

“by the missionaries of S. Teresa who are there. . . . So, not knowing where to turn, . . .
“I can do naught else but cry day and night. . . . ‘Manus Dei tetigit me’ with this baneful
“and impracticable bishopric of Babylon, which I would never have accepted except by
“force, your lordship knows this. . . . If at length my resignation, so many times repeated,
“be accepted, I look to your old affection for me that I be allowed some small pension.
“. . . If, however, it be not accepted, then . . . deign to obtain for me the favour re-
“quested of being allowed to remain in Persia anywhere it may seem to me more suitable,
“as was already conceded to my predecessor. . . . By reason of the commodiousness of
“the premises Hamadan would please me but, lying out of the way as it does and with a
“very cold situation, troublesome to an infirm old man as I am . . . certainly little suited
“for a bishop: from it I cannot attend to my duties, as it is out of the way and almost
“without any trade: and it is most difficult there to obtain funds sent from Aleppo, and
“one can rarely get letters or find credit. On the other hand, at Shamakha, Tabriz,
“Isfahan and other large towns everything is to be had easily and there are frequent
“opportunities for writing and for bargaining with merchants for remittance of funds. . . .
“For the rest, your lordship should consider that it had never been the intention of the
“lady who founded the bishopric of Baghdad that the residence of the bishop should be in
“the dominions of the cruel Ottomans, but in Persia, in which at that time Baghdad was
“situated. . . .”

The Bishop pulled every string in his reach: on the day following the above letter he addressed another to the Papal Nuncio at the Court of Louis XIV and the latter, titular Archbishop of Damascus, 16.7.1696,¹ wrote to Mgr Fabroni, Secretary to the Sac. Congregation:

“By the hand of Monsieur de St. Olon, brother of Mgr Pidou de St. Olon, Bishop of Baghdad, there has been handed me a packet containing a letter which that prelate had written to me, accompanied by a packet addressed by him to Mgr Cibo. . . . His brother mentioned above, Monsieur de St. Olon, is a gentleman of the bedchamber of the King” (of France), “well known to me, and in station meriting every consideration. He has spoken to me about the requests of Mgr his brother, and as for my enlightenment he has given me two papers, I pass these on to your lordship. . . .”

In the one of those two notes Monsieur de St. Olon, after referring to the boundaries fixed between the two dioceses of Isfahan and Baghdad, remarked:

“De sorte qu’on le laisse pour ainsy dire Maistre des Deserts: il ne peut aller à Bagdat, qui est aux Turcs et encor moins à Bassora, dont les Arabes viennent de s’emparer. Il ne luy est plus permis de demeurer à Hispahan ny à Hamadan, anciennes demeures de ses predecesseurs. De sorte qu’il ne scayt où aller. On pourrait l’établir à Alep suivant les raisons contenues au Mémoire cy-joint. Il demande qu’on luy fixe une demeure commode “et utile à la Religion. . . .”

It was pleaded that it was no criterion that a similar request to fix the seat of the bishops of Baghdad at Aleppo had been made by the late Mgr Picquet in the preceding pontificate, and refused. In the session of the Congregation, 12.11.1696, the papers were submitted to Cardinal Pamphili: and it could have been hardly comforting to the harassed Bishop of Baghdad that the brief decision recorded was:

“let him reside in some place in his diocese most convenient to his ‘subjects’ and to himself.”

However, no sooner had he consecrated the new Bishop of Isfahan in December 1696 than

¹ *S.R.*, vol. 525, p. 261.