

'on a mission, which he executed so satisfactorily that he was in a position to ask as a 'reward for an appointment as ambassador to Persia. Ambassadors paid no customs dues 'in Persia, and Israil Ori proposed to carry with him a great quantity of merchandise. 'With the appointment from the Czar in his pocket Israil Ori went off from Muscovy to 'Vienna, where by virtue of his past connections and Imperial service he also obtained 'letters from the Emperor to the Shah. Finally he went to Rome, where, giving out that 'he had much credit with the schismatic Armenians and would engage to bring them to 'the submission and union so ardently desired in Rome, he succeeded in getting a Brief 'from Pope Clement XI¹ for the purpose.'

That Brief was in fact dated 15.7.1705 (Arch. Vat. *Epist. ad Princ.*, vol. 84, p. 192) and, although it commended Israil Ori to the favourable notice of Shah Sultan Husain, its contents animadverted once more to the oppressive conditions prevailing in Nakhchiwan for the Catholics, so that many of these Christians had preferred to go into voluntary exile and live in Turkish territory, and it reproached the Persian monarch for not remedying them:

'Pope Clement XI to the illustrious and most puissant king of the Persians. Illustrious "and most puissant king greeting and the light of Divine grace. . . . Since therefore Our "beloved son Israil Ori has particularly deserved Our Pontifical high regard by the excep- "tional integrity and honesty of character with which he is endowed, by his fidelity and "prudence as well, We wish to fortify him, as he is setting out thither, with this Our "favourable opinion and testimonial, whereby we declare to You that it would be truly "gratifying to Us if You were at Our hint to receive him willingly, listen to him kindly and "aid him in those matters consonant with equity and reason he will ask of You.

"But on such an occasion We cannot but set out to You frankly that to Us and to the "other Christian princes it is very serious and annoying that some of those who in Your "name rule over the provinces of that most extensive country treat ill the Christian natives "and inhabitants, no small portion of whom, since they felt and perceived themselves to "be ceaselessly the object of plots and false accusations, preferred freedom and tranquillity "before possessions and property, and emigrating from Your country took care to seek "refuge with other princes. This state of affairs, besides being exceedingly prejudicial to "Your laws and interests, in nowise contributes to the commending of Your reputation "and to no small extent it alienates from You the hearts, as We have said, of the princes "and kings, between whom and Yourself old-time friendships exist. For they take it ill "that that very same religion, which they themselves profess as being especially pleasing "to God and salutary to man, should be held in contempt and hatred there.

"Now, although We, rightly judging about You, are convinced that all this" (persecution): "has been done not only by no command of Yours, but rather entirely without Your "knowledge, or at least when You were preoccupied by the false charges against the "Christians themselves (for why should You, who covet the fame of being a just and gentle "monarch, suffer the innocent to be punished?), in order to preserve Your reputation for "fairness it is necessary that You openly curb the license of Your subordinates so that "may become known to everyone that for all those who are prepared to obey just laws "and the mode of life of Christian men is (certainly such) it is safe to dwell in Your domin- "ions. Meanwhile deeming that due weight will be given by You to advice which proceeds

¹ Of this there is confirmation in a note from the Secretary of the Sac. Congregation de Prop. Fide to Cardinal Paulucci, 19.2.1708 (*S.N.R.*, III, p. 332) asking for a search to be made in the Secretariat for Letters to Princes,

to see whether in the year 1700 a letter or Brief were written to the Elector Palatine or to the king of Persia recom- mending an Armenian, Israil Ori, and asking that credence be given to what he might represent in the name of His 'Holiness and the Holy See, and also to discover whether a similar letter were issued in the beginning of the reign of 'Clement XI. The reason is that news has been received . . . that the said Israil Ori is a heretic and well-known 'schismatic, and that with those letters he goes persecuting the Catholic and Armenian Uniats, falsely asserting that this 'is the wish of the Pope. . . .'

The Secretariat for Briefs, 13.7.1708, replied:

'sending a copy of the Briefs issued about Israil Ori. . . . It is now thought the letter of credence was issued at the request 'of the Elector Palatine.'