

At Diarbakr the Capuchins became established from 1667 and at Mausil from 1669.¹

The Jesuits were the last of the Orders to plant themselves in Persia: and it is hard to conjecture the motives which led them to dissipate, and for a whole century, energy in a small mission in Julfa, isolated from other scenes of more profitable activities for their Society, when the field of work had already become congested after the arrival of the Capuchins. Notwithstanding introductions brought from the French Court it was the Polish sovereign, if anyone, whose interests they were to safeguard: and one is forced to the supposition that emulation with the other Orders was partly the reason for their coming.

Already in 1646,² Fr. Dionysius gave the information:

“On 2.1.1646 a Jesuit Father of French nationality (Fr. François Rigordi) arrived here “with the intention of taking a house in this city, but after having been here 15 days he “determined to go on to India. . . .”

“The Father had a recommendation from the Polish ambassador, from which, however, “he did not derive the assistance expected. . . .”³

Some years pass and then, 1.10.1653, the French consul at Aleppo, François Picquet (afterwards Bishop of Baghdad), wrote to Rome that Frs. Rigordi and Amatus Chezaud, S.J., had quitted Aleppo “a few months ago for Isfahan”.⁴

They arrived on or about 30.6.1653 (“15 days after the Carmelites began to reside in Julfa, “i.e. Sunday in the octave of Corpus Christi”): for the first two months they were guests in the Carmelite convent in the city:⁵ and, 9.8.1653,⁶ it is recorded that

“Fr. Rigordi, bearing letters of recommendation from the king of France, had gone off “after the king of Persia then at Mashhad in connection with his relief of Kandahar: the “second Father is Fr. Amatus Chezaud, a very virtuous person, well read in Arabic and “very much more in Armenian, they say.”

On 3.12.1653 the same Carmelite again mentioned them:

“Fr. Rigordi has returned from the Court, highly favoured with privileges not usually “accorded to guests—they are authorized to have houses at Julfa and Shiraz, as I have “myself seen in the Persian. This king has written to the king of France with many ex- “pressions of regard, saying the friendship of the king of France had always been esteemed “and desired by Shah 'Abbas, his great grandfather. The Jesuits have brought a portrait “of the king of France as a gift to the Shah—as the Capuchins had done in the case of “Shah 'Abbas I.⁷

“We Carmelites had been dispatched here mainly by His Holiness, and are known as “‘Fathers of the Pope’s Majesty’ (=“Padrian-i-A'la hazrat-i-Pap”): and we desire a painting “of the Pope for our church, and letters from the Pope to the Shah are always useful. . . .”

That particular letter of Fr. Balthazar was being taken to Europe by Fr. François Rigordi himself,

“who is returning to his superiors on business of their mission. . . .”

The small mission, for its size, was well provided:

¹ For Capuchin Missions generally see Fr. C. da Terzorio's *History*.

² O.C.D. 237 c, 2.3.1646: and see the published work, *Pérégrinations du Père Rigordi, S.J., édition du P. Carouzon, Paris,*

1874.

³ MSS. *Hist. Miss.*, chap. 20, book 8.

⁵ Fr. Barnabas, 9.11.1653.

⁷ Are these paintings of Louis Quatorze and Louis Treize extant in Iran today? is a question for the National Museum and Art Department of that country.

⁴ *S.R.*, vol. 135, pp. 440-7, 141-9, 156-9.

⁶ Fr. Balthazar of S. Mary.