

“So, willingly embracing the opportunity offered Us some years ago by there coming to Your parts Israil Ori, recommended to Us on the testimony of many, We determined to hand to him to convey to You Our letters given him under date 15th July 1705 in which, besides a courteous and indeed earnest and careful recommendation of Israil himself, on whom We relied that he would attend to the affairs of the Catholics with all energy and assiduity and that fidelity to which he pledged himself, We expressly begged of You as being the principal object of Our letter and the chief point of Our desires, that You would give instructions for the Catholics attached to the Roman Church living in Your realms, or at one time or other entering those parts to be used and treated humanely by Your officials and that in no wise would You allow that they should suffer unjustly any harm either in their persons or in their property, nor be molested by the plotting and false accusations of certain men who, since they are deserters from Our Faith, consider nothing more important than bitterly to pursue the true Catholics and to involve them in every kind of misfortune and straits.

“So with this mind and purpose We seized the opportunity and wrote to You; but not without an immense sorrow of Our heart We have learnt repeatedly that the aforesaid Israil Ori has recklessly abused that same commission from Us and has entered on a path there directly opposed to Our wish; and the aid for the Catholics, which he had distinctly asserted he would bring, he has afforded so negatively that he has rather disquieted them greatly and afflicted them and, what is most iniquitous, he has advanced apostates from Our Faith over the very Catholics and thus error over truth, and that he has forsooth so conducted himself as if he had been dispatched there by Us to oppress the true sons of the Roman Church, whose welfare, liberty and immunity, had he been mindful of God the just judge or wished to accommodate himself to Our desires, he ought especially to promote.

“Consequently We deemed it worth while that You should know that Israil Ori is unworthy of any confidence or of Your authority or of any mark of respect, but rather he should by Your instructions be discouraged from wicked attempts against Catholics, who agree in unity of Faith with the Roman Church, and to whom, indeed, We hope that You will show Yourself favourable in all things. Correspondingly from Us, where there shall be the means, You will receive a very copious return in those things which We shall consider acceptable to You. Given under the Fisherman’s ring, the 2nd day of March 1709, in the ninth year of Our Pontificate.”

‘It is hardly credible,’ remarked Fr. du Cerceau in his edition of Fr. Krusinski’s work, ‘how much this “embassy”, so inconsiderable as it was, alarmed the Court at Isfahan. The numerous retinue, some 200 persons still when it reached Isfahan: a speech at Shamakha in which Israil Ori had claimed to be descended from the ancient kings of Armenia, and not to have renounced his rights: in Persian fashion the Court officials suspected an ulterior motive, backed by the Czar of Muscovy. The French envoy, Michel, in Persia at the time, intensified the scare by explaining to the courtiers that an anagram of the name Israil Ori is “Il sera roi”!’¹

‘Mir Wais could not imagine how persons at the head of affairs in a great country like Persia could be so deluded as to be alarmed over a phantom, such as Israil Ori’s chimera of the re-establishment of an Armenian kingdom represented; but he perceived the opportunity it afforded him to advance his own intrigues rapidly. He pretended to be seriously impressed by its latent dangers when in conversation with the faction of Itimad-ud-Dauleh, suggesting that the Georgians might be also at work to obtain autonomy with the help of the Muscovites, who since the defeat of Charles XII of Sweden at Poltava, 8.7.1709, had risen greatly in prestige as a Power, and pointing to the presence at the Czar’s Court

¹ On his arrival in Isfahan he was accorded the usual marks of respect, managed successfully his surreptitious trading ventures, and then left the country, dying at Astrakhan some years later, a “staunch Catholic”, *vide* Fr. du Cerceau’s work.