

had been looking to receive alms from the Pope. Fr. Dionysius remained at Khusruabad, handicapped by his ignorance of the Chaldaean vernacular and the difficulty of reaching precision through an interpreter imperfectly acquainted with the Persian language, until October 1654 when from the district of Salmas he went to that of Urmieh (which then owned religious allegiance to Mar Elias of the other (Mausil) branch of Chaldaeans, to Tirgawar, visiting the Chaldaean bishops, to Solduz and Maragha. His estimate of the Assyrians under Mar Shimun inside the Persian frontier did not exceed 1,000 households in the whole of Azarbaijan, but that might include collateral families. His second report, to the Definitor General, preserved in the archives of the Sac. Congregation:

'Account of the second journey of Fr. Dionysius of the Crown of Thorns O.C.D. to the province and patriarch of those Chaldaeans who are under the rule of the king of Persia,'

and dated from Isfahan, 11.2.1655, is not here given: it runs to eighteen foolscap pages:¹ and there is also another account of eight pages relating his discussions with the patriarch and subsequent peregrinations in the archives of the Order.²

It would appear that the motive behind Fr. Dionysius' tour round the districts of Urmieh, Solduz, Maragha, etc., was to encourage bishops, priests and headmen to subscribe to the letter of the patriarch to Pope Innocent X, in which willingness was expressed to make submission: and that they did so with good will:³

"The letter from the patriarch to the Pope was subscribed by all the priests and the 'Rais' (i.e. headmen) of the districts of Salmas, Urmieh, Arsenouk, Solduz, Maragha, and another from three bishops was subscribed by all the priests and headmen of the province of "Tirgawar."⁴

In *S.R.*, vol. 236, p. 205 *et seq.*, letters from the Chaldaean patriarch, etc., to Rome are to be found: of the profession of faith then made by the patriarch and the Assyrians a translation in Latin is stated to be given in *Theologia Carmelitana* of Fr. Philip of the Most Holy Trinity.

Fr. Maximin of Jesus, who set out to return to his province in Europe in the spring of 1655⁵ was entrusted with the conveyance to Rome of the reports of the negotiations; but he arrived to find Pope Innocent X dead.

If the dates adopted in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* be correct, that particular Mar Shimun (III) had died or been removed from office between 1654 and 1658 when, it states:

"Mar Shimun *IV* entered into relations with the Congregation of Propaganda, for which attitude his subjects tried to depose him. Alexander VII, however, defended him earnestly "in a letter to the king of Persia, and urged that he might be permitted to return to his patriarchal office. . . ."

This is the Brief of 12.7.1664 to 'Abbas II (*Epistolae ad Principes*, vol. 65, Alex. 7, ann. 10, p. 167 (181) for text, see Appendix of Latin Briefs).

The calamitous ending to the dispatch of their Chaldaean-speaking envoy would seem to have damped active interest in the Sac. Congregation: perhaps there was no one so well qualified in Rome to duplicate the part assigned to Fr. Gioerida. For some years the Carmelites in Persia awaited the outcome:

"all admit that our Mission has never had such an opportunity . . . and perhaps will "never have the like. . . ."

¹ *S.R.*, vol. 236, p. 215. ² Fr. Dionysius, Tabriz, 8.12.1654, O.C.D. 237 c.

⁴ Fr. Dionysius, Isfahan, 15.1.1655, O.C.D. 237 c.

³ *MSS. Hist. Miss.*, chap. 17, book 9.

⁵ Fr. Felix, 15.2.1655, O.C.D. 237 i.