

“reported having, in execution of the decree of the 13th October last, exhorted Mgr the Bishop of Isfahan to return without more delay to his post, when the said bishop exhibited some repugnance to doing so, because of lack of an emolument fitting for his maintenance. . . . Wherefore it was decided that a letter be written to the Nuncio at Venice.”¹

There is no indication that sufficient pressure could be brought, or was brought on the ‘Counts’ Shariman of Venice to contribute to the annual support of the Bishop of Isfahan: according to a letter of 1703² at least 2,250 scudi was then the amount outstanding and due from the family on this account: still in 1708 the Nuncio was writing to the Sac. Congregation³ that he had “renewed pressure on the Sharimans and especially Markar, to continue to assist “the missionaries”.

The ‘fidus Achates’ of Bishop Elias in Persia, Lay Brother Francis Mary of S. Sirus rejoined him in Rome, 22.12.1702, having returned from accompanying the Portuguese ambassador to the Indies: in his *Vita P. F. Elia* he stated that in 1703 occurred the great earthquake in Rome and the Pope bade Mgr Elias preach in the church of S. Mary Aegyptiaca to the Armenians: that on 31.5.1703 Pope Clement, who would have liked to retain the Bishop in a post in Rome, sent Mgr Elias with Mgr Philip Ellis, O.S.B. (? sic), to obtain information required for a beatification: that Pope Clement XI gave his reply for the Shah of Persia together with some gifts, 11.5.1704 [? sic 1705], and on the 22nd of that month bestowed a final blessing on the Bishop of Isfahan, who quitted Rome, 25.5.1705. The Pope had done all that was asked, and generously, in the way of recommending the Bishop of Isfahan: this was what he had addressed to Shah Sultan Husain, 17.2.1705:⁴

“Illustrious and most puissant king, greeting and the light of Divine grace. The letters, “filled and loaded with the highest expression of affection and Your excellent goodwill “towards the name and dignity of the Roman Pontiff which Your Highness had written “back to Innocent XII, of happy memory Our predecessor, We, who albeit by no merits “of Our own, but by the ruling of God, have been put instead in his place after his decease, “have received to the great gratification of Our heart, and We have had them faithfully “translated to Us.

“From them We have therefore learnt what courteous good offices at a sign from Our “dead predecessor You have caused to be paid to the late Peter Paul, formerly Archbishop “of Ancyra, to whom You showed Yourself complaisant in all those matters, which he “asked of You in the name of the Pope. Nor meanwhile was he greatly forced to labour “to exhort You to consolidate ever more surely the friendship and league of sentiments “and association which exists between You and the Christian princes and kings, since You “above all things wish it, and desire in particular to deserve well of and cultivate the “benevolence of the supreme prelate of the Universal Church. Now this Your noble will “and greatness of soul and Your propensity for all Christians above measure happen “welcomely to Us.

“For just as We see of what great importance it is to the Christian commonwealth that “You, a king truly outstanding in rank, power, wealth and the extent of Your realms and “subject peoples should be joined in Your inclinations with that commonwealth and with “those holding chief place in it, and should cherish a particular regard for the successors “of Blessed Peter, so We deem a great increase of Your glory to depend upon the fact of “the fame of Your name being spread beyond even the wide-stretched boundaries of the “kingdom of Persia and being received most freely by right even of treaty too and mentioned “with praise by foreign nations and distant peoples. As far as We are concerned, We “desire that You should be convinced that We have a mutual regard altogether well “disposed for You and desire nothing so much as that God, the author of all good things,

¹ S.R., vol. 546, p. 384.

² *Idem*, III, p. 323, 25.2.1708.

³ S.N.R., II, p. 348.

⁴ *Clementis XI P.P. Epistolae et Brevia Selectiora*, Rome, 1724.