

in order to get money from them, being Franks and Catholics, sent an armed party with officials, 25.8.1737, into the church during Mass and took off to prison the bishop and all principal native Catholics. It was the schismatics who similarly at Hamadan had the episcopal servants there beaten and fined. From Baghdad, 26.6.1737,<sup>1</sup> Fr. Leander of S. Cecilia informed the pro-Vicar Apostolic then in Rome:

“I wrote another letter to your Reverence . . . about the troubles in the missions in Persia, and I much doubt whether the missionaries have not been driven out of that country because of the heretic Armenians, who sent a considerable sum, more than 400 Tumans, to the son<sup>2</sup> of Wali Na’amat” (or Tahmasp Quli Khan). “who is at *Mashhad* at present, to have them turned out of Persia. . . .”

Then he went on to allude to an extraordinary action by the representative of the Czar of Russia:

“I have had news that the Vartapets have also been joined by the ambassador of Muscovy, who has instructions from his Court to have all Europeans driven out of Persia, so as to establish a monopoly of trade for his countrymen: and there is evidence of this in the insult to Monsieur Leipsick, head of the Factory of the Dutch in Isfahan, in the middle of the bazar. The latter was leaving our House in Isfahan, having been to dine with Fr. Thomas: aware of this, the Russian went to wait for him in the bazar near our House and first had him forbidden by his *shatirs* to advance and commanded to turn back. Leipsick replied that this was a ‘royal’ (i.e. public) road, and both might pass: on that answer he was pulled down from his horse, well beaten and robbed of a watch and gold case. I wanted to write about this to the Sac. Congregation and inform them about this upset, and point out a method by which it might be countered, so that so many souls and Residences should not be lost—this would be by causing the chief Armenians in Julfa to understand that, if the missionaries were driven out of Persia, their (Armenian) funds in the Monti (i.e. di Pietà at Rome) would be attached, and the business of Armenians in cities of Italy sequestered. . . .”

In a letter<sup>3</sup> of 4.11.1740 to the Cardinal Prefect, Bishop Philip Mary of Isfahan was more explicit:

“For two years past we have been subjected to constant persecution in matters of creed, stirred up by the non-Catholic patriarch of the Armenians, named Lazarus, who demanded that all the missionaries should be driven out of Persia, their churches destroyed and the Catholics perverted. While the king his father was in India, five times with this object the patriarch made overtures to the viceroy,<sup>4</sup> spending much money and making many false statements as, for instance, that the missionary Fathers stopped people from paying taxes to the king, that they were disturbers of the public peace in the country, that by drawing the Armenians over to their Faith they were causing them to settle elsewhere to the harm of the state, that the Fathers were stealing away the people who had been subject to their patriarch, in order to make them vassals of the Pope . . . that they went into the houses of Christians to see their womenfolk, and other slanders of that nature, repugnant even to the infidels. When the charge had been laid before the governor of Isfahan all the statements were publicly adjudged false, after we had been taken to the tribunal on various occasions by police, and many Catholics had been put in prison and ill-used by the schismatics: the Messrs. Shariman bestirred themselves a great deal, spending money and in other ways, and it was necessary for me to incur various expenses on officials, scribes, police and on certain poor Catholics, who in the end were all released. Not content with this, the Armenians again sent to the Court a bishop and a priest with a quantity of gifts, hoping with these to suborn the viceroy in order to obtain

<sup>1</sup> *S.N.R.*, IV, p. 506.

<sup>2</sup> and <sup>4</sup> Riza Quli Mirza.

<sup>3</sup> *S.R.*, vol. 708, p. 165.