

“Therefore I may be permitted to make it publicly known that the schismatic Armenian merchants of Julfa are continually harassing their compatriots who have become Catholics, and in particular have recently accused of *lèse-majesté* those who gave the money for public use, inflicting many losses. This causes these people to hold aloof . . . and stops the coming of other rich merchants, who would betake themselves hither to enjoy this most serene clime. It is not for me to suggest to the particularly great wisdom of your Serene Highness remedies to avert disorders of this nature, so prejudicial to the public weal, i.e. for the leading men from the schismatical party of Julfa who are residing in this capital to be summoned by the Supreme Court and threatened that, if they cause their Catholic compatriots in Persia to suffer, they will render account for it with their lives and their property and, in fine, by instilling fear into them to ward off an evil which concerns the worship of God and the advantage of this mother-country. . . .”

It was 1.4.1702 when the Bishop reached Rome, already 2½ years since he had left Isfahan. In the first of his long written representations—that considered in the session of the Sac. Congregation on 13.6.1702¹—after referring to the “commiseration shown by His Holiness to his representations in various audiences and details given of oppression by the Muslim” rulers of Persia of the Christian and other subject minorities as one chief reason why he had come to invoke intervention, Bishop Elias turned to his personal financial position, which has already been disclosed in this narrative. He urged that he had never received more than 100 scudi per annum. (In a minute in the secretariat of the Sac. Congregation on the Bishop’s letter from Warsaw of 4.6.1701 it is mentioned that he had been paid “100 scudi for one year only, notwithstanding that the provision for bishops, who have no other revenues assigned them, is usually 200 scudi yearly”.) He complained that on his prolonged journey he had been obliged to borrow money, hoping to repay it from that annual provision now accumulated and due for several years: and further he had been hoping to find in Rome ready the episcopal vestments for ordinary wear and for ecclesiastical functions, which Innocent XII had assigned for him. “But,” he went on,

“during the two months since my arrival I have been unable to obtain up till now anything more than the ration of bread and a jar of wine daily, and 7½ scudi monthly.”

On this application the instructions given were brief:

“Let 10 scudi monthly be assigned to him, but let him depart” (i.e. to his diocese) “as speedily as may be.”

In Latin, 26.9.1702,² Bishop Elias again tackled the Cardinals of the Sac. Congregation, setting forth the three main needs which had led him to make the journey, which (as already quoted verbatim in various parts of this narrative) were given as (a) the opportunity of appealing personally to the Catholic sovereigns for their intervention against the machinations of the schismatics; (b) intervention by the Holy See and Christian princes to stay the Persian Court from the forced conversion to Islam of the Christians (including Armenians) and other minorities; (c) the settlement of an annual grant for the Bishop of Isfahan, since the Sharimans were no longer able to provide it.

Then he remarked, somewhat vaguely, with regard to his return to Persia that

“as already from the time of our departure there had ceased to exist the reason for war” (i.e. by Persia against Turkey) “which the occupation of Basra chiefly furnished, and hence everything had been brought back to a peaceable state of relations, it appears that what was then required is no longer to be looked for at present: until a reply on these matters arrives from the Persian king or at least a letter from our (Carmelite) Fathers, to whose

¹ *S.N.R.*, II, p. 339, and *S.R.*, vol. 541, p. 455.

² *S.N.R.*, II, p. 343, and *S.R.*, vol. 543, *post* p. 200.