

“from the kindness of heart and sincere affection of the Pontiff We again and again commend to You the same Israil who will explain to You in more detail Our meaning, and beg also for Your Highness from Almighty God true salvation, which cannot exist without Himself.

“Given at S. Mary Major, Rome, the 15th July 1705.”

Then the Jesuit Père Champion from the mission at Shamakha wrote:¹

“Israil Ori, an Armenian by race, arrived in Shamakha, 5.2.1708, taking the style of an ambassador from the Pope to the king of Persia. Having gone to pay my respects I was told by the ambassador that in the Holy Year 1700, having been sent to Rome by the Elector Palatine, he there had many secret conversations with Cardinal Albani, then Secretary for Briefs, and that Pope Innocent XII charged him with a letter to the Shah of Persia for the good estate of the Catholic religion in those parts, but that he was unable then” (in 1700) “to make the journey to Persia because the Elector Palatine sent him to the Czar of Muscovy in the interests of the Emperor. Meanwhile Pope Innocent XII having died, his successor Clement XI sent to Vienna another letter for the Shah of Persia, in which His Holiness declared that all that Monsieur Israil Ori might propose to his Majesty according to justice would be in the name of His Holiness. The contents of this letter of our lord Clement XI Monsieur Israil Ori has put in writing and handed to me. I observed in conversation that M. Israil Ori the Armenian is a real heretic and on his arrival permitted that the heretic Armenians should publish in their church an excommunication of the missionaries from the Pope, asserting the persons excommunicated to be rogues and liars, and forbidding any Armenian to communicate with them. . . .”

The Carmelite Vicar of Julfa, 2.4.1709, mentioned in a letter to Rome² that:

“An Armenian, a Persian subject, born in Gilan, with the object of escaping the payment of customs-duty has arrived with a ‘standard of the Pope’, saying that he is an ambassador to promote the union of the Armenians with the Catholic Church. This man, named Israil Ori, is an uneducated man of no position; but the Catholics, deeming him to have obtained these papers from Rome by misrepresentation, paid no attention to him: so on the Armenian feast-day Israil went to the Armenian schismatic church and took communion. . . .”

Notwithstanding his credentials from Rome this individual did speak in a hostile manner of the Catholic missionary Orders at Julfa and, as the result of the adverse reports to Rome on the subject of Israil Ori’s reprehensible conduct, Pope Clement XI had a Brief discrediting him written to Shah Sultan Husain, 2.3.1709 (Arch. Vat. *Epist. ad Princ.*, vol. 87, p. 33): no further credence or respect was to be paid him. The Brief ran in fact:

“Illustrious and most puissant king, greeting and the light of Divine grace. As it appertains to Our office with every good office of Our charity as Pontiff and father to come to the help of Catholic Christians adhering to and united with the Roman Church who dwell in various parts of the earth however remote, so that by Our assistance there may be gained for them the favour and good graces of their princes, whose dominions they inhabit perpetually or else resort to them, We have considered that this point especially is to be given attention by Us and taken up with Your Highness both on account of the evident amplitude of Your grandeur and might, and because We think You to be fair in mind towards all men but particularly well disposed to Christ’s faithful, as also because We promise Ourselves much from Your marked and sincere goodwill in Our regard.

¹ *S.N.R.*, III, p. 334, 4.4.1708.

² *S.R.*, vol. 573, p. 48.