cite Marcos Hiqueras a quien al parecer, se debe la grande obra de piedra de dicha capilla. La noticia la debemos a Federico Antonio Sánchez de Gálvez en sus *Recuerdos marianos o Alhama y su madre*, Barcelona, 1864, 48-49, cuya obra se echa de menos en la Bibliografía que cita al final de su libro. A propósito de esta pequeña laguna observamos también que falta la bibliografía básica carmelita: la *Historia del Carmelo español*, a que hemos aludido y el *Epitome historial de los Carmelitas de Andalucía y Murcia* del P. Miguel Rodríguez Carretero, editado por el p. Ismael Martínez. También observamos algún pequeño desliz en la interpretacin iconográfica; los dos santos Cirilos que se consideraban carmelitas, San Cirilo de Constantinopla y Cirilo de Alejandria; a ninguno de los dos se le nombra en la iconografía carmelita como San Cirilo del Monte Carmelo (p. 80). El P. Enrique Silvio en 1606 no era Procurador General (p. 77) sino que era General de la Orden.

A pesar de estas ligerísimas observaciones son numerosos los méritos de este libro y las noticias que proporciona sobre la fundación carmelita de Alhama. Felicitamos cordialmente al autor.

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CHARMIAN WOODFIELD, *The Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and some conventual buildings at the Whitefriars*, Coventry. British Archaeological Reports, British Series 389. 2005, pp. 389, 167 illustrations, 12 tables. Archaeopress, Gordon House, 276 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 7ED, United Kingdom. ISBN 1-84171-834-3.

The publication of this massively informative volume is in itself a major achievement – a supreme example of determination, enthusiasm, flair and sheer hard work in the face of a number of obstacles and, as the author puts it herself, 'accepting the once traditional responsibility of the excavator for publication'. The resulting tome contains features which will appeal to both generalist and specialist readers.

There are several superlatives which can be applied to this project as a whole. The Carmelite Friary church at Coventry was the second largest known medieval friary church in Europe, after the London Greyfriars. The excavations within it and around the cloister and other buildings were the first and the most extensive major excavations to have taken place on that type of ecclesiastical site in the United Kingdom. Enormous amounts of data are involved, despite some unfortunate episodes of loss and damage implicating both site records and objects. There exist 3250 drawings of window glass fragments alone, for example, of which some1640 are published in the volume.

In a book of this size and weight, it was very wise to provide a relatively simple 'entry point' for readers whether archaeological, architectural or 'lay'. There is first a summary of the entire work in English, French and German,

followed by a more extensive résumé of each section or chapter of the publication, of which there are some 24. From these brief outlines the reader is directed if desired to the appropriate drawings and photographs further on in the volume. The full chapters follow, dealing with: historical background; architectural analysis of the (remarkably) still standing east range of the cloister; reconstruction drawings of the friary complex and specific buildings within it; the account of the excavations, conducted by Charmian Woodfield in 1960-64 and 1968-69 and by others in 1956, 1973, 1975, 1977-8 and in the late 1990s; architectural stonework and sculpture; the choir stalls, which survive partially in St John's Hospital and the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum; a gaming board for playing 'marbles', carved on one of the surviving choir-stall desk-tops, probably by schoolboys after conversion of the choir to a Grammar school in the post-Reformation period; medieval window glass; analysis of the contents of an oyster-shell palette; floor tile; roof tile; brick; slate; plasterwork; structural metalwork; pottery; vessel glass; other 'small' finds; wire-headed pins; numismatica; human skeletal analysis; animal bone; and wood and charcoal analysis. As with most archaeological reports, this is the work of many hands, with Charmian Woodfield leading a group of 21 contributors and seven illustrators, taking the story of the site through from before the establishment of the friary in the mid 14th century to later uses as school and private home in the post-Reformation period. In the later 20th century an inner ring road obliterated much of it, except the east claustral range.

Excavations reported in the volume covered in whole or in part the choir, the nave, the crossing, the sacristy, chapter house, cloister and reredorter. It is very sad that so much else has been lost through unmonitored development and institutional carelessness, but in the work of the author and her colleagues we see both thoughtful and meticulous excavation and post-excavation work and deep understanding of the wider implications and ambience of the immediate study. Archaeology can be unnecessarily insular, so it is pleasing to have included comparative plans of some French, Portuguese and Danish Carmelite sites, alongside English, Scottish and Irish ones, although it would have been useful to have an indication of their sources. The wider, human context is also reflected in the inclusion of such items as a late 14th century vignette from the Carmelite Missal from the London Whitefriars, depicting the dedication of a Carmelite church; an image from the works of Richard Rolle, c. 1400, showing a friar hearing the confession of a nervous- looking nobleman, whose posterior seems only inches away from a weapon-bearing devil; and an extract from an Elizabethan ballad lamenting the silence, now that the friars no longer sing in the choir. As a prelude to the description of the excavations themselves, we are invited to picture for ourselves the processional route to the choir, with the colourful statues on the pulpitum, the Tree of Jesse window at the east end, the elaborate choir-stalls with their seats for 90 friars and novices, the timber reredos and the Venetian glass vessels, Spanish ceramic altar vases and a gold, silver and enamel Hungarian

chalice on the altar. A similar grasp of the importance of interpreting and visualising, as well as simply describing the evidence, is apparent throughout the volume, especially in the inclusion of a range of reconstruction drawings and artist's impressions by architectural historian Paul Woodfield. Some may find the 'raw data', in the form of highly detailed architectural and archaeological reporting, rather more challenging. It is not for the fainthearted and requires a modicum of technical knowledge to make the most of it. Two of the archaeological plans, figures 42 and 43, are described by the author as 'overloaded' and no doubt there are good practical reasons why less busy phase plans could not be presented instead. But they have been well drawn, and do work, for the patient reader who wants to know more.

Above all, this is a very honest volume, conscious of its weaknesses, which are few in relation to its multitudinous strengths. Pulling together such a variety of writings, produced by so many over a long period of time, and in some cases summarising, for the sake of completeness, reports already published elsewhere, is the stuff of nightmares – but the author has realised that one could go on re-drafting and editing for eternity. The historical background chapter relies on some now rather discredited sources and therefore attributes the origin of the Carmelite Order to the 9th century B.C., which no historian would nowadays do. That is a pity in this period in which the 800th anniversary of the granting of the Rule is about to be celebrated.

There are boxes and plan chests throughout Europe and beyond stuffed full of excavation material at various stages en route to publication and most archaeologists have a bulging cupboard or two to which they direct furtive guilty glances from time to time. Charmian Woodfield and her contributors should rightly feel immensely proud that their filing cabinets are clear and that our knowledge of medieval Carmelite heritage has been so much enhanced as a result. Let us hope that others will be encouraged, too, and that we may soon also see the publication of the excavations of the site where it all began, in the Wadi-es-Siah, on Mount Carmel itself.

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