

1684 with one Armenian priest, but abandoned from 1688 to 22.9.1691 when a Fr. Hyacinth David was posted there, and their church was built, largely at the expense of Gaspar Shariman. He had been joined before 1695 by a Bolognese, Fr. John Bartholomew,<sup>1</sup> who, 11.9.1697, addressed the Sac. Congregation,<sup>2</sup> stating that he wished to establish a convent in Julfa, where youths could be educated in the Observance. In former times, he wrote, an attempt had been made to form a sort of college in the province of Nakhchiwan, Religious having been sent for the purpose from Europe, but it had not taken root, chiefly because of exactions by the 'Turks' (=Persians?) and of the manual labour done by the friars. He thought that such a noviciate could best be set up in Isfahan, where some European Fathers could be dispatched and, when they knew Armenian sufficiently, teach philosophy and history to Armenian youths. A grant from the Sac. Congregation would be required to maintain two or three Religious; but the Sac. Congregation already possessed a fund collected to found a college for Armenians. On that the Master General of the Order wrote in a memorandum that the Archbishop of Nakhchiwan (to whom the Order annually paid 200 scudi) and Fathers in that province desired a hospice in Isfahan for four to six missionaries, but had no money for the purpose; though Gaspar Shariman had obtained them a house, the two Religious in Julfa were existing in misery on alms—their only income 40 scudi paid by Gaspar. As to the noviciate in Nakhchiwan the Master General considered the youths should then pass on to study philosophy in Rome: he had already discussed the placing of such a noviciate in Rome. Thereupon the Secretary of the Sac. Congregation minuted that a college for Armenians had actually been started in Rome; but, the results expected not having been realized, it had been afterwards transferred to Leopoli in Poland. Yield on the investment or fund collected by the former Archbishop, Mgr Cittadini, on special authorization by Brief had never exceeded 529 scudi and in 1697 produced only 353 scudi, so that the Sac. Congregation had had to pay 600 scudi to make up the deficiency. The result is to be read in a note addressed, 21.2.1699, by the Secretary of the Sac. Congregation to Fr. John Bartholomew of S. Hyacinth in the form of a decree,<sup>3</sup> dated 9.2.1699:

“To his Eminence Cardinal Sacripante, who will be so good as to concert with the “Father General (of the Dominicans) for the extension and establishment of the new “Hospice at Isfahan or Julfa of his Order, where he will allow and grant the General that “a noviciate may now be set up, and also a house of study for teaching Armenian youths, “both those in religion and seculars. To this end the Father General after consulting the “Vicar Provincial of the Congregation of S. Sabina of the province of Lombardy will “propose three Religious distinguished in learning and religious spirit and other suitable “qualities to be transferred there” (to Julfa) “from that Congregation, and not to be moved “thence without consulting the Sac. Congregation. . . .”

From that time onwards the Sac. Congregation, as appears from the records, took a particular interest in the Dominican Fathers at Julfa, although the proposed noviciate seems never to have gone beyond a school similar to that of the Carmelites, but smaller. Two references in letters of Fr. John Bartholomew<sup>4</sup> allude to the building of the Dominican church in Julfa being begun and finished by Gaspar Shariman: two others mention that the Sharimans were then busy adorning and embellishing the Dominican church and, 30.10.1706,<sup>5</sup> that:

“besides the buildings of our House, done for us by ‘Count’ Shariman, his brother Nazar “for the greater convenience and security of the first has added and connected to it another, “having on the garden side a covered way or passage. . . . We are really greatly obliged “to these gentlemen for having so aided us, and embellished the church, so that the one

<sup>1</sup> *S.N.R.*, II, *post* p. 116, 18.3.1695.

<sup>2</sup> *S.R.*, vol. 532, p. 208, 11.9.1697; he did so again, asking a grant, 31.5.1698, *S.R.*, vol. 533, p. 270.

<sup>3</sup> *S.N.R.*, II, p. 228.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, p. 232.

<sup>5</sup> *S.R.*, vol. 550, p. 290; *Idem*, vol. 559, p. 549.