

according to a minute in the Secretariat of the Congregation. In his letter of 4.11.1740¹ the Bishop of Isfahan acknowledged receipt of the Cardinal Prefect's communication of 2.5.1739 and the

"final approval of the Holy Father, committing charge of the Catholic Armenians of Erivan and its dependencies to the Archbishop of Nakhchiwan as a provisional measure."

None the less, while obeying, Bishop Philip Mary begged to be allowed to exercise episcopal functions in that district of Erivan independently of the Archbishop of Nakhchiwan. Now, in that letter of 1744 quoted above, Archbishop Salvini went on to state that he had been for 24 years a simple priest in that region and, while the Turks were in occupation of the town, he had come to Tabriz four times to administer the Sacraments: since he had been consecrated—i.e. in 1736—he had come to assist Père Damian during an illness of the latter without possessing any faculty, for he thought that Tabriz was part of 'Media' and totally distinct from Persia. For the past 27 years Tabriz had looked to Nakhchiwan for spiritual help in the absence of the Capuchin Fathers, whose church had been destroyed in the war:

"On my last passage through Aleppo I pressed the Father Guardian to provide a priest for Tabriz, and he sent Père Clement, who dispatched elsewhere later, had been succeeded by Père Damian. . . ."

He mentioned a little village called Kazzuk² beyond the river Araxes in the province of Erivan, quite separate from Nakhchiwan, but always looked after by the Archbishops of Nakhchiwan since there had been Catholics in Armenia: it seemed to him difficult to hold that the Bishop of Isfahan's jurisdiction was meant to cover such provinces, or more than Persia proper: only the late Mgr Barnabas Fedeli, who was consecrated by my predecessor in a village of Nakhchiwan, saw Tabriz in passing. He asked pardon if he had done wrong (i.e. by trespass of jurisdiction): and, as he remained a 'titular' archbishop, because "a shepherd without flock or hut", he begged to be allowed to retire to Rome. Thereupon Cardinal Colonna di Sciarra had given instructions, 15.2.1745, that "after absolution" (for the wrong done) had been granted by the Pope in an audience the latter had directed:

"let the bishop of Nakhchiwan proceed as if Delegate of the Apostolic See till further orders. In an audience of 11.7.1745 our Most Holy Father approved all the above. . . ."

Meanwhile in 1744-5 the Carmelite Bishop Philip Mary of Isfahan had been making an episcopal visitation of the northern provinces³—the first ever carried out, as far as the records disclose:

" . . . From Tabriz in the month of October last year" (1745) "I gave your Eminence an account how, with God's help, I had made a visitation of almost all the diocese belonging to the Bishop of Isfahan within the space of 17 months, administering the Sacrament of Confirmation to those baptized by the missionary Fathers⁴ in the principal provinces, i.e. Tabriz, Ganjeh, in Georgia, in Gilan. . . ."

" . . . In another letter dated 27.7.1745, with which your Eminence also favoured me

¹ *S.R.*, vol. 708.

² A minute made in the Secretariat (*S.R.*, vol. 708, p. 207) explained that

"apart from the town of Nakhchiwan the archdiocese consisted of eight places and two hamlets, where there are convents and churches of the Dominican Fathers, viz.: Abranar, Chahuk, Kushakan, Abrakunis, Karakush, Sapunis, Santak, Karna, Kazzuk, the last a hamlet of 12 houses and described as within the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Nakhchiwan. . . . According to the Brief of Paul III . . . the Archbishop was to be elected by the eight priors of the principal houses of the Dominicans, and by 8 principal lay-persons from the 8 chief places inhabited by Catholics, although *today* the election falls to the Holy See, because it was ceded to it by them. . . ."

³ Bp. Philip, 28.4.1746, *S.N.R.*, V, p. 167.

⁴ He speaks of one Capuchin Father from Bologna having been 5 years among the Imeritians.