

COPSEY, RICHARD, *Carmel in Britain 3: The Hermits from Mount Carmel*. 2004, pp. xii, 514. Saint Albert's Press, Whitefriars, 35 Tanners Street, Faversham, Kent, ME13 7JN, United Kingdom (ISBN 0-904849-23-6) & Edizioni Carmelitane, Via Sforza Pallavicini 10, 00193, Roma, Italia (ISBN 88-7288-074-2). £ 17.50 / € 25.00.

This collection of articles on the medieval Carmelites in western Europe is the fruit of many years of historical study which led its author to become one of the prime experts on the Order's provinces in the British Isles and beyond. The subjects covered range from the community's legendary history to the origins and development of the Scottish province and the English friars' intellectual contributions which survive in manuscript. Four of the thirteen articles are here printed for the first time, a further three have been revised and six have been republished, making this important material much more easily accessible.

In the first article 'Establishment, Identity and Papal Approval: The Carmelite Order's Creation of its Legendary History' the author traces the small group of hermits from Mount Carmel to Sicily and other destinations in Europe and describes the transformation of the widely dispersed community into an Order which began to establish priories in the big urban centres. The threat posed by the decisions of the 1274 Council of Lyons was countered successfully by the creation of distinctive features, most importantly a foundation legend and the emphasis on Marian devotion. A sign of tension within the Order at this time is the subject of the second article on the text 'Ignea Sagitta' which questioned the decision to abandon the eremitical way of life and which – like its author Nicholas the Frenchman – was for a long time forgotten in the Order. The suggestion that it was intended as a circular letter to the provinces is plausible and the possibility that the treatise was written in Cyprus and only came to Europe in the fifteenth century could explain why it was unknown for so long. Two letters written from the Holy Land to Pope Martin IV in the early 1280s form the subject of the third article. Both of them draw attention to the dangers facing Christian rule there, referring to the important role played by the Carmelites in the area, clearly an attempt to protect the Order from suffering the same fate as the Friars of the Sack and others who were not allowed to accept novices after 1274. Although internal textual problems have cast doubt on the status of these texts, Copsey comes to the conclusion that both are genuine.

Carmelite history in western Europe is the focus of the next part of the volume. The extracts made by John Bale from a chronicle in the Carmelite priory of Calais are edited in the following article where Copsey can show that the text probably originated in the South-East of England and may well have come to France after 1347 when English friars replaced their French brethren after the conquest of the town by Edward III. Another article in the context of the Anglo-French dispute centres on the legend of Simon Stock and relates

the propagation of the story to the English occupation of parts of France in the fifteenth century when French friars were driven out of Caen. Stock, an English saint buried in Gascony, might have suited the English province well at a time when there was hostility between different branches of the Order. Large parts of the volume deal with the Carmelites in Scotland, a subject which has hitherto received only relatively little attention. The Scottish province began its existence in the background of political disputes between the Scottish leaders and the neighbouring English government and only gained its independence in 1324 after Robert Bruce's kingship had been accepted by Pope John XXII. Future military confrontation led to changes, notably the replacement of Scottish friars by English Carmelites in Berwick after the town was captured in 1333 (the battle here was that of Halidon Hill, not 'Moor', p.120). The next article on the 'Foundation Dates of the Scottish Carmelite Houses' is directly related although here the political context features to a far lesser degree. The foundation dates of the Scottish priories poses a problem because the available information is circumstantial and not contemporary. Based on the analysis of four documents Copsey proposes plausible new foundation dates for Queensferry, Banff and Kingussie. While it is not quite clear whether additional material from urban archives could have been of help in this investigation, such a question does not arise with Copsey's substantial study of the Carmelite priory of Aberdeen which offers a complete historical survey from the foundation in 1273 to the suppression in 1560. Deeds and wills help to shed light on the development of the convent and the friars' role in the town's religious life and a surviving rental covering properties held beyond the priory precinct indicates that the community's real income declined in the later middle ages. Significantly this is attributed to underlying economic factors and not to a decline of popular interest in the Carmelites which was maintained even in the sixteenth century, as is shown by the fact that there was no reduction of bequests in the decades before the end of the community. The volume's focus then shifts to England. The visit to the English province by prior general Peter Terrasse in 1504-5 is the subject of the next article which offers a translation of the visitation records with detailed annotations. Two articles are then devoted to one of the province's most fascinating figures, John Bale, whose journeys to France and Northern Italy in 1526-7 led to the production of important notebooks. Of particular interest is a detailed description and even a part edition of British Library MS Harley 1819 which was the basis for Bale's later writings on the Order's history. Given the attention paid to Bale's later life and activities it is encouraging to see that his formative period as a Carmelite friar is seen as equally relevant and one can only hope that more material from the notebook will be published. Finally there is Copsey's list of surviving writings by English Carmelites, originally printed in two separate articles but here merged into an indispensable work of reference.

This collection of articles contains important material. It presents both analysis and original sources, the emphasis being the Order's history in the

British Isles. The author should be encouraged to take the logical next step: the preparation of a coherent history of the Carmelites in medieval England and Scotland.

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BERND JASPERT, *Mönchtum und Protestantismus. Problema und Wege der Forschung seit 187*, vol. II: *Von Karl Heussi bis Karl Barth*, Eos Verlag Erzabtei Ottilien, 2006, pp. 1082, ISBN 3-8306-7229-2

È uscito il secondo volume di un ampio studio del dott. Jaspert, Presidente dei Congressi internazionali della *Regula benedictina*, in cui continua la storia dell'atteggiamento di teologi protestanti verso il significato ecumenico del monachesimo.

Dopo aver esposto nel primo volume, uscito nel 2005, le opere dei primi secoli del protestantesimo, con riferimento ad autori spirituali, in questo secondo volume egli si dedica agli ultimi cento anni della Chiesa evangelica e alle conclusioni teologiche di numerosi scrittori. Per questo motivo già il titolo del libro c'informa che si tratta di uno studio sui «problemi e percorsi di ricerca a partire dal 1877».

In sedici capitoli vengono riportati autori protestanti che hanno lasciato scritti sul valore del monachesimo, cominciando con Karl Heussi (1877-1961) e terminando con Karl Barth (1886-1968). Gli autori più conosciuti da noi (per qualche traduzione italiana o francese) sono Friedrich Heiler (1892-1967), Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), e Walter Nigg (1903-1988), perché si sono occupati in maniera particolare anche della storia delle monache, e per il risalto dato a personaggi venerati come santi e mistici.

Ogni capitolo rappresenta una preziosa esposizione circa il rapporto spirituale con il monachesimo, nel quale «si è voluto accettare nella chiesa evangelica la possibilità genuina di seguire Cristo, da uomini e donne che in questo senso hanno praticamente vissuto» (p. 264) la vita religiosa e pratica. Ciò vale anche per il vivere nel cosiddetto Terzo Ordine, ma sempre sulla base di fatti storici che offrano elementi caratteristici, tali da far vedere l'accettazione e del monachesimo come sistema informativo dell'autentica vita religiosa.

In questa prospettiva s'incontra al termine di ogni capitolo il "risultato" dello studio condotto da Bernd Jaspert. Per esempio, già parlando di Karl Heussi (1877-1961) egli riporta preziosi articoli su asceti, monaci, monachesimo, *considerandone* l'Egitto come origine, e questo gli consente d'indicare il monachesimo «come parte essenziale della storia del cristianesimo». È una nuova e importante parte dell'interpretazione data dai teologi protestanti, che cominciano cosè a considerare «il cristianesimo come movimento ecumenico dai tempi iniziali fino al presente», e con questo si passa dai primi secoli del protestantesimo ai giorni nostri, considerando «il monachesimo il problema della storia ecclesiale». Per questo, l'«opera di Heussi offre un