

Though so far away Archbishop Salvini continued to try and save this remnant of worship in Nakhchiwan, for a letter next year (22.9.1748)¹ stated that:

“the 4,000 piastres collected little by little long ago for the church at Kushakan, as also “the 1,000 piastres for that at Abranar and very necessary, are being employed on the “repair of those churches, which have the roofs fallen in partly, and the walls sagging. “God grant that they be not reduced to mud-heaps because—if they be not promptly “re-erected—the *right* to erect them may be lost and with it practice of the Catholic religion. “Our rivals” (i.e. the schismatic Armenians) “will not fail to profit by the opportunity “in this connection, as they did not succeed in doing in Nakhchiwan all the harm they “did in Julfa and Tiflis nine years ago. As regards the construction of a hospice here in “Smyrna for the accommodation of the Dominican Armenian Religious, who have “remained, two have remained, the others I sent to the province. . . .”

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In parts of that general survey of the position of Catholics, Latins and Uniats, throughout Persia and Mesopotamia in the years 1730–48 reference occurred in some letters to hostility of the schismatics: now that the student or reader will be turning back from it to the capital of Persia and to life at Julfa in particular, he will find this fierce animosity and their persecution of Uniat compatriots flaming out afresh. To quote the *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques*, vol. IV (1930) on Armenia, sect. XXV and XXVI:

“In the 18th century the notables of Constantinople exercised a preponderant influence “in the election of the Katholikos. . . . It was they who had elected Lazarus of Smyrna. “While Kolot was ruling at Constantinople, the see of Echmiadzin had fallen to Abraham “of Crete” (1734–7): “he found favour in the sight of Nadir Shah, who caused him to “bless and gird on him his sword in sign of his absolute power over all the Armenians.

“His successor, Lazarus (1737–51), in order to enter into his see at Echmiadzin had to “obtain letters patent from the Sultan and from the Shah. His tussles both with the Shah “and with the Sultan were often real dramas, in which he did not by any means take up “the attitude of a martyr. Naturally he showed himself pitiless towards his subordinates, “who did not admire all his administrative measures. . . . He ordered that his former “rival, Peter Quttur, who had mocked at his megalomania, should be imprisoned and “scourged. Quttur, taking refuge at Constantinople, there denounced the injustices and “violent measures of the Katholikos. . . . At a synod held at Erivan Lazarus was declared “deposed” (1749) “and sent into confinement on the island of Sevan; while Peter Quttur “was put in his place. But soon Lazarus, having been put back on his patriarchal throne “by Ibrahim Mirza, the ‘prince’ at Tabriz, shut up his rival in a cell and let him die of “hunger in it. . . . The Catholics of Persia were at various intervals persecuted: usually “they remained true to their Faith . . . by the haughty state he kept Lazarus incurred “the rigours” (of the wrath) “of Nadir Shah, who imposed a fine of 2,500 Tumans on “him. . . . (Letter of Fr. Desvignes, S.J., Julfa, 26.5.1744).”

Over those years, 1737–51, of the Katholikos Lazarus it may be noted that the vindictive animosity was not confined to Persia proper, but can be seen at work at Baghdad and elsewhere in the letters of the Carmelites and others: action seems to have been taken on a *mot d'ordre*, everywhere. Fr. Emmanuel's report in Rome to the Sacr. Congregation of 21.9.1740² has already been quoted.

In 1737 it was a *heretic Armenian* at Baghdad who instigated the Pasha of Baghdad, who,

¹ *S.N.R.*, V, p. 254.

² *S.R.*, vol. 703, p. 417.