

“large sums of money to the king of Persia and his ministers, merely on religious grounds: it does not appear reasonable to force them to pay the maintenance allowance, to burden them more grievously, with the risk of chilling them in their Faith. . . . He begs your Eminences to assign him some annual allowance to live with the decorum due to his rank for the common weal of the faithful in the missions, and to give directions for his episcopal clothing for celebrating to be provided for him . . .”

and 24.5.1698:<sup>1</sup>

“. . . As to the palace or bishop's house, which they promised, it is impossible for them to give possession of it until our re-establishment in Julfa, together with liberty for themselves and all our Catholics to declare that they belong to us . . .”

and this despite the fact that, in 1697 shortly after his consecration, he had written to the Pope with regard to the Shariman family who, on his recommendation for reward by the Holy See, had been accorded

“the immense favours and privileges of citizenship of the city of Rome and freedom of the ports of Rome and Ancona, and other benefits both spiritual and temporal,”

that

“moved by an ineffable sentiment of gratitude, in proof of their devotion ever more intense to the Apostolic See, they have increased the fund to be assigned first for our Residence at Julfa, which has been begun, and then for the bishopric of Isfahan to the extent of an annual yield of about 30 Tumans, i.e. about 420 scudi. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

But from almost the beginning the five brothers failed to make good their promises, as Bishop Elias showed in his memorial to the Cardinal Prefect while still in Rome in 1703:<sup>3</sup>

“From the time of my being appointed bishop” (1694) “there had been promised me an annual stipend of 30 Tumans by the five brothers Shariman, who among themselves had agreed upon the contributions they arranged to make: to this is to be added what had been voluntarily offered by their sister and others well disposed: so the total was raised to about 500 scudi.

“After 1½ years—I do not remember exactly—they began to mix up in this some of the income from a certain bath (Hammam) left by the dead son of one of them out of his maternal estate for the Residence of our Fathers in Julfa: and from about the same time, when the eldest of them, worn out with old age, distributed his property among his sons and daughters, retaining for himself a portion barely sufficient for him to live, the promised stipend and maintenance began to fail me as regards that (fifth) share: so that, as the hoped-for allowance from the Sacr. Congregation of 100 scudi did not reach me, I was compelled to have recourse to the heads of our Order to allow me to take advantage of our Residence at Julfa, acquired by me previously, until from elsewhere better provision had been made for me. But after the fifth year I was scarcely able to obtain anything from the four other Sharimans, then from three of them, and at length from none of them, as they all protested that they were no longer able to continue the amount of the contribution in question, since they had become bankrupt by very many losses and trials. . . . There is a total of at least 150 Tumans due, i.e. 2,250 scudi, reckoning the Tuman at 14 scudi only. . . .”

In 1699 his observations<sup>4</sup> to the Cardinal Prefect were put thus:

<sup>1</sup> *S.N.R.*, II, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 178.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 348.

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Elias, 14.6.1699, *S.N.R.*, II, p. 264.