

What Fr. Leander himself thought is recorded in his published work, *Secondo Viaggio*. Fr. Charles Raymond, whom he found at Baghdad on his arrival there, 18.12.1735,

“did not want to return to Hamadan unless the pro-Vicar Apostolic kept it up better than
“in the past. . . . On 7.1.1736 I left . . . we arrived at 21 o'clock¹ at Hamadan and,
“entering the House, found that doors and windows had been taken away, and there was
“no place to get out of the cold . . .”

Interesting exhibits in the archives of Propaganda Fide are the receipts given by Frs. Charles Raymond and Leander respectively for their maintenance and for expenditure on the premises at Hamadan between 28.12.1734 and 8.3.1736.² Then Fr. Emmanuel, the pro-Vicar Apostolic, himself went to superintend the repairs:³

“Immediately after Easter I left Baghdad to go and visit the House at Hamadan. I
“found it necessary to effect many repairs . . . but it can be said to be a sort of miracle
“that the church and House have remained as they are, seeing that it is still the best
“preserved building there is in all Hamadan. *The town itself is totally destroyed*, and can be
“sooner called a heap of stones than a town. I have remade the roofs, altogether re-done
“the walls of the enclosure and the garden, the watercourses, whitewashed the rooms
“afresh and re-made the windows and doors, purchased a chalice, copes, surplices and, in
“fine, all necessary objects for the church. Fr. Leander of the Roman province is there. . . .
“So after four months . . . I returned to Baghdad . . . my arrival was on 4.9.1736. . . .”

The pro-Vicar Apostolic had obtained from Constantinople an order, by virtue of which he had built the church at Hamadan, according to a letter of Fr. Philip Mary.⁴ In 1737, however, when Fr. Leander was already back in Baghdad, near the bishop's house at Hamadan a

“Persian seized possession of the water-supply essential for the House and garden: no
“title deeds were available and there was no money to expend on bribes . . .”

and in 1739

“Fr. Leander wrote that he had paid out 55 piastres for fines levied in Hamadan and that
“the two servants of the House and an Armenian Catholic were severely bastinadoed, and
“forced to pay 24 ‘hazar’⁵ which together with the 55 piastres make 254 Roman scudi—
“that is the miserable state of the house at Hamadan. . . .”⁶

According to that report of 1740 to the Sac. Congregation, Hamadan

‘contains about 100 families of the Armenian rite, all heretical, more obstinate than any
‘others in all Persia . . . although there are no true Catholics to be found in the town,
‘there are not lacking outsiders who frequent the church. . . .’

By the time he had been consecrated bishop of Baghdad and had gained a footing in that city and made the nucleus of a Catholic parish, however, Fr. Emmanuel of S. Albert had changed his mind about Hamadan: in a letter of 1744 from Malta:⁷

¹ The present Italian system for numbering the hours was in use 200 years ago: or is this Persian computation—
ba'd az dasteh? ² *S.N.R.*, IV, pp. 376, 378, 422, 423, 424. ³ *Idem*, p. 421, 2.10.1736.

⁴ *Idem*, p. 419, letter of 29.9.1735.

⁶ Fr. Emmanuel's report of 1740 in Rome.

⁵ Presumably 'hazar' (1,000) dinar, the modern term for 1 qran.

⁷ *S.N.R.*, V, p. 124.