

“the said Sharimans up to his departure from his diocese—the Cardinal considers that, if it be so approved by his Eminence the Cardinal Prefect, in addition to the 300 scudi already received, the Bishop of Isfahan may be paid another 400 scudi, but without any hope of obtaining a larger sum with the object of paying off entirely the debts which he says that he has contracted both on the journey and during his stay in Rome.

“Then, as to the allowances to be given to the said prelate during the time that he may stay in Rome, he desires that the 10 scudi monthly already assigned to him by the Sac. Congregation be increased; but, as the Cardinal ‘proposer’ has no status in that matter, he leaves the request to the judgment of his Eminence the Cardinal Prefect. Regarding the amounts to be paid him, after his return to his see, the view of the Cardinal ‘proposer’ (which he leaves to the criticism of the Sac. Congregation) would be that, while the prelate remains in Rome, diligent search should be made in the Sac. Congregation for the letters written by the Sharimans in the years 1693 and 1694—those by which they promised to pay 30 Tumans yearly to Mgr Elias provided that he be consecrated Bishop of Isfahan—and that in regard to the fulfilment of such promises a letter be written to Mgr the Nuncio in Venice to take steps to force the Sharimans residing there and very rich to satisfy their indebtedness, if not in full, at least in part, and also that security (for full payment) be sought. 5th October 1702 (sd.) Card. Franc Barberini.”

On the 4th December 1702 the Secretary, Mgr Fabroni, noted that the Cardinal Prefect had approved all the above proposals. In the following year, in the session of the Sac. Congregation, 30.4.1703,¹ it considered a long petition in Latin, addressed by Bishop Elias to Pope Clement himself, beginning:

“. . . Fr. Elias of S. Albert, Bishop of Isfahan, sets forth to Your Holiness how, having tarried this year in Rome, he was expecting to receive from Persia some reply to the letter, already 1½ years ago sent off from Vienna. . . .”²

He numbered three requests: *firstly*, he indicated the tenor of the replies to the letters brought from the Shah which it was important the Pope should send—the compliments and praise to be given, the warm recommendation of himself (the bishop) and all his flock, particularly of the Armenians in communion with the Holy See. The Christian princes, to whom the Shah had also sent letters by the Bishop, should show unanimity in commending to the Shah’s benevolence and protection the Bishop and his flock: in particular the king of Portugal should be moved to write because, as his dominions were more nearly coterminous with those of the Shah, he pulled greater weight, as had been seen when the Portuguese ambassador intervened and helped the recovery of the residence of the Carmelites in Julfa. *Secondly*, he elaborated and detailed financial requirements to set the mission to the Armenians in particular, and that of the Carmelites in their various stations in Persia, on a solid footing: the other Orders working in Isfahan and Julfa are not mentioned as needing support:

“Travelling allowances for several companions of proved vocation and good repute offering themselves for the Persian mission: and stipends paid in advance for several years, together with a pledge of continuance later in accordance with needs . . . in the double church and school at Julfa, one of the Armenian, the other of the Latin rite, together with the Residence of his Order established by him; in the former of which daily the Divine office with sung Mass and Catholic observance is celebrated by three priests and as many clerics, and more than thirty scholars; in the latter besides private Masses daily, on Sundays and feast-days solemn Masses with the Gregorian chant are celebrated (with travellers passing and Religious arriving from elsewhere): at these usually a sermon in Armenian was included, unless by reason of some festival occurring in the church of the Armenian rite it was given there. There too Christian doctrine, grammar, controversy and the

¹ S.R., vol. 545, p. 78.

² This petition would appear then to have been written in the latter half of 1702.