

the schismatic Katholikos, the stones of which twenty years before Shah 'Abbas had the idea of transporting to Julfa and re-erecting there in order to nail the Armenians to the new Julfa as the centre of the Armenian church too—had been proposed for the new Latin bishop; but it was thought that an Augustinian, given that title by Paul V, was still alive in Portugal<sup>1</sup> (perhaps Fr. Simon Morales?). Isfahan, at any rate, had been a bishopric in the Christian church of pre-Muhammadan days.

Accordingly, in the sitting of the Congregation of 26.6.1632:<sup>2</sup>

“on the report of Cardinal Spada, the Sacr. Congregation considered that, if it should please His Holiness, in order that the Catholic Faith may be the more easily propagated in the Persian empire, Fr. John Thaddeus of S. Elisaeus, Discalced Carmelite, a missionary since the pontificate of Clement VIII in the said empire, should be promoted to the bishopric of the royal city of Isfahan, in the province of Parthia of the same empire, now called 'Iraq' ”.

On the same day His Holiness

“our lord, approving the opinion of the Sacr. Congregation, confirmed the above-mentioned “decree”.

The Bull of nomination to the bishopric was dated 6.9.1632:<sup>3</sup> his consecration followed on 18.9.1632.

In two respects, however, the choice had been recognized in Rome to have drawbacks: Bishop John Thaddeus was already in his 59th year and frail of body for an Eastern climate and conditions: so on the same day as his appointment it had been thought well to assign him a coadjutor with the right of succession in Fr. Timothy Perez, a Spaniard too, born at Palermo, but of the Calced Carmelites. At that date for nearly ten years Baghdad had been in Persian possession, i.e. in the same realm; and, as Capuchin missionaries had already established themselves there, Carmelites had been contemplating similar action, it was decided to give the coadjutor the title of Bishop of Baghdad or Babylon, as can be read in the *Acta* of the session of the Sacr. Congregation, 26.6.1632:<sup>4</sup>

“Deliberating with regard to the nomination of a Bishop of Isfahan, it was considered that, in order to avoid a lengthy vacancy” (i.e. when Bishop John Thaddeus died) “which would be very harmful for that new diocese and for other just reasons, there should be given the said Fr. John Thaddeus as coadjutor, with future right of succession, Fr. Timothy Perez, Calced Carmelite, with the title of Baghdad or Babylon”—

which on the same day His Holiness confirmed.

But the limits of jurisdiction of the two bishops were drawn with distinct differences, which deserve notice because of much future argument at intervals in the following hundred years on the subject. The decree of the Sacr. Congregation of 8.11.1632 in the case of the Bishop of Isfahan read:

“. . . That the Bishop of Isfahan can use the faculties to be granted him in the whole empire of Persia except that part of Assyria now subject to the same king, which is assigned to the Bishop of Baghdad:<sup>5</sup> also (he can use them) in Greater and Lesser Armenia,

<sup>1</sup> S.R., vol. 209, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> *Acta*, p. 81. See *Hierarchia Latina Orientis*, cited above.

<sup>3</sup> Brev. Arch. Vat., 966, p. 707. It is given, with some obvious errors by the registrar, in the Appendix of Latin Briefs.

<sup>4</sup> Vide the late Fr. L. Lemmens' *Hierarchia Latina Orientis*, No. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Several of the first bishops used the title "Bishop of Babylon"; the decrees of constitution of the see and its limits give preference to the name "Baghdad"—i.e. "Baghdad or Babylon". Actually the two sites of the ancient Babylon and of Baghdad are far apart.