

He had already been proposed¹ for the bishopric among the three names put forward for the previous election in 1750: he was Vicar Provincial for the "Persian" mission of the Carmelites when, 10.9.1754, letters patent from the Praepositus General of the Order were received at Basra transferring him in a like capacity to their missions in Syria. At the beginning of 1755, still in that position, he had been to Kharg island to meet Fr. Urban: he had returned to Basra after Easter: on 14.9.1755 he left Basra for Aleppo to take up his new appointment:² he had arrived at Baghdad, 30.11.1755.

The *Acta* of the Sacr. Congregation for 1759 give as reported in the session of 20.11.1759 that:

"Fr. Cornelius of S. Joseph, Bishop-elect of Isfahan, by his letter of 26.5.1759, when "acknowledging receipt of the pontifical Bulls and faculties transmitted to him for him to "be consecrated by any Catholic bishop and in whatever place most convenient for him, "sets out that he had chosen the town of Malta for the main reason that at Alexandretta, "whence he was writing, the opportunity of an Imperial ship returning to Leghorn and "due to call at that island had offered itself. Then, by another letter of 10.10.1759, he "writes from Cagliari in Sardinia that the vessel in question had been surprised by a Prussian "privateer near the straits of Bonifacio and taken into Cagliari, where he succeeded in "being set at liberty together with all the passengers who were on the ship. In that state "of affairs he had been welcomed with every kindness by Mgr the Archbishop and favoured "with singular expressions of esteem by the Viceroy" (of Sardinia) "and by the people "there: so, he says, he had decided to receive consecration from the Archbishop there. "As an additional reason he stated that on board the same ship there had landed at that "port a Jew from Smyrna, very wealthy and respected by his folk, who was to receive holy "Baptism from Mgr the Archbishop and their prelate, who having freshly entered on his "charge counted on being able to perform them as events out of the common. . . . He "submits that, when his consecration has taken place, he cannot do less than proceed to "Rome, in order to profit by the proximity in order to bring with him two youths to be "placed in the Urban College, and to consult with the Sacr. Congregation and with the "heads of his Order on various points important for the welfare of the missions. As there "was in that port an Imperial ship well fitted out, and dispatched to those waters precisely "to go in search of the Prussian privateer, a passage to Leghorn has been tendered him "gratis, but he asks for the approval of your Eminence. The two youths, whom he is "bringing with him, are a Persian³ and a Melkite Greek, to whom a place was assigned "in the College in 1757. . . ."

Mgr Cornelius appears to have arrived in Rome before 9.1.1760.⁴ Before his consecration he had not been asked by his consecrator to take the oath required by the decrees of Popes Alexander VII and Clement XI:⁵ during his stay in Rome he was requested by the Secretary to the Sacr. Congregation to make good the defect, but demurred, and finally left Rome at the end of May for Milan without having taken the oath. This involved him in difficulties and correspondence, for after his arrival in his native city, 21.6.1760, he was handed by Cardinal Pozzobonelli, the Archbishop, a notification of 7.6.1760 from the Sacr. Congregation menacing him with penalties. He at once complied and took the oath, the document (*vide S.N.R.*, VI, p. 608) being transmitted to Rome by the Cardinal Archbishop, 25.6.1760. In making humble apologies,⁶ and expressing his obedience, Bishop Cornelius explained that he had demurred

¹ *Vide S.R.*, vol. 773, p. 275.

³ This was John, son of Isaac, afterwards a Uniat priest at Julfa in 1773.

⁴ When—see *S.N.R.*, VI, p. 251—he wrote to Mgr Marefoschi, the Secretary, that he had been permitted to stay at the Carmelite convent of the Vittoria, and asked for a carriage to call on the Cardinals.

⁵ Decrees of Alexander VII and Innocent X prohibited bishops dependent on the Sacr. Congregation de Prop. Fide from using pontificals, even with the Ordinary's consent, in other dioceses than their own—this was to minimize any tendency for newly consecrated bishops particularly to escape going to the mission-field, or remaining there.

⁶ Bp. Cornelius, Milan, *S.N.R.*, VI, p. 606; *S.N.R.*, VI, p. 612, 25.6.1760; draft reply from the Secretary, *S.N.R.*, VI, p. 613.

² *Vide Cont. Basra Chron.*