

“As to the assignment made to us by the Sharimans of 30 Tumans (five of which belong “to our Residence at Julfa substituted for the income from a hammam given to it before “my appointment to the bishopric) their intention appears to have always been that it “should be perpetual, if the maintenance of this mission with the preaching, schools, etc., “in the Armenian language should become permanent. . . . This income is now being “paid to us by hand, each of the five Sharimans contributing his portion¹ (they are talking “of making the assignment perpetual out of their private monies deposited by them in “Venice, according to what one of them has already made me write in his will, and I hope “the others will do so. . . .)”

Next year the acting Vicar Provincial, Fr. Basil, was explicit:²

“We used to receive great financial help from the Sharimans, but all is finished now. “It will be much indeed if we can retain their sons: as to the money we no longer hope, and “on this point we have recourse to the charity of the Sacr. Congregation for the mission at “Julfa, which is most necessitous. If we had the wherewithal to live, your lordship should “believe that it would be very flourishing. The Sharimans said before they became “Persians” (i.e. Muslims) “that they no longer wanted to contribute to the maintenance of “Mgr Elias and so, if the Sacr. Congregation send him back as we desire, it should provide “him with a salary proportionate to his position.”

Regarding the second motive for his journey, the author of the *Vita P. F. Elia a S. Alberto* mentions that he, Lay Brother Francis Mary of S. Sirius, after the return of Bishop Elias to Julfa in 1697

“slept with a loaded gun in a small room near to the Bishop for fear of an attempt on the “latter’s life,”³

such was the enmity of many schismatics: and Bishop Elias himself informed the Sacr. Congregation, 26.9.1702:⁴

“. . . it was recommended to me, at whom our adversaries appeared particularly to aim “in this fierce persecution, to *withdraw*. . . .”

By October 1699 that Austrian Fr. Conrad, Vicar Provincial, who had been hastily dispatched in 1697 to Rome by Bishop Elias with previous replies of Shah Sultan Husain on the occasion of the readmission of the Carmelites to Julfa, had not returned from Europe, although the Sacr. Congregation were actively trying to expedite his departure (the Archbishop of Seleucia, Nuncio in Vienna, writing to Mgr Fabroni, secretary of the Sacr. Congregation, 16.5.1699:⁵

“immediately the last letter from your Illustr. lordship of the 25th April concerning Fr. “Conrad of the Assumption . . . reached me, I had him summoned, in order to learn from “him the impediment which his superiors were placing in the way of his journey to Persia “ . . . and I told him of the order which I had from the Sacr. Congregation to see that . . . “his journey should not be impeded”

and, though this was followed by another letter of 12.9.1699⁶ from the Nuncio reporting: “Fr. Conrad of the Assumption has left safely for the mission in Persia”, no trace in the records has been observed of that Religious being once more at Isfahan. There were, however, other

¹ This statement in 1699 seems contradictory of that made in 1703 above.

² Fr. Basil of S. Charles, 2.2.1700, *S.R.*, vol. 538, p. 407.

⁴ *S.N.R.*, II, p. 342.

⁵ *Idem*, p. 259.

³ O.C.D. 320 e.

⁶ *Idem*, p. 285.