

“As to my view requested on the desire expressed by the right reverend the Bishop of Baghdad that Hamadan, a town of our diocese of Persia, in which the said Bishop has a house for his residence, shall be declared to belong to his diocese of Baghdad, the exchange being made with the town of Basra, which is in his district and in which the Discalced Carmelites in turn have the house of their residence, I reply that this proposal had been elsewhere made to me by the right reverend bishop, and that I out of brotherly condescension for our mutual convenience and because of the urgency of the reasons alleged for it freely gave my consent to it, as far as in me lay. The strongest ground for the convenience and urgency is that the Bishop of Baghdad, as he has no residence of his own either in Baghdad or Basra, in which he might dwell permanently, also does not seem able to acquire one: nor indeed in the opinion of the missionaries residing there can he stay there (Baghdad) openly exercising episcopal jurisdiction, without the gravest risks and harm being done. Since the Bishop of Baghdad can easily, as it were in passing, make a visit from Hamadan to Baghdad and other adjoining towns without any such risk, and similarly the Bishop of Isfahan visit Basra, if it should please your Eminences to agree to the convenience requested by the Bishop, by virtue of this answer I, as far as lies in me, declare my consent to it. . . . Yet in order to guard against quarrels and disputes, which might arise from an exchange so made, I consider that two precautions should be adopted in regard to it: (a) the Residence and mission at Hamadan, already established about 20 years ago by the right reverend François Picquet, should be declared to belong to the Bishop of Baghdad and jurisdiction over it declared to belong to him under no other title than as Bishop of Baghdad, so that *the missionaries from*” (the Seminary for Foreign Missions) “*Paris* or any persons whatever should not be able to make any claim to the said Residence and mission, (b) the extent of the country depending” (i.e. for episcopal jurisdiction) “on the town of Hamadan, and that of Basra should be limited to some furlongs thence, and to the neighbouring villages, to the exclusion of the towns which might sometimes be alleged to be in the districts of Hamadan and Basra, especially as these were royal cities or capitals. Fr. Elias of S. Albert.”

Why, when the two bishops were in agreement, the alteration of boundaries was not authorized by the Sac. Congregation, does not appear on the record. On 4.9.1702 the Sac. Congregation issued the order:

“Let permission to reside in the town of Hamadan be prolonged for the term of another three years, and meanwhile conditions at Baghdad to be reported. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Some time between the end of 1702 (when a certain Fr. Amadeus Hamilton, an “English” Theatine, aged about 50, on his way to Goa, had been staying with Mgr Pidou for a year<sup>2</sup>) and the middle of 1706, therefore, the Bishop of Baghdad had gone back to Hamadan, where he still had the reverend Jean Baptiste Roc from the Seminary in Paris as his sole companion, and where, at the end of June 1706, he had consecrated as titular Bishop of Nicopolis the Carmelite Fr. Peter of Alcantara of S. Teresa. “But my black spouse of Babylon is more than ever inaccessible to me,” he complained.<sup>3</sup> In the next month, 21.7.1706, Bishop Pidou from Hamadan not only renewed his request for a coadjutor on account of his own age and infirmity, but asked particularly that Père Gratien de Galiczen, a priest of the diocese of Angers and doctor of the Sorbonne, aged over 40, might be selected.<sup>4</sup> This proposal was considered at the session of the Congregation, 20.6.1707,<sup>5</sup> and the order was passed:

“His Holiness to be prayed, as a favour, to name him as coadjutor, and, as for the suitable allowance to be assigned him, their Eminences the Prefect and Cardinal de la Trémoille to be asked their views.”

<sup>1</sup> S.R., vol. 543.

<sup>4</sup> S.R., vol. 559.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 170.

<sup>5</sup> S.N.R., II, p. 473.

<sup>3</sup> S.N.R., II, p. 483, letter of 29.6.1706.