

Shah), 'but except for an honourable lodging the Court had temporarily assigned to him, 'and some allowance indifferently paid, he did not know what to hope from payments 'made from the recovery of Mgr Picquet's estate'—

he stated in a letter a month later.¹ He had at that time assisting him three French secular priests, Pères Sanson, of the Sorbonne, Roc and Gaudereau from the Seminary for Foreign Missions at Paris, and two Franciscan Tertiaries:

'Being unable to keep up the mission at Hamadan without a residence for himself as 'bishop, he had been offered a very fine house in Julfa by one of the heads of the Catholics 'there, which'—so Fr. Pidou opined—'will serve us as episcopal palace.'

French policy at that period in the East, as elsewhere, was *accaparatif* and assertive, and these young graduates from the Sorbonne and the Seminary at Paris too had the interests of France at heart, set on staking an exclusive claim where they worked. On the other hand, although acting as administrator and vicar apostolic of the diocese of Isfahan, the bishop-elect of Baghdad was not justified in counting on remaining permanently in residence in the chief centre of another bishopric, and acquiring a fixed property stake there. This explains a conflict of interests which arose between the French Mgr Pidou and his chaplains and the Belgian Vicar Provincial of the Carmelites in particular, as set out by the latter later on to the Sacr. Congregation:²

'Markar Sarrat' (i.e. Shariman) 'had the intention of providing an episcopal residence 'for a bishop, and offered a fine house to Mgr Pidou, so that he might occupy it in the 'name of the Sacr. Congregation. . . . He intended to found some fund for the maintenance 'of a bishop, who, he desires, should be designated with the title "of Isfahan", as he had 'urged: so he is negotiating to purchase certain villages of Armenians, which already have 'thirty families settled, whence the bishop appointed can draw temporal revenues, and 'where he could exercise pastoral functions.

'Fr. Sanson, one of Mgr Pidou's chaplains, did not like the terms of this offer, his object 'being to establish himself in Julfa as depending solely on the Seminary for Foreign Missions 'at Paris.'³

Some friction arose out of this, and Markar Shariman tritely replied to reproaches of Fr. Sanson that his object was to unite the Armenians concerned to the Holy See, not to the *Seminaire des Missions Étrangères à Paris*.⁴ This friction was increased, and complaint made to Rome⁵ by the Vicar Provincial of the Carmelites, because of a dispensation given by Père Sanson for a marriage of one of the Shariman family within the degrees of affinity, to the scandal of the schismatic population of Julfa; Mgr Pidou gave a written decision as to its validity, and another of his chaplains was present in the house of the Shariman concerned when without witnesses and without the proper formalities or any ritual he purported to have joined the parties concerned in matrimony. Following that incident, the Armenian notable in question agreed that

¹ Mgr Pidou, Isfahan, 21.4.1691, *S.N.R.*, II, p. 3.

² *S.R.*, vol. 517.

³ "Afterwards Monsieur Sanson (I being present) bought the house at Isfahan in the suburb of Julfa for some 120 "Tumans = 6,000 French lire—I do not remember exactly—and I took possession of it, 4.11.1690, after much opposition "from the schismatic Armenians and to the displeasure of other Latin Catholics . . ." (*vide* Bishop Pidou's letter, Hamadan, 11.8.1699, *S.N.R.*, II, p. 279).

⁴ *Vide* Fr. Elias' letter to Sacr. Cong., 1.10.1693, *S.N.R.*, II, p. 87:

" . . . the house which Mr. Marcar had promised for a bishop to be sent by His Holiness and the Sacr. Cong. and "I myself did my best to give possession of it in that name to Mgr Pidou, but, as he would not do so, unless in the name "of the Seminary in Paris, they remained without it. . . ."

⁵ Fr. Elias, 8.1.1693, *S.R.*, vol. 517; *idem*, 23.2.1694, *S.N.R.*, II, p. 95.