

“Fr. Joseph Dominic of S. Rose arrived at Basra about this time: he was the last missionary at Shiraz, who, harassed by continual exactions¹ by the Persians and Armenians, “was compelled at length to abandon that Residence.”

That was the end of 115 years of steadfast endeavour (less some breaks when no Carmelite was available for that post), of much abnegation and many privations suffered. What became of the church, so recently restored by Fr. Cyril, and the premises of the hospice? Did the few Armenians of the place occupy them and convert the church to use for schismatic rites, the predecessor of the present schismatic church in Shiraz, which exists from early in the 1800's? It is known, however, that “in the narrowing (of the limits) of the town that House of ours “was razed to its foundations,” i.e. before 1772, from the report of Bishop Cornelius.² The only vestige came to light in 1926 when two broken pieces of stone taken outside the town to pave a water-channel, and ascertained to have come from the framework of gates erected round the citadel during the fighting between the wards in 1908-11 and recently dismantled, were found to have inscriptions with crosses cut in what evidently had been grave-stones: the words in Latin on the one read: Hic jacet (H)ABIB GIOERIDA, Obiit die XII IULII 1672 and record the burial of one of the Assyrian Catholic family so often mentioned in this work, brother or nephew of the first wife of the noted traveller and writer Pietro della Valle.

There can be little doubt, on the other hand, that the founding of a fresh mission at Bushire in 1745 was not permanent, for lack of priests to fill it, however much the Vicar of Julfa, Fr. Sebastian, might write to Rome, 29.5.1745:³

“. . . Fr. Urban . . . the present provincial of our province of Persia and Arabia, has “gone off . . . suddenly with one neophyte . . . to Bushire, a seaport on the Persian “Gulf, where he straightway purchased a house with the help of Christians there, who for “so long past have been sighing for the Fathers to go to them. . . .”

In regard to Bandar 'Abbas—the modern port and small township is at a short distance from the site of Gāmbnun, where were the ‘Factories’ of European nations, small garrisoned forts in fact—there are to be found a number of instances of Carmelites being temporarily resident or dying on journeys from India to Basra, or inland to Isfahan. But it is in 1722 that the *Basra Chronicle* gives a definite reason for it being made a link in the chain of mission posts of the Carmelites—“because of the very large number of Christians who live at Bandar “'Abbas Fr. Urban has been staying there sixteen months”: the merchants, even the Protestants among them, were often generous and gifts made to the Carmelite chaplain helped the missionaries at Basra and Shiraz to eke out their existence in those days when they did not receive funds from Rome regularly. Not till 1732, however, is Bandar 'Abbas mentioned as a regular hospice, or was an attempt made to found one, *teste* the *Basra Chronicle*:

“Fr. John Joseph of S. Antony, a Frenchman from the province of Avignon, who had “arrived from Bandar 'Abbas at Basra on 29.6.1732, was sent to Bandar 'Abbas to found “that mission, 17.12.1732.”⁴

He was the missionary previously so long at Hamadan, concerned in the tale of the casting of a cannon, and was speedily to fall a victim to the feverish climate—on 2.4.1733. Fr. Placid of S. Nicolas at that time Vicar Provincial showed persistence, and again on 23.10.1733 *Chron. Basra* notes:

“Fr. Placid, Vicar Provincial, with Lay Brother Augustine of the Purification, set out “for Bandar 'Abbas to establish a house there. . . .”

¹ “Continuis contributionibus vexatus.”

² *S.N.R.*, VIII, p. 6.

³ *S.R.*, vol. 729.

⁴ “To make a small establishment in that mission post,” wrote Fr. Urban, 13.6.1733, *O.C.D.* 242 h.