

“go to my diocese, nor for the same reasons is there any hope that I shall be able to go there soon. So, for my conscience’ sake, I have thought it well to send your Illustr. lordship confidentially the enclosed petition . . . to obtain permission for me to stay in places nearest the borders of my diocese—in Baghdad, Basra or Surat, where also those belonging to my bishopric have taken refuge . . . and for me to use pontificals, at least to consecrate the Holy Oils, at Basra, a place more convenient for that object and where the greater number of my flock have collected, whence I can easily send the Oils to all the missions of my diocese of Isfahan, and to those in the diocese of Mgr the Bishop of Baghdad.<sup>1</sup> Otherwise, as there is no other Latin bishop but myself, we shall be obliged to have the Holy Oils brought with difficulty and after much delay from India or Europe. . . .”

This request was allowed after consideration in the session of the Congregation, 13.11.1752, by the Pope granted 26.11.1752, but the exercise of functions and use of pontificals by the Bishop was to be subject to consent by the Bishop of Baghdad, Ordinary of the diocese for Basra. Bishop Sebastian of S. Margaret had an elder brother, also a Discalced Carmelite, Fr. Hyacinth of S. Teresa, whom—presumably immediately after hearing of his own appointment to the bishopric—he had invited to join him (Fr. Hyacinth reached Aleppo, 30.5.1752, on his way East.<sup>2</sup>) On the very day of his consecration, 16.4.1752, i.e. in advance of Fr. Hyacinth’s arrival at Baghdad, the new Bishop wrote out letters patent<sup>3</sup> appointing Fr. Hyacinth<sup>4</sup> his Vicar General: and this appointment was to lead to further unfortunate friction, after Bishop Sebastian’s death more especially, both in Baghdad and Basra. Indeed, the reader today cannot fail to be unfavourably impressed by the style and matter of the letters of Fr. Hyacinth, apart from complaints in *Cont. Basra Chron.* and by two bishops, so the appointment did not prove beneficial.

Not content with the concessions given and the hospitality and assistance afforded him by Mgr Emmanuel Ballyet, the new Bishop of Isfahan by a petition and enclosure of 14.1.1754<sup>5</sup> was so tactless as to ask—on the ground that Persia was plunged in such turmoil, and Isfahan and Julfa had been sacked by tribesmen, and many of his flock in consequence refugees in Basra—that Basra be cut out of the diocese of Baghdad and annexed to that of Isfahan, when Hamadan could be given to Baghdad in exchange.

Acknowledging receipt of the intimation through the Praepositus General of the Order, Fr. Rinaldo Maria, that permission had been given him by the Holy See to reside in Basra, Bishop Sebastian continued:

“. . . which has relieved me of all scruples. So I left Basra . . . for Bushire to be at hand in order to see whether it were possible for me to penetrate to Isfahan, and I stopped (in that place of Arabs, thieves and cruel men, and suffered the limit of suffering) for five months and more: I had to endure more trouble than ever by reason of the claims put forward by many persons in that country: and these claims compelled me to run away and return here to Basra in order not to expose myself to further and evident risk of life. . . . For that reason, after having reflected deeply and committed myself to God, I determined to draw up the enclosed memorial and pray your Illustr. lordship to arrange so that there be granted me what I ask. . . . To me it appears just and reasonable that, as Mgr the Bishop of Baghdad has the town of Hamadan in my diocese as a place of refuge against a time of disturbances in Baghdad, I also might have in Basra a place of refuge in these days. . . . I willingly make it over, and am agreeable that Hamadan be amalgamated

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Emmanuel was leaving for Rome on a visit *ad limina*.

<sup>2</sup> *S.N.R.*, VI, p. 83, letter of a Dominican of 31.5.1752.

<sup>3</sup> Given in *S.N.R.*, VI, pp. 245, 249, 252, 256.

<sup>4</sup> Mgr Sebastian styled his brother in this: “Vicar Provincial of the mission in Persia”, whereas in the report by Cardinal Ursini in the session of the Sac. Cong., 8.8.1757, he is “Fr. Hyacinth of S. Teresa, who . . . had gone out to the missions of Persia with the title of *Vicar of Julfa*, and by the Bishop had been declared his Vicar General.” This strangely worded document also refers to Fr. Hyacinth as ‘having arrived safe and sound’ (whereas he had not left Aleppo at the time of the consecration) and states, “by the consent and permission given by the Fr. General” (of the Order) “and handed to me . . . you can accept this prelacy! . . .”

<sup>5</sup> *S.R.*, vol. 759, app. p. 258; *S.N.R.*, VI, p. 181, 29.12.1753; p. 207, 14.4.1754.