

they continued to reside until near the end of this reign, is described because of its repercussions on the position of the Carmelite bishops of Isfahan and mission posts, and certain political aspects.

* * * * * *

With the revival of the bishopric of Isfahan it became not a little embarrassing for Bishop Pidou of Baghdad to remain within the diocese and jurisdiction of another; but at the same time he was evidently unwilling to quit the amenities and safety of Persia where, especially in the Persian capital, he had opportunities for the dignified performance of episcopal functions, and where, as a scholar of the Armenian language, he was in his element in dealing with that community.

By this period the income from the invested endowment of the diocese of Baghdad produced, or made available to the Bishop through the Sacr. Congregation, only the sum of some 1,000 French crowns (écus), to the concern of the Bishop who asked for an explanation of the shrinkage:¹ and, as he liberally paid for the expenses of several French secular chaplains from the Seminary for Foreign Missions at Paris and from the third Order of S. Francis, he had got seriously into debt. Having left Hamadan in July 1695 with that intention, he is found writing from Isfahan, 31.10.1695, to Mgr Cibo, then Secretary of the Sacr. Congregation:²

“I had come here on my way to Shiraz and Basra, and am looking out for travelling companions in order to betake myself to the diocese assigned to me as soon as possible, and I hope to find them shortly, at least as far as Shiraz. . . . I confess to your Excellency, however, that I am in the greatest straits here, constrained to go to Basra alone and to leave here in Isfahan Monsieur Gaudreau” (of the Seminary at Paris) “alone and Monsieur Roc” (also from the Seminary) “alone at Hamadan: . . . the former having taken literally what you had written me about doing everything possible to recover the property left by my predecessor has, however, taken and spent so intemperately during my absence, while I had gone to Hamadan out of obedience” (to your instructions), “that I am reduced to beggary, laden with debts and heavy interest, and I can scarcely obtain credit by reason of the expenses incurred by him in litigation still pending and undecided. . . .”

A separate note of the same date, addressed to the Cardinals of the Congregation, was in the same strain:³

“The long litigation, fruitless up till now, for the recovery of the property left by my predecessor, and the many expenses of the constant journeys which the Sacr. Congregation have obliged me and oblige me to make having reduced me to extreme indigence and loaded me with debts and heavy interest, I now . . . implore the compassion of your Eminences and beg them to send me some financial aid through the Father Procurator General of the Discalced Carmelites who, I hope, will receive me in their hospice at Basra whither I am about to set out. . . .”

However he had changed his mind a month later⁴ about proceeding to Basra:

“. . . having been strongly dissuaded from it by Mgr Elias of S. Albert and by all prudent persons I have been finally constrained to yield to the twofold reason⁵ laid before me

¹ 1702, *S.N.R.*, II, p. 424.

² *S.R.*, vol. 525, p. 257.

³ *Idem*, p. 252.

⁴ Mgr Pidou to Mgr Cibo, Rome, 28.11.1695, *S.R.*, vol. 525, p. 253.

⁵ The “reasons” against his going to live in Basra were quoted by him as given by the Carmelites at Basra:

“(a) As Basra had been captured by the Arabs, everyone was fleeing from it . . . a long and cruel war was foreseen . . . as it was a seaport it might have to be abandoned, and the Fathers and other Christians obliged to take refuge in Persia; (b) the Fathers could not receive him in their house on account of its small size, and in order to avoid confusion, (c) as the orders from the Turkish government were that missionaries might not enter the houses of Christians, if Mgr the bishop were to go to Basra, he might be a cause of both himself and the Fathers being expelled at the instigation of schismatics; (d) the climate was unhealthy, the heat in summer excessive, while the Bishop was already of advanced age and afflicted with various ailments.”