

“Latin rite, and an Augustinian could not be made bishop because of *their status as representatives and agents of the king of Portugal*,¹ and because of the state of war existing at present between the Portuguese and Persians, so that they are in disfavour, and Antonio de Gouvea had to leave—he was a Portuguese Augustinian.

“The Carmelites went to Persia by orders of Clement VIII and are there as persons from His Holiness, and are called ‘Friars of the Pope’.² All in the country know that they were sent out, and live there for the assistance of Christians, and not for affairs of state: and so they are the more liked by the king and the Persians. . . .”

It may be conjectured that opposition was maintained, the matter left in abeyance, for nothing more is recorded under specific dates for some eighteen months.

Fr. John Thaddeus had been consulted as to his views, and another minute³ records:

“With regard to the bishop to be created for Persia. From my conversation with Fr. John I have gathered that it would be best to make as bishop in Persia someone qualified from among the secular clergy, a person with learning and an inherited private income, so as to be able to live with some style at the Court of so great a sovereign and do credit to the Apostolic See and, having authority from the Shah to be able to purchase land and select sites, make purchases and in a short time form a good income for the bishops who succeeded him.

“If a friar were appointed, even from his own Order, discords would be likely to arise between the bishop and Religious to the great hurt of the propagation of the Faith, particularly among the Armenians. . . . If a friar were appointed, besides that the small difference in his ordinary dress would fail to create in the Shah and his officials the reverence and respect which would accrue, were a secular appointed, the friars and missionaries would be more in agreement under a secular than under a regular bishop. Therefore, as Fr. John is more in favour of such a bishop, I consider it would be well to fall in with his opinion: (a) because he will serve with more zeal a prelate appointed in accordance with his own view, (b) because, as on this question the Sac. Congregation has no information about conditions in Persia, it behoves it to depend on the opinion of the Father named, who has been 25 years in that country—and we have irrefutable evidence of the goodness of his life and habits and, as to the latter, also the experience of the past two years,⁴ for he has kept to such a strict life that he might have been a novice, making a home of his cell. . . .”

Then consulted, on 22.5.1631⁵ Fr. John Thaddeus humbly disclaimed any competence to give an opinion:

“In sending a bishop to Persia their Eminences the Cardinals consider that it should be done to the satisfaction of Fr. John, and someone fancied by him dispatched, and because of that he is pressed to name some person suitable for such a charge.

“Now, as to what Mgr Ingoli, Secretary of the Sac. Congregation has asked me regarding the selection of a bishop for Persia, I reply that shortly after I arrived” (i.e. in Italy) “from Spain I departed for Persia, where I have been about 25 years, and since my return I have been in Rome almost without leaving my cell for two years past. For that reason I have no information, nor even do I consider myself competent to judge whether such and such a person be so eminent, and possess such qualities as they desire—that only our lord the Pope, the Sacred Congregation and our Superiors can judge well: and I do not venture to name anybody lest—were it to turn out not a success—the fault should be mine. . . . And then, as far as I am concerned, I have always served God, the Apostolic

¹ See also the ‘Report’ of Fr. John Thaddeus, of 1624, in *S.R.*, vol. 209: “. . . The Augustinians are at Isfahan as ‘ambassadors of the king of Spain: the Carmelites as guests sent by the Pope. . . .’”

² *Idem.* ³ *S.R.*, vol. 209, p. 258.

⁴ This indicates that this minute must be dated 1631.

⁵ *S.R.*, vol. 209, p. 204.