

### Historia

ANDREW JOTISCHKY, *The Carmelites in Antiquity: Mendicants and their Past in the Middle Ages*. 2002, pp. xii, 370. Oxford University Press. Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP, United Kingdom. ISBN 0-19-820634-8. £65.00.

Dr. Andrew Jotischky who teaches in the history department at Lancaster University, England, is a younger scholar who has devoted extensive research into medieval Carmelite history especially to into the origins of the order in the Holy Land and its subsequent medieval sojourn. See the extended review by Fr. Joachim Smet in *Carmelus* 44 (1997), 176-181, of Jotischky's *The Perfection of Solitude: Hermits and Monks in the Crusader States*. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995). In his preface to *The Carmelites in Antiquity* (vii) Jotischky writes: "My interest in the Carmelites emerged from studying the religious life of the crusader states, in which they occupy a unique place as the only contemplative order founded in the Latin East." Jotischky is a prolific author, he is also a stouthearted historian not only because of his prodigious industry but because he is unfazed by the pitfalls in Carmelite history of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. In addition, Carmelite historiography throughout the middle ages which Jotischky investigates in the book under review is hardly for the fainthearted. Early sources are scant and what is extant demands acute interpretation. Much of the medieval Carmelite scene is a cache of documents difficult to understand without an appreciation for the dynamics of symbolic communication that include the meaning of legend and myth. Yet, thus equipped one can engage in an exciting and not well known field of study.

With *The Carmelites in Antiquity* Jotischky has expanded his Carmelite horizons; in it he tackles issues of Carmelite historiography from the time of the Carmelites in the Holy Land until John Bale turns his hand to the Carmelite story in the sixteenth century. Jotischky's book is not a chronological history of the Carmelites in the middle ages but is rather a collection of studies about the literature with which the medieval Carmelites constructed their identity as a religious order in the church. This literature included their claim to Elijah as their founder and to the Blessed Virgin as their sister. Not so outrageous a claim if one puts it into a symbolic framework through which a community sought to understand its mission in the church.

This is a book for specialists; it is too detailed and goes down too many paths to suit the tastes of many general readers. However, no scholar interested in the history of the Carmelite Order will want to be without this book. The notes and the bibliography reveal the author's breadth of reading; he constantly makes connections with events and texts that are helpful to fellow scholars. Jotischky has acquainted himself thoroughly with the documents and literature produced by medieval Carmelites, and his mastery of related materials is truly impressive. Jotischky's contextualization of

Carmel's medieval tradition is one of the chief benefits of this study. Research into medieval religious orders in isolation makes for distorted perspectives. There is a need for orders like the mendicants to engage in conversations about their mutual interests and discoveries. Jotischky's book is a model exercise in this regard. His subtitle, "Mendicants and their Pasts in the Middle Ages", is an indication of this approach and his Chapter Eight illustrates this methodology: "Patterns of Historical Thinking in the Mendicant Orders". Chapter Nine "Antiquity, Truth, and Historical Method: Carmelites and Others" does so as well and reveals the author's ability to work across institutional demarcations. Besides their distinctiveness friars have much in common among themselves and, indeed, with the monasticism that preceded and followed their introduction into the life of the church.

Chapter 5 "Carmelite Ecclesiology in the Fourteenth Century" is an historical exercise that can be a starting point for the development of a theological ecclesiology based on rigorous historical research. Some forty-five years ago Yves Congar, O.P., suggested that the quarrel between the friars and the secular clergy in the middle of the thirteenth century offered insights into the development of an ecclesiology. See *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 28 (1961), 35-151. Religious orders are experiments in ecclesiology, undertakings in how to be church? This lived ecclesiology precedes articulated ecclesiology. The friars with their distinctive charisms offer quite special insights into how communities can be church. In the thirteenth century the friars did so with their pursuit of the *vita apostolica*. Historical research into the traditions of the mendicant orders invites historians and theologians to dialogue with each other about the ecclesiological significance contained in the prophetic voices of founders and other special voices within the ranks of these orders.

Other chapters in *The Carmelites in Antiquity* take up topics like the significance of the change of the Carmelite habit, Nicholas the Frenchman's "Ignea sagitta", the evolution of the Carmelite story in the middle ages, and the Carmelite "historians" of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In *The Perfection of Solitude: Hermits and Monks in the Crusader States*, Jotischky argued for the possibility of a mixed community of Orthodox and Latin hermits on Mount Carmel. For a rejection of this suggestion, see Smet's review above (p. 181). Yet, Chapter Eight of *The Carmelites in Antiquity* returns to that stance by suggesting once again a possible Orthodox identification of truly legendary figures whose Carmelite identity was the invention of medieval Carmelite mythology. Such a suggestion about mixed communities seems unproductive. After all, pre-modern Carmelite history was plagued by too many unproven assertions.

Some minor observations are in order. Several times in this text the dates within which Albert of Vercelli granted a *formula vitae* to the Carmelite hermits on Mount Carmel are given as 1205-1214 (pp. 9, 110); the dates should be 1206-1214. The bibliography should include Ludovico Saggi, O.Carm., *Santi del Carmelo: Biografie da Vari Dizionari* (Rome: Institutum Carmelitanum,

1972), with its important introduction by Saggi: "Agiografía Carmelitana". The bibliography should also have noted Joachim Smet's revised edition (1988) of volume one of *The Carmelites: A History of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*.

Andrew Jotischky has made substantial contributions to the history of the Carmelite Order not only with this book and the *Perfection of Solitude* but with various essays concerning Carmelite history and historiography. It is hoped that he will continue his research into the Carmelite tradition; his work has the merit of attracting other scholars into the conversation about the facts and the meaning of Carmelite history. There is much yet to be done in a fertile field of research.

KEITH J. EGAN

ISMAEL MARTÍNEZ CARRETERO, O.Carm, *Desde la Nueva Andalucía hasta las tierras del Nuevo Reino de Granada. 50 Años de la Provincia Bética en Venezuela y Colombia 1954-2004*, 2 v. Mérida – Venezuela, 2005, 976 páginas, con abundante material gráfico.

[Forman parte los volúmenes del Archivo arquidiocesano de Mérida, volúmenes 11 y 12 de Fuentes para la historia eclesiástica de Venezuela].

Huelga decir que, al hablar de la Provincia Bética se refiere a la de los carmelitas. El libro lo prologa el Presidente de la Conferencia Episcopal Venezolana y Arzobispo Metropolitano de Mérida, Baltasar Porrás Cardozo (pp. 23-31). Es un prólogo cercano a la Orden del Carmen y al autor donde, además hace gala de una gran erudición.

Con buen acuerdo el P. Ismael dedica el primer capítulo (141 pp.) a introducir al lector en la historia de la Orden del Carmen, de acuerdo con las últimas conquistas de la historiografía contemporánea que, por cierto, han sido muchas y relevantes. No podía faltar en el mismo un amplio apartado en el que aborda el problema de la presencia de los carmelitas en la evangelización de América durante la época heroica del descubrimiento-conquista. Es un tema que nos viene astillando el alma desde que comenzamos a estudiarlo hace casi medio siglo, mayormente si lo comparamos con la gesta brillante de los carmelitas portugueses en el Gran Pará, Solimoes y Río Negro. Los carmelitas españoles, y no por su culpa, como Orden, no pudieron planificar una acción en América.

En la práctica su trabajo misional fue de francotiradores. Se pueden mencionar algunas figuras, como el conocido mariólogo Diego Velásquez al que dedica un amplio apartado en *La Virgen de la Fe*, el P. Pablo Garrido y cuya biografía enriquece el P. Ismael al sorprenderle en Trujillo (Venezuela), regentando cátedra de latinidad en el Colegio de Artes y Teología, base de la futura universidad. No podía faltar la alusión honrosa a Antonio Vázquez de Espinosa, autor del *Compendio y Descripción de las Indias Occidentales* en la que hace un retrato de la América colonial en el primer tercio del s. XVII y de la que existen tres ediciones en castellano (hoy todas agotadas); las dos