

“In Gilan the Latin church at Rasht has been taken over by Fr. Emmanuel Caro, an apostolic missionary, I do not know for certain of what Order. He writes to me that the Khan there has written in gilt letters to His Holiness asking for two or three Latin missionaries, and exhibiting the secular arm in his (Don Emmanuel’s) favour in everything, but complaining at not receiving replies . . .”

although in the session of the Sac. Congregation on 30.7.1770¹ Cardinal Strappanij had stated that the Superior of the Capuchins at Astrakhan had, 1.10.1768, notified the Sac. Congregation:

“a certain priest named Emmanuel had intruded himself into the mission at Rasht: he had been a long time there, and passed himself off as having been an apostolic missionary in the city of Delhi, capital of the Mogul’s dominions. . . .”

But the minutes of the session continued:

“Now from a letter from Mgr Cornelius of S. Joseph, Bishop of Isfahan, written from Basra, 10.1.1770,² what was unknown about the identity and status of the priest in question has been made clear. He had been born at Guadalajara in Mexico, had a passport from the Spanish consul in Villafranca, had been made priest in 1753, and was a parish priest for seven years: then he went to visit the Holy Places, stayed in Madrid for three years: he heard that a missionary was wanted in the Caucasus, and went via Holland and England to Petersburg, where he had been sent by the Empress to minister to the European colony. He then came to Gilan, where he had rebuilt the church and house at a cost of 256 scudi. . . .”

By instructions of the Sac. Congregation, 11.8.1770, the Bishop of Isfahan sent provisionally to this Don Emmanuel Caro a commission as Vicar of Rasht, with the necessary faculties, 30.6.1771.³ At the end of July 1770 Don Emmanuel Caro was joined at Rasht by a Dominican, Fr. Norbert Secker.⁴ Two communications of 1772⁵ show that

‘Don Emmanuel Caro, who in the guise of a physician had got into relations with the Khan, governor of the province of Gilan, and through his intermediary succeeded in recovering from the hands of the heretics that’ (Jesuit) ‘house and church . . . after remaining there three years, on hearing a report that a Capuchin Religious sent by the Sac. Congregation to those parts was coming as a physician, sold the former hospice of the Jesuits to ‘Turks’, abandoned that mission to the small edification of the flock, and went to Shiraz, and there acts as a doctor for the Muslims, and has a bad name. . . .’

That was in 1771, and Bishop Emmanuel of Baghdad, Administrator of the diocese of Isfahan between the end of 1771 and July 1772,

“had ordered him” (Don Emmanuel Caro) “to quit Persia, but without any result. He lives by practising medicine, but scandalously according to what all merchants, who come from there, assert. Some indeed say that he is a Jew. . . .”⁶

Cardinal Pamphilj quoted in the session of the Sac. Congregation on 7.9.1778⁷ the report of the Administrator of the diocese, Fr. John son of Aratun, dated April and September 1777 as to Shiraz, where

¹ *Acta* for 1770, p. 291.

² 30.6.1771, *S.N.R.*, VII, p. 631.

³ Fr. John son of Isaac, Julfa, *S.N.R.*, VIII, p. 34, 10.5.1772, and Bp. Cornelius’ report, Rome, December, 1772.

⁴ Mgr Charles of S. Conrad, 13.6.1774, *S.R. nei Congressi*, No. 34.

⁵ ? *sic*, 10.12.1770.

⁶ Fr. de Bernardis, 31.7.1770, *S.N.R.*, VII, p. 584.

⁷ *Acta* for 1778, p. 309.