

They had arrived, Frs. François Rigordi and Aimé Chezaud, 30.6.1653;¹ the former had been to the Court (at Mashhad), and

“returned greatly favoured, having been authorized to open houses at Julfa and . . . as
 “I myself have read in the Persian. . . . The Jesuits are negotiating for a Residence in
 “Julfa, having obtained the ‘farman’ from the Shah; but, in spite of that, they are meeting
 “with much opposition from the” (Armenian) “clergy; while our Fathers, who have no
 “special permit or sanction to live in Julfa, so far are being left in peace there by the favour
 “of the Headman of the town. Fr. Dimas, who was such a good missionary to the Armenians,
 “left a good example and Sarfaraz was very fond of him. . . .”²

But hardly was the ink dry on those last lines, when Fr. Balthazar had to append a post-script to his letter to the Praepositus General, Joachim of Jesus Mary:³

“. . . After having written to your Reverence at length . . . at this point there arrived
 “in haste Fr. Stephen, to give us the news of the great disturbance there was in Julfa—
 “the whole town in a commotion—seeing there so many ‘Frank’ Religious, especially since
 “the coming there of the Fathers of the Company of Jesus. . . .”

In a later communication, 22.4.1654, he mentioned that the protest of the schismatics against the intrusion of the ‘Frank’ missionaries took the form of:

“sending one of their number to the Shah’s Court, to urge their demands to (be allowed to)
 “eject from Julfa the ‘Frank’ Fathers, who were dwelling there, i.e. the reverend Fathers of
 “the Society of Jesus, the Capuchin Fathers and our own—all of them at considerable
 “distances the ones from the others—they” (the Armenians) “even alleging that the
 “‘Frank’ Fathers wanted to hedge them round” (“saying in their petition that the ‘Frank’
 “Religious had come to pervert his subjects and made Christians of Muhammadans—
 “a thing enough to have us ejected not from Julfa only, but from all this realm of Persia,”
 is the version of Fr. Felix, 20.6.1654, O.C.D. 237 i). “According to what at present is
 “reported to us, the envoy sent by our opponents to the Court was dressed down and
 “humiliated there, the king with sharp words asking the individual, or having him asked,
 “how they (the Armenians) thought they would stop the ‘Frank’ Fathers from living
 “amongst them, when *his* father” (i.e. Shah Safi) “had allowed them to make churches in
 “the very houses of the king himself. . . .”⁴

The newly appointed Vicar Provincial—that Fr. Felix who in 1651 was looking forward to the opening of a Residence in Julfa, and had been nominated as its first Vicar—from Basra

“arrived back on the eve of Corpus Christi, found two of our Religious living at Julfa with
 “the desire of establishing a House there; they had been admitted by the Armenians
 “because they said they were there only to learn the language. . . . I have several times
 “consulted these Fathers of ours, who all say that establishment in Julfa will be of no utility.
 “Recently in a letter from our Fr. General addressed to Fr. Stephen,, it was stated that our
 “superiors deem establishment at Julfa and Kung useless. So I have recalled the Fathers
 “to this convent. . . .”⁵

Referring again to this eight months later, 20.12.1655, Fr. Felix from Shiraz explained:

“Seeing that the conjunction was a bad one I withdrew the Fathers already at Julfa

¹ 9.8.1653, O.C.D. 236 k.

² Fr. Balthazar, 3.12.1653, O.C.D. 236 k.

³ *Idem*, 4.12.1653.

⁴ This allusion to the convents of the Carmelites and Augustinians being on royal property has a ring of Persian sarcasm and displeasure about its wording.

⁵ 20.6.1654, O.C.D. 237 i.