

THE FABRIC OF WORSHIP:
LITURGY AND ITS ARTEFACTS
IN THE MEDIEVAL ENGLISH PROVINCE OF CARMELITES

INTRODUCTION

The shape of Carmelite liturgical and devotional practices in the Middle Ages was determined by a number of influences. The forms of liturgical prayer on Mount Carmel were the Mass and the recitation of the psalter, although it is possible that only the Mass was celebrated in common, the recitation of the psalms being an individual activity.¹ There was an alternative to the psalter for those who could not read.² It has recently been confirmed that the Carmelite rite of Mass and Divine Office owed much to the Rite of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.³ This rite in itself was not entirely native to the Holy Land but had been brought over from France by the Latin Crusaders of the twelfth century. The influence of the French liturgy can be seen in the calendar of Saints which exhibits several unique features, such as the feast of S. Louis of France. The Jerusalem rite also acquired certain

¹ See C. CICONETTI, *La Regola del Carmelo*, Rome 1973, pp. 246-268, who points out that it is only the Innocentian approval in 1247 of the original *formula* of Albert of Jerusalem († 1214) that imposed the obligation of celebrating the Divine Office; before this date it seems that the hermits had recited the psalms as part of their daily individual prayer.

² See the *Rule of St. Albert* (ed. H. CLARKE - B. EDWARDS, Aylesford, 1975, Chap. 9: «Those who know how to say the canonical hours with those in orders should do so, in the way those holy forefathers of ours laid down, and according to the Church's approved custom. Those who do not know the hours must say twenty-five "Our Father" for the night office, except on Sundays and solemnities when that number is to be doubled so that the "Our Father" is said fifty times; the same prayer must be said seven times in the morning in place of Lauds, and seven times too for each of the other hours, except for Vespers when it must be said fifteen times», and Chap. 11: «An oratory should be built as conveniently as possible among the cells, where, if it can be done without difficulty, you are to gather each morning to hear Mass».

³ J. BOYCE, *The Search for the Early Carmelite Liturgy: A Templar Manuscript Re-assessed*, in *Praising God in Carmel Studies in the Carmelite Liturgy*, Washington 1999, pp. 299-327.

elements from the Holy Land, most notably for the Carmelite rite, an importance placed on various processions and an emphasis on the Resurrection of the Lord, as well as a number of Old Testament figures who could conveniently be worked into the historiography of Carmelite origins.⁴ The Carmelites brought this somewhat hybrid liturgy to Europe when they began to move to the west from around 1238-39.⁵

Once established in Europe and with papal approval and permission to make foundations in cities and towns,⁶ the Carmelite friars ensured that their special liturgical origins were not lost by adopting as the official liturgical *ordo* a compilation made by the German Carmelite Sibert de Beka (1260/70–1332).⁷ His standardised collection of Carmelite feasts and observances was approved by the General Chapter celebrated in London in 1312.⁸ Thereafter, the decrees of General Chapters regularly urged provincial superiors to enforce Sibert's provisions, on pain of losing office.

There was, however, a recognition on the part of the order that a certain local flexibility and adaptation would be required. The 1324 General Chapter issued the following decree:

Et de festis Sanctorum quorum corpora in conventibus nostri Ordinis requiescunt, similiter.... et de Sanctis quorum in villa ubi fratres sunt vel morantur solemne festum celebratur et de illis de quibus infra proprium conventum altare habeamus... facere valeant festum 9 lectionum vel magis.⁹

This might be regarded as a formal permission to venerate regionally significant saints and the local provisions, which affected

⁴ See E. CARUANA, *Santorale*, II. *L'Ordine Carmelitano*, in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, Rome 1973, vol. VIII, cols 927-928.

⁵ J. BOYCE, *The Liturgy of the Carmelites*, in *Praising God in Carmel*, pp. 1-45; E. BOAGA, *Pietre vive*, Rome, 1993, p. 78.

⁶ See BOAGA, *Pietre vive*, pp. 45-49.

⁷ See BOYCE, *The Liturgy of the Carmelites*, pp. 12-15.

⁸ The acts of the 1312 chapter are not extant: see P. KALLENBERG, *Fontes liturgiae carmelitanae: investigatio in decreta, codices et proprium sanctorum*, Rome 1962, p. 25, for a discussion of this.

⁹ KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, p. 27: «And regarding the feasts of the saints whose bodies repose in our houses and those saints whose feast is celebrated with solemnity in the towns where the brothers live and those [saints] whose [bones] are in the altar of the convent, then they are to be ranked as feasts of 9 lessons». The number of lessons or readings at matins was an indication of the importance of the feast. Ferial days had three readings, lesser feasts, six and more important ones nine.

England in particular, can be seen as implicitly sanctioned by the 1324 legislation.

Yet despite this general provision, those provinces, then, who wished to follow a different observance from that of the order as a whole, as expressed in Sibert's *Ordo*, still had to seek permission from the General Chapter and this was granted by means of a decree issued by the Prior General and the chapter's gremiales. The English province of Carmelites exhibits two apparently contradictory tendencies in this regard.

First, it seems to have been an English ordinal of the late 13th century that formed at least in part the basis of Sibert's compilation.¹⁰ The circumstances of the composition of the English *Ordo* remain largely unexplored, but it seems possible that with the migration of the friars from a rural environment (typified by the foundations of Aylesford, Hulne, Lossenham and Shoreham) to a more urban context (London, Oxford, Bristol, York and so on) there was a need to affirm the identity of the order. The common acceptance and following of a liturgical rite was one means of making such an affirmation. The position is concisely summarised by the Carmelite liturgist, James Boyce:

The unique shape of the Carmelite liturgy suggests that it was one among several thrusts to associate the religious practices of the Carmelites with their unique identity. ...their liturgy became a part of their life and helped define them as religious.¹¹

Yet on the other hand, there was much more variety in the medieval liturgy than in the modern post-conciliar period. Indeed the English Church enjoyed a certain liturgical pre-eminence even in Rome where the Bishop of Salisbury was the *ex officio* papal master of ceremonies by dint of the regard in which the Sarum rite was held.¹² It would seem that the English Carmelites adapted their liturgy to local circumstances, not so much in terms of ritual, but more to reflect in the provincial calendar of saints English devotions and observances. There is also some evidence that a certain specifically Carmelite

¹⁰ See P. RUSHE (ed.), *Antiquum Ordinis Carmelitarum ordinale saec. XIII*, Études Carmélitaines, Dublin 1912-13, and KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, p. 104 for bibliography and comment. Note that Boyce compares a Templar Breviary of the mid 13th century with Sibert's *Ordinal* and shows that the two are also very close in their prescriptions.

¹¹ BOYCE, *The Liturgy of the Carmelites*, p. 34.

¹² See P. BAXTER, *Sarum Use The development of a medieval code of liturgy and customs*, Salisbury 1994, p. 33.

element was introduced into the calendar. The sources for information about these local adaptations are usually the liturgical decrees of General Chapters and local liturgical books.¹³ However, in this admittedly short and rather summary account, it seems important also to take account of the evidence from Carmelite churches and chapels of the objects of devotion which were materially present therein. As indicated above, one approach has been to examine the written sources for Carmelite liturgy and piety: the work of Paschalis Kallenberg in the 1950s and 1960s remains of immense importance in this field, as does that of James Boyce who has confirmed suppositions and verified hypotheses by analysing the actual content of the liturgy, including its music and chants. As a complement to these studies, another approach is proposed here which seeks to appreciate the importance of the material fabric of worship as a further means of coming closer to what medieval Carmelites and their congregations saw in the churches they frequented.¹⁴ It seems to be the case that here too the medieval English Carmelites tried to follow the provisions of the 1324 Chapter on local adaptations as accurately and faithfully as possible. They took advantage of these concessions to adapt and customise liturgical practice to the English setting and in the long term with much success.

THE DECREES OF THE GENERAL CHAPTERS

It is the opinion of many Carmelite scholars that the order possessed constitutions perhaps as early as 1247 in the wake of the changes introduced by the General Chapter held in Aylesford and subsequent papal interventions.¹⁵ However, if these constitutions did exist, they are lost now. The extant decisions and legislation of General

¹³ Much of James Boyce's research has been to verify the connections between liturgical legislation and actual practice.

¹⁴ This approach is exemplified in a masterly and fascinating way by EAMON DUFFY in both *The Stripping of the Altars*, Yale 1992, and *The Voices of Morebath*, Yale 2001, where considerable attention is devoted to taking account of church buildings, decorations and so on. For an attempt to apply this approach to Marian devotion in English Carmelite Churches, see K. ALBAN, *The Character and Influence of Carmelite Devotion to Mary in Mediaeval England* Maria, in «A Journal of Marian Studies», 2 (2001), pp. 73-104. One of the problems in Carmelite studies is the lack of material evidence from the medieval period. There are only some contemporary references to altars, statues and so on in wills and much later the accounts of the suppression of the friaries in 1538.

¹⁵ For example, A. STARING, *Medieval Carmelite Heritage Early Reflections on the Nature of the Order*, Rome 1989, pp. 33-37.

Chapters have survived from the chapter of London held in 1281.¹⁶ Among the provisions laid down are regulations for the correct performance of the divine office, as well as indications regarding the rank of certain feast days which were proper to the Order. For example, the feasts of Saints Nicholas, Augustine and Catherine are to be considered *duplex*.¹⁷

Apart from legislation for the whole order, certain local provisions were also made. In the same 1281 General Chapter, the feast of St. Richard is allocated nine lessons in England. This refers to the office of matins, celebrated early in the morning or during the night, which was a combination of psalms and readings from scripture and saints' lives. Here the number of lessons indicates the degree of importance and thus solemnity with which the feast is to be celebrated.¹⁸ In practically all the acts of the General Chapters of the Middle Ages there is this combination of overall regulations for the order, mixed in with local provisions. It is notable that the English province enjoyed more specific legislation on this subject than any other province in the order. Yet the superiors of the English Carmelites were expected to ensure that the friars followed the general provisions for the order contained in Sibert de Beka's Ordinal. Among the items of legislation passed by the General Chapter held in Ferrara in 1357 is a piece specific to England: *Et nihilominus prior generalis priorem provincialem Anglie ab officio suo teneatur absolvere, si per eius negligenciam steterit quod dictum ordinale in provincia Anglie minime teneatur...*¹⁹ This provision

¹⁶ There are references to a General Chapter held in Messina in 1259 which was attended not only by European representatives, but also by friars from Acre and Mount Carmel itself. There was legislation regarding the Divine Office, but it does not survive. See KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, p. 22, citing JOHANNES TRISSE, *Acta capitulorum generalium*, BL MS Harley 1819, f. 59.

¹⁷ There are two explanations for this term. Up to the end of the thirteenth century, it was the custom to celebrate the feria office always and on great feasts that fell on a weekday to recite two offices of night vigils, one for the day and one for the feast. Hence the liturgical rank of that day was called a duplex or double. In time the practice of celebrating two offices fell into disuse, but the label stuck. See W. ADDIS - T. ARNOLD (eds), *A Catholic Dictionary*, London 1955, pp. 339-340, and L. EISENHOFER - J. LECHNER, *The Liturgy of the Roman Rite*, (trans. A.J. and E.F. Peeler, London, 1961), p. 240. The other explanation is that on great feasts the antiphons were sung twice before and after the psalms. The second custom may be a relic of the first.

¹⁸ See EISENHOFER - LECHNER, *Liturgy of the Roman Rite*, pp. 458-459. Indeed the term *duplex* was expanded to give a full range of liturgical ranks: *semiduplex*, *duplex minus* and *duplex maius*.

¹⁹ KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, p. 34: «In the same way the prior general may relieve the prior provincial of England of office, if through his negligence what is prescribed in this ordinal is in no way observed in England».

is repeated in the Constitutions of 1369 issued by the General Chapter held in Montpellier and therefore perhaps points to a particular problem with the English province that was felt to be straying away from Sibert's instructions and from the degree of uniformity required by them.²⁰

Table 1 shows in summary form the specific liturgical legislation for the English province in the Middle Ages. While this hardly represents a flood of decrees (4 in a period just short of 200 years), it is striking that only two other provinces in the Order enjoyed a certain legitimised adaptation to local circumstances.

Table 1 - General Chapter Liturgical Decrees for the English Province

| Chapter | Year | Provisions for English Province |
|----------|------|--|
| London | 1281 | St. Richard to have 9 lessons. ²¹ |
| Burgundy | 1294 | The same provision repeated. ²² |
| Florence | 1399 | St. Augustine, apostle of the English, to have the rank of <i>duplex</i> . ²³ |
| Brescia | 1478 | St. Gacian to have the rank of <i>duplex</i> . ²⁴ |

In 1294 the Chapter at Burgundy allowed the province of Aquitaine to celebrate St. Quiteria with nine lessons at matins,²⁵ and in 1425 the Catalanian province was permitted to observe St. Honoratus as a *duplex*.²⁶ By contrast, the sole province of England was allowed four exceptions to the Order's norms and interestingly two of the exceptions were made before the adoption of Sibert's *Ordinal* in 1312. This might suggest that there was a sense of liturgical identity from which a dispensation was necessary before the formal incorporation of liturgical norms themselves. The reasons for these exceptions are fairly straightforward in the cases of St. Richard and

²⁰ KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, p. 40.

²¹ See L. SAGGI (ed.), *Constitutiones capituli Londiniensis anni 1281*, in «Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum», 15 (1950), pp. 203-245.

²² See L. SAGGI (ed.), *Constitutiones capituli Burdigalensis anni 1294*, in «Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum», 18 (1953), pp. 123-185.

²³ G. WESSELS (ed.), *Acta capitulorum generalium*, 2 vols, Rome 1912-34, vol. I, p. 124.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

²⁵ SAGGI, *Constitutiones capituli Burdigalensis anni 1294*.

²⁶ WESSELS, *Acta capitulorum generalium*, vol. I, p. 172.

St. Augustine: both were national saints of some importance, recent and remote.

Richard of Chichester (ca.1197-1253), sometimes known as Richard of Wych, theologian and canonist, graduate of Oxford, Paris and Bologna, owes his place in the liturgical calendar as a saint not for his learning or ecclesiastical achievements, important as they were, but for his simplicity and generosity, two virtues on which the medieval person placed great value in an almost counter-cultural act of protest. Richard was at the centre of a power struggle with Henry III whose choice of candidate for the see of Chichester was rejected in 1244 by the canons in favour of Richard. After several years of argument, Richard was eventually recognised by the king; he proved himself to be an exceptionally able and pastorally minded prelate, not only in his concern for the material fabric of his cathedral and other churches, but above all in his anxiety to raise the standard of ministry among the diocesan clergy. He was a man known in higher circles: Innocent IV had consecrated him bishop in Lyon in 1245 and even Henry III turned to him as one of the preachers of the Crusades in London in 1250. Richard died in Dover in 1253 and only nine years later Urban IV proclaimed him a saint in the Franciscan church in Viterbo.²⁷ He was, in point of fact, noted as a benefactor of the mendicants, especially the Dominicans. The medieval Carmelite province had no houses in the diocese of Chichester at that time,²⁸ and it is therefore unlikely that Richard's special place in the Carmelite calendar is due to anything more than the high regard and great devotion with which he was generally held in England. His feast (3 April) occurs in the 13th century Anglo-Irish Ordinal, where it attracts 9 lessons at matins. He is not found in the first version of Sibert de Beka's *Ordinal*, and this might therefore suggest a specifically English devotion, rather than a Carmelite one.²⁹

If Richard of Chichester represents a contemporary national figure in the English Carmelite Calendar, then that of Augustine of Canterbury embodies a notable individual from the period of the very «conversion of England». Augustine († 604) was probably a Roman,

²⁷ See E. JACOB, *St Richard of Chichester*, in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* [NCE], vol. XII, New York 1967.

²⁸ The house at New Shoreham was founded between 1315 and 1317. See K. EGAN, *Medieval Carmelite Houses, England and Wales*, in «Carmelus», 16 (1969), pp. 142-226, at pp. 201-203.

²⁹ See KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, pp. 82-83.

entered the monastery of St. Andrew on the Celian Hill and was sent by Pope Gregory the Great to preach the Christian message to the «Angles».³⁰ Augustine's story is recounted by the Venerable Bede in his celebrated *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* and suffice it to say he became a popular saint in the Middle Ages, particularly in the south east of England, where he had worked. Augustine's feast (26 May in England, 28 May elsewhere) occurs in the Carmelite Missal of the late 14th century reconstructed by Margaret Rickert, and she argues that he is one of that group of saints who were celebrated by the English church in London and the south-east. Again it would seem that Augustine's place in the Carmelite calendar is a result of his national importance rather than any specifically Carmelite attachment. By a strange turn of fate Augustine and Bede share the same date of death, posing a tricky problem for patriots: which one to celebrate? Sometimes (as in the modern calendar) Bede was moved to 25th May – the more recent saint giving way to the older one.

There is, however, a Carmelite missal-breviary of the late 14th century³¹ which appears to be championing Bede's cause. Augustine is celebrated on 26th May, but Bede is ascribed nine lessons at matins (before in most breviaries he had only three) and more significantly he is styled a doctor of the Church: *festivitas nostri beati Bedae prebyteri confessoris egregii et doctoris catholici*. This is a title that was not normally given to Bede outside the Benedictine order. It is hard to draw any specific conclusions from this Carmelite text and it would be rash to suggest support for Bede at the expense of Augustine. It is, perhaps, a continuing reminder of the flexibility and freedom found in medieval liturgy.³²

The reasons for the special place accorded to St. Gacian [sometimes: Gatian], granted the rank of *duplex*, by the chapter celebrated at Brescia in 1478, are hard to see. He was probably born in Rome and died in Tours on 20 December 301. Legend had it that Gatian was one of the 72 disciples sent out by Christ (Luke 10) and that St. Peter had sent him to Gaul in the first century.³³ There may

³⁰ H. FARMER, *St. Augustine of Canterbury*, in NCE, vol. I.

³¹ Oxford Univ. Coll. Ms E 9. Probably compiled between 1375 and 1391. See KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, pp. 155-157.

³² See R. PFAFF, *Bede among the Fathers? The Evidence from the Liturgical Commemoration*, in «*Studia Patristica*», 28 (Leuven, 1993), pp. 225-229.

³³ L. CLUGNET, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV, New York 1908 (Online Edition, 1999), and K. JONES (ed.), *St. Gatian*, in *Butler's Lives of the Saints New Full Edition – December*, Tunbridge Wells 2000.

be some slight connection here with Carmelite legends: it seems that the Carmelite hermits, who had been living on Mount Carmel since the time of Elijah and Elisha, in the New Testament period, were the companions of the apostles as they moved around preaching after the ascension of Jesus.³⁴ The desire on the part of the Carmelites to prove their antiquity as an order may have found expression in a particular devotion to St. Gatian which is seen not only in the rather formal decree of the General Chapter in 1478, but in the presence of an altar to the same saint in London and Norwich.³⁵ It is to the material evidence of devotion that this paper now turns.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE MATERIAL FABRIC OF DEVOTION

As indicated above, liturgical practice might also be gauged by the presence of the artefacts of piety and worship. There are very few remains indeed of medieval Carmelite houses (Aylesford, Hulne and Coventry being the most extensive) and even fewer artefacts: mostly seals and matrices seized by the Royal Commissioners in 1538 and now the property of the Crown largely held in the British Museum. The same commissioners noted the contents of the houses as they made their way around the country and the accounts of the suppression are an important source of information for Chester and Coventry. Another key class of documents are wills and last testaments whose bequests and provisions sometimes reveal liturgical practices and the presence of certain artefacts. This is certainly the case for Chester, Doncaster, Ipswich, London, Ludlow, Maldon, Newcastle, Northampton, Norwich and Sandwich. Finally there are some contemporary literary accounts of Carmelite churches in Bishops' Registers (Aylesford and Ludlow) and other ecclesiastical documents, such as letters (London, Ludlow and Maldon). Table 2 gives a summary of the information available.

³⁴ See, for example, account given by THOMAS NETTER OF WALDEN in the *Doctrinale fidei antiquitatum*, (Venice, 1757) Book IV, art. 2, cap. 27, quoting the widely diffused *De institutione primorum monachorum*, a compilation of Carmelite history and legends.

³⁵ See below.

Table 2 - Presence of Devotional Objects by Saint and Church

| <i>STATUES, ALTARS, ETC</i> | <i>CARMELITE HOUSE</i> |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Our Lady | Aylesford, Burnham, Chester, Coventry, Doncaster, London, Lynn, Maldon, Newcastle, Northampton, Norwich |
| St. John Baptist | Aylesford, Ipswich, Nottingham |
| St. Thomas of Canterbury | Aylesford, Berwick, Norwich |
| St. Christopher | London, Lynn |
| St. Gation (Gratian?) | London, Norwich |
| St. Barbara | Maldon, Sandwich |
| St. Catherine of Alexandria | Northampton, Sandwich |
| St. Anne | Norwich, Sandwich |
| Holy Trinity | Berwick |
| Holy Cross | Norwich |
| St. Lawrence | Norwich |
| Sts. Peter and Paul | Aylesford |
| St. Ninian | Sandwich |
| Sts. Crispin & Crispinianus | Sandwich |
| Sts. Cosmas & Damian | Sandwich |
| St. Anthony | Sandwich |
| St. Trunion | Sandwich |
| St. Albert of Trapani O.Carm. | London |

The presence of Marian statues, pictures, altars and other artefacts in 11 of 15 houses for which this sort of information exists is a clear manifestation of the Marian nature of the Order. This is mirrored also in the dedication of Carmelite medieval churches where all but one has a Marian title.³⁶ In the cases of Berwick, Ipswich and Nottingham it is hardly conceivable that, although no specific mention is made of the Virgin among the decorations of the church, there was not some image or altar to Mary.

In some cases the Marian artefact was rather famous: in Coventry

³⁶ See ALBAN, *The Character and Influence of Carmelite Devotion to Mary*, for a full discussion of the material evidence for Marian devotion.

the image was known as «Our Lady of the Tower», and pilgrims came from far and wide to pray for Mary's intercession and leave offerings at her statue, much to the chagrin of the local, diocesan clergy.³⁷ The statue at Doncaster was perhaps even more famous for its protective powers over those who found themselves in difficulty crossing the River Don.³⁸ Similarly, the statue at Northampton which was placed in an outer chapel near the entrance to the church attracted many pilgrims and offerings. One benefactor left a colt to his son Henry so that he could go on pilgrimage to Our Lady of Walsingham and Our Lady of Northampton.³⁹

Several wills mention images and pictures of Mary before which tapers are to be burnt in memory of some benefactor.⁴⁰ Items of a domestic nature are also pledged to the Virgin: Cecilia de Gunthone left a white bed hanging to the Carmelites of Lynn to be placed first by the statue of the Virgin, and then used as a pall to cover her coffin.⁴¹ Physical contact or proximity is a powerful symbol of a spiritual bond: here between the pious Cecilia and the Virgin Mary. Even today the *pallia* destined for new metropolitans are left overnight on the tomb of St. Peter in the Vatican crypt before they are consigned to the archbishops the following day. Elizabeth Swinburne left a piece of silver to make a crown for the statue of the Virgin which is on one of the altars in the Newcastle Carmelite church.⁴²

The popularity of John the Baptist (an altar in Aylesford,⁴³ a chapel in Ipswich⁴⁴ and a statue in Nottingham⁴⁵) is attributable not only to

³⁷ See the comments made by Dr. John London to Thomas Cromwell, in *Letters & Papers, Henry VIII*, (1893), xiii, (2), 674 (p. 257).

³⁸ *Yorks. Arch. Journal*, xiii, 558: Hist. Mss Commission, xiv, App. IV, 1.

³⁹ W. Colfex of Geddington gave the following instructions to his executors in his will: «Also that Henry my son have my colte to performe my pilgrymage, yt is to saye to our Lady of Walsynghen & [our Lady] of Northampton». Wills in Northampton Probate Office, Book E., fo. 56, in R. M., SERJEANTSON, *The White Friars of Northampton*, in «Associated Architectural Societies», (1909), xxx, (1), p. 158.

⁴⁰ For example, in Doncaster, in the accounts of Henry VIII is the entry: «... for a taper of wax burning before Our Lady of Doncaster, four years. 4l» *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, ed. J. BREWER, Longmans, London 1864, ii (2), 1474.

⁴¹ A. G., LITTLE, *Corrodies of the Carmelite Priory at Lynn*, in «Journal of Ecclesiastical History», (1958), ix, pp. 8-29.

⁴² J. RAINE (ed.), *Testamenta Eboracensia*, Surtees Society, vol. 53, 1869, p. 208.

⁴³ A. G., LITTLE, *The Carmelites at Aylesford*, in *A history of the county of Kent*, Victoria County History, London 1926, repr. 1974, ii, pp. 201-203.

⁴⁴ V. REDSTONE, *The Carmelites of Ipswich*, in «Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History», x, 2 (1899), 192-3, 4.

⁴⁵ See below.

the honour and reverence accorded to him in the Church at large, but also to a specifically Carmelite understanding of this figure. This interpretation hinges on the gospel texts where the Baptist is likened to Elijah, for it was commonly held that Elijah would return to inaugurate the Jewish end-time.⁴⁶ The disciples' questions in Mark 9:10 and Matthew 17:10 make that clear.⁴⁷ In Matthew 17:13 it is also evident that the disciples believed Jesus had been referring to John the Baptist in his reply: «Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist». However, another tradition, reported by John has the Jews question the Baptist directly about his identity.⁴⁸ John declares quite clearly that he is neither Elijah nor the prophet (i.e. Moses).⁴⁹ However, the association of Elijah and John the Baptist remained a strong one in the medieval mind. It was relatively easy for the Carmelites to incorporate John into that part of their historiography of the order which dealt with its origins. As heirs of the hermits of Mount Carmel, medieval Carmelites were acutely conscious of the association of that location with Elijah: the first and second books of Kings bear ample testimony to the importance of Carmel the place and Elijah the prophet. In the absence of any historical figure (St. Albert of Jerusalem who gave the first hermits a *formula vitae* sometime between 1206 and 1214 was never considered the order's founder) Carmelites looked to Elijah as the father and founder of the order. This process was doubtless facilitated by the commonly held belief that Elijah had instituted the contemplative life when he hid in the brook Cherith (see 1 Kings 17:2-6). As an Elijan figure then, it was a short step to make John the Baptist a Carmelite and depict him as such, just as had been done with Elijah. The clinching piece of evidence in this process comes from an account of the Nottingham Carmelite church by John Bale, historian, playwright, protestant bishop in Ireland, and sometime Carmelite friar. Bale claims that in the cloister of the Carmelites at Nottingham was a statue of St. John the Baptist showing him clothed in the Carmelite habit. Thomas Elyngham, monk and prior of Lenton, near Nottingham, was inspired to write some less than complimentary verses on this statue: *Non tibi Carmeli tegimen fuit immo Carmeli*.⁵⁰ Bale's reply is placed in

⁴⁶ See Malachi 4:5, for example.

⁴⁷ Mark 9:10: Matt. 17:10 is a parallel text.

⁴⁸ John 1:19-20:

⁴⁹ John 1:21:

⁵⁰ «You never wore Carmel's clothes!»

the mouth of the saint himself: *Responsio eiusdem Sancti Johannis Baptiste Elyngham mentiris metris fatuis ...*⁵¹.

Another typically English saint is found in Thomas à Becket. The presence of an altar to him in Aylesford⁵² and in the king's chapel in Berwick,⁵³ as well as an entire chapel dedicated to him in Norwich, is entirely in line with medieval devotion to the murdered archbishop of Canterbury. The cult of Becket was promoted swiftly and surely in the years following his violent death in 1170; he was canonised in 1173 and a fire in Canterbury cathedral in 1174 allowed the construction of a shrine to house the relics of the troublesome priest. Even the occurrence of Becket's feast day during the Christmas Octave did little to diminish devotion or divert public interest.⁵⁴ In the Carmelite world Sibert de Beka's *Ordinal* ascribed the rank of *duplex* to the feast, and this was further enforced by a decree of the General Chapter in 1369.⁵⁵ A Carmelite antiphonal in Florence compiled between 1312 and 1362 has a decorated capital for the feast of St. Thomas, perhaps giving some idea of the diffusion of the celebration even to southern Europe.⁵⁶

The next most popular saints, as they appear from the surviving evidence, can be conveniently considered together for the simple reason that some considerable doubt has been cast on their historicity. They were, however, extremely popular saints in the Middle Ages, attracting widespread and deep devotion. They were also noted as particularly efficacious in answering prayers and with eleven other were sometimes known as the «Fourteen Holy

⁵¹ Bodl. Libr., Ms. Bodley 73, fo. 48v: BALE, J., *Scriptores Illustrum Bryt.*, Basle 1557-9, ii, 574. In his later printed work, Bale claims that he read this poem in a history book by Thomas Scrope (O.Carm., d. 1491) but it is not in any of Scrope's surviving works. «Reply of the self same Saint John the Baptist. Elyngham you are lying using foolish standards...».

⁵² A. G. LITTLE, *The Carmelites at Aylesford*.

⁵³ R. LAMONT-BROWN, *The Life and Times of Berwick-upon-Tweed*, John Donald, Edinburgh 1988, p. 35.

⁵⁴ D. KNOWLES, *St Thomas à Becket*. in NCE, Vol. II.

⁵⁵ KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, p. 43.

⁵⁶ KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, p. 83. See also J. BOYCE, *The Carmelite Feast of the Presentation of the Virgin, A Study in Musical Adaptation*, in MARGOT E. FASSLER - REBECCA A. BALTZER (eds.), *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages, Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography, Written in Honor of Professor Ruth Steiner*, Oxford University Press, New York 2000, pp. 485-518. The music for many of the chants of the office of Thomas of Canterbury, composed by Benedict of Peterborough, was adapted by the Carmelites of Mainz to new texts to celebrate the office of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary on Nov. 21st.

Helpers».⁵⁷ St. Christopher, possibly a third century martyr from Greece, was one of the most popular saints in the Middle Ages. The idea conveyed in the name, at first understood in the spiritual sense of bearing Christ in the heart, was in the twelfth or thirteenth century taken in the realistic meaning and became the characteristic of the saint. Hence the popularity of the traditional story of Christopher carrying the Christ child across the river and feeling the weight of the sins of the whole world.⁵⁸ In 1396 the General Chapter at Piacenza allowed nine lessons for the feast of St. Christopher and, to avoid a clash with the feast of St James, who is also celebrated on 25 July, St. Christopher was transferred to after the octave of St. Mary Magdalene (22-29 July).⁵⁹ An image of Christopher is recorded in London⁶⁰ and a statue in Lynn.⁶¹

No less popular was St. Barbara in Carmelite circles with an image in Maldon⁶² and a chapel in Sandwich.⁶³ The Carmelite General Chapter of 1321 allowed her nine lessons at matins because she was one of those saints mentioned in the canon of the Mass;⁶⁴ this

⁵⁷ For the record: Achatius, (against headaches); Barbara, (against fever, against sudden death); Blaise, (against ills of the throat); Catherine of Alexandria, (against sudden death); Christopher (against plagues, against sudden death); Cyriacus, (against temptations, especially at time of death); Denis, (against headaches); Erasmus, (against abdominal maladies, for protection of domestic animals); Eustachius, (against family trouble); George, (for protection of domestic animals); Giles, (against plagues for a good confession); Margaret of Antioch, (for safe childbirth); Pantaleon, (for physicians, for protection of domestic animals); Vitus, (against epilepsy, for protection of domestic animals). Their feast day was 8th August until the 1969 reform of the Roman Calendar when all but Blaise were removed singly and collectively.

⁵⁸ JACOBUS OF VORAGINE, *The Golden Legend Readings on the Saints*, (Trans. W. Ryan), 2 vols, Princeton 1993, vol. 2, pp. 10-14.

⁵⁹ WESSELS, *Acta capitulorum generalium*, vol. I, p. 119.

⁶⁰ In the will of W. Copley, in J. RAINE (ed.), *Testamenta Eboracensia*, Surtees Society, vol. 53, 1869, pp. 46-50.

⁶¹ In the will of John Stegge of Lynn: *Reg. Chichele, Canterbury*, (Cant. & York Soc., 1945) iii, 410, 411.

⁶² John Dyrek bequeathed his gown to the image of St. Barbara in the church of the Carmelite Brothers in Maldon. Maldon Archaeological Group, *Maldon's Carmelite friary: being the story of the town's medieval religious house (founded 1292) incorporating historical research (with a chronology by Arthur C. Simpson and appendix by Dr. W. J. Petchey) archaeological investigation and dowsing survey*. Report No. 7 in the «Ecclesiastical Monuments of Maldon» series. Compiled by Stephen P. Nunn. Privately Published, 1985.

⁶³ In 1500 Nicholas Lokyar, smith, of St. Clement's parish, Sandwich, bequeathed: «...to the light of St. Barbara at Friars..», [Collection of wills by Mr. Hussey: courtesy of Mrs. Elizabeth Deighton].

⁶⁴ KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, p. 26.

provision was repeated in 1357. Kallenberg suggests that her presence in Carmelite liturgical books, but not in Dominican ones may be significant in distinguishing the two otherwise very close mendicant rites.⁶⁵ Barbara was honoured as a virgin and martyr, being put to death by her own father for her faith, perhaps in the middle of the third century. Her cult was popular in both east and west from the seventh century and she seems to have been particularly effective in keeping people alive long enough to receive the Last Rites.⁶⁶

Catherine of Alexandria was another third century saint whose popularity was widespread: she is noted not only for her own attachment to the Christian faith, but her considerable scholarship and learning which she put to use in persuading others of the reasonableness of belief. The impact of her cult was felt at all levels: as a patron of female students, of theologians and preachers she enjoyed a certain intellectual pre-eminence not often accorded to those of her sex. Her fortitude in the face of torture inspired physical courage; the instrument of her suffering, a wheel, made the ideal patron of wheelwrights and mechanics in general.⁶⁷ In the context of Carmelite liturgy, the Chapter of London held in 1281 decreed that her feast should be a *duplex*, together with SS. Nicholas and Augustine of Hippo. This provision was repeated in 1294.⁶⁸ Several Carmelite liturgical books have illuminations for her feast day: a gradual and an antiphonal from Florence between 1312 and 1342 and a breviary from Parma sometime between 1440 and 1478.⁶⁹ In the English province of Carmelites an altar was dedicated to her in Northampton⁷⁰ and there was a statue to her in Sandwich. This latter seems to have been the object of public pilgrimage for the bishop of Exeter, Thomas Brentingham, granted forty days indulgence to those of his diocese who should devoutly visit the church of the Carmelites at Sandwich, «in which as we have heard, a fair image of the blessed virgin and martyr Katherine is held in great veneration».⁷¹

⁶⁵ KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, pp. 90-91.

⁶⁶ M. COSTELLOE, *St. Barbara*, in NCE, Vol. II.

⁶⁷ JACOBUS DE VORAGINE, *Golden Legend*, vol. 2, pp. 334-341.

⁶⁸ KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, p. 24.

⁶⁹ KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, pp. 174-176, 233-234, 248.

⁷⁰ In 1310, 14 November, Bishop Dalderby, of Lincoln, granted the community a further permission to have a fixed altar constructed in their church and to have it dedicated in honour of St. Catherine. Dalderby's "Memoranda, Lincoln," fo. 171: in R. M. SERJEANTSON, *The White Friars of Northampton*, in «Associated Architectural Societies», (1909), xxx, (1), p. 150.

⁷¹ *Reg. Brantyngham, Exeter*, i, 223.

The presence of St. Anne in the list of those saints evidence for whose cult is to be found in Carmelite churches is an extension of the Order's Marian devotion. As the mother of the Virgin, Anne enjoyed a special status in the Church at large; her story is not to be found in the canonical scriptures, but in apocryphal writings similar to scripture, in this case the *Proto-evangelium of St. James*. In later legends Anne's supposed matrimonial vicissitudes are at the basis of the feast of the Three Marys, originally a Gallican feast, but later characteristic of the Carmelite liturgy.⁷² The earliest surviving General Chapter decrees from 1281 order that St. Anne's feast be observed with nine lessons at matins;⁷³ in 1411 the celebration of her memoria at vespers and lauds is extended to the whole Order.⁷⁴ In several liturgical books the conception of the Blessed Virgin is illustrated in the scene of Joachim and Anne at the Golden Gate of Jerusalem⁷⁵ and shortly after the extension of her feast to the entire Order a 'sequence' or pre-gospel hymn is found in *Gradual* from Germany.⁷⁶ In the surviving records for English Carmelite churches Anne was honoured with a statue in Norwich⁷⁷ and an altar in Sandwich.⁷⁸

Of all the saints listed there is only one Carmelite saint: Albert of Trapani. There are very few certain historical facts regarding the life and person of Albert, yet his cult was one of the most widespread

⁷² See above. St. Joachim died soon after the presentation of Mary in the temple; St. Anne then married Cleophas, by whom she became the mother of Mary Cleophae (the wife of Alphaeus and mother of the Apostles James the Lesser, Simon and Judas, and of Joseph the Just); after the death of Cleophas she is said to have married Salomas, to whom she bore Maria Salomae (the wife of Zebedaeus and mother of the Apostles John and James the Greater).

⁷³ KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, p. 23.

⁷⁴ WESSELS, *Acta capitulorum generalium*, vol. I, p. 145.

⁷⁵ In a Carmelite Breviary from Parma (1440-1478) a whole page is dedicated to this scene (KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, pp. 174-177) and in a Carmelite Missal from Rouen (1479-81) the 'G' of the Introit *Gaudeamus* for the Conception of the Virgin has the same illustration (KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, pp. 144-147).

⁷⁶ KALLENBERG, *Fontes*, pp. 241-243.

⁷⁷ In 1440 Christina, the wife of Peter Savage of Norwich, was buried in the chapel of the Holy Cross, before the image of the Blessed Anne there. *Reg. Doke, Norwich*, fo. 154: JOHN KIRKPATRICK, *The White Friars*, in D. TURNER (ed.), *History of the Religious Orders and Communities and of the Hospital and Castle of Norwich*, Yarmouth 1845, p. 168.

⁷⁸ In 1510 Richard Swinderby or Sters, of St. Peter's parish, left instructions in his will: «To be buried in the Church of the White Friars before the Image of St. Anne. The Friars to sing for my soul a trental of Masses, and have 6s. 8d.; also, for my burying, 6s. 8d.», A 11, 9: in DUNCAN, LELAND, *Testimenta Cantiana*, London 1906, p. 293.

in the medieval Carmelite Order, with representations of him documented in S. Felice del Benaco, Rome, Seville, Siena, Trivulzio and London. He is usually depicted with crucifix between two lily stems. He sometimes appears with another early Italian Carmelite saint, Angelo, as in the famous painting of Filippo Lippi. He also was believed to possess powers of healing and of protection against earthquakes.

The earliest *Life* dates from around 1385, but extant only in a 15th century copy, and is not generally held to be a reliable source of information about the saint. However, a few details can be stated with some certainty: he was born to Benedetto degli Abati and Giovanna Palizi after 26 years of childless wedlock. Some maintain he was born around 1240. They dedicated his life to the Lord as a mark of gratitude and held to this vow even in the face of attractive alternatives. Albert joined the order in Trapani and pursued his studies there. On ordination to the priesthood, he was sent to Messina which he freed from famine caused by a siege. He was noted as a powerful and moving speaker all over Sicily. He is later depicted as a saint who devoted himself to study and to preaching and effected many conversions by his rhetorical talents. Although his writings and sermons do not survive, some scholars would number him among the leading spiritual figures of the order. He was prior provincial of the Sicilian province according to a document from the Trapani house dated 10 May 1296. He took ill on 7 August in Messina and died there probably in 1307.

It appears that Albert was the object of veneration soon after his death for his relics were moved from Messina to Trapani in 1316. He was considered one of the patrons and protectors of the Order and in Palermo as early as 1346 a chapel dedicated to him is found. Various general chapters paved the way for his liturgical cult: in 1411 the chapter of Bologna inserted his name among the *duplex* feasts of the order.⁷⁹ The chapter of 1420 ordered that a «radiant image» of Albert be kept on display by every convent and Nicholas Audet urged every convent to have an altar dedicated to him.⁸⁰ In 1476, Sixtus IV declared him to be a saint.⁸¹

The point of interest for English Carmelites is that the following

⁷⁹ WESSELS, *Acta capitulorum generalium*, vol. I, p. 145.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁸¹ Information about S. Albert is taken from K. ALBAN, *Alberto di Trapani*, in the forthcoming *Dizionario Carmelitano*.

poem was placed before a statue of St. Albert of Trapani: probably, from its position in John Bale's notes, it was in the London house:

Carmina ponenda ante ymaginem sancti patris Albertis.

Sum pius Albertus nulli pietate secundus,
 Sum quoque cui virtus contigit ante diem.
 Me cuncti fugiunt morbi pallorque dolorque,
 Noxia quaeque animo, corpore quaeque sedent.
 Hinc michi nomen et hinc venerancia sacra parentum
 Et quia me sequitur maximus orbis amor.⁸²

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The fact that the English medieval Carmelite province recognized feasts of local importance and incorporated them into their own celebrations is hardly surprising. For the first time, however, it has been possible to demonstrate this incorporation using evidence not only from literary sources, but also from what appears to have been present in Carmelite churches in terms of statues, altars, images and so on. In this respect it has also been possible to distinguish those saints which were dear to the English from abroad and those who were popular because of their native origins. Secondly, there is some evidence that the Carmelites promoted their own saints, in the case of St. Albert of Trapani it is clear that this was so, or saints who had become associated with the order, in the case of St. Gatian. The best way to win favour with the local populace may have been to support native saints and show that this group of hermits from the Holy Land was as at home in England as any other order. The process, however, was not one-way: it seems that the Carmelites in England also wanted to affirm their own identity as a group and they did this by introducing at least one Carmelite saint, as well as by following their own *ordo*. The evidence is in some sense inconclusive, but this could reflect the delicate balance the Carmelites may have been seeking to achieve between inculturation on the one hand and a statement of identity on the other.

⁸² Bodl. Libr., Ms. Bodley 73, fos. 50-51.

It would have been impossible to write this paper without access to the manuscript of Fr. Richard Copsey's «*Gazetteer of Medieval Carmelite Houses*», which contains all the information examined here as regards the altars, chapels, statues and other object of devotion which were in the Carmelite churches of the medieval province. Dr. Arie Kallenberg, whose work remains fundamental to any study of the Carmelite liturgy, and Fr. James Boyce, who possesses an unrivalled knowledge of the subject, both gave invaluable advice and made most helpful comments. I am very grateful to all three scholars for their support and assistance.

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