

Accordingly Pope Clement IX wrote to Shah Sulaiman, 13.2.1669 (Arch. Vat. *Epist. ad Princ.*, vol. 68, p. 150):

“We wished to follow in the train of Our venerable brother Arachiel, Archbishop of Gheriam [? *sic* for Erivan) with a letter of Ours to Your Highness, asking that You will deign to show him those signs of clemency and benevolence with which You are wont to receive persons recommended by Us and which will be able to keep both him and the other Catholics living in his archiepiscopal district safe and secure against plots and harm from schismatics, who are constantly raging against them more than inimically with savage ill-will and, where they are able, even with acts done. But first of all this same Archbishop will desire that there be granted him by Your Highness the power of building a church in the town of Erivan, which would be both a great comfort and of spiritual benefit certainly to all the Catholics of those parts. But, if it would please the royal will to grant that, it will more and more link to itself by a fresh and tight bond of goodwill Our high regard already for long past obliged by its kindnesses. . . .”

Not at Erivan only in the northern limits of the Persian empire but in Georgia too the Latin missionaries—the Capuchins there—were being harassed and by schismatics of the Greek rite, not Armenians, so that the Sovereign Pontiff, 18.3.1668 (*Epist. ad Princ.*, vol. 67, p. 316) wrote to the Shah:

“We confidently beg that You will ordain that Fr. Stephen of Ameria and his Capuchin companions be protected by Your authority and secured from the attacks of the schismatics of the Greek rite residing in that region. . . .”

Probably this was that Catholic Armenian Azariah, in whose benefit Pope Clement X addressed to the Shah his Brief dated 10.9.1672,¹ in which the phrase occurs:

“But as there has come to Our ears the unjust oppression, which Our beloved son, Azariah Acaz of Armenia, has suffered in your realms on account of his zeal for forwarding the Catholic Faith, We have wished to indite this letter to Your Highness that, informed by it as to the harm done the said Azariah, You may add a new increase to Your outstanding qualities by a splendid amends for the same.

“Assuredly finer titles to Your name there are none that You will claim than those You have by famed proofs hastened to acquire through spreading Divine worship within Your very vast dominion. Up! then, most puissant king, protect the militia of the King of Kings from the reckless acts of hostile parties, quash the forces that rise against them, and by the powerful interest of Your patronage bestowed on the Catholics and specially on the said Azariah answer Our anxious prayers in a signal manner. In this way You will surround Your royal head with a crown of true glory and so will pave for Yourself a road to everlasting salvation. Now Ourselves gaining a mental foretaste of this inward delight we do earnestly beg for Your Highness from God, the author of all good things, the lengthy enjoyment of present happiness. Given at Rome at S. Mary Major under the Fisherman’s ring, 10th September 1672, in the third year of Our pontificate.”

As to Mgr Arachiel, it is surprising to note that, in his pursuit of protection for his church in Erivan, he wandered from Rome to England. The Nuncio in Brussels reported to Rome, 4.10.1670:²

“That Armenian archbishop, Arachiel, was in England, where he had a very civil reception with his letters patent and letters of recommendation from various princes. He went first to Amsterdam to take ship for the East; but, finding none, with the opportunity of

¹ Arch. Secr. Vat. *Epist. ad Princ.*, No. 70, p. 191.

² Arch. Secr. Vat. Misc. Arm. I, 17, p. 345.