

A HEROIC SUCCESSOR TO ST. TERESA OF ÁVILA:
PAINTED MINIATURES OF ANA DE SAN BARTOLOMÉ

Since 1990 my research on the iconography of St. Teresa of Ávila has taken me to Spain, where I've studied paintings and statues housed in Discalced Carmelite churches and have had the privilege of developing friendships with nuns who continue the monastic way of life that the saint cultivated over four hundred years ago, with its emphasis on constant prayer, strict enclosure, and poverty.¹

During a visit to the Convent of St. Teresa in Madrid, after hours of animated conversation about Carmelite history at the iron grille through which the nuns speak with visitors, I mentioned my interest in the lives and writings of Teresa's close female disciples. They surprised me by sending out into the locutorio a velvet-bound, seventeenth-century book, containing painted miniatures of the life of Ana de San Bartolomé, one of the nuns most favored by Teresa who assumed a powerful leadership role within the Order after the Founding Mother's death. These images have not been analyzed previously in scholarship, though they are mentioned briefly in Julián Urkiza's authoritative edition of the complete works of Ana de San Bartolomé.² The pictures deserve greater attention, since they reveal much about an important chapter of Carmelite history and about perceptions of female sanctity in Counter-Reformation Europe.

¹ I am grateful to the Madres Carmelitas de Santa Teresa for giving me access to the Ana de San Bartolomé volume and for encouraging my Teresian projects. Special thanks also to Rev. Dr. Patrick Thomas McMahon, O.Carm., and Patricia O'Callaghan for allowing me to conduct research in the *Carmelitana Collection* at Whitefriars Hall in Washington, D.C. This paper originated in a 1998 Folger Institute seminar, «Gender and Sanctity in Counter-Reformation Europe», led by Alison Weber. I presented portions of it at the 2002 Sixteenth Century Studies Conference in San Antonio, Texas. Special thanks to Alison Weber, Joseph. F. Chorpenning, O.S.F.S., and Charles Haynes for reading and commenting on earlier drafts. Carmen Benito Vessels and Ellen Echeverria kindly assisted with translations. Barbara von Barghahn offered helpful guidance, as always.

² *Obras completas de la Beata Ana de San Bartolomé*, ed. JULIÁN URKIZA, O.C.D., 2 vols., Teresianum, Roma 1985, 1, p. 105*, hereafter *OCASB*.

Before examining the paintings' iconography, I will first review the key events of Ana's life, the primary source for which is her own body of writings, including two autobiographies, histories of the expansion of the Carmelite reform, narratives about the state of her spirit, declarations regarding St. Teresa, lectures to her nuns, poems, and hundreds of letters.³ Her longest and best-known text, called *Autobiography A* to distinguish it from a shorter autobiography (B), is her own compilation of writings composed between 1605 and 1624, with a final paragraph written in 1625. This account of her life in religion and mystical experiences circulated in Spanish manuscript copies made by her friends and Carmelite Daughters and in published editions in Flemish (1632), French (1646), German (1669), Italian (1725) and English (1917).⁴

Ana was born in 1549 in the Castilian village of El Almendral to a family of landowning farmers. Her parents died when she was ten years old, leaving her to be raised by her siblings. As a teenager, she says, she had a vision in which the Virgin told her she would become a nun, and another in which she saw the convent and nuns of St. Joseph's, the first foundation made by Teresa in the city of Ávila. Despite opposition from her family, she took the veil as a lay sister there in 1570.

In 1577 Teresa chose Ana as her personal assistant, having recognized her as a nun of exceptional intelligence and discretion. The ailing Madre needed not only a nurse, but also a secretary to help with

³ For studies of the life and writings of Ana de San Bartolomé, see *OCASB*, 1, pp. 53*-205*; P. SILVERIO DE SANTA TERESA, O.C.D., *Historia del Carmen Descalzo en España, Portugal y America*, 15 vols., El Monte Carmelo, Burgos 1935-, 8, pp. 518-60; ELECTA ARENAL - STACEY SCHLAU, *Untold Sisters: Hispanic Nuns in Their Own Works*, with translations by AMANDA POWELL, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque 1989, pp. 21-27 and 30-36; WINIFRED NEVIN, *Heirs of St. Teresa of Ávila*, Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee 1959, pp. 105-47; and ALISON WEBER, «*The Partial Feminism of Ana de San Bartolomé*», in *Recovering Spain's Feminist Tradition*, ed. LISA VOLLENDORF, The Modern Language Association of America, New York 2001, pp. 69-87.

⁴ The Spanish original of *Autobiography A* is reproduced in *OCASB*, 1, pp. 282-377, prefaced by URKIZA's commentary on its date of composition and publication history (278-81). The autograph manuscript is in the archives of the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Antwerp. Despite its circulation in published editions in five other languages, the first Spanish edition did not appear until 1969. An English edition, translated from the French of MARCEL BOUIX, S.J., is *Autobiography of the Blessed Mother Anne of Saint Bartholomew*, translated by a religious of the Carmel of St. Louis, St. Louis 1916. Unfortunately, Bouix's French edition (1869), upon which this translation is based, is incomplete, omitting Ana's descriptions of her difficulties with Pierre de Bérulle. Some of these contentious episodes can be found in the translations included in ARENAL - SCHLAU, pp. 55-65.

her voluminous correspondence. As a child, Ana had acquired only a rudimentary ability to read in the vernacular. One of the miracles cited during Teresa's beatification and canonization proceedings was that she miraculously gave Ana the ability to write in a single afternoon by presenting her with two lines of her own handwriting from which to learn.⁵ During the last five years of Teresa's life (1577-82), Ana was her inseparable companion, traveling with her and assisting in her last four convent foundations. Teresa died in Ana's arms in 1582, at the Discalced Carmelite convent in Alba de Tormes. This event, which forever gave Ana a place of preeminence in Carmelite history, is depicted in one of the miniatures in the Madrid manuscript.

After Teresa's death Ana was acknowledged as one of the Founding Mother's true heirs, a living relic of the saint. In 1604 she was chosen to extend the Carmelite reform into France, where she took the black veil as a choir nun. She assisted in the foundation of French Discalced Carmelite convents and served as prioress at Pontoise, Paris, and Tours. Her rise to the position of founder and prioress was remarkable for a woman of the peasant class who had been a lay sister in Spain. She founded a convent at Antwerp in 1612, where she remained until her death in 1626. There she served as confidante to the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia (1566-1633), to whom Philip II had ceded government of the Spanish Netherlands. Isabella and her husband Archduke Albert (1559-1621) laid the first stone for the Discalced Carmelite nuns' church at Antwerp. The Infanta was said to have remarked that she feared nothing for the city of Antwerp, since Ana, its saintly protector, would defend the city from attack – a heroic feat that was twice attributed to her (1622 and 1624), as will be shown.⁶

By the last years of her life Ana had attained the status of local celebrity. Large numbers of sick came to the Antwerp convent, seeking water that she had blessed. Miracles began to be attributed to her soon after her death, including Queen Marie de' Medici's testimony that Ana's mantle cured her of a severe fever in 1633. Ana's first biogra-

⁵ See Ana de San Bartolomé's 1595 deposition in *Procesos de beatificación y canonización de Santa Teresa de Jesús*, ed. P. SILVERIO DE SANTA TERESA, O.C.D., Monte Carmelo, Burgos 1934), 1 p. 173.

⁶ Isabella Clara Eugenia's remark, recorded in a written declaration by Clara de la Cruz, is paraphrased in *OCASB*, 1, p. 61*. CONCHA TORRES SÁNCHEZ, in *La clausura imposible: conventualismo femenino y expansión contrarreformista*, Al-Mudayna, Madrid 2000, argues that the Spanish monarchy used the Discalced Carmelites' expansion into France and Flanders to cultivate loyalty among the aristocracy in those regions.

pher, Crisóstomo Enríquez, writing in 1632, six years after her death, says that by that time the bishops had approved over 150 miracles.⁷ In 1735 Pope Clement XII declared the heroicity of her virtues. She was beatified by Benedict XV in 1917.

The volume in Madrid, illuminated with scenes of Ana's life, is regarded as a precious relic by the nuns who keep it, since it contains a treatise written in her hand. This meditation on the silence, love, and other virtues modeled by Christ, the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist, and contemporary saints (especially Teresa), has been dated by Urkiza to 1618-1622, when she was living in Antwerp.⁸ Inserted before the treatise are pages bearing a statement in Spanish by Juan de la Madre de Dios, the Discalced Carmelite Provincial of Flanders and confessor to Ana, signed in Antwerp in 1648, attesting to the authenticity of Ana's handwritten manuscript; and a second testament to the same effect, in French, signed by six of the Discalced Carmelite nuns who lived with Ana at the Antwerp convent.⁹ These contents suggest that the volume was compiled in Antwerp in the late 1640s, around twenty years after Ana's death. It was sent at an unknown date to Spain.

⁷ *Historia del Carmen Descalzo*, 8, p. 559. Maria de' Medici's declaration is included in English translation in *Autobiography of the Blessed Mother Anne of Saint Bartholomew*, pp. 125-27.

⁸ Using a slightly later autograph copy, Urkiza reproduces Ana's treatise, which he entitles *Meditaciones sobre el camino de Cristo* («Meditations on the Way of Christ»), with a brief introduction, in *OCASB*, 1, pp. 659-683. The Madrid autograph is a copy of an earlier manuscript, now lost, which Ana probably wrote during her years in France, ca. 1606-1611. Urkiza's dating of the Madrid autograph to 1618-1622 is based on analysis of the handwriting.

Urkiza provides a description of the Madrid volume and its contents in *OCASB*, 1, pp. 104*-5*. It consists of 111 folios. The volume's red-velvet binding with silver clasps measures 176 x 118 mm; the folios are 166 x 112 mm. Attached to the center of the front cover is a silver oval-shaped medallion, incised with a portrayal of Christ on the Cross, flanked by the Virgin and St. John the Evangelist. On the center of the back cover is a medallion showing a lamb with the cross.

On a page preceding Ana's autograph manuscript is a painted representation of Teresa giving her the ability to write. It is a full-page miniature, of a different format than the oval-shaped series of twelve discussed in the present study. The composition shows Teresa seated, with Ana standing in front of the saint's desk, holding a quill pen. Attached to the verso of this page is an engraving of Teresa's Transverberation, signed by C. de Mallery.

⁹ The signatures are «Marie du St. Esprit, María de Jesús, Clara de la Cruz, Beatriz de S. Joseph, Catherine de la Me. de dieu, Marie Terese de Jesus». Two other written statements, one in Spanish signed by Tomás de Jesús, and one in Italian, signed by a «Fra Giovanni...», have been bound within the volume after the series of painted miniatures. *OCASB*, 1, p. 104*.

The twelve painted miniatures are positioned after Ana's autograph text in the volume. Each composition is oval-shaped, surrounded by a border of flowers and ribbons. On the page opposite each is a four-line poem. The last poem (Fig. 2) bears a signature: «G.H. Wilmart scripsit». Georges Herman Wilmart was an illuminator of manuscripts and a calligrapher who worked in Brussels from 1623-1687.¹⁰ Since the signature only affirms that he transcribed the text, it is uncertain whether he painted the miniatures as well.

The arrangement of the miniatures is as follows:

- 1) Ana, wearing the black veil, holds a crucifix.
- 2) The Virgin and Christ Child appear to the young, sleeping Ana.
- 3) Ana, as a young shepherdess, is accompanied by the Christ Child in the fields.
- 4) Ana, as the mirror of Teresa, receives the saint's blessing.
- 5) Christ appears to Ana as she kneels before an altar.
- 6) Teresa dies in Ana's arms.
- 7) Christ reveals France to Ana.
- 8) She defends Antwerp through prayer.
- 9) Her vision of Christ removing her heart.
- 10) She falls in ecstasy, supported by an angel, as Teresa appears on a cloud above.
- 11) Her vision of the Antwerp convent as a bright light.
- 12) Teresa (like another Elijah) blesses Ana (like another Elisha).

The arrangement of the miniatures into a biographical series has parallels in seventeenth-century print cycles of saint's lives, such as the influential set of twenty-five engravings by Adriaen Collaert and Cornelis Galle, issued in Antwerp in 1613 under the title *Vita B. Virginis Teresiae a Iesu ordinis carmelitarum exaltaetorum piae restauratricis* («Life of the Blessed Virgin Teresa of Jesus, Pious Reformer of the

¹⁰ Only brief mentions of Wilmart are available in art historical literature. See JOHN W. BRADLEY, *A Dictionary of Miniaturists, Illuminators, Calligraphers, and Copyists, from the Establishment of Christianity to the Eighteenth Century*, 3 vols., Burt Franklin, New York n.d., 3, p. 418; and *Bulletin de la Société Française de Reproductions de Manuscrits et Peintures* 3 (1913), p. 75. One of his manuscripts, a Book of Hours with miniatures (MS lat. 10569), is in Paris' Bibliothèque Nationale, though I have not viewed it. It is cited in LÉOPOLD VICTOR DELISLE, *Inventaire des manuscrits latins conservés à la Bibliothèque nationale sous les numéros 8,823-18,613*, Georg Olms, Hildesheim - New York, 1974, p. 80.

Discalced Carmelites»¹¹). Like the Teresian prints, the portrayals of Ana emphasize her mystical experiences in accordance with the Counter-Reformation taste for artistic representations of visions and ecstasies. Indeed, the paintings may have been partially intended as preparatory studies for an eventual print series. The anticipated audience for the painted miniatures must have been members of the Order and those closely associated with it: benefactors, families of nuns who had entered the convent, lay people who came there seeking spiritual advice, and local devotees of Ana, all of whom might promote Church recognition of her sanctity.

The images and poems draw upon Ana's writings, especially her autobiography. I aim to show that, in addition to illustrating celebrated moments of her life, they highlight two aspects of her identity: she is presented as the legitimate successor to Teresa's authority, and also as a virile woman, who, by exceeding the perceived limitations of femininity, heroically bolstered the Counter-Reformation Church. The paintings' iconography reflects not only Ana's presentation of herself in her writings, but also the Order's attempt to shape and transmit a portrait of sanctity after the death of one of its most charismatic luminaries.

Ana as Teresa's Successor

The poem accompanying the fourth miniature (Fig. 1) reads:

*In the mirror of Teresa
She saw herself, and took counsel,
She was Teresa's image, and not a mere sketch,
Since her virtue revealed it.*¹²

Teresa places her hand upon the head of the kneeling Ana, as if blessing her protégé. Behind them is a mound (a reference to Mount Carmel) from which grows a flowering tree with a clear circle in its center, probably an allusion to the image of the mirror in the poem. The painting and poem set up the idea that, because Ana was directly trained by Teresa and enjoyed unparalleled intimacy with her, she is her spiritual heir, a daughter molded in the Mother's image.

¹¹ Information about the Collaert and Galle series is contained in CECILE EMOND, *L'Iconographie Carmélitaine dans les anciens Pays-Bays méridionaux*, Palais des Académies, Brussels, 1961, p. 155.

¹² *Al espejo de Teresa / Se miro, y tomo consejo, / Su Imagen fue y no Bosquejo / Pues su virtud lo confiessa.*

The notion of Ana as a mirror image of Teresa was supported by the written testimony of Teresa's niece (also called Teresa de Jesús, nicknamed «Teresita»), who was present when the saint died at Alba, cradled in Ana's arms. She wrote that during those final moments, Ana's face shown with such heavenly luster that the other Sisters were drawn away from the dying Teresa to gaze at her face, marveling that her form should reflect the splendor of the saint's entry into heaven. Ana later revealed that, at that moment, she had a vision of the Holy Trinity and heavenly court awaiting Teresa's soul. Her physical radiance, therefore, externalized and communicated Teresa's glory to the other nuns in the room.¹³

Several passages in Ana's autobiography highlight the idea that, after Teresa's death, her own life was an extension of the Founding Mother's. While propagating the Carmelite reform in France, she often faced opposition from ecclesiastical superiors there who sought to limit her authority. In Paris, on the anniversary of Teresa's death in 1611, she had a vision of the saint accompanied by some Carmelite nuns: «Upon seeing her, I found myself thinking that she had come for me, to take me out of all these dangers. But though I said to her with great joy: "Mother, take me with you", she said nothing, and my Sisters surrounded her and begged her to bring me, because I was suffering so. And she answered them sternly: "I shall not bring her because for now she must live and do what I would have done"». ¹⁴ Through Ana, therefore, Teresa continues her work within the Order.

The passing of Teresa's authority to Ana is made explicit in the last poem and miniature (Fig. 2) in the series:

*The Reformer, another Elijah,
In showing her wish
To her daughter, as to Elisha,
Improves her in spirit.*¹⁵

The prophets Elijah and Elisha figure prominently in Carmelite art and literature, since during the early modern period they were regarded as the Order's founders. Teresa and her nuns, by adhering to what they understood as the primitive Carmelite rule, sought to imi-

¹³ «Relación de Teresa de Jesús sobre Ana de San Bartolomé», in *OCASB*, 1, pp. 757-80, at 766.

¹⁴ *Autobiography A*, in *OCASB*, 1, pp. 361-62; translation in *ARENAL - SCHLAU*, p. 65.

¹⁵ *La Elias reformadora / En muestras de su desseo / A su hija como a Elisseo / De Espiritu la mejora.*

tate the contemplative, eremitic way of life of Mount Carmel's early inhabitants.¹⁶ The poem refers to a scriptural episode from the *Book of Kings*, in which Elisha succeeds Elijah: «When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask for whatever I may do for you, before I am taken from you». Elisha answered, “May I receive a double portion of your spirit”. Elijah is then taken up to heaven in the flaming chariot. The prophets in Jericho who later see Elisha say “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha”» (2 *Kings* 2: 9-10, 15).

Similarly, the Madrid manuscript implies, the spirit of the deceased Teresa rested on Ana during her lifetime. Believing herself to be the transmitter of Teresa's will - a role confirmed by mystical experiences, such as the vision mentioned above - Ana asserted enormous authority. She developed an adversarial relationship with her immediate superior and confessor in France, Pierre de Bérulle (1575-1629), a future cardinal and one of the most prominent leaders of the French Catholic restoration.¹⁷ After playing an instrumental role in importing the Teresian Carmel from Spain, he disputed and wanted to change points in the Rule of the Order and Constitutions. Ana describes the resulting fray: «I contradicted him, and he said he knew these things quite as well as I. I told him that was not so; that he must be great in book-learning, but that he had no experience, as I did, of matters concerning the Order».¹⁸ Ana's privileged relationship with the Founding Mother, then, occasionally allowed her to challenge figures of authority. There were other nuns close to Teresa who assumed leadership roles within the Order, especially Ana de Jesús and María de San José. But Ana de San Bartolomé found herself in disputes with both of these women, setting herself apart as the Elisha to Teresa's Elijah.¹⁹

¹⁶ For Elijah and Elisha in Carmelite tradition, see ROBERTO FORNARA, O.C.D., «*Elijah, Elisha and Mount Carmel*», and SILVANO GIORDANO, O.C.D., «*The Elijan Tradition*», in *Carmel in the Holy Land, from Its Beginnings to the Present Day*, ed. SILVANO GIORDANO, O.C.D., Il Messagero di Gesù Bambino, Arenzano 1995, pp. 19-25 and 33-40.

¹⁷ See STÉPHANE-MARIE MORGAIN, *Pierre de Bérulle et les Carmélites de France*, Les Editions du Cerf, Paris 1995.

¹⁸ *Autobiography A*, in *OCASB*, 1, pp. 348-49; translation in ARENAL - SCHLAU, 64.

¹⁹ Ana de San Bartolomé's troubled relationship with these two Sisters arose from a 1590 conflict known as «the nuns' revolt». Nicolás Doria, elected provincial of the Discalced in 1585, proposed changes in monastic governance and sought to alter the original Teresian constitutions. Ana de Jesús and María de San José, leaders of the «rebel nuns», resisted such modifications and petitioned Pope Sixtus V to forbid changes (without papal approval) to the «primitive» constitutions drafted by Teresa. He complied with their request, issuing the 1590 brief *Salvatoris*. But in the following year Sixtus' successor, Gregory XIV, rescinded the brief and approved most of Doria's revisions. Ana de San Bartolomé sided with Doria in this crisis, convinced that Teresa would have

Ana as Virile Woman

In her autobiography, Ana presents herself as God's friend and confidante from childhood, who carries out His will on earth in spite of obstacles that are placed before her. God allows her to defy assumptions of women's physical and intellectual inferiority, making her a virile woman, so virile, on occasion, that she puts men to shame.

When she decides, she wants to be a Carmelite nun, her brothers threaten her and subject her to trials. God, in response, endows her with miraculous strength. This narrative becomes a retelling of the labors of Hercules. Ana is given chores of mythical proportions, which she accomplishes in heroic fashion:

«My brothers did not spare me; they gave me two carts to draw alone... the harvesters made sheaves for me twice as large as those for the men, thinking that I could not lift them. I took them up, however, with great ease, and threw them without any effort into the carts. Seeing this, the men who were reaping stopped to gaze at me; they seemed seized with fear, and asked one another if this strength came from God or from the evil spirit».²⁰

The idea of a manly woman – a familiar conceit in the early modern period, often used to explain extraordinary virtue in a female – also surrounded Teresa.²¹ In the Bull of Canonization, Gregory XV extolled Teresa as a «second Deborah», a woman who, «having con-

advocated major points of the Dorian reform. Her dealings with Ana de Jesús, one of the six nuns who carried the Discalced Carmelite order to France in 1604, were further strained in 1605 when the latter, then prioress at Paris, rejected an English postulant who had converted from Protestantism. In defiant response, Ana de San Bartolomé accepted the English novice at her convent in Pontoise. See WEBER, «*The Partial Feminism of Ana de San Bartolomé*», 77-78, and the same author's «*Introduction to María de San José Salazar (1548-1603)*», in MARÍA DE SAN JOSÉ SALAZAR, *Book for the Hour of Recreation*, with translations by AMANDA POWELL, University of Chicago Press, Chicago-London 2002, pp. 1-26, especially 8; see also ARENAL - SCHLAU, pp. 24-25.

²⁰ *Autobiography A*, in OCASB, 1, p. 288; translation in *Autobiography of the Blessed Mother Anne of Saint Bartholomew*, p. 13.

²¹ The classic statement of this topos is St. Jerome: «As long as a woman is for birth and children, she is different from man as body is from soul. But when she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, then she will cease to be a woman, and will be called man»: JEROME, *Commentarius in Epistolam ad Ephesios* III.5, quoted in translation in BARBARA NEWMAN, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 1995, 4. MARY ELIZABETH PERRY deals with the theme of the manly woman in her investigation of Catalina de Erauso, a seventeenth-century nun who dressed as a man, in *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1990, pp. 127-36.

quered and triumphed over her flesh with perpetual virginity, and over the world with admirable humility, and over all machinations of temptations of the devil with great and abundant virtues...exceeded and surpassed feminine nature with admirable courage and strength of will». ²² Similarly, the Jesuit priest Francisco de Ribera, in the first published biography of Teresa, printed in 1590, maintained that women like her, who «with fortitude overcome their passions and submit to God must be called men». ²³ Teresa herself urged her nuns to be manly: «I would not want you, my daughters, to be womanish in anything, nor would I want you to be like women but like strong men. For if you do what lies in your power, the Lord will make you so strong that you will astonish men». ²⁴

As Teresa's successor, Ana too is a virile woman. In the Madrid manuscript, she is compared through text and image to valiant Biblical men: the prophet Elisha, as we've just seen, as well as Christ, St. Peter, and Moses. ²⁵ In the seventh miniature (Fig. 3), she is cast as another St. John the Evangelist. The poem reads:

*John, like a Divine Eagle,
Saw the City of grace,
And Ana merited the grace
To see the Kingdoms that she supported.* ²⁶

²² Quoted in translation in GILLIAN T.W. AHLGREN, *Teresa of Ávila and the Politics of Sanctity*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca-London 1996, p. 164. The complete text of Gregory XV's Bull for Teresa's canonization, in English translation, is in *Minor Works of St. Teresa*, translated by a Benedictine of Stanbrook, Thomas Baker, London 1939, pp. 204-19.

²³ FRANCISCO DE RIBERA, S.J., *La vida de la Madre Teresa de Jesús, fundadora de las Descalzas y*, Salamanca 1590), quoted in translation in AHLGREN, p. 158.

²⁴ ST. TERESA OF ÁVILA, *The Way of Perfection*, in *The Collected Works of Saint Teresa of Ávila*, trans. KIERAN KAVANAUGH, O.C.D., and OTILIO RODRÍGUEZ, O.C.D., 3 vols., Institute of Carmelite Studies, Washington, D.C. 1976-85, 2, p. 70.

²⁵ The poem accompanying the first miniature, showing Ana holding a Crucifix, associates her with Christ:

Con sumo Amor y Obedencia / Jesús abrazó la Cruz, / Y alumbrada de esta luz / Toma su Cruz con paciencia («With highest Love and Obedience / Jesus embraced the Cross, / And illuminated by this light / She takes up her cross with patience»).

In the second miniature, showing Ana as a young shepherdess accompanied by the Christ Child, she is compared to St. Peter: *Al pastor bueno y Divino / Esta oveja lo apeteze, / Y como a Pedro le ofrezte / Las sendas de su camin.* («For the good and Divine Shepherd / This sheep longed, / And as He did for Peter, / He offers her His way»).

²⁶ *Iuan como Aguila divina / La Ciudad de gracia vio, / Y Ana gracia merecio / Berlos Reynos que apadrino.*

Just as John saw the New Jerusalem (*Revelation* 21:9-27), Ana, as a young nun, received a vision of France, where she would eventually take the Carmelite reform. While at prayer one day at the Convent of St. Joseph's in Ávila, she saw Christ: «This Adorable Master communicated to my heart the pain that overwhelmed Him, and He said to me: “Behold the souls who are being lost in spite of My love. [Help] me to save them». And at that time He showed me France, as if I were there, and the thousands of souls who are being lost because of heresies... This vision and favor filled me with so great a love for God and for souls I could scarcely live, so great was my thirst for their salvation».²⁷

Ana, like Teresa, was determined to make herself useful to the Church in its time of crisis. The Founding Mother's work of reforming the Carmelite Order was fueled by her overriding desire to rescue the souls of two groups, who, in her view, were headed toward eternal damnation: the Protestants in Europe and the unconverted Indians in the New World. Through unceasing prayer and rigorous observance of the primitive Carmelite rule, Teresa insisted, her nuns could assist the Church's efforts and thereby counteract further loss of souls.²⁸ Since the small community of women would remain occupied in prayer for priests and defenders of the faith – those on the front lines of the Church's militant offensive – they would be working for God, though remaining strictly cloistered. Ana says that Teresa's intention was that «all those who would join her monasteries should be always engaged in prayer and holy exercises of mortification and penance, in order to aid Jesus Christ and His Catholics in the conversion of the kingdom of France. This country was so continually present to her thoughts, and she wished earnestly for its salvation, that she did not cease to cry to God in order to obtain it».²⁹ By carrying the Carmelite reform to France, Ana perpetuated the Founding Mother's missionary inclination. An episode recounted in her auto-

²⁷ *Autobiography A*, in *OCASB*, 1 pp. 292-93; translation in *Autobiography of the Blessed Mother Anne of Saint Bartholomew*, p. 23.

²⁸ *Way of Perfection* and *The Book of Her Foundations*, in *The Collected Works of Saint Teresa of Ávila*, 2, pp. 41-43, and 3, pp. 101-102. See also JODI BILINKOFF, «*Woman with a Mission: Teresa of Ávila and the Apostolic Mode*», in *Modelli di santità e modelli di comportamento*, ed. GIULIA BARONE *et al.*, Rosenberg, Torino 1994, pp. 295-305; and CHRISTOPHER C. WILSON, «*Teresa as Missionary*», in *Missionary, Martyr, Mother: St. Teresa of Ávila in Mexican Colonial Art*, Ph.D. diss., The George Washington University, Washington, D.C. 1998, pp. 117-35.

²⁹ «*Origenes del Carmelo Teresiano en Francia*», in *OCASB*, 1, p. 172, quoted in translation in *Autobiography of the Blessed Mother Anne of Saint Bartholomew*, p. 48.

biography illustrates her own drive to save souls. A Spanish priest warned Ana that it was «neither necessary nor expedient» that nuns go to France in the midst of heretics, «that it was not for them to preach to them». Christ subsequently appeared to her and said: «Pay no attention to what they have said to you: just as flies seek a drop of honey, so you will attract souls».³⁰

The artist has placed Ana kneeling beside Christ in a landscape overlooking a vista with small buildings, including a Church, presumably one of the Carmelite convents she would help found in France. The angels with luminous shields refer to a set of unusually large and bright stars, which Ana saw burning in the sky, night and day, prior to her departure from Spain, each representing one of the nuns who would journey with her. In the poem, Ana is compared to John the Evangelist. The composition of the miniature has parallels in the iconography of John's vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem, such as a late sixteenth-century painting by Marten de Vos (1532-1603), who worked in the city of Antwerp (Fig. 4). An angel with outstretched arm stands beside the Evangelist on a little hill, with the heavenly city in the background, a similar arrangement to that of the miniature.

The eighth miniature in the series (Fig. 5) refers to two episodes when Ana was credited with rescuing Antwerp from invasion by Protestant troops. The poem reads:

*God, liking her prayer,
Through which He has her accomplish more,
Wanting to free Antwerp
In an imperiled state.*³¹

In 1622, Maurice of Nassau, Prince of Orange, led an army with the intention of taking the city. But suddenly a great storm arose, sinking his ships and thwarting the attack. Ana, at the same time, was participating in this drama from the confines of her convent cell:

«That night, without knowing of the treachery of our enemies, I was struck at about midnight with a great fear and I began to pray, my arms extended towards heaven, and with great fervor. My arms became tired from being uplifted, and I let them fall; it seemed to me that someone

³⁰ OCASB, *Autobiography A*, 1, p. 334; translation in *Autobiography of Blessed Mother Anne of Saint Bartholomew*, p. 46.

³¹ *Gusta Dios de Su Oracion / Con [que?] le [haze?] mas logar /Queriendo a Amberes librar / En apretada ocasion.*

raised them again and an unknown voice said: "It is not yet time to stop, keep them raised". And I remained that way until daybreak. I felt then that what I asked had been granted. And, indeed, it was so». ³²

Ana tells of a second attempt on the city, in 1624, which she again repelled through prayer. As on the first occasion, she awoke in the middle of the night and felt compelled to keep her hands raised toward heaven. ³³

She is shown kneeling in her cell, arms raised in prayer, with a crucifix, a book, and an instrument of penance on the table in front of her. Inscribed on rays of divine light, pouring into her cell from heaven, are the words «Ruega mas mas» («Pray more, more»). Through a window is seen the city of Antwerp, in the midst of the storm that destroyed the enemy's ships.

Ana's narrative about this event, and the painted image, present her as a counterpart to Moses. According to the *Book of Exodus*, after the Israelites were delivered from slavery and bondage in Egypt, they journeyed through the desert toward the Promised Land. On the way they were attacked by Amalek and his tribe. While Israel's army battled the enemy, Moses stood at the top of a hill with the staff of God in his hand. As long as he kept his hands raised up, Israel had the better of the fight, but when he let his hands rest, Amalek's troops rallied. With his companions' help, Moses kept his hands raised, and thus the Israelites were victorious (*Exodus*, 17:9-13). Similarly, Ana's prayer and raised hands delivered Antwerp from Protestant siege. She cites this biblical passage elsewhere in her writings, proving her familiarity with the image of the praying Moses, reaching toward heaven, as militant defender of God's chosen people. ³⁴

³² *Relaciones de Gracias Místicas*, in *OCASB*, 1, p. 511; my translation.

³³ «A few days ago I awoke at two o'clock in the morning, with a powerful impetus that told me to pray... I began then to pray, my hands raised, experiencing a strong urge to plead for mercy. For two entire hours, from two o'clock to four... I remained with hands raised to heaven. All the following day I was like one dead, my body bruised, as if I had been beaten with a cudgel. I did not know then what had happened; but later they told me of the treachery attempted by the heretics and that it had failed», *Relaciones de Gracias Místicas*, in *OCASB*, 1, p. 512.

³⁴ She makes this biblical reference in *Orígenes del Carmelo Teresiano en Francia*, in *OCASB*, 1, p. 172.

The Limits of Female Heroism

It should be pointed out that the creator of these miniatures tempered the characterization of Ana as a virile woman with images that place her in more feminine, passive roles. One shows her seated and holding a distaff (Fig. 6), calling to mind the Counter-Reformation recommendation, espoused by some, that «women should stick to their distaff and rosary, and not worry about other forms of devotion».³⁵ Her traditional nun's work of spinning has been interrupted by a mystical experience, when she felt Christ remove her heart.³⁶ While other miniatures praise her as a new Elisha, Moses, or John, this one summons up associations with a female saint, Catherine of Siena, who underwent a mystical exchange of hearts with Christ. For contemporary readers, such an inclusion might have functioned as a safeguard, since, as feminist scholars have shown, the manly woman topos could backfire, arousing anxiety about subversion of the hierarchical establishment of the sexes. Women who were praised as exceptions to their sex and elevated as honorary men could be undermined by the same gender reassignment that had legitimized them.³⁷ In Teresa's case, her «manly virtue» went hand in hand with her written proclamations of what were perceived as exaggeratedly feminine qualities, such as extraordinary humility, self-depreciation, and theological incompetence. As Alison Weber has demonstrated, these rhetorical strategies helped make her model of sanctity acceptable to male audiences.³⁸ Similarly, the creator of the Madrid manuscript portrays

³⁵ «These are times when there are those who preach that women should stick to their distaff and rosary, and not worry about other forms of devotion». This passage from a 1559 letter written by a Jesuit is quoted in translation in ALISON WEBER, *Teresa of Ávila and the Rhetoric of Femininity*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1990, p. 32; the source for the letter is *Monumenta historica Societatis Iesu* 8, Madrid, 1896, cited in FRANCISCO TRINIDAD, «Lectura "heterodoxa" de Santa Teresa», *Cuadernos del norte* 2 (1982), pp. 2-8, at 4.

³⁶ The accompanying poem implicitly associates Ana's mystical experience with Teresa's vision of the piercing of her heart (the Transverberation), an episode commonly presented in early modern literature and art as a wounding of love: *Su Corazon con la Erida / Que Jesus leda de amor, / No siente ningun dolor, / Que es erida queda vida*. («Her heart with the wound of love / That Jesus gives her, / Doesn't feel any pain, / Because it is a wound that gives life»). The vision is recounted in *Autobiography A*, in *OCASB*, 1, p. 296. On the theme of the removal or mystical exchange of hearts in the early modern period, see WENDY M. WRIGHT, *Sacred Heart: Gateway to God*, Orbis, Maryknoll, NY 2001, pp. 76-77.

³⁷ MARY D. GARRARD, *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Art*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1989, p. 149.

³⁸ Teresa's strategic use of language, intended to disarm Counter-Reformation rea-

Ana attaining manly virtue without having abandoned the assigned realm of femininity.

In his sociological study of sainthood, Pierre Delooz has pointed out that a posthumous reputation for sanctity rests on the opinions and value judgments made by others. Saints, then, are saints for other people, «remodeled in the collective representation which is made of them».³⁹ It could be said that Ana's devotees fashioned an image of her sanctity that selectively emphasized what was important for them in the decades following her death: foremost, her status as Teresa's direct spiritual heir; and, second her (and by extension, her Order's) role as heroic defender of a Church in crisis. I have suggested that the miniatures were intended to solidify and promote Ana's reputation for sanctity, an early step in the effort to achieve her eventual canonization. In this regard they were only partially successful. Ana still has not been made a saint (Teresa and Mary Magdalen de' Pazzi were the only Carmelite nuns canonized during the early modern period), and her beatification did not take place until over 250 years after the miniatures' completion. The many factors contributing to success, failure, or delay in canonization lie outside the scope of this paper.⁴⁰ What is certain is that, by the twentieth century, Ana's fame had been eclipsed by that of more recent Discalced Carmelite nuns: St. Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897), St. Edith Stein (1891-1942), and Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity (1880-1906). Jean Dagens, the biographer of Pierre de Bérulle, wrote in 1952 that Ana deserves to be rescued from her relative obscurity, since her participation and influence in the history of the Teresian Carmel «and in the Catholic restoration in France, merits a place that historians have not yet given her».⁴¹ Con-

ders who insisted that women shouldn't write or teach, is the subject of Alison Weber's pioneering study *Teresa of Ávila and the Rhetoric of Femininity*. Weber sums up this theme in her conclusion (159): «Teresa's rhetoric of feminine subordination – all the paradoxes, the self-depreciation, the feigned ignorance and incompetence, the deliberate obfuscation and ironic humor – produced the desired perlocutionary effect». See also AHLGREN, pp. 164-65.

³⁹ PIERRE DELOOZ, «*Toward a Sociological Study of Canonized Sainthood in the Catholic Church*», in *Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, ed. STEPHEN WILSON, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1983, pp. 189-216, at 195.

⁴⁰ On factors affecting the success of canonization proceedings in early modern Europe, see PETER BURKE, «*How To Be a Counter-Reformation Saint*», in *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800*, ed. KASPAR VON GREYERZ, Allen & Unwin, London n.d., pp. 45-55.

⁴¹ JEAN DAGENS, *Bérulle et les origens de la restauration catholique (1575-1611)*, Bruges 1952, pp. 213-25, quoted in *OCASB*, 1, p. 60*.

sideration of the miniatures in Madrid should contribute to the current effort, spearheaded by literary scholars, of placing Ana within the context of women's and religious history. With carefully woven iconographic strands they present a vivid, though carefully measured, portrait of one of the most prolific and celebrated nuns of the Counter Reformation.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

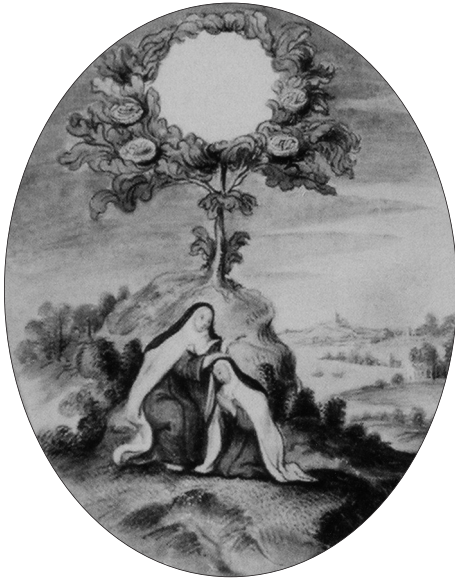


Fig. 1: *Ana de San Bartolomé*, as the mirror image of *St. Teresa of Ávila*, receives the saint's blessing. Mid-17th c. Madrid, *Madres Carmelitas Descalzas de Santa Teresa*.



Fig. 2: *Teresa* (like another *Eflijah*) blesses *Ana de San Bartolomé* (like another *Elisha*). Mid-17th c. Madrid, *Madres Carmelitas Descalzas*.



Fig. 3: *Christ Reveals France to Ana de San Bartolomé.*
Mid-17th c. Madrid, Madres Carmelitas Descalzas.



Fig. 4: Marten de Vos, *St. John the Evangelist's Vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem.*
Late 16th c. Tepotzotlán, Mexico, Museo Nacional del Virreinato.



Fig. 5: *Ana de San Bartolomé defends Antwerp through prayer.*
Mid-17th c. Madrid, Madres Carmelitas Descalzas.



Fig. 6: *Ana de San Bartolomé's vision of Christ removing her heart.*
Mid-17th c. Madrid, Madres Carmelitas Descalzas.