

“from Us by so great a distance between places yet We hold in the bosom of (Our) apostolic affection as if they were present. . . .”

This Pope, so markedly energetic in defending Catholics and indeed all Christians in that distant Eastern country, followed up that appeal to Shah Sultain Husain by another Brief of 17.8.1714 (Arch. Vat. *Epist. ad Princ.*, vol. 90, p. 108):

“Although because of the obligation of Our pastoral office in several other letters of Ours . . . to Your Highness We have as pressingly as possible striven to procure the favour of Your royal patronage for the Catholics and missionary Religious who reside in Your very extensive dominions, and although we certainly do not fear that You will not admit Our good offices and requests with that same inclination of reciprocal genuine regard which always existed between Your forefathers and Our predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs, nevertheless We are compelled to write to You anew on the same subject now when manifold and indeed serious complaints from those same Catholics and missionaries are being reported to Us, that they themselves are constantly plagued by the plots and false tales of certain men, who since they have become renegades from our Faith, albeit provoked by no offence and wrong done them, yet have no other end in view than to attack bitterly the true Catholics and involve them in certain extreme misfortunes and straits. We therefore strongly beg . . . that You will deign to curb the audacity of wicked men of this kind, and by Your authority cause that the necessary tranquillity be altogether restored forthwith to the above-mentioned Catholics and missionaries.”

However

“on 3.12.1714, the patriarch Alexander, our great persecutor, died, and Moses, archbishop of Julfa, was nominated his successor. . . .”¹

They had together spent 150,000 piastres to have all Catholic missionaries expelled, according to a minute of that year in the secretariat of the Sacr. Congregation.

Section XXIV of the article on ‘Armenia’ in the *Dictionnaire d’Histoire et de Géographie* deals solely with the so-called ‘patriarchs’ at Constantinople and only on the death of the Katholikos Astoadzatur (originally from Hamadan) in 1729 alludes to the succession at Echmiadzin, saying that he had addressed a profession of Faith to Pope Innocent XIII, and that his successor the Katholikos Karapiet (from Zaitun) had sent a letter of homage to Pope Benedict XII: no comments from that source are therefore available as to Armenian-Latin relations in Persia after the death of the Katholikos Alexander.

But from a few words by the Dominican Vicar Apostolic in a letter² of 24.9.1718 from Isfahan,

“the quiet state of affairs, in which at present our missions are, at least as far as the schismatics are concerned, who, although they have in hand the *raqam* so contrary to our interests, are not making use of it to our hurt”:

and from a reference to the cordiality between the grand Wazir and the French Court, which

“does not allow the schismatics the freedom to give vent to their ill will by taking advantage of the favours extorted from the Shah . . .”,

it would appear that from 1714 matters went fairly smoothly for the Uniats until 1720³ when:

¹ S.R., vol. 600, p. 494, letter of 12.1.1715 from Fr. Peter, Capuchin, Tabriz.

² S.N.R., II, p. 430.

³ Date uncertain, it may be 1724.