

The Sac. Congregation was still¹ critical of Bishop Pidou residing in another's diocese and showing little disposition to enter his own: the minute was worded:

"Mgr Pidou, Bishop of Baghdad, having betaken himself from Hamadan to live in Isfahan in consideration of the permission received from your Eminences to reside outside his diocese, or else in view of the need, which he presumes, for himself to be in Isfahan on account of the absence of Mgr Elias, Bishop of that city . . . petitions your Eminences to confirm his faculties and the licence to exercise pontifical privileges outside his diocese. On that I must tell your Eminences that, according to the faculties, he cannot exercise pontifical privileges outside his diocese, and that in 1694 he was notified that he might only exercise them in Assyria, Mesopotamia, Basra and Amid, districts of his diocese. Then, with regard to his exercising pontifical privileges outside it, there is the decree of the Sac. Congregation dated 28.5.1651 which prohibits him. So it rests with your Eminences to reflect how provision ought to be made for the needs of the diocese of Isfahan, in view of the absence of its own Bishop, 30.8.1700."

The orders passed were:

"They (the Cardinals of the Congregation) sanctioned the extension (of the faculties) for 3 years as to both places, but he should take care to obtain the permission of the Ordinary, as far as possible. . . ."

On 27.7.1700,² however, Bishop Pidou wrote to acknowledge the receipt of an intimation from the Sac. Congregation, dated 20.9.1699,

'of the sudden withdrawal of the favour, granted him shortly before, of being allowed to reside outside his ever inaccessible diocese in any place he might judge suitable and advantageous to the sacred ministry. Now the time is limited to three years and the place to Hamadan. He regretted being unable to execute the instructions in this new order with his usual promptitude, because of the very difficult journey, and, having been summoned to Isfahan the previous year by the Archbishop of Ancyra, he was detained by infirmity, old age and extreme poverty—wanting even for his daily bread, which for the previous 7 months had been charitably given him by the Portuguese Augustinian Fathers, and by debts of more than 3,000 scudi despite his economical mode of life.

'So he begged the favour might still be allowed him without any alteration, or else his oft-offered resignation accepted, or a coadjutor assigned him. . . .'

As to the suggestion to make an exchange of diocesan territory, Basra for Hamadan, on his part Bishop Elias was willing enough to agree, as can be seen from his comments, after his arrival in Rome, on the Bishop of Baghdad's request, which was considered in the session of the Sac. Congregation of 4.9.1702:³

¹ Subsequent to the decree of 19.6.1696 quoted above, two others had been issued with regard to his residence: the first, of 14.4.1698, after repeating that he should reside in his diocese in some place most convenient to himself and his flock, had the qualification added by Cardinal Sacripante:

"If for any urgent reason he cannot return to his diocese, he may be allowed, for the time as long as that lasts, to remain outside his diocese, but it would be on his conscience as bishop. . . ." The other decree, of 24.8.1699, "on the occasion of the Bishop complaining that Basra, a place in his diocese, was not exchanged for Hamadan, situated in the diocese of Isfahan, and that he could not reside in any place among the Turks in Mesopotamia far from consuls of the" (i.e. protecting the) "Catholic missions without exposing the Christians there to evident danger of being oppressed and apostatizing," was as follows:

"If the true facts be as stated, he can—if it please our lord" (the Pope)—"be permitted to remain in Hamadan for 3 years and, as to the use of pontificals, he should obtain the consent of the Bishop of Isfahan: and in an audience given, 15.1.1701, His Holiness sanctioned it."

On the above minute, marked to Cardinal Imperiali, orders were passed that the Bishop of Isfahan, not yet arrived in Rome, should be awaited, and meanwhile search made for a coadjutor bishop for Mgr Pidou (*vide S.R.*, vol. 539, p. 256).

² *S.R.*, vol. 539, p. 255.

³ *Idem*, vol. 543, p. 502.