

“else than certain abodes for devotion and sites and places of retreat for the faithful assiduously praying to God for the times to be prosperous, and for the safety of the princes by whose favour they are established there, they ought not to be deprived of Your royal protection. Besides, it concerns Your grandeur to take care lest the traders, likewise Catholics, whose capital is small as is well known, should be overburdened by fresh taxes by the officials of Your Highness at the time of the latest assessment or numbering since they are known to be nearly unequal to bearing the former burdens. . . .”

At the same time Pope Clement XI took the opportunity (20.4.1701) to reopen the correspondence with the Katholikos Nahapiet, trusting he would receive the five Dominicans kindly, and to express the hope that intercourse would lead to closer relations with Holy Mother Church (Arch. Vat. *Epist. ad Princ.*, vol. 83, p. 108: for Latin text see appendix).

On Sunday in the octave of Corpus Christi, 1702, the Dominicans had a solemn procession from their church at Julfa, with the Bishop of Baghdad pontificating at Mass and the Armenian priests from the Shariman church present also.¹ Finally, note may be taken here of the several changes among the Dominican prelates of Nakhchiwan in this period.² Archbishop Paul Baptist died in 1701; Stephen Shiran elected 15.1.1702 died in 1708: Hyacinth David, already mentioned, was then elected but set on by robbers and mortally wounded when on his way to Rome for confirmation: Fr. Peter Martyr from Parma was nominated by the Holy See itself, 6.5.1709, and continued till his death in 1721. He had been furnished by Pope Clement XI with a Brief of recommendation dated 15.6.1709 (Arch. Vat. *Epist. ad Princ.*, vol. 87, p. 64) for himself and “the other Armenian Catholics in Your dominions”, and, after arriving in Isfahan on the vigil of SS. Simon and Jude, 1712³ to present it, was received by Shah Sultan Husain, but “with scant convenience, on horseback in the courtyard of his palace as he was “returning from a ride”; before March 1712 he had visited all his diocese and calculated his flock to be then 3,000 souls—a huge loss from the flourishing numbers of earlier times: he also reported that the printing of the breviary in Armenian had been very successful, and of great profit for all the Religious in Nakhchiwan.⁴

Returning, then, to Fr. Barnabas Fedeli, thus appointed Vicar Apostolic of the diocese of Isfahan, a letter of his related that from Venice he had reached Smyrna after 35 days’ sailing on 24.9.1710:⁵ by 19.1.1711 with his companion Fr. Antoninus from Ferrara he was at Abranar in Nakhchiwan, having had to pay more than 400 piastres to Turkish officials at Erzerum on the way, and he protested against ‘Turkish’ oppression of the miserable peasants of Nakhchiwan.⁶ On 29.1.1714, already resident in Julfa, he referred to his appointment as Vicar Apostolic: and he acknowledged gratefully the receipt of 200 scudi from the Sac. Congregation for himself; but in November of that year he mentioned that part of the allowance sent him had been captured at sea by corsairs, while the Dominicans at Abranar had annexed another portion for their needs, so that he had been obliged to draw on the Sac. Congregation:

“I became a Religious to live in poverty: but I am afraid that I have become a Vicar Apostolic to die in want. . . .”⁷

As a result, in the session of the Sac. Congregation of 17.12.1715⁸

“the Secretary reported: ‘The Father Procurator of the Dominican missionaries in Armenia “and Persia sets forth to your Eminences that Fr. Barnabas from Milan, Vicar Apostolic “in Isfahan, intimates that he is unable to live in that position on 100 scudi annually.’ “The Secretary added: ‘The pay of 100 scudi is usually given to Vicars Apostolic in those “parts: if they are bishops they are given 200 scudi.’”

¹ *S.N.R.*, II, p. 429, 27.7.1702.

³ *S.R.*, vol. 594.

⁵ *S.N.R.*, III, p. 376, Fr. Barnabas, 30.9.1710.

⁷ *S.N.R.*, II, p. 436.

² See *Hierarchia Latina Orientis*, No. 5, by Fr. L. Lemmens.

⁴ *Idem*, vol. 608, p. 575, 31.8.1716.

⁶ *S.N.R.*, III, p. 378, and *S.R.*, vol. 576, p. 586, 12.2.1711.

⁸ *Acta* for 1715, p. 657.