

### Historia

FRANCES ANDREWS, *The Other Friars: Carmelite, Augustinian, Sack and Pied Friars in the Middle Ages*. 2006, pp. ix, 261. The Boydell Press, Boydell & Brewer Limited, P.O. Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 3DF, United Kingdom ([www.boydell.co.uk](http://www.boydell.co.uk)). ISBN 1-84383-258-5, ISSN 1749-4974. £ 25.00 / \$ 47.95.

This book is published in The Boydell Press' series *Monastic Orders* following Michael Robson's volume on *The Franciscans in the Middle Ages*. Persons keen to promote Carmelite Studies may be disappointed that the Order apparently does not merit a unique volume alongside those listed in the frontispiece as currently in production: the Benedictines, the Canons Regular, and the Carthusians. Such persons might likewise be disappointed that the Carmelites and the Augustinians – as survivors of the 1274 Council of Lyons prohibition on new religious orders – should be placed alongside two orders that were suppressed (the Pied Friars and Friars of the Sack), perhaps reinforcing the view that the Carmelites always played second fiddle to the Dominicans and Franciscans. However, Andrews make a convincing case for the comparison, given the parallel concerns and chronological links between the 'Other Friars'. Whilst the title of the book might sound disparaging, it highlights the all too liminal place that Carmelites have occupied in Medieval Studies thus far, and Andrews' book presents a persuasive case for reassessing the importance of the medieval Order.

The *Monastic Orders* series aims to provide an accessible introduction to these important medieval institutions and there is certainly a need for this in the English-speaking world, particularly for a committed undergraduate readership. This means that little new ground broken in *The Other Friars*; Andrews collates previously published materials but presents them in a particularly fresh and accessible way. There is a definite lacuna in the academic arena for an introductory text less daunting to the newcomer than multi-volume histories or obscure studies of very specific aspects of Carmel.

Most Carmelite scholars in Britain with whom I have discussed the book have been somewhat surprised that it should have been penned by someone not previously on our 'radar', however this is a salient reminder that Carmelite Studies are not our personal domain and it is encouraging to know that there is a potential market for such publications. The book may actually benefit from being written without direct input from established Carmelite historians; there can be a tendency for those of us who are members of the Order to present material in a way that is accepted as the convention, but Andrews approaches this material afresh, backed up with her experience of teaching students unfamiliar with the Carmelite Family. The book points to the need for a monograph on the medieval Carmelites.

Given the predominant interests of the *Carmelus* readership I do not offer here an analysis of the material relating to the Augustinians and other minor orders. The *Carmelitana* presented in the volume focuses on a wide range of topics, beginning with the circumstances of eremitic life in Palestine in the High Middle Ages. The *Rule of Saint Albert* is summarised succinctly, both as a *formula vitae* and in its mitigated form. With regard to the mitigation of Innocent IV Andrews helpfully highlights the variations in historiographic interpretation over whether the adoption of mendicancy was deliberate or incremental.

Andrews follows conventional historiography in not questioning the dating of the *Ignea Sagitta* to 1270. A confusing footnote reference to recent studies of the *Ignea* (which makes it unclear whether there are 2 or 3 volumes in the *Carmel in Britain* series) is untypical of Andrews' otherwise thorough referencing.

Andrews' discussion of the Carmelites' expansion in the thirteenth century is well contextualised, and an entire chapter is devoted to 'The Geographical Dispersal of the Order'. The clear setting-out of the role of chapters, provincial structures, and legislative documents will be welcomed by many students trying to get a handle on the organisation of the medieval Order. Andrews' makes an illuminating survey of Carmelite foundations right across Europe; this necessarily fails to highlight the peculiarities of individual provinces but presents a good general picture of the Order as a whole.

As a Lay Carmelite I was particularly pleased to see the emphasis Andrews gives to the importance of lay patronage and support of the Whitefriars, as well as the role of confraternities. The developing place of women in medieval Carmel is outlined in detail.

The chapter on 'Daily Life' is extremely useful in setting out the routines of novices, students and preachers, and the final chapter relating to 'Later History and the Development of a Historiographical Tradition' in Carmel is equally helpful, covering topics such as Carmelite liturgy and hagiography. The role of the Carmelites in the universities and ecclesiastical enquiries of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is rightly given sustained scrutiny.

In most regards this book will not provide the scholar accustomed to Carmelite history with many new facts but it will prompt them to approach the materials afresh and perhaps to broaden their geographic vision. The book's very reasonable price will hopefully introduce a new generation of students to Carmelite Studies.

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