

“ . . . my dearest brother, Mgr Sebastian, Bishop of Isfahan in Persia, who after about 40 days [? sic] of very painful illness and loss of blood<sup>1</sup> gave up his soul to his Creator on 22.6.1755 at 5 p.m., aged 42, and after 15 years in the mission. On 18.6.1755 he himself asked me for all the holy Sacraments and I heard his confession, and gave him the Viaticum, and on the morning of the 22nd about 8 o'clock I gave him the Holy Oils, he being still fully conscious: and really he died the death of a saintly missionary. . . . How much he is mourned by all the people I cannot express, and the sorrow and universal regret was enormous. At his burying, in fact, the heretics showed their veneration . . . by being present at the funeral functions, which I conducted. The consul for England, or English ambassador, at his own expense had made for him a coffin lined with black cloth, with his name inscribed on a stone, and paid all the expenses of the funeral, being present in person at the obsequies in grand parade and with a numerous retinue. It is very certain that his death has been most felt by me, because I have lost the dearest thing I had in the world. . . . I have always been his vicar-general for all his diocese of Persia by virtue of his letters patent issued in my favour on the day of his consecration (a copy of which I send enclosed). . . . As to what was found belonging to him I send the list. Thank God he left no debts, and was found to have 30 Roman scudi, which had been alms offerings received from the people. I had to pay the doctor 10 Roman scudi, and 5 scudi for medicines. I distributed 5 scudi to the poor, 10 scudi are for Masses. . . .

*Inventory.* 1 mitre: 1 gilt silver ring with a crystal stone: 2 silk chasubles of all the usual colours, much used: 1 episcopal cross of gold: 2 silk gloves: 2 silk stockings: 2 shoes and an episcopal staff of gilded wood: 1 worn carpet: 2 quilts.<sup>2</sup> The rest of what he needed he was wont to use from our mission at Basra. He was buried by me . . . garbed in the best episcopal garments he was found to possess, i.e. socks, shoes, rochet, mozzetta, and cape. . . .”

Fr. Cornelius of S. Joseph was at the time

“at Basra, where I was staying in my capacity as Vicar Provincial of Persia . . .”;

and in a letter of 20.12.1755<sup>3</sup> from Aleppo to the Cardinal Prefect he later described it as a

“death deplored by all those Christians of ours because of the amiable qualities which the deceased prelate possessed. . . .”

Cardinal Ursini's report in the session of the Sac. Congregation on 8.8.1757 mentioned that

“in 1755 the post of Vicar Apostolic for the Mogul's dominions being vacant, he” (i.e. the late Mgr Sebastian) “proposed for it his brother, Fr. Hyacinth of S. Teresa . . . but the

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps typhoid or dysentery.

<sup>2</sup> “Fr. Hyacinth, his brother, took sole charge of the effects” (vide Fr. Cornelius, 20.12.1755, *S.N.R.*, VI, p. 234). Dispute was to arise about the right to them later, and according to *Acta* for 1760, p. 149 (session of 17.3.1760), Mgr Cornelius, by then bishop himself, asked for a decree to compel surrender, and was told in reply that he could, if necessary, make use of canonical laws on the subject in order to effect recovery. But, by his letter of 10.9.1762 (*S.N.R.*, VII, p. 73) Bishop Cornelius informed the Cardinal Prefect:

“On my arrival at Basra I took great pains to find out with whom are the pontifical ornaments, such as pastoral staff, mitres, chalices, crosses and other things belonging to the ‘chapel’ of the bishop, my predecessor, brought from Isfahan to Basra by the late Mgr Sebastian of S. Margaret. But to my very great regret I understand that everything was taken with him to Surat by his brother; so that now, lacking those necessary articles and any means of obtaining them, I find myself unable to perform the functions required by my office. . . . I have to do with a Religious of my own Order who is in a distant country. It would be necessary for the Sac. Congregation, in addition to its decree on the subject, to support me by sending a letter of remonstrance to Fr. Hyacinth so that . . . he defer to your orders and send back to me what might concern the bishopric of Isfahan, not that regarding the vicar apostolic for the Mogul's dominions, in whose favour the Father has disposed of it.”

<sup>3</sup> *S.N.R.*, VI, p. 284.