

“during the siege of Tabriz by the Turkish army in 1720 [? sic for 1725] ’Uthman Pasha told “the Christians to remain in their churches and published a decree guaranteeing them safety “there. So the Capuchin Fr. Bernard from Bourges, who had been resident there upwards “of twenty years and was feeble, with 100 Catholic Armenians remained in the Latin “church. On the eighth day the assault took place and ’Uthman Pasha was the first “person killed. Though Fr. Bernard hung out the French flag, it was of no avail: the “doors were broken down and all put to the sword. Fr. Bernard had his body cut through “from side to side by a sabre stroke and then his neck was half severed. . . .”¹

Moreover, in 1721 Tabriz had been very badly damaged by an earthquake, so that according to a letter of the Bishop of Isfahan, 4.7.1721:²

“the Capuchin Fathers after the ruining of Tabriz by the earthquake had left there to “come to Isfahan. . . .”

On the other hand the Catholic missions at Tiflis had been destroyed owing to Armenian violence, and on the instructions of the Holy See and armed with expostulatory letters from the Pope, the Emperor and the king of France the (Dominican) Bishop of Isfahan negotiated until, 22.2.1722,³ he was in a position to write to Cardinal Sacripante:

“. . . At last matters being well settled, for the mission (Capuchin) at Tiflis I have “obtained as much as His Holiness had desired and demanded, i.e. that the losses suffered “should be made good, both those of the Fathers there, and those of the Catholics there: “that both the church and the house of the Fathers there should be rebuilt, and that the “patriarch and the authors of the cruel attack committed there should be punished.

“So the royal *raqam*, i.e. edict or grant, is that the church and house of the Fathers “should be rebuilt better than they were before being destroyed, that there be handed “over to the Fathers 360 Tumans, which amount to the sum of about 5,000 Roman scudi. “Then, for the punishment of the patriarch, he has been compelled by a royal *raqam* to “pay 3,000 sequins and to send here to the capital his vicar-general or another ‘bishop’ “to give an account of his actions on that occasion. Besides, in the same *raqam* a warning “is notified to the patriarch and all the Armenians that, if another time they should attempt “a similar attack, they would have to pay 200 Tumans together with an order to the “governor to punish them at his discretion. Finally, orders were given that, under pain “of a fine of 12 Tumans, S. Leo should not be cursed, as will be read in the copy of the “*raqam* herein enclosed.

“. . . I have also obtained a *raqam* for the mission at Ganjeh according as I was “requested by the Capuchin Fathers there. I have also obtained what the Jesuit Fathers “at Erivan desired, and what was necessary for our mission here. How long these *raqams*, “or edicts will last, and how they will be carried out God alone knows, because here it “can be truly said *Nihil permanet sub sole*—nothing under the sun lasts: and three days “after M. Michel the ambassador extraordinary from the most Christian king had left here” (i.e. in 1708) “these officials granted the Armenians just the contrary of what he had “obtained in our favour: while the Bishop of Agathopolis was ill, the Armenians obtained “the total cancellation of the *raqam* which he had succeeded in getting after great effort. “For *jus est in pecuniis*—justice goes by money. . . .”

With that the factor of the enmity of Armenian schismatics will be left until after the arrival of the Afghans, while the anomalous situation of the bishops of Baghdad in Persia, where

¹ See Fr. C. da Terzorio's *Missioni dei Minori Cappuccini*, vol. III, Rome, 1920.

² *S.R.*, vol. 634, p. 384.

³ *S.N.R.*, III, p. 530.