

the bishopric for his successors: he was a good theologian and mathematician and of sterling life, but it was doubtful whether his brother would agree.¹ Finally, in 1632 the Sac. Congregation finished by nominating Fr. John Thaddeus himself: and there had been a petition from Persian Armenians to the Pope to that effect:²

“Most Holy Father,

“The Christians, who are under the rule of the king of Persia and are called ‘Franks’,³ “humbly supplicate Your Holiness to be pleased to give them as soon as possible the bishop “desired by the said king with such insistence, and by them awaited with so great desire “for the salvation and aid of their souls. Should Your Holiness grant us one in the person “of Fr. John Thaddeus of S. Elisaeus, who for 25 years has been a missionary in that “empire and so dear and acceptable not only to your ‘Frank’ petitioners, but also to the “king, the notables and all the court and people of that empire, be pleased to commit “the examination of his life and merits to the most eminent cardinal of S. Onofrio, so that “in the next consistory he may be proposed as ‘archbishop’ of the metropolitan city of “Persia, where is the residence of the royal court, i.e. Isfahan . . . so that, as soon as “possible he may be dispatched to his charge. . . .”

It had been observed that “the Armenians who come to Rome even go on their knees to “him, such was their esteem for him”.⁴ (Indeed, while he was those years in Rome, pressure came from the Carmelite missionaries themselves for his return: e.g. Fr. Matthew of the Cross:⁵

“Be so charitable as to send back to us Fr. Leander and Fr. John, who . . . are the “‘pillars’ in these parts . . .”

Fr. Basil of S. Francis from Basra:⁶

“We beg your Reverence earnestly for Fr. John Thaddeus, for we are orphans without “him and particularly Persia . . .”

and another letter from Isfahan of 1630:⁷

“. . . If your Reverence could make Fr. John Thaddeus return, it would be doing a “great service to the mission; he is desired by all the Religious and even Muslims, who do “not cease to ask when he will come back. . . .”

So, before June 1632,⁸

“in accordance with the order of His Holiness, Fr. John Thaddeus of S. Elisaeus, Discalced “Carmelite, was examined⁹ . . . when the replies of the said Fr. John Thaddeus to several “questions had been heard,¹⁰ they unanimously gave their opinion that he was suitable for “the office of bishop, and, accordingly, should it please His Holiness, he could be promoted “to the episcopal dignity. . . .”

The title of ‘Tres Ecclesiae’—the three churches of Echmiadzin in Armenia, the seat of

¹ S.R., vol. 209, p. 205.

³ i.e. Uniats—particularly those of the Latin rite, as in Alingia (Nakhchiwan).

⁴ S.R., vol. 209, pp. 186–7.

⁶ 9.12.1630, O.C.D. 241 g.

⁸ Acta of the Sac. Cong., p. 58; see Fr. L. Lemmens, *Hierarchia Latina Orientis*.

⁹ As to his doctrinal and other knowledge being sufficient for the office.

¹⁰ He was examined by Fr. Theodore a Capuchin by instructions of the Cardinal of S. Onofrio, Antonio Barberini, brother of Pope Urban VIII—S.R., vol. 209, p. 201.

² *Idem*, p. 206.

⁵ 8.8.1630, O.C.D. 238 a.

⁷ 24.3.1630, S.R., vol. 115, ‘Lettere di Levante’.