

“Masqat in a vessel 10 or 12 of these men, who begged me with much earnestness to do so, “in order that they might escape the hardships they were suffering: and there went with “them one old man to explore and see what can be done there and can be planned for the “better.

“I turn back to represent to your Illust. Lordship that, if by this method these men are “not converted, no more thought need be wasted on them; nor in Muhammadan countries “will they be ever anything else than they have been up till now. Time will be our main “witness to this: and as to this business Your Illust. Lordships will please understand that “it is not a question of bringing back Christians” (i.e. to the Faith from error), “but of converting “them from real paganism. . . .

“. . . The book that today they follow they call *Sidra*, and they say it has come from our “father Adam . . . and this book it is much desired to have translated into Arabic: and “now that I understand that Your Illust. Lordships also want it, I desire the more to get “hold of it. But they (the Mandaeans) say that it is a grave sin to translate it, and besides “there are very few who know how to read its writing, let alone make a translation of “it . . . in all this country there are only two old men who know it, and they are not “suited for this. . . .”

In a second letter of 26.2.1630¹ Fr. Basil added:

“After I had closed the letter which I send to the Sac. Congregation, the ‘Christians “of S. John’ have brought me the enclosed packet for His Holiness, and it is in gratitude for “what they understood from the letter I have just received from the late Cardinal Bandini. “. . . I shall also mention that today there arrived a letter from those ‘Christians of S. “John’, whom I sent to Masqat: and they express themselves well satisfied with the land, “which I indicated in my other letter, and they find it good and want to have it and ask for “it with all earnestness: and that place is called Dubba.”

In the archives consulted a gap then occurs with regard to this subject, but evidently the machinery indicated by him was brought into play: for, 2.12.1633,² from Basra Fr. Basil notified the Praepositus General in Rome:

“. . . With regard to the ‘Christians of S. John’, I wrote at length to your Reverence “and to the Sac. Congregation several times: how *last October*” (i.e. 1632) “I sent to our” (i.e. Portuguese) “possessions in the Straits of Hurmuz a matter of 700 souls of both sexes, “and of all sorts, all of them full of courage, there being (humanly speaking) no other method “of converting these people except this; because, should they take to the place, little by “little all will emigrate.

“As regards their journey expenses, I gave them by orders of the Viceroy of India 1,200 “piastres, so that they left contentedly. But, just as this year everything has gone amiss, so “it occurred too that these people found General Ruy Freire d’Andrade (to whom they “were going) dead, and with that they were split up and sent (in groups) to various forts of “ours, little to their liking and many of them left. Some of them went to India to see the “Viceroy,³ and so far I do not know what success they have had—in any case he will have “given each of them his rations. But things are at a bad pass, because those who have so “far remained are scattered and with reason very disgusted. . . . Will your Reverence “please see to this business and discuss it with the Sac. Congregation, so that, before all” (the Mandaeans) “there have been wiped out, some orders may come from the king of “Spain recommending these people” (to the Viceroy), “and, if these orders can be obtained,

¹ S.R., vol. 115 (V), p. 420.

² O.C.D. 241 g.

³ In 1630 the Conde de Lineros [*? sic*] was viceroy of the Portuguese Indies, very helpful to the Carmelites. There is a letter from him to the Card. Prefect of Propaganda in S.R., vol. 135, p. 345, speaking of Fr. Basil being actively engaged in sending Mandaeans to India.