

The Pope sanctioned the appointment, 27.6.1707, the sum of 300 scudi was to be reserved from the revenue of the diocese of Baghdad as salary, and a Brief was issued, 8.7.1707,¹ for the consecration as titular Bishop of Agathopolis of Mgr de Galiczen (who, 3.9.1708, wrote to the Sacr. Congregation expressing thanks for the honour bestowed and asking to be allowed to take a priest companion with him).²

At this point it is desirable to take notice of evidence of French influence trying to take hold in Persia. It was the period when Louis Quatorze was dominating the politics of Europe and making French activity felt in ecclesiastical affairs abroad, too. In 1706 there had been dispatched to Persia on behalf of the king of France an envoy named Jean Fabre; and his mission and that of Monsieur Michel who followed him are the subject of a graphic account, dated from Erivan, 9.7.1707,³ by the Bishop of Baghdad who, despite the infirmities which, he had repeatedly told the Sacr. Congregation, made travelling for him difficult, at the age of seventy years had been moved to make the long journey in the interests of his country and king:

“The harm, which has been caused in Persia by the extravagant proceedings and “imprudences of the late Sieur Jean Fabre, sent by the king to the Sufi, is only too notorious “and public, and has been unutterably prejudicial to the honour of France, and to the “interests of the Catholic religion. The cause of so many horrible scandals has been the “infamous French mistress, whom he brought to this country and whom he rashly passed “off as sent by our princesses” (i.e. of France as a gift) “to the royal Haram. The governor” (at Erivan) “immediately gave the news to the Sufi” (i.e. the Shah), “a young prince “given over to debauchery. But Divine Providence heard our sighs and our prayers, and “had pity for the sake of all these missions which the wretched female had sworn to ruin, “should she reach the throne of Persia, her mad ambition, since she aimed at nothing “lower; for it allowed the Khan himself to fall in love with this painted fury and he, urged “on to it by certain political considerations as well as jealousy, poisoned the said Fabre “on the 17th August last” (1706). “After the death of that atheist, who died as he had “lived, some fifteen Frenchmen who were (with him), among others his son Joseph, aged “14 years, and the Sieur Jacques Fabre, his nephew, having seen in his papers that I had “been nominated by his Majesty to succeed him (Fabre) in case of his death” (i.e. as envoy) “wanted at once to summon me from Hamadan, my ordinary place of residence, more “than 200 leagues away from here; but the Khan did not allow it until towards the end “of the year, in order that the rains should render it morally impossible for me to make “the journey. He wanted to put in the place of the dead man the little Joseph, a child “good for nothing, as he” (the Khan) “had already written to his nephew, ‘Itimad-ud- “Dauleh, the chief Wazir, that Madame the ‘pseudo-missive’ was the real ambassadress. “. . . Whilst the Khan pretended to be waiting for a reply . . . there were some strange “tragedies here, for that wretched woman, seeing herself despised by the French, stirred “up the Khan against them, their Armenian purveyor was put in irons and died in prison, “two other officials also were publicly hacked to pieces in front of the ‘Embassy’, their “house was broken into and pillaged. Our Frenchmen were bound, garrotted and im- “prisoned together with the Jesuit Father Meunier, their chaplain: and finally they were “all sent off to the Shah, under the tyrannical charge of the triumphant Amazon.

“Hardly were they outside the gate of Erivan than Monsieur Pierre Victor Michel, a “person of talent, arrived there from Constantinople incognito together with one janissary “and a dragoman, and he got in before them to Tabriz. The Marquis de Feriol, ambas- “sador at the Ottoman Porte, who knew his ability tested in important errands in Spain “and Hungary, had sent him off poste-haste from Constantinople with orders from the “king to arrest the mistress and the paramour too, if he had found him alive. He (M. “Michel) made himself known to, and recognized” (as duly empowered) “by all the “Frenchmen . . . and after efforts and tirades the hussy was obliged to eat humble-pie.

¹ *Vide Hierarchia Latina Orientis*, No. 10, by late Fr. L. Lemmens, O.F.M.

² *S.R.*, vol. 563, p. 424.

³ *S.N.R.*, II, p. 500.