

“ . . . Shortly I shall have to borrow again, not having had any allowance last year nor this, nor has any money been received at Aleppo, where our procurator has a claim for another 9 Tumans. I sent to our Fr. Vicar General in original the letter from our Fr. procurator at Marseilles, wherein mention was made of all the money which had been sent to us: and the truth is that from the year 1716 up till the present I have received nothing except the allowance for one year (about 20 Tumans) and another 20 Tumans remitted to me by the Sac. Congregation in payment of a debt owed us by Mgr Pidou. On account of this condition of affairs I have been unable to give any money to our Residences at Basra and Shiraz: so, in order to exist, the Father Vicars there have had to do what they could by other means: the one at Shiraz borrowed money on loan and made a quantity of wine, which was bought by the consul for France and the Portuguese Agent, so that with the profit the Vicar has kept himself and his companion and repaired the house which was likely to collapse. . . .”

Then, with regard to numbers, at the beginning of 1695 there were 12 Carmelite Fathers and two Lay Brothers in the three Persian posts, a number of whom were shortly afterwards dispersed to other missions and to Europe. Two died in 1695 and 1696.¹ The French Franciscan Tertiary, Fr. Cherubin, who had been of such assistance to him in the school for Armenians at Julfa from 1690 and who in 1695 left Persia, was solicited to return by Mgr Elias in 1698-9² and did so at a later date, having by then entered the Carmelite Order. Early in 1700 the Vicar Provincial Substitute was asking for two or three missionaries to be sent out as he was alone at Isfahan except for a single companion:³ and, 23.7.1703, the Procurator General of the Order in Rome asked the Sac. Congregation for sanction to send three more Religious to Persia, as one had died and two there were ‘of advanced age’.⁴ In January 1706 a new recruit and Vicar Provincial arrived from Rome:⁵ while a minute of 27.3.1708 speaks of Bishop Elias as taking “two others with him” back to Persia:⁶ one Father had indeed left Rome in 1708 and another reached Isfahan by the autumn of 1709.⁷ But one missionary had been consecrated a Bishop and left Persia in 1706, and on 13.9.1709 Fr. Raymond was writing to Rome:⁸

“We are in want of many things, especially of companions, as for five years I have remained *alone*, looking after this very large house with its garden,” i.e. the Convent.

The Vicar Apostolic of the diocese in reporting, 5.6.1715, the death of Fr. Cherubin, aged 60, at Julfa, added that in the space of about three years the Carmelites

“had *lost six or seven Religious*, at the time there being only one to take charge of both the Convent and the Residence in Julfa”:⁹

this was confirmed by the Vicar of Basra in the words:¹⁰

“in four Residences only I myself and Fr. Jerome Francis, and Fr. Bonaventura freshly arrived remain alive: all the others are dead.”

The position became worse, for after Fr. Bonaventura¹¹ died the same writer, 9.5.1716,¹² commented:

¹ Fr. John Bartholomew, O.P., 5.10.1696, *S.N.R.*, II, p. 173.

² *Vide S.N.R.*, II, p. 216, 19.9.1698, and *Idem*, p. 264, 14.6.1699.

⁴ *Idem*, vol. 545, p. 490.

⁷ *S.N.R.*, III, p. 364.

¹⁰ Fr. Paul Augustine, 8.9.1715, *S.R.*, vol. 603.

¹¹ The first writer in all these records in the archives observed to spell the word as ‘Ispahan’—previously all wrote ‘Aspahan’ or ‘Spahan’.

³ *S.R.*, vol. 538, p. 455, 15.1.1700.

⁶ *S.R.*, vol. 562, p. 95.

⁹ *S.R.*, vol. 603, p. 94.

⁸ O.C.D. 238 g.

¹² *S.R.*, vol. 608.