

In 1657 Fr. Dionysius was still expressing his anxiety over the decision they expected to be taken in Rome: all they in Isfahan knew was that the Procurator General of the Order had:

“handed over the Chaldaean affairs to Cardinal Capponi. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Another five years, and he and others enthusiastic at Isfahan had died at their posts: with them the subject drops from correspondence.

But, to complete the historical narrative, Mar Shimun V (1670) wrote to Pope Clement X: after the election of Mar Shimun VII (in 1738) no further attempts were made by his successors settled in NW. Persia to renew relations with Rome. The Lazarist Fathers (of the Mission of S. Vincent de Paul) in the latter half of the 19th century and early years of the 20th did, however, gain considerable numbers to the Roman obedience and Faith. The Chaldaeans of that region round Urmi were, moreover, the quarry of other creeds and sects—the Czarina Maria of Russia was specially interested in one mission which had official Russian government support: the Anglican archbishop of Canterbury’s mission disposed of ample resources and had able missionaries, some of them learned in the Chaldaean liturgy and tongue: there were Nonconformist sects deriving support from the United States, as well—all disputing the field for proselytes. In the bitter frontier fighting of the ‘constitutional’ struggle in Azarbaijan, before the Great War of 1914, in Simko’s rebellion, much of the agricultural prosperity of the region round Lake Urmieh was destroyed: and having made common cause with the Allies in the War of 1914 large numbers of the Nestorians drifted to Iraq, where they formed part of those “Assyrians” under the Mar Shimun of the day, whose fate and assistance became a political and economic problem for the League of Nations.

The Catholic (Uniat) section of the Assyrians was hardly touched by those untoward events in Iraq: and their small community in the new Iran is now being rebuilt and fostered.

To return to the Nestorian Chaldaeans of Diarbakr,

“the patriarch Simeon bar Mama was succeeded in 1576<sup>2</sup> by Ilyas (i.e. Elias) Simeon Denha, who in 1586 sent to Pope Sixtus V a profession of faith, which was judged heretical. Elias II, 1591–1627, took up again the question of reunion and in a letter to Rome (1610) complained that he and his people were regarded as heretics by the Franciscans of the Holy Land. In 1616 he summoned a synod attended by eight metropolitans,<sup>3</sup> in which the Superior of the Franciscans at Aleppo, Fr. Thomas of Novara, took part: and in preparation for this synod a delegation had been sent to Rome (in 1612) when the union was consummated, although superficially; only a few of the Nestorians, such as the envoy to Rome, Adam, and the patriarch himself perhaps were sincere.<sup>4</sup> Elias III (1617–60) also solicited the pallium from Rome, but his profession of faith was found unorthodox. . . .”

In his zeal over the Chaldaeans Fr. Dionysius of the Crown of Thorns determined, on his way back from the Chapter General in Rome in 1653, to visit Mar Ilyas III and influence him: a letter of 7.11.1653<sup>5</sup> stated that he had arrived at Aleppo on the 4th and was leaving by caravan for Mausil, thinking that the Sac. Congregation would be glad for him to have a discussion with that patriarch too. His report from Baghdad is dated, 2.1.1654:<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 3.1.1657, O.C.D. 237 c.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from the article on “Chaldaeans” by the Rev. Dr. Labourt in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*.

<sup>3</sup> See in the appendix the Brief of 25.3.1614 (Arch. Vat. Arm. XLV, vol. 9, p. 96, No. 282) addressed to the patriarch of ‘Babylon’, Elias; to Gabriel: to Elias archbishop of Diarbakr, James archbishop of Mardin, Chnon Jesu archbishop of ‘Assyria’, Joseph archbishop of Jazirat, Jesusdedit archbishop of ‘Persia’, to whom the Pope sent by Archdeacon Adam returning to Mesopotamia a gift blessed by being touched by the chains of S. Peter, or kept in the Apostle’s Confessio, viz. a book of the Gospels printed in Arabic type for use in their churches.

<sup>4</sup> See the Brief of 25.3.1614 from Pope Paul V to his ‘Venerable brother Elias patriarch of Babylon’ (Arm. XLV, vol. 9, p. 92, No. 281), acknowledging the letter sent by the patriarch through the Archdeacon Adam, and pointing out the various heads of Nestorian heresy. This Adam, so another Brief mentions, after daily discussion with doctors of theology in Rome had abjured his errors.

<sup>5</sup> S.R., vol. 291, p. 527.

<sup>6</sup> O.C.D. 242 c (see also his letter of 30.3.1654 to the Secretary, Sac. Cong., S.R., vol. 292, p. 528).