

“when there is such a concourse: and I ought to offer some present to the ‘king’ as do all “the others, in particular the schismatic Armenians, who on such occasions do not omit “to spend handsomely in order not to miss any likely advantage: and even the Catholics, “whom they oppress . . . the Catholic party in Persia being fairly numerous and some “of them to be classed as rich merchants though, on occasions when they can get out of it, “they are in the habit of leaving the missionaries without support and funds.

“In such circumstances, finding myself with a number of debts . . . I have taken the “liberty of drawing a bill of exchange on the Sacr. Congregation for 500 Roman scudi out “of the yearly allowance which you are pleased to give me: for that is the balance of the “sum which I am due to receive since my consecration (which took place on 17.6.1730): “up till now I have had 400 scudi only. I have taken this sum from the Messrs. Shariman “here: so will your Eminences be pleased to have payment made to their brother in Leghorn, “Count David Shariman, or to whom he may wish: and of that bill of exchange I have “had several copies made, whichever one of them being paid, the others will be null and “void. . . . I add below, for your Eminence to see, the account of the debts incurred by “me specially because of the persecution suffered, and beg the Sacr. Congregation to “consent to pay them as an extraordinary charge—apart from the bill of exchange— “because incurred for the holy Faith out of dire necessity. In that case I shall be able to “extract myself from the embarrassment in which I now am. If you will do me this act “of charity, be pleased to hand over all to Mr. David Shariman or his agent, for then it “will be transferred to me here. . . .

“1739. To officials at the Court, scribes, for orders obtained, messengers	scudi
“sent from one place to the other . . . . .	130
“1740. Cost of the journey to the Court . . . . .	50
“1740. Cost of the translation of the Gospels and Scriptures . . . . .	240
	420”

It is rare to find in the archives of that period that appeals for unforeseen expenditure, losses and damage by wars or for repairs by the Carmelites in Persia were granted, more often than not they were minuted “nothing” in the Secretariat; but on this occasion the Congregation was evidently impressed by the possibility of an important issue being at stake, and prompt in accepting the expenditure incurred as extraordinary. In the Session of 10.7.1741 the summary of proceedings on this point reads:

“The Congregation considered that it ought to comply with the said request for an “extraordinary remittance of 420 scudi to be made, but under the heading of urgent needs “of that mission and without making any mention that the sum was used for the translation “mentioned, in order not to give *this*<sup>1</sup> official approval before having in due course examined

<sup>1</sup> With regard to the statement in Sir John Malcolm’s *History of Persia*, chap. XV:

“It has been already stated that Nadir desired to change the religion of his country. . . . Soon after his return “from India he directed that the four Evangelists should be translated into Persian: and, when this work was finished in “a very incorrect manner by some Romish and Armenian priests who wrote under the superintendence of his secretary, he summoned “some Christian priests, Jewish rabbis and Muhammadan mullas to his presence. Extracts from the imperfect trans- “lation of the New Testament were read to him, and he amused himself and some of his hearers with ludicrous remarks “on the mysterious parts of the Christian faith. The tenets of the Jews, and the traditions of the Muhammadans were “treated with the same freedom, and the tyrant *broke up the assembly* with a declaration that, if God spared him, he would “make a religion much better than any which mankind yet possessed. . . .”

It will be seen from the above letter of the Bishop, from the sequel related by Fr. Urban and other quotations from Bishop Philip Mary’s letters to be read farther on, that this part of Sir J. Malcolm’s tale is not substantiated and quite distorted. There was no breaking-up of the assembly, nor ludicrous remarks passed in presence of the delegates. Further the Bishop expressly contradicted that Catholic priests actually wrote the version: that was done by Muhammadan Persian scribes. It was not a translation from the Latin or a European language direct into vernacular Persian, but from an Arabic translation of the Vulgate rendered by Persian munshis (who may have been imperfectly acquainted with Arabic), as explained verbally by the Armenians and Latin missionaries. None of the parties would have been linguistic or Biblical scholars. The contemporary (1741) reserve and caution of the Roman Curia in regard to the production shows that it was not regarded as having any authority.