

VISUAL IMAGES AS A WAY OF DEFINING IDENTITY:  
THE CASE OF THE RECONSTRUCTED CARMELITE MISSAL

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The Carmelite Missal, London BL Additional 29704-05 & Additional 44892, is famous for two quite different reasons, firstly for its lavish illumination and secondly for its post-medieval fate. In the nineteenth century, the children of the then owner, Philip Hanrott, cut it up and pasted many of the illuminations in scrapbooks. Subsequently the manuscript became newsworthy because of the brilliant detective work done by Margaret Rickert, who reconstructed it from the fragments.<sup>1</sup> The work of 3 illuminators may be detected, whose work has been identified in other manuscripts, secular as well as religious; the manuscript has been described as a 'foyer of contemporary artists'.<sup>2</sup>

It can be dated with some accuracy, since it excludes feasts introduced into the Carmelite Calendar in 1393 (the Visitation, the Presentation of the Virgin in the temple and Mary of the Snows), which suggests that the manuscript was at least commissioned before this date. The Solemn Commemoration of the Virgin, introduced before 1387, is included but seems to be squeezed in, suggesting that its inclusion was not originally planned. It is the only Marian feast to be without illumination; indeed even quite minor feasts have some visual representation. This too suggests that the feast may have been added after the volume was originally conceived. There was a long review of Miss Rickert's edition by Bruno Borchert, in which he discussed the extent to which the illuminations reflect Carmelite liturgical practices and emphases in doctrine.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> MARGARET RICKERT, *The Reconstructed Carmelite Missal: An English Manuscript of the late XIV Century in the British Museum* (London, 1952).

<sup>2</sup> KATHLEEN SCOTT, *Later Gothic Manuscripts: 1390-1490*, II (London, 1996), pp. 24-30 and PAUL BINSKI, 'The *Liber Regalis*: Its Date and European Context', *The Regal Image of Richard II and the Wilton Diptych*, ed. Dillian Gordon, Lisa Monnas and Caroline Elam (London, 1997), p. 246.

<sup>3</sup> BRUNO BORCHERT, 'A Fourteenth Century English Missal Restored', *Carmelus* 1 (1954), 145-151.

I have previously invited a re-examination of this manuscript. Its worth, status and function have to be considered. Some of the rubrication is too small to be legible and it is clear that this Missal is not one to be used to help the priest say Mass.<sup>4</sup> I have suggested previously that the illuminations in the manuscript promote devotion to the Virgin and are used to define and promote Carmelite identity, and that the illuminations also comment on the relationship between the friars and the donor and his wife.<sup>5</sup> In this essay the function of these images is explored more fully.

The placing of images in a Missal involves choices: the size and prominence given to particular feast days, which are to have historiated initials and how the material is to be presented. In this manuscript there are twelve 6-line illuminations, used exclusively for those feasts afforded the highest status (*totum duplex*) in the Carmelite liturgical year. The large illuminations are thus for: the Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi and the Dedication of the Church in the Temporale and the Purification, Annunciation, Assumption, the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, All Saints and the Conception of the Virgin in the Sanctorale.<sup>6</sup> Such illuminations do not merely illustrate the text. They have a number of functions. At the simplest level, they serve as a sort of visual index; they enable one to find one's way easily round the liturgical text without needing to read the text.

## I. IMAGES AND PATRONS

Secondly, they serve to aid and sometimes to promote the patron, - in the case of the Carmelite Missal a surprisingly self-effacing one. Whether in this case such promotion was this-worldly (a statement of power, wealth or status) or other-worldly (with the intention that the friars should offer prayers and Masses *post mortem* for them), we will never know. If Robert Knollys was the patron of this manuscript, as seems likely,<sup>7</sup> then he was a man well in his seventies, a widower and

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<sup>4</sup> RICKERT, pp. 24-25.

<sup>5</sup> VALERIE EDDEN, 'A Fresh Look at the Reconstructed Carmelite Missal: London, British Library, MS Additional 29704-05', in *Imagining the Book*, ed. Stephen Kelly and John Thompson, (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 111-126.

<sup>6</sup> One section of the manuscript has not been recovered, - that is for the section in the Temporale between the first Sunday in Advent and Holy Saturday. Borchert states incorrectly that all the 6-line illuminations are for Marian feasts (Borchert, 149).

<sup>7</sup> EDDEN, pp. 113-116.

childless and generous in his dealings with the Carmelite Order. It would seem that the donor paid, possibly had a hand in the choosing the illuminators,<sup>8</sup> but left the choice of subject to the friars of London Whitefriars.

## II. IMAGES AND DOCTRINE

Thirdly, illuminations may be used for doctrinal affirmation. The most detailed of those in this Missal have several frames which relate the narrative events celebrated by the feast. Many include detail or iconography which clarify points of belief, as for example the illumination for the votive Mass for Trinity (f. 193v, fig. 1), of which Nigel Morgan has written<sup>9</sup> Here the Father is represented as an old man with an orb, the Son on his right hand. The Holy Spirit as a dove hovers between Father and Son. Morgan points out that a number of other aspects of this image are unique and derive from adapting traditional Trinitarian iconography to illustrate the first lection reading, Apocalypse 4:10, which describes the throne of God. The streams of grace from the beak of the dove of the Holy Spirit move us from the throne and contemplation of judgement to the means of grace. Below these are three scrolls, bearing the legend: *'et cum ipso'*, *'et per ipsum'* and *'et in ipso'* (Romans 11:36), the Epistle for the Mass in Carmelite (and Sarum) usage. Below the Trinity we have the figure of the Woman clothed in the Sun from Apocalypse 12, usually taken to signify the Virgin and also the Church. Her arms are outstretched, her mantle spread, as if to protect her sons. She is *Mater Misericordiae*, a *'scala salutis'*: a symbol of the intervention and mediation of Mary through her Son, who in turn intercedes with the Father, as Borchert points out.<sup>10</sup> Two scrolls follow the lines of her outstretched arms, inscribed with the words: *'Pater de celis, miserere nobis'* and *'Sancta*

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<sup>8</sup> One of the illuminators of this manuscript was also involved in a manuscript commissioned by Thomas of Woodstock and another commissioned by Woodstock's wife, Eleanor of Bohun. See LYNDA DENNISON, 'Oxford, Exeter College MS 47: The Importance of Stylistic and Codicological Analysis in its Dating and Localization', in *Medieval Book Production: Assessing the Evidence*, ed. Linda L. Brownrigg (Los Altos Hills, 1990), pp. 56-57. For Knollys and Woodstock, see Edden, pp. 114-115.

<sup>9</sup> NIGEL MORGAN, 'The Coronation of the Virgin by the Trinity and Other Texts and Images of the Glorification of Mary in Fifteenth-Century England', *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1992 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Nicholas Rogers (Stamford, 1994), pp. 223-241.

<sup>10</sup> BORCHERT, pp. 46-47.

*Maria ora pro nobis*'. Two further scrolls follow the lines of her mantle and are inscribed: '*Genui deum et hominem*' and '*elegit et pre-elegit me dominus*', the latter drawn from a responsory used at Marian feasts, including the antiphon at Lauds on Saturday of Commemoration of the Virgin between the Nativity and the Purification.<sup>11</sup> In the corners the four evangelists, represented symbolically, carry quotations from their respective gospels. Borchert writes 'Each ... shows the opening words of a passage of his Gospel, by which they indicate to us the principle moments in the redemption: Annunciation, Nativity, Epiphany and Ascension.'<sup>12</sup> John bears the opening words of his Gospel: '*In principio*', the gospel for the Nativity; Luke's quotation is '*Missus est*', the words which begin his account of the Annunciation. Mark, has '*Recumbentibus*', from 16:14, 'He appeared more recently to the eleven when they were at table', the gospel for the Annunciation. The Matthew quotation is difficult to decipher; it probably reads '*Cum natus esset*' The opening words of the second chapter of the gospel, which open Matthew's account of the Epiphany, are '*cum ergo natus esset*', but these letters are very indistinct.

Here in shorthand is the story of the redemption, including the roles of each person of the Trinity, Christ as redeemer and judge of mankind and the Virgin as intercessor and mediatrix between God and man. As Morgan states, the reference here to the Church as the means of grace affirms orthodox doctrine in the face of Wycliffite heresy.<sup>13</sup> The illumination also presents Mary as mediating on behalf of her sons, another Carmelite emphasis, one which also inspires devotion and will be considered later.

The illumination for the feast of the Conception of the Virgin (f. 165, fig. 2) also engages with controversial doctrine, a fact of which we are reminded by the heading from Sibert's *Ordinale* (c.1312) '*Concepcio sancte marie uel potius ueneracio sanctificacionis sancta marie*'. By the late fourteenth century the doctrine had become firmly established amongst the Carmelites. They had been active in promoting it and had introduced it into their calendar early, in 1306, giving it the status of *totum duplex*.<sup>14</sup> In 1342 Archbishop Fitzralph

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<sup>11</sup> The actual incipit is '*Elegit eam deus et praelegit eam*'.

See [www.bach.music.uwo.ca/cantus](http://www.bach.music.uwo.ca/cantus).

<sup>12</sup> BORCHERT, p. 150.

<sup>13</sup> MORGAN, p. 231.

<sup>14</sup> KALLENBERG says that the feast was celebrated as a patronal feast ('The feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the Liturgical Tradition of the Order', *Carmelus* 47 (2000), 11, citing John of Hildesheim, '*in festo Concepcionis gloriosae Virginis, venerantes in hoc*



had famously affirmed the belief that the Order's white habit was adopted in honour of this feast.<sup>15</sup> John Baconthorpe (d. ?1348) interpreted Elijah's little cloud, which restored the dry land to fruitfulness, (1 Kings 18:42-44) as revealing the mystery of the Virgin's sinless birth; the idea was further discussed by Felip Ribot, writing at about the same time as this manuscript was made.<sup>16</sup> Both the importance afforded to the feast and the elaborate illumination given to it in this Missal affirm the importance of the feast to the Carmelites, who had their own distinctive liturgy for the feast.<sup>17</sup> There are four frames; the iconography is standard:<sup>18</sup> Joachim and Anna in the temple where his gift is rejected, Joachim with an angel, the angelic announcement to Anna, and the meeting at the Golden Gate, the moment of the Immaculate Conception. This sequence is clearly modelled on the Annunciation, the Visitation and Joseph's dream but is distinguished from these events iconographically. Whilst the Annunciation is almost always located in a chamber, here the angel appears to Anna in a garden lush with trees. In some versions of the legend, Anna looks at the trees and the sparrows in them, envies them their fertility and asks God for a child.<sup>19</sup> These details may also underline the chaste maternity of Anna, prefiguring the chaste maternity of her daughter. The angel who speaks to Joachim, who has retired to work amongst the shepherds, is located in a wooded landscape. It is possible that the sheep are a reminder that from this chaste maternity will come, in the next generation, the Lamb of God, in direct line from the shepherd king, David. As Reau points out, the story of Anna and Joachim is of particular interest to Carmelites.<sup>20</sup>

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*patronam ordinis'* (*Medieval Carmelite Heritage*, ed. Adrianus Staring (Rome, 1989), p. 374) but this does not seem to mean more than 'honouring in this feast the patron of the Order', that is, like all Marian feasts, this feast celebrates the patron of the Order. Hildesheim goes on to point out that the other orders of friars also honour her on this feast, which seems to make the point clear.

<sup>15</sup> BENEDICT ZIMMERMANN, 'Ricardi Archiepiscopi Conceptione B. V. Mariae habiti in ecclesiis Carmelitarum annis 1342 et 1349 e codicibus Oxoniensibus,' *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum Discalceatorum*, 3 (1931), p. 166.

<sup>16</sup> BACONTHORPE, *Laus Carmelitarum* I ix (Staring, p. 226); Felip Ribot, *The Ten Books of the Way of Life and Great Deeds of the Carmelites*, Book VI 1-2, edited and translated by Richard Copsey (Rome, 2005), pp. 82-84.

<sup>17</sup> JAMES BOYCE, *Praising God in Carmel: Studies in Carmelite Liturgy* (Washington, 1999), p. 107.

<sup>18</sup> LOUIS REAU, *Iconographie de l'Art Chrétien* Vol. II. ii (Paris, 1957), pp. 155-161.

<sup>19</sup> REAU, p. 158.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

John of Hildesheim, following, John de Hesdin, says that the first Carmelite convent was built on mount Carmel near the Golden Gate.<sup>21</sup> Reau says that according to Carmelite legend, Anna accompanied her parents on a pilgrimage to Carmel before marrying Joachim but I have not been able to trace this legend.

### III. IMAGES TO INSPIRE DEVOTION

These images may inspire devotion as well as present controversial doctrines; they appeal to both head and heart. Some images, however, are clearly designed primarily to prompt devotion. This is particularly likely in a Missal. Christopher de Hamel writes:

'A Missal is a unique kind of book. It is the vehicle for a sacrament. Pictures cannot be taken as strictly illustrative in a text which, taken on its own terms, is not for the use of a reader as such, but rather to recreate the most holy moments of religious worship... The images of Christ on the Cross and of the Father in majesty become part of the presence of God in the sacrament... The picture of Christ on the cross was kissed devoutly by the priest.'<sup>22</sup>

Sadly, since the section of this Missal for Holy Week does not survive and consequently there are no illuminations for the Passion. The illumination for Trinity Sunday (f. 36v), however, does present an image of Christ on the cross. This is of interest because, unlike some images of this period, it seems designed to evoke worship and adoration of Christ as redeemer rather than evoking compassion for his suffering. The wound in his side is unobtrusive and he wears a halo, not a crown of thorns.

The illumination for the Assumption (f. 132v, fig. 3), the patronal festival until it was replaced by the Solemn Commemoration in the fifteenth century, is one of the most elaborate illustrations in the manuscript. Two lay figures, presumably the patron and his wife, appear on the descender. The head of the initial is divided into four scenes. On the extreme left, angels lead the disciples to where the Virgin, already wearing a splendid golden crown, lies on her deathbed. In the lower right, disciples attend the bier; a Jew falls head downward and another has his hand attached to the bier, trying to steal the body.

<sup>21</sup> STARING, pp. 330, 374.

<sup>22</sup> CHRISTOPHER DE HAMEL, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*, 2nd. Edition (London, 1994), p. 210.

This image, not infrequently found in treatments of this subject, mirrors the story of the Jew who was struck dead when he touched the tabernacle (Ark of God) to steady it (2 Samuel 6:6). The Virgin's womb was the tabernacle of God incarnate.<sup>23</sup> In the centre, the disciples are gathered round the closed tomb. The eye is drawn towards the upper section which depicts the coronation, and includes a detail: she hands down her girdle to a still doubting Thomas, reflecting the legend found in the Golden Legend.<sup>24</sup> In the upper section, her role reflects the lection passages for the feast, which include both Apocalypse. 12 and also psalm 45:9-11: 'At your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir'. Roundels surround the initial, depicting various scenes of the miracle of the Virgin.<sup>25</sup> At one level, these images are instructive. The deathbed and the bier affirm the reality of her death; the Thomas legend affirms the corporeal nature of her assumption. Archdale King comments that the collect '*veneranda nobis*' also suggests belief in a corporeal assumption.<sup>26</sup> These images tell a story but their primary function is surely to evoke a devotional response. What is evoked here (and elsewhere in the manuscript) is devotion to Mary as to a Mother, who through her Son invites all her followers to sonhood.

The iconography for All Saints (f. 152v, fig. 4) is unique. It shows the crowning of the Virgin by a trinity of the *Gnadenstuhl* type; the Virgin is crowned by the right hand of the Father, who holds the Son (in the form of a crucifix) in his left hand. This scene is surrounded by saints and angels. This illumination has been discussed fully by Nigel Morgan.<sup>27</sup> Mary is here crowned Queen of heaven and intimately linked to the Trinity as a source of grace.

There is a similar emphasis in the illumination for the Annunciation (f. 99r), in which the Virgin, presented standing, is observed by the Father, from whom rays of light flow to the Holy Spirit, a dove hovering above the scene. The book on the lectern may be said to represent the Word, whose incarnate life has just been initiated. Here too, the Virgin plays her part in the redemptive work of the Trinity.

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<sup>23</sup> See REAU, p. 611.

<sup>24</sup> JACOBUS DE VORAGINE, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, translated by William Grainger Ryan. Vol. 2. (Princeton, 1993), p. 82.

<sup>25</sup> JACOBUS DE VORAGINE, Vol. 1, pp. 101-102.

<sup>26</sup> ARCHDALE KING, *The Liturgies of the Religious Orders* (London, 1955), p. 275.

<sup>27</sup> MORGAN, pp. 227-229.

## IV. CARMELITE DEVOTION TO MARY

Borchert comments on the images of the Virgin in the manuscript:

‘Devotion to Mary as Protectress of the [Carmelite] order took a very subordinate place in the veneration of our Lady in 14th century England, which directed itself apparently much more to the beauty of her sanctity and to her maternity willed by God from eternity as the principle of the union of man with him: *Mater et Decor*.’<sup>28</sup>

This comment invites reconsideration and possibly revising. Images of the Virgin in this manuscript reflect varied aspects of Carmelite devotion to her. The illumination for the Assumption does indeed celebrate Mary’s maternity, as we have commented, but we do not find images of the lactation nor of the deposition, though of course, with Christmas and Holy Week missing, it is difficult to be sure what was originally there. There are many opportunities to present Mary as a figure evoking our pity and compassion but invariably what is evoked is awe and admiration. In the illumination for the Purification (f. 93r) the emphasis is on the handing over of the child to Simeon, who stands by the altar, reminding us that Christ is to be the sacrificial victim. Mary’s look is serene; no sword pierces heart and we are not invited to consider this as in any way a sorrowful event.<sup>29</sup> Rickert comments on the unusually devotional nature of the illumination for the Nativity of the Virgin (f. 138v, fig. 5): ‘Everything is quiet and orderly: the three coifed women... standing with thoughtful faces, while Anna, as she reaches for the child, has a far-away look on her face.’<sup>30</sup> What is celebrated most frequently is her role as a tool in the redemptive process, and as Queen of Heaven, interceding on behalf of her followers. As we have seen, the illumination for All Saints uses the feast as an opportunity to celebrate the Coronation and even the votive Mass for Trinity affords Mary a significant role as mediatrix and intercessor. To use them as meditative objects is to be drawn into the relationship between a generous Queen and her retinue. She is both ‘Regina coeli’ and ‘Flos Carmeli’.

Fourteenth century Carmelite writers stress Mary’s role as patron of the Order. Bernard Oller (d. 1383) explains, ‘post ascensionem Christi in eiusdem montis declivo in honore beatae Mariae

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<sup>28</sup> BORCHERT, p. 151

<sup>29</sup> For the iconography of the Purification, see REAU, pp. 261-266.

<sup>30</sup> RICKERT, p. 108.

genitricis Dei oratorium consruerunt, et ipsam in patronam specialem et advocatam devote elegerunt.<sup>31</sup> In his treatise *Laus Religionis Carmelitarum*, Baconthorpe relates a legend about Mary's visits to Mount Carmel in her girlhood, supposedly drawn from an account by Matthew of the infancy of the Virgin.<sup>32</sup> In this story an angel takes Mary to Carmel whilst she is still a child and prophesies that she will become the bride of Christ. The angel disappears but Mary remains on the mountain and dedicates her life to God and to becoming the bride of God, making a vow of virginity. The angel returns and makes a second prophecy: that Mary will be known as 'domina', 'our Lady'. Saggi points out the implications of her patronage: she is the foundress of the Order; it exists to honour her and, because of this, she is the protectress of the Order.<sup>33</sup> This is made clear by Arnold Bostius in his 'De patronatu et patrocinio'.<sup>34</sup> The relationship is feudal; where Christ is 'dominus', Mary is 'domina'. Baconthorpe calls her 'domina loci': 'mistress of this place', that is Carmel. She has dominion over Carmel, which is of course both a place and a choice of life.

It is because of her role as patron, that she mediates on behalf of her followers. Baconthorpe describes her as 'advocata gratissima', explaining 'Carmelitae vero sub titulo speciali Mariam obtinent advocatam sine aliquo sancto medio post Dominum, ut in professionis vinculo patet eorundem'.<sup>35</sup> Mary's power to mediate comes because of her relationship with her son. Arnold Bostius speaks of Mary as the new Bathsheba, who interceded with King David on behalf of her son Solomon; she is the Queen of Heaven dispensing heavenly power and favours.<sup>36</sup> Baconthorpe writes of Elijah's little cloud of rain (3 Kings 18:44) as prefiguring Mary, through whom streams of grace flowed to mankind and who is herself the fount of pity, 'Fons iste Carmeli Maria est'.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> STARING, p. 411.

<sup>32</sup> As Staring points out (p. 220), this particular story is not in any of the standard infancy narratives.

<sup>33</sup> *Santi del Carmelo*, ed. L. Saggi (Rome, 1972), p. 112.

<sup>34</sup> See EAMON CARROLL, 'The Marian Theology of Arnold Bostius, O.Carm. (1445-1499)', *Carmelus* 9 (1962), pp. 197-236, especially pp. 212-216. Bostius lived after the completion of this Missal but his comments reflect earlier Carmelite devotional emphases.

<sup>35</sup> STARING, p. 241.

<sup>36</sup> See CARROLL, p. 227.

<sup>37</sup> *Laus Religionis Carmelitarum*, I. ix-x, Staring, pp. 226-227.

## V. CARMELITE DEVOTION TO MARY: THE LITURGY

Carmelite liturgy celebrates Mary's dominion over Carmel and as powerful Queen of Heaven, asking for her protection and mediation. This theme recurs in the five antiphons used in all Carmelite Marian feasts.<sup>38</sup>

Haec est regina virginum quae genuit regem velud rosa decora virgo Dei genitrix per quem reperimus Deum et hominem alma virgo intercede pre nobis omnibus.

Tu decus virgineum virgo Dei genitrix Maria te solem inter omnes virgines caastissimam exoramus ut pro salute nostra apud Dominum intercedere digneris.

Sub tuum presidium confugimus Dei genitrix nostras deprecationes ne despicias in necessitatibus sed a periculis libera nos semper virgo benedicta.

Sancta Maria, succurre miseris iuva pusillanimes refove flexibiles ora pro populo interveni pro clero intercede pro devoto femineo sexu.

Beata dei genitrix Maria virgo perpetua templum Domini sacrarium Spiritus Sancti tu sola sine exemplo placuisti Domino Iesu Christo, ora pro populo interveni pro clero intercede pro devoto femineo sexu.<sup>39</sup>

Boyce comments, "These antiphons all have the common theme of Mary as intercessor from individuals to God which formed an integral part of the Carmelite devotion to her. From the posture of the small and humble suppliant who wants nothing more than to be found pleasing to God, The Carmelite begs the favour of her intercession. Mary as the vessel of the holy ("temple of the Lord an vessel of the Holy Spirit") supplies the reason for venerating her."<sup>40</sup> Boyce also shows how Mary's roles as intercessor is stressed in the first of these antiphons, as it is the only word to carry melodic independence.<sup>41</sup>

Another antiphon praises Mary as 'Ave regina caelorum, ave domina angelorum', queen of heaven and mistress of the angels. Two later liturgical chants gained a special place in Carmelite liturgy because they were (falsely) ascribed to the Carmelite saint, Simon Stock. One was the hymn 'Flos Carmeli', which reminds Mary of the privileges promised to the Carmelite brothers:

'Flos Carmeli, vitis florifera, splendor caeli, virgo puerperal singularis; mater mitis, sed viri nescia Carmelitis da privilegia, stella maris.'

<sup>38</sup> See BOYCE, p. 343.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 343-344.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 344-345.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

The other, the antiphon 'Ave stella matutina', actually written by Peter the Venerable, asks for Mary's: favour:

'Ave stella matutina, peccatorum medicina, mundi princeps et regina... Tu nos in hoc carcere solare propitia, dei plena gratia.'<sup>42</sup>

## VI. IMAGES AS PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Finally I want to consider the way in which visual images make public statements. I shall call this function 'proclamatory'. The manuscript was presumably on display. Its visual images make a public and official pronouncement about Carmelite identity. We have considered how the elaborate illumination afforded the feast of the Conception of the Virgin serves as a statement of a doctrinal position: a belief in the Immaculate Conception. It may also be said to remind those who 'read' its meaning that the order was very active in promoting the doctrine. A more striking example is to be found on f. 38r (fig. 6), the initial for Corpus Christi. Carmelites did not celebrate the feast with a procession, which was a common subject for this day. The illumination here is a reminder that the feast celebrates the Eucharist. The words of consecration (from 1 Corinthians 11:14-25) are given on scrolls: '*Accipite et comedite, hoc est corpus meum*' and '*Hic calyx nouum testamentum est in meo sanguine.*' The lower section presents the elevation of the Host at Mass and includes two Carmelite friars and two laymen adoring the host. In the corners, roundels show two Carmelite friars and two white dogs. Margaret Rickert, followed by all other scholars, links these white dogs with Wyclif's castigation of Carmelite friars as 'white dogs'.<sup>43</sup> These roundels are placed outside the frame and are surely placed as a reminder that it was the Carmelites who came into conflict with Wyclif by championing the orthodox doctrine of the Eucharist against his denial of transubstantiation.

Another example would be the illuminations figuring John the Baptist: the Nativity of John, a 5-line illumination, showing Elizabeth seated and Zachariah writing John's name on a scroll (f. 113v). The beheading of John (f. 136v) is one of the most elaborate

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<sup>42</sup> *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, ed. Clemens Blume & Guido M. Drevés, XLVIII (Leipzig, 1905, repr. 1961), p. 243.

<sup>43</sup> RICKERT, p. 50.



initials with four compartments, showing John preaching to Herod and Herodias, Salome dancing, his beheading and deposition. The prominence given to John can easily be explained and is another example of the use of illuminations to make a public statement. In the late fourteenth century, the antiquity of the various orders was a contentious issue. The Carmelites claimed to be established by Elijah and to have a continuous history on Carmel from his time until the Saracen incursions in the twelfth century. John the Baptist has a significant role in this history, with scriptural authority for seeing him in direct line from Elijah, following his way of life, living an eremitic life in the wilderness (Luke 1:17). The issue was a matter of public debate at Cambridge in 1374, between the Carmelite Hornby and the Dominican Stokes. The debate was decided in favour of Hornby.<sup>44</sup>

The claim was backed up by Felip Ribot, whose history of the Order stresses the Elian heritage of the Order and the role of John the Baptist as a link between Old and New Testament eras. This work was translated into English by Thomas Scrope/Bradley,<sup>45</sup> who himself either wrote or merely transcribed a poem on Elijah which makes much of the link between John and Elijah:

Gaude prece Jesus Christi,  
Baptiste tyrum iam cepistis.  
Diversorum adventum  
Johannes adventum primum  
Set Helya tu secundum  
Venturi ad iudicium.

[Rejoice, herald of Jesus Christ, you have taken on the figure of the Baptist. Of the two comings, John heralded the first coming, but you Elijah heralded the second coming of him who will come to judge.]<sup>46</sup>

Another example of the use of images as proclamation concerns a group of manuscripts known as the 'Carmelite Netter' group, manuscripts of Netter's works copied in Carmelite houses. Several of these are presentation copies with rich illuminations. Netter's

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<sup>44</sup> J. P. H. CLARK, 'A Defense of the Carmelite Order by John Hornby, O.Carm., A. D. 1374', *Carmelus* 32 (1995), pp. 73-106.

<sup>45</sup> A text which I am editing for Middle English Texts.

<sup>46</sup> London, British Library, Harley 211, f. 85.

Doctrinale was a learned, polemical treatise attacking the heresies of John Wyclif and his followers, written at the prompting of Henry V (to whom he was confessor) and dedicated to Pope Martin V. It survives in whole or in part in 23 manuscripts with two additional manuscripts containing a paraphrase and a selection of extracts respectively.<sup>47</sup> Eight of these are illuminated. Two have images of the sacraments. Oxford, Lincoln College 106 has the royal arms and seems to have been presented to Lincoln College by Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln. Oxford, Merton College 319 includes a picture of a royal figure and may have been intended as a gift to some member of the royal family. Netter's links with the royal family were strong. He was confessor to Henry V and for a short while before he died in 1430, to the young Henry VI. He acted as Henry V's ambassador on a number of missions. Henry supported him when he went to the Council of Constance as a defender of orthodoxy. The Lincoln College manuscript and Paris Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 3378 have images of the sacraments, though rather oddly, there is no image of the Eucharist in the Lincoln College manuscript. This latter manuscript has an image of the Virgin displaying the infant Christ to four Carmelite friars (on f. 3v), an image which affirms the Virgin's role as mother of God, as mediatrix of her Son's grace and also her special relation with the Order. Kathleen Scott comments that these manuscripts give 'compelling evidence of the Carmelite struggle against heresy'.<sup>48</sup> One may draw a second conclusion - that these manuscripts have a public nature. One has to ask why anyone would go to the trouble and very considerable expense of making a presentation copy of Netter's works. Gifts, of course, always carry significance. Whether these manuscripts were read by those to whom they were presented is immaterial. Their illuminations instantly affirm an orthodox theology of the sacraments, the priestly role conferring them and serve also to emphasise Carmelite orthodoxy in places of influence. Their production is both a political and a polemic one.

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<sup>47</sup> See MARGARET HARVEY, 'The Diffusion of the Doctrinale of Thomas Netter in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries', in *Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages: Essays presented to Margaret Gibson*, ed. Leslie Smith and Benedicta Ward (London & Rio Grande, 1992), pp. 281-294; RICHARD COPSEY, O.Carm., 'The Carmelites in England 1242-1540: Surviving Writings', *Carmel in Britain*, Vol. 3: The Hermits from Mount Carmel, pp. 393-396.

<sup>48</sup> SCOTT, p. 188.

The Carmelite Missal itself makes a public statement about the nature of the order: its devotion to the Virgin, its origins as an eremitic order in whose history John the Baptist has an honoured place, their current role upholding orthodoxy, the priestly role and the centrality of the sacraments in the Christian life.

We need to broaden our conception of how these images were used, how they were 'read' and to consider, on the one hand, what happens to in both mind and heart when an image becomes an object of meditation and also, from a different perspective, the social and public function of images.

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BL Add 29704-5 fo 38r detail - Corpus Christi

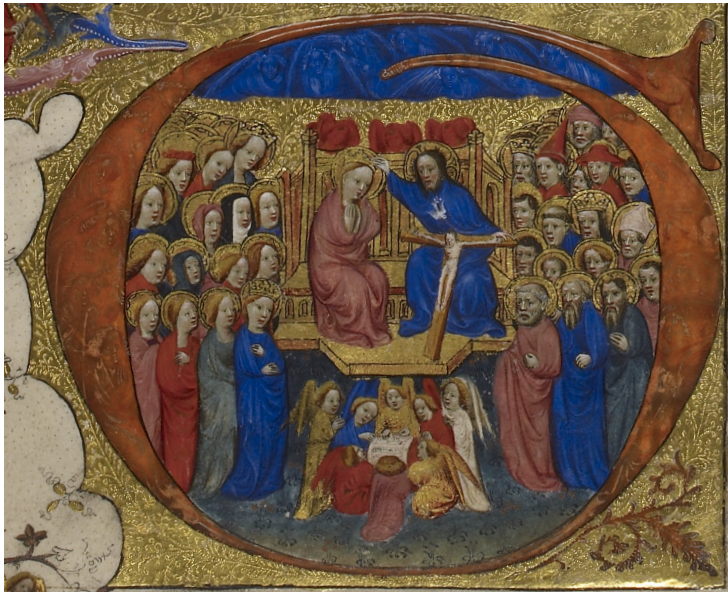


BL Add 29704-5  
fo 132v detail 2





BL Add 29704-5 fo 138v detail - Nativity of Mary



BL Add 29704-5 fo 152v detail - Coronation of Virgin & All Saints



BL Add 29704-5 fo 165r detail - Conception of Virgin Mary



BL Add 29704-5 fo 193v detail 2