

off the recital of developments in Julfa, in order to unravel the domestic position of the Carmelite posts during the period.

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Whereas the Carmelite mission in Persia and Portuguese India may be termed to have lived its 'apostolic era', marked by the tireless energy of men of outstanding capacity who had made some small way among the Muslims, during the reign of the first 'Abbas—with less result to show in that of his successor—to have been at its most extensive range of proselytization among non-Muslims during the reign of the second 'Abbas—the span of nearly thirty years under Shah Sulaiman leaves two impressions on the student, viz. in the first half neglect and quasi-abandonment, the few Religious of a calibre inferior to that of their predecessors, while the latter half saw almost every other interest in Persia and India ignored to allow for a concentrated and vigorous attempt to bring the Armenians of Julfa to union with the Holy Roman See.

As to numbers, the Religious in Persia were in no wise to blame and deserve commiseration. In 1669:¹

“There are only four houses and three Religious. . . .”

Actually, according to a list of 1671² supplied to the Sac. Congregation by the Praepositus General, Fr. Alexander of Jesus, there were six Fathers in the four houses, Isfahan, Shiraz, Basra, Tatta, seven at Goa, one at Diu, and one on the Malabar coast: of these fifteen in priest's orders three were Poles, three Portuguese, three Neapolitans, two Lombards, one Roman, one Fleming, one Belgian and one Frenchman: seven of them already over 50 years old, and two over 60 years of age. Another list of that year supplied by the Procurator of the Mission³ adds the name of another French Father at Bandar 'Abbas. Death had reduced numbers to a level almost unworkable in Persia proper and Basra; the account of conditions in the mission cited above—it had been presented on the instructions of the Secretary to the Sac. Congregation, Mgr Baldeschi—noted:

“In the past 13 years, inclusive of those of other Orders, 25 Religious have died in the ‘Levant. . . .’”

As one Carmelite graphically put it:⁴

“Our missions are in a very bad state: we remain scarcely one Religious for each House, “and of those who remain three or four have one foot in the grave”

and from Basra Fr. Jerome wrote appealingly to Rome:⁵

“Here I am alone, without a companion. . . . I have no one here to whom to make “my confession—very humbly, for the love of our Lord, I beg you, our Father General, “to aid us as soon as possible by sending us Religious: . . . the Lord himself, when sending “his first missionaries out into the world, sent them with companions—*binos misit*—two “and two. . . .”

The same day to a Definitor General he wrote sadly:

¹ Fr. Angelus, 25.3.1669, O.C.D. 238 l.

⁴ Fr. Angelus, 14.1.1671, O.C.D. 236 i.

² S.R., vol. 428, p. 135.

⁵ 17.2.1671, O.C.D. 241 l.

³ *Idem*, p. 224.