

“what happened at the rising in Julfa against me, about our being expelled and the destruction of our church . . . none the less, in order to provide any tribunal, to which they might have recourse, with documents and proofs more adequate for their conviction and the due punishment of their crimes, I have handed to the Procurators of this mission proceeding to the Chapter General in Rome a copy of the charge and complaint they made against me and against the Sharimans to the king of Persia through the intermediary of the Queen Mother, which bears more than 900 seals and signatures, for the most part affixed under compulsion or bogus. Having been given to us in secret by a trusty person, who would stand to lose his head were it discovered, this copy it has not been possible to have certified as a true copy, nor indeed to have it translated from the Persian. I think there should not be wanting someone in Rome able to do this. Further I have handed (the Procurators) one of the very abusive books they have printed here against the Apostolic See and the Catholic religion, together with copious explanations and marginal contradictions in Latin. From this without any delay the reason for our disputes and of the final resort by the enemies of our Faith to the secular arm can be judged. . . .”

By 22.8.1695<sup>1</sup> Fr. Elias had again become insistent:

“. . . The bearer of the present letter, Stephen, son of Khwajeh Gaspar (Shariman) and elder brother of the little Basil now a scholar in the college of Propaganda, can relate details of the ‘abomination of desolation’ here, which obliged him to fly ‘to the hills’, and of the great risk all their family will run with regard to their worldly possessions, unless we very soon receive some assistance and at the same time our enemies, conceited beyond measure, be humbled. All the rest of the Catholics are in great consternation over a new case, which occurred three days ago, when a certain good Catholic named Giusi who had been constantly plagued for six or seven years past on account of his religion and impoverished by the law-suits brought against him at the instigation of Stephen, the schismatic bishop, finally died with great constancy in his religious Faith, after having received all the Sacraments of the Church from the Jesuit Fathers, without once permitting any schismatic priest to come near him. Stephen forbade his burial and ordered that his corpse should be allowed to remain until on account of the stench his family should be obliged to abandon the building: and he also gave orders that, should any Father dare to go and carry away the corpse, he should be stoned and killed, asserting that he would answer to any court where this might become the subject of a suit. But, after some time spent in altercation, some friends and neighbours more resolute than the rest carried out the corpse and went to bury it without any priest being present. To be thus deprived of ecclesiastical burial causes great apprehension here in the minds of the simple, as being a sign and result of very great malediction. Further to revenge himself also on the relatives of the dead man Stephen immediately put a renegade relative of theirs, who had become a Muhammadan, in possession of some shops and whatever little else there remained of his estate, giving a certificate that everything belonged to the renegade. . . .”

The Bulls for the consecration of Fr. Elias as Bishop of Isfahan reached him, 8.4.1695,<sup>2</sup> “sent gratis<sup>3</sup> by His Holiness”.

His first thought appears to have been to go to India for the rite:<sup>4</sup>

“I have received the Brief from His Holiness together with the dispensation from the vow,<sup>5</sup> but I am awaiting the Bulls for my consecration to arrive in a few days by an Armenian merchant, to whom they were handed in Aleppo and . . . I shall look around and see where the more conveniently and more usefully I can betake myself to be con-

<sup>1</sup> *S.N.R.*, II, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> There were usually chancery fees to pay on the documents.

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Elias, 18.3.1695, *S.N.R.*, II, pp. *circ.* 120.

<sup>4</sup> Letter of 24.5.1695, *S.N.R.*, II, p. 133.

<sup>5</sup> Of the Carmelites, i.e. not to accept prelacies.