received the priest's forgiveness.

Here we might ask: was not the behavior of William on this occasion irrational or imprudent? We must not judge him by our insights into ecumenism following the second Vatican Council. He was a man of his day, schooled in the tradition of polemic. It would be useless to look in the theological books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the classical period of confessionalism, for efforts to understand the needs and rights of the religious opponent, not to mention the fact that the Iberian peninsula had just comparatively recently thrown off the yoke of the Moors. Furthermore, up to almost our time the constant attitude of the Church towards Islam was one of condemnation. Islam was considered a religion which sought to supplant Christianity and denied its principal dogmas¹⁷⁵). William's approach, although lacking in prudence, was classical. Islam was condemned, Mohammed was a false prophet, the Koran a collection of errors, Islamic-Christian dialogue unthinkable. It took a universal Council of the

¹⁷⁵) Islam denies the Christian dogmas of the Trinity and Incarnation.

Church to declare in a solemn document that the God of Islam is the « one, true, living, merciful and almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth and Speaker to men » ¹⁷⁶).

As a consequence of this incident Father William left Nakhchevan and went to Erivan, the capital of Greater Armenia. It is famous for the three great churches which were founded by St. Gregory the Illuminator, well known and sacred to all Armenians, and for the miracles wrought in days gone by. Although the Churches had been destroyed by the war, they were still the official see of the Armenian Patriarch. At the time Melchisedech resided there. He and his bishops gave William a warm welcome. He shared with the clergy the money he had and acquainted the aged Patriarch with the purpose of his trip. He found him sympathetic as he, too, felt sorry that the relics had been treated with so much disrespect and told Father William he wished to God he would take them all. They would be better taken care of anywhere than in the stables of the Moors. He was so helpful that he pointed out to the Father where they could be found, made him also familiar with the names of individual saints and told him the stories of their lives and martyrdoms. He also assigned to him one of his bishops as a guide and companion to places where the saints had been buried ¹⁷⁷).

Once more we must ask the question: why? Why all this effort and expense of much needed money when so many people were in need? We are confronting here another one of the limitations of the human mind which is so often enticed and taken captive by new ideas. At the close of the sixteenth century the rediscovery of the ancient Roman cemeteries brought about a fad, or shall we even say a craze, for the possession of relics. A new wave of digging for sacred bodies was set off, and exaggerated powers were ascribed to the relics of the saints. The catacombs, which had been despoiled of their authentic bodies as early as the eighth and ninth centuries, were systematically searched again. Bishops, princes and abbots vied with each other, to acquire relics. Their cult became widespread. Part of this new devotion may have been the desire to establish a physical

¹⁷⁶) *The Documents of Vatican II* (ed. by W. ABBOTT, S.J. [New York 1966]), *Decree on Non-Christians* p. 663.

¹⁷⁷) GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 41r f.; ARAKEL, *op. cit.* 374 dedicates a whole chapter to the fine of 300 *tumans* Melchisedech had to pay by order of the Shah for having handed over the relics of St. Ripsima to William.

link with Christ. After the conversion of the peoples of Europe, when this need first became felt, the crusades satisfied it to a certain extent. The devotion to the relics of persons near to Christ may have been another manifestation of this desire. We should also add that William was not even aware that he was trespassing. The Saints, and consequently their relics, were to him the property of the universal Church¹⁷⁸). As sacred objects they must not be profaned. His contemporaries seem to have agreed with him and even praised his action¹⁷⁹). While reading history, we today must show that we are able to learn from the past and to respect others in the context in which they found themselves. Perhaps in anticipation we should already state here that ultimately William did not die a martyr for the relics, or even as a consequence of his search, but rather because he wanted to come back to the poor Armenians with whom he had fallen in love. He loved them as brothers in Christ and as fellow men. From personal acquaintance the Carmelite John Thaddeus assures us that William's first love always belonged to souls, i.e. human beings¹⁸⁰).

Consistent with the custom for all Catholics who passed through Etchmiadzin, Father William left the Patriarch a particularly large donation and then departed. His companion, the bishop, pointed out to him the churches of the neighborhood and William bade him farewell, being satisfied again with the company of his two Armenian servants and the Syrian D'Abreu who had brought along the necessary tools. Pretending to rest in the first church they reached — a custom allowed to all travelers — he and his companions began to dig where the highaltar had been. He happened to come upon the body of St. Ripsima, Virgin and Martyr¹⁸¹).

These activities of William could not be kept secret very well, however much he himself tried to keep them under cover. For one thing the Armenians who had received the Father's money talked

¹⁷⁸) Cf. for instance Gouveia's spontaneous words to the Shah (*supra* p. 215) « the first favor I asked was to give William permission to remove from the churches 'the relics of our saints' ».

¹⁷⁹) E.g. Ambrose OF THE ANGELS. See his letter to the Propaganda in *AA* (1965) 246.

¹⁸⁰) *AA* (1965) 229: « Resplandiera em este religioso hum singular zelo do bem e salvação das almas, por las quais trabalhou primeiramente ».

¹⁸¹) See the sworn statement of d'Abreu *AA* (1965) 226; GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 42r f. St. Ripsima of Roman birth fled from Rome to preserve the purity of her body, and suffered martyrdom in Greater Armenia at the time of Thiridates. She is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology on September 29.

about it. Some of them were bitter and jealous because he had given more to others. Also the operation itself was too cumbersome to be kept hidden. The movement of the heavy stone coffin attracted the attention of some Armenian clerics ¹⁸²). In time the story reached the ears of the Patriarch David. When he had ascertained the facts he set out for Tabriz, went directly to the Shah and complained bitterly about William and the interference of the Patriarch Melchisedech ¹⁸³). He accused his rival for having sacrilegiously sold the relics of the ancient saints of Armenia, and Father William for having profaned the churches and holy places by buying them. One could easily see, he said, how Melchisedech carried on his office of Patriarch, for out of greed and ambition he had put up for auction even the bones of those he called his predecessors, while presuming to usurp the place they had held during life and did not allow them to rest in the place they themselves had chosen for their last repose. Then he went into politics. He told Abbas the Latin priest acted as an agitator throughout Armenia, and did never cease to persuade his flock from denying him, David, the obedience due to his office, and transferring it instead rather to the Roman Pontiff. He also accused him of purchasing

¹⁸²) ARAKEL, *op. cit.* 357 : « Grâce à la Providence et à la miséricorde divine, ainsi qu'aux prières de S. Illuminateur, le même jour et au même moment, deux évêques de S. Edchmiadzin, Grigor et Vardan, étaient sortis pour se distraire par le promenade. Arrivés au tournant, à l'église de S. Rhipsime, ils rencontrèrent précisément les pères, qui venaient d'apporter dans l'église le coffre aux reliques et voulaient les prendre pour eux. A des questions sur leur affaires, n'ayant obtenu que de réponses vagues et embarrassées, et en tournant dans l'église, ayant observé tout, l'ouverture pour descendre, la porte latérale, le caveau, la pierre tombale écartée, les fouilles du monument, ils adressèrent vertement aux religieux francs; la discussion devint querelle, ou en vint aux coups et aux blessures. L'évêque Vardan fut même frappé et blessé à la tête, car les pères étaient trois, contre les deux évêques. Celui qui nous a raconté ces faits avait vu de ses yeux les traces et cicatrices des plaies ». Arakel continues : not much came of the investigation because Melchisedech, having received money, made little of the affair.

¹⁸³) Arakel relates that when the story of the fight came to the ears of David, he called the principal leaders of the Armenians together presided over by Khodja-Safar. He contacted the Shah again through his brother Khodja-Nazar, who told Abbas he wanted the priests arrested. A courtier, named Avetik Althoun, was sent to take charge of the proceedings. He arrested the bishop of Abraner and the leaders of the Christians. When they refused to reveal the whereabouts of William and his companions, he had them suspended and whipped until they betrayed the priests. Althoun presented the priests and the relics to the Shah on a day the Shah held court. Yet Abbas dismissed the accused without punishment for at that time the « king of Persia and the one of the Franks had made a peace treaty ».

Armenian children from the Moors and transporting them to Hormuz, as the Shah could easily enough verify. While William was in Georgia, Abbas won his victory over the Gurds who were Moslems and made many slaves. Many of these passed through the towns where William stayed and he purchased four, namely a married woman with two boys and one girl, and made them all Christians ¹⁸⁴).

David's conference with the Shah took place in the presence of a captain of cavalry who, besides being a confirmed Moslem, was related to Maqsud, the Sultan of Nakhchevan, and hated William especially for the incident in the palace of his kinsman. He saw now his patiently awaited opportunity to get even with the hated priest. He confirmed the charges the Patriarch had made and added the scandal the Latin priest gave to the Shah's subjects was outrageous. The only reason they had not long ago taken steps was that they saw him so highly honored and a protegee of His Highness. He underscored above all the effrontery of the friar of having purchased so many boys and girls in Georgia and taken them to Hormuz. He knew his master well. The Shah showed only indifference as far as the relics were concerned, but he was aroused and showed much annoyance about the children. He sent immediately for William who came in haste from Abraner trusting the Shah's word and safeconduct he had received from him in person. At the request of the cavalry officer a search was ordered also for the children, nine in number ¹⁸⁵). When William came to Tabriz he was taken before the Shah in whose presence the Patriarch David and his followers accused him again of the theft of the relics and the profanation of the churches. The Shah, however, was satisfied that he had returned the children and could not have cared less for the relics. But he surely was happy to witness the open discord between the priest and the Patriarch. Always anxious to exploit the existing schism for his own purposes, he had been apprehensive for a long time at the thought that the Patriarch and his group might return to the obedience of Rome. Welcoming every opportunity to prevent this, he favored the Armenian and ordered Father William to return to the Patriarch all the relics he had taken from Armenian churches. William gave to David all the relics he carried on his person

¹⁸⁴) GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 44v; AA (1962) 316.

¹⁸⁵) The additional ones to the five named earlier are vouched for in Ms. Appendix I p. 198.

and told him, with a bit of mental reservation, these were all he had. This was true if he meant on his person, for he had left many in Abraner ¹⁸⁶).

David was happy for having won his cause, but was hardly satisfied with the poor restitution he had received. He considered it impossible that the priest, after so much excavating, had found only these few relics. Continuing his inquiries, he learnt that William had left a trunk in Abraner. Informed that David had knowledge of the relics William departed from Tabriz in greatest secrecy and haste and tried to hide them. Accompanied only by the faithful D'Abreu, he took the relics from their hiding place, went during a night into the mountains, reburied them and marked the place for future identification. The Patriarch, who had always kept him under surveillance, did not take long to notice his absence from the city. His informers told him the Augustinian had left for Abraner. He notified the Shah who sent two of his men to fetch the Father together with the relics. Both these men were renegade Armenian Catholics and perhaps both had accepted bribes from the Patriarch to make their search with the greatest diligence. Despite their efforts the relics were already buried and Father William was on his way back to Tabriz.

The two gendarmes intercepted him on the road, put him in a wooden pillory, and exhibited him from village to village to the derision of the people ¹⁸⁷). They informed William that it was the Shah's wish that all the relics be returned immediately and without subterfuge. William answered that by order of the Shah he had given the Patriarch all the relics he had. This was not the answer they wanted and in order to make him talk they tortured him so severely that he almost lost his life. He was whipped and slapped about and for several days his arms were tied behind his back, so that even months afterwards the abrasure of the skin could be seen. His face and body were discolored from the blows he had received. When the torturers had become tired and convinced that he either had no more relics or that their efforts had been in vain, they took him to Tabriz, exhibited him again in his pillory to the derision of the people, and told the Shah all that had happened. Abbas had him thrown into prison and had him

¹⁸⁶) GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 45v.

¹⁸⁷) AA (1965) 227.

tortured « for the very ferman ¹⁸⁸) he had given him in my presence », as Gouveia would report later ¹⁸⁹).

Father William remained in prison without receiving visitors or aid from anyone until, as if sent from heaven, the ambassador Ali Quli Beg returned from Europe. From Goa to Persia he was accompanied by two Augustinians, Melchior of the Angels and Balthasar of St. Mary ¹⁹⁰). At the request of Father Melchior the diplomatic Shah put on his pleasant face and had William freed from prison ¹⁹¹). But all his pleasantries could not conceal the marks of ill-treatment on the face and the body of the priest.

Having been given his freedom William went with the other Fathers to the city of Ardavil which would be more comfortable during the approaching winter. Although the whole district was strife-torn because of the repeated invasions and counterattacks of the Persians, with either one or the other of the opponents plundering the neighborhood, Father William left Ardavil again accompanied only by the Syrian D'Abreu, to recover the relics he had buried. Traveling by night he returned to Abraner and transported the relics on the mule of D'Abreu to Ardavil and a few days later to Isfahan. From there they were taken to Goa ¹⁹²).

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(To be continued)

¹⁸⁸) A rescript, passport or safeconduct given by the Shah.

¹⁸⁹) GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 47r.

¹⁹⁰) Balthasar of St. Mary Dias entered the Augustinian Monastery at Goa on April 16, 1602, about 30 years old. He returned later to Portugal where he died 1616. Manoel DA AVE MARIA, *op. cit.* 372.

¹⁹¹) GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 47r, says that Abbas acted spontaneously upon the ambassador's arrival. However, d'Abreu has it that Melchior obtained William's freedom. See AA (1965) 227. D'Abreu was on the scene when this happened.

¹⁹²) GOUVEIA, *Tres Martires* 48r f.