

IT ISSN 0008-6673

CARMELUS

COMMENTARII AB INSTITUTO CARMELITANO EDITI

VOLUMEN QUINQUAGESIMUM PRIMUM

2004



EDIZIONI CARMELITANE
VIA SFORZA PALLAVICINI, 10
00193 ROMA

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CONSILIUM COMMENTARIIS EDENDIS

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Librorum aestimationes: Joachim Smet, O.Carm.

Bibliographia annualis: David Waite, O.Carm.

Finito di stampare nel mese di ottobre 2004
dalla Tipolitografia 2000 sas di De Magistris R. & C. – 00046 Grottaferrata (Roma)
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EDITORIALE

Questo numero di *Carmelus*, che vede la luce nel 150° anniversario della proclamazione del dogma dell'Immacolata Concezione, si apre quasi ovviamente con un articolo che documenta il prezioso apporto dato dai carmelitani alla definizione dogmatica di una verità mariologica che da sempre costituisce un punto straordinario di riferimento della pietà mariana dell'Ordine. Emanuele Boaga vi mostra ancora una volta la sua grande capacità di storico e di *lettore creativo* di documenti d'archivio, regalandoci nella rievocazione spesso brillante di episodi e personaggi che altrimenti giacerebbero nel dimenticatoio del tempo un'ulteriore testimonianza della peculiarità mariana dell'ordine carmelitano.

Le pazienti ricerche di Balbino Velasco Bayón su Giovanni della Croce offrono un utile contributo alla biografia del grande mistico. Di valore prettamente anagrafico i suoi accertamenti sull'anno in cui la famiglia del santo lasciò il suo luogo d'origine, Fontiveros; risulta interessante, comunque, la contestualizzazione scelta dall'autore per documentare la presenza della famiglia a Fontiveros, cioè l'inserimento dei *de Yépez* nel lunghissimo elenco di "contribuenti" della città spagnola. Più legata ai futuri orientamenti spirituali di Giovanni della Croce è senz'altro la documentazione relativa alla presenza di un monastero di carmelitane nella sua città natale. Ma forse il contributo più prezioso alla biografia del santo è da vedersi nel documentato rapporto tra le sue opere e quelle di Battista Spagnoli, detto il Mantovano; ne risulta evidenziato un elemento finora non sufficientemente illustrato della formazione culturale e letteraria di Giovanni della Croce.

La dettagliata e articolata ricerca di una studiosa americana, Jane E. Lytle-Vieira, riesce a ricostruire con dovizia di particolari tutto lo scenario della imbarazzante e penosa controversia che vide contrapposti Ebrei e Cattolici sulla opportunità di un monastero di carmelitane ad Auschwitz, proprio dentro il recinto del campo di sterminio. L'autrice si dilunga nel documentare e nell'illustrare con saggia imparzialità le posizioni e le ragioni delle due parti. Ma poi, e qui è l'originalità del suo lavoro, propone una visione solutrice del problema

attraverso l'attenta analisi del linguaggio usato da Ebrei e Cattolici. Secondo l'assunto dell'autrice, se si fosse prestata attenzione al valore metaforico/allegorico/mistico delle parole usate dalle controparti, senz'altro si sarebbe trovato prima un costruttivo punto d'incontro: di sicuro interesse, al riguardo, è l'analisi comparata, che essa conduce da esperta linguista, tra il linguaggio reperibile nei testi della mistica carmelitana e quello dei testi di certa tradizione ebraica, in particolare di quella mistica *chassidica* che si sviluppò proprio in Polonia attorno alla figura di Israel ben Eliezer (1700-ca. 1760), detto il Baal Shem Tov ("signore del Nome buono").

Tutto basato su scrupolose ricerche d'archivio e intelligenti ispezioni *in loco* è il contributo con il quale lo studioso spagnolo Jesús Ángel Sánchez Rivera ricostruisce le vicende storiche del convento carmelitano del Piélagos (Toledo), ridotto ormai in rovine, sia pure così suggestive per chi voglia provare il brivido di quella dimensione archeologica che è anch'essa parte integrante del fluire storico degli istituti religiosi.

Ed è egualmente da collocarsi nel tentativo di recupero storico di fatti e personaggi del passato il breve saggio con cui una studiosa fiorentina, M. Cristina Francois, lega la figura del venerabile padre Albizzo de' Nerli all'introduzione del culto in Firenze dell'Arcangelo Raffaele.

Nei *Commentariola*, di ampio respiro è il dettagliato *excursus* con cui padre Pablo Garrido, ricercatore infaticabile di *res carmelitanae*, documenta l'applicazione della *strictior observantia* nelle varie province carmelitane della Spagna del diciassettesimo secolo. Mentre il saggio su padre Xiberta *filosofo* rappresenta uno straordinario omaggio *postumo* che padre Redento Valabek ha voluto lasciarci in onore del suo antico Maestro.

Questo numero di *Carmelus* si chiude con i necrologi che vogliono ricordare con particolare senso di affetto e gratitudine i PP. Redemptus Maria Valabek e Stefano Possanzini, collaboratori instancabili della rivista, da essi amata e arricchita con frequenti contributi forniti dalle loro originali e incessanti ricerche nel patrimonio storico, spirituale e culturale dell'Ordine. La loro vita esemplare di religiosi e di studiosi rimane eredità preziosa dell'*Institutum Carmelitanum*, di cui furono membri per gran parte della loro esistenza terrena.

Padre Joachim Smet, infine, ha curato con la solita precisione e accuratezza la rubrica delle *Librorum aestimationes*.

EDMONDO COCCIA

Roma, festa di S. Elia Profeta, 20 luglio 2004

IL CONTRIBUTO DEI CARMELITANI ALLA DEFINIZIONE DEL DOGMA DELL'IMMACOLATA CONCEZIONE

La data dell'8 dicembre 1854 è particolarmente cara al cuore dei credenti, perché ricorda la definizione del dogma dell'Immacolata. Nella ricorrenza dei 150 anni dalla definizione dogmatica, piace ricordare, evocandolo con questo contributo, l'apporto che l'Ordine del Carmelo, nei suoi due rami antico e riformato, ebbe ad offrire in questa occasione e le feste solenni con le quali intese commemorare lo storico evento.

I CARMELITANI A FAVORE DELL'IMMACOLATA

È noto come i carmelitani, entrati nelle università medievali sul declinare del periodo aureo della Scolastica, trovarono la questione immacolatista praticamente risolta in senso negativo, avvalorata dalle posizioni di S. Bernardo di Chiaravalle, S. Anselmo e S. Tommaso d'Aquino e i suoi discepoli. Nella prima generazione dei teologi carmelitani, nel secolo XIV, solo tre seguirono questa posizione comune, mentre con il mutamento d'opinione di Giovanni Baconthorp (†1348) a favore del privilegio mariano si ebbe un ritorno alla tradizione immacolatista dell'Ordine, che già celebrava ufficialmente la festa della sua patrona sotto il titolo della Concezione per decreto del capitolo generale 1306, e forse ancora prima in alcune parti dell'Ordine stesso. Da quel tempo in poi nessun carmelitano fu annoverato tra gli avversari del dogma dell'Immacolata, e la festa liturgica venne sempre più arricchendosi in solennità (anche quando la festa patronale venne spostata al 16 luglio) e indulgenze, tra le quali quelle concesse da Sisto IV ai fedeli che visitavano le chiese dell'Ordine nel giorno della festa. Il tema dell'Immacolata trovò un considerevole spazio anche nelle raffigurazioni artistiche promosse dall'Ordine, dove Maria veniva contemplata come Donna dell'Apocalisse. Ancor più spazio ebbe nella vita dell'Ordine il culto all'Immacolata Concezione quando nei secoli XVII-XVIII, nella penisola iberica, i Carmelitani arrivarono ad esprimere un impegno specifico (il cosiddetto «voto sanguinario») in difesa di questo

privilegio mariano, da diffondere nelle predicazioni e nelle dispute scolastiche.¹

Nel Carmelo riformato, quello degli Scalzi, fin dal suo sorgere fu grande il fervore nel proclamare l'Immacolata, come risulta documentato da una delle prime testimonianze (la *Carta expostulatoria* di P. Alonso Sobrino edita in Siviglia nel 1615), dal ruolo svolto nella Giunta reale sull'Immacolata e dalla supplica del Collegio di S. Alberto di Siviglia nel 1650, che costituisce il culmine di tutto un processo, nell'area spagnola del secolo XVII, per la richiesta al Romano Pontefice di proclamare il dogma dell'Immacolata. Ed espressione di ciò fu l'affermazione del desiderio concezionista nella riflessione dei Salmaticesi. A ciò vanno aggiunti i trattati editi da autori Scalzi, la crescente presa di posizione nella predicazione a favore dell'Immacolata e un curioso memoriale, della fine del sec. XVIII e finora inedito, in cui l'anonimo autore – attraverso l'applicazione della nuvoletta che sale dal mare e lo scudo dell'Ordine carmelitano – trae motivi per chiedere la proclamazione del dogma mariano.²

Si giunge così agli inizi del secolo XIX, nel quale in tutta la Chiesa si ebbe un ulteriore sviluppo della dottrina e del culto verso l'Immacolata. Ben presto, durante il pontificato di Pio VII (1800-23) e specialmente in quello di Gregorio XVI (1831-46), arrivarono da varie parti del mondo numerose richieste alla S. Sede per la dogmatizzazione dell'Immacolata.³

¹ Cf. C. CATENA, *Il culto dell'Immacolata Concezione nel Carmelo*, in «Carmelus» 1 (1954), pp. 290-321; Id., *La dottrina immacolatista degli autori carmelitani*, in *ibid.* 2 (1955), pp. 132-215; *La Inmaculada en el Carmelo, por los Padres Carmelitas de la Antigua Observancia (Calzados) de Zaragoza*, (Congreso Nacional Mariano 1954); E. BOAGA, *La Signora del Luogo. Maria nella storia e nella vita del Carmelo*, Roma 2001, pp. 62-65, con bibliografia ivi indicata nelle pp. 64 e 74.

² Cf. *La Inmaculada y el Carmelo* (Congreso Nacional Mariano 1954, Sección Carmelitana), Vitoria s.d.

³ Per le vicende del contesto storico e per la preparazione della definizione, si rimanda, una volta per tutte, ai seguenti studi: CRISÓSTOMO DE PAMPLONA, *Elaboración de la definición dogmática de la Inmaculada Concepción*, in *Virgo Immaculata*, vol. II, Roma, 1956, pp. 174-197; G. MARTINA, *Pio IX*, (3 voll., Roma 1974-1990), II, pp. 261-286; G. SÖLL, *Storia dei dogmi mariani*, Roma 1981; D. BERTETTO, *Pio IX e la definizione del dogma dell'Immacolata*, in «Pio IX», 12 (settembre-dicembre 1983), pp. 231-268; M. G. MASCIARELLI, *Pio IX e l'Immacolata*, in *Pio IX a Gaeta*, Atti del convegno di studi per i 150 anni dell'avvenimento e dell'elevazione della diocesi di Gaeta ad arcidiocesi (13 dicembre 1998-24 ottobre 1999), a cura di L. Cardi, Marina di Volturno 2003, pp. 171-223. Per una panoramica della discussione teologica sull'Immacolata Concezione si rimanda pure alla voce *Immaculée Conception*, di F. X. LE BACHELET e M. JUGIE, in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, VII (1927), coll. 845-1218; E. CAMPANA, *Maria nel*

Tra queste richieste si trovano quelle di due vescovi carmelitani scalzi: Clemente Manzini (di S. Teresa), vescovo di Cuneo,⁴ e Luigi M. Fortini (Luigi M. di S. Teresa) vescovo di Calamo.⁵ Il tono delle lettere le rende due appassionate suppliche a favore di una dichiarazione papale sull'Immacolata.

Malgrado i desideri espressi da questi vescovi e da altri, non si ebbe il risultato auspicato per varie ragioni, tra cui l'opposizione degli ambienti giansenisti e le reticenze espresse in merito da alcuni vescovi e facoltà teologiche. Nel frattempo dalla S. Sede venivano fatte alcune concessioni in materia liturgica, come quella ai Francescani il 17 giugno 1806 di introdurre nel *Prefazio* la specificazione «Immacolata» alle parole «et te in Conceptione». Il 15 giugno 1838 anche la provincia di Monte Santo di Sicilia ebbe la concessione d'includere nel *Prefazio* tale specificazione.⁶ Poi seguì nel 1838 una simile concessione ai Carmelitani Scalzi e nel 1843 il permesso per questi ultimi di aggiungere nelle litanie lauretane l'invocazione «Regina sine labe originali concepta».⁷ Per partecipazione queste concessioni passarono anche all'antica Osservanza.⁸

Infine, fu nel suo pontificato che Pio IX giunse, dopo un lungo e difficile cammino, alla proclamazione del dogma dell'Immacolata.

dogma cattolico, Torino-Roma 1936, pp. 380-601; S. DE FIORES - A. SERRA, *Immacolata*, in *Nuovo Dizionario di Mariologia*, a cura di S. De Fiores e S. Meo, Cisinello Balsamo (MI) 1985, pp. 679-709.

⁴ *Pareri dell'episcopato dell'episcopato cattolico, di capitoli, di congregazioni, di università, di personaggi ragguardevoli, etc. sulla definizione dogmatica dell'Immacolato Concepimento della B. V. Maria rassegnati alla Santità di Pio IX P. M. in occasione della sua enciclica da Gaeta il 2 febbraio 1849*, (10 voll., Roma 1851-54), IX, pp. 59-60. Clemente di S. Teresa (al secolo Bernardo Manzini), nato a Sassello nel 1803, entrò tra i Carmelitani Scalzi, professando i voti religiosi a Torino nel 1822. Ricoprì vari uffici nell'Ordine, di cui fu preposito generale dal maggio 1841 al gennaio 1844, quando fu creato da Pio IX vescovo di Cuneo, che resse per molti anni. Morì nel convento di Genova nel 1865. Cf. BARTHOLOMAEUS A S. ANGELO - HENRICUS M. A SS. SACRAMENTO, *Collectio Scriptorum Ordinis Carmelitarum Excalceatorum*, (2 voll., Savona 1884), II, p. 210, 287, 311. A. FORTES, *Catalogus superiorum generalium O.C.D. Congregationis Italiae 1600-1875 et Totius Ordinis 1875-1985*, Roma 1988, p. 27.

⁵ *Pareri dell'episcopato*, IX, pp. 69-70. Luigi Maria di S. Teresa (al sec. Ferdinando Fortini), nato a Roma nel 1795, si fece carmelitano scalzo, professando nel 1816. Andò in missione nel 1825. Nel 1837 venne eletto vescovo di Calamo e coadiutore del vicario apostolico, cui successe nel 1840. Nominato assistente del soglio pontificio nel 1843, morì a Bombay il 1° gennaio del 1848. Cf. AMBROSIVS A S. TERESIA, *Nomenclator missionariorum Ordinis Carmelitarum Discalceatorum*, Romae, apud Curiam Generalitiam, 1944, p. 22.

⁶ *Pareri dell'episcopato*, VI, p. 581.

⁷ *Ibid.*, VI, pp. 578, 580, 581.

⁸ CATENA, *Il culto dell'Immacolata*, p. 315.

DUE CARMELITANI PRESENTI NELLA FASE PREPARATORIA SUL DOGMA

Fin dall'inizio del suo pontificato, Pio IX pose attenzione alla delicatissima problematica riguardante l'Immacolata Concezione. Uno dei suoi primi atti fu quello di ratificare la proclamazione fatta all'unanimità dai vescovi degli Stati Uniti di scegliere a patrona della nazione Maria col titolo dell'Immacolata. Si ebbe così una ripresa della pressione per arrivare al dogma immacolatista. Tale spinta crebbe ancor più con il successo e l'influsso di una pubblicazione di P. Giovanni Perone (1794-1876), professore del Collegio Romano. Tutto ciò, oltre a determinare la concessione di un ufficio interamente dedicato all'Immacolata, indusse Pio IX a costituire il 1° giugno del 1848 una consulta speciale di 15 teologi, tra i quali vari cardinali, prelati e religiosi, incaricati di studiare «il gravissimo argomento sull'Immacolata Concezione della gran Madre di Dio Maria Santissima» e sul quale si chiedeva di emettere in iscritto il proprio voto. Fra i membri di questa consulta teologica fu annoverato P. Paolo di S. Giuseppe, definitore generale dei Carmelitani Scalzi, residente nel convento della Scala di Roma, che il 5 giugno rispondeva accettando l'incarico ed esprimendo fiducia di poter rimettere il frutto delle sue ricerche nel tempo prescritto.⁹

Paolo di S. Giuseppe (al secolo Fortunato Lupi), nato a Roma il 25 settembre 1784, entrava tra i Carmelitani Scalzi emettendo la sua professione solenne il 19 marzo 1801. Teologo, giurista, versato e fecondo scrittore, ricoprì vari uffici: fu due volte definitore generale e procuratore generale, priore provinciale di Roma, esaminatore del Clero Romano, consultore delle Congregazioni delle Indulgenze e Reliquie, dei Vescovi e Regolari, dei Riti e di Propaganda Fide. Morì il 28 gennaio 1866.¹⁰

Quasi un mese dopo la designazione a consultore, Paolo di S. Giuseppe rimetteva il suo voto nelle mani dell'incaricato della consulta teologica.¹¹ Dopo aver sottolineato lo scopo del voto stesso, ossia se la

⁹ V. SARDI, *La solenne definizione del dogma dell'Immacolato Concepimento di Maria santissima. Atti e documenti pubblicati nel cinquantesimo anniversario della stessa definizione*, (2 voll., Roma 1904), I, pp. 1-2, 4 (testo della lettera di accettazione).

¹⁰ Cf. BARTHOLOMAEUS A S. ANGELO - HENRICUS M. A SS. SACRAMENTO, *Collectio Scriptorum*, II, pp. 27-28; *Cenni storici sui conventi dei PP. Carmelitani Scalzi della Provincia Romana*, Roma 1929, p. 61; O. DI RUZZA, *Sintesi storico-cronologica della Provincia Romana dei padri Carmelitani Scalzi*, Roma 1987, p. 157.

¹¹ Testo delle lettera accompagnatoria e del voto: SARDI, *La solenne definizione*, I, pp. 190-214.

pia credenza dell'Immacolata Concezione poteva, seguendo gli usi della Chiesa cattolica, essere solennemente definita, e dopo aver notato la inutilità dei passati tentativi per la definizione del punto controverso, esaminava in che modo la Santa Sede poteva emettere in proposito una definizione dogmatica. In particolare osservava che tale definizione, nel caso non poteva basarsi sulla Parola di Dio scritta, poteva basarsi su quella *tradita*, di cui dava un'ampia sintesi fin dai primi secoli, con attenzione ai padri e all'autorità dei Dottori. Inoltre, poneva una cura particolare nell'esame delle posizioni di S. Bernardo e di S. Tommaso d'Aquino e di alcuni testi patristici che a prima vista sembravano sfavorevoli alla Concezione Immacolata della Vergine. Con abbondanza di particolari egli ricordava la tradizione ecclesiale e il numero di teologi sempre più in crescendo a favore dell'Immacolata. E come conseguenza di quanto esposto in precedenza osservava: «la Concezione Immacolata della Vergine vanta di per sé una tradizione antichissima; ... una tradizione divina ... che può ben definirsi come una verità fondata sulla parola di Dio *tradita*».¹² Inoltre, dopo aver risposto ad alcune obiezioni e difficoltà mosse dai «nemici della Chiesa», osservava che non essendo provato nel corso storico della Chiesa il costante e unanime consenso verso l'Immacolata, si poteva – sviluppando le tesi di Melchior Cano e il modo di agire nelle definizioni dogmatiche dei concili di Nicea, Calcedonia, Efeso, Laodicea e Trento – procedere alla definizione pur essendovi qualcuno di contraria opinione. «Se poi riflettasi allo stato attuale della Santa Chiesa, ed al bisogno che v'è, di soccorsi specialissimi, che vengano a Lei dall'alto; tanto più si dirà convenevole la definizione».¹³

Poco dopo gli eventi politici precipitarono. Il 24 novembre 1848 il Papa Pio IX fu costretto a rifugiarsi a Gaeta in doloroso esilio, mentre in seguito a Roma, il 9 febbraio 1849, veniva proclamata la «Repubblica romana». Ovviamente, in tale situazione, la consulta teologica sospese i suoi lavori, e parte dei suoi membri ripararono anch'essi a Napoli. Paolo di S. Giuseppe rimase a Roma. A Gaeta, il 6 dicembre 1848 Pio IX diede ordine al card. Luigi Lambruschini di far riprendere i lavori di questa consulta speciale e per l'occasione, il 10 dicembre, vennero aggiunti cinque nuovi consultori, tra i quali un carmelitano, questa volta del ramo antico: Giuseppe Maria Mazzetti, vescovo titolare di Seleucia.¹⁴

¹² SARDI, *La solenne definizione*, I, p. 208.

¹³ *Ibid.*, I, p. 214.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 557 e 564.

Mazzetti, nato a Chieti il 2 dicembre del 1778, ancor giovane si era recato a Napoli per studiare medicina e faceva in essa tale progresso che a ventitré anni pubblicò un'opera intitolata *La materia medica*, in cui sintetizzava le varie dottrine delle scuole mediche del tempo. Rinunciando alla carriera accademica, entrò tra i Carmelitani di S. Martino ai Monti in Roma. Alunno della provincia romana dell'Ordine, conseguì il magistero in teologia il 21 aprile del 1807. Sacerdote, oltre al ministero pastorale, ebbe l'incarico d'insegnare teologia nello *Studium* generale dell'Ordine e curò pure l'insegnamento della matematica e della geometria. Ebbe vari uffici e cariche non solo nell'Ordine, ma anche presso le Congregazioni Romane, e fu consultore del S. Ufficio dal 17 luglio 1821 al luglio del 1836. Nominato l'11 luglio 1836 vescovo di Aquino, Sora e Pontecorvo, diede le dimissioni il 5 febbraio 1838. Pochi giorni dopo, il 15 febbraio 1838, divenne arcivescovo titolare di Seleucia. Dal 1837 in poi fu anche consigliere di Stato e ministro della Pubblica Istruzione a Napoli, Regno Borbonico. Morì il 14 luglio del 1850 e venne sepolto nel Carmine Maggiore della città.¹⁵

Con la lettera di nomina,¹⁶ datata il 13 dicembre 1848, Mazzetti ricevette anche l'invito ad esprimere un voto, *sub secreto pontificio*, su due questioni: dati i numerosi voti già espressi dalla maggior parte dei vescovi e da Ferdinando II, era opportuno consigliare al pontefice di dichiarare il privilegio di Maria concepita senza peccato? e in che modo era opportuno procedere?

Mentre Mazzetti stava preparando il suo voto, gli giunse un'altra lettera del card. Lambruschini con invito per il giorno 22 dicembre a partecipare alla congregazione antipreparatoria a cui avrebbero dovuto partecipare tutti i cardinali e i consultori per esporre il proprio voto, tolto il segreto fra loro.¹⁷

Dalla relazione di questa congregazione, svoltasi nel collegio dei Barnabiti di Napoli, è possibile conoscere l'atteggiamento di Mazzetti sui due quesiti proposti già per il voto dei consultori.¹⁸ In particolare, sul primo, il suo atteggiamento fu favorevole alla definizione. Sulla seconda questione, cioè sul modo di procedere, egli sostenne la necessità di un ulteriore approfondimento, oppure che almeno si discutesse

¹⁵ Cf. V. APREDA, *Elogio funebre di mons. Giuseppe Mazzetti*, Napoli 1850; G. BROCCOLINI, *Giuseppe Mazzetti*, Bologna 1968; E. BOAGA, *Bibliotheca Carmelitana rerum naturae speculatorum*, in «Carmelus», 12 (1965), pp. 276-277 (con altra bibl.); J. SMET, *The Carmelites*, IV, Darien Ill. 1985, pp. 64, 142, 143-144 e 149.

¹⁶ SARDI, *La solenne definizione*, I, p. 565.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 565-566.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 555-563.

sui metodi allora proposti per la canonizzazione dei santi. La relazione del segretario riporta le parole stesse di Mazzetti: «Quindi si limitò a queste parole: *Vocatis Episcopis occasione Canonizationis, sin minus servata praxi S. Sedis pro canonizatione Sanctorum*». ¹⁹

Per comprendere la posizione del carmelitano si rende necessaria una spiegazione dei termini che già dal secolo XVII usavano vari teologi e giuristi quando trattavano della definibilità dell'Immacolata riferendosi al modo di procedere da parte del Romano Pontefice. Frequentemente in detti scritti appaiono quattro termini di diverso significato: *dichiarazione, determinazione, canonizzazione e definizione*. ²⁰

Con la loro proposta che il Papa *dichiarasse* o *determinasse* la questione dell'Immacolata, i teologi intendevano sottolineare che in tal modo il Romano Pontefice, con la propria e piena autorità, dirimeva la controversia tra immacolatisti e contrari, senza per altro emettere un giudizio teologico su l'una o l'altra posizione, perché poteva esser ugualmente vera l'una ed errata l'altra, oppure viceversa.

Il termine *canonizzazione* per il mistero dell'Immacolata veniva usato per un'analogia con la finalità della canonizzazione dei santi in vista della loro venerazione e del loro culto. Il papa, istituendo la festa e il culto dell'Immacolata Concezione, canonizzava in un certo modo anche il privilegio mariano. Poiché si riteneva allora che il proclamare solennemente la canonizzazione dei santi costituisse un atto dell'infallibilità del Papa, per analogia si poteva anche sostenere che egli procedesse in modo infallibile nel culto e nella venerazione della Madonna e, di conseguenza, l'Immacolata Concezione divenisse verità infallibile come la stessa canonizzazione dei santi. Una posizione, questa, sostenuta tra gli altri dal celebre teologo gesuita Francesco Suarez (†1617).

Il terzo termine, *definizione*, prerogativa del Papa in un Concilio o prescindendo da esso, comportava invece una certa confusione, a seconda che la verità s'intendesse definibile *de fide divina* oppure *de fide catholica*, ossia come oggetto di rivelazione diretta o indiretta, contenuto o no nel deposito della Rivelazione. Inoltre, molte volte il termine *definire* era applicato non alla verità stessa dell'Immacolata, ma alla contesa immacolatista; già nel secolo XVII invalse l'uso di fare riferimento alla questione «*de definienda controversia Immaculatae*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I, p. 559.

²⁰ Per un approfondimento della sintesi qui presentata delle discussioni teologiche dei secoli XVII-XIX sul modo con cui il Papa poteva procedere alla definizione dell'Immacolata, si rimanda agli studi indicati nella nota 3.

Conceptionis». In seguito si fece strada l'interpretazione del termine come atto solenne e personale «ex cathedra» del Papa fuori del Concilio. Per queste ambiguità di significati risulta difficile intendere il significato esatto da darsi a questa espressione, quando risulta usata in richieste, suppliche e voti che si rivolgevano alla S. Sede.

Accade inoltre che i termini *dichiarazione*, *canonizzazione* e *definizione* siano usati indifferentemente, anche se rimangono di significato distinto; e così, se nella prima parte del secolo XVII per il mistero dell'Immacolata prevalgono i termini *determinare* o *dichiarare*, verso la metà dello stesso secolo risulta preferito il termine *canonizzare*, mentre nel secolo XIX s'insiste sulla sua *definizione* come articolo di fede «ex cathedra».

Senza dubbio il riferimento di Mazzetti alla possibilità di *canonizzare* il mistero dell'Immacolata lo pone sulla scia di Suarez e sembra aver influito nelle proposte formulate da alcuni degli intervenuti dopo di lui nel lungo dibattito tra i presenti alla congregazione antipreparatoria. La sua posizione riecheggia, per esempio, in quella di mons. Giovanni Battista Canella, come anche nel modo in cui, in realtà, molte delle petizioni di vescovi fino allora pervenute alla s. Sede chiedevano e indicavano indulgenze, festività, ufficio e messa per l'Immacolata come supporto per la definizione dommatica del privilegio mariano.²¹ Quando il card. Pietro Ostini ritirò il suo *suspensive* a consigliare una dichiarazione dommatica, anche Mazzetti si uniformò agli altri della maggioranza, che decise d'indicare al Papa l'opportunità di una definizione dommatica, ma solo dopo una consultazione dell'intero episcopato attraverso un'enciclica.²² Il 2 febbraio 1849 Pio IX indirizzava a tutti i vescovi del mondo il documento suggerito, la *Ubi primum*.

I «PARERI» DEI VESCOVI CARMELITANI

La risposta da parte di numerosissimi vescovi non si fece attendere e fu quasi plebiscitaria in senso favorevole ai quesiti posti dell'*Ubi primum*. Più tardi, tra il 1851 e il 1854, questi pareri dell'episcopato vennero resi di dominio pubblico, insieme ad altri volti, attraverso i tipi della «Civiltà Cattolica».

²¹ SARDI, *La solenne definizione*, I, pp. 559-561.

²² *Ibid.*, I, pp. 561-562.

Analizziamo qui, sulla scorta di questa pubblicazione, i «pareri» dati dai vescovi carmelitani.

Ricordiamo innanzitutto il parere espresso, con lettera del 12 novembre 1849, dal ricordato Mazzetti.²³ Nel suo breve scritto, in cui non appare alcun cenno alla sua partecipazione alla congregazione antipreparatoria, egli esprimeva la propria gioia come carmelitano nel dare la sua adesione positiva, anche perché sostenuta dal sentimento del popolo cristiano. Mazzetti non poté partecipare o assistere agli eventi successivi che portarono alla proclamazione dell'Immacolata Concezione, perché morì il 14 luglio dell'anno seguente.

Il Carmelo del ramo antico aveva poi in quel tempo altri due soli vescovi: i fratelli Carlo di S. Giuseppe de Souza, vescovo di São Luís de Maranhão (1844-1850),²⁴ e Pietro di S. Marianna Souza, vescovo titolare di Crisopoli in Cipro (1841-1864).²⁵ Il loro parere non appare tra quelli inviati a Roma e pubblicati nei *Pareri dell'episcopato cattolico*.

Per il primo di essi vi è una spiegazione, mentre per l'altro non si sa il motivo della sua assenza. Infatti, Carlo di S. Giuseppe era già sofferente nel 1847 ed era stato sottoposto senza successo ad un trattamento medico in Recife, lontano dalla propria sede. Ripetute varie volte e per periodi sempre più lunghi tali terapie nella stessa Recife, gli venne diagnosticata una emiplegia o paralisi del corpo. Nei primi mesi del 1849 era quasi incapace di apporre la propria firma. Morì il 3 aprile 1850.²⁶

²³ *Pareri dell'episcopato*, IX, p. 216.

²⁴ Nato nel 1777 a Recife (Pernambuco, Brasile), entrò tra i carmelitani nel 1796. Compiuti gli studi presso il seminario di Olinda, fu rinomato teologo ed esimio predicatore. Occupò vari uffici in seno all'Ordine ed anche nella città di Olinda e Recife. Eletto vescovo di S. Luís de Maranhão il 13 maggio 1843, resse la diocesi fino al 1850. Morì in Recife il 3 aprile di detto anno. Cf. B. VELASCO BAYÓN, *História da Ordem do Carmo em Portugal*, Lisboa 2001, p. 248; SMET, *The Carmelites*, IV, pp. 142 e 149; F. CONDURÚ PACHECO, *História Eclesiástica do Maranhão*, Maranhão, 1969, pp. 168-175.

²⁵ Pietro di S. Marianna Souza nacque a Recife nel 1782. Entrato tra i carmelitani della provincia di Pernambuco, professò nel 1799. Compiuti gli studi di filosofia e teologia, per l'inclinazione verso la matematica venne inviato in Portogallo, ove frequentò l'Accademia Reale di Marina di Lisbona. Ordinato sacerdote, tornò in Brasile. Oltre l'insegnamento di matematica presso l'Accademia Militare di Rio de Janeiro, fu precettore di Pietro II. Creato vescovo titolare di Crisopoli nel 1841, morì il 6 maggio 1864. Cf. SMET, *The Carmelites*, IV, pp. 149, 178-9; E. BOAGA, *Bibliotheca carmelitana rerum naturae speculatorum*, in «Carmelus», 12 (1965), p. 277.

²⁶ CONDURÚ PACHECO, *História*, pp. 174-175.

I vescovi del ramo riformato, cioè degli Scalzi, risposero tutti.²⁷

Il primo a spedire il suo parere fu Francesco Giuseppe Nicholson (Giuseppe dell'Annunciazione), vescovo di Gerapoli *in partibus*. Egli, con lettera del 9 luglio 1849, inviò la sua adesione favorevole al pronunciamento sull'Immacolata. Lo stesso giorno spedì anche un'altra lettera a nome dell'infermo vicario apostolico di Corfù, di cui era coadiutore.²⁸

Dalla vicaria apostolica del Malabar, con lettera del 9 novembre 1849, sottoscritta congiuntamente,²⁹ espressero il desiderio positivo il vicario apostolico Ludovico di S. Teresa Martini, arcivescovo di Cirene,³⁰ e altri due carmelitani scalzi: Bernardino di S. Teresa, vescovo titolare di Eraclea,³¹ e Bernardino di S. Agnese, vescovo titolare di Tanis.³²

²⁷ ISMAEL DE SANTA TERESITA, *Aportación del Carmelo en la definición dogmática de la Inmaculada*, in *La Inmaculada y el Carmelo*, cit., p. 141, erroneamente include tra i vescovi che risposero alla *Ubi primum*, mons. Fortini, che era invece morto il 1 gennaio 1848, ossia più di un anno prima che venisse inviata la enciclica papale, che è del 2 febbraio 1849: cf. nota 5.

²⁸ *Pareri dell'episcopato*, I, pp. 403-409, 410-411. Gabriele dell'Annunciazione (al secolo Francesco Giuseppe Nicholson), nato a Dublino (Irlanda) nel 1824, entrò tra i Carmelitani Scalzi e professò nel 1825. Ordinato sacerdote nel 1828, passò poi in Italia nel 1838, e a Roma si laureò in teologia nel 1842. Nominato nel 1846 coadiutore del vicario apostolico di Corfù, con il titolo di arcivescovo di Gerapoli, passò gli ultimi anni della sua vita in Inghilterra gravemente infermo e morì il 30 aprile 1855. Cf. AMBROSIVS A S. TERESIA, *Nomenclator missionariorum*, pp. 222-223.

²⁹ *Pareri dell'episcopato*, II, pp. 339-340.

³⁰ Ludovico di S. Teresa (al secolo Tiburzio Marcellino Martini), nato a Piscaglia (Lucca) nel 1809, emise i suoi voti religiosi nel 1828 a Roma, ove fu anche ordinato sacerdote nel 1832. Nel 1835 venne inviato alle missioni del Malabar. Nel 1839 fu nominato coadiutore, con diritto di successione, del vicario apostolico di quelle missioni; lavorò strenuamente nella missione di Canarà fino al 1845, quando divenne vicario apostolico del Malabar. False accuse l'obbligarono a tornare a Roma nel 1851. In seguito, nel 1855, rinunciò all'ufficio di vicario apostolico e si recò a Firenze, ove morì il 12 luglio 1833. Cf. AMBROSIVS A S. TERESIA, *Nomenclator missionariorum*, p. 252.

³¹ Bernardino di S. Teresa (al secolo Giuseppe Baccinelli) nacque a Roma il 15 marzo 1807. Entrò tra i carmelitani scalzi e professò nel 1824. Nel 1833 venne inviato nelle missioni in India. Fatto vescovo titolare di Eraclea nel 1847, fu poi arcivescovo di Farsalia *in partibus* e dal 1853 coadiutore del vicario apostolico di Gerapoli, con diritto di successione, e amministratore apostolico di Quilo, smembrata da Gerapoli. Nel 1859 fu vicario apostolico di Gerapoli, ove morì il 5 settembre 1868. Cf. AMBROSIVS A S. TERESIA, *Nomenclator missionariorum*, p. 71.

³² Il carmelitano scalzo Bernardino di S. Agnese (al secolo Filippo Pontanova), nato nel 1804 a Napoli, professò i voti nel 1828. Inviato missionario nelle Indie nel 1833, fu professore e rettore del seminario di Gerapoli, vicario apostolico di Mangalore e nel 1845 coadiutore del vicario apostolico di Gerapoli, col titolo di vescovo di Tanis. Ritornato a Roma nel 1852, morì l'anno seguente nel convento di S. Maria della Vittoria. Cf. AMBROSIVS A S. TERESIA, *Nomenclator missionariorum*, p. 70.

Successivamente giunsero le lettere di Giovanni Francesco Whelan, vescovo di Aureliopolis,³³ e di Clemente Manzini, vescovo di Cuneo,³⁴ spedite rispettivamente in data 8 dicembre e 28 dicembre 1849; in esse i due carmelitani manifestavano il proprio convincimento personale e il desiderio delle rispettive popolazioni a favore della proclamazione del dogma dell'Immacolata.

I pareri favorevoli dati da questi vescovi carmelitani esprimono pertanto un'accettazione pura e semplice della definizione progettata; testimoniano inoltre come essi considerassero il privilegio contenuto implicitamente nella rivelazione e ritenessero quindi opportuno il passo che intendeva compiere Pio IX. Va anche osservato che le risposte inviate dai vescovi carmelitani si limitavano a sottolineare la definibilità dell'Immacolato Concepimento di Maria, senza addentrarsi in questioni scolastiche.

Vi è una sola eccezione: quella del vescovo di Cuneo, il già ricordato carmelitano scalzo Clemente Manzini, che ancor prima di scrivere la lettera suindicata aveva spedito alla S. Sede, in data 21 ottobre 1849, un suo voto personale sul modo di procedere *dogmatico* nel proclamare l'Immacolata Concezione.³⁵ In questo voto, che s'inserisce nel dibattito assai vivace tra i teologi lungo il cammino verso la definizione dell'Immacolata e che si fa notare per contenuto ed eleganza dello stile, il vescovo di Cuneo ricorda come la via dommatica da seguire debba articolarsi con prove desunte dalla Scrittura, dai Padri della Chiesa, dalla liturgia, dalle suppliche dei vescovi e da quanto il magistero pontificio, nel corso dei secoli, aveva detto in merito all'Immacolata. Egli passa quindi a trattare ogni singolo aspetto. Con riferimento alla Scrittura, egli sottolinea in particolare l'argomentazione biblica da desumersi dal testo della *Genesi* 3,15 (l'inimicizia tra il serpente e la donna) e da alcune espressioni del *Cantico dei Cantici* («unica la mia colomba, la mia perfetta»: 6,8; e «tutta bella sei, in te nessuna macchia»: 4,7), applicate alla Madonna come di consueto nella tradizione ecclesiale. Per quanto riguarda invece i santi Padri

³³ *Pareri dell'episcopato*, II, pp. 420-421. L'irlandese Giovanni Francesco di S. Teresa (al secolo Guglielmo Whelan), nato a Dublino nel 1798, professò i voti a Roma nel 1817 e dopo essere stato ordinato sacerdote a Firenze tornò in patria, ove svolse vari uffici di priore e di vicario provinciale. Nel 1842 fu nominato vescovo coadiutore, con il titolo di Aureliopoli *in partibus*, del vicario apostolico di Bombay. Nel 1846 tornava a Dublino. Due anni dopo era di nuovo a Bombay come vicario apostolico. Chiamato a Roma nel 1850, rinunciò all'ufficio e tornò in Irlanda, ove morì a Dublino il 13 dicembre 1876. Cf. AMBROSIUS A S. TERESIA, *Nomenclator missionariorum*, p. 211.

³⁴ *Pareri dell'episcopato*, II, pp. 491-492. Su Manzini vedere la n. 4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, VI, pp. 610-620.

della Chiesa, egli centralizza l'esame sul pensiero di S. Ambrogio, offrendone un'ampia esposizione. Notevole spazio viene poi dato all'argomento desunto dalla liturgia, con attenzione alle celebrazioni liturgiche in onore dell'Immacolata e al suo culto pubblico e solenne. Accennata inoltre la necessità di tener conto delle suppliche che stanno arrivando alla Sede Apostolica, egli ricorda l'argomento del magistero pontificio con riferimento a quanto scritto da Alessandro VII. Manzini conclude così il suo voto: «Quae cum ita se habent, nullum nobis dubium posse Ecclesiam veritatem hanc, sive *dogmaticae* definire»;³⁶ e aggiunge l'opportunità e attualità di tale proclamazione, facendone risaltare il significato di opposizione alle eresie del mondo moderno e d'incremento della fede e prosperità del popolo cristiano. Da notare l'accento all'opposizione alle «novità moderne», che in quel tempo era abbastanza diffusa specialmente in certi ambienti clericali e di cui si terrà conto nel corso della preparazione della bolla; lo stesso Pio IX, a un certo punto, sembrò orientato nella direzione di unire la definizione dogmatica alla condanna degli errori moderni.

Nel volume dei *Pareri dell'episcopato* appaiono alcune petizioni fatte da Congregazioni o Ordini religiosi, ma non appaiono «voti» o «suppliche» esposte dai superiori generali dei due rami dell'Ordine del Carmelo. Ciò forse è spiegabile per il fatto che la *Ubi primum* era diretta solamente ai patriarchi, primati, arcivescovi e vescovi.³⁷

PRESENZA CARMELITANA NELLA FASE DI PROGETTAZIONE E DI STESURA DELL'ATTO DOGMATICO

Pio IX, rientrato in Roma il 12 giugno del 1850 con l'aiuto delle truppe francesi, e ristabilito il governo pontificio, fu incoraggiato dalle risposte favorevoli che giungevano da ogni parte del mondo a far riprendere, nel settembre dello stesso anno, i lavori della consulta speciale teologica, con aggiunta di tre nuovi consultori. Fu così che il ricordato consultore Paolo di S. Giuseppe riprese a collaborare con questa consulta speciale. I consultori vennero coinvolti nell'esame delle numerosissime lettere dell'episcopato; questo esame, effettuato nel corso del 1851, si concluse con la stampa delle lettere e di altri documenti in tre volumi riservati ai cardinali e consultori.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, VI, p. 619.

³⁷ Cf. il testo della bolla in SARDI, *La solenne definizione*, I, pp. 571-574.

Inoltre, venne chiesto ad ogni consultore di dare per iscritto il proprio voto sul primo progetto del documento pontificio per la definizione del dogma, preparato dal P. Giovanni Perrone. Nel maggio del 1852 venne costituita una nuova commissione teologica, che comprese i consultori della precedente con l'aggiunta di nuovi. Il suo compito era quello di continuare, parallelamente al lavoro di altri gruppi, l'esame dei progetti per la stesura definitiva della bolla pontificia. Oltre allo studio da svolgersi in privato per i membri della commissione, vi era poi l'impegno di frequenza a tutta una serie di riunioni specifiche.

In tale contesto l'apporto di P. Paolo risulta essere stato il seguente.

Prima di tutto egli formulò un voto sul primo schema della bolla pontificia.³⁸ Egli ricevette tale progetto il 14 aprile, mentre si trovava a Monserrato, e subito si mise al lavoro, che condusse a termine entro lo stesso mese di aprile. Nel suo voto il P. Paolo rilevò l'ordine, la chiarezza e i contenuti del progetto stesso, ma si sentì in dovere di suggerire, accanto ad alcune osservazioni marginali, alcuni termini che gli sembravano più appropriati. Al centro della sua attenzione, tuttavia, fu l'espressione *Piam sententiam etc. constantem fuisse, et esse Catholicae Ecclesiae doctrinam*. Egli contestò fortemente il *constantem fuisse ... doctrinam*, rilevando che l'espressione non poteva prendersi «nello stesso istessissimo senso tanto rapporto al presente, quanto rapporto al passato, dicendosi che fu quello che è, dicendosi che è quello che fu».³⁹ Di conseguenza, egli proponeva di correggere certe espressioni ricorrenti nel testo in questo modo: non *Catholicae Ecclesiae fuisse sententiam*, ma *in Ecclesia Catholica semper aliquo modo viguisse sententiam*; non *perpetuus Ecclesiae sensus*, ma *perpetuus in Ecclesia sensus*. Aggiungeva inoltre una redazione della formulazione della definizione dommatica che si rifaceva a simili espressioni. Il voto di P. Paolo si unì a quello della maggioranza dei voti contrari al progetto, che venne abbandonato.

Quando la nuova commissione speciale teologica prese a riunirsi negli anni 1852-54, il P. Paolo non fu presente alla prima riunione, quella dell'8 maggio 1852.⁴⁰ Fu invece presente a quella del 2 agosto 1853.⁴¹ In

³⁸ Testo della lettera di presentazione del voto e testo del voto in: SARDI, *La solenne definizione*, II, pp. 41-42, 42-45.

³⁹ SARDI, *La solenne definizione*, II, p. 43.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 781-782.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, I, p. 839.

questa riunione, svolta nella casa del card. Fornari, che ne era presidente, i presenti espressero la propria opinione se procedere o meno alla definizione. Dei 21 presenti, 17 risposero pienamente *affirmative*. Tra di essi vi era il P. Paolo, che in un secondo intervento nella seduta, riportandosi al suo voto, «dice che possa venirsi alla definizione dommatica, ed aggiunge la necessità».⁴² Alla medesima conclusione perveniva un'altra commissione formata da 19 cardinali, istituita per esaminare alcune difficoltà riguardanti la definizione stessa.

Nella successiva riunione dei teologi consultori, svoltasi il 9 settembre 1854 nelle camere della Segreteria di Stato al Quirinale, si esaminò il IV schema, con molte osservazioni per migliorarne il testo. Il P. Paolo non poté intervenire alla riunione perché indisposto di salute, ma mandò le sue osservazioni.⁴³ In esse muoveva alcune critiche al testo dello schema, ribadiva il suo concetto di non forzare eccessivamente i testi biblici e di moderare le espressioni che si riferivano alla «tanto pubblica e tanto universale» credenza sull'Immacolata, suggerendo il testo seguente: «Nihil mirum, si vel ab ipsis religionis primordiis in ecclesia radices egerit, ac in fidelium animis maiora semper incrementa susceperit».⁴⁴ È da notare anche un altro suggerimento dato dallo stesso P. Paolo: per quanto riguardava certe richieste di vescovi tese a introdurre nel canone della messa il riferimento al privilegio della Vergine, egli suggeriva d'inserirlo nell'*Infra actionem*: «Communicantes et memoriam venerantes in primis gloriosae semper Virginis Mariae sine originali labe conceptae, Genitricis Dei et domini nostri Iesu Christi».⁴⁵

Il 28 ottobre 1854 si ebbe la sessione plenaria dei consultori teologi per l'esame del V schema. Come al solito, la riunione avvenne al Quirinale, presso la Segreteria di Stato. Anche a questa riunione P. Paolo non partecipò, forse per la sua malferma salute, e questo spiega perché il suo nome non sia registrato nella lettera convocatoria della riunione. Egli non risulta presente neppure alla consulta dei cardinali e teologi del 3 novembre 1854, quando venne esaminato il VI schema.⁴⁶

⁴² *Ibid.*, I, p. 841.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, I, p. 118; II, pp. 118-119.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 120-121: testo delle osservazioni.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, II, p. 121.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 124, 142, 149, 150, 167-170.

Seguirono poi altri schemi, modificati e corretti fino a giungere al nono, definitivo. In quest'ultima fase non si sa se il P. Paolo sia stato coinvolto o impedito dalla sua malferma salute. Nel frattempo si preparava la *Narratio Actorum* da presentarsi al Papa insieme all'esemplare della bolla.

Il P. Paolo però fu presente all'ultima sessione della commissione, celebrata, malgrado fosse domenica, il 19 novembre dello stesso anno 1854 nella casa del cardinale Giovanni Brunelli.⁴⁷ Lo stesso cardinale volle preparare accuratamente l'incontro, ospitando il giorno prima i teologi. La finalità era lo svolgimento delle sedute di cardinali e vescovi residenti in Roma, sedute durante le quali sarebbero state presentate la *Narratio Actorum* e la bolla pontificia, con possibilità data ai consultori d'intervenire, qualora ve ne fosse bisogno, per dare le spiegazioni del caso.

Nei giorni 20-24 novembre si realizzò la solenne riunione dei cardinali e vescovi nella sala ducale del palazzo apostolico del Vaticano. Tra i presenti si faceva notare, per l'abito diverso da quello degli altri prelati, l'arcivescovo di Cirene, ossia il carmelitano scalzo Ludovico di S. Teresa Martini.⁴⁸ Dai verbali della riunione, però, non risulta che il carmelitano sia intervenuto oralmente o per iscritto.⁴⁹

Decisa la data della solenne proclamazione dommatica, furono ultimate le ultime modifiche al testo della bolla. E finalmente il venerdì 8 dicembre 1854 nella basilica vaticana, nel corso di una liturgia solennissima e alla presenza di circa duecento tra cardinali, arcivescovi e vescovi, Pio IX, emozionato, procedette all'atto dommatico, leggendo la solenne formula definitoria.⁵⁰ Tra i partecipanti al rito solenne vi era non solo l'arcivescovo Martini,⁵¹ ma anche P. Paolo di S. Giuseppe, che ebbe l'onore di essere invitato in modo particolare e di vedersi assegnato un luogo distinto insieme agli altri teologi e canonisti, in ringraziamento della cooperazione prestata alla sospirata proclamazione del dogma.⁵² In rappresentanza del Car-

⁴⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 171-173.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, II, p. 196.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, II, p. 194, 245. Martini si trovava a Roma già dal 1851, quando si era difeso con successo da false accuse mossegli nel Vicariato Apostolico del Malabar: cf. AMBROSIUS A S. TERESIA, *Nomenclator missionariorum*, p. 253.

⁵⁰ Per un'analisi della cerimonia della proclamazione del dogma cf. P. FERNESOLE, *Pie IX, pape (1792.1878)*, I, Parigi 1960-1963, pp. 256-259; documentazione dell'evento in: SARDI, *La solenne definizione*, II, pp. 397-461.

⁵¹ SARDI, *La solenne definizione*, II, p. 438.

⁵² *Ibid.*, II, p. 242.

melo vi erano nel corteo pontificio, come indicato nel cerimoniale, per gli scalzi il preposito generale della Congregazione d'Italia, Natale di S. Anna, e, per il ramo antico, il vicario generale Girolamo Priori, allora reggente l'Ordine dopo la morte del priore generale Giuseppe Raimondo Lobina, avvenuta il 23 febbraio di quell'anno 1854.⁵³

Il giorno dopo la proclamazione solenne dell'Immacolata, l'arcivescovo Martini era presente all'incontro in Vaticano voluto da Pio IX per esprimere il proprio ringraziamento a tutti i cardinali, arcivescovi e vescovi che avevano partecipato alla solenne cerimonia. Come gli altri prelati, anche Martini ricevette dalla mano di Pio IX un'incisione raffigurante la Vergine Immacolata e una medaglia d'oro commemorativa dell'evento, del valore di circa cinque scudi romani e recante da una parte l'immagine dell'Immacolata e dall'altra un'iscrizione in cui si ricorda che l'oro per coniare la medaglia stessa proveniva dai donativi fatti dall'Australia.⁵⁴

A proposito, poi, di una notizia, diffusa in seguito, che riportava la nota risposta data da Papa Pio IX ad una religiosa che gli chiedeva quali sentimenti avesse provato nel momento della proclamazione del dogma, vi è chi ha scritto che questa religiosa fosse carmelitana; ma è praticamente impossibile verificare l'esattezza della notizia.⁵⁵

IL CARMELO IN FESTA

Già in preparazione alla solenne proclamazione nelle chiese del Carmelo si innalzarono preghiere secondo l'intenzione del Pontefice e per il bene della Chiesa. In Roma notevoli furono le missioni svolte in varie parrocchie per ordine del Vicariato in preparazione all'evento.

⁵³ Il genovese Natale di S. Anna fu preposito generale della Congregazione d'Italia degli Scalzi dall'aprile 1853 al maggio 1859. Cf. FORTES, *Catalogus*, p. 28. Girolamo Priori, della provincia romana, fu procuratore generale dell'Ordine dal 1849 al 1854, quando il 25 settembre venne istituito da Pio IX vicario generale. Fu poi priore generale dal 1865 al 1863. Morì a Roma nel convento di S. Nicola ai Cesarini il 18 marzo 1883, all'età di 73 anni. Cf. M. VENTIMIGLIA, *Historia chronologica priorum generalium ordinis B. M. Virginis de Monte Carmelo*, ed. con suppl. di G. Wessels, Napoli 1773 - Roma 1929, p. 368.

⁵⁴ SARDI, *La solenne definizione*, II, pp. 445, 448-449.

⁵⁵ ISMAEL DE S. TERESITA, *Aportación del Carmelo*, p. 142.

Tra le parrocchie scelte vi fu anche quella di S. Martino ai Monti.⁵⁶ Purtroppo non sono reperibili, finora, cronache sullo svolgimento di tali missioni.

La solenne definizione dommatica dell'Immacolato Concepimento di Maria Vergine venne accompagnata dovunque nella Chiesa cattolica da grande esultanza; nulla di più naturale che ne esultassero anche i Carmelitani. Come nota di colore, qui ricordiamo alcuni di questi festeggiamenti, soprattutto quelli ufficiali più solenni promossi dalle curie generalizie dei due rami dell'Ordine.

A Roma, nella chiesa di S. Maria in Traspontina, allora sede della curia generalizia dei Carmelitani dell'antica Osservanza, i «festeggiamenti ufficiali» dell'Ordine furono realizzati nei giorni 23-24-25 febbraio del 1855. Ne diedero ampia cronaca il «Giornale di Roma» e la rivista «La Civiltà Cattolica».⁵⁷ Le feste furono definite «splendide». Le stesse cronache informano sui particolari della celebrazione: l'addobbo straordinario «in velluto e seta» e la «ricca illuminazione» della chiesa, il triduo di preparazione con predicazione e con messa pontificale, durante la quale veniva eseguita scelta musica del maestro Capocci, in ogni giorno del triduo la benedizione eucaristica serale data da un eminentissimo cardinale, e infine, l'ultima sera, a conclusione della solennità, il canto dell'Inno Ambrosiano. Dalle stesse cronache apprendiamo che celebranti dei pontificali furono: il carmelitano scalzo mons. Ludovico Martini e Giovanni Emanuele Marongiu Nurra, arcivescovo di Cagliari, che si trovava a Roma da quattro anni perché esiliato dalla sua diocesi da parte del governo del regno di Sardegna.⁵⁸ La predicazione venne tenuta dai seguenti padri carmelitani: Angelo Demartis, reggente dello studio generale dell'Ordine,⁵⁹ Giu-

⁵⁶ SARDI, *La solenne definizione*, II, p. 400.

⁵⁷ «Giornale di Roma» del 1° marzo 1855 e del 13 marzo 1855; «La Civiltà Cattolica», vol. 9 (1855), p. 689. Cf. anche A. MARTINO, *Le feste ufficiali dell'ordine carmelitano per la definizione dell'Immacolata*, in «La Madonna del Carmine», 8 (1954), pp. 72-73.

⁵⁸ Cf. R. TURTAS, *Storia della Chiesa in Sardegna, dalle origini al Duemila*, ed. Città Nuova, Roma 1999, p. 824.

⁵⁹ Angelo Demartis (al secolo Salvatore), nato a Sassari il 7 sett. 1817, entrava giovanissimo nel Carmelo. Conseguita la laurea in teologia presso l'Università di Sassari e ordinato sacerdote, venne chiamato a Roma nel 1850, come reggente dello studio generale dell'Ordine e professore di morale alla Sapienza. Fu consultore delle Congregazioni dell'Indice e degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, ed esaminatore del clero romano. Nominato vescovo di Galtelli-Nuoro nel 1867, resse la diocesi fino alla morte, avvenuta il 24 giugno 1902. Partecipò al Concilio Vaticano I. Cf. SMET, *The Carmelites*, IV, pp. 130-131, 134-139.

seppe Camillo Scalabrini, assistente generale,⁶⁰ ed Eliseo Giordano, ex-provinciale.⁶¹

Ma la festa non si svolse esclusivamente in chiesa. Tutto il rione attorno ad essa partecipò alla comune esultanza. Come informano le ricordate cronache giornalistiche, le case di Borgo Nuovo apparivano splendidamente illuminate di notte e le finestre ornate di fiammeggianti damaschi. Ogni sera, davanti al convento e fino ad ora tarda, allietava la popolazione un concerto tenuto dai bombardieri di Castel S. Angelo.⁶²

Da notizie di archivio si apprendono altri dettagli curiosi sull'apparato della chiesa e sulle spese incontrate per i festeggiamenti.⁶³ La «ricca illuminazione» consisteva in ben 57 lampadari, di cristallo di Boemia, con un enorme consumo di cera tanto che per portare quella necessaria si usò un carro ben grande. L'altare maggiore venne ampliato con un'armatura in legno ornata di festoni. I piedistalli delle colonne lungo la chiesa vennero dipinti a colore. Inoltre, per i pontificali si fecero fare apposite ampolline di cristallo dorato e una tovaglia di lino riccamente ricamata. Tra le spese, oltre quelle degli addobbi e degli altri oggetti necessari, sono annoverate quelle per il pagamento dell'«organaro e tiramantici», dei facchini per i vari trasporti, di due chierici «per servire messe» e di altri sei chierici della basilica di S. Pietro per il servizio dei pontificali (dato che gli studenti dello studio generale non sapevano servire secondo il rito romano, avendo l'Ordine ancora il rito proprio). Seguono poi le spese per le carrozze con le quali si andò a «invitare, portare e riportare» i vescovi

⁶⁰ Giuseppe Camillo Scalabrini nacque a Trapani il 31 maggio 1801. Divenuto carmelitano, emise la sua professione a S. Martino ai Monti in Roma. Completati gli studi accademici e ordinato sacerdote, svolse ampia attività di predicatore. Ricoprì vari incarichi, tra i quali quello di priore provinciale della provincia di S. Angelo in Sicilia (1833-1841). Assistente generale, fu anche commissario e visitatore generale. Morì in Trapani il 24 ottobre del 1867. Cf. Necrologio n. 638, ms. nell'archivio del convento di S. Maria dell'Annunziata di Trapani.

⁶¹ Eliseo Giordano, nato a Sassari il 12 marzo 1820 ed entrato giovane tra i carmelitani, conseguì il magistero in teologia nel 1846. Reggente degli studi nel convento di S. Giovanni a Teduccio presso Napoli nel 1847, fu poi a Roma segretario e socio del priore generale. Provinciale titolare di Sassonia, nel 1856 divenne parroco di S. Maria in Traspontina. Procuratore generale negli anni 1874-1883, venne creato da Leone XIII vescovo di Alghero il 15 marzo 1883. Morì il 7 gennaio del 1906. Cf. L. CANEPA, *Mons. Eliseo Giordano dei Carmelitani vescovo di Alghero*, in «Il Monte Carmelo», 21 (1935), pp. 105-107.

⁶² «Giornale di Roma», 1 marzo 1855; «La Civiltà cattolica», vol. 9 (1855), p. 689.

⁶³ Archivio Generale dell'Ordine Carmelitano in Roma (AGOC), fondo II Roma (Tr.), 33 (esito febbraio 1855) e 38 (spese per il triduo dell'Immacolata Concezione).

per i pontificali del sacro triduo, le varie mance alla servitù di cardinali e vescovi, il rinfresco con «caffé e zuccheri» offerto ai prelati; ed infine viene annotato anche lo scudo con cui si pagò il «Giornale di Roma» per inserirvi la cronaca del triduo.

Le spese sostenute, anche se non si conosce la somma esatta, furono ingenti. Trovandosi la chiesa della Traspontina vicino a S. Pietro, lo stesso Pio IX volle partecipare alle spese con un'offerta generosa. Si aggiunsero i contributi di altri prelati per coprire le spese. Tra questi contributi le cronache ricordano la consistente elargizione del card. Giuseppe Cosenza, titolare della chiesa. Concorsero anche la popolazione e un'apposita «deputazione» presieduta dal conte Castore di Marsciano.⁶⁴

Altra celebrazione ufficiale fu quella dei S. Maria della Scala in Trastevere, sede della curia dei carmelitani scalzi. La celebrazione avvenne prima del 12 maggio 1855. Il triduo «per magnificenza d'adobbi e per concorso di popolo, non fu inferiore a nessuno di che ebbero luogo quest'anno nella capitale del mondo cattolico».⁶⁵

Le feste curate dai carmelitani nell'isola di Malta si svolsero con la collaborazione zelante della confraternita del Carmine. Le cronache ricordano: «Non stiamo qui a descrivere minutamente la splendidezza degli interni apparati, e i brillanti preparativi per la illuminazione della vigilia; diremo soltanto che la Chiesa [del Carmine a Valletta] era gremita di gente in un modo veramente straordinario. Alle ore 2 pom. si diè principio ad un sermone recitato dal padre Maestro Carmelo Carta dello stesso Ordine.⁶⁶ Indi si cantò un Vespero solenne, con musica sontuosissima del Maestro Nani, e dopo l'Inno Ambrosiano, cantato dall'affollatissimo popolo ivi raccolto, si finì con la sacramentale benedizione».⁶⁷

Anche le solennità svoltesi a Siviglia in Spagna per commemorare l'evento del nuovo dogma mariano hanno lasciato ricordo nelle cronache, che descrivono soprattutto quelle realizzate nella chiesa dei carmelitani scalzi, sempre nell'anno 1855, descritte «como las más

⁶⁴ «Giornale di Roma», 13 marzo 1855.

⁶⁵ «La Civiltà Cattolica», vol. 10 (1855), pp. 471 e 693.

⁶⁶ Il maltese Carmelo Carta nacque nel 1801 e professò nell'ordine a ventidue anni. Ordinato sacerdote, esercitò alcuni uffici all'interno del suo convento della Valletta. Maestro in teologia e predicatore, fu anche socio e segretario del vicario provinciale di Malta. Cf. Archivio Generale dell'Ordine Carmelitano, II Malta, Commune, Relazione anni 1855, 1856.

⁶⁷ SARDI, *La solenne definizione*, II, p. 507, ove si riporta il testo edito nel Supplemento al n. 290 del giornale maltese «L'Ordine», giovedì 11 gennaio 1857.

solemnes y casi las primeiras de ese año en la tierra de María Santísima». ⁶⁸

Infine, nel concludere, tra i numerosi scritti e poesie che in occasione della proclamazione del dogma composero appartenenti al Carmelo, piace ricordarne almeno due: un ampio e tenero cantico in onore dell'Immacolata composto dalla carmelitana scalza M. Teresa della Presentazione (†1890), del monastero di Sevilla; il cantico venne incluso nell'album che la città di Siviglia volle donare nel 1867 a Pio IX ⁶⁹ e un piccolo trattato sull'eccellenza del culto verso l'Immacolato Concepimento di Maria Vergine, pubblicato a Recife nel 1855 da un carmelitano del ramo antico, Lino del Monte Carmelo Melo Luna (1821-1874), della provincia di Pernambuco. ⁷⁰

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⁶⁸ ISMAEL DE S. TERESITA, *Aportación del Carmelo*, p. 142.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 142-143.

⁷⁰ SMET, *The Carmelites*, IV, p. 171. Per notizie su Lino del Monte Carmelo: R. PERÉA, *Os intelectuais luso-brasileiros. IX: P. Lino do Monte Carmelo, diretor da Bibliotheca Pública (1821-1874)*, Recife, 1941.

APORTACIONES
A LA BIOGRAFÍA DE SAN JUAN DE LA CRUZ

I SOBRE EL AÑO EN QUE JUAN DE YEPES ABANDONÓ FONTIVEROS

Hasta qué año vivió Juan de Yepes en Fontiveros es uno de los problemas, sujetos a revisión. La imprecisa indicación del P. José de Velasco a propósito de los años que contaba Francisco de Yepes al abandonar Fontiveros, camino de Arévalo, es lo único que se conocía hasta tiempos recientes. Dice así: «sería de 18 años poco más o menos».¹ Si nació en 1530, según este autor, habría que situar la salida de Fontiveros de Catalina Alvarez y sus hijos en torno a 1548. Este año está un poco lejos de los datos que proporcionan los padrones fontiverosños conservados en el archivo de la Real Chancillería de Valladolid.

En el padrón de 1548 (el primero conocido) figura *la de Yépez* (sic) que habría que identificar con Catalina Alvarez, viuda de Gonzalo de Yepes. Como *la de Yepes* figura en los padrones de 1551 a 1555.²

El profesor Marcos Martín apunta la idea de que su nombre se repitiera por inercia o sencillamente que Catalina y sus hijos estuvieran todavía en 1555 en Fontiveros.³ Nos inclinamos más bien por esta última posibilidad e intentaremos razonarla. De acuerdo con este autor, los padrones de 1548 y 1553 se hicieron para «aprontar el pago de la martiniega y los salarios de justicia».⁴ Estimamos que habría que rechazar la inercia, porque varía la cantidad con la que

¹ JOSÉ DE VELASCO, O.CARM., *Vida, virtudes y muerte del venerable varón Francisco de Yepes*, Valladolid 1616, p. 78.

² Valladolid, Arch. Real Chancillería, Protocolos y padrones, c. 57-10 al 57-15. Su nombre puede verse al final de los padrones de 1550-1555. Cuando dimos a conocer estos padrones, los estudiamos bajo otra perspectiva, es decir, para acercarnos al número de habitantes de Fontiveros. Véase nuestra obra *De Fontiveros a Salamanca pasando por Medina del Campo*, Madrid 1991, pp. 20 ss.

³ ALBERTO MARCOS MARTÍN, *San Juan de la Cruz y su ambiente de pobreza*, en *Actas de congreso internacional sanjuanista*, 3 v., Valladolid 1993, II, pp. 156-157.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

contribuyó *la de Yepes* en estos años. En 1548 con 1 maravedí⁵ y con 4 en 1553.⁶

«Tres de estos padrones (1550, 1552, 1555) se hicieron para cumplir con el repartimiento del servicio ordinario y extraordinario».⁷ Pues bien, la cantidad con la que contribuyó *la de Yepes* también es distinta. En 1550 con 10 maravedises; en 1552 con 6; en 1555, con 10.⁸

Los padrones de 1551 y 1554 se hicieron «para prorratear entre el común de los hombres buenos “los gastos e pleitos que se tratan con los vecinos desta vylla que se dicen hidalgos”».⁹ En estos años contribuyó con 2 y 1 maravedí respectivamente.¹⁰

Varias conclusiones podemos extraer del estudio de estos padrones. Por supuesto, identificar *la de Yepes*, con *la de Yezpez*, único apellido que aparece en los mismos. Un simple vistazo comparativo con la contribución de otros vecinos, acredita que era mínima la cantidad con que contribuía, prueba inequívoca de la pobreza de *la de Yepes*. Finalmente digamos que la familia Yepes permaneció durante estos años en Fontiveros al menos hasta el 13 de agosto de 1555.¹¹

La edad de Juan de Yepes, al salir de Fontiveros hacia Arévalo y Medina del Campo, está en función del año de su nacimiento; hasta el presente, que sabemos, se han barajado tres distintos: 1540, 1542, 1544.¹²

Los datos aportados no inciden en el esquema general de la vida del P. José de Velasco, biógrafo de Francisco de Yepes, y primer biógrafo de San Juan de la Cruz. Sencillamente hay que prolongar su estancia más años en Fontiveros y retrasar su salida hacia Arévalo y Medina.

Referida directamente a Juan de Yepes y de su estancia en Fontiveros sólo conocemos una noticia. De niño correteó por la zona de las lagunas, cayó en una charca, le salvó un labriego con una ijada,

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁶ Valladolid, Arch. Real Chancillería, Sección Protocolos y padrones, c. 57-13.

⁷ MARCOS MARTÍN, *San Juan de la Cruz y el ambiente de pobreza*, p. 156.

⁸ Valladolid, Arch. Real Chancillería, Sección Protocolos y padrones c. 57-10; c.57-12; c.57-15.

⁹ MARCOS MARTÍN, *San Juan de la Cruz y el ambiente de pobreza*, p. 156.

¹⁰ Valladolid, Arch. Real Chancillería, Sección Protocolos y padrones, c. 57-11; c. 57-14.

¹¹ El P. José Vicente apunta la posibilidad de que hubiera existido un viaje de Fontiveros a Arévalo con posible estancia y de nuevo de Arévalo a Fontiveros [JOSÉ VICENTE RODRÍGUEZ, *Lectura varia sanjuanista*, en «Revista de espiritualidad», 52 (Madrid 1993), p. 288].

¹² De momento nos limitamos a ofrecer estos datos; en su día intentaremos exponer nuestro punto de vista.

pero él creyó haber visto una señora, muy hermosa que le alargaba la mano y que no se la dio por no mancharla.¹³

Si esta escena no es una florecilla y ocurrió en la zona de las lagunas, allí, junto a una de ellas, se levantaba el convento de las monjas carmelitas ¿qué le diría al pequeño Juan de Yepes el bastión de fe del Carmelo de la Madre de Dios?.

II PADRÓN DE LOS VECINOS DE FONTIVEROS EN TIEMPOS DE JUAN DE YEPES (1553)

En veynte y çinco días de hotubre de mil quinientos cinquenta y tres años fueron juntos los señores Benito Ramires, alcalde hordinario, Pedro Ramires, Neculás Hernández, Andrés de Madrigal, Pedro Fernández, jurados e Juan Rodríguez, procurador, en casa de my, Juan Gómez, fue para tasar e repartir por los vecinos de esta vylla de Fontiveros e pecheros de ella los maravedis que le cupieron a pagar de la martiniega e salario de la justia de este año, los quales fueron repartidos por virtud de una hyjuela que ende tenian firmada de Juan de Herreros vecino de esta vylla, término del seismo de San Juan en que diz que repartiesen por los vecinos de esta vylla e pecheros de ella veinte y tres mill y noveçientos y veinte y çinco maravedis, los quales se repartieron en la forma que se sygue.

dezeno	Pedro Linero	27
ochavo	Pedro Pascual	34
	Juan Gutiérrez	20 (tachado 7)
[omissis]		
dezeno	la de Antonio López	27
	la de Diego de Barrío	6
dos terçios	Alonso García el moço	180
seismo	Baltasar Gómez	45
	la de Yepes	4¹⁴

¹³ CRISÓGONO DE JESÚS SAGRAMENTATO, O.C.D., *Vida y obras de San Juan de la Cruz*, Madrid 1950, pp. 32-33; FORTES, A-CUEVAS, F. J., O.C.D., *Procesos de beatificación de San Juan de la Cruz*, IV, Burgos 1992, p. 356; V, 1994, pp. 113, 242; JOSÉ VICENTE RODRÍGUEZ, O.C.D., *Demonios y exorcismos, duendes y otras presencias diabólicas en la vida de San Juan de la Cruz*, en *Actas del congreso internacional sanjuanista*, II, Valladolid 1993, p. 302.

¹⁴ [Proprio su questa menzione de *la de Yepes* l'autore dell'articolo richiama l'attenzione con una sua nota manoscritta; egli ne ricava la conferma sulla presenza della famiglia De Yepes a Fontiveros negli anni centrali del XVI secolo; e proprio per questo motivo ha ritenuto di doverne «contestualizzare» la storicità riproducendo dai documenti d'archivio da lui consultati l'intero e lunghissimo elenco di abitanti e «contribuenti» della città spagnola, *n.d.e.*].

medio	Alonso García	135
pechero	Juan López	270
[<i>omissis</i>]		

Ansi que hecho el dicho repartimiento como arriba se contiene, ante los señores alcalde y jurados que van dichos e declarados, suma, e monta el dicho repartimiento veinte y ocho mil y seisçientos y çinquenta y nueve maravedís, y por que es verdadera la firmó de su nombre Benito Ramirez, alcalde ordinario.

Benito Ramirez¹⁵

III ENCUENTRO DE JUAN DE YEPES CON UN POETA CARMELITA EN MEDINA DEL CAMPO

Pretendemos en las páginas que siguen insistir en un aspecto, ya señalado por historiadores de prestigio, es decir, su más que probable conocimiento de la obra de un poeta carmelita: Juan Bautista Spagnoli, el Mantuano, durante el período que vivió en Medina del Campo y a propósito de sus estudios en el colegio de los jesuitas. Es posible que su estancia en la ciudad de las ferias se prolongara unos 10 años aproximadamente, desde que llegó en fecha ignorada, hasta su marcha a Salamanca, una vez emitida la profesión religiosa en 1564, en el convento de Carmelitas de Santa Ana. Fue una etapa decisiva en su vida.

Juan de Yepes, pobre y emigrante, no tuvo las mismas oportunidades que los hijos de las clases privilegiadas de la época, pero afortunadamente no le faltó el acceso a la cultura, gracias, principalmente, al administrador del hospital medinense de las bubas, Don Alonso Alvarez de Toledo, donde trabajó, como enfermero.

Conoció a grandes maestros enseñantes jesuitas en el colegio de la Compañía. Es significativo además que los documentos indiquen abiertamente que el célebre P. Bonifacio fue su preceptor.¹⁶ Dadas sus ocupaciones, debió de ser un alumno a tiempo parcial; suficiente para introducirse en el campo humanístico una inteligencia privilegiada.

¹⁵ Valladolid, Arch. Real Chancillería, Protocolos y padrones, caja 37-13.

¹⁶ Véase la *Relación de Francisco de Yepes sobres su hermano San Juan de la Cruz*, Madrid, B.N., Ms. 127338, f. 611 ss. Fue publicada por PABLO MARÍA GARRIDO, O.CARM., *Santa Teresa, San Juan de la Cruz y los Carmelitas españoles*, Madrid 1982, pp. 374-375. La noticia era conocida a través del mismo Francisco de Yepes (SILVERIO DE SANTA TERESA, O.C.D., *Historia del Carmen descalzo en España, Portugal y América*, V, Burgos 1636, p. 22).

En el colegio de la Compañía pudo asomarse y familiarizarse con el mundo de los clásicos latinos: Terencio, Virgilio, Cicerón, César, Ovidio, etc. Los alumnos llegaban incluso «a escribir con corrección en latín, a hacer versos latinos».¹⁷

Se ha aludido, además, y muy especialmente, a un autor no clásico, sino renacentista a quien Erasmo calificó como el Virgilio cristiano. Nos referimos a Bautista Spagnoli, al que veneramos en los altares, desde 1885 como Beato Bautista Mantuano. Hijo de cordobés e italiana, nació en 1447. Ingresó en la Orden del Carmen y llegó a desempeñar el cargo de prior general de los Carmelitas.

Escribió numerosas obras en poesía latina que irrumpieron briosamente en los ambientes culturales. Baste recordar que uno de sus tratados, *De calamitatibus temporum*, se imprimió cerca de treinta veces entre los años 1498 y 1510.¹⁸

«En honor de la Virgen compuso varias odas y un poema en tres libros, la *Parthenice Mariana*,¹⁹ cantos a la Virgen, que tuvo rápida difusión, pues de ella se hicieron unas setenta ediciones, quince en el siglo XV y cerca de cincuenta en el siglo XVI».²⁰

¿Conoció la *Parthenice Mariana* Juan de Yepes?. Creemos que sí. Juan de Yepes debió de conocer esta obra. ¿Razón?. En Medina del Campo y en 1561 (atención a la fecha) se imprimió la *Parthenice Mariana*. Reproducimos el título completo de la misma:

Baptistae Mantuani Carmelitae, Teologi ac poetae clarissimi, Parthenice Mariana, recenter excusa, in Methynensium scolasticorum gratiam: collegio Societatis Jesu bonas litteras addiscentium, Methynae Campi. Excudebat Franciscus a Cantu. Typographus ANNO M.D.L.XI.

¹⁷ LUIS FERNÁNDEZ MARTÍN, S.J., *El colegio de los Jesuitas de Medina del Campo en tiempo de Juan de Yepes*, en *Juan de la Cruz, espíritu de Llama*. Coordinador OTGER STEGGINK, O.Carm., Institutum Carmelitanum, Roma - Kok Pharos Publishing House, Kampen, The Netherlands, 1991, pp. 41ss. Sobre el P. Bonifacio véase FÉLIX GONZÁLEZ OLMEDO, *Juan Bonifacio*, Santander 1983, passim.

¹⁸ EDMONDO COCCIA, en *Santos del Carmelo. Biografías de distintos diccionarios. Preparación e introducción de Ludovico Saggi, O.Carm. Traducción castellana de Jesús Carrión, O.Carm.*, Madrid 1982, pp. 263ss. Un estudio de las ediciones de las obras del Mantuano en el mismo autor, E. COCCIA, *Le edizioni delle opere del Mantovano*, Roma 1960.

¹⁹ Sobre el vocablo *Parthenice* indica el P. LOKKERS: «*Parthenice*: Virgo; vox Graeca, proprie adiectiva, qua, absolute posita, significatur herba, quae et parthenium dicitur, a poeta ut symbolum virginis adhibetur. Cfr. Catull, 61.193» (*Beati Baptistae Mantuani ex operibus Anthologia et commentario adstruxit P. ADALBERTUS LOKKERS, O.Carm., Traiecti ad Mosam 1936, p. 33*).

²⁰ E. COCCIA, en *Santos del Carmelo*, pp. 263ss.

Precede a esta edición un prólogo en latín del propio editor, en el que traza una breve semblanza del gran carmelita poeta y declara que la publicó a instancias de los jesuitas.²¹

Realmente el título y año de impresión son sugerentes. Se destina el libro para los alumnos del colegio de la Compañía. Uno de ellos, con toda probabilidad, por no decir con seguridad, era Juan de Yepes, quien, como es sabido, no ingresaría en el noviciado de los Carmelitas de Medina hasta dos años más tarde, en 1563.

Por otra parte, existen grandes probabilidades y casi pruebas de que San Juan de la Cruz conoció las obras de Mantuano. En la lejana fecha de 1953 Bataillon escribió un artículo titulado: *La tortolice de Fontefrida y del Cántico espiritual*. Con su habitual maestría hace una excursión sobre la presencia de la tórtola viuda en la tradición literaria que enturbia el agua antes de beberla, para no entristecerse. Nótese que la tórtola veía en las aguas cristalinas su propia imagen, pero creía que era la de su compañero perdido. La interpretación del poeta latino del siglo XV (Bautista Mantuano) es la que sigue: «La tórtola que perdió a su consorte vuela sola por los campos, no se ve posarse en rama verde, y no bebe en aguas límpidas: *Sicut ubi amisso thalami consorte per agros/ sola volat turtur, nitidis neque potat in undis/, ne comitis prisci tristetur imagine visa/, nec viridi posthac fertur considerare trunco ...*»

Por los versos del Mantuano – y por otros canales – pudo llegar el ya clásico retrato de la tórtola viuda ... a San Juan de la Cruz ... y es para él figura de los misterios del alma contemplativa. La viudez de la tórtola no es tal viudez, sino ausencia del Amado y víspera de unión con Él:

Y ya la tortolice/ al socio deseado/
en las riberas verdes ha hallado.

Bataillon advierte que San Juan de la Cruz enriquece el simbolismo de la viudez de la tórtola,²² lo que por otra parte es muy propio

²¹ Esta edición es una rareza bibliográfica. Por primera vez la hemos visto citada en CRISTÓBAL CUEVAS, en *Estudio literario*, en *Introducción a la lectura de San Juan de la Cruz*, Salamanca 1991, p. 145. Conocemos un ejemplar existente en la B. N. de Lisboa; se echa de menos la referencia a dicha edición en el libro de Coccia, citado en la nota 18.

²² MARCEL BATAILLON, *La tortolice de Fontefrida y del Cántico espiritual*, en «Nueva revista de Filología Hispánica», 6, Madrid 1953, pp, 291ss. También en *Varia lección de clásicos españoles*, Madrid 1964, pp. 144ss. Véase SAN JUAN DE LA CRUZ, *Cántico espiritual* (B. 34,5).

del Santo, como señaló también otro agudo hispanista, R. Richard, a propósito de un pasaje espiritual de Laredo, recreado por San Juan de la Cruz.²³

Continuando en esta línea, antes que Bataillón hubiera advertido posibles reminiscencias del Mantuano en San Juan de la Cruz, lo había hecho el P. José Vicente Rodríguez. En efecto, lo indicó en 1947 en un artículo en castellano e insistió el siguiente año en otro estudio publicado en latín.²⁴ A la vuelta de casi medio siglo se reafirma en su opinión y la amplía con nuevas aportaciones, aunque se echa de menos una reproducción de textos paralelos de ambos autores, acaso a doble columna. El Santo habría leído al Mantuano, cuya huella rastrea en distintos pasajes de sus obras inmortales. Cita varios ejemplos; veamos algunos: «Vestidos y colores en el humanista italiano: caridad “de tela de oro vestida”. Esperanza, con su laena, es decir, vestidura usada por augures y soldados en la antigüedad. Acaso diríamos esclavina verde: “cubierta de tela verde”. Fe, toga blanca. En San Juan de la Cruz: “caridad, toga roja. Esperanza, almilla verde. Fe, túnica, camisa blanca”». No sin razón afirma el P. José Vicente que esta hipótesis de trabajo podría ser más fecunda que introducirse en el mundo del Islán, para detectar la posible influencia en el Santo, lo que parece insinuar una crítica a quienes investigan en esta dirección.

«Cautivado por la belleza poética, advierte el P. Rodríguez, podía leer (en la *Parthenice*) una entusiasta descripción del Monte Carmelo. El espíritu mariano de Bautista Spagnol pudo llamar la atención de Juan de Yepes».²⁵

En contacto con la *Parthenice Mariana* acaso le encaminara también hacia la admiración por la historia profética de la Orden del Carmen, en la que el Mantuano vivía inmerso. En este libro precioso se alude con relativa frecuencia a Elías y Eliseo, quienes dejaron trazado el camino de la vida espiritual y quienes tuvieron abundancia de seguidores.²⁶

²³ R. RICHARD, *La fonte de St. Jean de la Croix et un chapitre de Laredo*, en «Bulletin Hispanic», 58 (1956), p. 271.

²⁴ JOSÉ VICENTE DE LA EUCARISTÍA, O.C.D., *El mejor humanista cristiano pretridentino*, en «Revista de espiritualidad», 6 (1947), p. 68. VINCENTIUS AB EUCARISTIA, O.C.D., *Libamentum aesthetico – marianum ex B. Baptistae Mantuani operibus*, en «Analeca O.C.D.», 20 (1948), p. 211.

²⁵ JOSÉ VICENTE RODRÍGUEZ, O.C.D., *Lectura varia sanjuanista*, en «Revista de espiritualidad», 52 (1993), pp. 310 ss.

²⁶ BAPTISTA MANTUANO, *Historia virginal (Parthenice Mariana)* traducido en romance por Juan Fernández de Ledesma, Valladolid, 1627, f. 56v.

Son significativas las palabras que el poeta pone en boca de la Virgen:

Célicos habitadores/ del encumbrado Carmelo/ Varones que eternizays
memorias de los primeros/ Decidme, o varones santos/ pues merecí a
vuestro ejemplo/ Renunciar del matrimonio/ los actos menos perfectos.²⁷

Las alusiones al monte Carmelo, como lugar de culto continuado a la Virgen purísima, son de cuño tradicional carmelita, como lo es también la alusión al celo desbordado de Elías.²⁸

Además de estas referencias, más o menos esporádicas, en el libro tercero de la *Parthenice* existe un apartado que titula *Descriptio Carmeli*. En él evoca, como se acaba de indicar, la santa montaña con estilo que subyuga:

Entre omenajes sobervios/ De Cesarea y de Sidón/ A quien ministra el
Jordán/ Espejos de presunción/. Eminente se descuella/ y altiva frente
erigió/ El Carmelo, siendo al viento/ Obstentosa emulación.

Alude al rapto de Elías y al espíritu que heredó Eliseo. Vuelve sobre el culto perenne a la Señora del Cielo en la montaña santa. Considera el monte Carmelo como una vid generosa, porque allí empezó la vida monacal, origen de racimos frondosos, como los cartujos, los frailes menores, los ermitaños de San Agustín, los frailes predicadores, con leves pinceladas sobre sus carismas. Allí tuvo su comienzo la religión del Carmen. De nuevo su mirada hacia los profetas. Y se hace eco de leyendas entrañables, como las visitas de la Virgen a los ermitaños del Carmelo.

En este tratado, el poeta carmelita, con un conocimiento admirable de la Sda. Escritura, discurre sobre los principales misterios de la Virgen: Concepción, Nacimiento, Presentación, Visitación, Purificación, Tránsito glorioso. No olvida acercarse a la vida de Cristo y siempre, junto a él, la Virgen, su madre: Nacimiento, Bodas de Caná, Pasión ... Intercala además temas, como las virtudes de Ntra. Señora, quejas amorosas de Santa Ana, etc.²⁹

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 104. El original en elegante latín dice así: "Dicite Carmeli, qui sancta/ silentia montis./ Incolitis vates, vatunque/ aeterna propago./ Quos imitans taedas sum/ designata iugales." (BBAPTISTA MANTUANO, *Parthenice Mariana*, edición de Medina, 29r.).

²⁸ BAPTISTA MANTUANO, *Historia virginal (Parthenice Mariana)*, traducida en romance por Juan Fernández de Ledesma, f. 71r, 16r, 75r.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, passim. Sobre la mariología del Mantuano véase ENRIQUE DEL SAGRADO CORAZÓN - JOSÉ MIGUEL DE LA IMMACULADA, O.C.D., *La mariología de Juan Bautista Spa-*

Juan de Yepes tuvo que vérselas con el latín enrevesado del poeta Bautista Mantuano, desbordante y abundoso en imágenes y metáforas, pero que le aproximaría, sin duda, al marianismo de la vieja Orden.

El monte Carmelo ha sido una constante de inspiración poética para los carmelitas de todos los tiempos, un lugar añorado y nostálgico, como aparece ya en las páginas vibrantes del *Libro de la Institución de los primeros monjes* de la segunda mitad del s. XIV. ¿No es significativo también que San Juan de la Cruz titule uno de sus famosos tratados espirituales: *Subida al Monte Carmelo*? ¿Sería mucho afirmar, en la hipótesis indicada por el P. Rodríguez, que la lectura de la *Parthenice* influyó en alguna manera, para que Juan de Yepes ingresara en la Orden del Carmen? ¿A Santa Ana de Medina del Campo llegó también de la mano del Mantuano? Las páginas del poeta de Mantua ¿le fascinaron encaminándole al misterio del Carmelo?

Y ya que hemos hecho alusión al Mantuano, recordemos a otro poeta carmelita, cuya obra se imprimió en 1580, sin que naturalmente pudiera conocerla Juan de Yepes, siendo estudiante en Medina, pero no se descarta la posibilidad de que hubiera sido, en posterior conocimiento, fuente de inspiración de aquella frase del Cántico espiritual: un no sé qué, que ... Nos referimos a Pedro de Padilla. Dámaso Alonso cita, ante todo, la poesía de Padilla que comienza así:

Por sólo la hermosura/
nunca yo me perderé/
sino por un no sé qué/
que se alcanza por ventura.

Continúa Padilla con una composición deliciosamente equívoca, pero al fin de cuentas, dice el maestro, vemos se refiere al amor humano, aunque al más alto, al más descontentadizo, al menos material. No nos maravilla que el que así cantaba, el que así mostraba su desvío por la hermosura carnal, buscando la interior, cinco años después se entrara también carmelita y se convirtiera también en poeta a lo divino. Prosigue Dámaso Alonso citando una poesía que podría ser del Santo y que comienza con las mismas palabras de la de Pedro de Padilla, pero con una ligera variante: «*Por toda la hermosura*, en

gnoli, en «El Monte Carmelo», 48 (1947), pp. 229-235. Curiosamente otro poeta carmelita, contemporáneo de San Juan de la Cruz, Pedro de Padilla, al que aludiremos seguidamente, también escribió lo que podríamos llamar un tratado mariológico (PABLO MARÍA GARRIDO, O.CARM., *La Virgen de la Fe. Doctrina y piedad mariana entre los carmelitas españoles de los siglos XVI y XVII*, Roma 1999, pp. 95-131; 303-328).

vez de *Por sólo la hermosura*. Las estrofas siguientes de la posible poesía de San Juan de la Cruz respiran claramente al amor divino».

La composición de Padilla se encuentra en su obra *Tesoro de varias poesías*. Indica asimismo Dámaso Alonso que la frase en cuestión la repite con frecuencia Boscán.³⁰

Pedro de Padilla fue amigo personal, entre otros escritores, de Cervantes; Cuando vistió el hábito en el Carmen de Madrid, le dedicó unas redondillas. Fue uno de los poetas celebrados de su tiempo y actualmente está despertando interés.³¹

IV EL CONVENTO DE MONJAS CARMELITAS DE FONTIVEROS Y JUAN DE YEPES

Cuando nos acercamos a la infancia de San Juan de la Cruz, sorprende la falta de noticias en relación con el convento de carmelitas de clausura, que, como es sabido, ya existía en su tiempo, aunque en distinto emplazamiento del actual. Por tradición nada se transmite y en su archivo no hemos encontrado documento alguno sobre el particular. Curiosamente hemos de recurrir al archivo de las carmelitas descalzas de Valladolid para encontrar una noticia.

En las informaciones que se hicieron en Fontiveros sobre el bautismo del Santo los días 22 y 23 de julio de 1627, en vistas al proceso de beatificación, una de las informantes fue precisamente Inés de Castellanos, monja del convento de carmelitas de Fontiveros. Copiamos literalmente el documento y sus palabras:

«En la dicha Villa de Fontiveros en los dichos veintitrés días del dicho mes y año el dicho Padre Fray Juan de S. Antonio para más averiguación de lo contenido en el dicho pedimento presentó por testigo a la Sa. D^a Inés de Castellanos Briceño, religiosa en el convento de la Madre de Dios del Carmen de esta dicha villa, la cual juró voluntariamente a Dios y a una Cruz, en forma de derecho, de decir verdad de lo que supiese y la fuere preguntado y siendo preguntada al tenor de dicho pedimento, dijo que muchas veces ha oído decir a religiosas más antiguas y en especial a D^a María Ramírez, difunta que hubiera hoy ochenta años de edad y era natural de dicha villa, que el Padre Fray Juan de la Cruz y Francisco de

³⁰ DÁMASO ALONSO, *La poesía de San Juan de la Cruz* (Desde esta ladera), Madrid 1942; 3^a ed., 1958, pp. 89-91, 205.

³¹ AURELIO VALLADERES REGUERO, *El poeta linarense Pedro Padilla*, Jaén 1995, pasim. Sobre Padilla véase también BALBINO VELASCO BAYÓN, O.CARM., *Historia del Carmelo español*, III, Roma 1994, pp. 175ss.

Yepes su hermano, eran naturales de esta villa y nacidos en ella y oyó decir que ellos y sus padres vivieron en esta villa en una calle que llaman de Cantiveros y tiene por cierto que se bautizaron en la parroquia de dicha Iglesia por ser naturales de ella y que no haber razón de su bautismo es por haberse quemado la iglesia después del nacimiento del dicho Venerable Padre con tan vehemente fuego que se abrasaron todos los ornamentos, libros y papeles de la dicha iglesia y así mismo ha oído decir que el dicho Padre Fray Juan de la cruz y Francisco de Yepes su hermano, eran legítimos de legítimo matrimonio, personas virtuosas y temerosas de Dios y de su conciencia y ellos y sus padres y demás ascendientes, gente honrada, limpia de toda mancha y raza y dijo que todo lo que dicho tiene es la verdad, público y notorio, pública voz y fama. Leyósele su dicho y ratificóse en él debajo del dicho juramento y lo firmó de su nombre y dijo ser de edad de sesenta años, poco más o menos. Antonio Rodríguez. D^a Inés de Castellanos Briceño. Ante mí, Gaspar Hernández».

La declarante, Inés de Castellanos Briceño, fue hija de Antonio Briceño de Cárdenas y de Catalina Castellanos, naturales de Arévalo. Hizo la profesión en el convento de carmelitas de Fontiveros en 1582, siendo provincial el P. Rodrigo Nieto. En nota marginal leemos que murió el 6 de noviembre de 1621, lo que evidentemente es un error; de acuerdo con la declaración transcrita.³²

El original de las informaciones sobre el bautismo se conserva en el archivo de las carmelitas descalzas de Valladolid.³³ Conocidas estas informaciones ya yace tiempo y estudiadas por los historiadores, hemos querido simplemente reproducir la declaración de la monja de la comunidad fontiverenseña.

Fue un gesto fraterno y simpático el del P. Juan de San Antonio, carmelita descalzo, recurrir a las carmelitas para recabar noticias sobre el bautismo de Juan de Yepes. Lamentamos que las monjas no pudieran haberle proporcionado otros datos.

Posiblemente hacia más de 70 años que Catalina Alvarez y sus hijos habían abandonado Fontiveros. Son muchos años. Menos mal que encontraron personas que proporcionaron informaciones, alguna de ellas muy interesante.

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28016 Madrid

³² FONTIVEROS, Arch. Conv. MM. Carmelitas, *Libro de profesiones*, f. 2r.

³³ VALLADOLID, Arch. Conv. MM. Carmelitas, *Información sobre el bautismo de San Juan de la Cruz hecha en Fontiveros*. 22 julio, 1627.

“SEEING WITH THE EYES”: THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE
IN THE DISPUTE ABOUT THE CARMEL AT AUSCHWITZ *

Contents: Introduction - I. Background - II. Jewish Fears and Protests - III. Polish complexity: Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and Communism - IV. The Church - V. Demands for Geneva II - VI. Three Lenses on the Jewish Protesters Entry Into Carmel - VII. Pro-tests on All Sides - VIII. Reluctant Resolution - IX Carmelite Tradition - X. Hasidic Tradition - XI. Ordinary Language and Mystical Language - XII. Analysis - XIII. Conclusion - Works Cited.

“Words, they say, are a comparatively recent invention, for the fuller expression of something that was already in existence”.¹

“How we treat silence depends upon the theory we hold about how words are related to objects”.²

INTRODUCTION

If there is any value in the study of mysticism and its use of imaginative language, it is to facilitate the merging of worlds and not their collision. The international controversy surrounding the Carmelite monastery at Auschwitz reverberated at political and interfaith

* I am grateful to Rev. Patrick McMahon, O.Carm., for the original suggestion of this topic and for his generosity in time and intellectual energy in helping me complete the project. I thank my second reader, Rev. John Welch, O.Carm., for his support over the years at Washington Theological Union, his belief in me, and the opportunities with which he has graced me.

All the translations from the French and Dutch have been done by the author.

¹ SAMUEL BUTLER, “Thought and Language”, in *The Importance of Language*, ed. Max Black, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1962, p. 15.

² FREDERICK SONTAG, “Words of Silence: The Context for God”, in *God in Language*, ed. Robert Scharlemann and Gilbert E. M. Ogutu, Paragon House Publishers, New York 1987, p. 144.

levels and could be analyzed from several points of view - theological, historical, anthropological, symbolic, and nationalistic.

While these angles will be included, when relevant, this work will use language as the primary prism with which to understand this bitter debate. Further, I will speculate about the language of a potential dialogue between the Carmelite tradition and the Hasidic Jews. Both groups are representative of a mystical stream within their faiths and both honor a place that goes beyond words and rational, logical discourse.

I BACKGROUND

Even the correct name for the concentration camp in Poland commonly referred to by its German name of Auschwitz carries linguistic significance and emotional freight. For many Poles the location is properly called Oswiecim, an ordinary village in southern Poland near the Czechoslovakian border. For most of the rest of the world and certainly for the Jewish community, the site is Auschwitz, the machine for and symbol of the Nazis' industrialized effort to exterminate Jews from the face of the earth. The discrepancy in place name is only the tip of the iceberg in mutual misunderstanding, ignorance, and diatribe that occurred among the various parties to the dispute over the Carmelite convent on the grounds of the Auschwitz death camp.

Ironically, pre-war Oswiecim or Auschwitz was primarily a Jewish village and some of the Jewish inhabitants were conscripted as slave labor to build the actual camp. Further, once designated by the Germans as official concentration camp construction workers, some were sent on to build other camps and even survived extermination! Through having been assigned to this particular linguistic category of human beings (camp builders), as opposed to being seen primarily as Jews, their lives were spared in an ironic twist of German logic and language. Eichmann is reported to have said at his trial in Jerusalem: "The only language I recognize is an administrative one", illustrating the point that the Nazis' obsessive hatred of Jews could be trumped by their even stronger obsession for administrative logic and consistency in labeling human beings.³ Once a builder of concentrations camps, always a builder of concentration camps, even if Jewish!

³ THEO KLEIN, *L'affaire du Carmel d'Auschwitz*, Editions Jacques Bertoin, n.p. 1991, p. 17.

Even the term "Auschwitz" evoked entirely different collective memories and massive distrust among the disputants, in part due to simple ignorance of the history and inner workings of the Auschwitz operation. Indeed, the original inspiration for the camp was an outgrowth of an agreement between Hitler and Stalin in 1939 to eradicate politically threatening members of Polish society, including the well educated, the elite, and eventually anyone in the Polish Resistance.⁴ Polish political prisoners began arriving at Auschwitz in June 1940 and for most of the next two years, almost all prisoners were Poles in what was the concentration camp, as opposed to the subsequent death camp at Auschwitz II (see below). Two hundred and seventy thousand Poles died at Auschwitz and a total of 3 million Polish citizens died in other camps from actual murder, starvation and illness.⁵ Thus to Polish national memory, Auschwitz was hallowed, sacrificial ground where many of the best and brightest members of society were killed. A quote from Jonathan Webber illustrates the symbolic meaning of the camp to Poles:

As part of the wider Nazi treatment of the Polish population as a source of slave labor, Auschwitz was a specific element in the attempt at the systematic destruction of Polish culture and Polish national identity, in order eventually to provide Germany with more room to expand.⁶

(This important nuance of Polish history appears to have been often overlooked by some of the more strident Jewish voices during the angry debate). For this reason, many Poles reject Auschwitz as an exclusive Jewish sacrifice and there have even been some relatively recent skirmishes over who "owns" the symbolic horror of this place.⁷

⁴ WLADYSLAW T. BARTOSZEWSKI, *The Convent at Auschwitz*, George Braziller, New York 1991, p. 9. Thus in the collective memory of Poles, Auschwitz has special historical significance as the site of the early efforts to destroy Polish intelligentsia.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10. See also MARC H. ELLIS, *Ending Auschwitz*, Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, KY 1994, p. 60, where the author cites the figure of 75,000 deaths of non-Jewish Poles at Auschwitz.

⁶ JONATHAN WEBBER, as cited in MARC H. ELLIS, *Ending Auschwitz*, p. 60.

⁷ PETER FINN, "Dispute Over Auschwitz Crosses Roils Polish-Jewish Relations", in "The Washington Post", 6 september 1998. The article discusses the relatively recent dispute over the erection of multiples crosses, ranging from tiny ones to some 15 feet tall, and discusses Polish nationalists' insistence that Auschwitz is Polish and Catholic, not Jewish. The violent physical confrontation between N.Y.C. police and firefighters at the World Trade Center clean up after September 11th and feuding among survivor's groups about who is more deserving of financial help is sadly reminiscent of the ongoing polemic over who owns" Auschwitz

What many Polish and other Christian partisans in the argument either overlooked or denied was the near exclusive use of the sub camp (which contained the main gas chambers) called Auschwitz-Birkenau or Auschwitz II, to kill more than one million Jews. Starting in May 1942 most Jews who arrived at Auschwitz were sent directly to the gas chambers in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Indeed 90% of victims of the gas chambers at the sub camp were Jewish, thus marking Auschwitz as the grisly symbol of the Holocaust.⁸ While more Jews died in the four other Polish camps of Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka combined than at Auschwitz, Wladyslaw T. Bartoszewski suggests that Auschwitz became the overarching Holocaust symbol for several reasons.⁹ First, it was the center of destruction of European Jews, not just Polish Jews, so it had more of an international meaning; secondly, it had a large contingent of Jewish slave laborers with a relatively high survival rate, which meant they could be post camp witnesses; and thirdly unlike some other death camps, the physical plant of Auschwitz remained intact after the war as a concrete reminder of what took place there, thus making denial and obfuscation more difficult. Of the scholars I consulted, only one, Marc Ellis, referred to what he called an “incredible site” on the grounds of the Birkenau death camp – a Catholic church that he visited in 1992 as part of a group of Jewish intellectuals and advisers to the museum there.¹⁰

To Ellis, the presence of this church which commemorates the death of Edith Stein, is “much more provocative than the convent at Auschwitz” because it is a former Nazi building and because it stands alongside the road traveled by Jews on their way to the death camp.¹¹ I can only speculate why this church was not also a source of protest and confrontation but, to the best of my knowledge, there has been none. Undoubtedly the somewhat triumphal language of the original fundraising appeal to honor the Pope, which will be discussed below, and the fact that no mention was made of Auschwitz in the fundraising brochure as also a place of special symbolic meaning to the Jews were important factors in bringing this issue into the public square.

⁸ Some Jews reject the term “Holocaust”, believing that it suggests a religious or sacrificial connotation to the genocide. “Shoah”, to this group, denotes exactly the meaningless destruction of a people, a destruction without redemption. I use Holocaust simply because it was the most common usage in my research.

⁹ BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 13.

¹⁰ ELLIS, p. 60.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Abraham Joshua Heschel has suggested "all things carry a surplus of meaning over being – they mean more than what they are in themselves".¹² While Heschel was referring to the ineffable, spiritual underpinnings of reality, the above quote also highlights the truth that symbols are far more evocative than mere facts. The name Auschwitz signifies so much more than the bald numerical total of people killed there and has come to stand for the modern, scientific application of technology to kill human beings judged to be unworthy of life, in this case Jews. So whatever the exact "count" of murdered human beings, Auschwitz's surplus of meaning far exceeds the facts.

There is a basic conceptual challenge in the argument over the presence of a Christian convent on grounds of a concentration camp whose principal focus became the extermination of Jews. One struggles to acknowledge the huge losses for the Poles as well as other groups at Auschwitz without trivializing the unique suffering of the Jews, but one also must wonder whether language at all is suited for the purpose of discussing the Holocaust? As Susan Shapiro asks, "Have not the very coherence of language and the continuity of tradition been broken, shattered by this event?"¹³ Shapiro argues that there has been a double rupture of language as our theological assumptions about the Divine and anthropological assumptions about human beings and relationships have been so negated that the capacity of language to bear this discourse has been radically called into question. She states: "The negating character of the event cannot be understood, therefore, as either external or occasional to thought. Rather, it must be recognized as a negation already present in our language, the very instrument of our thought".¹⁴ Shapiro notes the inherent contradiction in using language to describe a "radically negating event that shatters the very conventions of speech and discourse without employing those conventions and, thereby, domesticating that radical negativity".¹⁵

Certainly one of the first places to use Shapiro's cautionary comments about the dangers of linguistically "domesticating" the Holocaust is in the initial Belgian fund raising appeal for the Carmelite

¹² ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL, *Man is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York 1951, p. 40.

¹³ SUSAN SHAPIRO, "Hearing the Testimony of Radical Negation", in *The Holocaust as Interruption in Concilium*, T. and T. Clark Ltd, Edinburgh 1984, p. 3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

convent at Auschwitz. If there was even a case example of how *not* to approach an exquisitely sensitive topic, this was it! In 1985 a Belgian charity, *Aide a l'Eglise en detresse*, decided to commemorate Pope John Paul II's upcoming visit by raising funds to support the Carmelite nuns already established in a ramshackle building adjacent to barracks at Auschwitz. The most striking thing about the fund raising language was the total absence of any reference to Jewish deaths at Auschwitz and the somewhat exclusive, triumphal Christian focus. While much was made of the fact by the later protesters that the appeal referred to the Carmelite nuns praying for "lost (or strayed) brethren of our countries", and that the convent would be a spiritual fortress", there was actually nothing in the text to support subsequent inflammatory accusations that the nuns would be praying for the conversion of the Jews who died at Auschwitz.¹⁶ In fact, the fund raising appeal also mentioned the Carmel's prayers and penance "for those of us who are still living", which could have been interpreted as a humble acknowledgment of the responsibility that the living had to atone for the deaths at Auschwitz, rather than an attempt to domesticate the Holocaust.¹⁷ While the financial appeal was aimed at the Catholic community, had it also evidenced any sensitivity to the symbolic power of Auschwitz for the Jewish people, some of the subsequent hostility might have been diminished. The fact that the nuns' convent had formerly been a storage area where the Nazis had stored the deadly Zykon B gas for use in the death camp made the physical location and symbolism even more neuralgic.

The Belgian appeal to celebrate the Pope's visit through financial donations came against a background of Jewish ambivalence about the Pope's true attitude vis a vis the Holocaust and the Church's supposed efforts to "christianize" the deaths of six million Jews. In protesting the convent, Sergio Minerbi, researcher at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, referred to remarks made by the future John Paul II in 1971 when he was Archbishop of Cracow about the Polish Church's wish to have "a place of sacrifice, an altar, and a sanctuary, precisely at Auschwitz".¹⁸ Minerbi accused the Pope of wanting to con-

¹⁶ THEO KLEIN, *L'Affaire Carmel*, p. 208. Even if this had been the intent of the fundraisers, it is bad Catholic theology, as one doesn't pray for conversion of the dead.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ SERGIO MINERBI, "L'attitude du Pape Jean-Paul II vis a vis des Juifs et de la Shoah", in *Pourquoi le Carmel d'Auschwitz?*, in «Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles», Brussels, Belgium (1990-3-4), p. 77. Here we have one of the many clash of symbol sys-

struct a “basilica” at Auschwitz, based on these remarks and speculated that the Carmelite convent might really be a ruse for the Pope’s alleged plan for a basilica. This is a typical example in this polemical debate of one side exaggerating and projecting malicious intent on to the other. In this case, Minerbi built a basilica out of the Pope’s words from nearly two decades earlier. Minerbi also objected to the canonization of Edith Stein as an example of Christian “appropriation” of Jewish symbols, people, and places, in this case Auschwitz.¹⁹ Many Jews, Minerbi among them, (and not a few Christians) had also been troubled by the Church’s canonization of the Polish Franciscan, Father Maximilian Kolbe, in 1982.²⁰ Minerbi, whose language was among the most hyperbolic and cynical on the Jewish side of this controversy, suggested that the Church was positioning itself as “the major victim of Nazism” and implying that Auschwitz was the “symbol of the cosmic punishment of the Jews because they didn’t recognize Christ”.²¹

Another example of emotional and inflammatory language, this time attacking the Carmelite sisters themselves, is an article by Micheline and Nathan Weinstock.²² While they strike many blows at the Church and the John Paul II (whose style is that of a “Hollywood show”), they reserve the most scorn and outrage for the fact that the sisters maintain a vegetable garden at Auschwitz:²³

It is precisely this patch of green, maintained with love by the nuns, as numerous photographic reports have shown us, that is singularly trou-

tems - for the Christian, evil can be redeemed through liturgical sacrifice at the altar, whereas for Jews, there is no possibility of redeeming sacrifice at Auschwitz, only blasphemy.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8. Edith Stein, a brilliant Jewish philosopher, converted to Catholicism became a Carmelite nun, and was killed in Auschwitz. Her eventual canonization by John Paul II in 1998 caused much outrage in the Jewish community who felt the Church was using her to publicize Catholic suffering when Jews believe she had been killed solely because she was Jewish. Stein and her sister, Rosa, were two of two hundred and thirteen Jewish converts to Catholicism who were deported from Holland in retaliation for an anti-Nazi letter from the bishops that was read in all Dutch Catholic churches on July 26, 1942.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 78. Minerbi acknowledged Kolbe’s generosity in volunteering to take the place of a married man with family who had been sentenced to death, but asserted that his previous role as editor of an anti-Jewish journal made him an unsuitable candidate for sainthood, particularly if the Church was attempting to mend fences with the Jewish community.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 79, 82.

²² MICHELINE AND NATHAN WEINSTOCK, “Le sens pervers du Carmel d’Auschwitz”, in *Pourquoi le Carmel d’Auschwitz?*, pp. 21-40.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

bling. Would it ever occur to you to grow vegetables in a field of human ashes? What flavor can a Carmelite possibly find in products from such a garden? And is it really blood that runs in their veins for them to enjoy eating such vegetables?²⁴

The vegetable garden, of course, was not literally in a field of human ashes and such extreme symbolic language can be found on both sides of the polemic, as we shall see below.

Against this already heightened background of Jewish sensitivity about Auschwitz as well as the many centuries of deicide accusations against the Jews, the Belgian appeal asking for donations for the convent without any mention of Auschwitz as *the* symbol of Nazi efforts to exterminate the Jews raised many hackles. Further, the fund raising appeal argued that donations would be “proof of our desire to erase the outrages so often done to the Vicar of Christ”.²⁵ While there is reason to think that the aforementioned “offenses” actually referred to the neighboring liberal Dutch Church’s open challenge of papal conservatism, many Jews heard the “offenses” as referring to criticism of Pope Pius XII’s alleged indifference about the destruction of the Jews during World War II. According to this theory, a sub text of the Carmelite convent was the rehabilitation of the memory of Pope Pius XII by re-focusing on Polish victimization and Christian martyrdom and drawing attention away from Pius XII’s perceived failure to defend the Jews.²⁶

While there are very plausible, innocent interpretations of the fund raising message in a strictly Christian milieu, it did have a triumphal tone. One example is its reference to “the victorious power of the Cross of Christ” at Auschwitz, which among other claims in the appeal caused Theo Klein, a lawyer and president of «The Council Representing Jewish Institutions in France” to characterize it as evidence of “the old tradition of imperial and intolerant Catholicism”.²⁷ So while the fund raising tract stands as a most infelicitous example of dealing with such an emotionally charged topic as Auschwitz, it also illustrates the profound linguistic challenge in finding any language

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

²⁵ KLEIN, p. 208.

²⁶ The role of Pius XII is a neuralgic one between Jews and Catholics. Until the 1963 appearance of the play, *The Deputy*, by ROLF HOCHHUTH, Pius XII was seen as a protector of the Roman Jews. The play challenged his public silence. Final evaluation of Pius XII’s role must await the full opening of all the relevant archival material.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

that properly encompasses the horror symbolized by Auschwitz. Shapiro’s above cautions about language not being able to contain the radical negativity represented by this symbol is to the point. The relatively innocent, naive inspiration to raise money for the convent, without taking Jewish sensibilities into account, and the exclusively Christian language of the appeal both illustrate her charge of the impossibility of domesticating the radical evil, particularly against the background of Jewish suspicion, some of which was well founded, as described above.

II JEWISH FEARS AND PROTESTS

Within months of the above appeal, the President of the «World Jewish Congress» lobbied government officials in Poland to move the convent. Momentum was building in the protest movement and in February, 1986, four Belgian Jewish leaders met with the Archbishop of Cracow, Cardinal Macharski, whose diocese included Auschwitz. This group expressed fear that the presence of the Carmelite convent would “accelerate the banalization” of the Holocaust at the very place regarded as the worldwide symbol of German efforts to eradicate European Jews.²⁸ Referring to the mutual respect and dialogue that had characterized Jewish-Christian relations since Vatican II, the Belgian Jews complained that this unilateral action of placing nuns at Auschwitz violated the trust that had been built up. Cardinal Macharski acknowledged that Jews had been the main victims at the death camp, a site that represented evil incarnate to him. However, he defended the location of the convent as a “concrete manifestation of a desire to pray and repent”.²⁹

According to Bartoszewski, the dispute which raged between Jews and Catholics boiled down to the two different theological interpretations of Auschwitz as symbol – with most Jews arguing that a Catholic convent would trivialize the memory of the Jewish victims and some Catholics defending the nuns’ right, even obligation, to make reparations at the site of this great evil. To Catholics the mystery of redemptive suffering is central to the faith in a crucified Christ who, through his death and ultimate resurrection, reunited God and humankind and demonstrated the power of Love over death, even death

²⁸ BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 8.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

in Auschwitz. But for the Jewish theological tradition, any attempt to redeem the site was offensive. To illustrate this, I cite Yaffa Eliach's account of her experience when she joined other members of President Carter's Commission on the Holocaust for evening services at an ancient Cracow synagogue. Unexpectedly one member of the group, the sole Holocaust survivor of a large family, approached the bimah, banged on a table, and announced he was calling God to Din Torah, a court hearing on God's conduct:

God! How could you stay here when next door are Auschwitz and Plaszow? Where were you when all over Europe your sons and daughters were burning on altars? What did you do when my sainted father and mother marched to their deaths? When my sisters and brothers were put to the sword?³⁰

In the face of such anguish, Auschwitz is a place of God's absence, not presence. Christopher Longley offers more theological elaboration as follows:

The Jewish instinct in a place like that is to leave it as desolate as possible, physically, morally, and philosophically. Auschwitz is not sacred to the Jews; it is the very opposite of sacred. To extract solace or meaning from such things, let alone find holiness there, is to try to mitigate the evil, to pretend it was somehow not as bad as it really was, and thus to belittle the millions who died there.³¹

In addition to different theologies, there is the issue of the relative silence of Christians during the Holocaust. The «European Jewish Congress», as just one example, protested in 1986:

When our brothers and sisters met their death in Auschwitz, they were surrounded by a total silence on the part of the world and a very significant silence on the part of the Church. We cannot tolerate that prayers should take place, even in the best of intentions, in this place, from those who could have, at the right time, raised their voice for our brothers and sisters and who did no do so.³²

³⁰ YAFFA ELIACH, *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust*, Avon Books, New York 1982, p. 250.

³¹ CHRISTOPHER LONGLEY, in «Times», May 20, 1989, as quoted in BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 156.

³² A. MONTAGUE, "The Carmelite Convent at Auschwitz: A Documentary Survey", in *IJA Report*, as cited in BARTOSZEWSKI, pp. 35-36.

A third perspective is offered by a modern Jewish theologian, Richard L. Rubenstein, who posits a certain Christian cultural ignorance and insensitivity to the Jewish notion of memory, stating that "May his name and memory be blotted out!" is the most abominable curse a Jew can utter.³³ In Rubenstein's opinion, the anger at the perceived threat to obliterate the memory of the Jewish victims at Auschwitz was an important, overlooked factor in Jewish resistance to the convent.

In July, 1986, an important meeting in Geneva took place between the Catholic delegation, headed by the French Cardinal Decourtray and leaders of several European Jewish communities, led by Theo Klein, the aforementioned Frenchman.³⁴ As we shall see in future developments, it was significant that no Carmelites were involved in the gathering or apparently even consulted. The fruit of this encounter was Cardinal Macharski's spontaneous (and surprising, according to Klein) commitment to stop any additional repairs or construction to the convent, pending a permanent resolution of the issue. The language of the document issued by this group, *Zakhor* in Hebrew or *Souvien-Toi* in French is a short masterpiece in reconciliation, in acknowledging Auschwitz as the "unique symbol" of the Shoah, in memorializing the dead, and in remembering that Poles, gypsies, and Russian prisoners of war were also murdered there.³⁵ Just as it was

³³ RICHARD L. RUBENSTEIN, *After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London 1972, p. 70.

³⁴ For a thoughtful, personal account of the Carmelite convent dispute, associated meetings, and correspondence, seen by a French Jewish leader, see THEO KLEIN's above cited work, *L'affaire du Carmel*. Of particular interest are his impressions of the French Cardinals, Albert Decourtray and Jean-Marie Lustiger, the latter of Jewish origin like Klein. Klein, who describes himself as a "non-practicing Jew", was struck by Decourtray's humility, which he attributes to the Cardinal's mysticism and deep faith (pp. 60-61). There are also many delicious details of the dynamics of the meetings.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 211. I found no indication that this document was ever issued in Polish and indeed, some of the Jewish community outside Poland seemed better informed about the matter than the Polish people. French was apparently chosen as the common language due to its long diplomatic use and due to the plurality of French speakers: French Cardinals Decourtray and Lustiger, the Jewish chair, Theo Klein, the Chief Rabbi of France, René-Samuel Sirat, Belgian Cardinal Danneels, and the president of the Belgian Coordinating Committee of Jewish Organizations. Klein mentions that two Belgian representatives were included because the dispute originally arose in Belgium and to recognize Belgian Jewish "vigilance" about the matter (p. 58). Presumably the other participants either spoke French or used interpreters. This point is not clarified. The Polish representatives were all Catholic (Cardinal Macharski, his assistant, the Jesuit Fr. Musial, and a lay intellectual). The absence of Carmelites certainly suggests that this was an issue with important political and interfaith overtones, rather than primarily a theological dispute.

significant that no Carmelites were involved in either Geneva meeting, the fact that the document did not appear in Polish speaks volumes about this controversy being an international and interfaith political issue, rather than a Polish question. Apparently neither the Poles nor the Carmelites were seen as significant to the process. In his account Klein was pleased with the commitment to a “mutual search” in order to “move beyond the affront” (of the convent).³⁶ Over time, however, some participants accused Cardinal Macharski of not following through scrupulously enough on his earlier promise to prevent any expansion or rehabilitation of the convent. Polish nationalistic protests against evicting the nuns were growing (see below), and there was a demand from the Jewish side for another meeting to hold the Church accountable to its commitment.³⁷ Charges of Polish anti-Semitism increased along with Catholic insistence that Polish deaths had to be honored too. Failure to include the Poles in a meaningful dialogue certainly increased the tension.

III POLISH COMPLEXITY: NATIONALISM, ANTI-SEMITISM, AND COMMUNISM

As chair of the Jewish delegation, Theo Klein’s views on the evolution of this controversy are worth noting. He begins his effort at analyzing Polish anti-Semitism by comparing it to the history of a family with ups and downs and divergent views of the same experiences.³⁸ He stresses that to analyze this phenomenon is not to defend or justify it, but to attempt to explain it. Like many family histories, the story of Jewish-Polish relations is rife with ambiguities, contradictions, hatreds, and some mutual respect. From the 10th century the history of Jews in Poland consists of occasional waves of immigration from Western Europe when Jewish persecution there increased and chronic Polish ambivalence about the role Jews played in the economy. For the elite and working class, the Jews were a valuable minority in terms of their economic contributions as professionals in towns

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 87. Klein acknowledges rare voices of Jewish support for the nuns remaining at Auschwitz, such as a statement from the Canadian Jewish Congress, due to what he calls “incoherences” caused by “untimely initiatives” from his side. For contemporary Jewish dissent from the original demand that the convent be moved, see RICHARD L. RUBENSTEIN, *After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism*, pp. 62 and 72.

³⁸ KLEIN, p. 33.

and as middlemen in agriculture, as peddlers, tanners, shoemakers, and so on. in the villages and countryside. Since the Polish nobility wasn't allowed to engage in trade directly, with grain and timber as the only exceptions, they found it convenient to rely heavily on Jews to do their trading and in some cases to manage their estates. For the poor peasants living miserable level, the Jews became ideal figures for projections of the peasants' resentments and jealousies, particularly between the 16th and 18th centuries. Given the relative level of Jewish autonomy and the lack of opportunities for the impoverished peasants, this 200-year period has been described as "heaven for the Jews, paradise for the nobles, hell for the serfs".³⁹ However, this is also the same historical period that included a ban on Jews living in certain towns and periodic violence such as the murder of 20% of the Jewish population during the Cossack revolt against the nobles in 1648, when the Jews were accused of supporting the interests of the nobility.⁴⁰

According to Klein, another factor leading to Polish anti-Semitism was the use of Yiddish by the Jews who lived in the countryside and villages. Given that Yiddish was a Germanic based language and that some elements of Polish society were anti-German, this linguistic relationship and the Jews' near monopoly on business with Austria and Germany were additional factors in maintaining anti-Jewish sentiments. Ironically, the Polish speaking Jews, who lived in cities, were professionals and better integrated into Polish society, but were often hated because of their supposed social and economic advantages. As per Klein, "in brief, if they were poor and badly integrated, they were scorned; if they were rich and well integrated, they were objects of envy".⁴¹

The 18th c. partition of Poland by Austria, Prussia and Russia further complicated the ambiguous picture. Even though Jews participated in two uprising against the Tsars, they were often seen as collaborating with the foreign occupiers. On the other hand, although the Poles themselves had no love for the Tsarist occupiers, the Tsars' anti-Jewish policies fanned the flames of native anti-Semitism.⁴² According to Klein, "this old scheme of hatred" existed all over Europe, par-

³⁹ BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

⁴¹ KLEIN, p. 32.

⁴² Klein asserts that both the Polish and Russian gentry often used the Jews as their unpopular tax collectors, and thus had in common their ambivalence about the Jews.

ticularly in his native France, but reached its zenith in Poland, which happened to have the largest Jewish community in Europe.⁴³ Simultaneously with Poland's assent to the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, which affirmed its independence, Poland was forced to sign the Minorities Treaty that supposedly guaranteed Jewish rights. This became a major threat to Polish honor and independence, a threat, which intensified when American Jews protested that the Polish Jews were still being mistreated.⁴⁴

Klein stresses that 20th c. Polish attitudes about Jews were multi-determined and can't be simply subsumed under "classic anti-Semitism". In addition to the role of poverty, Polish nationalism had always been edgy about minorities and the allegiance between nationalism and Catholicism had a profound effect on the Jews being seen as the hated "other". By the time of Polish independence in 1918, the country faced a critical question about how to relate to the Jews who were 10% of the population. Would they be incorporated, along with other minorities, into a heterogeneous, pluralistic society or would Poland become a "homogeneous religioethnic community?"⁴⁵ This question was openly debated among political parties and in the market square with the main focus on the Jewish minority. It is Rubenstein's belief that while "most Poles" agreed that Jews should be removed from the country, they lacked the methods to do so, other than "soft" persecution and encouragement of emigration.⁴⁶ The Nazis, according to Rubenstein, supplied the strategy for achieving this national desire and their policy of exterminating Jews dovetailed nicely with Polish sentiments.⁴⁷

Attacked by both German and Russian armies, the Poles lost their independence in 1939 and suffered terribly during the war. When Germany turned on Russia in 1941, Polish Communists began working underground against the Germans and became open pro-Soviet partisans when the Russian army invaded to expel the Germans. The 1945 Yalta Conference with Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin paid lip service to a future multi-party Polish state, but the Communists who then occupied the country never allowed free elections to be held, and thus Poland fell under Soviet influence.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴⁴ RUBENSTEIN, pp. 65-66.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 64. This question is an ironic foreshadowing of the problems in the Middle East and the struggles in Israel over pluralism

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

Under Communism, a new stereotypical, negative category emerged, that of "Judeo-Communism", which linked Jews to the hated Russian occupier.⁴⁸ Klein explains this, in part, by noting that for many Polish Jews the Russian occupiers did represent a more hopeful, less anti-Semitic force than the just vanquished Nazis and he wondered who could blame them? The post World War II Russian occupation forces appointed some Jewish sympathizers to various low level, administrative posts, thus adding fuel to the popular notion of Jews as Communists and therefore, by definition, as supposedly opposed to Polish freedom, the principal icon of which was the Catholic Church.⁴⁹ Eventually, in another example of the rigid linguistic categories of Nazi thought, some of these supposedly pro-Communist Jews, were eventually deported to Siberia for the crime of being religious believers or middle class, not particularly because they were Jewish.⁵⁰ In another more recent example of the role of language in scapegoating and oppression, Cardinal Glemp is reported to have charged that "Trotskyites", allegedly a thinly disguised reference to Jews, penetrated the Solidarity movement.⁵¹

IV THE CHURCH

In the Cathedral of St. John in Warsaw there is a plaque that speaks volumes about the close association between the Polish nation and the Catholic Church: "Catholicism isn't an addition to Polishness. It resides in its very essence. Trying to separate Catholicism and Poles is to ruin the very basis of the nation".⁵² The identification between the Church and the nation became particularly intense, of course, during times of struggle and threat.

Although Rubenstein credits the Church with having set boundaries on acting out one's hatred of Jews, all scholars I consulted referred to the Church's important role in maintaining anti-Semitism.⁵³

⁴⁸ BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 3.

⁴⁹ KLEIN, p. 34.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵¹ RUBENSTEIN, p. 69. Leon Trotsky, a Jew, was a leader of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and has been identified with a particular ideological strain of Marxism.

⁵² GWENDOLINE JARCZYK, "L'Antisemitism en Pologne, hier et aujourd'hui", in «Etudes», as quoted by KLEIN, p. 102.

⁵³ RUBENSTEIN, p. 68.

Bartoszewski, Klein and Rubenstein all quote from a 1936 pastoral letter from Cardinal Hlond, primate of Poland, to show that anti-Semitism existed at the highest Church levels. Hlond wrote:

There exists a Jewish problem which will continue as long as the Jews continue being Jews... It is a fact that the Jews oppose the doctrines of the Catholic Church, that they are liberal thinkers, in the avant garde of atheism and of Bolshevik subversion. It is undeniable that they have a pernicious influence on public morality... But let us not be unjust. These descriptions don't apply to all Jews. A large number of Jews are upright and virtuous believers, working in honest professions. A number of Jews have an edifying and holy family life; among them are persons of an exceptional morality, truly noble and honorable.⁵⁴

This type of anti-Jewish pronouncement is, according to Klein, a particular Polish specialty where the basic affirmation against Jews is nuanced with exceptions that confirm the original theory: most Jews are despicable, but there are some exceptions that we must note.⁵⁵ Another famous anti-Jewish proclamation from the Church hierarchy, which illustrates the above "the above exception proves the rule" approach, was a sermon Cardinal Glemp, the Polish primate, gave in 1989 after the Carmelite controversy was already aflame. In a homily at the famous Jasna Gora Monastery in Czestochowa, Glemp attempted to explain the complexity of Jewish-Polish relations, but his condescending language and prejudicial examples of typical Jews, ended up antagonizing Jewish groups and receiving criticism from Catholics as well. While he began by saying that:

Life, however, does not favour neat classifications, and relations between people fall into categories other than just friend or foe. In our country, this is especially true of the Jewish nation, which was never just a neighbor, but a member of the household and which through its distinctness both enriched us and caused us difficulties... Alongside the Jewish innkeeper who induced the peasant to drink, alongside the Jews who propagated Communism, there were among the Israelites people who gave Poland their talent and their lives...⁵⁶

⁵⁴ KLEIN, p. 102. Detestable as Hlond's statement is, it appears based more on his dislike of Jews because they aren't Catholics rather than prejudice based on ethnicity per se.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁵⁶ BARTOSZEWSKI, pp. 109-111.

Glomp went on to acknowledge Polish silence about the suffering of the Jews as well as Poles who died to save Jews and to insist on the need for:

A dialogue to explain difficult matters systematically and not to present demands. We have our faults with regard to the Jews, but today one should like to say: my dear Jews, do not speak to us from the position of a nation raised above all other and do not present us with conditions that are impossible to fulfill.⁵⁷

As if this patronizing tone was not offensive enough, Glomp went on to accuse Jews of controlling the mass media in many countries and implied they were conducting an anti-Polish campaign in their efforts to oust the Carmelite sisters from Auschwitz. He concluded: "Without anti-Polonism there will be no anti-Semitism here either".⁵⁸ In the ensuing firestorm of criticism, Glomp justified his comments by questioning the competence of his brother Cardinal who had negotiated the original Geneva agreement and demanding the renegotiation of the accord. The three foreign Cardinals whose competence Glomp challenged protested tersely, as did Cardinal John O'Connor, the Archbishop of New York! In his denunciation of the competency of the Cardinals who negotiated the agreement, Glomp was also explicitly challenging Cardinal Macharski, Archbishop of Cracow, one of the original signers.⁵⁹ This in-fighting between elements of the Polish Church just illustrates the complexity of the reaction in Poland and apparently caught the Jewish delegation by surprise.

A recent article in «Commonweal» is illustrative in dealing with this ambiguity and offers some personal background on Polish attitudes towards the Jews, while exploring the author's struggles to come to terms with his Polish grandfather's heroic underground resistance to the Nazis, his rescue of Jews, and, at the same time, the grandfather's profound anti-Semitism.⁶⁰ Referring to the widespread Polish perception that what they suffered under the Nazis has been overlooked in favor of an exclusive emphasis on Jewish suffering and Poles

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

⁵⁹ Glomp's challenge to Macharski marked a dramatic break with the lockstep unity maintained by the Church hierarchy under the Nazis and the Communists. The Church was able to be a relatively independent and unifying voice due to the Poles' identification with the Primate, who functioned almost as a monarch.

⁶⁰ Alexander Charns, "My Polish Grandfather: a dark history with flashes of light", in «Commonweal», 11 January 2002, pp. 16-18.

as alleged anti-Semites, the author argued that one must acknowledge that “distinctly Polish and Roman Catholic anti-Jewish stereotypes and prejudices were a reason why more Poles did not risk their lives to save their Jewish brothers and sisters...”⁶¹ At the same time he reported there are more Poles recognized at Yad Vashem in Israel as “righteous gentiles” than any other country. He concluded that his grandfather was both “a hero and a bigot” and that these apparently contradictory categories are close to the ambiguity in most human hearts.⁶²

As stated above, prejudice against the Jews wasn’t the only factor operaging in this complex, dynamic scene. Patrick Michel, a researcher at the center Nationale Republicaine Scientifique in Paris, contends that the primate, Cardinal Glemp had political “circumstantial and tactical reasons” to attempt the abrogation of the first Geneva agreement.⁶³ Michel sees the Church as having been threatened by the increasing pluralism of Polish society and the erosion of its former privileged plase as “the besieged castle”, representing a bulwark of strength and morality against the Communist totalitarian regime.⁶⁴ Having to acknowledge the possible legitimacy of alternative Jewish claims about the meaning of Auschwitz would have forced the Church (and Glemp) to come to termis with the Church becoming *one* of several competing purveyors of meaning, rather than *the* only one. Even Klein, a fierce partisan for removal of the convent, speculated that some of Glemp’s intransigence was for Polish domestic consumption, rther than being against Jewish interests per se.⁶⁵ While both Klein and Bartoszewski acknowledge a strain of official anti-Jewish pronouncements in the language from Church leaders, they both suggest that these attitudes poisoned, not so much the dialogue process on the Carmelite convent, but the willingness or ability of local Polish Church officials to implement it. Klein also proposed the possibility that the Polish Communist government allowed the original establishment of

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁶² The apparent contradiction in terms is reminiscent of a famous anti-Nazi graffiti in German occupied Amsterdam during World War II: “Keep your hands off our filthy Jews”, showing the presence of both protective instincts and negative stereotyping of Jews.

⁶³ PATRICK MICHEL, “Poland, the Church, and Democracy - A Delicate transition”, in «Cross Currents», Spring 1990, p. 89.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁶⁵ THEO KLEIN, in «Jewish Chronicle», September 8, 1989, as cited by BARTOSZEWSKI.

the Auschwitz convent as a method of embarrassing the Catholic Church, its most outspoken foe.⁶⁶ Michel also contends that there were certain tensions between the Polish Church and the Vatican, that affected the struggle over Carmel and that it showed the political fissures in what had been a previously monolithic, univocal institution.

Suffice it to say that Polish response to the Carmelite question was dynamic, multi-layered and cannot be facilely subsumed as exclusively driven by anti-Semitism or by opposing theologies, while these certainly were major influences. Also in play were nationalistic forces, political questions, power struggles within the Church itself, and the possible role of the Communist party in wishing to embarrass its Catholic opponents. Another important and fascinating angle, which is beyond the scope of this paper, is the behind-the-scenes role played by the Polish Pope, John Paul II. It is also significant up to his point in the struggle the Carmelites themselves played no public role and a letter from their Superior General to Klein laments that the Carmelites themselves weren't involved in the process (see below).

V DEMANDS FOR GENEVA II

Given Cardinal Glemp's efforts to undo the first Geneva agreement and the perception of the Jewish leaders that no apparent effort was being made to move the sisters off the Auschwitz site, the protests escalated and took on an increasingly international scope. By late 1986 Yad Vashem weighed in by circulating a letter to its supporters asking for their involvement in evicting the nuns and the Belgian Jewish weekly publication, «Regards», began publicizing the cause. One article stated “there will be neither peace nor tranquillity as long as a shadow in the shape of the cross falls on the immense field of our unappeasable sorrow”.⁶⁷ This starkly sums up the irreconcilability of the Jewish and Christian symbols – what was a sign of redemption for one was a deep offense to the other.

In Polish circles the issue went public with an article by a Jewish intellectual, Dr. Stanislaw Krajewski, defending the nuns' right to be there and strongly asserting that the sisters' vocation was contemplative prayer, not the conversion of Jews or anyone else.⁶⁸ Krajew-

⁶⁶ KLEIN, p. 72.

⁶⁷ «Regards», No. 171, 1986, as quoted in BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 44.

⁶⁸ STANISLAW KRAJEWSKI, “Auschwitz, Klasztor I Żydzi”, in «Tygodnik Powszechny», June 22, 1986, as quoted in BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 39.

ski's only objection was to the original plan to name the convent after Edith Stein, which could have been interpreted as a proselytizing effort. Once the nuns withdrew this proposal, he was satisfied and stated that perhaps a Christian contemplative presence on the site would facilitate Christians taking more responsibility for the Holocaust. Also in a more conciliatory vein was an article by Rabbi Norman Solomon, which focused on educating his Jewish readers about what he saw as two basic facts: 1. That Jews were not the only victims of Auschwitz. 2. That the wall separating the convent from the camp existed at the time of Auschwitz activity and had not been added after World War II, as some Jewish groups apparently were claiming.⁶⁹

Klein demanded and got a date for a second Geneva meeting with the principal participants of the earlier meeting the previous year. In addition to the same four Cardinals and many of the same Jewish leaders, there were added delegates from B'nai B'rith and the co-chair of the World Jewish Congress. At this follow up meeting in Geneva in February, 1987, a Jewish spokesperson, Professor Ady Steg, of the Universal Israelite Alliance, acknowledged that more non-Jews were killed at Auschwitz (as opposed to Birkenau) than Jews, but observed that:

And if Auschwitz has become the symbol of the Holocaust it is no *we* who have decided this: a symbol does not decree itself. It is the universal conscience which has seen in Auschwitz and not in Birkenau, Treblinka, or Sobibor, the place of the Jewish catastrophe.⁷⁰

Steg asserted there were more than enough churches where Poles could mourn their dead and that Auschwitz must be left to the Jews. All authors I consulted agree that it was at this second Geneva meeting that the Church made all the concessions. While the language of the accord did not *specifically* state that the Carmelite sisters would be moved, it did specify that there would be no "permanent Catholic place of worship on the site of Auschwitz and Birkenau camps" and that the Carmelites' prayer would take place within an educational center which would be built within two years.⁷¹ This future center,

⁶⁹ NORMAN SOLOMON, in «Christian Jewish Relations», No. 3, September 1986, pp. 42.46, as quoted in BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 44.

⁷⁰ BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 45. Note the power of his statement that "a symbol does not declare itself" as a way of understanding why logic and reasoned, muscular discourse can never be sufficient to address an evocative symbol, particularly when the two communities were in confrontation over the meaning of the symbol, Auschwitz

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

maintained by European churches, would raise consciousness about the Holocaust, the "martyrdom of the Polish people and other peoples in Europe during the totalitarian horror throughout the war of 1939-1945", and would work against efforts to deny the Holocaust, and would promote Jewish-Christian exchanges.⁷² Klein's memoirs speculate that the language of this agreement gave Cardinal Macharski and the Catholic Church adequate language to "cover" themselves with those of their constituents committed to the convent remaining at Auschwitz. Indeed, Klein acknowledges having naively assumed that this document would be iron clad and confesses that he was not sufficiently aware of the many divisions and multiplicity of opinions within the Catholic Church that would come into play in delaying the agreement.

Once the agreement was firmly in place, all protagonists found themselves in the difficult position of having to negotiate with the Polish (Communist) government about the exact location of the proposed ecumenical center. If language and politics had complicated the earlier debates, things now got considerably more complex with the government using a two-track system on Jewish issues. On one hand, to cultivate international standing, the Communists worked to maintain credibility with Israel and to cooperate with various international Jewish interests. On the other hand, the government avoided any public, domestic discussion of Jewish matters, partly in an attempt to increase its popularity by playing to anti-Semitic feelings and partly to avoid any discussion of its own past campaigns against Jews.⁷³

Confusion, accusations, denials, rumors, and publicity proliferated from this point on. What follows is only a summary of the most interesting or controversial developments. The Jesuit, Fr. Stanislaw Musial, who had participated in the Geneva meetings, became the initial point person in attempting to explain the pending withdrawal of the nuns to the Polish public. In what was acknowledged to be a ground breaking public position for a clergyman, he wrote that, while both Jews and Poles saw Auschwitz as "a particularly sinister symbol of death..., it can never be sufficiently emphasized that the fate of the Jews during the last war was incomparably worse than that of any other nation. Never before in the world's history had there been a crime of such evil".⁷⁴ However, Cardinal Glemp's public questioning

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 48.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

of the Geneva II agreement provided a strong challenge to Musial's conciliatory language.⁷⁵ From the Jewish point of view there was no visible sign of moving the nuns and they began to question whether their perceived ally, Cardinal Macharski, had sufficient will or power to implement the agreement that the sisters would move to the ecumenical center off the grounds of the concentration camp, within two years, as agreed in Geneva.⁷⁶ In placing this apparent delay in implementation in context, Bartoszewski argues that Macharski was a typical product of the Polish Church, which had learned to operate behind closed doors during the Nazi and Soviet occupations, and that his retiring personality made him an unlikely person to lead the charge.⁷⁷ It was also argued that given the state of the Polish economy, it was unreasonable to think that anything could be constructed within a two-year period. Thus the public and the Jewish signers had little idea what was going on in the Polish Episcopacy, but they saw no movement to meet the deadline of moving the nuns to the ecumenical center by February 1989. The Prioress of the Carmel, whose name is not given, was quoted as accusing the Jews of negotiating in "bad faith" and of having been "manipulated".⁷⁸ Leaders of the World Jewish Congress threatened to boycott all ecumenical events unless the agreement was respected and solid progress seen. Klein, while vigorously denouncing the non-compliance, also attacked what he saw as a Jewish victim mentality among his co-religionists where Jews were always fated to be exploited by the powerful Catholic Church.⁷⁹

Ady Steg, previously mentioned, accused the Carmelites nuns of "vomiting love for the dead Jews but overflowing with scorn for living Jews".⁸⁰ There are multiple examples on both sides of this inflammatory, hyperbolic language.

⁷⁵ RUBENSTEIN, p. 63. Rubenstein asserts the notion of "cognitive monopoly" to explain Cardinal Glemp and the Church's alleged intransigence and inability to accept pluralism in Polish society. Neither Glemp nor the Church, he believes, had come to terms with modern communication and mass media, where issues occurring on Polish soil were instantly debated internationally and where the Church was no longer the only voice.

⁷⁶ KLEIN, p. 93. Klein states that Macharski lacked the personal qualities of a "boss".

⁷⁷ BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 63.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 65. We do not know precisely what she meant, but Bartoszewski speculates that the Prioress felt this was an anti-Polish issue in which the better financed Jewish groups were having more say.

⁷⁹ KLEIN, p. 101.

⁸⁰ KLEIN, p. 112.

VI THREE LENSES ON THE JEWISH PROTESTERS ENTRY INTO CARMEL

One of the most spectacular happenings in the troubled history of this dispute occurred in July 1989, when a group of seven American Jews, dressed in knock offs of concentration camp uniforms, scaled the convent wall and knocked on the convent's door and windows.⁸¹ Reportedly Polish construction workers nearby came to "defend" the nuns and a physical altercation ensued which was reported round the world. This boisterous, American style demonstration was in marked contrast to the silent, reverential atmosphere all parties reportedly desired for Auschwitz and significantly escalated the tensions and grievances on both sides. Since my particular interest in this question revolves around the language used, I will show below the different use of language by the commentators I consulted and how language gives clues to the author's lens.

1. Wladislaw T. Bartoszewski's account, *The Convent at Auschwitz*, is the most comprehensive and historically based account of the overall dispute. Bartoszewski is a social anthropologist, educated in Warsaw and Cambridge and a professor of modern European history at Warwick University.⁸² While he certainly is international in focus, he taps into the Polish media reports in a way neither of the other authors does. The chapter dealing with the confrontation between the American Jews and the nuns and construction workers is entitled «Invasion», thus giving us a linguistic clue about his stance (sub heading is «Rabbi Weiss Invades the Convent»⁸³).

Bartoszewski has sufficient objectivity to report that the press accounts, both in Poland and internationally, varied widely. He quotes some comments attributed to the chief "invader", Rabbi Avraham Weiss (from a Solidarity paper) about his group being manhandled by the workers, water thrown on them and verbally abused.⁸⁴ According

⁸¹ It is not clear whether they first knocked on the convent door and only climbed over the wall later when there was no answer at the door. Bartoszewski actually details both sequences on p. 86.

⁸² In the introduction he mentions his gratitude to his father, who has the same name, for his help on the book. I have unable to establish whether his father is the same Wladyslaw Bartoszewski who was in the Polish underground, survived Auschwitz, and later became Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs. This particular Bartoszewski is mentioned in the Rubenstein book as having been active in the rescue of Jews and is an interesting possible link to the author of the book on Carmel.

⁸³ BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 86.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

to Bartoszewski, the group climbed the convent walls when there was no response to their knocking and began blowing horns and praying with their prayer shawls on their shoulders. After “a few hours” the workers threw out Weiss and group in a “brutal fashion”, and Weiss complained that the police who were watching did nothing. Reportedly nuns and a priest were also present and took no action. Two days later the Weiss group nailed the following protest to the door of Cardinal Macharski’s Curia:

Dear Cardinal Macharski, we come in peace, but at the same time we are afraid. We come to appeal for justice for our dead who cannot speak for themselves... As proud Jews we announce - stop praying for the Jews who were killed in the Shoah, let them rest in peace as Jews.⁸⁵

This letter was labeled “very restrained” by Bartoszewski. He also includes a report from Reuters that Weiss’ group gave a letter to Macharski’s representatives, demanding his resignation, if the convent was not relocated and if the Carmelite nuns, who allegedly watched as the workers intervened, were not sanctioned “for watching in silence as workers beat Jews”.⁸⁶ The same day the Weiss group returned to the convent, scaled the walls again, and demonstrated for six hours with signs and song. The nuns, who did not appear, called the police who didn’t intervene, and the protesters eventually left. Needless to say, these events attracted a large group of spectators. This account by Bartoszewski quotes multiple press reports, most of which seemed critical of actions by Weiss’ group and refers to the nuns being disturbed on July 16th, an important Carmelite feast day (Our Lady of Mt. Carmel). It is worthwhile to note the inclusion of a Jewish critique of Weiss’ group in the «Jewish Chronicle» that referred to the American Jews and the Polish nuns and construction workers as “two small, self-selected xenophobic groups (who) felt threatened by each other”.⁸⁷ In his conclusion, Bartoszewski considers Polish ignorance about Judaism and Jewish values as “the main reason” for the bitter controversy.⁸⁸ While not exonerating the Jewish side at all in terms of its perceived misunderstanding of Catholic motives and the meaning of Auschwitz to Poles, Bartoszewski concludes that this was “a fight between two dif-

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ SHENKIN, in «Jewish Chronicle», August 11, 1989, as quoted in BARTOSZEWSKI, 97.

⁸⁸ BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 159.

ferent symbols – of Jewish and Polish martyrdom".⁸⁹ Given his academic training and intimate knowledge of Poland, his study reflects a nuanced, critical approach to the complexities of the Auschwitz dispute, though his bias against the "invasion" of the convent is clear.

2. The author of *L'affaire du Carmel d'Auschwitz*, Leo Klein, presents himself clearly as a partisan, as a "small entrepreneur" seeking to get a job done and refusing to succumb to what he describes as a Jewish tendency to feel victimized and defeated by the powerful Catholic Church.⁹⁰ An attorney by profession, he mentions several times his lack of religious belief: "I consider myself a Jew and an agnostic without any contradiction, a Frenchman nourished in a republican culture and a Jew passionately attached to the existence of Israel without partition".⁹¹ Born into an observant Alsatian Jewish family, he eventually became president of the Representative Council of French Jews and Chair of the Jewish delegation on the Carmelite convent question. He describes the French Jewish community as diverse both in religious practice and original ethnic origin, with vibrant discussions and differences. In passing, he recalls the French Church's silence about the anti-Jewish policies of the Vichy regime and observes that there is always a danger of overt anti-Semitism returning.⁹² Somewhat surprisingly to me, he expresses a greater affinity for Arab Moslems than with Christians and says (in 1991) that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a family quarrel.⁹³ Whereas with Moslem Arabs Klein feels "a kinship, a kind of existential complicity", dialogue with Catholics, he maintains, is "more cold, a dialogue of reason... passion isn't present in the exchange but rather, the interests of both parties".⁹⁴ Thus Klein approaches the Carmel question as a lawyer and "small entrepreneur" who shares little common passion with the Catholics, but who respects the good consciences of some of his adversaries. The one paragraph

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁹⁰ KLEIN, pp. 44, 154.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 186. The infamous Dreyfus case in which a French, Jewish army officer was unjustly accused of spying for Germany in 1884, found guilty in two trials, imprisoned, and only pardoned in 1906, would have been very much in Klein's consciousness as a blatant example of French anti-Semitism. Interestingly enough, Dreyfus, like Klein, came from Alsace.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193. In light of present day blood letting on both sides, his characterization of a family feud seems to be a euphemism.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 191-192.

devoted to the American Jews who climb the convent walls is worth quoting in its entirety:

On the 14th of July a small group of American protesters, lead by Rabbi Weiss, comes to pray in the Carmelite garden.⁹⁵ They are assaulted by the laborers who are working in the yard. The police, who are present on the site, do not intervene during the scuffle. There we are again: at Auschwitz, in the shadow of the cross, where the Jews are being hit by the Poles, and more precisely, by the laborers who are engaged in the work (on the convent) that cardinal Macharski had said wouldn't take place... As far as I'm concerned, even if I understand the demonstrations, I don't approve of them. And certainly not that of Rabbi Weiss, who believed in the efficacy of a media 'coup' but whose method recalls the terrible behavior of the "integristes".⁹⁶ Is Weiss one of them? I don't have the answer but to use their methods, is in the end to be identified with them.⁹⁷

The first point of interest is Klein's disapproval of the demonstration, even though he presents the demonstrators' intent as peaceful and spiritual. These peaceful protesters are "assaulted" by the workers and the watching police do nothin. Immediately he identifies with Jews being attacked at Auschwitz under the shadow of the dreaded cross. He is the only author who claims that the laborers were engaged in work on the convent that Macharski had promised would not occur. (In fact, I was unable to locate any reference to exactly *what* the workers were doing, whether it was routine maintenance or new expansion.⁹⁸) So while he is critical of the demonstration, he is sympathetic to the demonstrators' cause and places the blame for aggression on the workers. Klein ignores the invasive quality of the event, as described above by Bartoszewski, about the Jews climbing the wall of a cloistered convent. Obviously this event didn't make much of an impression on Klein as he devotes minimal space to it. It would appear

⁹⁵ After Klein's vociferous protest against the Carmelite prayers, it is ironic that he implicitly accepts Jewish prayer on the site.

⁹⁶ The term "integristes", according to Peter Bernardi, S.J., in a private communication, refers to "those Catholics who were intransigently opposed to any accommodation to modernity" in France. Bernardi continues that the "integristes" tended to be "restorationists" and "authoritarians... opposed to any democratic tendencies". Given that Klein was French, he would have been familiar with this Catholic label, but it is significant that he applies it to his co-religionis., Rabbi Weiss. Although he questions if the term applies to Weiss, his usage suggests he may have found Weiss doctrinaire and rigid.

⁹⁷ KLEIN, p. 131.

⁹⁸ See «The Wall Street Journal» article cited below, which refers to repairs.

that as an attorney his attention was more focused on the chronology of the respective moves and countermoves made by both sides, and less on psychological nuances.

3. For my taste, the most interesting and nuanced version of the American Jews' protest at the convent is that given in *After Auschwitz* by Richard Rubenstein.⁹⁹ Somewhat of an iconoclast in the Jewish community, Rubenstein has announced in various publications, speeches, and classes his contention that the Jewish traditional belief in "the God of history" can no longer be maintained after Auschwitz.¹⁰⁰ However, according to Marc Ellis, his former student, and apparent admirer (since he dedicates *Ending Auschwitz* to him), Rubenstein does accept a Jewish mystical understanding of God and was saved from "despair" through psychoanalysis.¹⁰¹ I am also interested in Rubenstein due to his apparent disaffection from Abraham Joshua Heschel, whom I have quoted earlier and whose work will figure prominently in the discussion below of Hasidism. Ellis reports that Rubenstein, who had been Heschel's student at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, was troubled by Heschel's purported romanticizing of the world of Eastern European Jews, a world that had been totally savaged by the Nazis.¹⁰² Insisting that "No Jewish theology will possess even a remote degree of relevance to contemporary Jewish life if it ignores the question of God and the death camps", Rubenstein focuses exclusively on what he sees as the mutual abandonment of the Jewish people and God.¹⁰³ Given this particular lens, his perspective of the July 14, 1989, incident at the convent should be of interest.

Of the three authors I used for this part of the study, Rubenstein is the only one against the original Jewish demand that the convent be moved, although he eventually agreed that relocation was necessary because the whole issue had become so inflammatory.¹⁰⁴ Of the two

⁹⁹ RICHARD L. RUBENSTEIN, pp. 62-79.

¹⁰⁰ ELLIS, *Ending Auschwitz*, p. 6.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6. Perhaps I am particularly sympathetic to Rubenstein's approach as it is more psychological and I am a therapist.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁴ Rubenstein felt that the demands of a pluralistic society, which the Jews wanted, also implied that the Jews would have to tolerate Gentile religious expressions and could not have a "cognitive monopoly" on Auschwitz. He used this same term to apply to the Polish Church's efforts to identify national values with Catholicism.

Jewish authors, he alone refers to the powerful symbolic invasion of the nuns' sacred space by the Jewish protesters. As cloistered sisters of the Discalced Carmelite order, the nuns lived in "an enclosure", an ecclesiastical and juridical term meaning that the walled off space had been specially consecrated by the bishop and that the area was completely forbidden to outsiders, even non-Carmelite women.¹⁰⁵ While Rubenstein does not highlight the spiritual significance of the breach of enclosure, he grasps the "primal associations" of the groups' actions.¹⁰⁶ He concedes that the Jewish prayer shawls worn by the protesters, their books and religious songs not only would have had no meaning to the nuns or the Polish onlookers, but that they could have triggered fear and anxiety in "the psyches of theologically unsophisticated Polish Catholics".¹⁰⁷ (Note the patronizing assumption that the nuns and the observers were theologically unschooled!) He goes further in linking the assumed virginity of the nuns with the "male invasion" of their sacred space to suggest "most unfortunate sexual associations".¹⁰⁸ I feel that he more than the other commentators, gets at the unspoken but very powerful symbolic meaning of the "invasion" of the convent.

His criticism of Rabbi Weiss and group notwithstanding, Rubenstein asserts the Jewish protesters were "violently assaulted by Polish construction workers" and adds two new details in his discussion of the incident.¹⁰⁹ In his version, the leader of the workers yelled "Heil Hitler" and a priest stood by, encouraging the workers' assault on the peaceful Jews.¹¹⁰ Obviously, his version suggests more malice and vicious anti-Semitism on the part of the workers and the unnamed priest than Bartoszewski or Klein. Even though he has previously acknowledged that the demonstration caused "primal associations" for the nuns and onlookers, his portrayal of the workers' role imputes only hostility to them.¹¹¹ Rubenstein writes that the July 14th event brought tempers on both sides to a boil.

«The New York Times» of July 15, 1989 carried a photograph of a man leaning out the convent window, pouring water on a group of

¹⁰⁵ Without diminishing the symbolic importance of this closed space, allowances are made for necessary outsiders to enter, as workmen, doctors, etc.

¹⁰⁶ RUBENSTEIN, p. 73.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

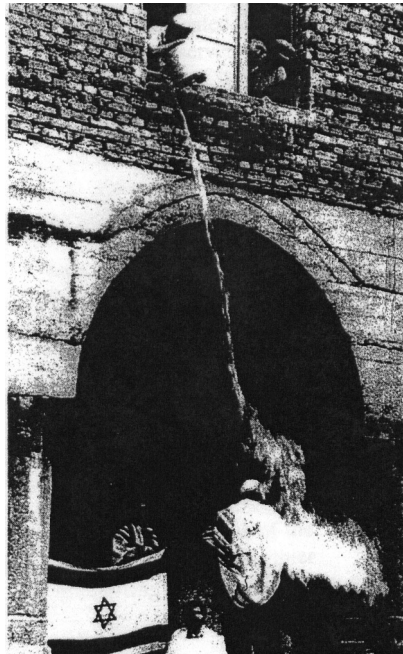
¹¹¹ Although I found no specific mention of it, I wonder if the often-mentioned workers had any sense of needing to protect the nuns from the demonstrators.

men in yarmalkas and prayer shawls (sees below). The small blurb underneath the photo says Rabbi Weiss was “punched and kicked”, thus highlighting the male-to-male struggle, rather than the perspective of the nuns, about which we know nothing.¹¹² A later edition on July 27th has a lengthier article on the whole controversy but only a small paragraph referring to this incident, which reads:

This month several Jews from the United States clambered over a fence surrounding the cloister. Polish workers poured buckets of water on them and dragged them from the site while the Polish Police and the nuns looked on without interfering.¹¹³

This account softens the Jews’ penetration of the convent with the word “clambered” and uses the plural for “workers” pouring water and “dragging” the Jews away.

«The Wall Street Journal» of November 1989 adds some detail and includes some words from the Carmelite Prioress.¹¹⁴ This article reports that the demonstrators left pamphlets at the convent door and “then were beaten by the workers on the site”.¹¹⁵ The reporter actually visited the convent site and reports on works in progress (as alleged by Klein) without describing more than “repair work” to the convent.¹¹⁶ She quotes the Prioress, speaking from behind the grille, as saying: “It’s important for us to be here for all the Polish dead but we also pray for salvation for everyone



Demonstrators Clash With Workers at Auschwitz.

¹¹² «New York Times», 15 July 1989, p. 3.

¹¹³ «New York Times», 27 July 1989, sec. A, p. 3. Since no specific actions are attributed to the nuns, one wonders if they were passive observers in an effort to avoid involvement with men in the cloister or were they silently supportive of the workers?

¹¹⁴ BRIGIT GRAUMAN, “Standoff at Auschwitz: Nuns, Pole, Jewish Memories”, in “The Wall street Journal”, 28 November 1989, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

everywhere". Referring to the mail they've received from Poles imploring them no to move the convent, she is quoted as saying further: "They write to us that they lost a father, a brother, in Auschwitz, and they beg us to stay".¹¹⁷ In Bartoszewski's version, the Prioress regretted water having been poured over Weiss by a worker who was mentally retarded and who was only playing a practical joke.¹¹⁸ According to Bartoszewski, the Prioress herself had helped take food to Jews during World War II at the request of her mother.¹¹⁹

VII PROTESTS ON ALL SIDES

The day after the Jews entry into Carmel the Cracow Curia issued a statement condemning the behavior of the protesters, who, it claimed, had:

hurled abuse at the sisters, Poles, and the Church. Workers and passers-by drew attention to their improper behavior and demanded that they leave immediately. Various forms of *persuasion* and discussion continued until 5 p.m., when the intruders *were moved* outside the gate [emphasis mine]¹²⁰

(Note the euphemistic use of "persuasion" and "were moved", if one accepts the U.S. media accounts of the Jews having been drenched with water, at the least, and possibly also physically attacked!) Within a few days the Cracow Curia and the Episcopacy both weighed in with protests about the Weiss group's action.

At the end of July, Poland's Chief Rabbi and other Jewish organizations in Poland issued a statement of concern about the Weiss demonstration, which they said violated Jewish values.¹²¹ There was much vociferous debate in the Polish press with some Poles apologizing for the allegedly intolerant attitude of the workers and the police who just watched. On July 20th delegates from the World Jewish Congress visited the Vatican to ask for the Pope's intervention in the escalating controversy. Bartoszewski asserts that the delegation was told that this was a matter for the local Church and that the Pope would

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* This quote is only the second time we hear a Carmelite quoted.

¹¹⁸ BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 95.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 88-89.

no interfere.¹²² There were several ongoing demonstrations by Jewish groups in front of the convent, including one eight days after the original incident, where one hundred members of the Belgian Students Union and the World Jewish Congress protested with banners in French and Polish that read “Do Not Christianize Auschwitz and Shoah”.¹²³ There were also protests by local residents of Auschwitz, many of which had ugly, anti-Semitic themes. Bartoszewski described the local crowd outside the convent as “poor, ugly, and wretched”.¹²⁴ Their protests ranged from anger that the local population had never been consulted and that they were being portrayed as ignorant, anti-Semites to complaints that the Jews had not cared for their own remaining cemeteries and synagogues in Poland but saw fit to interfere in Church business.¹²⁵

In the first official Carmelite pronouncement of which I am aware, Fr. Dominik Wider, Provincial of the Discalced Carmelites in Poland, took public issue with the Geneva accords and accused the Weiss group of having held the nuns as virtual hostages.¹²⁶ Wider denied that any water was poured on the Jews (apparently he hadn’t seen the photograph in «The New York Times»!) or that a priest had been present.¹²⁷ With a sweeping anti-Semitic generalization, he said that discussion with Jews was impossible, as they don’t dialogue: “No arguments reach them”.¹²⁸ He objected to any plans to move the nuns. Obviously this kind of rhetoric was not helpful and was very different from the language used by the Carmelites’ Superior General, Camilo Maccise, as will be discussed below.

«The New York Times» refers to “prominent Catholics in Cracow” who were supposedly privy to the mind of Cardinal Macharski (who had signed the Geneva agreements). These sources volunteered that Macharski could not take firmer action to implement the agreement due to the resistance of the sisters and the local populace. Macharski was quoted as saying: “If you think that Macharski can go down there and tell those nuns to move, and they will get up and go, you are

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 91. It is noteworthy for our study of language that the signs included Polish, although the speeches, as per Bartoszewski, were in English and French.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 93. Bartoszewski uses the term “Father General” with which I am not familiar, so I assume he meant “Provincial”, the head of a province.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94

mistaken”.¹²⁹ Klein also muses about what he sees as the nuns’ surprisingly fierce independence:

I finally understood that the Carmelites, although contemplatives and female, depend (neither juridically or spiritually) on the bishop of their diocese, nor on the provincial and not even the Prior General of the Carmelites. They seem to obey, according to the circumstances, first these and then those, or they disobey everybody, enjoying in the face of pastoral authority, an autonomy that they trace to their grille.¹³⁰

We don’t know whether Weiss’ entry into the convent grounds was a trigger or not, but Macharski finally took a stand on August 8, 1989, when he abrogated the Geneva agreements (as discussed above in ch. IV, The Church), citing in part Jewish disrespect for the nuns. He charged that “some Western Jewish centers” had mounted a “violent campaign of accusations and slander, outrageous aggression”.¹³¹ Blaming the Jewish demonstrators for disrespecting the nuns and “the Christian faith, as well as symbols and piety”, Macharski announced that he would not proceed with plans to relocate the nuns to the interfaith center. Weiss’ response was swift: “the Cardinal has, in almost classical anti-Semitic terms, chosen to portray the Jewish victims as aggressors. It was not we who beat Polish Catholics. It was Catholic Polish workers of the convent who assaulted us...”¹³²

Following Macharski’s renunciation of the agreement, Cardinal Glemp’s anti-Semitic sermon at Czestochowa (already discussed above under the ch. IV, The Church) two weeks later escalated the situation further. The protests on both sides and entreaties to various Vatican and Polish officials are too numerous to mention and included both ugly anti-Semitic demonstrations outside the convent and appeals by the Jewish representatives to the highest Vatican and Polish authorities.

¹²⁹ «New York Times», 27 July 1989, A3. This quote would fit with Klein’s opinion discussed above that Macharski’s shy personality didn’t lend itself to resolving such a contentious issue.

¹³⁰ KLEIN, p. 175. As we shall see, Klein far overestimates the nuns’ independence and ignores their vows of obedience.

¹³¹ RUBENSTEIN, p. 73.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 74.

VIII RELUCTANT RESOLUTION

As already discussed, little was known publicly about the feelings of the Carmelites themselves, either the cloistered nuns of Auschwitz or the larger Carmelite order. According to a «Washington Post» article, getting the nuns’ cooperation was difficult and involved archival research and invocation of St. Teresa of Avila, the reformer and founder of the O.C.D. Order.¹³³ Supposedly a vote was held at the Auschwitz convent and of the fourteen nuns, only one voted to relocate. Given St. Teresa’s well-known guideline that at least six women were needed to found a new convent, the move was blocked temporarily since there were not six nuns willing to transfer to the new convent at the ecumenical center.

Klein is the only commentator to mention correspondence with the Prior General of the order in January and February 1989, (well before the controversial Weiss incident). He includes copies of a letter to himself and to the French Cardinal Decourtray from the Prior General, Philippe Sainz de Baranda.¹³⁴ For the purposes of analyzing language what stands out in the Sainz de Baranda’s January letter to Decourtray is his unequivocal statement: “... the duty of carrying out all the points (of the Geneva agreements) is mandatory and, consequently, the Discalced Carmelites of Auschwitz must accept the transfer as provided for by the Accord”.¹³⁵ This language is clear, direct, and allows no “wiggle room”. Further and very diplomatically, Sainz de Baranda chides Decourtray for not having involved the Order in the Geneva meetings and for not informing the Carmelites when the agreements were reached. Look at this language for an example of a protest couched in high diplomatic swirls and curlicues:

... renewing to you my most sincere wish to collaborate, I take the liberty, Eminence, of speaking with you frankly, also in the name of the General Definitory, to say that it is incomprehensible and painful to me

¹³³ JOHN POMFRET, “Pope Orders Nuns at Auschwitz to Move”, in «Washington Post», 16 April 1993, sec. A, pp. 17, 20. Pomfret quotes Fr. Musial, S.J., who has been mentioned above as a participant in the Geneva meetings, to the effect that 13th c. text affirmed the contemplative nuns right to decide themselves on the location of each convent. If the 13th c. document is the Rule, which is the foundation of Carmelite life and allows the men to choose the location of their monastery, it doesn’t apply to women who only entered the order in the 15th c. It is not clear if this is the “archival research” mentioned.

¹³⁴ KLEIN, pp. 230-238.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

that the Carmelites weren't consulted at the time of the Geneva meeting nor were they informed later when the agreement was concluded and signed. I believe that the Carmelites had the right to know the contents of the agreement, given that a very important and painful decision was being made there (in Geneva), a decision which would affect the Carmelites who are under the jurisdiction of the Order. It would have facilitated things, if there had been more respect and more collaboration, and one might have avoided the current situation in which, the Order is finally being asked to intervene.¹³⁶

After this very deferential protest, Sainz de Baranda now strongly asserts:

I would like to add just a word, I think it is my duty as Prior General of the Order, about the future of the Discalced Carmelite community in Auschwitz. It is clear that the monastery is not being *suppressed* and that the community is not being *dispersed* [emphasis mine]. It is a question of a transfer or concretely, of building a new monastery... It seems obvious to me that the Discalced Carmelite community also has rights which should be respected and, if necessary, defended to the Jewish representatives by the Catholic delegation in Geneva.¹³⁷

Obviously the Prior General needs to mark a position that the nuns will remain as a community, even if in a different location and that his Catholic brothers on the delegation should do a better job of protecting their interests! Under this very polite and diplomatic language, there is a strong position being taken. Sainz de Baranda also writes several days later to Klein, confirming the acceptance of the decision that the nuns will move to a yet to be constructed interfaith center which he opes will be constructed as soon as possible "so that the sisters may experience the atmosphere of peace and silence which are indispensable to the contemplative life and that the brotherly ties between Jews and Christians will not suffer any new tensions because of Auschwitz".¹³⁸ While Sainz de Baranda is diplomacy itself, a carefully worded reproach to the Jewish delegation is implied.

After the tumultuous Weiss incident at the Carmel, protests gathered steam on both sides with the abrogation of the accord by Macharski, the anti-semitic homily by Glem and his charges that the agreement had been negotiated by incompetent Cardinals. Klein observed that he finally understood that this affair was not at all about

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 231-232.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

a Catholic-Jewish conflict but about Polish conflicts at the heart of the Church.¹³⁹ He asked how could a Polish Pope disavow the attitude of Glemp, who as Primate was the "incarnation of the continuity and unity of the nation"?¹⁴⁰ Still, Klein relates John Paul II was obliged to apply "the pontifical unction" in September 1989, two months after the crisis of the Weiss protest, because the situation was out of hand.¹⁴¹ All the authors I used agreed that the decisive move in favor of the transfer of the nuns to the interfaith center came from the Vatican and effectively settled the matter.¹⁴² In a wonderfully obscure, indirect fashion the Pope's wishes were made known through the "moderate voice" of Cardinal Willebrands of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, who announced that the Vatican is "prepared to make its own financial contribution" to the interfaith center where the Carmelites would be housed.¹⁴³ Although Glemp quickly changed his message to support the nuns' transfer, the oblique Vatican language reportedly still left some Jews in the dark about the Pope's intentions.¹⁴⁴ After so much drama, bitter controversy, and accusations, it is little wonder that outsiders not acquainted with the intricacies of Vatican communications might not realize that Vatican financial support for the interfaith center was equivalent to Papa "blessing" of the nuns' transfer. While it would be too simplistic to say that everyone lived happily ever after, Rome's intervention decisively settled the matter and the acute sense of crisis passed. However, mutual recriminations continued with the Prioress of the convent quoted in a Polish-American paper to the effect that the nuns refused to budge "a single inch", that the Israelis were the true anti-Semites because of their treatment of the Arabs, and that Jews were responsible for atheism in Poland.¹⁴⁵ Representative of the ongoing furor was a press report in December 1989 (after Vatican intervention) that Rabbi Weiss planned to sue Cardinal Glemp for slander.¹⁴⁶ Protests against moving the nunz continued outside the convent until they moved in the interfaith center in July 1993.

A critical shift in language from the Catholic side is evident in the correspondence from the new Discalced Carmelite Superior Ge-

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-144.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

¹⁴² KLEIN, p. 144; BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 126; RUBENSTEIN, p. 77.

¹⁴³ KLEIN, p. 144, and RUBENSTEIN, p. 77.

¹⁴⁴ BARTOSZEWSKI, p. 126.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 133. Doubts were raised later about the authenticity of this interview.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

neral, Camilo Maccise, with Theo Klein. Unlike the Polish Carmelite Provincial, who made an insulting, anti-Semitic generalization, Maccise's entry is noteworthy for its healing language. In a letter dated July 14 1991, exactly two years after the Weiss protest, Maccise expressed his intent to honor the agreement in moving the convent as soon as possible. What is significant in his frank apology to Klein:

This "day of violence and distress" which is the Shoah ought never to be forgotten in contemporary memory. At the beginning of my term as Prior General of the Discalced Carmelites, *I express to you my regret for the lack of understanding and respect to Jewish memory, which may have been shown by members of the Carmelite family*. United to my Polish brothers and sisters, I reverence, as a Christian, the memory of the Polish martyrs under National Socialism. Neither this faithfulness and nor the Catholic faith demand that the sisters pray on the (actual) site of the martyrs' death [emphasis mine].¹⁴⁷

Klein appeared very moved by this personal apology and delicate diplomacy, even though Maccise doesn't specify to which martyrs he refers. Klein replied a week later:

Reading your letter has convinced me that you have appropriated, with a profundity that I must honor, *the meaning and the scope of the Geneva accords which go beyond the words and the pledges...* It is important to end this painful conflict, first to maintain in silence and serenity the places of suffering, but also, as a commitment *to a reciprocal concern as regards our convergences and divergences* [emphasis mine].¹⁴⁸

Note that these communiqués go well beyond the diplomatic language of courtesy and the confronting or logical language of argument and use empathy, symbolic language ("meaning and scope", "convergences and divergences", etc.), and mutual respect. The last letter in Klein's book is Maccise's reply a week later in July 1991, in which the thesis of this paper begins to take shape. Maccise used the positive communication technique of "mirroring" in agreeing with several of Klein's points and then goes further to invoke a story about The Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism:

Speaking for the Friars and Nuns of Carmel, I am conscious of the need to pursue mutual listening and education of the hearts *"as regards our convergences and divergences"...* *I dare to hope that what you have suffered*

¹⁴⁷ KLEIN, p. 268.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 270-271.

may also open a path of meeting and better comprehension. I write this thinking of a well-known commentary of the Baal Shev Tov on dialogue: ‘Two brothers are walking together. Piotr says: Ivan, I love you’. Ivan answers: ‘If you love me, tell me what makes me suffer!’ Piotr answered: ‘How would I know what makes you suffer?’ Ivan says to him: ‘How can you say you love me if you don’t know what makes me suffer?’ [emphasis mine].¹⁴⁹

One has the sense that Maccise and Klein have experienced some of the empathy of which The Baal Shem Tov spoke and in so doing, have reached across the abyss of their respective tradition’s misunderstandings and rancor. The importance of this exchange cannot be overestimated. It appears from Klein’s response, that finally someone from the Catholic side has begun to understand what causes his (and other Jews) suffering. In his introduction to *L’affaire du Carmel d’Auschwitz*, Klein asserts that a dialogue is about “obliging the other to reveal themselves” and not committing “the terrible error” of always assuming the “irremediable hostility of the others, the goyim”.¹⁵⁰ With Maccise’s apology, empathetic response, and particularly his use of a Hasidic reference, Klein may have seen him “revealing” himself, beyond the level of logic and reason that Klein experienced in negotiations with other Catholics. This reaching out for common meaning, instead of fighting over symbols, is most striking and healing. This exchange also harkens back to Shapiro’s cautions about language being an inappropriate vehicle with which to deal with the Holocaust. By offering the Hasidic story, Maccise certainly uses words, but not to score a debating point – rather to go *beyond* the words to a spiritual point of reverence for the other.

As discussed above and as evidenced by Sainz de Baranda’s diplomatic protest to Cardinal Decourtray, the Carmelite nuns at Auschwitz and the Discalced Carmelite Order itself were not consulted at either Geneva meeting and seem to have been bystanders to the whole controversy. The apparent relegation of the Carmelites to the sidelines highlights my contention that this dispute was primarily about the politicization of the symbol of Auschwitz by both Poles and Jews, and particularly by the leaders of both groups. At their worst, zealots within both communities saw the “other” as continuing to victimize them. There are definitely discrepant theologies between the two communi-

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 272.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

ties as regards expiation, prayer, sacrifice, and redemption, etc., which complicated the issue. In correspondence and decrees issued there is some use of Hebrew Scripture citations by both groups, but spiritual language clearly takes a back seat to the language of reasoned, muscular, polemical debate (not to deny that both sides often used emotionally charged language). Most participants sought to manipulate to their advantage and used the mass media to help them, rather than genuinely seeking mutual understanding.

The last Maccise letter in which he uses the Hasidic story, and with which Klein closes the book, offers us a departure point for exploring what might have been, had there been an extended dialogue between the Carmelite and the Hasidic traditions. Both groups represent a mystical stream within their faiths and both honor a place that goes beyond language. A caveat: I explore this potential conversation, not to facilely deny difference or tension nor to suggest that the convent should non have been moved, as I certainly believe it should have been, but to look at unexplored depths, to consider how such an exchange might have reduced the rancor and hatred, and how the process might have been different. After a brief exploration of both the Carmelite and Hasidic traditions, there will be a summary discussion of mystical language and then an analysis of how these traditions might have used their commonalities to surmount the polemics and inflammatory language of both sides.

IX THE CARMELITE TRADITION

The Carmelites belong to an ancient tradition that had its birth and inspiration in a group of men who lived as hermits in Palestine on Mount Carmel and sought their inspiration in the Prophet Elijah and the Blessed Virgin. While the exact date of this informal group's birth is unknown, by the early 1200's there are references to them. From the Carmelite Rule, given to this group of hermits between 1206 and 1214, we know that they lived a life of poverty in separate cells, and joined together for daily mass. John Welch has speculated that their eremitical existence "focused their scattered lives, and settled their confused minds. It freed hearts that had been anxious about many things".¹⁵¹ Disturbed by the changing political scene in Pales-

¹⁵¹ JOHN WELCH, O.CARM., *The Carmelite Way*, Paulist Press, Mahwah, N.J. 1996, p. 9.

tine, these first Carmelites began to migrate to Europe in 13th century, where they evolved from an eremitical life to a life of pastoral service as mendicant friars, without ever renouncing their contemplative heritage.

In attempting to capture the Carmelite Charism, Welch highlights the mythic role the early rugged mountains and valleys played in the developing Carmelite imagination. Symbolic language was always key to their understanding of themselves and the world around them. For the early friars there was a relationship between the stark wilderness from which the Order had come and the intentional, interior emptiness of the heart, facilitated through asceticism, prayer, and solitude in the cell. The Dutch Carmelite, Kees Waaijman, draws attention to the history of "mystical space" associated with the original Mount Carmel. In recounting the spiritual and psychological challenge faced by the original men who were uprooted from the actual Mount Carmel, he poses the question of how they managed to remain Carmelite away from Mount Carmel? Their answer, as per Waaijman: "In whatever place you live, draw away from the finite and enter into the infinite space which is God. Turn every place into a Carmel".¹⁵²

An important document in carrying the Carmelite spirit through the centuries was the abovementioned Carmelite Rule, given to the original hermits by Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem in the early 13th century.¹⁵³ Waaijman calls the Carmelite Rule "a spiritual structure in which the parts of the whole are so related to each other that together they form a way which leads to God, or rather, which gives God a chance to find us".¹⁵⁴ The Rule embodies the specific steps that can be taken to "turn every place into a Carmel". Highlights of the Rule include the followers' dedication to Christ, an elected prior to whom the community promises obedience, a separate cell where the Carmelite remains in contemplative prayer, unless "occupied with other lawful activities", and property held in common.¹⁵⁵ The Carmelite Rule is noteworthy in its common sense and flexible demands as witness the following qualifying phrases: "necessity over-

¹⁵² KEES WAAIJMAN, *The Mystical Space of Carmel*, trans. John Vriend, Peeters, Leuven, Belgium 1999, p. 3.

¹⁵³ In the history of different orders in the Catholic Church, a Rule of Life, often written by the founder, has pride of place in systematically organizing the members' life in a way designed to emphasize and maximize the particular charism or spiritual goal of the order. Any Rule aims to draw the adherent closer to God and to minimize distractions, both internal and external.

¹⁵⁴ WAAIJMAN, pp. 13-14.

¹⁵⁵ WELCH, pp. 175-181.

rides every law and “See that the bond of commonsense is the guide of the virtues”.¹⁵⁶ By “placing the center (of one’s focus) outside of human activity” and on the Holy One, the faithful Carmelite attains a pure heart, and Waaijman argues that it is precisely this perspective of the pure heart that opens “the mystical perspective”.¹⁵⁷

Moving from the wilderness of Mount Carmel to all parts of the globe, the Carmelites struggled to maintain their heritage and founding vision. The 14th c. document, *The Book of the First Monks*, was a seminal document in shaping the Carmelite tradition and in enriching Carmelite symbolism. Initially once taken as literal history, *The Book of the First Monks* is now understood mythically, as being even more powerful and “true” than a history book. The truth that it contains is symbolic and thus more compelling than facts. Assembled by Felip Ribot, Provincial of the Catalan province, it consists of ancient documents as well as major additions by Ribot that purport to tell the history of the Carmelites from the Order’s supposed foundation by Elijah to medieval times. Even though its historicity is no longer accepted, Paul Chandler argues it is “perhaps the most significant single work for our knowledge of early Carmelite spirituality”.¹⁵⁸ Given its importance in explaining the foundational link to the prophet, Elijah, and both Jewish and Christian Scriptures, it behooves us to explore it, at least briefly.

Like the Rule, the *Book of the First Monks* gave the Carmelites a self-definition, a connection to Elijah and Mary and a powerful symbolic myth and language that transcended time and space. But the *Book of the First Monks* goes beyond a purely metaphoric understanding of the tradition. It attempts to establish a direct, genealogical link between Elijah, Mary, the early hermits, and generations of Carmelites. Perhaps in an effort to compensate for the lack of a specific, charismatic founding figure and to establish the order’s legitimacy in Europe, Ribot wished to lay out the family tree, specifically linking the founding figures with their descendants. In addition to the alleged historical, genealogical tie, Carmelites are those who model them-

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 178, 181.

¹⁵⁷ WAAIJMAN, p. 53.

¹⁵⁸ PAUL CHANDLER, O.CARM., *The Book of the First Monks: A Workbook*, Carmelite Spirituality for Formators of the Carmelite Family, Centro Internazionale S. Alberto, Rome, Italy 1992, p. 3. [The critical edition of *The Book of the First Monks* by P. CHANDLER, not yet published, has been used by E. COCCIA for his Italian translation of the work: *Istituzione e gesta dei primi monaci*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 2002, note of the editor].

selves after the multifaceted prophet, Elijah, and the hidden, silent waiting of the Virgin Mary, both of whom offer mythic inspiration to the order. Following this imaginative theme, Elijah is the first monk and "founder" of Carmel and Mary is honored in the order's full name, "The Brothers of the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel". Elijah and Mary are also said to be the first man and woman to take vows of virginity as an expression of their purity of heart.

Patrick McMahon noting that the medieval Carmelites, like other orders, rode the popular image of Eliah to their own benefit, reminds us not to project current historical requirements onto a pre-historic era.¹⁵⁹ In claiming Elijah as founder, the *Book of the First Monks* tapped into a long tradition of Elijah meaning different things at different times, based on the particular needs of the community. Ribot in the 14th c. wrote in such a "pre-historic" culture, "more interested in meaning than in historical fact".¹⁶⁰ The malleable figure of Elijah was a perfect symbol for the Carmelites to use in establishing the meaning of their lives in an ascetic, monastic tradition which valued chastity, silence, and prayer, particularly in a historical context of competition with other orders for legitimacy. A large portion of Ribot's work was the key Elian text of *1 Kings 17:2-4*. His exegesis asserted that the purity of heart, attained by the Carmelite in silence and solitude, would lead to the actual experience of God's love in this life. This Elian scriptural quote, according to Chandler, illustrates "Carmelite spirituality as an asceticism and a mysticis of love".¹⁶¹ Like Elijah, who retreated from the world to his cave where he experienced God in the gentle breeze, the Carmelite will find that less is more and that a pure heart yields rich rewards.

With this very brief foundational background about the Carmelites, we must touch on several key historical events in the life of the order. First is the sixteenth century reform of St. Teresa of Avila, who wished to return to the original, unmitigated Carmelite Rule to eliminate the influence of wealth and power that existed in the convent of the Incarnation in Avila where she had lived nearly three decades.¹⁶² Teresa focused on establishing small groups who would

¹⁵⁹ PATRICK MCMAHON, O.CARM., "Pater et Dux: Elijah in Medieval Mythology", in *Master of the Sacred Page*, ed. KEITH J. EGAN and CRAIG E. MORRISON, O.CARM., The Carmelite Institute, Washington, D.C. 1997, pp. 283-299.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

¹⁶¹ CHANDLER, p. 5.

¹⁶² Teresa herself came from a family of "conversos" or Jews who had converted to Catholicism usually under the threat of the Inquisition. Her movement to return to

live in absolute poverty in total dependence on God (rather than wealthy benefactors) and in intimacy with each other and with God. The desired atmosphere is illustrated by her famous quote: "... all must be friends, all must be loved, all must be held dear, all must be helped".¹⁶³ The sisters become a true community, dedicated to each other's spiritual perfection and overall well being, as opposed to being concerned with pleasing wealthy patrons. It was Teresa's goal for her sisters to become holy through the sanctification of everyday life. While she outlined a whole theory of the spiritual life, her teachings on prayer were simplicity itself: "... prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends".¹⁶⁴ Her doctrine on prayer points to a more recollected, authentic life where God's will moves from the periphery to the center of one's life. Divine Mercy is a major theme in her works and she once referred to her autobiography as the *Book of God's Mercies* as it is organized around evidence of God's compassion and mercy.¹⁶⁵ (Likewise, the French Carmelite, Therese of Lisieux began her autobiography with the stated intention to sing "the Mercies of the Lord".¹⁶⁶) Although Teresa's language and imagery are her own, her trajectory is the same described in the *Book of the First Monks*, namely, a life dedicated to the pure heart so that one may taste the "torrent" of God's love in contemplative prayer.

Needless to say, Teresa's determined efforts to reform or re-found the Carmelites engendered resistance both within and without the Order, but by her death, in 1582, she had succeeded in implanting her vision of the reform in seventeen convents in Spain.¹⁶⁷ In 1580 the Spanish Carmelites split into two different groups, with Teresa's reformed group becoming the Discalced Carmelites (O.C.D.) and the original group being known as the Ancient Observance (O.Carm.). The

the idealized, original eremitical life of Mount Carmel is paradoxical: she is attempting to recapture the original vision by herself being creative and groundbreaking. This paradox has inspired many an intra-Carmelite debate about whether she is a "reformer" or a "founder".

¹⁶³ TERESA OF AVILA, *The Way of Perfection*, chapter 4, section 7, cited in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol. 2, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. and Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D., ICS Publications, Washington, D.C. 1980.

¹⁶⁴ TERESA OF AVILA, *The Book of Her Life*, chapter 8, section 5, vol. 1.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁶⁶ *Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux*, trans. John Clarke, O.C.D., ICS Publications, Washington, D.C. 1996, p. 13.

¹⁶⁷ While Teresa insisted in her autobiography that she was at peace with all the politics and feuding about the reform leaving it all in God's hands, she proved to be remarkably astute in making the system work for her and in negotiating behind the scenes.

final international separation of the two groups occurred in 1593. From that time on there have been two distinct orders or two branches of the same vine with common symbols and heritage, but with different nuances and charisms. The actual reform and separation process was bitter, complicated, and the tension between the two groups lasted centuries. Happily today there is more fraternal cooperation and respect between the two branches.¹⁶⁸

Discussion of the Carmelite reform must include the collaboration between Teresa and St. John of the Cross, the passionate Carmelite friar whose work and insights were critical to the success of the reform and whose poetry and spiritual commentaries have become classics. John was ordained in 1567, the same year Teresa founded her second reformed monastery, and was persuaded by Teresa to join her work in the reform. In 1568 the first reformed monastery for contemplative friars was founded in Duruelo. Teresa and John shared the same vision for the friars and nuns: radical opposition to all the false gods of their contemporary society in order to undergo radical transformation in God's love. John's poems and accompanying commentaries are classic and hallmarks of Carmelite non-linear, mystical language. They elaborate on two paradoxes that are hallmarks of John's and which have particular relevance for the thesis of this paper. First, the spiritual path must be marked by renunciation of all attachments to worldly things and relationships, even those that are worthy and good. Often this detachment is not voluntary, but occurs when the proximate things of the world, which we have made into gods, fail us. Without any choice, we are forced to face our poverty, limitations, and the disordered relationships we have worshipped, in the place of God. In this necessary purification, all must give way before love of God until one reaches the famous "Nada" or nothingness where the soul is stripped of all attachments. Surprisingly, in this letting go into nothingness, one finds God who could not be contained by any of the gods to which one was attached previously. Secondly, in the "dark night" the soul feels abandoned, bereft, and far from God, but in a sophisticated psychological and spiritual insight, John explains that the necessary purifications and darkness are a prelude to an even deeper union with God. What seems to be darkness is actually the presence of God, so overwhelming and profound that our

¹⁶⁸ Interestingly enough, the Baltimore Carmel is the successor community to the first American Carmel, founded by Catholic women from Maryland who had been trained in the Lowlands in convents with direct ties to Teresa.

limited senses perceive it as “the night”. Like Teresa, John used shockingly bold and creative images to illustrate the same classic Carmelite orientation to a radical turning towards God. While certainly not identical, there is a parallel paradox in the Hasidic spirituality explored below.

Although the modern understanding is that any activity or ministry can be contemplative, the Carmelite charism still maintains the original dynamic tension between the active life and the more explicitly mystical focus of contemplative prayer. Even the original Carmelite Rule contains this tension with the elected prior living in the first cell that pilgrims would encounter so he could welcome them in being of service and the eremitical ideal of the men enjoying the solitude or the cell for prayer. In cloistered orders of nuns, such as the Discalced Carmelites in Auschwitz, the accent is on the side of contemplation, but always in service of those who request their prayers and for the needs of the Church. Within the Carmelite family today there are groups of friars who staff parishes, teach in schools, give retreats, ec. and “active” congregations of religious sisters who care for the aged and infirm, teach, give spiritual direction, etc.

X HASIDIC TRADITION

To enter the Hasidic world is to become one with a Chagall painting: fantastic, ephemeral spirits float by, colors are vibrant, and there is joy, dance, and song. This is not the Enlightenment world of rational thought and science, nor is it irrational. Rather it is a particular orientation to life, namely, the amazing discovery, according to Heschel, of “the ineffable delight of being a Jew”.¹⁶⁹ This movement, he believed, was caused by depletion of the Jewish imagination in the intricacies of Jewish law and the social and economic suffering of the people in the eighteenth century. “Hasidim” is related etymologically to the biblical notion of *hesed* as the Creator’s loving kindness to creation as well as human devotion to God and to each other and this was welcome news to oppressed Jews.¹⁷⁰ Eliach relates receptivity to the optimistic Hasidic message to the earlier pogroms by the Cossacks,

¹⁶⁹ ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL, *A Passion for Truth*, Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, Vermont 1973, p. 52.

¹⁷⁰ MARTIN BUBER, *The Legend of the Baal-Shem*, trans. Maurice Friedman, Schocken Books, New York 1969, p. 214.

the failure of the predicted seventeenth century Messiah to appear, and the general decline of Jewish institutions in Eastern Europe.¹⁷¹

Eve as the Carmelite stories about their founder Elijah transcend the historical facts, so too the founder of Hasidism escapes the narrow bounds of history. There is no historical documentation for the existence of the Hasidic founder, the Baal Shem Tov, but what is missing in factual evidence is compensated for in the beauty and power of the legends associated with him.¹⁷² As Elie Wiesel puts it, the legends about the Baal Shem Tov describe "events that may or may not have happened, and if they did, may or may not have happened in quite the way they are told. Viewed from the outside, all of these tales are incomprehensible; one must enter them for their truth may be measured only from the inside".¹⁷³ Subjectivity is the very nature of the Hasidic tale. Wiesel remembers his grandfather warning him: "There will, of course, always be someone to tell you that a certain tale cannot, could not, be objectively true. That is of no importance; an objective Hasid is not a Hasid".¹⁷⁴ There is some variance among the scholars I consulted about whether the Baal Shem Tov even existed, but tradition places him in the Ukraine from approximately 1700 to 1760.¹⁷⁵ Born to a pious, observant couple who had been childless, he was named Israel ben Eliezer. His birth was said to have been a reward for the parents' hospitality towards Elijah who appeared mysteriously to share their Sabbath meal disguised as a beggar. The father is reported to have counseled his son at his death:

I leave before I can make you into a man who fears God and loves those who fear Him. Remember one thing: "God is at your side and He alone is to be feared". Later, the Baal Shem Tov was to add: "God sees, God watches. He is in every life, in everything. The world hinges on His will. It is He who decides how many times the leaf will turn in the dust before the wind blows it away".¹⁷⁶

Tradition has it that he lived a marginalized life, plying several trades and not succeeding at any, until the age of thirty six, when he

¹⁷¹ ELIACH, p. xv.

¹⁷² The Baal Shem Tov is also known as The Master of the Good Name or the acronym of his initials, The Besht.

¹⁷³ ELIE WIESEL, *Souls on Fire - Portraits and Legends of Hasidic Masters*, trans. Marion Wiesel, Fireside, New York 1972, p. 5.

¹⁷⁴ WIESEL, *Souls on Fire*, p. 7.

¹⁷⁵ Note that Martin Buber's biographer, Maurice Friedman, asserts that Hasidism began in Poland.

¹⁷⁶ WIESEL, *Souls on Fire*, p. 11.

recognized the time had come for him to stop playing the fool and accept the mystical leadership role for which God had destined him. His powers were publicly displayed to a visitor who saw the Baal Shem Tov radiant with light near his hearth, which was blazing with flames.¹⁷⁷ The visitor reportedly fainted and upon awakening was cautioned by the Baal Shem Tov: “One does not look where one should not”. The visitor ran back to the village, announced to pious Jews who were studying the Torah that there was a new source of illumination nearby. The devout men built a throne and upon taking his seat, the Baal Shem Tov said: “I shall open a new way”.¹⁷⁸

This story contains many typical Hasidic elements, including the presence of Elijah, things not being as they seem the miraculous, impossible happening, the reverence accorded the Baal Shem Tov, the spirit of joy and celebration, and the fact that the legend are best seen from within, as Wiesel suggested. In Hasidism, Martin Buber said that “mysticism and saga flowed together into a single stream” and that “the proclamation of rebirth” is always present.¹⁷⁹ Like all myths, in Hasidism he claimed, “there is no division of essential being. It knows multiplicity but not duality”.¹⁸⁰ The Baal Shem Tov’s transformation illustrates this point about non-duality – at age thirty-six he didn’t become a new or different person, rather he began to show the powers he had always had. And his powers, although enhanced and revered, are not qualitatively different from the powers of his followers who can also see the miraculous, if they know how to look. Heschel, the scion of a long line of important Hasidic rabbis, described the ease with which the divine permeated the ordinary: “Miracles no longer startled anyone, and it was no surprise to discover among one’s contemporaries men who had attained the holy spirit, men whose ear perceived the voice of heaven”.¹⁸¹

This new movement inverted the traditional hierarchy of Jewish values, whereby scholarship was no longer the principal path to God: “It placed prayer, ecstasy, storytelling, and sanctification of daily life on

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁷⁹ BUBER, p. 12. One can see the notion of rebirth in the Baal Shem Tov’s “new way”.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁸¹ ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL, *The Earth is the Lord’s*, 1950, as quoted in EDWARD K. KAPLAN - SANUEL DRESNER, *Abraham Joshua Heschel*, Yale University Press, New Haven - London 1998, p. ix.

a par with Talmudic studies".¹⁸² Likewise leadership roles were initially based on charismatic appeal, though Hasidism eventually became an almost exclusively dynastic phenomenon with rabbis known by their lineage: i.e. Abraham Joshua Heschel whose ancestors have been rabbis for seven generations, traced his paternal Hasidic roots back to the Rebbe (Rabbi) of Apt, who had become the Hasidic spokesperson upon the death of the Baal Shem Tov and on his mother's side he was descended from Rabbi Yitzhac of Berditchev.¹⁸³ The latter ancestor's name shows another Hasidic tradition of naming the town from which the Rebbe came. The Rebbe was assumed to be a holy man or a *zaddik* who often had miraculous powers of telling the future, healing, causing supernatural occurrences, etc. The followers venerated the Rebbe whose words and advice were treasured, somewhat like the Desert Monks of the fourth century who were asked for "a word".

By the beginning of the nineteenth century Hasidim had overcome scholarly and class prejudices to become a major popular movement in Eastern Europe with particular importance in the Jewish communities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.¹⁸⁴ Friedman reports that almost half of the Jews in Eastern Europe considered themselves Hasidic.¹⁸⁵ While acknowledging that Hasidism "lives in personalities" and that "without the charismatic person there is not teaching of Hasidism", Heschel called it "first an intellectual revolution".¹⁸⁶ The Jewish emphasis had fallen too heavily on the side of abstract Talmudic arguments where the simplest question became a dialectical pyramid with all previous generations of scholars. As Heschel wrote: "There was a tremendous fascination in those days for what we call *pilpul*, with what may be called sharpness, intellectual wit in the study of the Torah and the Talmud".¹⁸⁷ The Baal Shem Tov offered another version of Judaism one that exalted prayer and didn't see study as the answer to all of life's quandaries. Heschel quotes the following to illustrate the emphasis on the human heart's response to God:

There is a famous story of how a man came to a rebbe for the first time in his life. He was already advanced in years; he was almost thirty years

¹⁸² ELIACH, p. xv.

¹⁸³ KAPLAN - DRESNER, pp. 5, 10.

¹⁸⁴ ELIACH, p. xvi.

¹⁸⁵ SAMUEL FRIEDMAN, *Martin Buber's Life and Works - The Early Years 1878-1923*, E. P. Dutton, New York 1981, p. 94.

¹⁸⁶ ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL, *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual audacity*, ed. Susannah Heschel, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, New York 1996, p. 35.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

old. "It's the first time I come to a rebbe", the man said. The rebbe asked him "What did you do all your life?" He answered, "I have gone through the Talmud four Times". "How much of the Talmud has gone through you?" asked the rebbe.¹⁸⁸

As can be seen from the two Hasidic anecdotes above, much of the richness of the tradition lies in its storytelling and literature. Just as a Chagall painting, the Hasidic tale was often a story within a story, a paradoxical account of unexpected, fantastic things happening, often told with biting wit in popular speech. As per Eliach, the common themes are "love of humanity, optimism, and a boundless belief in God and the goodness of mankind".¹⁸⁹ Dreamlike in quality, the Hasidic tale uses what therapists call "primary process" associations in which the world of reality is filtered through fantasy, myth, and the unconscious. The tales are inspiring to a people in need, subversive in overturning the established order, and affirming the power of memory and tradition. Wiesel celebrates the power of the Hasidic tale (and all stories):

True writers want to tell the story simply because they believe they can do something with it - their lives are not fruitless and are not spent in vain. True listeners want to listen to stories to enrich their own lives and to understand them. What is happening to me happens to you. Both the listener and the reader are participants in the same story and both *make* it the story that it is. I speak only of true writers and true readers and true listeners. As for the other, they are entertainers and their work doesn't really matter.¹⁹⁰

There is a powerful dynamic between the listener, yearning for a word of counsel or insight into his or her situation, and the paradoxical, metaphoric tale that works on the imagination and the heart. Both teller and listener are transformed by the process. Another example with clever humor, cited by Wiesel follows:

When the great Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov saw misfortune threatening the Jews it was his custom to go into a certain part of the forest to meditate. Then he would light a fire, say a special prayer, and the miracle would be accomplished and the misfortune averted. Later, when his disciple, the celebrated Magid of Metzritch, had occasion, for the same reason, to intercede with heaven, he would go to the same place in the for-

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁸⁹ ELIACH, p. xvi.

¹⁹⁰ ELIE WIESEL, *Harry James Cargas in Conversation with Elie Wiesel*, Paulist Press, New York 1976, pp. 86-87.

est and say “Master of the Universe, listen! I do not know how to light the fire, but I am still able to say the prayer”. And again the miracle would be accomplished. Still later, Rabbi Moshe-leib of Sasov, in order to save his people once more, would go into the forest and say: “I do not know how to light the fire, I do not know the prayer, but I know the place and this must be sufficient”. It was sufficient and the miracle was accomplished.

Then it fell to Rabbi Israel of Rizhyn to overcome misfortune. Sitting in his armchair, his head in his hands, he spoke to God: “I am unable to light the fire and I do not know the prayer; I cannot even find the place in the forest. All I can do is to tell the story, and this must be sufficient”. Ant it was sufficient.

God made man because he loves stories.¹⁹¹

Compassion and joy are major themes in Hasidic stories. A Father complained to the Baal Shem, “My son is estranged from God - what shall I do?” he replied, “Love him more”.¹⁹² The command “to love more” is “one of the primary Hasidic words”, according to Buber, as Love “exists in reality *between* the creatures, that is, it exists in God”.¹⁹³ There is a tremendous sense in Hasidic stories of our inter-relationship and mutual responsibility for each other. If one loves too little, the next person must love more. The story is told of a jealous rabbi who competed with the Baal Shem Tov and bitterly resented his teachings and his popularity. In a dream this rabbi saw his garden wither and die, the tenacious roots remained dead under the earth and the tortured rabbi pondered how to uproot them. The Baal Shem Tov appeared, he threw himself at his feet and cried out: “Master, teach me what I must do to tear out the roots!”. The Baal Shem Tov explained that the garden represented his owns bitter self-preoccupations and masochism which had taken material shape in the garden. However, magically the roots had been torn out through the Baal Shem Tov having shared this story with others: “And because I, a joyful man, have told your story to joyful men, joy has entered the depths and has torn out the roots”.¹⁹⁴ While the listener could well imagine that the Baal Shem Tov could have torn out the roots single-handedly, the message is that shared joy and compassion become even more powerful.

¹⁹¹ ELIE WIESEL, *Gates of the Forest*, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, New York 1966, prologue.

¹⁹² BUBER, p. 47.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

The prophet Elijah figures largely in the Hasidic tradition. Once, when the Baal Shem Tov was preparing to do cosmic battle with the forces of evil, he called back to his side all the “sparks” of goodness that he had sent into the world. However, the sparks protested being removed from the human sphere where they were so needed and where they had already inspired such hope. The Baal Shem Tov relented and allowed the sparks to return to the human world, but found himself without the strength to fight the battle alone. He ascended into the realm of the prophets, complaining, “Much of the fervour from my heart’s core has been sacrificed and I no longer have enough for the deed”.¹⁹⁵ He consulted Elijah, who directed him towards earth to a devout shepherd boy who longed to give God glory and whose pact with the Baal Shem Tov defeated the forces of evil. Another story about Elijah illustrates the nature of subjectivity in the stories of the Hasidim. Having been promised by the Baal Shem Tov that he would show them Elijah, the disciples tried to follow his injunction to open their eyes wide. First they saw a beggar go into their House of Study and emerge with a precious book. Next the same beggar left a ceremony, clutching a piece of silver. Finally, a mounted soldier appeared who asked the disciples to light his pipe. The Baal Shem Tov said: “It was he. The secret is in the eyes”.¹⁹⁶ We may say that one of the functions of the Hasidic story is to help the listeners keep their eyes wide open!

A marvelous contemporary example is *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust*, in which Yaffa Eliach transcribes actual Holocaust events told by survivors. The stories are told in a Hasidic format with calamitous events recounted with absolute faith in God or in the *zaddik* who represents Him. The purpose of the Hasidic story, writes Eliach, is “to restore order and to mend the broken lines of communication between man and his fellow man, and between heaven and earth, at a time and place when faith and prayer failed”.¹⁹⁷ This type of bold narrative offers the freedom and context to explore “dangerous, problematic, and otherwise forbidden topics”, such as the Holocaust.¹⁹⁸ Eliach makes the crucial point that the Hasidic story provides the survivor with a method to link his/her life before and after the Holocaust. One such story is “God’s messenger, the Grandson of the Pnei Yehoshua”.¹⁹⁹ Over his

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

¹⁹⁶ WIESEL, *Souls on Fire*, p. 27.

¹⁹⁷ ELIACH, p. xix.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xx.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-69. The notes explain that the Pnei Yehoshua was a religious book whose author was called by the name of his work. The author, a well-known scholar, was the mentor of the successor to the Baal Shem Tov.

mother's protests, a young Hasid went out after the Sabbath dinner and came upon an elderly Jew, being beaten up by Polish teenagers who fled. The aged man identified himself as the grandson of the Pnei Yehoshua and thanked the young man for saving his life, saying that his bravery had earned him "this world and the world to come".²⁰⁰ Only when they reach the prayer house with its illumination does the young Hasid notice the translucent quality of the old man's eyes. A year later with the persecution of the Jews in high gear, the Hasid goes out again for a walk, against the wishes of his fearful mother. A German soldier attacks him brutally, threatening to kill him, and screaming anti-Semitic epithets. Out of nowhere the image of the grandson of the Pnei Yehosua appears to the Hasid and simultaneously, a Christian woman from across the street threw herself at the German's feet to plead for mercy for the Jew. Although cursing the woman and the Hasid, the German retreats and the young man is saved. In recounting this story in 1974, the Hasid observed of the earlier miracle: "God has mysterious ways and mysterious messengers...".²⁰¹ This story is classic in the unexpected outcome, the emphasis on the brilliance of the Pnei Yehoshua's eyes, and the linking of two disparate events that on the surface would seem unrelated, unless one had Hasidic eyes to see.

XI ORDINARY LANGUAGE AND MYSTICAL LANGUAGE

Language, in order to qualify as such, must convey an idea between two people, the "sayer" and the "sayee", said Samuel Butler.²⁰² And since this language is both the method for conveyin the idea as well as the environment in which the idea is conveyed, words only become language, argues Robert Scharlemann, when they are put into a medium where the hearer can receive them.²⁰³ Thus, for example, speaking Portuguese words to a Finnish speaking person isn't language by Butler's definition, as the words can't be received by the sayee. Applied to the polemics of the Carmelite dispute, one can see multiple examples of ineffective language as well as words that never became language. Certainly ideological rhetoric is one case where words didn't become language, according to this definition. We can look in several places to illustrate this linguistic misfiring.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

²⁰² BUTLER, p. 18.

²⁰³ ROBERT E. SCHARLEMANN, *God in Language*, ed. Robert E. Scharlemann and Gilbert E. M. Ogutu, Paragon House Publishers, New York 1987, pp. cii-viii.

On the level of the everyday people involved, we can assume that what was meant by the Poles who demanded that Auschwitz honor their sacred dead was very different from what some Jews meant when they spoke of Auschwitz as *the* symbol, par excellence, of the Holocaust. Their language actually meant different things: the Poles wanted to use Auschwitz affirmatively to stake out their claim to the meaning of their national sacrifice, whereas the Jews used language negatively, to state what Auschwitz should *not* become. When the authors of the piece about nuns growing vegetables on top of Jewish ashes protested in hyperbolic language, their message may have incited more Jewish anger, but it certainly didn't melt any Polish hearts. The Poles may have "heard" the message, but, it couldn't have been considered "received". Likewise, Cardinal Glemp's patronizing homily, which generalized about Jewish media power, may safely be said not to have eased any Jewish distrust. The offensive ideas were conveyed by the sayer, but with limited reception by the sayee, due to anger, distrust, and prejudice. The best, or worst, example of the failure of ordinary language to "do the job" was the protest by Rabbi Weiss' group and the resultant confrontation with the workers. What actually happened is in dispute, as witness media accounts that all focus on different angles of one event in a Roshomon fashion, but neither the words of Weiss and group nor the alleged words of the workers ever became language in the above sense of the word. It is worth noting that even Klein, the chair of the Jewish delegation, voiced disapproval of the medium in which Weiss expressed himself. All the above examples illustrate rhetorical language in the service of ideology, not genuine communication.

The language at the interfaith level of negotiations between the Catholics and Jews, which can be closely followed by Klein's chronology of the correspondence, highlights rational, logical, and diplomatic language as befits the high ecclesiastical and professional circles in which the two delegations to the Geneva meetings functioned. This precise, legal language was the language of the courtroom or of a diplomatic treaty, thus the strongly worded, reasoned Jewish protests when the Carmelites were not moved by the agreed upon date. In a similar vein, the Catholic explanations for the failure to meet the deadline were couched in the same type of language with reasoned explanations about why the economic problems in Poland and internal Church politics had caused the delay. Interestingly enough, Klein himself characterizes his exchanges with the Catholics as too rational and lacking in passion, as we have seen above. We also saw how a participant at this level of discourse was expected to continue to use rational,

logical arguments. When Cardinal Macharski abrogated the terms of the Geneva agreement and Glemp suggested that the Cardinals who had signed the accord were incompetent, he was roundly condemned by his prothers cardinals. Not only had he disrespected the Cardinals on the committee, but also he had resorted to accusatory and non-diplomatic language.

Initially silent on the controversy, when the Vatican finally took a position, its language was so obscure and indirect that the Jews couldn't decipher it and had to turn to Catholics to learn that Rome had decided the nuns had to move. It seemed the higher one ascended on the hierarchy of power and social status and the further removed one was from the issues on the ground, the more obfuscating the language became.

Since silence necessarily bookends speech, one must highlight the virtual public silence of the Carmelite nuns themselves. While their vocation would not have lent itself to public demonstrations, any inquiry into this controversy runs up against the apparent lack of voice for the nuns themselves. How did they understand the issues involved and what language would they have used to describe their position?²⁰⁴

Similarly one notes the relative lack of linguistic attention given to the Polish people themselves by the Church authorities and the high-ranking decision makers. The initial Geneva documents were published only in Hebrew and French, not in Polish, and Cardinal Macharski appears to have done little of a positive nature to prepare his countrymen for the eventual transfer of the nuns. Certainly, once the demonstrations began and Macharski repudiated the agreement, there was massive public protest and much discussion, but, at this stage, it had reached a level of impasse where the language was often inflammatory and highly emotional. Had the Poles been given the opportunity to participate in a dialogue and to discuss the issues involved early on, where they could have expressed themselves thoughtfully without necessarily being labeled anti-Semitic, they would have had more sense of inclusion and there probably would have been less Polish anger.

The Carmelite convent at Auschwitz was not about truth or facts, not even the partial truths conveyed by all the above groups of sayers and sayees, it was about *meaning*. It is here, with the focus on meaning, that we began to see a shift in tone in the correspondence that Klein's book exposes. This shift occurs with the first letter from the

²⁰⁴ We do have only the fragmentary quotes attributed to the Prioress.

new Superior General of the Carmelites, Camilo Maccise, where we see the power of empathy and apology, as discussed above, and shift reaches its apogee in Maccise's final letter with the Baal Shem Tov quote. An excerpt from Butler is appropriate here:

... for the most part it is in what we read between the lines that the profounder meaning of any letter is conveyed. There are words unwritten and untranslatable into any nouns that are nevertheless felt as above, about, and, underneath the gross material symbols that lie scrawled on the page; and the deeper the feeling with which anything is written the more pregnant will it be of meaning which can be conveyed securely enough, but which loses rather than gains if it is squeezed into a sentence, and limited by the parts of speech. The language is not in the words, but in the *heart-to-heartedness* of the ghing, which is helped by words but is nearer and father than they [emphasis mine].²⁰⁵

With Maccise's genius stroke of citing the Baal Shem Tov story, he entered into the "heart-to-heartedness" of Klein's world and created what Butler refers to as "a covenant" between them.²⁰⁶ Using an Hasidic symbol, the story, he entered into the sayee's world and created a new bond of meaning which was previously unavailable through logical, reasoned discourse.²⁰⁷ Precise, literal language can nail down, but never expand, can specify facts (like the agreed upon date for the Carmelites to move), but can rarely clarify meaning. Maccise must have sensed intuitively that the convent debacle had reached such a point that he needed to move beyond the rational and linear, *not* to the irrational, but to the non-linear. By opening up the dialogue to new possibilities, Maccise moved beyond ordinary speech and opened the door to mystical language with the Hasidic story.

Since language is both "a tool and a medium", as we use it to do things and it is also the environment in which we work, let us look at mystical language in this context.²⁰⁸ Evelyn Underhill's classic study of mysticism delineated the faculties of "the mental life" of human beings.²⁰⁹ First there is the distinction between what she calls "the

²⁰⁵ BUTLER, p. 20.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁰⁷ I am not arguing against such language, but rather arguing that such language did not advance the resolution of this issue of the convent at Auschwitz.

²⁰⁸ SCHARLEMANN, p. vii.

²⁰⁹ EVELYN UNDERHILL, *Mysticism - The Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness*, Oneworld Publications, Oxford, England 1993, p. 67.

threshold” of the conscious, “surface” life and the “threshold” of the “unconscious deeps”.²¹⁰ The former is sub-divided into three parts, the “Trinity in Unity of feeling, thought, and will”.²¹¹ The latter encompasses a “hidden self” which can emerge, under certain circumstances, to experience a relationship with “the Absolute”.²¹² The mystical life, as per Underhill, involves “the emergence from deep levels of man’s transcendental self; its capture of the field of consciousness; and the ‘conversion’ or rearrangement of his feeling thought, and will – his character – about this new center of life”.²¹³ Stressing that “the business and method of Mysticism is Love”, Underhill gives various examples of the stammering and stuttering of mystics who have attempted to explain the inexplicable.²¹⁴ This is precisely the language that seeks to transgress beyond former linguistic boundaries, that stumbles and lurches with new experiences, and startling insights.²¹⁵ Like John of the Cross’ poetry or the Hasidic story, mystical language “is forever groping along the borders of the unspeakable, wresting new land from the vast void of the unexpressed”.²¹⁶ Still, even mystical language has the function both as the above mentioned tool and medium. Thus Sontag suggests that the principle function of language is to help the mind see beyond itself.²¹⁷ “Words”, he says, “properly used are props to hold the mind up”.²¹⁸ However, words only go so far, particularly in a context like Auschwitz where God appears to be absent, and then silence is the only response possible. But to remain silent does not mean one is not “doing” anything or that “nothing is happening”. Since words are only props, as stated above, mystical language is where one goes when the props fail or are no longer necessary and silence is often an accessory to this special kind of language. As Sontag suggests, “... we need to locate a silence underneath thought in order to help the mind move freely”.²¹⁹ Given Saint Martin’s claim that “all mystics speak the

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²¹⁵ FRIEDRICH WAISMANN, “The Resources of Language”, in *The Importance of Language*, ed. Max Black, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1963, p. 114.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 116. On the next page Waismann observes that there may be some truth in the notion that “ordinary speech is only good for saying things that are no longer worth saying”.

²¹⁷ SONTAG, “Words of Silence”, p. 136.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

same language and come from the same country”, I shall now explore how the mystical language of both the Carmelite and Hasidic traditions might have better bridged the gap than any of the language forms used.²²⁰

XII ANALYSIS

Keeping in mind Shapiro’s earlier caution about attempting to domesticate the radical negativity of the Holocaust requires us to move outside conventional language (which failed to find the heart-to-heart-ness between the disputants, as described above). With many critical differences between them, Carmelite and Hasidic spiritualities both transgress the conventional bounds within their respective traditions and go beyond the place where words hold the mind up. In their history both the Teresian reform of the Carmelites and the Eastern European birth of Hasidism have contradiction and paradox built into their very foundation. Teresa, a woman in 16th c. conservative Spain, without any wordly power or affluence, adroitly challenges much of the entrenched powerful interests and goes on to found (or reform) a major religious group. The rise of Hasidism seems to have been equally unlikely and surprising - poor, oppressed Jews begin to sing and dance, to follow preposterous “superstitious notions”, to engage in “unruly behaviour” and this form of piety captured almost half of European Jews prior to the Holocaust.²²¹ By their very nature, both groups challenge the mainstream and have paradox at their heart. With their mystical perspectives they suggest a radical toppling of conventional social or religious values and suggest that things are not really as they seem. Their shocking, paradoxical language challenges the believer to the core and undermines verities that have been taken for granted. Take, for instance, the teachings of John of the Cross, which are expressed in poetry and prose commentary. As discussed above, for John the pinnacle of the spiritual life is reached in the nothingness of “Nada” where radical detachment from all one previously knew opens up the possibility of moving beyond limited human concepts of God, necessarily described in words, to an authentic, mystical experience of the Divine. Indeed John’s instruction in *The Ascent*

²²⁰ UNDERHILL, p. xiii.

²²¹ As attributed to a “prominent Jewish historian”, cited in ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL’s *The Insecurity of Human Freedom*, Schocken Books, New York 1959, p. 240.

of *Mount Carmel* sets up his theory of spiritual detachment in classic paradoxical language:

To reach satisfaction in all
 desire satisfaction in nothing.
 To come to the knowledge of all
 desire the knowledge of nothing.
 To come to possess all
 desire the possession of nothing.
 To arrive at being all
 desire to be nothing.

To come to enjoy what you have not
 you must go by a way in which you enjoy not.
 To come to the knowledge you have not
 you must go by a way in which you knot not.
 To come to the possession you have not
 you must go by a way in wich you possess not.
 To come to be what you are not
 you must go by a way in which you are not.²²²

Much like a Zen koan, the literal, objective meaning appears to be nonsense and incomprehensible to someone outside the mystical circle. How can one attain the All by letting go of everything? This might be more puzzling to a mainstream Christian than to a Hasid who knows that the truth of a Hasidic story is seen subjectively, from within, not from outside, as it overturns commonly accepted patterns of reality. However, once the listener's imagination is seized by these contradictory images, he/she may feel a kinship with the already mentioned pious Jew who was confronted by the rebbe about whether any of his four readings of the Talmud had "gone through" him. Has the Talmud gone beyond words that prop up the mind, one might ask?

Another famous theaching of John's is the *Dark Night* in which one feels abandoned by God, unable to pray as before, and unsure of God's will. It is precisely in this perceived abandonment that the Divine is most present, John argues. There are multiple such stories in Hasidic *Tales of the Holocaust* and while I am not arguing that the theology is identical, I do assert that this concept would not be foreign to a Hasid. Such awareness is evident in "A Hill in Bergen Belsen", where Anna, ill with the typhus epidemic that had already killed thou-

²²² *The Collected Works of John of the Cross*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. and Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D., ICS Publications, Washington, D.C. 1991, p. 111.

sands in the camp, struggles to remain alive after four years as a prisoner.²²³ She knew instinctively that her only hope was to keep moving and not succumb to the temptation to give up and die. Deliriously shuffling through the camp, she spied a mist-covered hill in the distance that seemed to be a life giving sign. In her own mind, reaching the top of the hill would guarantee her survival. Unable to walk straight up the hill, she laboriously crawled to the top and collapsed. Suddenly she experienced the loving hands of her father, who was also a prisoner at Bergen Belsen, caressing her and assuring her that she would live to see the liberation of the camp. Four days later the camp was liberated and Anna was hospitalized. Upon her release she returned to Bergen Belsen and learned that the hill up which she had crawled had been, in fact, a mass grave for thousands of victims, including her father. In her perceived hour of abandonment, her father (and God) had been present. It is precisely in this juxtaposition of apparent desolation with God's presence that a common thread can be found between Carmelite and Hasidic mysticism.

In a more lyrical approach to the paradoxical union of love and suffering, Teresa wrote of "the heart that greatly loves receives no counsel or consolation excepts from the very one who wounded it, because from that one it hopes its pain will be cured. When You desire, lord, You quickly heal the wound You have caused..."²²⁴ In what would be nonsensical language, if taken literally, Teresa's wounds can only be cured by the very source of the pain. In a similar vein is the story of a *zaddik* on his deathbed who said: "Sweet suffering, I receive you in love"²²⁵ Both traditions understand the paradoxical "madness" of mystical language and ecstasy where longing for God is described in terms of pain.

In both traditions we are challenged to delve beyond the surface reality and look for a more transcendent understanding of reality where human experience trumps academic learning. The successor to the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid of Mezeritch, was said to have "mastered the art of winning the absolute loyalty of men by upsetting their equilibrium. His method relied on surprise and shock."²²⁶ While he was esteemed as a learned scholar and a maker of many miracles, it was the experience of his presence that attracted follower. Said an admirer, "I came to the Maggid not to listen to discourses, nor to learn from

²²³ ELIACH, pp. 208-209.

²²⁴ TERESA OF AVILA, vol. one, p. 460.

²²⁵ BUBER, p. 19.

²²⁶ WIESEL, *Souls on Fire*, p. 58.

his wisdom; I came to watch him time his shoelaces”.²²⁷ The experience of the holy person in the everyday moments of life provide a window for the seeker into what it means to lead a holy life now, in this moment, in these circumstances. Esoteric teachings take a back seat to the experience of the sanctification of every life. Similarly, Blessed Titus Brandsma, O.Carm., a Dutch Carmelite who was killed at Dachau, described Carmelites as not being called to dramatic, ostentatious things in public, but “it is certainly our duty to do ordinary things in extraordinary ways, in other words with pure intention and the focus of our whole personality”.²²⁸ Carmelites and Hasids would understand each other on this score.

Both traditions share themes about the importance of the believers’ friendship with God and with each other. Teresa’s famous quote, cited earlier about friendship is relevant: “... all must be friends, all must be loved, all must be held dear, all must be helped”.²²⁹ No one is excluded from the embrace of the community, which makes God’s love present to its members and models heaven on hearth. Likewise among the Hasids, there is reverence for the preciousness of each human being and reverence for him or her. Buber writes about the uniqueness of each individual soul and the honor it merits: “In each man, there is a priceless treasure that is in no other. Therefore, one shall honour each man for the hidden value that only he and none of his comrades has”.²³⁰ Although his language is exclusively male, the theme is the same as Teresa’s idea: each person is a fragment of the Divine and shall be honored and respected as such.

Another theme common to both the Carmelite and Hasidic traditions is the pure heart. We have seen this theme developed in the *Book of the First Monks*, where the Carmelite tradition of asceticism fosters purity of heart and awareness of Divine Nearness. This includes not only a charitable orientation towards all but an uncompromising focus on the Divine Presence. Paradoxically, it was during John of the Cross’ imprisonment by fellow Carmelites and attendant suffering that he wrote the great classic *The Spiritual Canticle* about the soul’s search for and ultimate union with God. The Hasidic tradition acknowledges the paradoxical possibility of attaining purity of heart in the most unlikely situations. A man, disillusioned and grieving his

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

²²⁸ TITUS BRANDSMA, *Mystiek Leven/Een Bloemlezing*, ed. Bruno Borchert and Uitgeverij B. Gottmer, Nijmegen The Netherlands 1985, p. 38.

²²⁹ TERESA OF AVILA, *Way of Perfection*, see footnote 162.

²³⁰ BUBER, p. 45.

dearest friend's death, had a visitation from the deceased which inspired him to visit the Baal Shem Tov in a reversal of his previous cynicism.²³¹ Prostrating himself at the Master's feet, he pronounced himself ready to die as the world held nothing more for him. The Baal Shem Tov counseled him, instead, to speak with the trees on a summer night "in your joy".²³² And he added that he was blessing him, "not for death" but rather for the man's continuing in the world, moving "from goal to goal, from strength to strength..."²³³ Through the unlikely experience of speaking with trees on a summer evening, the man's heart would be purified so that he could continue in the world, moving "from goal to goal" to seek God, rather than dying in disbelief and frustration.

Mystical space is another common theme of Carmelite and Hasidic spirituality that is relevant to the Auschwitz dispute. I my previous assertion is correct that Carmelites make important use of symbolic space, it is important to understand the Auschwitz Carmel question through this prism and to look for any correspondence on the Hasidic side. The whole history of Carmel is replete with the notion of mystical space. Earlier references have established the critical, imaginative role played by the early images of Mt. Carmel in the Order's understanding of itself.²³⁴ By turning everyplace into a Carmel, the believer taps into a wide range of imaginative symbols, which enrich the understanding and go beyond literal thought. Carmel becomes an orientation, a direction in which one's glance is cast, as much as a geographic site. Similarly, I argue, the Hasidic tradition uses the notion of sacred space to sanctify all of life as witness the following example:

The rabbi of Kobryn taught: God says to man, as he said to Moses: "Put off thy shoes from thy feet" - put off the habitual which enclose your foot, and you will know that the place on which you are now standing is holy ground. For there is no rung of human life on which we cannot find the holiness of God everywhere and at all times.²³⁵

Mystical space exists wherever the human seeks the Divine and experiences God's yearning also. This becomes another key point in which the Carmelite and Hasidic tradition understand each other.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ See WELCH and WAAIJMAN in footnotes 151 and 152.

²³⁵ WAAIJMAN, p. 4.

Elijah is another powerful, mythic symbol, which pervades both movements. He is honored on the Carmel side with the foundational importance given to him in the *Book of the First Monks*, where the author provides the genealogical link between the medieval Carmelites and the pre-historic figure of Elijah, as discussed above. Considered the first monk by the *Book of the First Monks*, he becomes the model for the eremitical and prophetic life and is such a rich and colorful image that he invites all sorts of projections in both traditions. Witness how he functions as a critical figure in the Hasidic tradition with the following example in the story "The Shepherd".²³⁶ The Baal Shem Tov is preparing for a final, cataclysmic battle with Evil and to this end, summons home all the "sparks" of good from the universe. Some of the sparks protest, however, at being called to abandon the creation in which they have been active: "Would you spoil all that you have redeemed?", ask the sparks.²³⁷ Reluctantly, the Baal Shem Tov allows the sparks to return to creation and then appeals to Elijah for special intervention in the battle against Evil. Elijah directs the Baal Shem Tov to a shepherd with whom he dialogues about good and evil and who moves to rescue his flock of sheep in a final battle of good and evil. In a typical Hasidic emphasis on the here and now, the shepherd saves the sheep at the same time he is discoursing upon existential themes. Elijah, in this Hasidic story, commutes between the divine realms and earth as a mythic, powerful figure, binding together the two realms. In another Elijah story, the Baal Shem Tov promised to show Elijah to his followers whom he admonished: "Open your eyes wide".²³⁸ A while later the group observed a beggar going into a House of Study and exiting with a book. Next the beggar was observed taking a silver spoon from a religious gathering and, thirdly, the beggar approached the group as a soldier on a horse who wanted his pipe lit. The Baal Shem Tov whispered: "It was he. The secret is in the eyes".²³⁹ With true Hasidic spirit, he suggested that one can "see" only with the eyes of spiritual belief and hope. All the above examples illustrate the powerful and varied projections associated with Elijah.

As discussed above, *The Book of the First Monks* describes Carmelite spirituality "as an asceticism and a mysticism of love".²⁴⁰ The Theme of Love runs across the board in the great Carmelite writ-

²³⁶ BUBER, pp. 202-208.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

²³⁸ WIESEL, *Souls on Fire*, p. 27.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ CHANDLER, p. 5.

ers and saints. One of the most famous sayings of John of the Cross is the following: "... where there is no love, put love, and you will draw out love...".²⁴¹ And Titus Brandsma, known for his good humor and concern for his fellow prisoners at Dachau, said: "Joy is not a virtue but an effect of love".²⁴² The strong Carmelite theme of love also finds a counterpart in Hasidism. Recall the story cited earlier about a father worried about his religiously unobservant son who was advised by the Baal Shem Tov: "Love him more".²⁴³

In another story from a now obscure *zaddik* we hear:

If a man sees that his companion hates him, he shall love him the more. For the community of the living is the carriage of God's majesty, and where there is a rent in the carriage, one must fill it, and where there is so little love that the joining comes apart, one must love more on one's own side to overcome the lack.²⁴⁴

This is the heart-to-heartedness of which Maccise spoke to Klein and which seemed to ease the separation between the two men from different traditions.

Both traditions emphasize God's mercy in dealing with the human. St. Therese of Lisieux began her autobiography by saying that her whole focus would be singing "The Mercies of the Lord".²⁴⁵ Stressing that any spiritual blessings she had experienced were through God's generous mercy and not her own merit, she pondered how God's mercy was allocated and concluded that God calls not those who are "worthy but those whom He pleases".²⁴⁶ The merciful bounty is not something achieved by human, but given freely by God. Likewise there is a strong Hasidic tradition of God's compassion and mercy. The following two stories about Levi-Yitzhad of Berdichev, a contemporary of the Maggid of Mezeritch, combine both the Yiddish humor and holding God accountable with the notion of God's mercy. Levi-Yitzhad bargained with God:

We shall give You our sins and, in return, You will grant us Your pardon. By the way, You come out ahead. Without our sins, what would You do with your pardon?²⁴⁷

²⁴¹ *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, The Letters, p. 760.

²⁴² BRANDSMA, p. 159.

²⁴³ BUBER, p. 47.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ *Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux*, p. 13.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ WIESEL, *Souls on Fire*, p. 108.

On another occasion, he warned God:

Know that if Your reign does not bring grace and mercy, ... Your throne will not be a throne of truth.²⁴⁸

Intimacy with God is so taken for granted that Levi-Yitzhad can threaten Him about his mercy! God needs human beings to exercise mercy, otherwise, the stories imply God would lose some of the Divine qualities.

All the above examples evidence the extent to which the Carmelite and Hasidic traditions both share a way of "seeing" that stands accepted reality on its head, language that opens up to the Transcendent, and which might have enabled the two groups to reach a more spiritually based decision to move the convent. The Polish Catholic "cognitive monopoly" to which Rubenstein referred would have been more easily chanelled, had the approach been through the mystical dimensions both Carmelites and Hasids share, rather than through inflammatory language and rhetoric.

XIII CONCLUSION

Where shall the word be found, where will the word Resound? Not here, there is not enough silence. T. S. Eliot²⁴⁹

The meetings, protests, correspondence, and media reports about the Auschwitz Carmel dispute were far more extensive than could be covered in this paper. Suffice it to say that the words expended on this issue appear to have been almost infinite and, with few exceptions, to have done little to resolve the crisis with any modicum of mutual respect or the heart-to-heartedness of the Hasidic story told by MacCise above. All sides (often there were more than two parties disputing) used the brute force of rationality and logic as well as emotional appeals to control the facts and the outcome. The presence of the Sacred was rarely mentioned by any of the participants, even though many of the leading figures were religious.

Since words can only point to that for which they stand, they are necessarily finite. Once one has dissected the facts about the Carmel

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

²⁴⁹ T. S. ELIOT, "Ash Wednesday", in *The Complete Poems and Plays: 1909-1950*, Harcourt, Brace, and Company, New York 1980, p. 65.

at Auschwitz, what does one do with them? It is only with symbolic and imaginative language that one can access the Transcendent or bow before the Wisdom of another faith tradition. Access to this type of language, which includes mystical language, is particularly critical in discussing any Auschwitz topic. As Shapiro has argued earlier, one must eternally guard against a facile linguistic domestication of the Holocaust. This caution is, perhaps, part of what the Rabbi of Bluzhov (Rabbi Israel Spira) meant when he said:

There are events of such overbearing magnitude that one ought not to remember them all the time, but one must not forget them either. Such an event is the Holocaust.²⁵⁰

If one could adequately describe the Holocaust or Auschwitz with words, there would be no need of silence. However, the inadequacy of language is a much broader problem, Sontag asserts: “If the reality of the world and of ourselves could be exhausted by description in words or formulae, silence is not important”.²⁵¹ But if there is an inexhaustible meaning in certain events, then silence becomes an absolute necessity, as the above T. S. Eliot quote suggests. Inherent in both traditions is an understanding that the things of “overbearing magnitude” cannot be contained by words, can only be suggested by mystical language, and honored by silence.

In explaining to his disciples how Elijah could have appeared in the form of a beggar in the Hasidic tale quoted above, the Baal Shem Tov stresses “the secret is in the eyes”. In other words, *how* we look will affect what we see. Looking with eyes of Love enable us to see the most irreconcilable things made whole, reconstituted, and transformed. Bl. Titus Brandsma asserted that seeing is a mutually reciprocal process with the Divine, who is able to “fix our glance”.²⁵²

Had the mystical glance been the lens through which this bitter dispute over meaning was considered and had the parties inclined towards silence as opposed to more words, I submit the convent would have been re-located sooner and with more harmony and trust among the parties. Had this occurred, it would have been a positive example of interfaith dialogue based on “seeing” the difference of the other and yet reaching beyond that gap to the underlying Reality that both traditions acknowledge.

²⁵⁰ ELIACH, unnumbered page before the dedication.

²⁵¹ SONTAG, p. 144.

²⁵² BRANDSMA, p. 155.

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EL CONVENTO DE CARMELITAS CALZADOS
DEL PIÉLAGO (TOLEDO). APORTACIONES
PARA SU ESTUDIO HISTÓRICO-ARTÍSTICO*

La historia de la fundación del Real Convento Carmelitano del Santo Desierto del Piélago (Toledo) es bien conocida, gracias, principalmente, al relato del escribano de Hinojosa e historiador local don Matías Gómez de Morales.¹ El 16 de agosto de 1687 se constituía la nueva fundación, tras algunas vicisitudes que la habían retrasado durante unos cuatro años. Y el 6 de junio 1689 obtendría amparo de la protección regia de Carlos II y sus sucesores, logrando así el respaldo definitivo para el mantenimiento y el desarrollo de la comunidad.²

El papel decisivo que el convento tuvo para la vida económica de la comarca es un tema apenas estudiado, pero sin duda clave para entender la historia de este lugar, principalmente durante el siglo XVIII. Entre sus propiedades se contaban: un molino – en realidad eran cuatro, como veremos –, tres pozos de nieve, numerosas posesiones agrícolas y “una brillante recua de mulos, con la que transportaba aceites a Bilbao y a otros puntos, cargando al regreso distintos géneros”.³

* Quiero dedicar este trabajo a Esteban Sánchez Manzano, mi padre, quien me descubrió este lugar “de paz edificado” que es el Piélago.

¹ El primero que estudió y publicó parcialmente el relato de Gómez de Morales fue el P. Balbino (O.Carm.); véanse de este autor: VELASCO BAYÓN, B., *Fundación de un convento recoleto de Carmelitas en Castilla (1683)*, in “Carmelus”, 19 (1972), pp. 113-133, e *Historia del Carmelo español*, vol. III, Institutum Carmelitanum, Roma 1994, pp. 112-114. Respecto al primer artículo de este autor, queremos precisar que, si bien las pesquisas para la fundación del convento se iniciaron en 1683 por el hermano Francisco de San Vicente, la fundación, *stricto sensu*, no acontecería hasta agosto de 1687.

² A.G.S. (Valladolid), Sección Patronato Real, 39-108. El documento ya fue referido por Pablo María Garrido, O.Carm., aunque erróneamente fijó la fecha el 6 de mayo (GARRIDO, PABLO MARÍA, *El solar carmelitano de San Juan de la Cruz. Los conventos de la antigua provincia de Castilla (1416-1836)*, B.A.C., Madrid 2000, p. 425). Hemos considerado interesante el transcribir y publicar el documento íntegro al final de nuestro texto (véase el Apéndice).

³ LÓPEZ DE AYALA-ÁLVAREZ DE TOLEDO, J. (Conde de Cedillo), *Una excursión a la Sierra del Piélago (Provincia de Toledo)*, in “Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Excursiones”, tomo XIII (1905), p. 73.

Además de la importancia económica que sin duda tuvo el enclave carmelitano, hay que destacar la influencia cultural que ejerció en sus alrededores. O, más exactamente, influencia religiosa, pues gran parte de las realizaciones que nos han llegado fue dirigida por el espíritu, la doctrina y la práctica religiosas. Numerosos son los testimonios que hemos hallado en los archivos de las parroquias circundantes sobre la presencia y participación de los frailes en las mismas; éstos, desde sus comienzos, salieron en misiones por las localidades cercanas para predicar. Los frailes observaron unas constituciones reformadas, de *strictior observantia*, que hay que comprender dentro de un movimiento de renovación espiritual más amplio nacido en la Orden del Carmen a mediados del siglo XVII.

Hoy permanecen las ruinas de este complejo en el corazón de la Sierra de San Vicente – un “esqueleto” parcial y torpemente restaurado –; es nuestro propósito desentrañar, en la medida de lo posible, los entresijos de su construcción, así como referir otras edificaciones que pertenecieron al convento. También son objeto de nuestro estudio las obras que albergó en su interior, es decir, todos los bienes muebles de los que nos han llegado noticias, tanto los que se han conservado como los que han desaparecido.

1. LAS PRIMERAS CONSTRUCCIONES

Tras las enormes dificultades que se dieron para la fundación del convento, y que no terminarían con su erección como tal en agosto de 1687, los frailes se instalaron en las precarias edificaciones del lugar del Piélagos, habilitando la ermita como iglesia para su comunidad.⁴

Poco ha quedado de esta primera construcción, la antigua ermita de Nuestra Señora del Piélagos. No obstante, conocemos algunas noticias más publicadas por Pablo María Garrido, concretamente del intervalo de tiempo que va desde la fundación hasta el año 1694, que ayudan a hacerse una ligera idea de estas primeras edificaciones per-

⁴ Gómez de Morales insiste en significar la pobreza del convento en sus comienzos (GÓMEZ DE MORALES, M., *La Historia de la descripción del Santuario de la Sierra de San Vicente del Piélagos, cueva de los Santos hermanos mártires San Vicente, Santa Sabina y Santa Cristeta, milagros, señas y aparición de Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles, propia de esta villa de la Hinojosa...*, 1773, cap. 6º, XII y XIV, cap. 7º, III, (manuscrito copia del original, escrito en 1919, que se halla en el Archivo Parroquial de Hinojosa de San Vicente –Toledo-, caja 18, libro 16).

tenecientes al convento.⁵ En primer lugar, y de común acuerdo entre las villas de Castillo de Bayuela y de Hinojosa, en el mes de mayo de 1685 se otorgó una escritura en virtud de la cual fueron cedidas al Provincial de los carmelitas de Castilla la ermita de los Santos Mártires y la ermita de Nuestra Señora del Piélago, con todos sus bienes y derechos, para la fundación del convento. Además, sabemos que durante el período de tiempo arriba mencionado se levantó la sacristía junto a la ermita, el refectorio y un pasadizo nuevo que unía ambas piezas. Se rehabilitaron los antiguos aposentos (¿tal vez la casa del santero de la antigua ermita?), disponiendo en ellos cuatro celdas para los religiosos. También se realizó otra construcción multi-funcional de unos 157 x 24 pies –unos 44,5 x 7,5 m.- y de cuatro alturas: en ella se distribuían las bodegas y despensas, la hospedería, la panadería, la biblioteca, y veintiséis celdas en la parte superior; según esta descripción pensamos que debe ser la construcción existente, correspondiente a la panda occidental del claustro en sus pisos altos. Hasta 1694 se habrían gastado 119.391 reales de vellón en dichas obras⁶.

En el lado norte de la cumbre del cerro de San Vicente está la cueva donde, según la tradición, se refugiaron Vicente, Sabina y Cristeta en su huida de las autoridades romanas; y sobre ella se levantó en el último tercio del siglo XVII una ermita gracias al empeño de Francisco García de Raudona – primer impulsor también de la fundación carmelitana –, lugar que también poseyó una porción de tierra a su alrededor. Dicha ermita, hoy en ruinas, pasó a contarse entre las posesiones de la Orden del Carmen como hemos referido.⁷

La rudimentaria fábrica que la ermita bajomedieval de Nuestra Señora del Piélago – más tarde Virgen de los Ángeles – debió tener en sus comienzos hubo de mejorarse con el tiempo, a tenor de los restos conservados en la actualidad. Las ruinas de la ermita permanecen

⁵ El capítulo del hermano Garrido constituye hasta hoy el estudio más completo y más reciente sobre el convento carmelitano del Piélago, (GARRIDO, PABLO MARÍA, *op. cit.*). Sin embargo, carece de una confrontación entre los datos documentales y los restos y objetos conservados, que en el presente trabajo hemos pretendido subsanar.

⁶ GARRIDO, PABLO MARÍA, *Ibid.*, pp. 414-415 y 426.

⁷ No consideramos que corresponda aquí presentar un estudio pormenorizado sobre la ermita, pues está un tanto alejada y su fábrica es anterior al convento del Piélago. Para un mayor conocimiento sobre la historia de este lugar, así como de los objetos que albergaba en su interior, remitimos a nuestro estudio que verá la luz próximamente: SÁNCHEZ MANZANO, E. - SÁNCHEZ RIVERA, J. Á., *La Sierra de San Vicente y la villa de Hinojosa*. Lo mismo vale para la primitiva ermita del Piélago, aunque en su caso describimos los restos de su fábrica, pues ésta fue la iglesia que utilizaron los frailes durante los primeros años.

ocultas por la maleza casi en su totalidad. Únicamente está despejada la fachada occidental, de unos 6,5 m. de anchura – unas 8 varas castellanas. En el centro de la misma se abre el vano de acceso, con un doble arco – de medio punto al exterior y escarzano en su interior –, y que debió tener una puerta de dos batientes. En el lado opuesto se encuentran los restos del ábside, de forma poligonal, donde estaría ubicado el altar de la Virgen. Y la longitud aproximada de la construcción es de unos 16 metros.⁸ Observando el muro occidental, de unos 90 cm. de grosor, podemos conocer cómo era la fábrica de la ermita, de piedra berroqueña unida con argamasa, con mampuesto en el interior y sillería a la parte exterior. Sin embargo, la cabecera presenta una obra más descuidada, con sillarejo en hiladas irregulares y sillares de refuerzo en las esquinas. El edificio hubo de cerrarse por una simple techumbre de vigas de madera (Fot. 1).

Además de las ruinas de la iglesia – antigua ermita –, existen restos cercanos de otro edificio, a la parte meridional, construido con mampostería; al estar cubierto de maleza no hemos podido observarlo con detenimiento, aunque quizá se trate del antiguo refectorio. Más puede verse del gran edificio arriba mencionado, a pesar de las desafortunadas intervenciones que se hicieron en él durante la segunda mitad del pasado siglo. La planta inferior de éste permite salvar el desnivel del terreno, comunicando mediante escaleras interiores con el segundo piso – aún existen restos de una de ellas –, situado a ras de la explanada donde se levantó el claustro y la nueva iglesia. Dos puertas dan acceso a esta planta baja, a sendas piezas de planta rectangular y gran amplitud: una (en el extremo noroeste), quizás la bodega, recorrida por una imposta donde posiblemente descansó una arqueña, y con una estancia aneja tal vez destinada a despensa; la otra (en el lado oeste), muy transformada, donde se ven todavía las grandes ménsulas que soportaron vigas de cerramiento. El segundo piso se destinó para la sacristía – correspondiendo en planta con la *bodega-despensa* de abajo – y para diferentes dependencias claustrales. Sobre la sacristía, en el tercer piso, pudo estar la biblioteca;⁹ y, al mismo nivel, la galería alta del claustro, a través de la cual se tendría acceso a otras

⁸ En nuestras numerosas visitas al lugar no pudimos observar directamente el ábside, oculto en el presente por la maleza, pero dos fotografías anteriores que hemos manejado nos han permitido saber cómo son sus restos.

⁹ Don Matías escribe que: “La pieza de la librería es igual a la de la sacristía” (GÓMEZ DE MORALES, M., *op. cit.*, cap. 7º, XVII); y el lugar que más encaja con esta descripción es la estancia de esta tercera planta, pues la que corresponde al primer piso parece menos adecuada para tal fin - entre otras cosas es más fría y oscura.

estancias, seguramente las celdas de los religiosos. La cuarta altura que se menciona en los documentos hubo de ser el sobrado, espacio entre el cierre del tercer piso y el tejado propiamente dicho.

Este edificio sería la base para una ampliación posterior: la construcción de las otras tres galerías dobles del claustro y el nuevo templo. Más adelante volveremos a la estructura del extremo occidental, en relación con la nueva iglesia que se erigió en el XVIII. Pensamos que hubo cierta continuidad en la construcción, al menos la idea de un proyecto global que se vino realizando durante medio siglo. No obstante, haría falta un estudio técnico más exhaustivo para aclarar las diversas fases constructivas del conjunto y la función de sus diferentes partes. Aún tenemos muchas dudas a este respecto; por ejemplo: ¿estaba edificada en 1694 la parte correspondiente a la *bodega-despensa*, sacristía y *biblioteca* que hemos descrito?, ¿dónde estuvo exactamente la hospedería al principio?¹⁰ o ¿se trasladó el refectorio primitivo a una sala del claustro?¹¹

Otras obras, de carácter puramente funcional, pertenecieron a los frailes, y fueron una ayuda muy importante para el sustento económico de la comunidad. En este sentido, una de las primeras actuaciones que llevaron a cabo fue el construir un molino, aproximadamente a 2 km. del convento – pero ya en el término de la villa de Navamorcuende –, en la cabecera del río Guadyerbás, y que aún hoy se puede ver. El molino tenía una reserva de aguas y una casa, y daba servicio a la comunidad y a los pueblos cercanos; su costo fue estimado en 27.500 reales por el arquitecto Gregorio Terán.¹² También se contaban entre sus posesiones tres pozos de nieve, en los términos de Hinojosa de San Vicente, El Real y Tablada, cuyos beneficios entre abril y septiembre de 1694 ascendieron a 18.500 reales. El primero tal vez fuera el construido por el hermano Diego de San José, antiguo ermitaño de Nuestra Señora del Piélago, y donado a dicha ermita en agosto de 1687.¹³ Y el segundo quizás fuese uno que también había

¹⁰ Gómez de Morales dice que en 1773: “Tiene la puerta principal de la hospedería a la banda de levante un espacioso atrio en que se da a los pobres limosna” (GÓMEZ DE MORALES, M., *Ibid.*, cap. 7º, XVII). No sabemos dónde ubicar con exactitud esta dependencia, pero dudamos de que estuviera en el mismo lugar que la hospedería que había en 1694.

¹¹ Lo lógico es pensar que sí, a no ser que el refectorio estuviera en lo que posteriormente se convirtió en la panda meridional del claustro, unido a la primera iglesia por el pasadizo antes referido. Como podemos ver el asunto es complejo.

¹² GARRIDO, PABLO MARÍA. *op. cit.*, p. 427.

¹³ De este pozo nevero de Hinojosa se dan más detalles en el *Catastro del Marqués de la Ensenada*, (Archivo General de Simancas – Valladolid –, Sección General de Rentas. Primera Remesa, tomo IX, libro 617, fol. 352 v. y 353).

pertenecido a la ermita del Piélago y que fue cedido a la Orden en mayo de 1685.¹⁴

El molino en realidad lo componen cuatro artificios ligeramente distanciados entre sí, y dispuestos a diferentes niveles de la ladera del monte para hacer descender precipitadamente el agua.¹⁵ Creemos que el situado a más altura, junto a la carretera que va a Navamorcuende, es en realidad el depósito o reserva de aguas que refiere la documentación. El segundo recibe el agua del anterior mediante una rampa; tiene además una estancia aneja. El tercero de la cadena es el mayor, y también recoge el líquido elemento a través de una rampa. Su fábrica es de mampuesto y sillares de refuerzo en las esquinas, los marcos de los vanos y la parte baja del muro por donde evacua el agua – con un arco de medio punto –; semejante al modo constructivo del convento. El cubo tiene potentes muros, de enorme grosor, y el interior revocado para evitar pérdidas. Tuvo la sala del molino tres alturas más entretecho, con una escalera de caracol de piedras enterizas que las comunicaba. Además, aún se pueden ver dos estancias anejas al molino que se corresponden con el primer piso de la casa del molinero: una, quizás un zaguán, que precede a la sala del molino; y otra que debió de ser la cocina, como delatan los restos de su chimenea. Ambas se comunican entre sí y tienen acceso desde el exterior. En la primera estancia, además, encontramos grabada en un sillar la fecha de terminación de la obra: “1695”.¹⁶ Por último, un cuarto artificioso del que apenas quedan vestigios, comunicado con el anterior también por una rampa que conducía el agua. Según hemos podido saber, todos estos molinos siguieron en funcionamiento hasta entrado el siglo XX.

También permanecen los tres antiguos pozos de la nieve, y al igual que los molinos, en una situación de total abandono.

A los bienes inmuebles hay que añadir los objetos que la comunidad adquirió para el culto. Según refiere Garrido, el promotor del convento, fray Juan Gómez Barrientos, había desembolsado 53.410 reales de vellón para comprar objetos y ornamentos necesarios para

¹⁴ GARRIDO, PABLO MARÍA, *op. cit.*, pp. 415, 421 y 425.

¹⁵ Éstos ya fueron publicados por MÉNDEZ-CABEZA FUENTES, M., *Los molinos de agua de la provincia de Toledo*, I.P.I.E.T., Diputación Provincial de Toledo, Toledo 1998, pp. 126 y 127.

¹⁶ Esta inscripción viene a completar la información proporcionada por GARRIDO, PABLO MARÍA, *op. cit.*, p. 427. En la estancia vemos dos grabados más: una pequeña cruz, algo muy común en muchos edificios; y, en el muro exterior, otra más dudosa y rara, que parece representar un rostro antropomorfo con un estilo esquemático y primitivo.

el culto, así como muebles y otros aderezos para las celdas y demás dependencias; en esta cantidad no se incluía el gasto en vestidos litúrgicos, imágenes y cuadros, ni en el órgano de la iglesia, donados por del propio Gómez Barrientos. Además, se sabe que en la iglesia fueron colocadas dos lámparas de plata, y se habían realizado: un nuevo altar para la imagen de *Nuestra Señora del Piélago*, un tabernáculo para el Santísimo Sacramento y dos altares, a ambos lados del altar mayor.¹⁷ Habría que sumar a estos bienes los que heredarían de las dos ermitas que pasaron a su posesión.¹⁸

2. EL NUEVO TEMPLO

El 10 de septiembre de 1741 se terminó el nuevo templo, que vendría a sustituir a la antigua, “*estrecha e indecorosa*” ermita del Piélago.¹⁹ Muestra del poder económico que había alcanzado la comunidad unos cincuenta años después de su fundación, esta construcción levantada en el corazón de la Sierra hubo de ejercer una mayor atracción de los lugareños por el retirado lugar.

Gracias al testimonio de don Matías y a los restos conservados se puede realizar una reconstrucción aproximada del edificio.²⁰ La iglesia es de una nave – no de tres, como relata el escribano, que debió incluir las capillas –, con dos capillas a cada lado, crucero y testero plano, orientado hacia el Oeste. La singularidad de disponer la cabecera al poniente se debió con seguridad al desnivel del terreno donde se iba a emplazar el templo – en una especie de terraza –; de no haber sido así, y si se hubiera dispuesto según la tradición, habría sido necesaria una gran escalera para facilitar el acceso de los fieles. La forma cruciforme de la construcción sobresalía en altura, como aún se puede observar; no así en planta, donde la cruz queda inscrita en un rectángulo, completado por las capillas laterales, las dos antesacristías y la sacristía.

¹⁷ GARRIDO, PABLO MARÍA, *Ibid.*, p. 428.

¹⁸ Sin embargo, es lógico pensar que no diferirían mucho de los objetos que las ermitas guardaban en sus últimos años como fundaciones independientes, referidas por Francisco de Barriales (1679) y el *Libro de cuentas* de la ermita del Piélago (1600-1668) respectivamente, obras de las que hablamos ampliamente en SÁNCHEZ MANZANO, E. - SÁNCHEZ RIVERA, J. Á., *op. cit.*

¹⁹ GÓMEZ DE MORALES, M., *op. cit.*, cap. 7º, III y IV.

²⁰ El capítulo séptimo del historiador de Hinojosa está dedicado en su integridad a describir la “*fábrica y principales riquezas de este santuario*”.

La mayor parte del edificio está levantado con mampostería, reservándose el trabajo de sillería para ciertas partes: la portada principal, cercos de puertas y ventanas, parte del lienzo septentrional, arcos y pilastras del interior, y las esquinas. Es curiosa la utilización del ladrillo para pilastras y cornisas, y que debió de cubrirse con placas de granito bien labradas según descubren las ruinas. También es de reseñar el uso de arcos de descarga, a base de lajas de piedra, sobre gran parte de los vanos.

La fachada principal la componen: la portada propiamente dicha, una gran ventana más arriba – en eje vertical – y una cornisa, por encima de la cual aún había un tramo más de muro hasta llegar al tejado. La puerta tiene dintel adovelado, y el cerco exterior presenta decoración de puntas de diamantes, alternándose una y dos; curiosamente, y por una motivación puramente estética, se colocaron tres sillares graníticos de distinta tonalidad al resto: uno en la clave y dos, enfrentados, en las jambas. Rematan la portada, por encima de la doble cornisa que cierra la parte superior: un nicho avenerado en el centro – albergó una imagen cuya identidad se desconoce –, el escudo real a un lado, y el escudo de la Orden del Carmen al otro, también coronado, para significar que ésta era una fundación de patrocinio regio. El nicho ya referido está concebido a la manera clasicista, como un templete con doble orden de columnillas superpuestas y sobre pedestales, entablamento quebrado y frontón triangular; en su interior, conformando el remate de la hornacina, hay una venera, elemento de dignificación para la figura que coronara desde la Antigüedad (Fot. 2).

Una pequeña entrada con arco de medio punto y realizada con sillares, da acceso a desde el frente del templo a la capilla del lado del Evangelio. Posiblemente desde aquí también se entrara a lo que creemos fue la torre, anexa al extremo sureste de la iglesia.

No queremos dejar de señalar un aspecto que nos llama la atención. Al penetrar en el templo observamos que el primer par de pilastras está prácticamente tapado por el cierre de la fachada, de un modo torpe que no se corresponde con la lógica constructiva. ¿A qué se debió esta mala resolución de la fachada? ¿A una precipitación en las obras?, ¿a la torpeza de sus constructores?, ¿a una posible filtración de aguas que obligó a retroceder el cerramiento?²¹ No lo sabemos. Una nueva incógnita para desentrañar en el futuro.

²¹ Hay que saber que en frente de la fachada, muy cercano a ella, está un pozo.

En el interior un zócalo de piedra recorre toda la iglesia. Por encima de éste, pilastras cajeadas articulan el espacio, decorando tanto los pilares torales como los que hay entre las capillas. Una cornisa señala la horizontal más arriba. Toda la iglesia estuvo abovedada, al menos sus estructuras principales. El acceso a las capillas se efectúa a través de arcos de medio punto; arrancan éstos de una imposta moldurada – que se prolonga por el interior de cada capilla –, y a juzgar por los restos, su estructura era a base de lajas de piedra unidas con mortero y recubiertas de placas graníticas, labradas con una moldura que trasdosa la rosca del arco – únicamente se conserva así el segundo del Evangelio.

El coro estuvo situado en alto, sobre el primer tramo de la nave. La ruina ha dejado al descubierto cómo estaba embutido el arco escarzano que servía de sustento a la tribuna, en las pilastras que separan las capillas.

Desde el crucero se tenía acceso a las dos antesacristías, una a cada lado; sus puertas están armadas con grandes bloques de piedra, decorados con molduras quebradas, formando orejeras; y por encima de cada una se abre una gran ventana.²² Desde ellas se pasaba a la sacristía, amplia sala que corre perpendicular a la nave de la iglesia. Ya ha sido comentada esta pieza, jalonada por grandes ventanas en el lado occidental y las cajonerías en el lado opuesto. Dos elementos más hay que añadir: en el muro oeste hay un nicho rematado por un arco de medio punto donde creemos estaba un altar de la Virgen del Carmen;²³ y una pila en el extremo noroeste donde habría un caño.

Un retablo de madera dorada cubría el frente de la capilla mayor, cuyo nicho central lo ocupaba la patrona del convento. Estaría empotrado en el gran nicho que hoy ha quedado desnudo. Al interior éste encuentra su correspondencia en lo que fue el tercer piso – aquel que denominamos hipotéticamente *biblioteca* –; en función de este dato, ¿pudo haber un transparente en el retablo mayor? Otros altares, con sus correspondientes imágenes, adornaban el interior de cada uno de los espacios de la iglesia, de los cuales nos ocuparemos más adelante.

Conocemos algunos aspectos más sobre cómo se revistió y se amuebló la iglesia a través del testimonio de don Matías. Las paredes estuvieron revocadas, enyesadas o encaladas. Incluso sabemos que la

²² Don Matías ofrece mayor información sobre estas piezas. Por ejemplo, nos cuenta que en la del lado norte había una fuente con dos caños, pila y nichos decorados, (GÓMEZ DE MORALES, M., *Ibid.*, cap. 7º, XI).

²³ GÓMEZ DE MORALES, M., *Ibid.*, cap. 7º, XII.

bóveda del templo estaba pintada, probablemente al fresco, como un cielo estrellado. Como era preceptivo también existió púlpito, según delatan las huellas de su anclaje en uno de los machones del lado del Evangelio. De otros objetos, como el órgano que había en el costado derecho del coro, hablaremos en el siguiente epígrafe.

El templo se comunica directamente con el claustro a través de una puerta situada en el brazo septentrional del crucero. La cara más noble de esta entrada – la que da al templo – es de silliería, con dintel adovelado y marco moldurado; su cara posterior descubre un arco de descarga.

Del claustro sólo está en pie la galería occidental, de la cual ya nos hemos ocupado. De las otras tres pandas sólo quedan huellas: la del lado norte, adosada al costado de la iglesia; se ve aún en el muro por dónde iban los dos pisos – más el sobrado. El segundo piso se comunicaba con el coro y con un espacio sobre la segunda capilla del Evangelio. También existen, aunque enterrados, los cimientos de las otras dos galerías, además del arranque de los arcos de la galería sur en su unión con la oeste.

Viendo el mutilado esqueleto del claustro nos hacemos una idea de cómo pudo ser. De dos alturas, con cuatro arcos de medio punto sobre potentes pilares en ambas por cada lado del patio. Una galería doble corría alrededor de éste: la exterior de circulación, y la interior hubo de alojar diferentes dependencias del convento. El piso inferior ofrece un mayor cuidado con arcos y pilares de buena silliería; en él se vuelve a utilizar un granito de distinto color para ciertas partes, en este caso para las impostas. La planta superior, por el contrario, se arma con arcos de lajas, ya sin impostas. En todo caso, fue un claustro de gran austeridad, en consonancia con el resto del edificio (Fot. 3).

El cementerio estaba por delante de la iglesia, donde había – y hay – un amplio atrio.²⁴ Se conoce una lápida sepulcral, hoy desaparecida, que estaba rota en varios pedazos, y tenía una inscripción identificaba al fraile que estuvo enterrado bajo ella: “[A]QVI + IACE [EL] M[UY] R[EVERENDO] P[ADRE] M[AESTRO] F[RAY] MA[NU]EL PEREZ, EX[A]M[I]N[ADO]R SI[NDI]CO S[INODAL] DE (...) OR (...) DE 170 (...). (REQUIESCAT) IN PACE”.²⁵

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ La inscripción ya fue publicada por Ventura Leblic; véase: LEBLIC GARCÍA, V., “Visita a las ruinas del monasterio de Santa María de los Ángeles en la Sierra del Piélago”, “Toletum. Boletín de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes y Ciencias Históricas de Toledo”, n° 22 (1988), Toledo, p. 116. Aunque ahora aportamos la transcripción de

Además, por debajo del conjunto, a la parte suroeste, se conserva aún una fuente de piedra. Tiene unos escalones para bajar a ella, y está protegida por un arquillo de medio punto. Por encima hay una piedra labrada en forma de venera en donde debía de haber un caño y, más arriba, otra con el escudo de la Orden del Carmen coronado. El agua de esta fuente venía encauzada de un poco más arriba.²⁶

Ya hemos explicado la suerte posterior del convento. Tras la desamortización de 1835-37 sus tierras hubieron de pasar a manos de particulares. Transcurrido más de un siglo, concretamente en 1956, pasó de nuevo a manos de la Iglesia, aunque esta vez al Arzobispado de Toledo. Se pensó entonces construir un seminario de verano, idea que no se llevó a efecto a causa de la prematura muerte de su principal impulsor, el obispo auxiliar de Toledo, don Francisco Miranda Vicente. Lamentablemente sí dio tiempo a intervenir sobre el conjunto, con una rehabilitación de la panda del claustro que se conservaba muy poco afortunada – y, desde luego, sin ningún criterio histórico o artístico. Y peor aún. Los arcos que aún se conservaban en la iglesia fueron dinamitados.

El expolio de la fábrica carmelitana desde su abandono ha sido continuo. A lo largo de los años, y prácticamente hasta la actualidad, muchas de las piedras de este lugar fueron trasladadas a las parroquias cercanas y a casas y fincas particulares.

3. PATRIMONIO ARTÍSTICO Y CULTURAL

De todos los objetos que se guardaban en el convento es poco lo que ha llegado hasta la actualidad. Algunos libros, ciertas tallas de madera y un cuadro que a continuación presentamos.

La biblioteca – o librería, según la denominación antigua –, tuvo especial relevancia. En 1694 contaba ya con 2.043 volúmenes, la mayoría donados por fray Juan Gómez Barrientos en 1692 de su biblioteca personal;²⁷ una vez más aparece Barrientos como gran benefactor de esta fundación carmelitana.

algunas palabras más; por el cargo que ostentó (Examinador Síndico Sinodal) y la fecha aproximada en que murió, quizá hubo de ser el sustituto de fray Juan de Bonilla, nombrado en 1688 y que, a su vez, había sustituido a fray Juan Gómez Barrientos.

²⁶ Por encima de ella están las ruinas del la antigua ermita del lugar, donde había una fuente bajo el altar.

²⁷ GARRIDO, PABLO MARÍA, *op. cit.*, p. 426.

Gómez de Morales también habla de la librería, aunque su descripción es muy vaga: “La pieza de la librería es igual a la de la sacristía y, aunque pudiera decir los innumerables libros y tomos de que compone, lo omito, y baste sólo decir que es especial, clara y hermosa (...)”.²⁸ Y nuestro autor alaba los libros de canto que había en el templo, muchos de ellos iluminados por fray Tomás Gómez de Santa María, uno de los primeros religiosos de la fundación.²⁹

Sin temor a equivocarnos, podemos decir que la biblioteca del convento fue la mayor de toda la comarca. Y que algunos de sus ejemplares se repartieron por las iglesias vecinas, como hemos podido comprobar en Hinojosa³⁰ y las noticias que tenemos de otras parroquias.

No sólo llegaron libros a las parroquias vecinas procedentes del convento. Existen varias esculturas documentadas, algunas de las cuales aún podemos contemplar, que seguramente pasaron a formar parte de las susodichas parroquias tras las leyes y decretos desamortizadores promulgados por Mendizábal. El convento del Piélagos se encuentra en el término jurisdiccional de Hinojosa de San Vicente. Por este motivo creemos que a la parroquia de esta villa serrana se trasladó una gran parte de las imágenes devocionales de la fundación carmelitana una que vez ésta fue abandonada.

La imagen que representa a *Nuestra Señora del Piélagos*, más tarde denominada *Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles*, ya se había trasladado de su emplazamiento original, la ermita homónima, a la nueva iglesia del convento del Carmen (Fot. 4). Esto sucedía en 1741, aunque la ermita ya formaba parte del complejo conventual desde los orígenes fundacionales del mismo.

De ella nos habla Gómez de Morales, quien la conoció colocada en el nicho principal del retablo mayor, como patrona del convento, por encima del tabernáculo. Un velo la ocultaba, y únicamente se descorría al celebrar misa o al realizar algunas veladas dedicadas a personas distinguidas.³¹ Al margen de sus fervorosas exageraciones, don Matías la describió como una imagen “de estatura de cuatro pies y medio [aprox. 125 cm.], color moreno, algo aguileño, frente espaciosa, nariz seguida, (...), ojos grandes y alegres (...), las cejas negras y en

²⁸ GÓMEZ DE MORALES, M., *op. cit.*, cap. 7º, XVII.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, cap. 6º, VIII y cap. 7º, X.

³⁰ A manera de ejemplo podemos citar el libro de *Sermones varios predicados por el padre fray Martin de San Joseph, carmelita descalzo y predicador de su convento de San Hermenegildo de Madrid*, impreso en el año 1679 en Madrid, y en cuyo interior se conserva el nombre manuscrito de su propietario: “Soy del padre fray Blas de Jauregui”.

³¹ GÓMEZ DE MORALES, M., *op. cit.*, cap. 7º, VIII.

arco, (...), su vestidura al uso antiguo, sus manos y dedos largos y delgados (...) con Niño Jesús en la mano izquierda y en la derecha un cetro (...)"'. Posteriormente, al relatar un episodio de la disputa entre los vecinos de Castillo de Bayuela e Hinojosa por la imagen, y que fecha en 1683, el autor dice que en el rostro de la Virgen era todavía visible una cicatriz en la mejilla derecha producida entonces.³²

El 24 de enero de 1829 la *Virgen de los Ángeles* aparece inventariada en la iglesia parroquial de Hinojosa, donde permanece actualmente.³³ Quizá se encontrara en la parroquia desde el año de 1809, cuando fue promulgado el decreto de supresión de las órdenes religiosas por parte del "gobierno intruso" de José I.

Según nuestras observaciones, es ésta una imagen para vestir de poco más de un metro de altura, cuyo cuerpo es una tosca base tronco-cónica de maderas cinchadas que queda oculta por los vestidos; sólo son de talla la cabeza y las manos – articuladas para sostener el Niño Jesús y el cetro antiguos. Tanto los rasgos faciales como las manos son estilizados y estereotipados, y la figura carece de movimiento, resaltando cierta frontalidad y hieratismo. ¿Se ajusta ésta a la descripción que antaño hiciese don Matías? Desde luego parece un tanto exagerado decir que tiene los ojos "*alegres*", como describiese Gómez de Morales, pues el rostro carece de expresividad. Tampoco hemos observado, a simple vista, la "*cicatriz*" que el escribano dice se le hizo en 1683, aunque bien pudiera haberse reparado. Por lo demás, nada nos hace dudar de que la *Virgen* hoy conservada sea la que se describiera en 1773. Incluso, por su estilo, podríamos decir que fue realizada en el siglo XV, centuria en que Gómez de Morales sitúa la legendaria aparición de la Virgen en el Piélago. Se conserva también un Niño Jesús, que bendice con la diestra y que en la otra mano debió de portar la bola del Mundo; una figura que suele acompañar a la *Virgen*, aunque dudamos de que sea el original.

En la iglesia de Hinojosa se conservan otras dos piezas que fueron del convento, ambas de excelente calidad:

San Andrés Corsino, talla de madera policromada de 160 cm. de alto (Fot. 5).

Representa a un santo carmelita de noble linaje florentino, nacido en 1302. Vestido con el hábito de la Orden, de la que era patrón, sujeta

³² *Ibid.*, cap. 5º, II.

³³ Archivo Parroquial de Hinojosa de San Vicente – Toledo –, caja 17, libro 42, fol. 219.

un báculo dorado con la mano derecha y tiene a sus pies la mitra episcopal. Dichos atributos revelan la dignidad que ostentó desde 1360 hasta 1373: Obispo de Fiésole. Además, en su mano izquierda sostiene un libro abierto que indica su condición de teólogo, carrera que estudió en París.³⁴

El origen de su iconografía se remonta al siglo XVII, pues fue canonizado en 1629. Pero fue Clemente XII, papa de 1730 a 1740, quien promovió su culto especialmente, dado que era descendiente de la familia del santo, los Corsini. A la luz de este dato podemos sugerir la hipótesis de que, en coincidencia con el papado de Lorenzo Corsini, o quizá inmediatamente después, se encargara la imagen del santo carmelita para el nuevo templo que, precisamente, se concluyó en 1741, diecinueve meses después de la muerte del papa.

Muy lograda en sus proporciones, esta figura transmite una elegante serenidad. En un ligero contrapposto, con la cabeza girada hacia el libro y la pierna derecha hacia el lado contrario, la talla presenta una disposición vertical que aporta el equilibrio compositivo necesario. El trabajo de los pliegues es bueno, aunque no son excesivamente complejos: cae el hábito de forma natural, con plegados gruesos, y recogido sobre el brazo izquierdo. Lo mismo se puede decir del rostro, casi táctil; el santo está concentrado en su lectura, con una boca entreabierta que le da mayor expresividad. También las manos otorgan elegancia y naturalidad a la figura. Hace pocos años fue restaurada junto con su compañera, pues se encontraban en un estado de conservación lamentable; hemos de tenerlo en cuenta a la hora de observar la policromía: la carnación del rostro y las manos es muy buena; la policromía de las ropas es más monótona, tan sólo con una pequeña cenefa decorativa de color dorado pintada a pincel; la peana de forma ochavada que soporta la imagen y el báculo están dorados.

Santa María Magdalena de Pazzi – o *de Pacis*, castellanizado – es también una pieza de madera tallada y con policromía, y de similar altura, 163 cm. Junto a la anterior, fue restaurada hace pocos años, dado su precario estado de conservación (Fot. 6).

Esta santa también había nacido en Florencia, en 1566. Y también perteneció a la Orden del Carmen. Murió en 1607, siendo canonizada sesenta y dos años después; entonces fue adoptada como

³⁴ Para la biografía e iconografía de San Andrés Corsino, así como la de otros santos carmelitas, hemos manejado: SAGGI, L., O.CARM., *Santos del Carmelo. Biografías de diversos diccionarios*, Madrid 1982 (Primera edición: Roma 1972).

patrona de los carmelitas. Aparece representada con hábito carmelitano y con el Niño Jesús en los brazos, siguiendo la tradición hagiográfica según la cual la santa habría tenido una experiencia mística en la que la Virgen le entregó a su hijo.

Esta figura es semejante a la anterior en lo referente a la postura, la factura y la composición. El elemento de mayor diferencia es el Niño, que introduce cierto movimiento, grácil e inquieto; a la vez, añade un componente sentimental de ternura del que carecía la imagen del santo.

Las dos esculturas son mencionadas por don Matías al describir cómo era el interior del templo del Piélago:

A los lados [de la Virgen de los Ángeles] tiene dos imágenes muy primorosas de talla, la una de San Andrés Corsino y la otra de Santa María Magdalena de Pacis, con diferentes Ángeles que dan su música a esta Soberana Reina; en su remate está el Espíritu Santo, recreándose en ver a esta Señora.³⁵

Así pues, ambas imágenes fueron concebidas como pareja: colocadas a cada lado del retablo mayor, de tamaño natural – unas dos varas castellanas de altura –, las dos representaban a santos de la Orden.

Ya Nicolau Castro las emparentó en su día con las maneras de Juan Pascual de Mena (1707-1784).³⁶ En nuestra opinión, esta atribución es verosímil, aunque la ausencia de documentación y aspectos estilísticos concretos nos hacen ser cautos al respecto. En la iglesia de San Marcos en Madrid existen dos obras de Pascual de Mena, *San Benito Abad* y *Santa Escolástica Abadesa*, que tienen ciertas concomitancias con las tallas de Hinojosa. Algún parecido encontramos entre el rostro *Santa María Magdalena de Pazzi* y el de la Santa de la iglesia madrileña; otros detalles también son semejantes, como las manos diestras de los santos varones. Sin embargo, no queremos dejar de señalar notables diferencias entre ambas parejas: las imágenes de Madrid presentan un tratamiento más rico y movido del frente de sus hábitos, así como de la barba del santo; las tallas de Hinojosa, por el contrario, poseen rostros de mayor expresividad: *San Andrés Corsini*

³⁵ GÓMEZ DE MORALES, M., *op. cit.*, cap. 7º, VIII.

³⁶ NICOLAU CASTRO, J. "Aportaciones a la escultura de Luis Salvador Carmona y Juan Pascual de Mena", in "Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología", LIV (1988), C.S.I.C., Universidad de Valladolid, Valladolid, pp. 477 y 478.

embebido en su lectura, la Santa con expresión de ternura y el Niño de dulces rasgos.

Pero no son las únicas piezas que llegaron a la parroquia de Hinojosa tras el abandono del convento. Están documentados en 1924: un “*San Elías Profeta de algún mérito*” y un *San Franco de Siena* en el altar de Nuestra Señora del Carmen; más un *San Alberto* en el altar del Santísimo Cristo de la Cruz.³⁷ En el inventario anterior, fechado el 24 de enero de 1829, no se cita ninguna de ellas, lo que nos hace suponer que llegaron a Hinojosa tras la desamortización de Mendizábal; y todas ellas fueron vendidas en la década de 1960. También albergó esta iglesia una escultura de la *Santa Fe* y un *San Francisco de Asís* que pertenecieron al cenobio del Piélago, pasando entre finales de 1854 y comienzos de 1855 a la parroquia de Garciotún, cuyo párroco las había solicitado para adornar la ermita de *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción* de dicho lugar, levantada en 1853.³⁸ Éstas también desaparecieron hace décadas.

No existen dudas respecto al origen de estas esculturas. En el recibo de cesión de las dos últimas a la parroquia de Garciotún se dice que éstas eran “*de las pertenecientes al convento del Piélago*”. Y de las primeras Gómez de Morales dejó testimonio al describir el interior del templo:

En el crucero eminente se hallan dos riquísimos altares, a la derecha el de San Alberto (...); así mismo en la nave del Evangelio está en una suntuosa capilla y altar perfectamente dorado el profeta San Elías, en el cual puso el arte toda la ciencia, según lo manifiesta su obra; (...) así mismo, hay en esta nave [de la Epístola], en otra capilla, otro altar y retablo bien dorado con la efigie de San Franco de Sena [sic: Siena].³⁹

Todos ellos muy venerados por la Orden del Carmen: San Elías, a quien legendariamente atribuían los orígenes de la Orden; San Alberto, carmelita y obispo de Vercelli que escribió la regla comienzos

³⁷ Archivo Parroquial de Hinojosa de San Vicente – Toledo –, inventario de octubre de 1924, carpeta aparte, sin numerar.

³⁸ Archivo Parroquial de Hinojosa de San Vicente – Toledo –, caja 17, libro 42, hoja suelta entre los fols. 219 v. y 220. El párroco de Garciotún referido era don Baltasar Portilla, cuya lápida permanece aún a la entrada de la iglesia de este pueblo, donde se lee: “D. O. M. AQUÍ YACE D[ON] BALTASAR PORTILLA, C[UR]A PARROCO Q[UE] FUE 35 A[ÑOS] DE ESTA V[ILL]A. FALLECIO EL 13 DE ENERO DE 1884 A LOS 63 A[ÑOS] Y 3 DIAS DE EDAD. R[EQUIESCAT] I[N] P[ACE]”. En el dintel de la entrada de la ermita de la Purísima una inscripción dejó constancia de su promotor, don Baltasar Portilla, y del año en que se erigió.

³⁹ GÓMEZ DE MORALES, M., *op. cit.*, cap. 7º, IX.

del siglo XIII; y Franco de Sena, también carmelita, aunque hay que precisar que no es Santo, como indican las fuentes, sino Beato.

Especial calidad artística debió tener el *San Elías*, pues los dos testimonios escritos que hemos hallado sobre él resaltan este aspecto; además, en la memoria de algunos lugareños aún permanece esta idea, pese a que en 1924 ya estaba un tanto dañado.

Tenemos indicios de que en otras iglesias también existen antiguas obras del convento, aunque es algo aún por investigar. Tal es el caso de la parroquia de Santa Catalina del Real de San Vicente, donde se encuentra una *Virgen del Carmen* que ya Nicolau Castro atribuyó en su día al convento.⁴⁰ Gómez de Morales cita dos imágenes de la Virgen del Carmen, una en la nave de la Epístola y otra en la sacristía;⁴¹ bien pudiera ser una de ellas.

En la iglesia realeña también hay un Cristo crucificado, conocido como *Cristo de Balaguer*, que la tradición popular cree un regalo de los frailes a la parroquia.

Y en la iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Nava en la villa de Navamorcuende hubo también un Cristo crucificado que fue destruido durante la Guerra Civil, y del cual se conserva la cruz, según hemos podido saber por testimonios orales.

Relata Gómez de Morales que también había “cuadros al óleo de los mejores maestros que han celebrado las edades”, aunque nuestro autor no describe ninguna de las obras ni menciona a sus artífices “por no hacer voluminosa” su pequeña obra.⁴²

Únicamente hemos localizado una obra que debió de salir del cenobio del Piélago. Se trata del lienzo del *Santo Cristo de la Tabla* en la villa de Mejorada, pintura firmada por fray Vicente Castillo, de la Orden del Carmen, y fechada en 1729 (Fot. 7). Además de la fecha y la firma, la obra contiene una leyenda en latín que dice así: “*Quo sitis humanae rapit, hei, te Criste Salutis? Sic vitam soboli das pelicanae tuae? Quid non acogit (?) amor? Fecundas (?) ad sepultos, ad vitam extincta posse redire*”.⁴³

⁴⁰ NICOLAU CASTRO, J., “Algunas noticias sobre el Arte Religioso en la Sierra de San Vicente”, in “Boletín de la Sociedad de Amigos de la Sierra de San Vicente”, nº 3 (1992), Madrid, p. 102.

⁴¹ GÓMEZ DE MORALES, M., *op. cit.*, cap. 7º, IX y XII.

⁴² GÓMEZ DE MORALES, M., *op. cit.*, cap. 7º, XIII. Si se trata de otra exageración del historiador, no lo sabemos, al menos hasta no descubrir algunas pinturas – o documentación relativa a ellas – que pudiera haber contemplado en aquel lugar.

⁴³ Noticia tomada de: PACHECO JIMÉNEZ, C. (Coord.), *Mejorada. Historia de una Villa de Señorío*, Asociación Cultural VII Centenario, Talavera de la Reina 2000, pp. 275

Parece ser que hubo una pintura anterior, quizás pintada sobre tabla, que más tarde fuera reemplazada por la obra que ahora nos ocupa. Los frailes carmelitas debieron fomentar la devoción popular hacia esta advocación, según se desprende del mensaje catequético que recoge la leyenda de la pintura; una vez más hemos de tener presentes las numerosas misiones que los religiosos realizaron por estas tierras. César Pacheco apunta acertadamente que tal vez la relación entre don Joaquín Álvarez de Toledo y Portugal, conde de Oropesa y señor de Mejorada, y el convento del Piélagos estaría en el origen del encargo de este cuadro para la iglesia parroquial de la villa.⁴⁴

Escasa es la calidad artística de la obra, torpe en el dibujo y en el tratamiento lumínico, de una pobre matización cromática, e ingenua en la creación de los volúmenes y del espacio. El asunto representado es el de Cristo yacente sobre un lienzo tras su crucifixión y un ángel, de suaves maneras, que asiste a este momento. La escena se desarrolla en la penumbra, en un lugar que no acertamos a adivinar, iluminado por una lámpara. Como hemos dicho, la advocación bajo la que hubo de ser concebida la pintura es la de *Cristo de la Salud*, aunque, pasado el tiempo, prevaleció la denominación antigua de *Cristo de la Tabla*.

Por último, no queremos dejar de referir otras obras que albergó el convento, y de las que don Matías dejó constancia. Éste nombra tres esculturas más: un *Cristo crucificado* en lo alto del altar mayor, una *Santa Teresa* en el lado contrario al altar de San Alberto, y el *Santísimo Cristo del Amparo* en una de las capillas del lado del Evangelio. En el coro se encontraba la correspondiente sillería y un gran facistol de madera, y un órgano de pino dorado y policromado que el autor valora sobremanera (¿Es el órgano que donara a fines del XVII fray Juan Gómez Barrientos?). Las cajonerías de la sacristía guardaban

y 276, y figs. 15, 17 y 30. La traducción de esta leyenda fue hecha por don Gervasio Bermúdez, que fuera párroco de Mejorada: “¿A dónde te lleva la sed de la humanidad, oh Cristo de la Salud? De este mundo das la vida a tu linaje como el pelícano. ¿A qué no obliga el amor? Das la vida a los muertos, llegada la muerte, puedes volver a la vida a los muertos.” Aunque para la última parte preferimos traducir: “(...), puedes redimirlos”. También el padre Balbino, en el mismo año, recogió el cuadro de fray Vicente; véase: VELASCO BAYÓN, B., “Artistas Carmelitas en el Solar Ibérico”, in “Carmelus”, vol. 47 (2000), Roma, p. 72.

⁴⁴ GÓMEZ DE MORALES, M., *op. cit.*, cap. 6º, XVIII, relata el decisivo papel que jugó el Conde de Oropesa, y entonces Presidente del Consejo de Castilla, quien medió para que Carlos II patrocinara la fundación carmelitana.

numerosas alhajas de plata, vestidos y ornamentos; todo lo necesario para el culto. También en la sacristía hubo una gran cruz-relicario de plata con numerosas reliquias, entre ellas una espina de la corona de Cristo que había pertenecido al infante cardenal – entendemos que ha de ser don Luis de Borbón (1727-1785) – u otra del *lignum crucis* engastado en una cruz de oro que había sido de monseñor Campesi, nuncio apostólico en España.⁴⁵

En fin, la fundación del Santo Desierto del Piélago tenía todo lo preciso “*para un buen gobierno monástico, político y económico*”.⁴⁶

FOTOS



Fot. 1. - Vista de las ruinas del convento del Piélago, con la ermita en primer término.

⁴⁵ GÓMEZ DE MORALES, M., *Ibid.*, cap. 7º, IX, X, XIV y XVI.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, cap. 7º, XVII.



Fot. 2. - Fachada principal de la iglesia.



Fot. 3. - Claustro, al lado meridional de la iglesia.



Fot. 4. - Virgen de los Ángeles, detalle.



Fot. 5. - San Andrés Corsini, detalle.



Fot. 6. - Santa María Magdalena de Pazzi.



Fot. 7. - Cristo de la Tabla, detalle (tomado de: PACHECO JIMÉNEZ, C., 2000).

APÉNDICE

Archivo General de Simancas (Valladolid)

Sección: Patronato Real

Signatura: P. R. 39-108

[*Signo*: Cruz]

Con esta remito a Vuestra Merced el despacho adjunto de Su Magestad, Dios le guarde, en que se ha servido rezibir en su Real Patronato el convento que en el desierto de Piélagos se ha fundado de la Orden de Nuestra Señora del Carmen, para que Vuestra Merced le haga poner entre los papeles que en ese Real Archivo miran a la Secretaría de mi cargo y mes de aviso de quedar executado.

Guarde Dios a Vuestra Merced largos años.

Madrid, 18 de junio 1689.

[*Firmado*] Marqués de Mejorada y de la Breña (?)

Señor don Pedro de Aiala. /

Folio 1 y ss.

[*Sello*: Sello primero, doscientos y setenta y dos maravedís, año de mil y seiscientos y ochenta y nueve]

Don Carlos, por la Grazia de Dios, rey de Castilla, de León, de Aragón, de las Dos Sicilias, de Hierusalém... = Por quanto el maestro fray Juan Gómez Barrientos, mi Pedricador [*sic*: Predicador] Calificador del Consejo de la Inquisición y de su Junta, Examinador Apostólico y Sinodal del Arçobispado de Toledo, Prior del Convento de esta Corte, Comisario General de las Provincias de España y Procurador General de todo el Orden de Nuestra Señora del Carmen, pusso en mis reales manos el Memorial, cuyo tenor es como se sigue:

Señor: el maestro fray Juan Gómez Barrientos, vuestro Predicador Calificador del vuestro Consexo de Ynquisición y de su Junta, Examinador Apostólico y Sinodal del Arçobispado de Toledo, Prior del Convento de esta Corte, Comisario General de las Provincias de España y Procurador General de todo el Orden de Nuestra Señora del Carmen, azerca de Vuestra Real Persona y Corte, puesto a los reales pies de Vuestra Magestad: dice que atendiendo a que su regla dispone como punto fundamental de observança / el que se funden algunos conventos en

desiertos para que se continúe el primer instituto heremítico en que el gran profeta Elías fundó su religión en el zélebre y santo Monte Carmelo, y en que se conserbó hasta que la Yglesia sacó a sus religiosos de los desiertos para que por medio de la predicación y administración de sacramentos ayudasen a los obispos, y movido de los deseos de muchos religiosos que con vibas ansias desean caminar a la perfección que profesan, teniendo por muy combeniente medio para conseguirla el que se ponga en egecuçión lo que con tanto azierto dispone la regla para vivir y morir en su religioso retiro, donde estén en su punto la vida común y la observancia, y se den las manos la vida comtemplativa en los ejercicios propios de un desierto y la actiba en la predicación y administración de sacramentos a los pueblos comarcanos. Atendiendo pues a uno y a otro, hallándose Provincial de esta provincia de Castilla el trienio antezedente, el suplicante le pareció ser de la precisa obligación de su offizio y de la confianza que a hecho su religión de él, puniéndole en los cargos de Procurador y Comisario General, el solicitar (como a solicitado y conseguido) la fundación de un combento de perfecta reforma y observancia en el santo desierto del Piélago, haziendo la costa la Providencia Dibina que a asistido con espezialidad al Comisario General para los exzesivos gastos que hasta ahora se an hecho. Y porque la noticia de las partes que concurren a hacer de grande estimación y veneración este sitio, la nueba fundación, sus utilidades / y fines puede ser del servicio de Vuestra Magestad, le a parecido al Comisario General ser de su obligación ymformar su real ánimo para que con conocimiento de todo y en vista de su súplica de él pueda ordenar lo que fuere de su mayor agrado.

Diez y siete leguas de esta Corte, entre Talavera y los Montes Carpetanos que dividen por aquella parte las dos Castillas y a la entrada de Extremadura, colocó la naturaleza un monte eminente y admirable que llaman de San Vicente, separado de todos los demás, que tiene de zircunferençia seis leguas, y en ella nueve lugares que le rodean y distan entre sí unos a legua y otros a media y todos juntos legua o legua y media de la zima de este monte a quien miran como a zentro, y a donde se forma un balle amenísimo zercado de collados y de una legua poco más o menos de zircunferençia, en cuyo principio estava una hermita de Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles, imagen antiquísima y muy milagrosa, y que con título de Piélago es la devoción de toda aquella tierra que concurre a sus romerías, y aquí es donde se a fundado el combento. Todo el monte es bosque muy espeso de robres, donde se hallan jabalíes, benados, zorros y lovos y otros animales. El valle es tan ameno de yerbas, flores, árboles y frutas, y tan lleno de fuentecillas perenes que dieron al sitio el nombre de Piélago. Los aires son tan blandos y puros que no admiten nocçibas impresiones, y quando la demás tierra, herida de los rayos del sol y combatida de los aires infestos / del verano, se abrasa sin reparo, en aquel sitio sólo se experimenta una primavera tan templada que basta qualquiera sombra de un árbol para defensa del calor del día

y del sereno de la noche. Y, en fin, atendiendo a la amenidad, a lo saludable y a las conveniencias con que dotó aquel sitio el Zielo en medio de los yncendios del estío, dejó sin exageración el historiador Mariana en el libro *De Rege* que dedicó al señor Phelipe Terzero, abuelo de Vuestra Magestad, que competía con aquellos Campos Elíseos que fingió la gentilidad, Zielo de los vienaventurados, y se admiran de que tengan desierto aquel sitio los ombres y no se baian todos a porfía a vibir en él el verano. Estas son las calidades que dio la naturaleza al sitio, y no son menos venerables las que le dio primero la religión superstiziosa, y después la verdadera; en tiempo de la gentilidad çiega aberiguó el padre Mariana que fue aquel sitio consagrado a Diana, diosa de los bosques y caza; pero después que ilustraron aquel monte las luzes de la Graçia, sirvió de dichosa acogida a los Santos Mártires Vizente, y Sabina y Christeta, sus hermanas, que saliéndose de Talavera, su patra [*sic*: patria], huyendo de la tiranía de Daziano hallaron en sus peñascos más blandura, pues siendo estrecha la cueba y no pudiendo caver en ella todos tres hermanos, como si fueran de zera los peñascos se recogieron en sí, dando lugar a los Santos fugitivos, y oy con ternura devota se / registran en aquella cueba las señales que hicieron los cuerpos en los mismos peñascos. Al culto de los Santos Mártires se erigió en aquel sitio (que está en lo más empinado del monte) un convento zélebre de templarios, que padeció las ruynas, que su religión haviéndose reducido sus rentas a una abbadía que es dignidad en la Santa Yglesia de Toledo, y en el sitio sólo se registran las ruynas de una gran fortaleza. Y en estos tiempos junto a ella edificó la piedad una hermita dedicada a los Santos Mártires que está adjudicada a la nueva fundación, y el sitio del valle del Piélago dedicado a Diana passó a tener por patrona a la Virgen Santísima del Piélago; y haviéndose hecho la nueva fundación en su hermita mejoró en las circunstancias sagradas, pues con eso se dedicó a la mejor Diana, la Madre de Dios del Carmen, reina y señora de los bosques del sagrado monte del Carmelo y Piélago, de donde corren fuentes de Gracia.

Pasa, señor, a notiziar el Comisario General a Vuestra Magestad de las utilidades de esta nueva fundación, y la primera, en nuestro modo ynperfecto de discurrir, parece que le toca a Dios, pues a adquirido una cassa más donde asista sacramentado, con nuevas adoraciones y cultos que antes no tenía; como también a su Madre Santísima, pues en lugar de hermitaños que avittaban en aquel sitio, tiene ya a sus / hijos especiales, los religiosos carmelitas, que la asisten y atienden a su mayor veneración y culto, que acompañan con continuado choro, perseverante oración, repetidas disciplinas, abstinencias y ayunos de los diez meses del año y con las demás mortificaciones y exerçijos propios de reforma y desierto, y aunque la ynfinita yndependençia que tiene Dios de las criaturas y la grandeza de su Madre no nezesitan de estas veneraciones y cultos, no se puede negar que el tenerlos zede en su mayor gloria, ni tienen los mortales más medios para reconocer la deidad de Dios y la gran-

deza de su Madre. La segunda utilidad es de la religión, pues por medio de esta fundación consigue el que se ponga en ejecución un punto tan fundamental de su regla, que dispone se hagan algunas fundaciones en desiertos para conserbar su antiguo ynstituto, y muchos religiosos (que la han deseado) logran y lograrán el vibir en perfecta reforma y vida común en este retiro, adelantándose por este medio en la mayor obseruançia y perfección a que aspiran, fabricándose en este santo desierto un seminario que, con la asistencia divina y protección de Vuestra Magestad, pueda ser principio de mayores progresos y la puerta por donde entre la reforma en esta provincia de Castilla, y aún de España. No son de poca ponderaçión las validades espirituales y temporales que con esta fundación han conseguido los pueblos comarchanos, porque haviendo en ellos más de seis mil personas a quien ad- / administrar sacramentos, sólo ay para este ministerio en los que zercan el monte aún no doze sacerdotes, a quien no pueden ayudar otros religiosos regularmente por estar los conventos de otras órdenes más zercanos al sitio çinco y seis leguas de distançia, con que carezen de doctrina y pasto espiritual; y el fruto que an hecho los religiosos de la nueva fundación en este corto tiempo ha sido grande con las misiones que han comenzado a hacer por aquella tierra, con gran consuelo de la gente, que no acaban de explicar su regozijo, dando gracias a Dios de veer que en lugar de los hermitaños que sólo vibían para sí, tienen en aquel sitio un convento que cuide higuualmente de todos, y a donde van quando quieren con toda combeniencia a confesar, ganar jubileos, oyr sermones y a donde hallan quien los aconsege en sus dudas, les consuele en sus trabajos y se ynterponga en sus discordias. Y en lo que toca a conveniencias temporales, gozan oy de nuebas utilidades, pues se hallan todos aquellos pueblos venefiçados del nuevo convento, los ricos porque venden allí sus frutos, los pobres porque allan en sus cortos medios socorro y el jornal de su trabajo, quedándose en unos y otros todo el dinero que es preçiso se gaste en el sustento de los religiosos y en la fábrica del convento. Finalmente, señor, haciendo la religión reflexión sobre las calidades singulares con que dotó la naturaleza al sitio referido, las prerrogativas que le a dado la devoçión, el ser esta fundación nueba planta de reforma, de cuyos frutos se espera participe / toda esta probinçia, y las utilidades que participan y participarán aquellos pueblos, circunstançias todas que parece concurren a hacer de grande estimación este santo desierto y su fundación en él, le a pareçido que es alaja que sólo deve ponerla (como la pone el Procurador y Comisario General en su nombre) a los pies de Vuestra Magestad, para que con su grandeza la patrocine, mayormente quando hallándose la religión del Carmen, la más antigua en la Iglesia de Dios, se halla la más olvidada en España, pues con arto dolor suyo llora el veerse sin un convento en Castilla de su ynmediato patronato. A Vuestra Magestad pide y suplica sea de su mayor serbiçio el admitir devajo de su espeçial patrocinio y patronato real la nueba fundación de este

santo desierto del Piélago y sus religiosos, para que a su soberana sombra no sólo viban felices, sino que, radicándose la reforma yntroducida, pueda extenderse a los demás conventos, que es el fin principal que a tenido el Comisario General en esta fundación, y el que movió al señor Phelipe Segundo para patroçinar con todo empeño la reforma de esta religión, que con tanta dicha yntrodujo nuestra Santa Madre Theresa de Jesús para mayor gloria de Dios. Y, últimamente, para que con más seguridad continuen lo que por constitución expeçial se obserba en el nuevo convento, que es ofrezer todos sus sacrificios y oraciones por la salud de Vuestra Magestad y neçesidades de su dilatada Monarchía.= Fray Juan Gómez Barrientos, Procurador y Comisario General.

Y haviéndose / visto en mi Consejo de Cámara, y consultándome sobre ello, por la presente, por mí y los Reyes mis subçesores, tomo y reçivo devajo de mi Real Protección y Patronato el dicho convento de perfecta reforma y observancia que en el santo desierto del Piélago, junto a Talavera, a fundado nuebamente el dicho maestro fray Juan Gómez Barrientos, y sus vienes y rentas. Y prometo, por mí y los dichos Reyes mis subcesores, de ampararle y defenderle, y sus privilegios, exempçiones y livertades, que por parte de los religiosos de dicho conventonos fuere pedido, de qualquier agravio, molestia o daño que en qualquier manera les fueren hechos o se yntentaren haçer, por qualesquier personas, de qualquier estado, dignidad y condición que sean. De lo qual mandé dar y dí la presente, firmada de mi real mano, sellada con mi sello y refrendada de mi ynfraescrito secretario y librada del Presidente y los del mi Consejo de la Cámara; y dos de un tenor, la una para que se ponga en el Archivo de las escripturas de mi fortaleza de Simancas, y la otra en el dicho convento.

Dada en Bicho Retiro, a seis de junio de mil seisçientos y ochenta y nueve días.

[*Firmado*] Yo, el Rey.

Yo, don Pedro Caietano, secretario del [...] del Rey nuestro señor, la hize escribir por su mandado. [*Rubricado*].

[*Firmas*] Conde de Oropesa.- [...] – Licenciado Luis de Salcedo [...]. /

[...] Vuestra Merced admite debajo de su Real Protección y Patronato el convento de perfecta reforma y obserbancia que en el santo desierto del Piélago, junto a Talavera, se a fundado nuebamente, del Orden de Nuestra Señora del Carmen. [*Rubricado*]. Duplicado.

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IL RITRATTO DEL VENERABILE PADRE ALBIZZO DE' NERLI E IL CULTO FIORENTINO DELL'ARCANGELO RAFFAELLO

In un piccolo ambiente attiguo alla Sagrestia della Chiesa del Carmine è attualmente visibile un dipinto che era originariamente collocato nella Sala del Padre Provinciale. Parliamo di un ritratto postumo del Venerabile Padre Albizzo de' Nerli, predicatore dell'Ordine Carmelitano, per ventidue anni Priore Provinciale di Toscana, Maestro in Teologia, morto in odore di santità il dodici dicembre del 1428. L'ultimo lustro della sua vita esemplare si intreccia con eventi fiorentini che si rivelarono subito eccezionali e che per i secoli a venire fecero risuonare della loro eco un culto di cui ancor oggi testimoniano la grandezza le numerose opere d'arte pervenuteci, le composizioni musicali, la formazione di Compagnie, gli innumerevoli documenti presenti negli Archivi fiorentini: si tratta del culto dell'Arcangelo Raffaello, documentato a Firenze fin dal 1411,¹ ma rinvigorito, a partire dal 1424,² ad opera di Padre Albizzo, che compì miracoli proprio per il tramite di quest'Arcangelo.

Poiché lo studio iconografico del ritratto in questione potrà farsi solo dopo l'analisi dei documenti d'Archivio inerenti al rapporto fra Padre Albizzo e il culto dell'Arcangelo Raffaello, mi occuperò del dipinto solo alla fine di questo breve intervento sull'argomento.

Per quanto attiene, poi, all'origine nobiliare del Venerabile Carmelitano, rimandiamo alle pagine scritte – in Appendice – dal penultimo discendente dell'antica casata dei Nerli: il Conte Giuliano Pieri-Nerli, il quale ha raccolto una seria di notizie documentarie relative ai propri avi.

¹ Cf KONRAD EISENBICHLER, *The Boys of the Archangel Raphael: a Youth Confraternity in Florence, 1411-1785*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto (Canada) – Buffalo – London 1998. Quest'opera ignora gli episodi relativi all'Arcangelo Raffaello, al Padre Albizzo e al Convento di S. Felicità, avvenuti intorno a quegli stessi anni (1424-1428). Purtroppo l'autore non ha preso in considerazione l'Archivio di Santa Felicità (A. di S.F.) in Firenze. Per il Culto dell'Arcangelo mi permetto di rimandare al mio *L'Arcangelo di S. Felicità: genesi di un Culto*, in «Granducato», n° 5, 1977, Firenze, pp. 27-33.

² M. CRISTINA FRANCOIS, *op. cit.*

CENNI BIOGRAFICI

Di Albizzo non conosciamo la data di nascita, ma sappiamo che proveniva da quel ramo dei Nerli di cui fu capostipite Gerardino di Ugo, e che si estinse con la morte dello stesso Albizzo, avvenuta il 12 dicembre 1428. Suo padre, come si legge anche nel dipinto in questione, si chiamava Azzolino († 1340) ed era figlio di un Albizzino (n. 1264 e m. 1316) che trasmise, com'era costume del tempo, il suo nome al nipote.

Il Gamurrini,³ nella sua voluminosa opera finita di redigere nell'anno 1685, sottolinea, a pagina ventitré del volume quinto, l'attività di Predicatore e di studioso di questo Carmelitano, e così scrive: «In questa medesima Scienza [la Teologia] fu pure famoso Teologo fra' Albizo de' Nerli dell'Ordine Carmelitano, uomo di Santa vita /.../nella Famiglia de' Nerli». E nel *Libro de' Ricordi de' Frati del Carmine* si trova indicato quanto segue: «A dì 12 Dicembre 1428 morì Mastro Albizo d'Azzolino de' Nerli uomo di gran Santità, osservò perpetuo digiuno, fù gran Predicatore, e sopra il suo Sepolcro fu fatto un Mausoleo di Marmo di basso rilievo per opera de' suoi Parenti, e messo in Capitolo con la sua effigie, e Iscrizione». Domenico Maria Manni in un suo manoscritto⁴ che ancora si conserva presso l'Archivio Storico di Santa Felicita, riferisce, a questo proposito, alla pagina novantuno del documento: «/.../ nel Libro de Morti servito per notar quelli del suburbano Monastero di Santa Maria della Disciplina detto del Portico [Monastero Agostiniano di San Gaggio], che in esso si conserva, così si legge: "Decemb. XI [sic] obiit Rev.dus Magister Albizus de Nerlis Ordinis Carmelitarum speculum religionis qui rexit hoc Monasterium utiliter an.XXII. MCCCCXXVIII". Ed al suo sepolcro nel Convento del Carmine di questa patria fu inciso:

«HIC IACET ALBIZUS FIL. AZOLINI
DE NERLIS MAGNÆ ABSTINENTIÆ ET
INTEGRITATIS ORDINIS B.M.V. DE
MONTE CARMELO ANTIQUÆ OBSERVANTIÆ
QUI ULTIMUM SUUM DIEM CLAUSIT
XII. DECEMBRIS. ANNO MCCCCXXVIII.
CUIUS ANIMA REQUIESCAT IN PACE»

³ Il Conte Giuliano Pieri-Nerli mi ha fornito questa citazione tratta da D. EUGENIO GAMURRINI, *Istoria genealogica delle famiglie nobili toscane et umbre*, Vol. V°, Stamperie di S.A.S. alla Condotta, Firenze 1685.

⁴ Ms. 727, redatto nel 1750 da Domenico Maria Manni e conservato nell'A. di S. F., intitolato *Istoria dell'antichissima Chiesa e Monastero di Santa Felicita di Firenze*, a p. 91.

I NERLI AL CARMINE

Come si è accennato, sin dagli inizi del '400, si assiste al sorgere in Firenze di un fermento religioso intorno alla figura dell'Arcangelo Raffaello; su questo filone culturale, testimoniato già dalla "Compagnia dell'Arcangelo Raffaello",⁵ s'innestano, a partire da un evento prodigioso avvenuto nel 1424, gli interventi miracolosi di Padre Albizzo.

Erano quelli gli anni in cui nella Repubblica fiorentina si assisteva a grandi trasformazioni: come nel Convento del Carmine, dove, già dal 1333, ebbe la propria sede privilegiata la Provincia Toscana dell'Ordine, con un suo proprio Padre Provinciale (carica importante che ricoprì lo stesso Padre Albizzo) del tutto autonomo dalla Sede Romana. E poiché, anche grazie a questo privilegio, le risorse economiche non mancavano, tra il 1424 e il 1425 – gli anni di cui ci occupiamo in questo lavoro – il Convento commissionò a Masolino e Masaccio la Cappella Brancacci.

Forse negli affreschi masaceschi della "Sagra",⁶ oggi andati perduti, compariva fra i tanti ritratti quello di Padre Albizzo; ipotesi molto plausibile, visto che i documenti⁷ ci parlano della presenza su queste pareti anche dei Padri Carmelitani allora presenti nel convento: vi fu perfino raffigurato lo stesso frate-portinaio con le chiavi in mano!

Al Carmine, la nobile famiglia del Padre Albizzo de' Nerli aveva avuto il patronato della Cappella Maggiore. Solo in seguito essa cambiò di patronato e i Nerli ebbero la loro nuova Cappella nel 1396: la prima nel transetto destro, detta "Cappella della Passione". In essa, tra gli affreschi con le Storie della Passione, oggi in parte distrutti e in parte staccati e trasferiti nel Refettorio,⁸ officiò il Padre Albizzo, vestito di ricchi parati che portavano le Armi di famiglia.

⁵ K. EISENBICHLER, *op. cit.*, tratta infatti della "Compagnia dell'Arcangelo Raffaello", sorta il 27 Dicembre 1411.

⁶ Sappiamo che Masaccio aveva affrescato in "grisaille", sulla porta del Chiostro, la "Sagra", ossia la scena di Consacrazione della nuova Chiesa del Carmine, avvenuta il 19 aprile 1422. Poiché vi rappresentò i principali "attori" di quell'avvenimento – sia laici che ecclesiastici – è molto possibile che vi fosse raffigurato chi, all'epoca, era Padre Provinciale dell'Ordine, e cioè il Padre Albizzo.

⁷ La Cappella, dedicata alla Madonna e voluta da un rogato di Cantino di Nerlo de' Nerli nel 1318, era in quel tempo rettangolare e assai più ampia di quella attuale.

⁸ Secondo UGO PROCACCI (in AA.VV., *La Chiesa di Santa Maria del Carmine a Firenze*, ed. Cassa di Risparmio, Firenze 1992, p. 145, nota 5), l'autore degli affreschi della trecentesca Cappella Nerli fu Lippo D'Andrea, che li avrebbe eseguiti proprio intorno al 1424. Essi raffiguravano, appunto, storie della Passione di Cristo, tema che dette poi il nome alla Cappella Nerli: l'Ultima Cena, la Flagellazione, la Crocifissione e

Un Inventario degli Arredi,⁹ che va dal 1391 al 1429, ci rivela che Padre Albizzo viveva in convento, nonostante che la sua illustre famiglia fosse proprietaria di case sulla stessa “Piazza del Charmino”.¹⁰ La sua cella aveva un letto con materasso a righe, una coperta bianca, anch’essa rigata, ed un “piumaccio” bianco che usava nelle notti più rigide. Come arredo indispensabile, un tavolo ed una sedia. E, probabilmente, anche una piccola biblioteca comprendente gli stessi volumi che via via andava stilando. Molto doveva comunque trovare nella Biblioteca del Convento del Carmine, dove sappiamo si conservavano alcune opere di grande valore, collocate oggi all’Archivio di Stato e alla Biblioteca di San Marco, in Firenze.

LE MONACHE DI SANTA FELICITA

Albizzo era anche Padre Spirituale delle Monache Benedettine della Chiesa e del Convento di Santa Felicita, posta sulla stessa riva dell’Arno, vicino al Ponte Vecchio. Scrive a questo proposito Domenico Maria Manni nel suo manoscritto, a pagina novantuno:

/.../ viveva in Firenze della nobilissima famiglia de Nerli Frate Albizzo Carmelitano figliuolo di Azzolino; il quale avendo sua vita fra gli studi non meno, che in religiose vigilie ed orazioni condotta /fu/ammesso fino nel 1391 per la sua dottrina nell’Università de nostri Teologi, colla Predicazione Apostolica e col governo e con la direzione di più Monasteri di Sacre Vergini /.../. Or questi era stato fatto Direttore e Confessore a vita delle Monache Agostiniane del Portico [di San Gaggio] per lo spazio di anni XXII, nel qual tempo fra le altre cose ch’egli fece, una fu di procurare discretamente che quelle Religiose dispensate venissero da M[onsignor] Jacopo Palladini Vescovo di Firenze da alcuni rigori del loro Istituto. Stando adunque il Maestro Albizzo in questo governo di Confessore si trova tra le Memorie del Portico, che per opera sua introdotta fu ivi la Devozione verso l’Arcangelo Raffaello l’anno 1411, cosa che pur oggi vi si continua.¹¹

alcuni Santi; penserei che questi ultimi potrebbero essere stati, come di consuetudine, i Santi onomastici dei committenti Nerli.

⁹ Tale Inventario è stato pubblicato da ALESSANDRO GUIDOTTI nel capitolo “Fatti, arredi e corredi carmelitani a Firenze”, nel succitato volume sulla Chiesa del Carmine. La lista degli oggetti posseduti da Padre Albizzo sembra contraddire il *topos* della tradizione riportato, come vedremo più oltre, dal PASSERINI, il quale ci presenta il Venerabile sotto una luce senz’altro più ascetica.

¹⁰ Cf BENEDETTO DEI e la sua *Cronica dall’anno 1400 all’anno 1500*, redatta nel 1492.

¹¹ Quest’ultima data sembrerebbe addirittura anticipare il culto – promosso da Albizzo in onore dell’Arcangelo – agli anni della fondazione della “Compagnia dell’Ar-

IL VENERABILE ALBIZZO E L'ARCANGELO:
LA MIRACOLOSA APPARIZIONE DELL'ANNO 1424

Padre Albizzo fu, dunque, direttore e confessore delle Suore Benedettine di S. Felicita ed «inculcò loro la devozione all'Arcangelo Raffaello».

Alle Suore che chiedevano di poter materialmente vedere l'Arcangelo, Padre Albizzo promise d'inviarlo: la suora camarlinga fu la prima che poté vederlo sotto forma di bellissimo giovane, all'apparizione del quale ella si spaventò. Si dice che Egli tornò ancora molte volte per l'intercessione di Padre Albizzo. E una notte che nel convento si era sviluppato un incendio, le suore furono svegliate a tempo da un bel giovane che ancora una volta fu identificato con l'Arcangelo. Il Venerabile le esortò allora ad essere loro devote e insegnò loro alcune orazioni da recitarsi in suo onore. Le apparizioni continuarono.

Una Cronaca manoscritta dell'Archivio di S. Felicita¹² ci descrive come un giorno, mentre la badessa era alla grata con altre monache, l'Angelo entrò nel convento e così parlò:

Ecco /.../ venire un huomo di bella forma vestito come Pellegrino, e quando fù in mezzo del Parlatorio disse con alta voce *Coeli enarrant* Suor Agnola rispose: *Gloriam Dei*. Ed egli s'accostò alla grata, e disse: Voi siete maninconose; ma chi vi aiutassi nelle vostre fatiche, che direste voi? Rispose egli e disse, voi havete bisogno d'aiuto, ed è bisogno che io vada personalmente a Roma per Voi,¹³ e tornerò qui a Voi con buone novelle. E faretemi grande onore, e fate dire a tutte le vostre Suore nove dì a reverenza de' nove cori delli Angeli questi tre Salmi, cioè *Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei, Saepe expugnaverunt me, et De profundis clamavi* /.../ poi disse che voleva nove candele bianche,¹⁴ la Badessa disse, che aveva delle gialle ed egli non volle, ma volle soldi per comprarle. La medesima Badessa /.../ gli domandò come aveva nome, ed egli rispose /.../ Graziano."

Poi, Raffaello recitò l'Offizio a voce bassa e siccome si accorse che le suore dubitavano di lui, disse loro che lo avrebbe riferito al con-

cangelo Raffaello", creata appunto nel 1411. Di questa Compagnia ha ampiamente parlato lo studioso K. EISENBICHLER, *op. cit.*, senza però nominare il nostro Carmelitano.

¹² Ms. n° 728 dell'A.di S.F. redatto nel 1819 da FILIPPO BRUNETTI e intitolato *Memorie istoriche di Santa Felicita di Firenze*. La presente citazione e le seguenti, contenute all'interno di questo stesso paragrafo, provengono dal manoscritto.

¹³ Si trattava di un problema di tipo economico relativo alla gestione del Convento di Santa Felicita.

¹⁴ Un cero del tipo di quello che vediamo nel dipinto in mano all'Arcangelo.

fessore: cioè al Padre Albizzo. Questi, in seguito, le assicurò che «certamente egli era stato il prezioso Arcangiolo».

Nove giorni dopo l'apparizione, cioè il primo ottobre, l'Arcangelo tornò dal suo viaggio a Roma ed apparve alle monache dopo le ore 23: entrò «con tanta furia» che le suore ne ebbero dapprima timore, ma egli le rassicurò dicendo che là aveva sistemato per loro ogni cosa.

Fu in ringraziamento di quanto avvenuto che il Padre Albizzo de' Nerli scrisse di propria mano un' *Antiphona*, un *Oremus* e un *Hymnus* da celebrare ogni anno, in quella data, a ricordo della grazia ricevuta.¹⁵

Quattro anni dopo lo straordinario evento, Albizzo morì in odore di santità.

Il "lume" che lo accompagnò in morte, recita ancora il manoscritto della *Cronaca*, sempre lo aveva accompagnato in vita. Egli stesso aveva detto che quel lume «era l'Arcangelo Raffaello che lo accompagnava». Si racconta che il Padre avesse previsto la propria morte per l'Avvento, come di fatto accadde, e quattro giorni prima che egli morisse un frate «vedde da lungi un gran razzo, e un bellissimo giovane parlare con il Maestro /.../ per la cui santità si diceva che a Lui appariva il Beato Angelo spesse volte visibilmente».

A carta 15 r. di un manoscritto del diciassettesimo secolo¹⁶ si legge questa intitolazione: «Lettera della morte del Reverendo Padre Maestro Albizzo de' Nerli, scritta da uno de suoi Padri a una delle nostre Monache [di Santa Felicità]». In questa lettera si dice come egli prevede l'ora (le 12) e il giorno (il 10 dicembre) della sua morte e si aggiunge a carta 16 v. e 17 r.:

/.../ così si crede sia andata l'anima Sua in Paradiso. Da più persone fu veduto un grandissimo Razzo sopra la Chiesa intorno alle 12 ore e starvi tanto quanto il detto Padre morì, e da tutti si crede l'anima sua accompagnata da quel razzo esser andata in Paradiso. In vita sua sempre si levava al mattutino, e di poi stava in Chiesa due ore, e quando se n'andava alla Camera sua molti frati affermano aver veduto un Lume innanzigli, il quale l'accompagnava insino alla Camera, e domandato dalli frati che cosa fusse quella, egli facendosi promettere di non dir

¹⁵ A carta 7 verso, si legge proprio di questa preghiera consigliata da Padre Albizzo alle monache.

¹⁶ Ms. n° 725 dell'Archivio di Santa Felicità (A. di S.F.), senza data ma sicuramente redatto prima del 1697. L'opera è intitolata *Del Monastero di Santa Felicità* ed è così sottotitolata: *Apparizione del S. Arcangelo Raffaello fatta alle Monache di S. Felicità l'anno MCCCXXIV*. Questo manoscritto ricopia dall'originale del 1424 la lettera in cui una monaca racconta delle apparizioni dell'Arcangelo Raffaello e dell'intervento di Padre Albizzo.

cosa alcuna durante sua vita, disse che quello era L'Angiolo Raffaello che l'accompagnava.

Quattro giorni avanti la Sua morte essendo un frate in Chiesa vedde da lungi un gran razzo, e un bellissimo giovane parlare con il Maestro, e preso animo seguì innanzi, e quando gli fu appresso sentì dirli. Sempre sij tu ringraziato Iddio, poiché ti piace chiamarmi a te. E domandogli il frate, che cosa era questa, Rispose Io presto mi morirò, e andrommi a riposare. E così di queste cose se ne dice tante, che è una dolcezza il sentirle, ma per non tediarvi farò fine.

LE TRE PREGHIERE, A TUTT'OGGI INEDITE, SCRITTE DAL PADRE ALBIZZO DE' NERLI PER L'ARCANGELO RAFFAELLO.

“ANTIPHONA”

Angelum nobis medicum salutis mitte de
Cœlis Deus Raphaellem, ut omnes sanet ægro-
tos, pariterque nostros dirigat actus.

V. Ora pro nobis Sancte Raphael Arcangele.
R. Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

“OREMUS”

Deus qui Beatum Raphaellem Arcan-
gelum Tobiaë famulo tuo properanti præ-
vium direxisti, et inter viæ discrimina do-
nasti custodem: da, ut eiusdem protegamur
auxilio, quatenus, et vitæ præsentis vitemus
pericula, et ad gaudia perveniamus æterna.
Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen

Così è scritto a carta 15 r. del manoscritto 725 del Convento di S. Felicità; e più oltre si legge: «I Salmi, come sopra si è detto, gl'imparammo [è una monaca che scrive] dal glorioso Arcangelo, e l'Antifona, et Orazione la insegnò allora alle nostre Monache il Sopradetto Reverendo Padre Maestro Albizo, il quale è fama che componesse anco l'Inno che si dirà qui appresso /.../».

Il Padre Nerli era, forse, anche compositore di musica sacra presso il suo convento del Carmine, dove la laica Compagnia di S. Maria delle Laudi fu presente con rappresentazioni religiose. La robusta iconostasi dell'allora gotica chiesa del Carmine si prestava facilmente a Sacre Rappresentazioni: si può ipotizzare, dunque, che in

quegli anni, nei quali era molto attuale il culto per Raffaello, vi abbia avuto luogo un "Tobiolo e l'Angelo". In fondo, i dipinti coevi rappresentanti questo stesso soggetto contengono elementi che si possono ricondurre a strategie rappresentative.

Ecco ora il testo dell'"Hymnus" composto da Padre Albizzo e tratto dal manoscritto 725 di cui si è appena detto:

"HYMNUS"

Summe totius moderator orbis
Cui sacer semper chorus Angelorum
Astat, hunc almi Raphaelis hymnum
Cælitus audi.

Unus ex septem solium superni
Ante qui perstant faciem videntes
Patris, humani generis Minister
Missus Olympo.

Hic Dei dictus medicina, sanat
Languidos, cæcis oculos recludit
Hostis insultus prohibet maligni,
Brachia frænat.

Ductor, et Custos iter omnem currit
Sospites servat comites ubique
Pauperes ditat, miseratus ægros
Protegit omnes.

Ergo tu nobis Raphael salutem
Affer, et Jesum simul et Mariam,
Angelos Cæli, reliquosque cives
Redde benignos.

Gloriam Patri, genitæque proli
Supplices cuncti resonemus, atque
Flamini Sancto pariter canamus
Omne per ævum. Amen

IL DIPINTO: IL VENERABILE ALBIZZO E L'ARCANGELO RAFFAELLO

Il dipinto, olio su tela, privo di datazione e di firma, è riconducibile alla prima metà del diciottesimo secolo.

Alla base della scelta iconografica sta senz'altro l'immagine prototipo di San Matteo¹⁷ quasi sempre raffigurato con accanto un Angelo – suo emblema – e con un libro: il Vangelo redatto da Matteo stesso e ispirato per tradizione dalla figura celeste. Anche qui, un Angelo con un simbolo della Fede, il cero acceso rivolto verso l'alto, rimanda, in un gesto deittico, ad una zona “superiore” che è il cammino verso Dio. Con ogni probabilità un cammino che passa attraverso studi esegetici e teologici a cui il Venerabile Albizzo allude indicando con la propria destra i libri in primo piano. Si tratta di tre testi di varie dimensioni, che portano i segni della lettura, forse della meditazione e della preghiera; non è escluso che si tratti addirittura delle opere scritte dallo stesso Venerabile.

La figura asessuata¹⁸ dell'Angelo è interessante da un punto di vista iconografico. La sua importanza deriva dal fatto che egli porta il Lume interiore. In questo dipinto esistono due “lumi”, un lume – come si è detto – interiore, la Luce della Fede raffigurata dal cero acceso, ed un lume esteriore, del tutto fisico, e proveniente dal basso a sinistra, che illumina realisticamente Albizzo, rivelandone la persona. Ricordiamo come il Venerabile affermasse di essere preceduto da un “lume”¹⁹ nel quale riconosceva Raffaello.

Quanto al fondo del dipinto, esso si perde nell'oscurità quasi a significare il Mistero impenetrabile di Dio, dentro il quale non si accede con la sola sapienza (i libri), ma con l'ausilio del Signore (l'Angelo Custode) e per mezzo della Fede (il cero acceso).

La figura del Venerabile, tonsurato secondo la Regola e vestito con la tonaca dell'Ordine Carmelitano, è connotata, nella parte destra inferiore del dipinto, dall'Arme di famiglia, e, nell'intera parte superiore, dalla seguente frase in latino ecclesiastico: «M[agister] ALBIZUS AZOLINUS DE NERLIS FI[LI]O»²⁰.

¹⁷ Grandi esempi si ritrovano nei vari “Tobia e l'Angelo” di: Berruguete, 1550; Caravaggio, 1600-1601; Guercino, 1640; Poussin, 1643; Rembrandt, 1661 ...

¹⁸ Asessuata secondo i dettami iconografici post-tridentini.

¹⁹ Qui rappresentato dal cero tenuto in mano dall'Angelo stesso.

²⁰ L'Arme dei Nerli presenta uno scudo il cui campo, azzurro e palato (i pali sono tre) di rosso, è attraversato da una fascia d'oro; sotto la fascia è presente, in posizione centrale, una lacuna a forma di spicchio, lacuna determinatasi forse dalla caduta di un elemento a rilievo applicato all'Arme.

I tratti di Albizzo paiono riferirsi ad un modello realistico in contrasto con quello generico e “neutro” dell’Angelo: considerando che il Venerabile era morto nel 1428, si può ipotizzare che quei tratti appartengano in realtà a qualcuno che posò per il pittore, forse un carmelitano del convento; oppure siano il risultato di una ripresa pittorica del ritratto stesso del Venerabile scolpito in bassorilievo sulla tomba a “cassone” posta in Capitolo, o del ritratto che Masaccio avrebbe verosimilmente eseguito nella “Sagra”.

Essendo il dipinto collocato in convento, il nobile Albizzo, sorridente di una beatitudine interiore, indica con lo sguardo e con la mano un percorso salvifico ai confratelli stessi: prima li conduce verso i santi libri, poi, tramite la candela posta di sbieco, li dirige, passando attraverso l’Angelo e la Luce, verso l’Orizzonte Celeste indicato dalla linea obliqua che idealmente unisce il cero alla mano sinistra della figura alata.

Quello dell’Angelo e del Venerabile è un sapiente chiasmo di sguardi e di gesti che inviano allo spettatore un messaggio edificante in questi termini: «Come Padre Albizzo, illuminato dalla Fede e dalla Sapienza, studia e prega, Dio invierà l’Angelo Custode Raffaello²¹ per assisterti e ricondurti a Lui un giorno, santificato».

M. CRISTINA FRANCOIS

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di Santa Felicita (Firenze)*

²¹ A Raffaello e Tobiolo, fin dalle origini della chiesa del Carmine, fu dedicata una Cappella (la prima a destra, entrando nel primitivo edificio) che ospitava un quadro – oggi scomparso – precedente l’attuale dipinto di Francesco Gambacciani, datato 1782, collocato nella Cappella del SS. Chiodo. Fu Raffaello che accompagnò e protesse Tobiolo. Il Suo nome significa «Dio ha risanato». Nel Libro di Tobia, l’Angelo così definisce se stesso: «Io sono infatti l’Angelo Raffaele, uno dei sette Angeli che stanno dinanzi al Signore». Il nostro Angelo, divenuto Arcangelo col Concilio di Trento, è spesso rappresentato – come in questo dipinto – vestito di bianco ed ha la funzione che per eccellenza lo contraddistingue: di Custode e di Guida nel viaggio verso Dio.

APPENDICE

del
Conte Giuliano Pieri - Nerli

L'anno 980, Ugo Marchese di Toscana donò le sue Armi a sei Famiglie di Firenze di cui una era quella dei Nerli. Leone è verosimilmente il capostipite della Famiglia; lo si può dedurre da una Bolla emanata da Niccolò II nel 1059, a favore di Sant'Andrea a Mosciano e di San Pietro a Sollicciano, monumenti della Chiesa Fiorentina, riferiti dal Lami all'illustre Famiglia.

Del Monastero di Santa Maria a Montignano, i Nerli ebbero il Patronato a partire dai primi anni del secolo XII (così afferma il Gamurrini a pagina quattro del quinto Tomo della sua *Istoria Genealogica delle Famiglie Nobili Toscane et Umbre*).

Così ha inizio una delle antichissime e nobili Famiglie di Firenze, che per la grandezza e potenza sua venne ad essere ammessa al godimento delle principali Magistrature della Repubblica. I membri della Famiglia ebbero nel corso degli anni molti incarichi; furono: Gonfalonieri di Giustizia, Priori di Libertà, Buonomini dei Sedici di Compagnia. Inoltre, durante il Granducato furono Senatori, Marchesi di Rassina, Cavalieri di Santo Stefano e Patrizi Fiorentini.

Nei tempi antichi, abitarono in Mercato Vecchio; in seguito si stabilirono in Mercato Nuovo e, successivamente, in Borgo San Jacopo e in altri luoghi del quartiere di Santo Spirito e San Frediano, dove ebbero nobili edifici con torri, logge ecc. Il Malaspini ci dice che erano potenti e grandi e che possedettero molte tenute. Tali tenute erano non lontane dalla città di Firenze nel Poggio di Ronciglione e nel luogo che oggi si chiama Scandicci e che allora si chiamava Farneto. Lo stesso Malaspini ci dice che pure il Castello di Nerlaia – come lo indica il toponimo – faceva parte del loro patrimonio.

I Nerli furono anche benemeriti della Chiesa. Alcuni di essi fondarono Sant'Andrea a Mosciano e San Pietro a Sollicciano, ed ebbero cappelle nelle Chiese di Santo Spirito, Santa Felicita, Ognissanti, San Salvatore al Monte e Santa Maria del Carmine.

Nel Popolo del Carmine la Famiglia ebbe estesi possedimenti situati nella zona corrispondente alle attuali Piazze del Carmine e de' Nerli in prossimità di Porta San Frediano. Nella Chiesa del Carmine, sul finire del 1300, i Nerli avevano il patronato della Cappella della Passione, che era posta accanto alla Cappella Brancacci e che oggi è denominata Cappella Alamanni - Uguccioni.

Nella sua *Genealogia e Storia della Famiglia Nerli*, conservata nella Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze, il Passerini, riferendosi a Francesco di

Tanai de' Nerli (1453 - 1528), afferma che questi, nel 1523, aveva una Cappella nella Chiesa del Carmine e vi preparava una sepoltura per sé e per i suoi discendenti.

Fra le personalità ecclesiastiche della Famiglia, si possono annoverare due Cardinali di Santa Romana Chiesa: Francesco Nerli senior (1595 - 1670), nominato cardinale da Papa Clemente IX nel 1669, e Francesco Nerli junior (1636 - 1708), fatto Cardinale nel 1673. Quest'ultimo curò il restauro del Palazzo Arcivescovile di Firenze e fu Arcivescovo della città.

Lo stesso Passerini ricorda il Venerabile Albizzo de' Nerli, di cui traccia un edificante ritratto: «Vestì ancora giovinetto l'abito religioso nel Convento di Santa Maria del Carmine di Firenze. Fu ricevuto Dottore nell'Università Teologica Fiorentina il 22 ottobre 1391 e governò lungamente cioè per ventidue anni i suoi religiosi in qualità di Provinciale della Toscana. Nelle Cronache dell'Ordine si conserva memoria di lui come di dotto Maestro di Teologia e di eminente predicatore. Visse osservando rigorosamente un perpetuo digiuno, macerando continuamente il suo corpo con cilici, flagelli e con altre asprissime penitenze, e sempre dormì sulla nuda terra. Morì in opinione di santità il 12 dicembre 1428 e fu sepolto in un bel cassone di marmo nel Capitolo del suo convento. Lasciò manoscritte moltissime prediche e due opuscoli, uno intitolato *Ad Religiosorum Institutionem* e l'altro *De virtutibus Cardinalibus*».



COMMENTARIOLA**STRICTIOR OBSERVANTIA
EN LAS PROVINCIAS CARMELITAS DE ESPAÑA**

En 1991, en la *Miscellanea* que el Institutum Carmelitanum de Roma quiso dedicar al P. Joaquín Smet, el conocido autor de la reciente historia de la Orden del Carmen,¹ con ocasión del 75º aniversario de su nacimiento, tuve a bien ocuparme con cierta amplitud del origen y desarrollo de la *strictior observantia* en la provincia de Castilla, completando los datos que acerca de este punto había adelantado él en su gran obra. El P. Smet había sido, de hecho, el primero en llamar la atención sobre el mismo, poniendo de relieve la importancia que este movimiento reformador de la vida religiosa carmelita había tenido en las diversas provincias de la Orden, y no sólo en las de Centroeuropa, sino también en las demás, entre las cuales las de la península Ibérica.²

En este trabajo intentaré hacer respecto de estas últimas lo mismo que hice en aquella ocasión respecto sólo de la de Castilla, pues estoy convencido de que este capítulo de la historia del Carmelo español es uno de los más desconocidos y de los más necesitados de un estudio serio y detenido. Necesidad que se deja sentir aun después de la publicación de la voluminosa obra del P. Velasco sobre el Carmelo en España, en la que ha aportado numerosos datos nuevos relativos a este tema.³

¹ JOACHIM SMET, O.CARM., *The Carmelites. A History of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*, 4 v en 5 t., Darien Illinois 1975-1988. Hay traducción castellana hecha por Antonio Ruiz Molina, O.Carm., *Los Carmelitas. Historia de la Orden del Carmen*, 6 v., Madrid (BAC), 1987-1996, de la que aquí nos serviremos.

² Cf PABLO MARÍA GARRIDO, O.CARM., «La *strictior observantia* en la provincia carmelita de Castilla», en *The Land of Carmel. Essays in Honor of Joachim Smet, O.Carm.*, ed. de PAUL CHANDLER, O.CARM.-KEITH J. EGAN, Institutum Carmelitanum, Roma 1991, pp. 299-321.

³ BALBINO VELASCO BAYÓN, O.CARM., HCE (= *Historia del Carmelo Español*, 3 v., Roma 1990-1994), especialmente a lo largo de todo el volumen 2º.

I. LOS ANTECEDENTES

Como es ya sabido, esta observancia «más estrecha» fue un vigoroso movimiento reformista que, nacido, a principios del siglo XVII, en el convento de Rennes (Francia), en la provincia carmelita de Turena, sería promovido y sostenido eficazmente por el entonces general de la Orden Enrique Silvio, y poco a poco se iría expandiendo, bajo el impulso de los generales sucesivos, por la mayor parte de las provincias de la Orden en Europa. Pero ni en las actas de la visita que Enrique Silvio giró a los conventos de las diversas provincias españolas por los años de 1605-1608 ni en las de los capítulos provinciales por él presididos, que afortunadamente se han conservado,⁴ hemos podido encontrar la más mínima alusión a este tema de la *strictior observantia*.

Probablemente, el santo general, que deseaba la reforma completa de toda su Orden, como lo manifestaría cumplidamente pocos años más tarde al hacerse promotor de esa *strictior observantia* en las provincias de Centro-europa, no juzgó prudente hablar en su visita a las españolas de una nueva «reforma más estrecha», tal vez para no herir la susceptibilidad de los carmelitas españoles, escamados como estaban por la baraúnda de «reformas», a las que se habían visto sometidos en la segunda mitad del siglo anterior. Sin embargo, no dejaría de imponerles las mismas o parecidas exigencias en orden a la vida regular y religiosa que impondría después a los conventos y provincias que aceptarían algo más tarde esa *strictior observantia*. Creemos que sería ilustrativo en este sentido un estudio comparativo entre los decretos que dejó para las provincias españolas en los diversos capítulos por él presididos y las Reigles et Statuts que se redactarían en 1612 en Rennes y Angers como base de la futura Reforma Turonense.⁵

Sin embargo, como advertía también con razón el P. Smet, la visita de Silvio a las provincias y conventos de España fue una visita rápida y de las actas de la misma no aparece directamente el estado religioso y moral de los carmelitas españoles, pues tampoco registró las entrevistas con los miembros de los conventos que visitó. Por lo que surgen dudas sobre la efectividad de su visita y de sus decretos de reforma.⁶

⁴ Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II C.O. 1 (12): *Reg. H. Sylvii in visitatione Hispaniae, (1605-1608)*.

⁵ Cf SMET, *Los carmelitas*, II, pp. 352-353.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 281, 283.

De hecho, apenas 10 años después, en 1617, el sucesor de Silvio, Sebastián Fantoni, enviaba a visitar de nuevo las provincias de España a su Procurador General, el M^o. Teodoro Straccio, y del registro de su visita que, en contra de lo que pensaba el P. Smet,⁷ sí se ha conservado,⁸ parece deducirse claramente que no sólo se había ido enfriando el impulso renovador de la reforma tridentina, que en las provincias de España había arraigado, al parecer, con fuerza, sino que además se había ido degradando la vida de muchos religiosos, al menos en algunos conventos. Consta, en efecto, que el Visitador tuvo que proceder enérgicamente contra los defectos y deficiencias que encontró en los que visitó, provocando las quejas de los religiosos de los mismos, quienes las hicieron llegar al general de la Orden Fantoni.⁹ Quejas que, sin embargo, no serían tenidas en cuenta, pues el Visitador había procedido siempre con rectitud e imparcialidad y, si había obrado con cierta dureza, era por estar convencido de que los abusos encontrados no podían quedar impunes y de que era necesario actuar con energía para erradicarlos y hacer así posible la implantación de la vida común que, evidentemente había ido decayendo en los años anteriores inmediatos. Esto es, por lo demás, lo que se desprende de la correspondencia epistolar del mismo M^o. Straccio por los años de 1636-1638, cuando siendo ya general de la Orden, intentó reunir a las dos provincias de Castilla, la Nueva y la Vieja, en una sola.¹⁰

Straccio estaba, de hecho convencido de la dificultad de restablecer en ellas, aun por aquel entonces, la práctica de la perfecta vida común. Y lo mismo debía de pensar respecto de las demás provincias españolas, las cuales, por lo mismo, no estaban aún debidamente preparadas para la aceptación de la *strictior observantia*, no obstante los intentos de reforma que había hecho durante su visita anterior a las mismas y después de ella.

II. PRIMEROS INTENTOS FALLIDOS

Por el libro de actas de esa visita consta, en efecto, que durante la celebración de los capítulos de las provincias de Aragón y Cataluña,

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

⁸ Roma, Biblioteca Nacional Central, Fondi Minori, 1.750, *S. Martino ai Monti: Agenda a Procuratore totius ordinis Carmelitarum ac Visitatore Generali in visitatione omnium provinciarum regnorum Hispaniae (1617)*.

⁹ Cf PABLO MARÍA GARRIDO, O.CARM., *El solar carmelitano de san Juan de la Cruz*, 3 v., Madrid 1996-2001, I, pp. 133-134.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 134 y ss.

que él presidió, había sometido a la deliberación de los gremiales la conveniencia de introducir en algunos de los conventos de las mismas la observancia exacta y perfecta de la vida común, según la regla mitigada de Eugenio IV, que era la que observaban, rogándoles que indicaran los conventos que juzgaban más oportunos para este fin. Y, aunque, al parecer, no todos estuvieran convencidos de que el proyecto fuera realizable por aquel entonces, los gremiales del capítulo provincial de Aragón convinieron unánimes en que los conventos más aptos para esa finalidad eran los de Rubielos y Arén en el reino de Aragón y el de Onda en el de Valencia, mientras que los gremiales del capítulo provincial de Cataluña se inclinaban por el convento de Vic o el de Gerona. En cuanto a las demás provincias, en las que no celebró capítulo provincial, el mismo Visitador señalaba el convento de Medina del Campo para la de Castilla la Vieja, el de Requena para la Nueva y el Desierto del Juncal... para la de Andalucía.¹¹

Al parecer, fue en la provincia de Cataluña en la que con mayor determinación presentó su propuesta de reforma el Visitador, pues entre los decretos que dejó en el capítulo, que se celebró en el convento de Perpiñán en los días 18-22 de febrero de 1618, hay uno, el 19, cuyo texto resulta del mayor interés, pues en él no sólo se mandaba la introducción de la reforma en el convento de Vic, sino que nos permite conocer la naturaleza del proyecto, que se intentaba realizar:

Item, porque todas las religiones que desean reformation tienen en cada Provincia algunos conventos de recolección, y sola la nuestra padeze esta falta, haviendo muchos religiosos que la desean, por tanto mandamos que por lo menos aya en esta Provincia un convento de recolección, el qual queremos que sea el de Vich o Girona, mandando en virtud de sancta obediencia y en pena de privación de officio al prior que es y fuere adelante, procure que en el dicho convento todos los religiosos vivan perpetuamente conforme a nuestra Regla mitigada y a los decretos que hizo el Rmo. Enrico Silvio en la visita a la Provincia año 1606, no admitiendo en el dicho convento dispensación alguna, y especialmente observando con rigor la vida común, sin depósito particular de frailes, sino administrando a todos y cada uno lo necesario, y guardando inviolablemente el decreto del capítulo general de Cremona, cap. 4, n.º. 1 azerca de que no salgan los religiosos fuera del convento más de una vez a la semana y todo lo que mandan nuestras Constituciones en la primera parte, cap.

¹¹ *Agenda* (cf supra, nota 8), ff. 170v-171r; 353r. Recogen también estas decisiones las actas de los mismos capítulos, que se han conservado. En cuanto a las de Aragón (Valencia, . AGR [= Archivo General del Reino], ms. 1.425: *Acta capitulorum provincialium provinciae Aragoniae (1558-1628)*, pp. 303-304; en cuanto a las de Cataluña, cf nota siguiente.

4, 5, 6, acerca del ayuno, silencio y recogimiento de los religiosos; y mandamos al Rdo. P. Provincial pro tempore, en virtud de santa obediencia que en qualquier ocasión favorezca la recolección del dicho convento y, hallando que el Prior se descuida en observar todo lo arriba contenido, irremisiblemente le prive del oficio y castigue como a ynobediente.¹²

En este capítulo había sido elegido provincial el P. M^o. Gaspar Gilabert y prior de Girona, tal vez pensando en su posible reforma al piadoso y benemérito P. M^o. Martín Román, mientras que el priorato de Vic quedaba a disposición del Provincial,¹³ lo que parece indicar que fuera este convento el elegido, como hemos visto, para iniciar la reforma. Reforma que, sin embargo, quedaría reducida a un buen deseo, puesto que no llegaría a introducirse por aquel entonces ni en él ni en el de Gerona, como tampoco en ninguno de los conventos de las demás provincias, que habían sido designados con este fin. De hecho, sólo se introduciría realmente en dichos conventos a partir del capítulo general de 1648, en el que se decretó formalmente que se implantara en ellos,¹⁴ después de que el capítulo general anterior de 1645 hubiera obligado, a su vez, a los provinciales a procurar con todo empeño que en cada una de las provincias hubiera al menos un convento reformado o recoleto.¹⁵ Pero se trataba ya de la strictior observantia, propiamente dicha, cuyas Constituciones, habían sido aprobadas en el mismo capítulo, mandando que en adelante fueran observadas en todos los conventos reformados.¹⁶ Sin embargo, para facilitar el paso a esta reforma de los conventos no reformados, el capítulo general aprobaba, a petición de las provincias de Francia, que aún no estaban enteramente reformadas, una serie de diecinueve artículos,¹⁷ los cuales, revisados y ampliados poco después hasta veintiocho por el nuevo general Juan Antonio Filippini, deberían ser observados

¹² Barcelona, ACA [= Archivo de la Corona e Aragón], *Fondos monacales*, Libro 21, *Acta capitulorum provincialium Cathalonie (1567-1714)*, f. 73r.

¹³ *Ibid.*, ff. 68v-69r. Sobre el P. Martín Román, ex-provincial de Cataluña y promotor de las Terceras Ordenes y de los conventos de mojas de clausura, cf VELASCO, HCE, II, passim y especialmente pp. 306ss.

¹⁴ Cf. Acta cap. gen. [= *Acta capitulorum generalium Ordinis fratrum B. V. De Monte Carmelo*, 2 v., Roma 1912-1934], II, 82: «Et quia summopere desideratur ut reformatio conventuum nostrae Religionis, divina favente gratia, in dies magis crescat et augeatur, ideo [capitulum] statuit et decernit ut in conventu Vici Provintiae Cathalonie perfecte introducat; et similiter in conventibus Requena et Metinensi Provintiae Castellae...et in conventu del Juncar Provintiae Bethicae».

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 83-87.

en adelante, no sólo en Francia, sino también en todas las provincias de la Orden.¹⁸

Pero la introducción de esta reforma, con sus titubeos, sus progresos y retrocesos en los diversos conventos, tendría un ritmo especial en cada una de sus respectivas provincias, por lo que es necesario ocuparnos por separado de cada una de ellas. Realizado ya este trabajo respecto de la provincia de Castilla, como hemos dicho,¹⁹ intentaremos hacer algo parecido respecto de las demás provincias ibéricas.

III. EN LA PROVINCIA DE CATALUÑA

No obstante el decreto preciso del Visitador Straccio en el capítulo provincial de 1618 durante su visita a la provincia, al que ya nos hemos referido,²⁰ los carmelitas catalanes no parece que dieran paso alguno decisivo en orden a la introducción de la reforma en el convento de Vic. El silencio de las actas de los capítulos sucesivos a este respecto no deja de ser elocuente. La difícil situación sociopolítica por la que atravesaba por aquel tiempo el principado de Cataluña, que explotaría en las turbulencias y guerras de mediados de aquel siglo con los consecuentes y, a veces, irreparables daños de los conventos, no debía favorecer demasiado las iniciativas reformistas. Y, por otra parte, los carmelitas catalanes tenían, al parecer, la convicción, un tanto presuntuosa, de que sus conventos estaban ya reformados y en ellos se vivía religiosamente y se observaba fielmente el voto de pobreza. Ésta fue, de hecho, la respuesta que el capítulo provincial, celebrado en abril de 1633 había dado a las nuevas instancias que el mismo Straccio, siendo ya general de la Orden, había vuelto a hacerles de que señalaran algunos conventos para la reforma.²¹

Es fácil comprender que el General, que conocía bien el estado de la provincia por su visita anterior a la misma, no estuviera de acuerdo con una tal presunción. De ahí que, con fecha de 27 de mayo

¹⁸ Cf SMET, *Los Carmelitas*, II, 291-297.

¹⁹ Cf supra, nota 2.

²⁰ Cf supra, nota 12.

²¹ Acta cap. prov.(cf supra, nota 14), f. 102r-v: «Conventus huius Provinciae esse tan reformatos ac religiosos et votum sanctissimae paupertatis in suo solido statu non indigere reformatione iudicarunt, propterea nullum reformatis conventum assignarunt».

del mismo año, al aprobar las actas de ese capítulo, volviera a insistir en sus instancias, recordando a los carmelitas catalanes que en sus conventos no existía ni siquiera una vida en común en conformidad con los decretos del Concilio de Trento.²²

Pero la insistencia de Straccio resultaría vana, como vano debió de resultar también el decreto del capítulo general de 1645 por el que se mandaba que los provinciales procuraran con todo empeño que en cada provincia hubiera al menos un convento reformado.²³ Es posible que tuviera mejor suerte el decreto del capítulo general de 1648, por el que, como hemos visto,²⁴ decretaba taxativamente que la *strictior observantia* se implantara, entre otros, en el convento de Vic,²⁵ pero si llegó a introducirse realmente, apenas si tendría tiempo de asentarse, pues este convento era demolido en 1654 ante la invasión de las tropas francesas.²⁶

Tampoco parece que llegara a introducirse por este tiempo en el convento de Gerona, que junto con el de Vic, había sido designado en el capítulo provincial de 1618, como posible convento en el que implantar la reforma.²⁷ El decreto del capítulo general de 1645, por el que se encomendaba al General y al Procurador General de la Orden que pusieran todo su empeño en recuperar el *conventum Gerundae* y en introducir cuanto antes en él las leyes de la reforma Turonense,²⁸ no se refería, como parece suponer Velasco,²⁹ a nuestro convento de Gerona, en Cataluña, sino al de Géronde en Suiza, que antes había pertenecido a la provincia de Narbona, en la que con anterioridad se había implantado ya la *strictior observantia*.³⁰

Digamos aquí de paso que el convento de Gerona en Cataluña sólo sería declarado convento de «recolección» en virtud de los decretos de «reducción» de los conventos españoles que el general de la Orden José Alberto Ximénez firmaba en Madrid en 1771, en los que se expresaba la conveniencia de que en cada una de las provincias de

²² *Ibid.*, f. 103r.

²³ Cf supra, nota 15.

²⁴ Cf supra, nota 14.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Cf VELASCO, HCE, II, p. 159.

²⁷ Cf supra, nota 12.

²⁸ Cf Acta cap. gen., II, 81: «Circa conventum Gerundae monemus R.mum P. Procuratorem Ordinis, ut omnem diligentiam adhibeant pro illo recuperando et statim ac recuperatus fuerit, in eo introducantur Pres. Observantiae Turonensis, eidemque observantiae conventus ille, cum nullius sit provinciae, applicetur».

²⁹ HCE, II, pp. 205-206.

³⁰ Cf SMET, *Los Carmelitas*. II, p. 377.

España hubiera un convento de esta especie, al que pudieran retirarse los religiosos de las mismas deseosos de una más estrecha y rigurosa observancia.³¹ Según Velasco, esta vida común o de recolección se instauró en él el 14 de octubre de 1772, siendo provincial el P. Jaime Alberto Molás, y, al año siguiente, en el capítulo provincial de mayo era reelegido prior el P. José Bahí, que había sido también provincial de Cataluña, para promover la observancia de la misma.³² Y sería él, al parecer, el verdadero y auténtico promotor de este último intento de reforma en la provincia de Cataluña. Hombre realmente piadoso, ya antes, siendo provincial, en sus visitas a los conventos había insistido en la vida de oración, como punto central de la vida carmelita, recomendando vivamente la oración mental.³³ Y fruto de ese su amor a la oración sería su obra *Directorio del christià* o *Manual de Meditaciones per caminar ab seguritat per lo camí del Cel*, que quedaría manuscrita y que puede considerarse como el mejor fruto de la vida reformada de la provincia.³⁴

a) *Valls, primer convento reformado*

Pero cerrando esta digresión y volviendo a retomar el tema de la implantación de la *strictior observancia* en ella, hay que decir que, en cuanto nos consta, el primer convento de Cataluña en el que se logró su implantación fue el de Valls, en el que se introdujo, no en 1661, como dice Velasco,³⁵ sino algunos años antes. De hecho, se habla ya de ella, como existente en ese convento en las patentes del general de la Orden Mario Venturini del 10 de septiembre de 1658 por las que prorrogaba el provincialato del P. M. Ángel Filbet, que había sido elegido en el capítulo provincial de 1656, por una doble razón: la primera, porque por casi todo el trienio no había podido regir y gobernar pacíficamente la provincia, a causa de los litigios y perturbaciones que había tenido que sufrir por parte de algunos religiosos poco temerosos de Dios; la segunda, para que la observancia regular que había

³¹ Véase *Reducción y decretos dispuestos por el General del Carmen de la Antigua y Regular Observancia para las provincias de su cargo en estos Reynos, con la provisión auxiliatoria del Real y Supremo Consejo de Castilla*, Madrid 1772.

³² Cf HCE, II, pp. 206-207, remitiéndose a las *Actas de los capítulos provinciales (1711-1833)*, (ACA, ms. 23, ff. 147v, 151v).

³³ Cf VELASCO, HCE, II, pp. 200-201.

³⁴ Se conserva actualmente en la Biblioteca de Catalunya de Barcelona, ms. 38. Véase ahora mi obra *Espiritualidad carmelitana. Cursillo de iniciación*, Roma 1999, p. 175.

³⁵ HCE, II, p. 207.

logrado introducir con la ayuda de Dios en el convento de Valls, se propagara y extendiera a otros conventos de la provincia.³⁶

Probablemente el P. Filbet la había introducido a finales del año 1657 o principios de 1658, con la colaboración del benemérito P. Magín Massó,³⁷ quien, al ser depuesto el prior anterior del convento P. Juan Miró por su mal gobierno, había sido elegido por el general de la Orden como nuevo prior en 1657.³⁸ El P. Massó encontró el convento en pésimas condiciones³⁹ y tuvo que ser él, por lo mismo, el que lo restauró material y espiritualmente, preparándolo así para que, de acuerdo con el provincial Filbet, pudiera albergar la strictior observantia. Éste, de hecho, en la segunda congregación definitorial celebrada en el convento de Barcelona el 22 de abril del mismo año de 1657, había propuesto a sus definidores su deseo de introducirla en alguno de los conventos de la provincia, según lo que había establecido el capítulo general de 1645 y en lo que, con repetidas instancias había insistido el general de la Orden. Durante su visita a los mismos había encontrado, de hecho, algunos religiosos deseosos de vivirla, a los que había pedido que expusieran su parecer acerca de cuál les parecía el más oportuno. Pero ellos dejaron a su arbitrio la designación del mismo,⁴⁰ y él no debió de tardar mucho en hacerlo, inclinándose por el de Valls, como se deduce de las citadas patentes del general Mario Venturini.

Ignoramos tanto el número de religiosos que abrazaron la reforma, como los nombres de los mismos, a menos que fueran los que formaban la comunidad seis años después, cuando el general Jerónimo Ari visitaba el convento en 1664. Moraban en él, de hecho, 14 religiosos: el maestro Francisco Tapioles (prior); el presentado Ángel Palau; los Padres Luis Portell (subprior), Rafael Faver y José Altabay; los clérigos Antonio Morera, Pedro Tomás Martorell, Eliseo Arnet, Isidoro Ganz, Dionisio Troche, Alberto Quiribo, y los hermanos Elías Nariis, Andrés Bover, y Ángel Fontanella.⁴¹

³⁶ Estas patentes fueron recogidas en Acta cap. prov., f. 161r. El original latino dice exactamente: «... et etiam ut observantia regularis, quae, favente Deo, in Vallium conventum est iam sua opera introducta, ad alios conventus Provinciae, eadem adiuvante gratia, propagetur et extendatur». El subrayado es nuestro.

³⁷ Sobre él, cf VELASCO, HCE, II, pp. 99-100.

³⁸ Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Cathalaunia* 3.

³⁹ Su informe al general, firmado por sus tres clavarios, puede verse en el lugar citado en la nota precedente (cf VELASCO, HCE, II, p. 162).

⁴⁰ Acta cap. prov., f. 157v.

⁴¹ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II C.O. 1 (30). *Liber visitationis Arii*, f. 180v-181v.

Por lo demás, aunque la presencia, como prior de la comunidad, del maestro Francisco Tapioles, que sería elegido provincial en 1669,⁴² y del presentado Ángel Palau, religioso ejemplar, que intervendría después eficazmente en la fundación del monasterio de monjas carmelitas en la misma villa,⁴³ parecía asegurar ya la seriedad del intento reformador, una circunstancia providencial vendría a darle consistencia: la visita que, hacía al convento, en la segunda mitad del mes de julio de 1664, el general de la Orden Jerónimo Ari, quien dejaba algunas normas sobre la economía y el buen gobierno del mismo, aunque renunció a decretar nada respecto de la reforma hasta la congregación general anual.⁴⁴ Esta congregación se reunía efectivamente durante los días 26-30 del mismo mes de julio bajo su presidencia, y en ella el general instaba vivamente al nuevo provincial José Metge a que favoreciera la reforma, exhortando a los religiosos de la provincia a unirse a ella, e intentara además abrir otra casa reformada. Dejó algunos decretos para el convento de Valls en orden a la conservación y progreso de la reforma y pidió al provincial que por esta razón no trasladara a los padres Ángel Palau y Luis Portell, como tampoco a los otros que habían abrazado la reforma.⁴⁵ En ésta, en virtud del decreto del capítulo general de 1645,⁴⁶ tenían que observarse las *Constitutiones strictioris observantiae*, pero, dado que los reformados en general las consideraban inapropiadas para las provincias de España, el general promulgaba un conjunto de decretos especiales para regular la vida reformada, en los que recogía fundamentalmente las directrices de Clemente VIII, imponiendo la perfecta vida común, la meditación diaria, la austeridad de vida. Eran las mismas leyes municipales, con algunas variantes, que había ya promulgado en la provincia de Aragón, donde había revelado su plan de componer unas constituciones reformadas que pudieran ser aceptables para todas las casas reformadas de la Orden. A los reformados catalanes les concedía una hora de recreación después de comer y de cenar.⁴⁷

Es de suponer que el provincial José Metge religioso también culto y ejemplar, que había aceptado en 1662 la fundación del convento de monjas de Vic,⁴⁸ no echara en olvido la recomendación del

⁴² Acta cap. prov., f. 196v.

⁴³ Cf VELASCO, HCE, II, pp. 216-217, 312-316.

⁴⁴ *Liber visitationis Arii* (cf supra, nota 40) ff. 187r-189v.

⁴⁵ Acta cap. prov., ff. 185r-186v.

⁴⁶ Cf supra, nota 17.

⁴⁷ *Liber visitationis Arii*, ff. 187r-189v. Las actas de esta congregación y los decretos de la misma pueden verse también en Acta cap. prov., ff. 183r-186v.

⁴⁸ Sobre él, cf VELASCO, HCE., II, pp. 103-104, 318.

general de promover la reforma de sus frailes y de introducirla en otro convento de la provincia, pero esto último no se realizaría ya bajo su provincialato, que terminó en el capítulo celebrado a finales de 1666, precisamente en el convento reformado de Valls, en el que era elegido de nuevo prior de este convento el P. Magín Massó.⁴⁹ Elección que el general de la Orden Mateo Orlandi, al aprobar las actas del capítulo anulaba, porque, tratándose de un convento reformado, la elección de su prior correspondía a los conventuales del mismo.⁵⁰ Con todo, también esta vez, el general autorizaba a éstos la elección del mismo P. Magín Massó por el bien que se esperaba de su mandato.⁵¹ Y es probable que durante este su priorato trabajara también, de común acuerdo con el primer prior del convento P. Tapioles, que sería elegido provincial en 1669⁵² y el P. Filbet, que, como decimos a continuación, había sido elegido vicario provincial de los conventos reformados, en ampliar la reforma, introduciéndola en el convento de Tárrega, como se decidiría, de hecho, según veremos, en el capítulo provincial de 1671, presidido por el exprovincial de Castilla P. Juan de Heredia, que había sido nombrado por el Consejo General de la orden Visitador General de la provincia de Cataluña.⁵³

Entre tanto, antes de que la reforma se introdujera en este convento de Tárrega, con fecha de 9 de septiembre de 1666 el Consejo General de la Orden, acogiendo la petición de los reformados de Valls, que éstos habían presentado al definitorio del capítulo general y que éste la había remitido al mismo Consejo General, tomaba diversas decisiones en relación con el mismo convento de Valls: la primera, que en adelante no fuera puesto al frente del convento como prior ningún fraile que no fuera reformado y que tanto el prior como los demás oficiales del convento fueran elegidos por los reformados, mediante elección canónica, de acuerdo con el privilegio del papa Calixto; la segunda, que el provincial de Cataluña, al hacer la visita al mismo, tomara como socio uno de los frailes reformados; la tercera, que los religiosos estudiantes cursaran sus estudios en el mismo convento reformado; y, finalmente, nombraba vicario provincial del mismo convento al P. M^o. Ángel Filbert, provincial que había sido, como hemos

⁴⁹ Cf. Acta cap. prov., ff. 189r y ss.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 192v.

⁵¹ Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Cathalaunia* 3: *Carta de los conventuales de Valls al general del 13 de mayo de 1667 y respuesta del mismo.*

⁵² Cf supra, nota 41.

⁵³ Acta cap. prov., f. 212v; sobre el P. Heredia, cf GARRIDO, *El solar carmelitano*, III. pp. 162-164.

visto, de Cataluña y benemérito de la reforma, según decían los mismos reformados.⁵⁴

Pero, al parecer, este último nombramiento no fue del agrado del provincial José Metge, quien no quiso aceptar las patentes en favor del P. Filbet. En vista de lo cual y de que muchos se quejaban de su gobierno, el Consejo General, con fecha de 4 de enero de 1667, determinaba enviar a la provincia, como Comisario y Vicario General al P. M^o. Raimundo Lumbier, teólogo prestigioso y exprovincial de la provincia de Aragón y Valencia, para que le informara sobre el estado de la provincia de Cataluña. Y al mismo tiempo prohibía al provincial de ésta, P. José Metge, celebrar el capítulo provincial hasta el primer domingo de Pascua de 1668, no obstante que éste hubiera obtenido del capítulo general pasado, con engaño, según se dice, patentes para esa celebración; y nombraba al dicho P. Raimundo presidente del capítulo provincial a celebrar cuando a él le pareciera oportuno.

Pero esta última decisión quedaría, al parecer, sin efecto, pues mientras tanto, el capítulo provincial se había celebrado ya con fecha de 18 de diciembre de 1666, y el Consejo General daba por válida esta celebración, pues aprobaba las actas del mismo el 13 de febrero de 1667, aunque con algunas salvedades, como la relativa a la elección que en él se había hecho del prior del convento de Valls, porque, tratándose de un convento reformado, esa elección tenía que haber sido hecha por los gremiales del mismo convento, de acuerdo con la concesión de la bula de Calixto III y lo ya establecido por el mismo Consejo General de la Orden. Y se ordenaba, por lo mismo, repetir dicha elección.⁵⁵

La nueva elección tenía lugar efectivamente poco después, y los gremiales daban su voto al mismo P. Magín Massó, aunque, al parecer, no había abrazado la reforma. Pero antes los conventuales de Valls, con fecha de 13 del mismo mes de mayo de 1667, habían obtenido licencia del general de la Orden para poder hacerlo en atención al bien que se esperaba de su mandato.⁵⁶ Y el P. Magín Massó que, como hemos visto, había sido nombrado prior del mismo convento de Valls en 1657, preparándolo para la introducción de la reforma,⁵⁷ continuaría su oficio de prior en los años sucesivos hasta 1670, cuando el capítulo provincial celebrado a partir del 13 de abril bajo

⁵⁴ Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II C.O. 2 (1): *Consulta varia Assistentium Generalium*, p. 183.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 200-201.

⁵⁶ Tanto la carta de los frailes de Valls como la respuesta del general se conservan en Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm. II *Cathalaunia* 3.

⁵⁷ Cf supra, nota 16.

la presidencia del M. Juan Bautista Sorribas, de la provincia de Aragón y Valencia, elegía para sucederle al P. Ángel Palau, pues, con anterioridad, los conventuales de Valls habían renunciado a su derecho de elección. Tenían, de hecho, una gran confianza en que el Presidente del capítulo les daría un prior idóneo y el más conveniente.⁵⁸ Por lo demás, el P. Palau sería elegido de nuevo en la Congregación definitorial extraordinaria del 20 de agosto de 1671, presidida por el provincial «apostólico» Juan de Heredia, con todos los votos, *nemine discrepante*.⁵⁹ El P. Palau sería elegido prior repetidas veces hasta su muerte. Y, durante su gobierno, como decía ya el P. Smet, restauró el convento material y espiritualmente, por lo que puede ser considerado el espíritu impulsor de la reforma.⁶⁰ Y tal vez se debió a su deseo el que en la misma congregación definitorial de 1671 se estableciera que el P. Lector fr. Eliseo Arnet, religioso reformado del convento de Valls que leía su curso de filosofía en el convento de Barcelona, lo prosiguiera en ese su convento reformado de Valls para mayor provecho, no sólo intelectual, sino también espiritual de los jóvenes estudiantes.⁶¹

b) *Tárrega: segundo convento reformado*

Pero mayor importancia para la vida reformada en la provincia de Cataluña tendría otro de los decretos emanadas en esa misma congregación definitorial, en el que literalmente se lee:

Sancitum est in augmentum Religionis et huius Provinciae observantiam quod conventus Tarragae, qui est designatus reformationis, in suo robore permaneat, et relinquatur zelo et religioni R. A. P. Provincialis, ut omni cura invigilet in eius augmentum et incrementum.⁶²

Decreto que resulta un tanto confuso, pues parece dar a entender que en el convento de Tárrega existía ya alguna especie de vida reformada, que debía permanecer en su vigor y sobre cuyo aumento e incremento debía vigilar con todo celo y diligencia el Provincial.

⁵⁸ Acta cap. prov. f. 197v.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 211v. El P. Juan de Heredia, que, como ya hemos dicho, había sido nombrado por el Consejo General de la Orden Comisario y Visitador General de la provincia de Cataluña (cf supra, nota 47), había sido nombrado además provincial de la misma por bula papal.

⁶⁰ Cf *Los Carmelitas*, II, pp. 642-643.

⁶¹ Acta cap. prov., f. 212v.

⁶² *Ibid.*

Pero, ¿qué especie de reforma existía y cuándo había sido introducida en él? Son preguntas a las que no podemos responder por ahora, pues en las actas de los capítulos provinciales no hemos encontrado ninguna indicación en este sentido. Lo único que podemos decir es que por ese tiempo era ya prior del convento el P. Luis Portell,⁶³ uno de los reformados del convento de Valls y subprior que había sido del mismo. Y tal vez fuera él el que había comenzado a introducir en el de Tárrega la *strictior observantia*, pues en las actas del capítulo provincial de 1674 se dice que para el convento reformado de Tárrega fue reelegido prior *nemine discrepante* por el buen gobierno y el aprovechamiento temporal y espiritual del mismo convento el P. Luis Portell.⁶⁴ Y en el mismo capítulo era también reelegido prior del convento de Valls el P. M. Ángel Palau, que fue hecho también segundo definidor de la Provincia, por razón de las grandes obras que llevaba entre manos, volviendo a ser reelegidos los dos por la última razón indicada en el capítulo provincial de 1677.⁶⁵

Estas repetidas elecciones y reelecciones son signo evidente de que ambos debieron de ser realmente los mantenedores de la *strictior observantia* en la provincia de Cataluña. Como un reconocimiento oficial de los méritos del P. Palau en este sentido por parte del gobierno central de la Orden podría considerarse el hecho de que el general Ángel Monsignani le nombrara presidente del capítulo provincial de 1684,⁶⁶ que realmente presidió, y en el que cesó ya como prior del convento de Valls, siendo elegido en su lugar con todos los votos *nemine discrepante* el P. Elías Torres, aunque volvía a ser reelegido, a propuesta suya, prior de Tárrega el P. Luis Portell por el bien de la reforma y por las obras que estaba realizando en el convento.⁶⁷

Pero, desgraciadamente, éste último moría poco después, pues en la congregación definitorial intermedia que se celebró en el convento de Barcelona el 13 de mayo del año siguiente se dice que, por esta causa, se elegía nuevo prior de la casa, de común acuerdo, al P. Hilarión Borrás.⁶⁸ Sin embargo, también éste fallecía poco tiempo después, puesto que la congregación definitorial del 20 de abril de 1687, volvía

⁶³ Había sido elegido prior en el capítulo provincial celebrado en Barcelona en mayo del año anterior (cf *Ibid.*, f. 196r).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 219v: «Reelectus fuit [p. Ludovicus Portell prior], nemine discrepante, propter bonum regimen et profectus spirituales et temporales illius conventus».

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 228r.

⁶⁶ Cf *Ibid.*, f. 242v ss.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 244v.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 248r.

elegir por la misma razón vicario prior del convento hasta el futuro capítulo provincial al P. Ángel Igosá . Y, al mismo tiempo, elegía igualmente vicario prior del convento de Valls, por haber cumplido su trienio el P. Ángel Palau, al P. Elías Torres.⁶⁹

En el capítulo provincial que se celebró en el convento de Barcelona a partir del 12 de junio de 1688, era confirmado en su oficio de prior de Tárrega el P. Igosá, mientras que como prior del convento de Valls era elegido el P. M. Alberto Papell.⁷⁰

c) *Evolución posterior*

Al parecer, la reforma de los dos conventos se había afianzado ya por este tiempo, y la *strictior observantia* seguiría manteniéndose más o menos vigorosa en ellos en los años sucesivos, aunque las noticias que acerca de ella nos han llegado sean escasas. Dos factores debieron de contribuir al mantenimiento de la vida reformada: el primero la ausencia de litigios entre reformados y no reformados, que en otras partes, como en la provincia de Castilla, consumieron inútilmente las energías de unos y otros;⁷¹ el segundo factor fue probablemente el empeño que pusieron en que los jóvenes profesos cursaran sus estudios en los mismos conventos reformados. Ya hemos recogido más arriba el decreto de la congregación definitoria de 1671 por el que se establecía que el P. Lector fr. Eliseo Arnet, religioso reformado del convento de Valls que leía su curso de filosofía en el convento de Barcelona, lo prosiguiera en ese su convento reformado de Valls para mayor provecho de los jóvenes estudiantes.⁷² Y no cabe duda de que esto siguiera haciéndose posteriormente, pues el capítulo provincial de 1684 aprobaba los dos cursos de filosofía que el P. José María Placi⁷³ había enseñado en el convento reformado de Valls, y el capítulo provincial siguiente de 1688 aprobaba igualmente los cuatro cursos de artes y teología que el p. Francisco Carreras había enseñado en los conventos de la reforma, a saber, Valls, Tárrega y Lérida.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 250v-251r.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 255v.

⁷¹ Cf mi trabajo ya citado supra, nota 2, en especial pp. 312-316.

⁷² Cf supra, nota 68.

⁷³ Acta cap. prov., f. 245v.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 256v. Algunos años más tarde, en la congregación definitoria celebrada en el convento de Barcelona en mayo de 1689, de nuevo se reconocían al P. José Rovira los dos cursos de teología que había leído en el convento reformado de Valls (*Ibid.*, f. 259v) y uno más en la congregación definitoria de Barcelona de abril de 1689, lo mismo que al P. Elías Torres (*Ibid.*, f. 260v). El P. Rovira sería además elegido prior del mismo

Extraña la mención en este lugar del convento de Lérida entre los reformados, y suponemos que se trate de un error del secretario o del copista, pues en las actas de los capítulos y congregaciones definitorias de la provincia anteriores no hemos podido encontrar la más mínima alusión a un posible intento de introducir en él la reforma, como tampoco en las de los siguientes hasta las del capítulo provincial de 1695, que se celebró bajo la presidencia del general de la Orden Juan González Feijoo de Villalobos. Éste, en efecto, de acuerdo con la táctica seguida en las demás provincias, queriendo fomentar la reforma de la Orden, distribuyó los conventos de esta provincia de Cataluña de la siguiente manera: conventos de vida común: Barcelona, Mallorca, Camprodón, Vic y Olor; conventos de reforma o de *strictior observantia*: Lérida, Valls y Tárrega; conventos eremíticos o del primer instituto: Salgar y Borges, reservándose para ulterior determinación la suerte de los conventos de Gerona y Peralada, que por aquel entonces estaban bajo el dominio de los franceses. Establecía además que en cada uno de esos conventos tendría que observarse el tipo de vida propio de cada uno, de acuerdo con los decretos particulares dados por él y que se habían impreso en Valencia,⁷⁵ los cuales tenían además que copiarse *de verbo ad verbum* en el libro de cada convento a continuación de la firma del mismo general y ser suscritos por los religiosos de los mismos.⁷⁶

Pero se trataba evidentemente de una determinación bizarra, hecha sólo sobre el papel, que no debió de tener consistencia alguna, como tampoco la tuvo en las demás provincias. Y no parece, por lo mismo, que la *strictior observantia* llegara a introducirse realmente en el convento de Lérida. La determinación del general tal vez pudo tener algún efecto en lo relativo a la vida eremítica, a causa de la resonancia que el *eremus Montis Carmeli* había tenido siempre y seguía teniendo en el corazón de todo carmelita, pues en las actas de los capítulos siguientes se sigue hablando del «Desierto de Salgar», aunque esta denominación tal vez indique más bien una realidad puramente física o geográfica que una realidad espiritual. Estaba, de hecho, como

convento reformado en el capítulo celebrado en Manresa en mayo de 1691, mientras que del convento reformado de Tárrega era elegido el P. Tomás Martorell (*Ibid.*, f. 266r, y véase también f. 268r).

⁷⁵ *Decreta pontificia... Ex ordine Rev.mi Patris Generalis Magist. Ioannis Feyjoo de Villalobos, Ordinis Fratrum Beatissimae Dei Genitricis semperque Virginis Mariae de Monte Carmelo Generalis, nec non Commissarii et Apostolici Visitatoris impressa ad maiorem commodum Provinciarum Hispaniae et Lusitaniae, quibus adduntur Ordinationes particulares ab eodem R.mo P. Generali editae pro eisdem Provinciis, Valentiae 1695.*

⁷⁶ Acta cap. prov., f. 277v-278r.

advertía ya el P. Smet, situado en un lugar remoto entre montañas y nunca tuvo más de cuatro sacerdotes y dos hermanos.⁷⁷

Durante el capítulo fueron elegidos los priores de los dos conventos reformados: del de Valls el P. Gerardo García, y del de Tárrega el P. Tomás Martorell, que fue reelegido. Y el de Valls fue designado, junto con los Barcelona y Mallorca casa de noviciado, pero, aunque se indican los nombres de los maestros de novicios en estos dos últimos, el del convento de Valls queda en blanco.⁷⁸

En los dos conventos siguió viviéndose la *strictior observantia*, al parecer con normalidad en los últimos años del siglo XVII y en los primeros del siglo XVIII y los dos gozaban de cierto prestigio e importancia, pues en los dos seguían dándose cursos de filosofía y teología. De hecho, la congregación definitoria de Barcelona de 1696 aceptaba los dos cursos de filosofía y otros tantos de teología que había leído en el de Valls el P. Gabriel Germá.⁷⁹ Y la congregación definitoria de Barcelona de 1699 aceptaba, a su vez, el curso de teología que había leído en el convento reformado de Tárrega el P. José Monserrat y los tres de filosofía que había leído en el convento «reformado» de Valls el P. Pablo de Monfart y Sorte.⁸⁰ Pero, sin duda, era éste el más importante, pues en él, por ser *strictioris observantiae*, como se dice expresamente al principio de las actas respectivas, se celebraban los dos primeros capítulos provinciales del siglo XVIII: el de 1701 y en de 1705,⁸¹ y en ambos eran elegidos los priores de los dos conventos reformados: en el de 1701, prior de Valls fue reelegido el P. José Rovira, definidor segundo de la provincia; de Tárrega, igualmente reelegido el P. Tomás Martorell.⁸² En el de 1705, de nuevo era reelegido prior de Valls el P. José Rovira «motivo continuandi fabricam», y de Tárrega, el P. José Monserrat.⁸³ Pero la congregación definitoria, a modo de capítulo, celebrada en 1710 en el convento de Barcelona presenta ya una cierta anomalía, pues en ella eran elegidos prior de Valls el p. Elías Torres y de Tárrega, el P. Agustín Nuet,⁸⁴ siendo además designado el primero, junto con los de Barcelona y Mallorca, convento de noviciado,⁸⁵ aunque ninguno de los dos lleva ya el apelativo de convento «reformado».

⁷⁷ *Los Carmelitas*, II, p. 643; cf. VELASCO, HCE, I, pp. 101-102.

⁷⁸ Acta cap. prov., f. 277r-v.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 286r.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 292v.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, f. 294 ss; f. 300v ss.

⁸² *Ibid.*, f. 297r.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, f. 301v.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 310r.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 310v.

Esto podría ser indicio de la repercusión que la Guerra de Sucesión a la Corona de España, que se había prolongado de 1700 a 1714, debió de tener en los dos conventos reformados, como la tuvo también en orden a la observancia religiosa con sus turbulencias y destrozos en los demás conventos catalanes.⁸⁶ Y tal vez tenga razón el P. Smet al afirmar que fuera la guerra la que viniera a acabar con cualquier resto de vida reformada en la provincia catalana, como lo probaría un memorial presentado al capítulo general de 1726 por el maestro Ángel Serra, en el que, entre otras cosas, proponía la fundación de una casa de vida común, porque ya no existía ninguna en Cataluña.⁸⁷ Extraña, sin embargo, que no hayamos encontrado ninguna protesta por parte del Consejo General de la Orden ante el hecho consumado de la desaparición de la «*strictior observantia* en los dos conventos de Valls y Tárrega», aunque tal vez esto sea también indicio de la escasa importancia que esta vida reformada había tenido en el conjunto de la provincia.

IV. EN LA PROVINCIA DE ARAGÓN

Aunque la *strictior observantia* arraigaría con mayor fuerza y lograría una mayor influencia en esta provincia de Aragón y Valencia que en la de Cataluña, los principios de la misma serían semejantes en las dos provincias y su implantación tendría un proceso similar con sus titubeos, sus progresos y retrocesos.

Como en la de Cataluña, también en ésta, el visitador general Teodoro Straccio, en el capítulo provincial de Valencia de 1617, que él presidió, había expuesto a los gremiales del mismo su vivo deseo de que en algunos de los conventos de la provincia se introdujera la reforma exacta y perfecta de acuerdo con la regla mitigada, que era la que todos profesaban. Y, por lo mismo, les rogaba que seleccionaran los conventos que juzgaban más idóneos para este modo de vida. Y los gremiales, de común acuerdo (*unanimes consensu*) elegían como más aptos para la reforma y recolección los siguientes: los de Rubielos y Arén en el reino de Aragón, y el de Onda en el reino de Valencia.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Cf. VELASCO, HCE, II, pp. 188-192.

⁸⁷ El memorial se conservaría, de hecho, según dice, en Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Cathalaunia* 2, pero en 1626 no se celebró capítulo general, y tal vez se trate del capítulo general de 1722, en el que fue elegido provincial de Cataluña el P. Francisco Solá, aunque tampoco en él se habla de ese memorial (cf. Acta cap. gen. II, pp. 324-325).

⁸⁸ Valencia, AGR (= Archivo General del Reino), ms. 1425: Acta cap. prov.(1)[= *Acta capitulorum provincialium Aragoniae, 1558-1628*], pp. 303-304.

Pero una vez desaparecido el Visitador, no parece tampoco que los religiosos de esta provincia dieran paso alguno en orden a la realización de los deseos expresados por él, a pesar de que el ambiente estaba caldeado en favor de los mismos. Hacía, en efecto, pocos años que habían muerto dos ilustres y buenos provinciales: el P. Miguel Alfonso de Carranza y el Venerable Juan Sanz, los dos fervorosos promotores de la observancia regular en la línea de Trento. Y a estos dos había sucedido por el tiempo que nos ocupa el P. Juan Pinto de Vitoria, discípulo que había sido predilecto del santo Juan Sanz y, como él, fervoroso promotor de la observancia y vida religiosa de su provincia de Aragón.⁸⁹

Tal vez por esto, el gobierno central de la Orden alimentara la esperanza de que esta provincia de Aragón y Valencia fuera la más dispuesta para aceptar una más estrecha observancia. Y así parece indicarlo, por otra parte, el hecho de que, apenas diez años después del intento del Visitador Straccio, el nuevo general de la Orden Gregorio Canal, sucesor de Fantoni, decidiera renovar sus instancias en este sentido. En las *Actas del capítulo provincial*, celebrado en el convento de Zaragoza en 1628, bajo la presidencia del M^o. Valerio Ximénez de Embún, se dice, en efecto, que éste había recibido una carta del Rmo. P. General (Gregorio Canal) en la que le manifestaba su vivísimo deseo de que el capítulo designara dos o tres o más conventos, en los que la observancia religiosa se realizara más plenamente y se observara con más estrechez. Y los definidores del capítulo, aceptando con reverencia este deseo, que ellos consideraban como un mandato, decidieron designar los siguientes: los de Valencia y Onda en el reino de Valencia; los de Zaragoza y Calatayud en el reino de Aragón, y, el de Pamplona, en el reino de Navarra.⁹⁰

Esta vez la respuesta del capítulo a los deseos del general de la Orden ofrecía, al parecer, una mayor seriedad y mayores garantías que la que había dado el capítulo de 1618, pues designaba conventos de mayor importancia, que, por lo mismo, podían disponer de medios suficientes para la realización del proyecto reformador, cuya falta había sido probablemente la causa de que fracasara el intento en aquella ocasión. Pero tampoco en ésta, no sabemos por qué, se darían pasos decisivos para su puesta en práctica, a pesar de que en la provincia no faltaban, al parecer, bastantes religiosos que anhelaban la reforma.

⁸⁹ Sobre ellos, puede verse mi *Estudio preliminar a Juan Sanz, Escritos espirituales*, Madrid (FUE) 1995, y mi obra *Espiritualidad carmelitana*, pp. 113-114, 115-118.

⁹⁰ Acta cap. prov., (1), p. 352.

Esto es, al menos, lo que se desprende del acta de la congregación definitoria de la provincia, celebrada en el convento de Zaragoza el 2 de mayo de 1632, en la que se dice que en ella se leyeron las cartas de algunos Padres graduados del reino de Valencia, los cuales, movidos, al parecer, por buen espíritu, pedían con insistencia al P. Provincial Valerio Ximénez de Embún, que, de acuerdo con lo que con gran celo había propuesto en otro tiempo el Visitador general Teodoro Straccio, se les concediera a ellos y a otros religiosos, que lo deseaban igualmente, un convento, en el que pudieran vivir en mayor observancia y reforma, dentro siempre de los límites de la regla mitigada, y proponían como el más apto para ese fin el convento de Onda.

El Provincial con su definitorio veían con buenos ojos el proyecto, pero eran del parecer de que en cosa de tanta importancia era necesario proceder con gran prudencia y les pedían, por lo mismo, que, para poder tomar una decisión acertada, le informaran más plenamente y en particular acerca de los bienes y rentas del convento de Onda, de las entradas ordinarias por razón de las limosnas y de las demás cosas necesarias para la comida y el vestido, de modo que pudieran, sin la ansiedad de tener que procurarse estos bienes temporales, dedicarse con más quietud a Dios y a los ejercicios espirituales, procurando con verdadero afecto la reforma. Si todo esto se encontraba realmente en el convento y lo confirmaban con sus firmas los definidores del Reino de Valencia, la congregación definitoria decidía acceder a los deseos de esos padres y concederles el dicho convento para implantar en él una mayor reforma y observancia.⁹¹

Sin embargo, el informe pedido sobre el estado del convento no debió de ser del todo satisfactorio, y la decisión de la congregación definitoria debió de quedar en suspenso, pues no nos ha llegado noticia alguna relativa a la posible implantación de la reforma en el dicho convento de Onda por aquel entonces. Y algo parecido debió de suceder algunos años después respecto del intento de su implantación en el convento de Rubielos.

En efecto, entre las determinaciones del capítulo provincial celebrado en el convento de Alcañiz a partir del 22 de abril de 1646, hay una en la que se dice que, poniendo en ejecución el mandato del Rmo. General de la Orden⁹² sobre asignar un convento para la reforma, vis-

⁹¹ Acta cap. prov., (2), p. 14.

⁹² Juan Antonio Filippini, que había sucedido a Straccio en el capítulo general de 1645, el cual, como ya hemos dicho, había obligado a los provinciales a procurar con todo empeño que en cada una de las provincias hubiera al menos un convento reformado o recoleto (c. supra, nota 15).

tas todas las circunstancias necesarias, el capítulo no encontraba ningún otro convento más apto para ese fin que el de Rubielos, por lo que lo designaba para la dicha reformación, que se haría realidad tan pronto como el dicho convento pagara las deudas que tenía y estuviera acabada la fábrica del mismo absolutamente necesaria.⁹³

Respecto de este decreto, al aprobar las actas de este capítulo, con fecha del 30 de junio del mismo año de 1646, el Rmo. P. Hipólito Sesoldi, en cuanto Procurador y Comisario General de la Orden, declaraba que en el convento reformado debían cumplirse fielmente en cuanto a la observancia y en cuanto al voto de pobreza los decretos del capítulo general de 1645, sin que pudiera admitirse excusa ni dispensación alguna.⁹⁴

Pero las cosas, al parecer, se irían alargando, pues en la congregación definitorial celebrada en el convento de Zaragoza, bajo la presidencia del provincial Pedro Olginat de Medicis el 11 de mayo de 1647, el definitorio decretaba amonestar seriamente al prior de ese convento de Rubielos para que pusiera todo su empeño y solicitud en acabar cuanto antes la edificación del templo del mismo, que era lo único que faltaba para que pudiera iniciarse en él la reforma tantas veces decretada.⁹⁵ Y en la aprobación del acta de esta congregación definitorial, el ya mencionado Hipólito Sesoldi, Vicario general de la Orden, avisaba que no era la mente del Consejo General que la implantación de la reforma en el convento se retrasara si la construcción de la iglesia del mismo se prolongaba demasiado, sino que quería y mandaba que sin más dilación la reforma comenzara en el mismo convento o en otro.⁹⁶

a) *Villarreal: primer convento reformado*

Con todo, tampoco esta vez llegarían a culminar estos repetidos intentos. Al parecer, los carmelitas aragoneses no se decidían a embarcarse en una tal aventura, pues en 1650 todavía estaban por realizarse los vivos deseos del Consejo General. De hecho, en el capítulo provincial celebrado en ese año, en el mes de mayo, bajo la presidencia

⁹³ Acta cap. prov. (2), p. 141.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 148. Y se añadía aún: «Hortantes praeterea in visceribus charitatis et sub intimatione divini iudicii ut circa introductionem et constitutionem dicti conventus pro reformatione, observantiam etiam voti paupertatis, iuxta modum praescriptum in praefato capitulo generali, aliaque omnia eiusdem capituli decreta exhibeatis vometipsos sedulos ac sollicitos executores, non desides aut negligentes» (*Ibid.*, p. 149).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

del M^o. Félix Durán, se sigue aún hablando de poner en ejecución el mandato del P. General de la Orden relativo a señalar algunos conventos, uno en el reino de Aragón y otro en el de Valencia, en los que implantar la reforma de la *strictior observantia*. Para el primero se volvía a señalar el de Rubielos, al que se añadía el de Alcañiz, pero de nuevo con la condición de que esos conventos tuvieran la debida clausura y las suficientes habitaciones para poder albergar a aquellos religiosos que espontáneamente quisieran seguir la dicha observancia. Para el reino de Valencia se indicaba el convento de Villarreal. Y los carmelitas valencianos se mostraron más animosos y decididos, pues al punto se ofreció un buen puñado de religiosos de vida ejemplar. dispuestos a abrazar la dicha reforma, cuyos nombres se indican también expresamente, a saber: el P. M^o. Félix Durán, presidente del capítulo, el P. M^o. Diego de Tuesta, a quien eligieron prior del convento, el Presentado Sebastián Vilanova y el P. Jacinto Lizarve, que sería el subprior; los sacerdotes José Perelló y Tomás Torres, y los coristas Anastasio Colomer, diácono, Luis Robles, Ceferino Robles, Vicente Vives, José Grau y José Blau, que cursarían las artes liberales bajo la dirección del mencionado Presentado Sebastián Vilanova; a los que se unían también los hermanos legos José Girona, Ángel Girona, José Pérez y Gerardo Costa.

En cuanto a la entrada y salida de la reforma, el capítulo decretaba además que el provincial no podía enviar al mismo como conventual a ningún religioso sin haber sido antes admitido por el prior y demás religiosos reformados por votación, después de que el provincial los hubiera informado sobre su vida y conducta (*de moribus et vita*). E igualmente, que ningún religioso que hubiera abrazado la reforma podía ser expulsado de la misma sin antes haber dado cuenta al provincial, el cual debería dar su licencia, y una vez obtenida la comunidad decidiría por votación lo que le pareciera mejor. Finalmente se establecía que el religioso que se uniera a la reforma lo haría con todos los enseres y todos los bienes que tenía para su uso en su antiguo convento, sin que el superior del mismo pudiera impedírselo. Estos bienes muebles se mezclarían y se aplicarían con los demás de la comunidad sólo pasados seis meses, y no antes; y en el caso de que el religioso recibiera rentas u otros bienes inmuebles, estos pertenecerían al convento en que había hecho la profesión sólo después de su muerte, no antes.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169.

En la aprobación del acta de este capítulo por el general Juan Antonio Filippini, éste precisaba que en los conventos pequeños no podían admitirse novicios, a no ser en los conventos reformados «ut reformatio crescat et bene novitii educentur», y se reservaba además todo lo relativo a los estatutos de la reforma y de los conventos reformados, así como lo relativo a los religiosos que podían o no estar en ellos.⁹⁸

La reforma se iniciaba, de hecho, en el convento de Villarreal el 17 de mayo de 1650. Así se dice en una relación sobre el P. Diego de Tuesta, que, como hemos dicho, sería el primer prior y, como se dice allí también, la piedra fundamental de la reforma.⁹⁹ Y ésta, como allí se precisa, no era «como la de Flandes y Francia, porque no quisieron (por justos motivos) los que dieron principio a ella admitir las constituciones de los reformados de Flandes y Francia, confirmadas por el papa Urbano VIII, sino que se contentaron con observar exacta y puntualmente las constituciones comunes de la Orden, vida común y otros estatutos que se hicieron para ella».¹⁰⁰

El capítulo provincial, que se celebraba en el convento de Calatayud el 4 de mayo de 1653, bajo la presidencia del M^o. Pedro Olginat de Medicis, volvía sobre este tema de la reforma y adoptaba las siguientes decisiones: en primer lugar, designaba y confirmaba de nuevo el convento de Rubielos como casa de reforma para el reino de Aragón, mandando al provincial ponerlo en ejecución lo más pronto posible; en segundo lugar, pedía al P. General de la Orden que todo lo que pertenecía al régimen del convento reformado de Villarreal, en especial lo relativo a la entrada y salida de los religiosos en él, se dignara encomendarlo al provincial de la misma provincia de Aragón, porque, dada la dificultad de acceder al mismo General, esto contribuiría a un mayor consuelo de los religiosos y, consiguientemente, a un mayor aumento y firmeza de la reforma.¹⁰¹

Como prior de Rubielos el capítulo elegía al P. Francisco Martín, que sería confirmado como vicario-prior en la congregación definitorial de 1656 «ratione insignis fabricae» y, por esta misma razón, vol-

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁹⁹ Sobre él, puede verse mi colaboración en DS [= *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*], XV (1991), 1348-1349.

¹⁰⁰ Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., *Post IV* 43, ff. 269r-270r. En la relación se añade que el texto de esos estatutos podía verse «en el libro más moderno de las ingresiones y profesiones de este convento de Onda». Pero no hemos podido localizar ese libro, por lo que ignoramos el contenido preciso de esos estatutos.

¹⁰¹ Acta cap. prov., (2), p. 186.

vería a ser reelegido prior por los capítulos sucesivos hasta el de 1673,¹⁰² pero, no obstante otros repetidos mandatos de diversos capítulos en orden a la implantación en él de la reforma, ésta no llegaría a hacerse realidad. Sí llegaría, en cambio, a introducirse, aunque por breve tiempo, al parecer, en el convento de Sangüesa, por decisión de la congregación definitorial de 1654, que se celebró en el de Zaragoza el 26 de abril de 1654, bajo la presidencia del custodio de la provincia M^o. Martín Pérez de Nagore por ausencia del provincial Anastasio Vives de Rocamora, que asistía al capítulo general, que se estaba celebrando en Roma.¹⁰³ Y, según parece, para asegurar el éxito de la implantación de la reforma en este convento, la congregación elegía por unanimidad prior del mismo al P. Diego de Tuesta, que ya la había implantado felizmente en el de Villarreal. Pero esta elección no tuvo efecto, pues el general de la Orden no aprobó el acta de esta Congregación.¹⁰⁴ Y, de hecho, en la congregación definitorial de Valencia de 1656 era nombrado prior de Sangüesa el P. Juan Garcés.¹⁰⁵ Con todo la reforma debió de introducirse realmente en él, pues en la congregación definitorial de 1661, presidida por el provincial Pedro Triay se dice que eligieron prior del convento reformado de Sangüesa al p. Simón Gargallo.¹⁰⁶ Pero éste renunciaba al año siguiente, sucediéndole como vicario-prior el P. Lorenzo Virgilio.¹⁰⁷ Y con la renuncia del P. Gargallo, la reforma en él se vino, al parecer, abajo, pues no vuelve a hablarse de ella posteriormente.

Pero, afortunadamente, la reforma había arraigado y se había afianzado en el reino de Valencia, en el convento de Villarreal, y desde él se iría propagando a otros conventos.

¹⁰² Cf *Ibid.*, pp. 184, 198, 212, 235, 254, 284, 302, 318.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 192: «Primo decreverunt instituere et de facto instituerunt conventum Sangossae pro Regno Navarrae conventum reformationis, ubi regularis observantia iuxta leges et constitutiones pro reformatione praescriptas vigeat, et eadem leges ad unguem observentur». El P. Anastasio Vives de Rocamora asistía, de hecho, al capítulo general (cf Acta cap. gen., II, 92).

¹⁰⁴ En el libro de actas de los capítulos de la provincia faltan, de hecho, las pp. 193-194, y en la p. 196, que quedaba en blanco, se lee la siguiente nota: «De la congregación pasada [de 1654] el Rmo. P. General jamás envió la confirmación, y así, por justos respectos pareció pegar estas hojas como cosa inútil. En Valencia, a 26 de abril de 1657. Fr. Raimundo Lumbier, provincial».

¹⁰⁵ Acta cap. prov., (2), p. 198.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 235: «pro conventu Sangossae reformato elegerunt [priorem] R. P. fr. Simonem Gargallo».

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

b) *Onda: segundo convento de la reforma*

La no aprobación del acta de la congregación difinitorial de 1654 tal vez tenga algo que ver con la presencia en Roma del provincial Anastasio Vives de Rocamora, el cual debía de tener a sus proyectos en este sentido para los que necesitaba la colaboración del P. Diego de Tuesta, que había sido el iniciador y sostenedor de la reforma del convento de Villarreal. Con este fin, sin duda, obtenía, con fecha de 3 de junio de 1654, patentes del general Filippini, que confirmaría después su sucesor Venturini, por las que le nombraba Comisario General de la reforma y le daba licencia para introducirla en el convento de Onda, por el que sentía gran predilección, y le autorizaba para destituir al prior que entonces era y nombrar otro reformado, expulsar a los frailes que no quisieran admitir la reforma y colocar en su lugar a otros favorables a la misma.¹⁰⁸

Y la reforma se inauguraba, de hecho, en él el 21 de agosto de 1654, siendo el primer prior, como era de prever, el P. Diego de Tuesta, que la implantaría y la afianzaría como había hecho ya en el convento de Villarreal. Éste asistía, como tal prior, al capítulo provincial de Valencia, en el que volvía a ser elegido hasta el capítulo próximo futuro.¹⁰⁹ Y lo sería de nuevo en la congregación difinitorial de 1661 «ratione strictioris observantiae, quae multum pendet ab illo», donde aparece también como difinidor,¹¹⁰ aunque renunciaría poco después, pues en la congregación siguiente del año 1662 era elegido en su lugar como vicario-prior el P. José Milla.¹¹¹

En la misma congregación difinitorial de 1661, que se celebró en el convento de Valencia bajo la presidencia del provincial Pedro Triay, se decretaba además que el convento reformado de Onda fuera considerado en adelante como seminario al que debían confluir todos aquellos que, llamados a la Orden y deseosos de una más estrecha observancia quisieran entrar en alguno de los conventos reformados del Reino de Valencia, salvo el caso (raro) en el que se juzgara oportuno que algún novicio viviera en el convento reformado de Orihuela; fuera de este caso, que se dejaba al arbitrio del provincial, el convento de Onda sería la casa común de todos los novicios. Y se decretaba además que cuantas veces un religioso tuviera que trasladarse por cual-

¹⁰⁸ Copia del texto de las patentes, hecha por el P. Andrés Caperó del original que se guardaba en el archivo del convento, en Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., *Post* IV 5, ff. 255r-256v.

¹⁰⁹ Acta cap. prov., (2), pp. 207. 212.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

quier causa legítima de un convento reformado a otro, los gastos del viaje corrieran por igual a cargo del convento de salida y del de la llegada.¹¹²

c) *Orihuela: tercer convento de la reforma*

Pero, entre tanto, la reforma se había extendido también al convento de Orihuela, al que se refiere ya, como hemos visto, el primero de los dos decretos que acabamos de mencionar. El P. Caperó, que estaba, sin duda, bien informado, en la relación, a que ya hemos aludido, dice que, al acabar el P. Anastasio Vives de Rocamora su provincialato en el capítulo provincial de Valencia de 1657, pidió al mismo capítulo que, «en premio de lo que había servido a la provincia, le dieran el convento de Orihuela para reformarle, y así se le dieron y se fue al dicho convento, en el qual puso la reforma». Y añadía: «En este convento, haciendo vida reformada, vivió con mucho exemplo de toda la comunidad, siendo el primero en todos los ejercicios, quando Su Magestad le promovió al obispado de Segorbe, año 1661, adonde está oy».¹¹³

En las actas de ese capítulo provincial de Valencia de 1657 se dice, en efecto, que el definitorio pidió al P. General de la Orden licencia para que el convento de Orihuela pudiera agregarse a los reformados cuando tuviera el número suficiente de religiosos y el P. General tuviera a bien conceder su autorización para deponer al prior actual y elegir otro en su lugar.¹¹⁴ Y la respuesta no tardaría en llegar, pues el General Mario Venturini, al aprobar las actas del mismo capítulo el 22 de diciembre del mismo año, concedía de buena gana (*libenter*) las dos cosas que se pedían y autorizaba al provincial para que, cuando le pareciera oportuno, introdujera la reforma en el convento de Orihuela.¹¹⁵

Ignoramos, con todo, la fecha exacta en que esto tuvo lugar. Lo único que podemos decir es que la reforma estaba ya introducida en él el 4 de abril de 1658, fecha en la que el P. Anastasio Vives de Rocamora escribía al Ayuntamiento de la Villa, dándole cuenta de la existencia en el convento de los carmelitas de una comunidad de vida reformada, que esperaba había de ser de gran provecho espiritual para los vecinos de la misma villa. Y añadía que la comunidad estaba for-

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 236, 238.

¹¹³ Arch, Gen. O.Carm., *Post* IV 5, f. 256v; cf VELASCO, HCE, II, pp. 508-514.

¹¹⁴ Acta cap. prov., (2), p. 214.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

mada por 11 religiosos de ejemplar vida, que no habían dudado en abrazar la reforma para ayudar al convento, que estaba pobre y arruinado.¹¹⁶ Y en el mismo lugar el P. Vives de Rocamora dice también que se había conseguido, «aunque con algunas dificultades» que el P. Sebastián Vilanova hubiese ido al convento de Orihuela como prior, dando ya por hecho lo que oficialmente sólo tendría lugar algo más tarde, tal vez por esas dificultades a que alude. El P. Vilanova, en efecto, era elegido vicario-prior del convento en la congregación definitiva de mayo de 1662 por renuncia del anterior, P. Vicente Alonso, que por aquel entonces había ya muerto.¹¹⁷

d) *Una etapa fecunda*

La provincia de Aragón y Valencia se sentía honrada con la presencia en su seno de las tres comunidades reformadas de Villarreal, Onda y Orihuela, con las que supo conservar la paz y la armonía, al contrario de lo que sucedería en la provincia de Castilla. Lo muestra claramente una de las determinaciones de la congregación definitiva celebrada en el convento de Zaragoza el 18 de mayo de 1660, bajo la presidencia del prestigioso provincial Raimundo Lumbier. En ella, reconociendo la vida honorable y el empeño que ponían en los estudios los padres de la reforma, los consideraban dignos de ser honrados, por lo que pedían al general de la Orden licencia para que en el definitivo de la provincia participara siempre uno de esos padres, elegido por los gremiales y con voto decisivo, aunque no fuere elegido definidor, pero en el caso de que algún de los reformados fuera elegido definidor, ningún otro de los padres reformados participaría en él.¹¹⁸

Un estímulo poderoso para su estabilidad y progreso lo recibiría la reforma de la visita del general de la Orden Jerónimo Ari a la provincia en 1664. En la congregación general, que presidida por él, se celebró en el convento de Valencia el 28 de mayo de dicho año, el gene-

¹¹⁶ Orihuela, Arch. Municipal, n.º. 311, f. 162 ss; citado por VELASCO, HCE, II, pp. 398-399.

¹¹⁷ Acta cap. prov., (2), p. 240: «Pro conventu Oriolae elegerunt in V[icarium] Priorem R. P. M. Fr. Sebastianum a Vilanova propter renuntiationem R. P. Praesentati fr. Vincentii Alonso, qui in praecedenti congregatione fuit electus Prior, quique iam obiit».

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 230. Pero, en la p. 232, se advierte que las actas de esta congregación no fueron confirmadas por el General de la Orden, y se aduce como prueba una carta del mismo P. Lumbier del 28 de abril de 1661, en la que así lo decía, y de cuya autenticidad daban fe el provincial Pedro Triay y los padres Juan Bautista Sorribas y Félix Durán.

ral, después de expresar su satisfacción por la existencia de los tres conventos reformados en la provincia, ponderaba la peculiar solicitud que sentía hacia ellos y que debían sentir también todos los padres de la misma. Por lo mismo, después de convocar a los principales representantes de la *strictior observantia* y de escucharlos, se propusieron y discutieron algunos artículos para fomentarla, aumentarla y afirmarla. Pero el general encomendaba una más madura discusión y una más prudente recopilación de los mismos al P. M. Lorenzo Espín, Asistente general de las provincias españolas, con el que deberían reunirse todos los que habían aceptado la *strictior observantia*. Una decisión que agradó mucho, no sólo a estos, sino también a los demás padres del definitorio, pues todos confiaban en la pericia y celo del dicho P. M. Asistente General. Y fruto de su trabajo sería el conjunto de decretos especiales que el general promulgaba para regular la vida reformada, en los que, como ya hemos dicho, hablando de la reforma en Cataluña, recogía fundamentalmente las directrices de Clemente VIII, imponiendo la perfecta vida común, la meditación diaria y la austeridad de vida,¹¹⁹ manifestando de paso su plan de componer unas constituciones reformadas que pudieran ser aceptables a todas las casas reformadas de la Orden, muchas de las cuales y entre ellas las españolas, como hemos visto, no habían querido aceptar las *Constitutiones strictioris observantiae*, que habían sido publicadas para la provincia flando-belga, aunque este último proyecto tampoco llegaría a realizarse.

Finalmente, el General procedía a la renovación de los cargos en los conventos reformados, buscando un mayor bien de la reforma. Cesó en el priorato del convento de Villarreal al P. Casimiro Piedra y en su lugar nombró al P. Jacinto Lizarbe, e, igualmente, cesó en el priorato de Onda al P. José Milla, y en su lugar nombró al P. Juan Saura. Y como subprioros de los dos conventos designó a los padres Esteban Herrero y José Capele, respectivamente.¹²⁰

El paso del P. Andrés Caperó, religioso de gran prestigio y de ejemplar vida, de la provincia de Castilla a la de Aragón y Valencia,

¹¹⁹ Estos decretos se imprimirían años más tarde, junto con la segunda edición de los decretos que había dejado en general Chizzola en su visita a las provincias de España en 1594-1595: *Decreta pro conservanda et amplianda vitae regularis observantia... per Reverendissimum M Ioannem Stephanum Chizzolam priorem generalem. Adiectis in margine notis, cum appendice et actis R.mi Ari*, Hispali, M.D.XCV. Nunc denuo Valentiae MCCL. Un resumen de los mismos puede verse en VELASCO, HCE, II, pp. 389-390.

¹²⁰ Acta cap. prov. (1631-1694), pp. 269-270.

que debió de tener lugar por este tiempo,¹²¹ a petición del gran promotor de la reforma Anastasio Vives de Rocamora, con el que pasó a vivir en el convento de Onda, debió de significar una inyección de vida para la misma y, durante algunos años, se mantuvo a un nivel muy alto tanto en el aspecto religioso como intelectual.¹²² El P. Caperó gobernó como prior el convento de Onda de 1673 a 1679, y en el primer año de su priorato, con fecha del 25 de mayo, la comunidad se comprometía por mayoría absoluta, expresada con voto secreto, a rezar los maitines a media noche. Así se dice en un documento que el procurador del mismo convento y notario electo certificaba haber sacado por su propia mano del libro de las «ordenaciones» de la misma comunidad.¹²³ Pero, al parecer, algunos religiosos se cansaron pronto de la decisión tomada, que tampoco aceptaron los otros dos conventos reformados de Villarreal y Orihuela, pues se quejaron al General Mateo Orlandi de que se les obligaba a levantarse a medianoche para el rezo de maitines y a llevar ropa interior de lana y de que la enseñanza de la filosofía era descuidada. La congregación definitiva de 1674 se veía, de hecho, obligada a aclarar las cosas al General, a través de una carta del definitorio del 17 de abril mismo, en la que le explicaba que sólo el convento de Onda había decidido rezar maitines a medianoche, que sólo los que lo deseaban hacerlo llevaban ropa interior de lana, y que la filosofía se enseñaba satisfactoriamente en las tres casas.¹²⁴

e) *El declive*

Con todo, esas quejas eran, probablemente, síntoma de un cierto decaimiento que había comenzado a introducirse en la reforma y que, al parecer, el celo fervoroso del P. Caperó no sería suficiente a detener. En efecto, en el capítulo provincial que se había celebrado o en

¹²¹ El mismo P. Caperó, en carta de 17 de julio de 1669 al P. Pérez de Castro desde Onda, le decía: «Ya, gracias al Señor, se consiguió permiso de la Provincia de Castilla para poderme prohijar en este Reino de Valencia» (Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II, C,O, 1: *Scriptorium O.Carm. Codex J*, f. 88).

¹²² Sobre el P. Caperó, cf. VELASCO, EHC, II, pp. 518-519, y véase también nuestra obra *Un censor español de Molinos y de Petrucci*, Luis Pérez de Castro, O.Carm. (1637-1689), Roma 1988, p. 75, nota 69.

¹²³ Reproduce el texto íntegro del mismo, que se conserva en Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Aragonia* 1, RAFAEL M. LÓPEZ MELÚS, O.CARM., *La Virgen de la Esperanza y el Carmen de Onda*, Onda 1983, pp. 79-80, quien no advierte que el documento está fechado erróneamente en 1663, en lugar de 1673.

¹²⁴ Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II, *Aragonia* 1.

Valencia el 26 de abril de 1670, después de la elección de los definidores, se decía ya: «Et quia ex reformatis non erat subiectum decens, ideo pro hac vice nullus fuit electus definator». ¹²⁵ Había cesado como tal en este capítulo el P. Diego de Tuesta, que había sido elegido en el capítulo anterior de 1667, y que fue confirmado prior de Onda «ratione utriusque fabricae». ¹²⁶ Igualmente y por la misma razón prior de Orihuela el P. M. Sebastián de Villanova y de Villarreal el P. José Saura “ratione fabricae spiritualis et ob inopiam subiectorum”. ¹²⁷ Y lo mismo se repetirá respecto de los definidores en los capítulos de 1673 y 1676. ¹²⁸

La causa de ello estaba, según parece, en el hecho de que algunos de los reformados habían comenzado a abandonar la vida reformada para volver a la obervancia. Esto es, al menos, lo que se desprende de las actas del capítulo provincial de Valencia, celebrado en el último de los años indicados, es decir, en 1676, bajo la presidencia del provincial Raimundo Lumbier. Por mandato del general de la Orden a través de una carta fechada el 28 de diciembre de 1675, que éste había recibido, el capítulo intimaba a los padres reformados el decreto del general Ari por el que se prohibía el paso de los reformados a los observantes después de haber vivido un año completo entre los primeros, y al mismo tiempo se intimaba a los superiores de los reformados otro mandato del general de la Orden sobre la obligación que les incumbía de proveer a sus súbditos, bajo pena de excomunión *latae sententiae*, de todo lo necesario para su sustento y vestido. El defensorio, por su parte, se lamentaba, de que después de 26 años desde que se había iniciado la reforma, fuera tan pequeño el incremento de los reformados hasta tal punto que entre ellos se encontraban pocos religiosos idóneos para ocupar el gobierno de los conventos y para desempeñar los demás oficios y ministerios, de modo que el defensorio se había visto en aprieto por la falta de sujetos idóneos para procurar a los tres conventos reformados superiores competentes y, obligado por la necesidad, a pensar si no sería bueno recurrir a algunos de los observantes con este fin, aunque no lo habían hecho, porque esto habría supuesto la total confusión y destrucción de la reforma. El defensorio estaba convencido por la experiencia de que la causa de esta falta estaba en la facilidad con la que algunos reformados salían de la

¹²⁵ Acta cap. prov (2), p. 300.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

¹²⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 315, 332.

reforma para volver a la observancia, los cuales, en el caso de haber perseverado, le habrían podido ser de gran utilidad y haber contribuido a su conservación e incremento, por lo que pedía al P. General que no fuera fácil en conceder dispensas en este sentido, si no quería ver destruida totalmente en poco tiempo la reforma.¹²⁹

Per tal vez el defensorio de la provincia exageraba un tanto, pues en la aprobación de las actas de este capítulo por el Vicario General Emilio Giacomelli no se alude para nada a este punto.¹³⁰ Y no conocemos ninguna otra disposición acerca de los reformados hasta la congregación defensorial, que se celebró en Valencia el 12 de mayo de 1684, presidida por el vicario provincial el M^o. Luis Pueyo y Abadía, en la que se dice lo contrario de lo que se afirma en la anterior acerca del número de los reformados, pues el defensorio pedía esta vez que, dado que los conventos reformados se veían cargados con un gran número de religiosos, mientras que las limosnas y las rentas con que se sustentaban disminuían cada vez más, se mandase que en adelante no se admitiera a nadie al hábito de la Orden sin la licencia del provincial o del vicario provincial y con el consentimiento de los exprovinciales y de los definidores actuales por el reino de Valencia. Y al mismo tiempo se aludía a ciertos inconvenientes que tenían que sufrir los conventos de Onda y Villarreal, derivados de la imposición de tener que usar la música orgánica, para cuya debida ejecución necesitaban de la asistencia de niños y seglares extraños, por lo que pedían al Padre General de la Orden ordenara que en esos dos conventos se usara únicamente la música que podía ser cantada por los religiosos de los mismos, excluyendo de la clausura a los dichos niños y seglares.¹³¹

En la congregación defensorial de Zaragoza de 1693, se elegían normalmente los priores de las tres conventos reformados: De Orihuela, el P. M. Vicente Berenguer; de Onda, el P. Jerónimo de los Ríos, y de Villarreal el P. Felipe Hernando,¹³² y el defensorio volvía a pedir al General de la Orden que prohibiera el paso de los religiosos reformados a los conventos no reformados.¹³³

No parece, pues, tener fundamento lo que dice el P. Smet a propósito de la visita del general Juan Feijoo de Villalobos a la provincia en el mismo año de 1693: «parece que vió pocas señales de reforma,

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

¹³⁰ Cf *Ibid.*, p. 341.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 406.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 481.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 484.

porque ordenó al provincial que reuniera en un convento, que él debía escoger, a todos los que profesaban nuestra primitiva institución y la vida común». ¹³⁴ El ilustre historiador se refería, sin duda, a uno de los decretos que el general dejó para la provincia el 22 de agosto del mismo año de 1693 y que creemos no supo interpretar bien. En él se mandaba, en efecto, al provincial que en la provincia hubiera, al menos, un convento, que él debía elegir; en el que se observara exactamente la vida del primitivo instituto de la Orden, es decir, la vida puramente eremítica, de acuerdo con la división tripartita de las casas que ya había establecido para toda la Orden: conventos de vida común, conventos de la *strictior observantia* y conventos del primitivo instituto o de vida eremítica, volviendo a prohibir de nuevo el paso de los reformados a las casas de la observancia. ¹³⁵

Efectivamente, en la congregación definitorial que se celebraba en Zaragoza el 1 de mayo del año siguiente de 1694, el definitorio trataba de la recolección y reforma del convento de Rubielos, que era el convento que el general Villalobos había designado para la implantación en él de la vida del “primitivo instituto” o vida eremítica, deseando poner en ejecución la voluntad del mismo general. Pero el provincial dijo que, después de haber visitado varios conventos, sólo había encontrado 4 religiosos que hablaron con él de ese tema, de los cuales, uno dijo que él no pedía una tal reforma, aunque estaba dispuesto a abrazarla una vez implantada, mientras que los tres restantes pedían expresamente la reforma. Con todo, el definitorio opinaba que uno de ellos, el P. José Lizandra, que era el que con más ardor la deseaba, no era recomendable para asegurar la paz y tranquilidad de esa posible reforma, y juzgaba que en el caso de que llegara a implantarse, debía ser apartado del convento por el mayor bien de la misma, por lo que no había suficiente número de religiosos para poner en ejecución los deseos del general. ¹³⁶

La última noticia del siglo XVII relativa a los conventos reformados, la encontramos en el acta de la congregación definitorial celebrada en el convento de Zaragoza el 17 de abril de 1697, en la que el definitorio hacía constar, «non sine magno animi dolore», que muchos religiosos de los mismos padecían graves dificultades, porque sus prelados no atendían, como debían, a sus necesidades, de lo que se derivaban grandes daños a los mismos conventos, y pedía, por

¹³⁴ *Los Carmelitas*, II, p. 638.

¹³⁵ Acta cap. prov (2), p. 493.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 496.

lo mismo, al General de la Orden interpusiera su autoridad para que el provincial, al visitarlos, pudiera corregir a los priores que no administraran debidamente los bienes de la comunidad, distribuyendo a cada religioso por igual lo que necesitaba, amenazándoles incluso con la deposición de su oficio de acuerdo con lo establecido por el mismo General.¹³⁷

Con esta noticia menos edificante se cierra la historia de los conventos de la *strictior observantia* de la provincia de Aragón y Valencia en el siglo XVII. Desconocemos la gravedad de los abusos denunciados por el defensor, pero esto mismo parece ser ya signo de que los superiores de la provincia vigilaban por la buena marcha de esos conventos, y es de suponer, por lo mismo, que los posibles abusos existentes en ellos se eliminan con prontitud. Consta, en efecto, que en ese mismo año de 1697, el provincial José Ángel Rosel firmaba en el convento de Zaragoza el 25 de mayo, un documento en el que, recogiendo la queja de la congregación defensorial, determinaba y precisaba lo que los priores de los conventos reformados debían procurar, en cuanto al alimento y el vestido, a los religiosos reformados que vivían en ellos.¹³⁸

En todo caso, las actas de los capítulos provinciales del siglo XVIII dan fe de que la reforma debió de seguir su ritmo más o menos normal durante todo ese siglo por lo menos hasta finales del mismo, aunque para este tiempo las noticias que tenemos a este respecto sean más bien escasas. Sabemos, por ejemplo, que, apenas comenzado el siglo, en el capítulo provincial que se celebró en Valencia a partir de 5 de mayo de 1702, el defensor pedía al General de la Orden que, además de las dos presentaduras de púlpito ya concedidas a los conventos *strictioris observantiae* existentes en la provincia, en los que las limosnas provenientes de los sermones se aplicaban “in solidum» a la comunidad, se dignara concederles una tercera, para la que sería elegido por concurso al más digno de los reformados, el cual pudiera gozar de los mismos privilegios de que gozaban los presentados en la observancia, con la condición de que perseveraran en la reforma. Y dado que el P. Felipe Hernando, religioso de la dicha reforma, había ejercitado durante muchos años laudablemente el oficio de predicador, se dignara concederle por esta vez esa presentadura de púlpito.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Aragonia*. II 2: Acta cap. prov. 1697.

¹³⁸ Madrid, A.H.N., *Clero*, libro 354: *Visita y otras cosas*. Citado por VELASCO, HCE, II, p. 395, nota 89.

¹³⁹ Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Aragonia*, 2: Acta cap. prov. 1702.

Conocemos también un decreto del capítulo provincial de 1735, en el que tal vez se refleja una de las consecuencias de la Guerra de sucesión a la Corona Española. Por él se ordenaba, en efecto, que todos y cada uno de los que habían profesado en la reforma., de cualquier grado o edad que fuesen, debían ser obligados a volver a sus conventos reformados en el espacio de un mes bajo la pena de suspensión *a divinis* y de cárcel por un año. Y en el caso de que alguno hubiera obtenido dispensa de la Santa Sede, debería mostrarla para comprobar su validez.¹⁴⁰

Pero este mismo decreto se había repetido, al parecer, en los años anteriores de 1733 y 1734.¹⁴¹ Lo que parece ser indicio de que la *strictior observantia* en la provincia de Aragón y Valencia había perdido su fervor inicial y había entrado en una etapa de decadencia. Y lo confirmaría las últimas noticias que nos han llegado de ella. Según dice el P. Velasco, en 1761 (25 de marzo) una patente del P. General otorgaba licencia al P. Manuel Serrano, para pasar de la reforma a la observancia, y, antes, en 1755, otra había concedido la misma licencia al P. Gerónimo Espuig, y varias más se concederían en 1790 a otros varios religiosos.¹⁴² Todo esto parece mostrar que la *strictior observantia* en la provincia de Aragón y Valencia, aunque sobrevivió de algún modo hasta la exclaustración o, por lo menos, hasta finales del siglo XVIII, la vida religiosa de los conventos que la habían abrazado no debía de diferir ya mucho de la que se vivía en los conventos de la observancia.

Queda, con todo, en pie, el hecho indudable de que esa *strictior observantia* ejerció una saludable influencia en la vida de la provincia, cuya vida intelectual y religiosa se mantuvo siempre a un alto nivel, como lo prueban sobradamente las figuras insignes que produjo, a las que hemos aludido a lo largo de este nuestro trabajo: el P. Anastasio Vives de Rocamora, insigne promotor de la misma y que sería elevado al obispado de Segorbe en 1661, al que, sin embargo renunciaría en 1673, para poder seguir viviendo la vida reformada en el convento de Onda, en el que moriría piadosamente;¹⁴³ el P. Andrés Caperó, que sería, a su vez, celoso promotor de la vida reformada y promovido también al obispado de Lugo, después de haber trabajado eficazmente

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*: Acta cap. prov. 1735.

¹⁴¹ Madrid, A.H.N., códice 427 B: *Quinque libri [conventus valentini]*, ff. 170v, 171v; citado por VELASCO, HCE, II, p. 396, nota 91.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*; remitiéndose al leg. 1211 de la sección de Consejos el mismo A.H.N. de Madrid.

¹⁴³ Cf supra, nota 111, y véase también P. L. LLORENS RAGA, *Episcopologio de la diócesis de Segorbe-Castellón*, 2 v., Madrid 1973, I, pp. 371-387.

por el bien de su Orden como asistente general y procurador general de la misma,¹⁴⁴ y, finalmente, el P. Diego Tuesta, no menos benemérito de la reforma que los dos anteriores y fervoroso predicador de la palabra de Dios, estimadísimo del pueblo de Dios, por cuyo bien espiritual trabajó incansablemente.¹⁴⁵

V. EN LA PROVINCIA DE ANDALUCÍA

Como ya hemos dicho, el Procurador General Teodoro Straccio, al visitar por delegación del general Fantoni las provincias españolas en 1617-1618, había designado como posible convento de reforma en esta de Andalucía el del Desierto del Juncal.¹⁴⁶ Sin embargo, esta designación apenas si debió de encontrar eco en la provincia, pues el cronista de la misma, al ocuparse de la visita del mismo Straccio ni siquiera alude a ella.¹⁴⁷ Según él, habría sido a últimos de 1627, cuando se recibieron letras en la provincia del Rvmo [Gregorio Canali], por las que ordenaba que el convento de Antequera fuese casa de reforma y que en él su guardase vida común, según las constituciones de la Orden, comisionando para ese fin al P. M. Diego de Miranda. Y añade que por sus patentes eximía a él y al convento de la obediencia del P. Provincial, aunque su comisión no tendría efecto, porque la comunidad recurrió al General, informándole de los inconvenientes que para ello había.¹⁴⁸ No sabemos cuáles fueran esos inconvenientes, pero lo más cierto parece ser que los carmelitas andaluces, al igual que los de otras provincias, se resistían a admitir la reforma, y, probablemente, la oposición aumentó por el hecho de que el general quisiera ya, desde un principio, eximir al convento y a los posibles reformados de la jurisdicción del provincial.

Un nuevo intento de introducir la reforma tenía lugar en 1629, cuando el P. Rvmo [el mismo Gregorio Canali], siempre según el P. Rodríguez Carretero, determinaba que fuera el convento de Escacena casa para la misma, a instancia de algunos padres graves de la provincia que lo habían pedido, dejando esta vez la disposición de la

¹⁴⁴ Cf supra, nota 120, y véase también MANUEL R. PAZOS, O.F.M., *El episcopado gallego a la luz de los documentos romanos*, III, Madrid 1946, pp. 190-196.

¹⁴⁵ Cf supra, nota 120.

¹⁴⁶ Cf supra, nota 11.

¹⁴⁷ MIGUEL RODRÍGUEZ CARRETERO, O.CARM., *Epytome historial de los carmelitas de Andalucía*, ed. de Ismael Martínez Carretero, Sevilla, 2000, p. 235.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

misma al P. Provincial, el P. M. Juan Sobrino.¹⁴⁹ Pero éste trataba por aquel entonces de fundar en Sanlúcar de Barrameda y, pareciéndole que tendría muy pronto efecto la fundación, resolvió que esta nueva casa se fundase para ser de reforma y se dejase la de Escacena. El provincial hizo ciertos estatutos relativos a la vida común que debían observarse en el convento reformado y que envió, al parecer, al Nuncio para su aprobación, e igualmente al general de la Orden Gregorio Canali, el cual los aprobaba con fecha de 15 de agosto del mismo año de 1629, con la condición de que la reforma de este convento no impidiera la reforma de otros que, a su vez, la deseaban, prohibiendo al mismo tiempo todo cambio en el hábito y anulando todas las censuras que los estatutos contenían.¹⁵⁰

Pero como las gestiones que se hicieron para la fundación del convento de Sanlúcar de Barrameda no tuvieron el efecto inmediato que el provincial esperaba, determinó que el convento para la reforma fuera el de Gibrleón, en el que, de hecho, se eligió nuevo prior y se estableció la *strictior observantia*.¹⁵¹ Y aunque Rodríguez Carretero no indica fecha, consta que, con fecha de 18 de octubre del mismo año de 1629, el dicho general Canali firmaba ya un decreto por el que prohibía bajo pena de excomunión *latae sententiae* que ninguno de sus inferiores se atreviera a impedir la reforma que recientemente se había establecido en ese convento de Gibrleón con título de vida común.¹⁵² Sin embargo, esta reforma duraría también poco, pues apenas un año después, por el mes de septiembre de 1630, según dice el mismo Rodríguez Carretero, «los padres reformados que hacían vida común en el convento de Gibrleón suplicaron comunitariamente al P. Provincial [Gaspar Ximénez] fuese servido de trasladar la reforma a otro convento» puesto que el suyo era muy insalubre por causa del clima. Y el provincial, que decía no poder hacerlo por sí solo, presentaba, de hecho, el asunto en la congregación definitorial que se celebraba en Sevilla en 1631, la cual, reconociendo como verdadera la causa alegada, determinaba que se disolviese la reforma y se repartiesen los conventuales de Gibrleón por diferentes casas de la provincia.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 259-260. Un amplio resumen de estos estatutos, que serían ampliados en 1639, puede verse en VELASCO, HCE, II, pp. 439-442, quien los toma del *Libro de decretos del convento de san Juan del Puerto*, del que hablaremos después, en nota 158, ff. 6v-10r.

¹⁵⁰ Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II O.C 1 (20): *Reg. Canali* II, f. 189r.

¹⁵¹ *Epytome historial*, p. 260.

¹⁵² Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II C.O. 1 (19): *Reg. Canali et Stratii 1627-1642*, f. 75v.

¹⁵³ *Epítome historial*, p. 263-264.

La provincia volvía a encontrarse así de nuevo sin ninguna casa reformada. Pero el provincial Gaspar Ximénez, que era un hombre de gran virtud, celoso del bien de su provincia y de la Orden y amante de la observancia y vida reformada, no podía resignarse a esta situación y se decidía a secundar fielmente las nuevas instancias que el general Teodoro Straccio, apenas elegido, debió de hacerle, al igual que a los demás provinciales españoles, a introducir una verdadera reforma en alguno de los conventos de su provincia. Y para procurar allanar los caminos para la misma en el próximo capítulo provincial que tenía que celebrarse en 1633, a principios de este año, según dice el mismo Rodríguez Carretero, después de despachar las vocatorias al mismo, comisionaba al P. M. Cristóbal de Eslava, que debía de ser otro de los que más vivamente deseaban la reforma, para que en los conventos de Jerez, Utrera, Alcalá de Guadaíra, Osuna y el Carmelo del Juncal hiciese exactos informes sobre las rentas, memorias, recibo y posesiones que las casas tenían para saber si en ellas podía observarse la vida común.¹⁵⁴

El general Straccio, por su parte, al nombrar al P. M. Luis de Ojeda presidente del capítulo que tenía que celebrarse en el convento de Antequera a partir del 17 de abril de 1633, le manifestaba, al parecer, su deseo de que la provincia intentara de nuevo la fundación del convento de Sanlúcar de Barrameda, en el que pudiera establecerse finalmente una casa de reforma. De hecho el nuevo provincial, Bartolomé Ximénez, apenas llegó a Sevilla, acompañado por el exprovincial Gaspar Ximénez, a quien el General de la Orden le había concedido voz consultiva y decisiva en el definitorio de la provincia,¹⁵⁵ visitaba al Duque de Medinasidonia para proponerle la fundación de Sanlúcar. Pero, aunque el Duque acogió bien la propuesta y la favoreció, surgirían poco después algunas dificultades y la fundación volvía a quedar suspendida por entonces.¹⁵⁶

No obstante estos numerosos intentos fallidos, el deseo de una verdadera reforma, a la que no dejaba de instar el general Teodoro Straccio, se había ido afianzando en el espíritu de muchos carmelitas andaluces y no tardaría en hacerse una auténtica realidad bajo el

¹⁵⁴ Cf *Ibid.*, pp. 268, 273-274.

¹⁵⁵ Se han conservado las actas de este capítulo de 1633, en forma de resumen que el definitorio envió al consejo general de la Orden para su aprobación, pero en él no se alude a esta concesión ni se habla de la posible introducción de la reforma en el convento de Sanlúcar de Barrameda.

¹⁵⁶ *Epytome historial*, p. 276.

impulso fervoroso y eficaz del mismo P. Gaspar Ximénez, quien volvía a ser elegido provincial en el capítulo provincial de Sevilla, que se celebraba a partir del 13 de abril de 1636, bajo la presidencia del carmelita aragonés M. Angel Palacios, por comisión del general Straccio, quien antes le había nombrado también comisario y visitador general de la provincia, recomendándole una vez más la promoción de la reforma en alguno de sus conventos. No se han conservado las actas de este capítulo, pero, si hemos de creer a Rodríguez Carretero, «se resolvió en el definitorio, que, para que tuviera efecto el decreto del P. Rvmo, se estableciesen algunas casas de reforma y que por los preladados se informase al P. Provincial para, en vista de dichos informes, señalar las que habían de ser».¹⁵⁷ Pero, como reconoce el mismo cronista, esto no parecía realmente demasiado fácil, «pues – como añadía – no hay convento en ella que pueda sostenerla no estando dotados con rentas suficientes para poder asistir a todos los religiosos».¹⁵⁸ De hecho, el intento que había hecho a fines de 1635 el Rector del Colegio de San Alberto de Sevilla Diego de Miranda de acuerdo con los padres colegiales del mismo y con el mencionado visitador Ángel Palacio, de hacer aquella casa de reforma y establecer en ella la vida común, no había tenido efecto porque se conoció no ser suficientes las rentas para que todos observasen la vida común.¹⁵⁹

a) *La reforma de San Juan del Puerto*

Las dificultades parecían realmente insalvables hasta que, por fin, el general Straccio decidía tomar en sus manos el asunto, nombrando al M^o Gaspar Ximénez, que había sido elegido de nuevo provincial, su comisario reformador, encargo que éste, según dice el mismo Rodríguez Carretero, «desempeñaría con suma prudencia y fervor, reformando los conventos con la mejor paz que jamás tuvo la provincia».¹⁶⁰ Resuelto, de hecho, a poner por obra el mandato del General, juntó a algunos padres Maestros doctos y ejemplares, entre los cuales estaba el famoso M. Nicolás Bautista,¹⁶¹ pidiéndoles su parecer sobre el convento que juzgaban más adecuado para iniciar la reforma, quienes se inclinaron por el Desierto del Juncal o del Carmelo, «por ser más a

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

¹⁶¹ Se ocupa de él ampliamente Rodríguez Carretero, *Epythome historial*, pp. 323-324. Véase también *Bibl. Carm.*, II, pp. 479-482 y VELASCO, HCE, III, pp. 462-463.

propósito por la soledad y retiro de aquella montaña a este fin»,¹⁶² aunque advirtiendo que no podría ponerse en práctica la reforma en este convento por estar a dos leguas de distancia de todo poblado, pues los religiosos se verían necesitados de muchas cosas, sobre todo los enfermos. Por lo que, al fin, resolvían que se señalase el convento de San Juan del Puerto por estar esta casa más cerca de poblado y a la orilla del mar y disponer, por lo mismo, de mayor facilidad para el consumo del pescado. El provincial, por su cuenta, le asignaba 300 ducados anuales de las rentas que había dejado el P. Lorenzo Niño de Guevara para que se fundase convento en Málaga.¹⁶³ Y, por su parte, el prior de San Juan del Puerto, que acababa de ser elegido en el capítulo provincial de Sevilla de 1636, renunciaba de buena voluntad a su oficio, siendo elegido en su lugar el ya mencionado Cristóbal Eslava, al que todos consideraban como el más idóneo para el priorato por sus virtudes notorias y grande literatura, y del que todos esperaban que había de ser piedra fundamental del nuevo edificio de la reforma.¹⁶⁴ Éste tomaba, de hecho, posesión de su cargo el 27 de agosto de 1637, acompañándole otros cinco padres, que él había escogido por compañeros, a saber: Francisco de Rodas, Blas del Castillo, Miguel Gerónimo, Juan Cobos y Martín Camacho, y cinco hermanos: Bartolomé de la Cruz, Juan Daza, Cristóbal de la Cruz, Martín de los Santos y Francisco de la Cruz.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 283.

¹⁶³ La patente de esta concesión, firmada el 15 de agosto del mismo año de 1637, puede verse al principio del ms. que citamos más abajo. Y en la relación sobre la reforma en él contenida se añade que el P. Fr. Juan Durán, Rector del Colegio de S. Alberto de Sevilla cedió al convento reformado toda su rica librería (f. 4r).

¹⁶⁴ *Epythome historial*, pp. 283-284.

¹⁶⁵ Así se dice en la Relación sobre la reforma del convento de S. Juan del Puerto, puesta al principio del *Libro de los decretos y determinaciones de este convento de Nra. S^a del Carmen de San Juan del Puerto*, de la reformación y vida común, desde veynete y siete de Agosto de mill i seiscientos y treinta y siete del nacimiento de Xpo, f. 3v. Este libro ms., seguido de varios inventarios de libros ingresados sucesivamente en la biblioteca del convento, que se ha conservado en Madrid, en la biblioteca del Sr. Rodríguez Moñino (sign. E-457100), es de extraordinaria importancia para conocer el origen y la evolución de esta reforma de San Juan del Puerto, que se extendería después a otros conventos. Además de la mencionada relación, cuya veracidad testifica fr. Luis de Avendaño, secretario del convento, se recoge una abundante documentación sobre los inicios y marcha posterior de la reforma y contiene además un *Liber alphabeticus librariae huius coenobii almi Ioannis a Portu de opido, reformationis ac vitae communis...* de no menor interés. La relación habla, en realidad, de seis padres y cuatro hermanos, pero los nombres no se corresponden con estas cifras. Del P. Francisco de Rodas, que moriría piadosamente el 6 de junio de 1638 se ocupa elogiosamente, dándole el título de "Venerable", Rodríguez Carretero (*Epythome historial*, p. 286). Una amplia reseña del mismo puede verse también en Arch. Gen. O.Carm., Post. IV: Catálogo. ff. 260v-265v.

Comenzaba así, en expresión de Rodríguez Carretero,¹⁶⁶ la «reforma deseada», que echaría hondas raíces y pronto se extendería a otros conventos.

b) *Sanlúcar de Barrameda y Santa Teresa de Sevilla*

El primero de ellos sería el de Sanlúcar de Barrameda, que se fundaría como convento de recolección o reforma, por expreso deseo de sus fundadores, con licencia del arzobispo de Sevilla, D. Gaspar de Borja y Velasco, otorgada en Madrid el 11 de agosto de 1640, siendo provincial el P.M. Luis Barrionuevo y Montalvo. La fundación tenía lugar, bajo el título de la Inmaculada Concepción, el 9 de octubre del mismo año en la ermita de San Sebastián, aunque a los 22 días se trasladaría al interior de la villa. El provincial nombraba primer vicario-prior del convento al P. Pedro de la Barrera, a quien sucedería poco después como prior el Presentado Pedro Trujillo.¹⁶⁷ Y casi al mismo tiempo que el anterior se fundaba el convento de Santa Teresa de Sevilla para que fuese también «casa de recolección o de reforma, conforme al de la observancia de San Juan del puerto», como de decía expresamente en la petición que hicieron sus fundadores al arzobispo de Sevilla, el ya mencionado D. Gaspar de Borja y Velasco, para que otorgara su licencia para la fundación. Licencia que, de hecho concedía también en Madrid el 13 de agosto de 1641. La inauguración de la nueva casa tenía lugar el 3 de septiembre del mismo año con la presencia del mencionado provincial Luis de Barrionuevo y Montalvo.¹⁶⁸

Pero la aceptación oficial de estos dos conventos, con las condiciones puestas por sus fundadores, sólo tendría lugar en el capítulo provincial de Sevilla de 1642, que presidió el M. Ambrosio Roca de la Serna, de la provincia de Aragón y Valencia, poeta de reconocido prestigio, y en el que era elegido nuevo provincial de Andalucía el famoso Maestro Nicolás Bautista, al que ya nos hemos referido.¹⁶⁹ El definitivo decretaba que la comunidad de la nueva casa de Sevilla fuese de 8 sacerdotes y 6 hermanos profesos, dejando el número de novicios a la determinación del prior, cargo en el que fue confirmado el P. M. Cristóbal Eslava, el cual, como ya hemos visto, había sido ya el primer prior de San Juan del Puerto y el principal promotor de la reforma.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ *Epytome historial*, p. 284.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 291-294.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 295-296.

¹⁶⁹ Cf *supra*, nota 154.

¹⁷⁰ *Epítome historial.*, p. 296.

c) *En el convento de Castro del Río*

Ésta se iba, de hecho, afianzando, y apenas cuatro años después, por decisión del capítulo provincial de 1646, se introducía también en el convento de Castro del Río,¹⁷¹ después de que el capítulo general de 1645 la hubiera hecho ya objeto de su atención. En él se decretaba, en efecto, que en la provincia de Andalucía se observaran escrupulosamente las condiciones que se habían estipulado en la fundación del convento de Santa Teresa de la ciudad de Sevilla y que habían sido confirmadas por breve de Urbano VIII. Y se determinaba además que ninguno de los religiosos que había profesado en ese convento reformado o en cualquier otro de la provincia podía ser trasladado a otro convento no reformado por el provincial, y que éste no podía impedir el paso a uno de los conventos reformados de todos aquellos religiosos que lo desearan. La entrada a los conventos reformados debía ser, de hecho, libre para todos los que quisieran abrazar su género de vida.¹⁷²

d) *En el convento del Juncal*

Resulta, por lo mismo, un tanto extraño que el capítulo general de 1648, en el que era elegido general de la Orden el P. Juan Antonio Filippini, que se convertiría en el principal promotor de la *strictior observantia* en toda la Orden, se mandara que ésta se introdujera también en el convento del Juncal, de la provincia de Andalucía,¹⁷³ en la que existían ya, de hecho, cuatro conventos pertenecientes a la misma, como lo reconocería, satisfecho, el mismo Filippini en la carta circular que dirigía al año siguiente de 1649 a todas las provincias de la Orden en la que decía: «In Hispania, in celebri Bethica provincia, quatuor sunt conventus *strictioris observantiae*».¹⁷⁴ Esos conventos eran por aquel entonces los cuatro de que nos hemos ocupado hasta ahora: los de San Juan del Puerto, Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Santa Teresa de Sevilla y Castro del Río. Y el nuevo general, sin pérdida de tiempo, se dedicaba a proteger y confirmar la reforma, aplicándole sus famosos artículos.¹⁷⁵ En consecuencia, el 18 de octubre de 1650, nombraba a

¹⁷¹ Así se dice en la petición que el vicario provincial de los reformados de Andalucía presentaría al capítulo provincial de 1653, a la que tendremos que referirnos y que recoge Rodríguez Carretero, *Epitome historial*, p. 310, aunque éste, al hablar de ese capítulo de 1646, no diga nada a este respecto (cf *Ibid.*, p. 302-303).

¹⁷² Acta cap. gen., II, 62.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁷⁴ Roma, Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II C.O. 24.

¹⁷⁵ Cf supra, nota 18.

fray Cristóbal Beltrán vicario provincial de los conventos reformados de Andalucía.¹⁷⁶ Y, por otra parte, con fecha de 13 de junio de 1651, confirmaba el decreto del capítulo general de 1648 acerca del convento del Juncal y mandaba que el prior de dicho convento fuera trasladado a otro, dejando el suyo para la reforma. Y, apoyándose en estos decretos, el mencionado vicario provincial de los reformados, al que el capítulo provincial de 1653 había concedido lugar y voz en los capítulos provinciales y pasaba a ocupar lugar en él después de los definidores,¹⁷⁷ presentaba una petición al mismo capítulo para que la provincia volviera a aceptar el convento de Castro del Río, que era insalubre y poco apto para la reforma y cediera para ésta el del Juncal, de acuerdo con lo establecido por el capítulo general de 1648 y por el general Filippini.¹⁷⁸ Petición que el capítulo aceptaba también de buena gana,¹⁷⁹ y, según dice Rodríguez Carretero, se ponía en ejecución el 18 de mayo del mismo año de 1653, fecha en la que el prior del Juncal, Matías Tirado, que acababa de ser elegido en el capítulo provincial, pasaba al de Castro del Río, y el prior de éste, Pedro Aguilar pasaba al del Juncal, llevándose consigo a otros varios religiosos que quisieron seguir la reforma, a saber: el P. M. Fr. Rodrigo Crespo, y los padres Pedro de Santa María, Andrés de la Ascensión, Fernando Álvarez y Pedro de San Alberto, el diácono Francisco de Santo Tomás y los legos Benito y Salvador de Santa María.¹⁸⁰

e) *Una reforma vigorosa*

La reforma, al parecer, proseguía felizmente su andadura, en paz y sin tropiezos. Y, al año siguiente, aprovechando la ocasión de que en él tenía que celebrarse el capítulo general de la Orden, los reformados presentaban al general de la Orden y al definitorio del mismo capítulo, una especie de memorial, en el que, después de hacer una breve historia de la reforma en la misma provincia, ponían de relieve que ésta no sólo no se había extinguido como las demás reformas que

¹⁷⁶ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica* 2: *Petitio pro parte R. P. Vicarii*, 1651.

¹⁷⁷ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica*: Acta cap. prov., 1653.

¹⁷⁸ Éste, entre tanto, había firmado, de hecho, dos decretos en favor de la reforma. Por el primero, fechado en Roma el 25 de enero de 1650, le había concedido el privilegio de que fuera sólo el vicario provincial de la misma el que entendiera en los asuntos de la reforma. Por el segundo, dado también en Roma el 13 de junio de 1654, mandaba que el convento del Desierto del Juncal fuera casa de reforma. Así lo dice RODRÍGUEZ CARRETERO, *Epítome historial*, p. 311.

¹⁷⁹ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica* 3: Acta cap. prov., 1653, f. 22.

¹⁸⁰ RODRÍGUEZ CARRETERO, *Epítome historial*, pp. 310-311.

habían surgido antes en la provincia, sino que había crecido de tal forma que por aquel tiempo contaba ya con unos 80 religiosos distribuidos en cuatro conventos, a saber: el de San Juan del Puerto, en el que la reforma había tenido origen en 1637, y los de Santa Teresa de Sevilla, Sanlúcar de Barrameda y el Desierto del Juncal o Monte Carmelo; que la reforma había llegado a ese estado gracias al cuidado que habían tenido de ella los padres generales y especialmente el Rmo. Juan Antonio Filippini, que había concedido a la reforma un vicario provincial. Visto lo cual, el definitorio del capítulo general determinaba lo siguiente: «1º. Que la dicha reforma pudiera elegir un vicario provincial de la misma, según la norma prescrita en los artículos del mencionado general Filippini, a menos que el general de la Orden quisiera instituir por sí mismo al tal vicario; 2º. Que, cuando el provincial de la provincia de Andalucía visitara los conventos de la reforma, tuviera que asumir como socio a alguno de los padres reformados, al que mejor le pareciera; 3º. Que el vicario de la reforma presidiera en las elecciones de los priores y demás oficiales de los conventos de la reforma; 4º. Que la confirmación de esos priores y oficiales fuera también competencia del mismo vicario, como era también competencia del mismo, dentro de los límites de la reforma, conceder licencia a los reformados para que pudieran oír las confesiones de los mismos reformados y para predicar en sus propios conventos, *servatis servandis*, como también conceder a los reformados que ya tuvieran licencia del Ordinario poder confesar a las mujeres; 5º. Que, en la medida en que podían y solían hacerlo los demás provinciales, fuera suficiente la licencia de sólo el vicario provincial para dar el hábito y admitir a la profesión a los novicios en la misma reforma; 6º. Que no pudiera el provincial de la Bética trasladar a los religiosos de la reforma a otros conventos no reformados sin el consentimiento del Padre general, y sin haber oído antes al vicario de la reforma acerca de la conveniencia de un tal traslado».¹⁸¹

No sabemos por qué, Rodríguez Carretero, que se refiere a este capítulo general y alude a algunas decisiones del mismo, no recoge estas otras relativas a la reforma.¹⁸² Sí aduce, en cambio, un decreto del nuevo general Mario Venturini, con fecha de 20 de junio del mismo año de 1654, por el que mandaba que los priores de las casas de la reforma debían ser elegidos de entre los religiosos de los mismos conventos reformados.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Acta cap. gen., II, 97-98.

¹⁸² Cf *Epítome historial*, pp. 314-315.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

En la congregación definitoria celebrada en el convento de Sevilla el 18 de abril de 1655, el vicario provincial de los reformados Cristóbal Beltrán presentaba al definitorio una triple propuesta. Por la primera rogaba al definitorio que pidiera al general de la Orden concediera a los Padres Maestros de la reforma Rodrigo Crespo y Diego del Castillo voto en los capítulos provinciales, aunque no hubieran obtenido el doctorado en alguna de las universidades aprobadas, puesto que, a causa de la pobreza de los conventos reformados, carecían de los medios necesarios para obtenerlo. Cosa que sentían, no sólo los mencionados maestros, sino todos los que se dedicaban al estudio en la reforma. A lo que accedía el definitorio, como accedía también a la segunda, por la que pedía que el provincial informara al P. General acerca del alimento, del vestido y de las demás cosas necesarias con las que se proveía a los reformados, según había podido constatar durante la reciente visita que había hecho a sus conventos. A lo que el provincial respondía que a todos los reformados se les proveía efectivamente de todo lo necesario y que de ello daría más detenida noticia en una amplia carta que escribiría al general de la Orden. Y, finalmente, el P. Beltrán rogaba al definitorio que, en atención a sus muchas enfermedades que le impedían asistir a los conventos reformados cuando era necesario, presentara al general de la Orden esta su dificultad para que él proveyera a su sustitución por otro religioso.¹⁸⁴

Ignoramos la respuesta del general Mauro Venturini, pero podemos dar por seguro que el general tuvo que hacer propia la sugerencia que el secretario o copista del acta de esta congregación expresaba al margen de la petición: «Credo quod R.mus Pater non debet annuere huic petitioni, quia iste vicarius provincialis est aptior caeteris». Y el buen Padre Beltrán seguiría ejerciendo su cargo para bien de la reforma, probablemente hasta su muerte. Y es del todo justo, recalcar lo que a este respecto escribía el P. Smet: «De una manera totalmente inesperada. En esta provincia [de Andalucía], con su historial de discordias, la reforma no causó disturbios. Ello puede haber sido debido a la personalidad de Beltrán, que gobernó la reforma durante muchos años y que no tuvo pretensiones sobre sus derechos».¹⁸⁵ Estableció, efectivamente, unas relaciones fáciles con la provincia y nunca trató de cortar los lazos afectivos con ella. Y esto explicaría también el hecho de que en el capítulo provincial de 1653, al proponer el presidente del capítulo la cuestión de si debía ser admitido como gremial

¹⁸⁴ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica* 3: *Acta congregationis*, 1654.

¹⁸⁵ *Los Carmelitas*, II, p. 619.

del mismo «cum loco et voce» el P. Beltrán, en cuanto vicario provincial de los reformados, todos los gremiales, a excepción de uno, respondieran afirmativamente, asignándole como lugar propio el que seguía a los cuatro definidores.¹⁸⁶

En el capítulo provincial de 1656, que se celebró a partir del 16 de junio en el convento Casa Grande de Sevilla, era elegido tercer definidor de la provincia el reformado P. Rodrigo Crespo y el día en que se hizo la fiesta de María santísima del Carmen, Madre y Patrona de la Orden, predicaba también el P. Antonio López, prior del convento reformado de Santa Teresa de Sevilla.¹⁸⁷ Cosa que se venía haciendo ya anteriormente, pues al capítulo de 1653 había asistido como cuarto definidor «pro reformatione» de la provincia el P. Pedro de León, al que sucedía en el mismo cargo el también reformado P. Diego del Castillo.¹⁸⁸

f) *Una crisis inesperada*

Pero, mientras tanto, habían comenzado a aparecer las primeras suspicacias y dificultades con la reforma. En efecto, el 10 de mayo de 1650 el P. Pedro Quesada, que había pasado de los carmelitas descalzos a la observancia, escribía una larga misiva al general de la Orden, en la que tocaba diversos puntos en relación con la reforma, mostrándose un tanto pesimista; pues, según pensaba, había progresado poco y no ofrecía un porvenir estable.¹⁸⁹ Y, aunque los hechos posteriores, desmentirían, como hemos podido constatar, esa su opinión, es posible que fuera compartida por otros miembros de la provincia. En todo caso es cierto que el capítulo provincial de 1656, al que ya nos hemos referido, tenía que ocuparse de un asunto de cierta importancia, pues el definitorio del mismo daba cuenta de un decreto que había recibido del general de la Orden Mario Venturini, fechado en Nápoles el 26 de junio de 1655, por el que le remitía 14 puntos que fr. José de Santa Teresa le había presentado en contra de los cuatro conventos reformados para que con toda diligencia y cuidado los examinase y se conociese la verdad de cuanto en ellos se decía. Así lo hacía el definitorio y, después de una exhaustiva información llegaba a la conclusión de que fr. José había hablado ante el general de la Orden temerariamente, sin temor de la propia conciencia y no según verdad.

¹⁸⁶ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica* 3: *Acta cap. prov.*, 1653.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibidem.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibidem.*

¹⁸⁹ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica* 2: *Documenta varia*, 1650.

En el dicho decreto no se especificaban esos 14 puntos, pero de la respuesta del definitorio parece desprenderse que uno de ellos se refería a la conveniencia o no del tránsito de los reformados a los conventos no reformados. Acerca del cual el definitorio opinaba que no debía cerrarse ni abrirse del todo, pero que en cualquier caso debía quedar al arbitrio del mismo definitorio conceder o negar dicho tránsito. Otro de los puntos se refería a la conveniencia o utilidad del oficio de vicario de los reformados, acerca de la cual se habían ya manifestado algunas dudas, pero que el definitorio juzgaba que seguía siendo útil y conveniente, siempre que se limitara a intervenir en los asuntos económicos pero no en el gobierno «político» de la provincia. Y, por otra parte, el definitorio hacía propia la petición que los padres reformados Rodrigo Crespo y Diego del Castillo habían presentado a la congregación definitorial del año anterior y pedía al general de la Orden que se dignara concederles la gracia de poder participar «cum loco et voce» en los capítulos de la provincia, aunque no hubieran podido obtener, a causa de la pobreza de la reforma el doctorado en alguna de las universidades aprobadas. Doctorado que era requisito necesario para poder gozar de los privilegios de los Maestros. Y concedía igualmente al convento reformado del Juncal o del Monte Carmelo que pudiera tener en él su propio noviciado.¹⁹⁰

Por lo demás, la confianza y buena armonía entre reformados y no reformados continuaban, al parecer, intactas, como parece probarlo el hecho de que el general Venturini, con fecha de 9 de noviembre de 1657, nombrara presidente del capítulo provincial que se tenía que celebrar al año siguiente al ya mencionado reformado P. Rodrigo Crespo, quien, en efecto, lo presidía en buena paz en el convento de Antequera a partir del 12 de mayo de 1658, y en el que, como de costumbre, era elegido cuarto definidor «pro reformatione» el P. Luis de Avendaño. Y en el mismo capítulo se leían unas patentes del mismo general Mario Venturini, por las que aprobaba el acta de la pasada congregación definitorial de 1656, y encomendaba al capítulo imponer a fr. José de Santa Teresa la pena que le correspondía por haber denunciado injustamente a los conventos y religiosos reformados, aprobando además la decisión del definitorio acerca del tránsito de los reformados a los no reformados y concediendo «pro hac vice tantum» la gracia que se había pedido en favor del P. Rodrigo Crespo.

Con todo, el vicario provincial de los reformados, Cristóbal Beltrán, exponía al capítulo que, habiendo enviado, en cumplimiento de

¹⁹⁰ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica* 3: *Acta cap prov.*, 1656.

la obligación de su oficio, comisiones a los conventos de Sanlúcar, San Juan del Puerto y el Juncal o Monte Carmelo para que procediesen a la elección de sus priores respectivos, habían sido elegidos, de hecho, priores los padres Gaspar Narváez del de Sanlúcar y el P. Pedro de Aguilar del del Juncal o Monte Carmelo, pero que ambos se habían negado a aceptar el cargo, sin que a él le hubiera sido posible en modo alguno convencerles para que lo aceptaran. Y, dado que él no podía por su mucha edad y sus muchas enfermedades acudir a los dos conventos para presidir las dos elecciones ni encontraba a quien encomendar la presidencia entre sus reformados, pedía al definitorio del capítulo que por esa vez, sin que ello supusiera que la reforma renunciaba a los privilegios que les habían concedido los breves apostólicos, aceptara esas renunciaciones y procediera a la elección de los dos priores. Y así lo hacía, de hecho, el definitorio, pues, después de considerar las razones de los padres Gaspar Narváez y Pedro de Aguilar y de admitir su renuncia, procedía a la elección de los priores que habían de sustituirlos, y al cambio entre los nuevos priores de San Juan del Puerto y del Juncal, de acuerdo con las sugerencias recibidas del P. Cristóbal Beltrán.¹⁹¹

Debió de ser ésta una de las últimas actuaciones del P. Beltrán como vicario provincial, pues poco después debió de morir o cesar en ese cargo. Y con la desaparición del P. Beltrán, se acabaría, al parecer, la paz y concordia de que había gozado la reforma dentro de la provincia, la cual, a su vez, había disfrutado igualmente de un período tranquilo, sin disturbios ni controversias. Período que se quebraba también por aquel entonces por la actuación del provincial Bernabé de las Ruelas, que había sido elegido en el mismo capítulo de 1658, pero que presentaría su renuncia al cargo en el capítulo general de 1660, el cual elegía para sucederle al P. Eustaquio Gutiérrez, lo que daría lugar a un cisma en la provincia, al arrepentirse el P. de las Ruelas de su decisión y pretender convocar y celebrar por su parte el capítulo provincial.¹⁹²

La última noticia acerca de los reformados por este tiempo nos la proporciona el acta de la congregación definitorial celebrada en Sevilla en mayo de 1659, la cual manifiesta, al parecer, un cierto malestar o inquietud entre ellos. Algunos, en efecto, apoyándose, al parecer, en las patentes del general Venturini que se habían leído en el capítulo provincial de 1656, por las que aprobaba la decisión que el defi-

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.* Acta cap. prov., 1658.

¹⁹² Cf VELASCO, HCE, II, p. 423.

nitario había expresado acerca de la salida de los reformados a los no reformados, pedían al mismo definitorio licencia para salir de la reforma. Petición que esta vez, después de consultar al vicario provincial de los mismos reformados, rechazaba por no considerar suficientes (sino más bien frívolas) las razones que alegaban, por lo que pedía al general de la Orden que, en el caso de que le presentaran directamente la misma petición, no se dignara aceptarla.¹⁹³

Es posible, con todo, que esa petición llegara directamente a Roma y que fuera ella la que diera ocasión a la respuesta más bien contundente del Consejo General de la Orden. Reunido, en efecto, el 24 de noviembre de 1660, bajo la presidencia del Vicario General Pablo de San Ignacio, en ausencia del General Jerónimo Ari, que había iniciado ya su visita a las diversas provincias de la Orden, emanaba los siguientes «reformationis articuli» para la provincia Bética: 1º. de acuerdo con los artículos para la reforma promulgados en 1648, que habían sido renovados de nuevo en el último capítulo general, los reformados no podían ser transferidos a los conventos no reformados, como tampoco los no reformados a los reformados, a no ser para ser probados por un año, de acuerdo con los mismos artículos; y una vez probados por ese año y aceptados, no podían volver a los no reformados; 2º. debían establecerse estudios en la misma reforma, por lo que había que enviar a ella un profesor que hubiera profesado en ella, o bien tenían que proponer otros de la misma reforma, que serían nombrados por el definitorio de la provincia, *servatis servandis*; 3º. el vicario provincial de los reformados debía permanecer en su oficio hasta la próxima visita del P. General o hasta que él estableciera otra cosa, mediante sus patentes; y, entre tanto, tenía que procurar que todos observaran escrupulosamente las constituciones y artículos de la reforma, pues al mismo vicario se le prohibía cambiar nada en perjuicio de la misma y debía conservarla hasta la visita del P. General, el cual establecería lo que su celo le dictase; 4º. no debió el P: Martín, prior que había sido elegido del convento de Sanlúcar de Barrameda, ser apartado de su priorato, sin alguna culpa digna de deposición;¹⁹⁴ 5. los conventos reformados podían deputar dos religiosos de la reforma al definitorio de la provincia, para que fueran oído en los

¹⁹³ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica* 3: *Acta congreg. definit.*, 1659.

¹⁹⁴ El P. Martín de San Jerónimo no había sido depuesto del priorato, sino trasladado, por sugerencia del vicario provincial de los reformados que lo estimaba necesario para el bien de la reforma, del priorato de San Juan del Puerto, para el que había sido elegido, al del Juncal o Monte Carmelo.

asuntos relativos a la misma, pero sólo con voto consultivo; 6. se amonestaba al provincial y a los definidores para que favorecieran la reforma y defendieran sinceramente («ex animo») a los reformados; todo lo demás se discutiría ante el P. General durante la visita que próximamente «Deo dante» haría a la provincia.¹⁹⁵

Pero, en una nueva sesión del 21 de enero de 1661 decretaba que el mencionado P. Martín de San Jerónimo, prior de Sanlúcar de Barrameda, no debía ser escuchado por más tiempo, si no presentaba una legítima procura,¹⁹⁶ y el 11 de abril el mismo año el Consejo juzgaba que el dicho prior debía ser remitido a su provincia con los decretos que ya se habían establecido, y que el P. General debía nombrar un vicario provincial para la reforma, después de haber escuchado a los conventos de la misma acerca de la persona más idónea.¹⁹⁷

Estas decisiones del Consejo general del 24 de noviembre de 1600, sobre todo aquellas por las que se prohibía de nuevo el paso de los reformados a los conventos no reformados y se confirmaba la figura del vicario provincial, que fueron hecha públicas por el reformado Luis de Avendaño en la congregación definitorial que, presidida por el nuevo provincial Eustaquio Gutiérrez, se celebraba en el convento de Sevilla el 18 de mayo de 1661, produjo una gran conmoción, por no decir rebelión, entre los reformados. Los cuatro conventos, sin duda de común acuerdo, aunque cada uno por separado, presentaban al definitorio sendos recursos, en los que protestaban airadamente contra las decisiones del Consejo general y pedían su revocación. No se resignaban, de hecho, a vivir encerrados en los cuatro pobres conventos de la reforma, tan sumamente pobres por las calamidades de los tiempos que no se podía acudir a los religiosos con lo necesario para sus personas, a pesar de ser pocos en cada casa. Y, por otra parte, esta decisión se oponía, según ellos, a un decreto del capítulo general de 1654, por el que se habría autorizado al definitorio de la provincia para que pudiera conceder la salida de los reformados a los no reformados, vistos los graves inconvenientes que se seguían de lo contrario.¹⁹⁸ En cuanto al

¹⁹⁵ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II C.O. 2 (1): *Varia consulta Assistentium Generalium sub Ari et Barberini*, pp. 64-65.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

¹⁹⁸ Los reformados no parece que estuvieran bien informados, pues en el capítulo general de 1654 no vemos ningún decreto que diga tal cosa, sino más bien lo contrario: «Statutum est a Definitorio, quod qui professi sunt strictiorem observantiam, non possint transire ad conventus aut provincias non profitentes dictam observantiam, etiam cum assensu Rmi Patris, iis exceptis qui vel mittuntur ad reformationem introducendam et promovendam, vel qui Ordini inserviunt apud ipsum Rmum» (Acta cap. gen., II, 88).

nombramiento de un nuevo vicario provincial para los reformados, no sólo no lo consideraban necesario, pero ni siquiera útil o conveniente, como lo había mostrado la experiencia, especialmente en el último trienio próximo pasado. Suplicaban, por lo mismo, al definitorio que informara debidamente al Padre General, avalando la veracidad de sus razones para que las cosas siguieran como estaban.¹⁹⁹

Esta desairada reacción de los reformados mostraba suficientemente que el espíritu inicial de la reforma se había venido a abajo, pues lo que había sido objeto primordial de la misma: el amor al retiro y soledad y la práctica sincera de la pobreza, se había convertido ahora en algo insufrible e impracticable. El general Jerónimo Ari debió de darse cuenta de ello y decidió, al parecer, mostrarse condescendiente, al menos en parte, intentando salvar la ya tan débil reforma. En la sesión que celebraba con su Consejo el 4 de octubre del mismo año de 1661 para estudiar y aprobar el acta de esta congregación definitorial, establecía, en efecto, respecto de las súplicas y quejas de los reformados, que el Provincial, por comisión del mismo general, eligiera a uno de ellos, piadoso e idóneo, según su criterio, como vicario provincial de los mismos, que dependiera totalmente en su jurisdicción del mismo provincial hasta que pudiera él mismo llegar a España y proveer con mayor detención sobre todo el asunto, si fuera necesario. En cuanto al tránsito de los reformados a los no reformados por causas justas, determinaba que no se debía impedir, pero que había que concederlo con gran prudencia y ponderación, a saber, con el consentimiento del provincial, del vicario provincial, del socio del provincial y de al menos dos de los definidores de la provincia.²⁰⁰

No parece, con todo, que este nombramiento del vicario provincial tuviera lugar por entonces pues las cosas de los reformados se habían ido complicado aún más por el hecho de que el reformado Cristóbal Crespo que, a raíz de la celebración del capítulo general de 1660, había sido elegido por el Consejo General de la Orden primer definidor del nuevo provincial Eustaquio Gutiérrez, al ser convocado para que asistiera como tal a esta congregación definitorial, que «loco capituli» se celebraba, como hemos dicho, en el convento de Sevilla el 8 de mayo de 1661, se negaba a asistir, uniéndose a la facción del exprovincial Bernabé de las Ruelas, el cual, sostenido, al parecer, por el Nuncio, había convocado, a su vez, por el mismo tiempo, ilegíti-

¹⁹⁹ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica* 3: *Acta congregationis definitorialis*, 1661.

²⁰⁰ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II C O 2 (1): *Varia consulta*, pp. 106-107.

mamente capítulo provincial en el convento de Écija.²⁰¹ Esta decisión poco acertada del P. Crespo, como nota el acta de la congregación, no sólo ponía a la reforma en una situación embarazosa, sino que le ocasionaba además un perjuicio, puesto que se quedaba sin representación en el definitorio, al ser asumido para sustituirle en él el P. Pedro de la Reina, que no era de los reformados. Con todo, para que los reformados no carecieran de toda representación en el definitorio, éste elegía como secretario del mismo al P. Lector Luis de San Antonio, que era uno de ellos.²⁰²

Afortunadamente, el cisma acababa pronto, pues una vez celebrado el capítulo ilegítimo de Écija, los participantes en él fueron volviendo a la obediencia del P. Gutiérrez, el cual, junto con el definitorio que le había asignado el capítulo general, intentaba en la congregación a la que nos estamos refiriendo, poner remedio a los desajustes que la rebelión del P. Bernabé de las había ocasionado. Por lo que respecta a la reforma, elegían prior del convento de San Juan del Puerto, en lugar del P. Crespo, al P. Luis de San Francisco, y vicario-prior de Sanlúcar de Barrameda al P. Jerónimo de Trujillo, pues el prior actual de mismo se había ausentado de él y no se esperaba un pronto regreso.²⁰³ Trabajo que el P. Gutiérrez continuaría en la congregación definitorial de 1662, en la que, a propósito del decreto del General de la orden del 5 de octubre del año anterior, por el que concedía, como hemos visto, al provincial facultad para que pudiera nombrar un vicario provincial de los reformados, totalmente dependiente de él, que gobernara la reforma hasta la próxima visita del mismo General a la provincia, decidía, de acuerdo con su definitorio, suspender por entonces ese nombramiento para no turbar la paz y quietud de que comenzaban a gozar de nuevo los conventos reformados después de la crisis pasada, y proponían que fuera el general personalmente el que decidiera lo más conveniente cuando llegara. Decisión que tomaba después de haber escuchado al prior de Santa Teresa de Sevilla, P. Martín de San Jerónimo, que estuvo presente en el definitorio.²⁰⁴ Sin embargo, el Consejo General, al aprobar el acta de esta congregación definitorial con fecha de 25 de agosto del mismo año, volvía a insistir en que el provincial nombrara al tal vicario provincial, sometido jurídicamente a él hasta que el General determinara otra

²⁰¹ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica* 3: *Acta cap. prov.*, 1661.

²⁰² *Ibidem.*

²⁰³ *Ibidem.*

²⁰⁴ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica* 3: *Acta congr. Defin.*, 1662.

cosa.²⁰⁵ Y el mismo Padre Martín de San Jerónimo asistía a la congregación definitoria de 1663, convocado por el definitorio para que expusiera lo que creía necesario en favor de la reforma. Pero dijo que no tenía nada que alegar respecto de la misma.²⁰⁶ Lo que parece ser indicio de que, aunque aún quedaban en la provincia algunas consecuencias del conflicto suscitado por el P. Bernabé de las Ruelas, los reformados habían vuelto a recobrar una cierta paz y tranquilidad, si bien seguían resistiéndose también al nombramiento del vicario provincial, que tampoco tuvo lugar en esta congregación.

g) *La visita del general Ari*

Así estaban las cosas cuando llegaba a la provincia el General de la Orden Jerónimo Ari. En la que entraba, procedente de Castilla, el 4 de mayo de 1664. Y, después de visitar diversos conventos, presidía el capítulo provincial en el convento de Antequera, que se celebró a partir del 25 del mismo mes y año, en el que prestaría especial atención a la reforma. Promulgaba, de hecho, diversos decretos, de los que se desprende que el General dudaba de la realidad de la misma: el provincial debía visitar cuidadosamente los conventos reformados y determinar cuántos eran los frailes que verdaderamente y de corazón profesaban la vida común y observaban los decretos hechos para estos conventos, no sólo en los principios, sino también en el tiempo posterior. Debía comprobar además si las comunidades eran lo suficientemente numerosas como para vivir en ellas una perfecta reforma. Los hábitos debían ser de material tosco, pero no tenían que diferir mucho de los hábitos que llevaban los frailes no reformados. El provincial debía indagar también si los reformados estaban dispuestos a aceptar las constituciones de la *strictior observantia*. Recomendaba llevar cuanto antes a los padres Cristóbal y Clemente, de la provincia galobelga, que estaban entonces en Madrid para resolver ciertos asuntos, al convento de Santa Teresa de Sevilla, para que instruyeran a los frailes del mismo y los dispusieran a la aceptación de esa *strictior observantia*. Y él decidiría más tarde si era factible hacer lo mismo en las otras casas reformadas.

Y, bajando ya a aspectos más concretos, determinaba que el mismo convento de Santa Teresa debía ser casa de noviciado y fray Pedro de Aguilar el maestro de novicios, mientras que el convento de

²⁰⁵ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II C.O. 2 (1): *Varia consulta*.... p. 147.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*: *Acta congr. Defin.*, 1663.

San Juan del Puerto sería casa de estudios para artes y teología. Pero quedaba sin resolver el espinoso problema del vicario-provincial de los reformados.²⁰⁷ Éstos seguían oponiéndose a su nombramiento, probablemente porque temían que contribuiría a un mayor distanciamiento de la reforma respecto de la provincia, a la que, al parecer se sentían estrechamente unidos, aunque tal vez más por razones puramente económicas que por razones afectivas.

No sabemos la incidencia que las disposiciones del general Ari pudieron tener en la vida de la provincia y, especialmente en la vida de los cuatro conventos reformados. Da la impresión de que los sucesores de Ari no se preocuparon excesivamente de este tema, pues en las actas de los capítulos y congregaciones definitoriales de la provincia de los años inmediatamente posteriores no encontramos alusión alguna a este tema de la reforma. Al parecer, los provinciales de este tiempo se preocupaban más por la reforma de la provincia en cuanto tal que de la de los cuatro conventos que ya se consideraban reformados. Acerca de estos, la primera noticia que tenemos es del año 1672, cuando el general Mateo Orlandi comisionaba al M. Juan de Hoces para hacer la tercera visita del provincialato de Juan de Castilla. El P. Hoces giraba, de hecho, detenidamente su visita a todos los conventos de la provincia, incluidos los cuatro de la reforma, y, en el capítulo provincial del año siguiente de 1673, que presidió también por delegación del mismo general, le informaba sobre la vida en estos últimos poco favorablemente: Según decía, «desde 1649» (es decir, desde el inicio de la *strictior observantia* en el convento de San Juan del Puerto) la reforma había sido tan solamente de nombre, pues, a causa de la penuria y necesidad de los cuatro conventos, la devoción, la vida y el espíritu común (que son la esencia de toda reforma), no solo se habían debilitado, sino que habían sido abandonados completamente. Los conventos de Santa Teresa y Sanlúcar de Barrameda, que habían sido fundados con la condición de que en ellos se observara la vida común y reformada, tampoco habían podido cumplir, por la razón indicada, el piadoso deseo de sus fundadores. Los de San Juan del Puerto y del Juncal o Monte Carmelo habían padecido desde un principio la misma dificultad, pues el primero estaba situado en un lugar de extrema pobreza, y el segundo en un remoto desierto. De ahí que los religiosos, presionados por la necesidad, se hubieran visto obligados a salir de sus conventos para pedir limosna y buscar medios

²⁰⁷ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II C.O. 1 (32): *Liber visitationis Ari (1600-1606)*, ff. 163v-164r.

para sustentarse, por lo que estaban más preocupados por sus propias necesidades que por las de la comunidad. La vida común, por tanto, había desaparecido y nadie quería ser prior. Las exhortaciones de los visitantes habían encontrado siempre oídos sordos, y no era de esperar que tuvieran mejor acogida en el futuro. En definitiva, para el P. Hoces, la reforma sólo servía para crear problemas y dividir la provincia.²⁰⁸

Pero, como se desprende claramente del acta del capítulo, éste parecer no era propio solamente del P. Hoces, sino de todos los capitulares, que lo hacían propio, los cuales daban fe de que el mismo P. Hoces, mientras giraba la visita a los conventos de la provincia, había perdido el tiempo y el trabajo en su empeño por restaurar y ampliar la reforma, pues los religiosos de los cuatro conventos habían reclamado y la habían rechazado, alegando las dichas razones y otras muchas. No obstante lo cual, el P. Visitador les había mandado observar estrictamente sus propias leyes y la vida común y reformada y presentar sus reclamaciones ante el P. General de la Orden. El capítulo rogaba, por tanto al general que se dignara considerar atentamente este asunto y viera que solución podía dársele, solución que ellos no encontraban.²⁰⁹

No consta, sin embargo, que el general Orlandi ni su sucesor Angelo Monsignani tomaron alguna medida para remediar esa situación. Y lo único que podemos decir es que los cuatro conventos siguieron manteniéndose como reformados, al menos de nombre, en los años siguientes, pues, como tales, figuran en una relación sobre el estado de la provincia presentada al capítulo general de 1680, que firmaba el secretario del provincial Francisco de la Encarnación, en la que se recogían los siguientes datos sobre ellos: En el convento de San Juan del Puerto vivían 15 religiosos, de los cuales 6 eran sacerdotes, 1 clérigo profeso y 4 legos; en el del Juncal, alias del Carmelo, 16, de los cuales 10 sacerdotes y 6 legos; en el de Sanlúcar de Barrameda, 23, de los cuales 16 sacerdotes, 2 clérigos profesos y 4 legos; finalmente, en el de Santa Teresa, extramuros de Sevilla, moraban 19, de los cuales, 9 sacerdotes, 4 clérigos profesos y 6 legos. Un total, pues, de 45 sacerdotes, 7 clérigos coristas y 20 legos.²¹⁰ La reforma, por

²⁰⁸ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica* 3: *Acta cap. prov.*, 1673.

²⁰⁹ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica* 3: *Acta cap. prov.*, 1673.

²¹⁰ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II C.O. II, 2: *Scriptorum O.Carm.*, *codex* 2, ff. 130r-132v.

Al final de la relación, el P. Pérez de Castro anotó: «R. P. Magister Ioannes de Ortega, pro-vicarius provincialis et definitor ad comitia generalia pro provintia Baeticae tulit ad Urbem hunc catalogum eumque consignavit R. P. Secretario generali. Romae, 1680. Fr. Ludovicus Pérez».

tanto, no había crecido, al parecer, desde 1654, cuando contaba ya con unos 80 miembros,²¹¹ pero tampoco había disminuido demasiado. Sin embargo, desconocemos el nivel de vida de observancia en ellos e ignoramos si había cambiado en algo el panorama que con tan negras tintas había descrito en 1673 el P. Hoces. Lo único de que consta es que en los capítulos provinciales y en las congregaciones definitoriales posteriores a este año no se alude para nada a la reforma y que poco a poco debió de ir decayendo más.

Esto es, al menos, lo que parece desprenderse de las patentes del nuevo general Pablo de san Ignacio en favor del P. M. Francisco de Fuentes, fechadas el 21 de marzo de 1688, por las que le nombraba presidente del capítulo provincial de Andalucía, que tenía que celebrarse en ese año, y en las que le imponía la no fácil misión de realizar un último intento para revitalizar la mortecina reforma. En ellas le decía, en efecto, que había recibido muchas quejas y lamentaciones acerca del estado en que ésta se encontraba, porque, habiéndose instaurado muchos años antes en cuatro conventos de la provincia, de acuerdo con lo que establecían los decretos del general Filippini, con todo, por aquel entonces apenas si podía hablarse de reforma, puesto que los que la habían abrazado, habían sido dispersados por otros conventos de la provincia por los superiores de la misma. Mandaba, por lo mismo, a los miembros de definitorio provincial, bajo pena de privación de su oficios y de sus grados, reunir de nuevo a los que habían profesado esa *strictior observantia* o deseaban abrazarla en esos cuatro conventos o en otros igualmente aptos, bajo la obediencia de sus priores, que habían de ser elegidos de entre los mismos reformados, para que la antigua reforma, que se había perdido, se restituyera en ellos y floreciera cada vez más. Prohibía además bajo la misma pena de pérdida de sus oficios, cuya ejecución se reservaba, a los provinciales «pro tempore» entrometerse en el gobierno de la misma reforma, a no ser en los casos que lo permitían los decretos del general Filippini, y les prohibía, por lo mismo, trasladar a los reformados a los conventos no reformados «suo nutu», por su sola voluntad o arbitrio.²¹²

El capítulo provincial sometía, de hecho, a su consideración estas patentes del general de la Orden, y la respuesta del definitorio provincial a la misma resulta bien significativa respecto del estado

²¹¹ Cf supra, nota 174.

²¹² Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II C.O. 1 (42): *Reg. Pauli a S. Ignatio (1686-1692)*, ff. 68v-69r.

en que se encontraba por aquel entonces la reforma. y confirma lo que el general decía en sus patentes. El definitorio, en efecto, después de reflexionar seriamente sobre el tema, confesaba abiertamente que, teniendo en cuenta la pobreza de los tiempos y el escaso número de religiosos no era posible restablecer la *strictior observantia* en los cuatro conventos y se limitaba a designar como convento de reforma el de Santa Teresa de Sevilla, en el que se establecería también el noviciado con su maestro de novicios, y dejaba al celo y prudencia del provincial (con el asesoramiento del P. M. Fuentes) procurar que, de acuerdo con la oportunidad de los tiempos y de los medios, la observancia estricta volviera a florecer en los cuatro conventos anteriores. Y el definitorio pensaba además que, habida cuenta de la calamidad de los tiempos, era imposible igualmente poner en práctica los decretos del general Filippini para la reforma y decidía solamente que el P. Provincial y el P. Francisco de Fuentes formularan un proyecto acerca del modo como debía disponerse esa reforma.²¹³

El provincial intentó, al parecer, ser fiel al compromiso contraído de hacer revivir la reforma en los otros conventos, pues en la congregación definitoria de 1690, informaba al definitorio de la provincia de que el P. Maestro Pedro de Villanueva, prior de San Juan del Puerto, creía tener una buena ocasión para hacer revivir en él la vida común, tal como había sido observada al principio.²¹⁴ Pero se trató, al parecer, de una última tentativa, ilusoria, como las anteriores, de restaurar la reforma, pues, al visitar la provincia el general castellano Juan Feijoo de Villalobos, no sólo no encontró en la provincia ningún rastro de la *strictior observantia*, sino que de algún modo, certificaría oficialmente la desaparición de la misma. En efecto, si hemos de creer a Rodríguez Carretero, en el capítulo provincial que presidió en el convento de Antequera en 1695, «se destinaron para la reforma, según el primer instituto de nuestro P. S. Elías, los cuatro conventos en los que se había implantado antes esa *strictior observantia*», junto con los de Gibralfaró, Antequera, Castro del Río, Aracena, Murcia, Jerez y San Roque de Córdoba, mientras que «para la observancia de vida común fueron designados todos los demás de la provincia».²¹⁵ Pero sabemos que las decisiones y decretos del general Villalobos en este sentido se quedaron en letra muerta, sin que fueran llevados a la práctica en ninguna de las provincias, por lo que podemos concluir que, a partir de

²¹³ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica* 3: *Acta cap. prov.*, 1688.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*: *Acta congreg. Definit.*, 1690.

²¹⁵ *Epítome historial*, p. 347.

ese momento los cuatro conventos en los que había estado establecida la *strictior observantia* se confundieron con los demás de la provincia, desapareciendo ésta del todo en la provincia de Andalucía.

No faltaron, sin embargo, religiosos que siguieron sintiendo nostalgia de la misma y que volvieron a repetir algunos intentos para hacerla revivir, aunque inútilmente. Consta, en efecto, que todavía, en 1710, algunos religiosos presentaban al capítulo provincial, celebrado en Sevilla en mayo de dicho año, una petición para poder abrazar una vida común más estrecha, petición que el capítulo aceptaba, determinando que, cuando hubiera suficiente número, lo comunicaran al provincial y, de acuerdo con él, eligieran el convento que les pareciera más apto. Y de nuevo se inclinaban por el de San Juan del Puerto, que fue aceptado por el general de la Orden para ese fin. Se dio libertad a los conventuales del mismo para seguir viviendo en él o para salir a otro convento. Por lo menos diez decidieron permanecer y, como el convento era muy pobre, todos se comprometieron a pedir limosnas para no tener que hacerlo, cuando se comenzara a vivir la vida común más estrecha por el mes de septiembre.²¹⁶ Pero el proyecto tampoco esta vez debió de prosperar, pues, cuatro años más tarde, en 1714, otro grupo manifestaba de nuevo al provincial Andrés de Rojas su deseo de vivir según la *strictior observantia*, y él les asignaba el convento del Juncal o Monte Carmelo como el más apto para esa forma de vida. Así se lo comunicaba él mismo en la congregación celebrada en ese año a su definitorio, que alababa la decisión del provincial y daba gracias a Dios, del que provienen todos los dones, por haber inspirado a esos religiosos tan buenos deseos.²¹⁷

No ha quedado constancia, sin embargo, de que este nuevo intento llegara, de hecho, a ponerse en marcha ni de que tuviera mejor suerte que los anteriores. Rodríguez Carretero no se ocupa para nada de ellos y en la visita que giró a la provincia el P. Ildefonso Gálvez en 1730 no se hace mención de reforma alguna en ella y los cuatro conventos que antes eran considerados reformados no difieren en nada de los demás de la provincia. Sorprende, en cambio, gratamente comprobar que en esta su relación aparecen como reformados dos conventos de monjas: el de Villalba y el de Cañete, en los que, al parecer, se vivía con fervor la vida reformada, pues, a propósito de las 19 religiosas que vivían en Cañete, el P. Gálvez escribía: «No sólo no encontramos nada a corregir, sino más bien mucho para levantar nuestros corazones a Dios que nos ha dado poder admirar un semejante coro

²¹⁶ Arch. Gen. O.Carm., II *Baetica* 3: *Cap. prov.*, 1710.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*: *Acta congreg. Definit.*, 1714.

de ángeles en forma humana, mostrando cada uno de ellos un compendio de virtudes religiosas». ²¹⁸

Mérito fue, en efecto, de los carmelitas andaluces el haber sabido asociar de algún modo al movimiento de reforma o de *strictior observantia*, característico de aquel tiempo, a los conventos de mojas. Tanto el convento de Villalba, que fue fundado en 1619, como el de Cañete, que lo fue en 1662, habían sido fundados, de hecho, como conventos de recolección o de *strictior observantia*, ²¹⁹ en consonancia con lo que sucedía ya entre los frailes. Y algo parecido sucedería también en la provincia de Castilla con el convento madrileño de las Baronessas, que se fundaba en 1651 como convento recoleto y el de nuestra Señora de Las Maravillas, que se adhería también a este movimiento de recolección en 1644. ²²⁰

Como parece desprenderse del informe del P. Gálvez, los dos conventos de monjas de la provincia de Andalucía habían sabido ser fieles a su condición de reformados, al contrario de lo que sucedía en los conventos reformados de frailes. Es probable que entre éstos tal vez nunca llegara a implantarse plenamente la *strictior observantia*, pero de lo que no cabe duda es de que los múltiples intentos que se realizaron en este sentido contribuyó poderosamente a mantener vivo entre los carmelitas andaluces el anhelo por vivir del mejor modo posible su profesión religiosa, siendo cada vez más fieles a las exigencias de su vocación carmelitana. En la *strictior observantia* y fuera de ella vivieron, de hecho, figuras ejemplares, de una talla intelectual y religiosa impresionante, muchas de las cuales quedaron recogidas en la benemérita obra de Rodríguez Carretero, que hemos venido citando repetidamente, pero otras muchas, que quedaron manuscritas, merecerían también ser conocidas.

PABLO MARÍA GARRIDO, O.Carm.

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²¹⁸ *Ibid.*: *Visita del P. Ildefonso Gálvez*, 1730. Pero no debieron de ser estos dos, los únicos conventos de monjas que se adhirieron a la *strictior observantia*. Al menos, el de Santa Ana de Sevilla seguía denominándose como «recoleta» en 1791, fecha en la que se imprimía en Cádiz el *Místico poema* que el Beato Diego de Cádiz había compuesto con ocasión de la profesión religiosa en el mismo convento de su pariente Sor María de las Nieves Caamaño de Santa Teresa «religiosa de velo negro de las reverendas madres carmelitas calzadas *recoletas* con el título de Señora Santa Ana de la ciudad de Sevilla». El subrayado es nuestro.

²¹⁹ Cf VELASCO, HCE, III, pp. 600-505, 638- 640, 648-649.

²²⁰ Cf GARRIDO, *El solar carmelitano de San Juan de la Cruz*, II, pp. 479-480, 481ss.

FR. BARTHOLOMEW MARIA XIBERTA: PHILOSOPHER*

XIBERTA: THE MAN, THE CARMELITE, THE SCHOLAR

Fr. Bartholomew Maria Xiberta (1897-1967) had as great an influence on the direction of the Carmelite Family in the mid 20th century as anyone. He helped form generations of Carmelite students as professor of theology at St. Albert's International College in Rome. As one who did not believe in holidays, immediately after his last class whenever there was a holiday break in the scholastic schedule, he left immediately to visitate nuns and sisters, who are still grateful for the solid spiritual nourishment he provided for them. As a perennial member of the General Curia, he was highly esteemed as counsellor by various Priors General under whom he served. His knowledge of and love for things Carmelite made him an invaluable and incisive advisor. Although notorious for downplaying the differences in the various schools of spirituality (when asked some question about Carmelite spirituality, he would brush aside the query with a typical gesture and trace a direct line straight upward towards heaven much in the line

* Il compianto P. Redento Valabek mi consegnò personalmente questo suo scritto prima di partire per gli Stati Uniti, dove avrebbe concluso la sua vicenda terrena per un incidente stradale. Con questo scritto egli intendeva rendere omaggio al P. Xiberta, giustamente ritenuto da lui uno degli interpreti più prestigiosi del carisma carmelitano nel ventesimo secolo. Si tratta quindi di una testimonianza preziosa, dove è possibile cogliere la congenialità spirituale e intellettuale tra due spiriti illustri che in modo diverso, ma con eguale dedizione, hanno dimostrato tutto il loro amore per l'ordine d'appartenenza. Si consenta di ricordare, qui, un significativo episodio della vita di P. Redento, che egli amava raccontare quasi divertito, ma con evidente visibile commozione. Ancora in periodo di oppressione comunista egli volle recarsi nella sua patria d'origine, la Cecoslovacchia. Volendo incontrarsi, ovviamente, con i pochi superstiti carmelitani, andò al loro convento di Praga e bussò alla porta. Ma i religiosi vivevano nella paura di "spie" del regime e quindi si guardarono bene dall'aprire la porta ad uno "sconosciuto". Allora, per farsi riconoscere, padre Redento ebbe la felice idea di mettersi a cantare, nelle inconfondibili note gregoriane che soltanto un carmelitano poteva conoscere, il "Flos Carmeli": e la porta si aprì. Proprio nel "Flos Carmeli" e nella pietà mariana che questo canto esprime può vedersi il valore, il segno d'identità di Redento Valabek [nota dell'editor].

of St. John of the Cross's ascent of Mt. Carmel, with the comment "spirituality goes straight to the Lord". Even those who did not share all of his views were impressed by the authenticity and commitment of his life.

Fr. Xiberta was a theologian by profession; in fact he was esteemed among his peers as a profound thinker. I recall at my oral exam for my licentiate in Theology at the Pontifical Lateran University, the professor, later Dean, Vladimir Boublik, asked who had taught me and when I answered that it had been Fr. Xiberta, his comment was: "a theologian's theologian". As was usual in those pre-Vatican II times, an integral part of Xiberta's theological arsenal was an underlying philosophy. In fact, Fr. Xiberta repeatedly insisted – and more so as the years rolled by – that the philosophical premises of our faith are vital in order to preserve the integrity and orthodoxy of the Christian faith. Up to now there has been no attempt to study the philosophical thought of Fr. Xiberta in any synthetic and relatively complete way.

It is a great boon for Carmel that a professor in Venezuela, Pompeo Ramis, has published an *Ideario filosófico de Bartolomé Xiberta* (Consejo de Desarrollo Científico, Humanístico y Tecnológico de la Universidad de los Andes, Mérida, Venezuela, 1996), in which he provides a first such synthesis. One's trust in the author's study is strengthened by the number of times he admits that he cannot pretend to give a complete overview of the philosophical premises of Fr. Xiberta's thought. In the first place, being a theologian, Fr. Xiberta was interested in philosophy – seriously interested – insofar as it served the theologian's purposes. Generally this implied a piece-meal approach to philosophical questions. I say "piece-meal" because in fact Fr. Xiberta, as a member of the prestigious Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, generally taught two courses – one on ontology, and the other on gnoseology – at St. Albert's in Rome as optional courses for those interested in earning a diploma from the appropriate Academy. Many of his students, who later became professors of theology availed themselves of these courses which more often than not repeated what had been learned in the students' regular philosophy curriculum. As we shall see later, there were some typically Xibertian truths which he particularly stressed.

Pompeo Ramis' advantage lies in that, as a fellow Catalan, he had easy access to Fr. Xiberta during his latter years of doctoral study in philosophy at the Pontifical University Gregoriana. Fr. Xiberta, ever the meticulous religious, would "recreate" for the prescribed half-hour periods-day by walking up and down the long corridors at St. Alberto's.

Ramis would often join Xiberta, and would engage him in a conversation especially about philosophical questions. Xiberta always took people seriously; even the novice in theological studies would he listen to (often he was anxious to give the answer, while the neophyte was still trying to put his objection or difficulty into words). All the more, then, was he delighted that some young Carmelite was embarking on the study of theology or philosophy.

Fr. Xiberta had a good sense of humor, but not on philosophical or theological questions. On these latter, he was too personally involved; he was *au courant* of the complexities and various opinions about every question in his field. Having had the advantage of a deep study of the medieval scholastics, he had come to a mature synthesis of the best of scholastic/ecclesial thought. Thus, when Ramis (and others) would begin to show the merits of some theory or teaching that they had just studied about in one of the Roman universities, but which deviated from Xiberta's vision, he could become quite agitated, tugging on the front of the fellow Carmelite's capuche, and rasping "*senti, senti* – listen, listen" as he was determined to cut at its roots what for him was an obvious error. Many times the discussion grew so animated that in the end Fr. Xiberta begged off, professing that he would never be able to get to sleep, as obviously these questions were not just pleasant exchanges of opinion, but rather in defence of the Catholic faith from so many critics. The author, Ramis, has professed how much these discussions aided him in his own philosophical studies. This first-hand experience of knowing Xiberta's mind on various questions adds much to the value of his work. The respect which Ramis shows for Xiberta and Xiberta's thought is ample proof that his fiery discussion with his fellow Catalan was a sincere attempt to reach the truth. Even when the author demurs from some conclusion of Xiberta, it is with admirable respect, which could be a paradigm of what respectful dissent should be like.

As a theologian immersed in the traditional scholastic authors, whose worth he appreciated in the measure that he deepened his knowledge of their thought, Fr. Xiberta will not be an *avant garde* or faddist theologian or philosopher. He definitely fits into the category of those who see philosophy as the handmaid of theology. On other hand, he decried, and with insistence, a mere repetition of what has already been said or even taught magisterially. If one repeated what had been written, it must be something internalized, that has now become part of one's own proper vision and conviction. He anticipated Pope John XXIII's admonition that a distinction must be made between the realities of our faith and the way in which we express

them. Xiberta's attachment to the realities themselves – to the Bl. Trinity and all things that belong to God's sphere – was rock solid; but he realized that the way to express these realities is always subject to being said better. Of course, this did not give him permission to say any which thing; the expressions of our faith are frightfully important because they are the way in which we come to know the invisible, yet all important realities. Wrong expressions will lead to erroneous ways of knowing the realities. This is why Xiberta was frightfully concerned with the correct expression – and did not hesitate to condemn wrong, doubtful or too vague or ambiguous statements of the truth.

Fr. Xiberta was something of a prodigy already at the age of two. It seems that because of lack of maternal interest, the youngster, baptized Baldiri, spent most of his time with the local parish priest. At three years of age, he was already responding in Latin to the priest as he served Mass. These early experiences obviously marked him for life: the Eucharist and the Blessed Mother were to be the two "real things" in his life. For him Christ and Mary were not dogmas, but the most important Persons of his life, who loved him like no one else.

Fr. Xiberta was indefatigable; he reminds one of Bl. Titus Brandsma, a workaholic. Confreres who knew him close up are unanimous in their assessment: he would not lose a single moment. Even when one of us students went to this room to ask for some help in our studies or in preparing our theses, he would give us his undivided attention, but when finished, by the time we reached the door, he would be back working at his typewriter. What amazed all of us was the prodigious output even in fields other than his beloved theology. His love for the liturgy and for the Carmelite Rite for which he fought against all comers, he dedicated hours and hours to prepare the Carmelite Rite liturgical books. He meticulously proof-read the 1938 four-volume Breviary, which resulted in a minimum of errors; in fact, he used to proof-read while walking on the streets of Rome; once at a crossing he was run down by an auto. He got up, apologized to the driver and limped back home.

The notes which he prepared for us students for his classes – complete to the last comma, he himself typed on to the stencil, to be run off on the Gestetner copy machine. When younger, he played soccer – with all his might. He learned to play the violin and when there was no one else, he even directed the choir. The list of his writings runs on and on; he wrote for local parish bulletins and for the most serious of scientific magazines. The latter were "natural" level, as he laughingly told us that rarely did the editor of a popular review ask him for a second article. His style was "too theological". The many

letters he wrote – meticulously and thoughtfully – especially to nuns and sisters have been handed down as relics by their recipients. He was not one for television; in fact, he made it a point to congratulate us students on various plays and skits we put on for various celebrations during the school year. He would invariably sit in the front row (he had been sitting with Karl Rahner and Henri de Lubac that morning, serving on the preparatory commission for the II Vatican Council), and laughing without restraint at our antics. Afterwards he was still laughing and congratulating: “Now that’s what I call a real recreation!”

This same assiduity was mirrored in his lectures. He rarely digressed; if he did so he immediately explained why so, and was soon back to his logically and systematically prepared lectures. His aim was to present to us students the teaching of the Catholic Church clearly, directly, not using interventions of other authors nor even the words of magisterial teaching. These he did give subsequently, but the core of his teaching was something he had long and deeply thought out in a way that was eminently personal and still faithful to the Church’s substantial traditions which he strove to share with this students. Fr. Xiberta definitely was not flashy; he was much more concerned about the correct expression of the truth than coining a catchy phrase. He explained to his students that for him pedagogy meant wholesome, comprehensive exposition of the material at hand. He was rigorously interested in substance, not in a happy turn of phrase. This approach to pedagogy carried over into his talks. My own class invited Fr. Xiberta to give us the retreat preceeding our priestly ordination (1960). Although up-to-his-eyes in work, including preparations for the II Vatican Council, he readily acquiesced. His talks flowed from his theology; for someone who had written so extensively, his talks were notoriously short. He was not long into this talk when he came to his main point (e.gr. “if we are loved by the heavenly Father, it is because He sees the Son in us”). He elaborated on this and then finished.

As happens to most of us, in his early years he was available to be a guide for visitors to Rome, something he was not able to continue in his later years, but his interest in others did not wane. He particularly followed the progress of the Carmelite Order with almost child-like eagerness. In reality it was merely an extension of his love for Jesus and Mary. And because of this love, his tendency was to become attached to doctrinal propositions – so that he could safely communicate the truth about the most important realities of our existence to others.

Fr. Xiberta confessed that the happiest days of his life he spent “on vacation” in the monasteries of our cloistered nuns, to whom he

gave spiritual talks, which again were based on his dogmatic teaching. The two-week break for Christmas and Easter, he would spend in Italian monasteries. After his last class before the break, he did not bother going to his room; he ran to the dining room, stuffed two day-old rolls into his habit pocket, took his prepared satchel and literally ran to catch the first bus to the first monastery he was to visit. The nuns have never forgotten how engrossed he became in the liturgical celebrations. The way in which he celebrated the Liturgy was even better than his sermon. He was not above singing the long Passion-Gospel on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, taking all three parts by himself. He solemnized the Sacred Triduum in the Carmelite Rite, asking that as much of the Office be sung as possible. He told me that the very best July 16th celebration for him was the one when he and Fr. Augustin Forcadell made up the local community; the two of them sang every note of the long Office and solemn Mass and then spent the rest of the day preaching to the people and enrolling them in the scapular.

Like every human being Fr. Xiberta had his limitations. He was not averse to confessing them. He admitted that he was not good at all assessing candidates for the priesthood or the Carmelite life; he was too much in love with Jesus, Mary and Carmel to realize that others had not reached his totalitarian commitment. I recall one candidate to whom I preached the retreat before solemn vows. When he showed some doubts, I told him to confer with his confessor, who happened to be Fr. Xiberta. The latter assured him that he should take vows. The obedient, humble young man did so, but in a few weeks was asking for (and obtaining) a dispensation from his vows. For a while Fr. Xiberta was Apostolic Examiner of the Roman clergy at the Vicariate. As he was examining one student about to be ordained a priest, Fr. Xiberta in conscience could not pass him because of the mistake in doctrine that he was expressing. The youngster began weeping, and so did Fr. Xiberta. Soon afterwards Fr. Xiberta resigned from the position.

Fr. Xiberta was also limited in his appreciation of reality around him. Some things he just seemed to block off. Once I remember him telling a group of us that there were three Johns whom he could never understand – St. John Chrysostom, Jean Gerson and St. John of the Cross. While objectively, he probably understood more than all of us put together, still he readily admitted some blind spots. The three Johns may have reflected three areas with which Fr. Xiberta was not synchronized – rhetoric, humanism, mysticism. Another limitation was his iron-clad attachment to some traditions which demanded adaptation in conformity with the times. Mischievously, we students

would ask Fr. Xiberta, who attended the sessions of the II Vatican Council, how many heresies he had heard in the Council hall that day. One who kept sacred the secrecy to which the Council members were sworn, Fr. Xiberta had no answer, but from his impassioned teaching in class, we understood that some things he held to be sacred were being questioned. Sometimes, however, he remained attached to secondary issues, as for instance, the Carmelite claim on early saints such as St. Dionysius Pope, or Pope St. Telesphorus, St. Hilarion, St. Euphrosyna and their retention on the Carmelite Calendar. Another example would be his attempt to show the beginnings of the scapular devotion at the beginnings of the Order, when historians have amply shown that this Church blessed and approved devotion came later on in Carmel's history.

Humble and simple, Fr. Xiberta was limited in his appreciation of and obligation to maintain his personal health. Engrossed in the life of the Spirit and in his theological and philosophical studies, he paid too little attention to his physical needs. He went to a doctor only when absolutely indispensable and when superiors demanded it of him. I recall one morning as he came to class he looked particularly in pain. I asked him if he were not feeling well. He said he had not slept all night because of a toothache. When I asked whether he had used some remedy, his answer was: "Of course; I put some toothpaste on it". This impractical side of Fr. Xiberta may appear absurd to a modern generation, but he was following the tradition of this time which saw suffering and pain which had not been sought, as something permitted by God, and so to be accepted as our share in the redemptive work of Christ.

With regard to philosophy, Fr. Xiberta often complained that moderns are more concerned with the methodology than with the contents of philosophy. In fact, he also lamented that students often thought they would become proficient by reading much rather than in depth. He recommended reading less, but integrating, interiorizing and assimilating more. Until the end, Fr. Xiberta contended that thinking should not be submitted to a methodology, but on the contrary, the method should submit to the thinking process. Fr. Xiberta's first introduction to philosophical methodology had come from a fellow Catalan Carmelite, Fr. Llovera, who eventually became Vicar General of the Order, then left the Order and became a Canon at the Cathedral; he was basically a sociologist, and his book on the subject was the standard text on sociology in his native Catalonia for many years.

Fr. Xiberta agreed with the school of Husserl that philosophy's aim is to arrive at reality as it is in itself; it is not some super-imposed

structure that we construct on it. He denounced the English Sensist teaching typified by Locke, which accepted the Stoic assumption that all knowledge came exclusively through the senses. While with the Scholastics Xiberta affirmed that our knowledge begins in the senses, he repeatedly taught that it does not end there. The Sensist teaching gives an incomplete version of reality. If there was one thing Xiberta insisted on, it was completeness of teaching. It was probably for this reason that Xiberta purposefully avoided novelty, the fads of the day which meant to attract youth by means of easier, more attractive expressions.

Xiberta's methodology cannot do without an introduction. In the introductory part, Xiberta aims to arrive at the *quiddative* dimension of the object of study. What he means is that in study, one must begin with the very essence of a subject or object in its various dimensions: 1) *subjecti indoles*: the dimension of the subject to be studied; 2) *investigationis media*: sources and method; 3) *investigationis structura*: the plan to be followed in study.

For Xiberta, the *Status quaestionis* (how the question is being broached at the present moment) is not an easy way of entering into the matter, because an overly limited idea of the issue results in false solutions to the problem. How often the context of an argument can throw a whole new light on the matter. Xiberta faithfully gives the various opinions or approaches to the subject, often dividing and subdividing them into various categories, again to give as ample a picture of thinking on the matter at hand as possible. He was especially strong in medieval thought and esteemed and quoted by such renowned experts as Gison, De Wulf and Grabmann.

A strong point of Xiberta was his ability to synthesize. He could encapsulate the thought of an author in a few sentences with uncanny accuracy. His own thought would have to be labelled Thomistic; however, not as a simple repetition, but as a critical interpretation. Xiberta knew how to set each of St. Thomas' arguments in historical perspective. He recognized St. Thomas to have been at odds with many contemporaries of him because of his espousal of Aristotle; Xiberta inherited Aquinas' quest for truth regardless of its provenance. But on the contrary he was adamantly opposed to those schools of thought which threw out elements of the truth.

Xiberta was never impressed by improvised commentaries on various texts. Rather he opted for a conscientious, logical exposé of the whole teaching on a subject. In this he is definitely in the maximalist tradition. He avoids saying as little as possible about questions. He often decried the poverty of the tracts of the One and Triune God.

He could not understand how we could say so little about Him who is the Creator and the *raison-d'être* of all else. He purposely elaborated the two tracts – on the One and on the Triune God – with their many dimensions because, as he said, the more you love someone, the more you want to know about him and to share that knowledge with others. He asked: is there any greater gift that we priests and religious can share with others than knowledge about God? Xiberta was never content, as were some of his contemporaries, with a compendium of current controversies, but inevitably aimed to arrive at those *quiddative* propositions that tell us about the very essence of Him in whom we live and exist and act.

In all this Fr. Xiberta had no concern about style. He worked very diligently to share a correct (rather than a beautiful) expression of the truth. In his teaching, he gave the truth in his carefully phrased *Conspectus doctrinae*: an overview of the teaching. We his students were impressed that with each successive edition of his notes he would inevitably change a word, a phrase or even the whole *Conspectus*, which was precisely the *quidditas*, the substantial statement of the correct teaching.

Xiberta was a firm believer in Latin; being a language not in common use, he considered it an apt vehicle to express essential truths of our faith which do not change with the passage of time. We noted how he favoured certain Latin expressions, all the more so if he found them in the Carmelite liturgical texts, or in the Order's saints and writers. Even in the most abstruse philosophical/theological argumentation in class, he did not hesitate to cite some Carmelite who put well what he was trying to say. When someone noted that he could be accused of chauvinism he replied at once: "We cite other authors to get our point across; why should we neglect our own?" His Latin followed the rules, but fortunately at St. Albert's he had two Latinists who went over his notes. First Fr. Alberto Grammatico, a great humanist with whom Xiberta would spend many a recreation discussing articles from *Reader's Digest* so that the both of them could broaden their horizons beyond their theological horizons. Fr. Grammatico, who taught in some of Rome's prestigious lyceums, was an accomplished Latin orator; he polished the style of Xiberta's Latin. After Fr. Grammatico's death, Fr. Macarius van Wanroij reviewed Xiberta's Latin texts. Fr. Macarius was much more meticulous and prone to follow the rules than the flow, as had Grammatico.

In fact, many students noted that they understood Xiberta's teaching much better when he spoke than when he wrote. My own hand-out notes ("*dispense*") are filled with marginal notations with

clarifications and examples that Xiberta used, avoiding a mere reading of his very precise notes. Often he connected his teaching with some current event (especially of the Church's life), or with something he had already taught previously, or showed the relevance of the truth for the spiritual life. In fact, all of his teaching had something of this "sapiential" flavor; at the beginning of each school year he would comment: "Unless your theology ends up in Chapel, it's worth very little".

Among the students at Sant'Alberto there were those more academically inclined and these garnered much from Xiberta's classes. Those of a more pastoral or practical bent often did not appreciate the lectures, although no one doubted the authenticity of the man, the scholar, the religious. It was obvious to all that he saw it his duty to communicate teaching about really existing objects of our faith and not only impressions or feelings, and this even when he delved into the question of mystical theology (which he did, for example, in dealing with the question of what worth is our earthly knowledge about God). As will be evident in what follows he was viscerally opposed to most modern philosophy, especially of the Kantian school – and this more when speaking than when writing. In a dialogue with Xiberta, the mention of Kant seemed to be a red mantle waved before a bull.

XIBERTA'S GNOSEOLOGY

In his defence of the objectivity of the faith, Xiberta understood the serious threats posed by those who doubted or denied the validity of the human thinking process. Though he tirelessly confronted and attempted to refute theories which warped the human thinking process, he still invariably took the theories very seriously and his refutations used – especially orally – some strong adjectives. Those close to Xiberta noted how passionate a nature he had; with him the Lord's injunction "let your speech be 'yes, yes, no, no' as everything else comes from the Evil one", resonated well in Xiberta's vision. Just as on the political scene the deeply Catalan soul of Xiberta saw no good in Generalissimo Francisco Franco, so on the philosophical scene, he definitely identified some thinkers as being in the "enemy camp". Descartes was one of these. Time and again, Xiberta repeated that Descartes posed the problem of knowledge badly. Xiberta was deeply convinced, in his "common sense" approach, that the approach of the Aristotelean/Thomistic school was the correct one. On every possible occasion he would show the validity of the latter, and insisted that

this theory was able to resist the criticism of the English Empiricists, of the Kantian critique of pure reason and of many contemporary irrational schools of thought.

Xiberta's Aristotelean Thomism was typically his: he abhorred mere repetition. He was convinced that if the truth of the Thomistic school were valid, then it should be assimilated personally and expressed in a personal way. For Xiberta allegiance to a philosophical system (as to a school of spirituality) was definitely not a mere repetition, but rather the basic orientation of the thinking process of a person. Acutely, he points out that the basic gnoseological problem can be traced further back than to Descartes; its origins lie in the Nominalism of Ockham which claimed a bottomless abyss between the object known and what we say about it.

Xiberta has no doubt that the human intellect is an imperfect faculty, but time and again he stresses that imperfect is not equivalent to erroneous, at least not in its roots. Xiberta is not lavish with examples, at least not in his written works (when talking to students, answering their queries, he was much more prone to use images). However in this case he gave the example of a watch which does not tell the correct time. The watch is deficient not because it cannot tabulate time correctly in itself (= "*quidditatively*"), but for other reasons, perhaps because the watch was made badly, used badly, or maintained badly.

Until he died, Xiberta held that the way the critique of human reason was posed in modern philosophy was a step backwards. It is obvious, he would say, that the human mind makes mistakes. But rather than postulating a substantially flawed mind, Xiberta pointed out that the intellect does make mistakes *per accidens* when it frames its discourse based on false premises. He asks the pointed question: why, when one's theory does not correspond to reality as understood, why always say that the theory is right and something is wrong with the reality as understood by the mind?

A penetrating thinker himself, Xiberta decried a dichotomy between pre-scientific and scientific knowledge. Since our knowing faculty is created, as we are, it is imperfect, and so limited, and so it need not always be onehundred percent correct. But this in no way implies that it is a failure. Though imperfect and limited, it still can function validly. Certainly, on a given matter, specialists will know more than someone with a general knowledge of the matter at hand. This fact does not justify a critique of our reason at its roots, but should elicit an admission of our creaturely limitations.

Most of our knowledge is about contingent things, and so demands a certainty that corresponds to physical and moral objects. It should not automatically be defined as unscientific, but rather it will be determined by the quality of the object. In moral matters, “certainty” has to take into account the whole ambit of free will and the free activity of the human person. The uncertainty that does exist is based not on the knowing faculty, but rather on the freedom of the human being.

Reacting to many other philosophers, Xiberta repeated: our knowledge is not a problem to be resolved, but simply a fact to be explained. He does not apologize for the reason for his adamant position: in his *Introductio in Sacram Theologiam* (p. 31), he explicitly states that his intention is to provide a solid basis for an objective theology in alerting his students to the infiltrations of subjectivism and anti-intellectualism of certain theologies.

The process of human knowledge is based on two terms, the knower and the object known. Both remain themselves while the knower receives knowledge from the object. This is the basis for the *objectivity* of human knowledge. It takes nothing away from either of the terms. As a process, human knowledge affects not the object, but the subject. The object is in no way conditioned by our knowledge of it. It exists on its own before, during and after our knowledge of it. And this is the greatest guarantee of authenticity.

Doubtlessly, there is a subjective side of knowledge. The knower receives information about the known object in accord with the knower’s limitations and imperfections. However, Xiberta warns against a common acceptance of “conceptualizations”: it is not that our concepts/ideas cause or shape the object, but vice versa. In other words, it should not be taken as our projection on to reality outside our minds, but rather that we have converted the objective reality into a concept, as expressed in a statement.

“Experience” is something basically passive, as we receive data from outside objects. Sometimes common experience can be more accurate than a more sophisticated kind because it is free of ideologies and pre-judgements. Theoretically scientific experience should be more accurate, correcting the deficiencies of the more common kind.

While “ideas” are imperfect and can never substitute for the objects themselves as experienced, still two philosophical extreme positions about ideas must be avoided, and Xiberta never tired of combatting the Sensist position that would make ideas only a shadowy image of reality, but he was equally opposed to the Idealist school which made them out to be clearer than the reality itself.

In fact, experience should end up in knowledge and not just in a catalogue of contingent facts, but rather in data that say something about the substance of the known reality. In some cases these can be dynamic, accidental aspects that reveal the essence. Theologian that he was, Xiberta could not get away from an example from theology: knowledge of the death of Jesus. It is true knowledge if it refers to the veracity of his death, to the saving power of his death, but not if it refers merely to his death as an historical, contingent fact.

Another favorite factor in Xiberta's insistence on the objectivity of human knowledge was based on the natural, spontaneous way in which we make statements using a subject and predicate. On numerous occasions he refers to this as our spontaneous way of perceiving reality. The subject, objectively speaking, is the reality as it stands before the mind in its totality, indivisibility and uniqueness. The predicate is some part of the substantiality of the subject. Xiberta's insistence is that both are real. Predicates help us in building up our knowledge; subjects, for their part, are indivisible and totally different among themselves. Each one excludes others in composition and in dynamism.

Xiberta sees the subject and predicate fact as something deeply rooted in the very being of all reality and certainly not something that our mind invents. He underscored in season and out of season that our mind does not superimpose these categories on reality, but the mind finds reality such and reports what it finds: the mind *intuits* the characteristic notes/predicates that fit each subject.

Truth, then, is not just in sensitive apprehension, by audio-visual means (and how much this would need to be stressed in today's society), but rather is a composition of the mind. Sensitive apprehension is the beginning of the process with a need for the "power of abstraction" of the mind. Otherwise, only physical objects perceptible to the senses could be objects of scientific knowledge.

The limitations of knowledge and sometimes the insuperable obstacles which afflict our understanding of truth should be attributed to the inevitable imperfection of every created activity, but not to the normal structure of our knowing process. Thus Xiberta cannot but write against the Relativists, the Subjectivists, the Positivists, as he demands the most perfect objectivity possible. He is not alone: he joins ranks with natural scientists as well as physicists who base all their theories on "an external world independent of the perceiving subject" (Albert Einstein).

Xiberta considers it unworthy of a creditable philosopher to be content with first appearances, as Locke does. The natural sciences

would be emptied of their validity, if because of first appearances, lead was identified simply as uranium bereft of radioactive energy.

Although in his lectures he often did not have time to go deeply into the question, Xiberta underscored the cooperation of the will in the human knowing process. First, we see, we perceive, we apprehend by means of intellectual activity; then we adhere, we consent to our knowledge by means of our will. Consent to a proposition without sufficient reason is labelled superficiality. Not to cede when faced with serious problems is deemed hardness of heart. A judicious person will demand proportionately serious reasons. Not to perceive the truth that has been adequately proposed is a sign of mental laziness or of mental alowness. It is the whole person who adheres to something – and this leads to the moral field. In itself, the intellect is amoral; honesty depends directly on consent or lack thereof.

XIBERTA'S ONTOLOGY

One of Xiberta's deepest frustrations was the lack of seriousness among modern thinkers about the ontological/metaphysical question. Conversely, he admires those who do so: Suarez, Rosmini, Raeymaker, he appreciated. It must be said that this question was of vital interest to Xiberta the theologian and his *objective* vision of a really existing God. However, he was also objective enough to acknowledge the question as an autonomous area of interest.

How often Xiberta lamented that the notion of "being" was taken as passive. Typically, he passionately held just the opposite: "being" is the most dynamic reality because it denotes all that simply is not. And he goes back to sense knowledge to point out that our senses provide us with the contrast between existing and non-existing realities. We simply experience on an objective level the fact that things that are not, do come into being. It is common experience that positive realities, good in themselves, are limited and imply the absence of others; for instance sound is not color, black is not white... With his typically keen mind, Xiberta agrees with those thinkers who see a subtle distinction between "to be" and "being", although he hastens to add that for the most part they coincide in meaning.

When dealing with elements like genus, species, properties and accidents..., he notes that they are not concrete being, but rather *entities* insofar as they do not exist except by subsisting in another. They are imperfect entities, but surely they are not nothing; e. gr. the color

red does not exist on its own, but only as property of an object, but it is certainly something real.

For Xibereta “being” is more fundamental than the more modern term “phenomenon”. “Being” is a rich, dynamic reality, a composite of act and potency, of matter and form, of substance and accidents. “Being” and “to be” are essential insofar as they are broadest in extension (including everything that is outside of nothing) and minimal in comprehension (identified with everything that escapes “nothingness”). But acutely, Xibereta is quick to add that “nothing” begins to exist, in which case “nothingness” would be a vast substructure from which existing things came to be practically at a second moment of time.

“Beings in the mind” are things that do not really exist; they are merely objects of the human mind. In human thought, they exist as if they really existed. “Being” can be attributed to them only insofar as they exist in the mind.

When Xibereta asserts that there is nothing more dynamic than “being”, his only fear was that his expression be taken as something rhetorical. He wished, as usual, to express the objective truth. In this case, the dynamism of “being” he intuited to underlie all the perfectionality of things. His clear statement: we know that there is nothing in creation, even among most evolved forms, that cannot evolve to higher stages.

In line with the Realist school of thought, Xibereta holds that ideal forms such as truth, goodness, beauty, participate in being. He prefers to label them “transcendentals” and time and again he warned his students that in the traditional Aristotelean/Thomistic school, transcendentals were not the same thing in the modern schools of philosophy. For Xibereta transcendentals were identified with “being” itself as its various dimensions. For him transcendentals are “one, true, good and beautiful”, identified as dimensions of being. The Idealists, on the contrary, wrongly identify transcendent not with objective being, but with the thinking subject.

One philosopher with whom Xibereta was glad to dialogue on these matters was his fellow Catalan, Zubiri. With his inborn humility and simplicity, Xibereta had a sort of reverential awe for great minds, for superiors and for authority. His conviction about superiors and even about the Pope was that in his providence God gave us just whom we needed at the time. He illustrated this in a talk he gave to us students on “The Generals I have known”, in which he in his positive way pointed out the providential good that each General in succession brought to the Carmelite Order, even the lamentable

Llovera, who left the Order and became a Cathedral Canon (Xiberta told us that he learned from Llovera, who in some ways was Xiberta's mentor in his youth, not to take oneself too seriously, but rather rely on the prevenient love of God and so to be a basically happy, positive individual. Even those whom he considered to be the bane of modern thought, especially Emmanuel Kant, he saw had the merit of marshalling the "forces of truth" to study the question in depth, something they probably would not have done without the critique of pre-reason of the German philosopher. It was in this context that Xiberta appreciated his personal encounter with philosopher Zubiri, with whom he could not completely agree, but whom he could not help admiring.

With regard to the traditional five proofs for the existence of God, Ramis, Xiberta's commentator, doubts that they are anything more than demonstrations of God's existence for someone who already has faith, but he acknowledges that Xiberta understood them as objective proofs. In fact, in his teaching Xiberta refused to be limited to the traditional five ways; he pointed out that these were just a handy, pedagogical resumé of such proofs. Pointing out that different persons have differing perspectives and needs, Xiberta attempted to give as complete as possible a listing of the proofs of God's existence, even those commonly rejected such as St. Anselm's ontological proof or proofs such as the universal quest for happiness. As usual, Xiberta was true to his maximalistic vision – "about God, the All-important Being, we can never say enough". Anything that might help others reach conviction of God's existence should be listed, if we are convinced that the ultimate fulfilment of man is not found in his own creaturely self, but in the God who made him and destined him for an eternity of happiness in his kingdom. Again, not content with the typical textbook approach, which often he taught was too defective and formalistic and minimal, he made this question one of the longest in his tracts. The argument from motion, for instance, Xiberta showed was in no way restricted to local motion, but to all change from potency to act. This applied, for instance, to the passage from one stage to a higher stage of perfection. God was simply the Perfection in its highest, unbounded state.

Just as Xiberta made much of the subject and predicate reality which he held to be rooted in the nature of things, so he held firmly to the same vision of the transcendental and predicamental order. The transcendental order of a reality, based on its very make-up, extended to all its dimensions and determinations, including everything that constitutes it in being, as opposed to nothing. It would be,

for instance, the human person as subject, including every aspect of what makes the person integral and whole. The predicamental order, in contrast, implies a specific entity, circumscribed by its very nature and so limited and distinguished from others; it determines that one thing is not another. Even identical twins, for instance, will have aspects in this order that affirm their individuality and the uniqueness of each twin.

Again, because it is to be important in theology, Xiberta delved deeply into the meaning of “analogy”. He was not all that satisfied with the traditional scholastic definition. In his search for a proper formulation, he came up with this definition: “Analogous terms are those predicated of distinct subjects with simply diverse meanings, but identical in certain ways”. For Xiberta analogy was an endowment of the human spirit/mind which is able to trace the richness of the relationships between different things. Language is able to express this richness, and in fact the quality of the writings of poets and writers in general depends on this. But even more than language, Xiberta sees this analogy affecting ideas to be predicated of others and relationships with others.

Analogy has many advantages. Firstly, it allows us to apply the theory of universals. Thus it allows us to set up a hierarchy in our concepts. In doing this, it helps us to settle on those which are *quidditative*, i. e. those which express fixed, permanent predicates which are basic to any science. In Xiberta’s case, this was imperative to do for what he considered to be the science of sciences, theology. Thus, he sees the need of Thomistic teaching on analogy because it teaches us not to be content with seeing merely the aspects in which things resemble each other, but also to affirm that all analogates in one category have their *raison-d’être* in a first term. This first analogate, identified with the Supreme Being, God, has nothing at all univocal with creatures, but is the supreme analogate, which makes our talking and writing about God meaningful. Without analogy, theology would be dead because nothing of what we experience would be applicable or expressible of God.

In his teaching on the Supreme Being, God, Xiberta uses all his philosophical acumen to say as much as possible about the virtualities contained in the reality of the Supreme Being. Such is the reality of God as “Pure Act”. Actual perfections prevail over potential perfections until one arrives at an act of being which is absolutely exempt from potency in any form. In class, Xiberta often admonished his students not to allow these philosophical considerations of God to end in the classroom, nor even in one’s vision, but in the chapel, where more

knowledge about God, who is only and purely Act, should make us love him and serve him more. The same could be applied to his teaching on *Aseity*, or independence from all other realities. To be “a se” (contained within oneself) denotes a full, autonomous reality in which existence and essence cannot be distinguished. One’s being comes not from outside oneself (as is the case with all creatures), but from within oneself.

God is “Subsistent Being” which indicates existence that is free of any bonds to another; there is no inhering in another (as is the case with accidentals), but it denotes existence on one’s own. Creaturely subsistent beings receive their being from others. But pure subsistent Being is without potency; rather act and form are found together in the highest form of subsistence.

“Fullness of being” denotes exemption from all limitation rather than the possession of all things at once in an exhaustive and essential way. What for most students would be a rather dry and abstruse consideration would have Xiberta’s enthusiasm and commitment roused to the maximum, as he discovered more and more details about God’s being by analogy. In fact, for meditation he used a well-worn and dated book in several volumes providing daily meditations based on these subtle philosophical and theological distinctions.

The same applied to his consideration and teaching about the attributes of God. Activity is to be moved by another (e. gr. heat, electricity, nuclear energy); it results from within one’s own capacities (life). *Life* itself is immanent and denotes an intrinsic unity, which is not a perfection added on to being, but really a higher degree of being. Xiberta insists on the scholastic truism: *vivere viventibus est esse*.

To take normal manifestations of life in its higher forms – knowledge and volition – Xiberta adds power. *Knowledge* goes beyond information collected. It denotes a mind present to itself, aware of self. In entities without knowledge we note that they are practically absent to themselves. *Volition*, linked with the things desired which are gathered to self, results in a person’s gaining possession of self with a new *raison-d’être*. *Power* denotes the capacity to extend to others the activity which derives from within oneself. Without doubt, it must be admitted that Xiberta has his eye on theology when he delves into these realities and concepts, but his conviction is that it all has a philosophical validity that stands on its own.

Even from the number of references to the distinction between the transcendental and predicamental orders in Xiberta’s writings and teaching indicates the vital importance of this truth in his vision. The transcendental order is first and most important, because it has to do

with the substance, with the person. The predicamental order has to do with something about the substance/person and so ranks second place. The transcendental order is superior insofar as it has to do with existence itself and the kind of existence. The predicamental order has to do with attendant questions, with a whole spectrum of varying importance, for instance, the difference between an alive and a dead person. The modern day concern about the dignity of every human person is based on this experience common to us all. The person is a rational, unique, individual being in virtue of whose more noble type of life, is distinct from all others in the fullest sense.

This ordering of subjects (transcendentals) and predicates (predicamentals) is a datum of our sense experience. This means, for many, that it is not just something in the logical order framed by our mind, but it corresponds to the natural, physical order outside the mind. Fr. Xiberta saw this as critical in order to save, foster and enhance the truth – on all levels, physical, moral, theological and spiritual.

XIBERTA'S THEORY OF VOLITION

Running parallel to our knowing process, but not independent of it is our volitional/willing process. While the two have respective distinct consistencies, the two of them form the superior psychic activity of the human person. Both manifest themselves *extensively* in the sense that the mind becomes all, and *intensively* in the sense that the intelligent subject shows the greatest degree of perfection by the act of understanding.

Knowing subjects are present to themselves/aware of themselves while non-knowing subjects are, so to speak, absent to themselves. By the will act a subject tends towards all and in some way binds them to self and associates them to one's life. This means a self-possession under a new title. Volition, like the knowing process, designates the highest degree of being.

The structure of the will act is three-fold: pleasure/satisfaction/affective appetite (today's expression might be "to be comfortable with", "to be turned on by"); the taking possession of (today's expression might be "owning"); rest/quiet (today's expression: "enjoy"). The affective appetite implies that a rational being is either pleased or displeased with an object so that he/she either desires or rejects the object. In the act of taking possession/"owning", the initial reaction

becomes a free activity. The third stage of rest/enjoyment is the fulfillment of the first two stages.

Xiberta is most insistent on these distinctions because already in his day (what would he say today with an “if you feel comfortable with it, go ahead” mentality?) he saw much confusion about the willing power of the human person. Xiberta already saw exaggerations about the autonomy of the will, a minimizing of the role of the intellect, which led to the inculcating of anti-intellectualistic, intuitive approaches. Xiberta, in season and out of season, insists on the primacy of the intellectual process. The acts of the will demand an interaction with the intellectual part.

Tirelessly, Xiberta calls for the need for clarity in order to understand the nature of man’s *free will*. Freedom is a property characterized by *spontaneity*. But spontaneity, too, needs some clarification. When it has to do with our absolute good, for instance, our eternal destiny of happiness, or satisfaction in an ideal value, spontaneity is linked with necessity. In these cases the greatest freedom is to be able to attain the greatest of goods. To be thwarted or frustrated from attainment of one’s definitive fulfillment denotes a defective spontaneity which does not allow a person to attain one’s true, lasting goal. On the other hand, spontaneity has to be with a *relative* good, accompanied by indifference, and in this sense it becomes free will.

To fluctuate between virtue and sin is a very evident imperfection. The *object* and its value influence the freedom with which one elicits an act of free will. A person is supremely free if he/she is able to choose the good which will lead him/her to authentic, lasting happiness. The firm decision of the subject in favor of the right thing, far from threatening one’s spontaneous will act, affirms it much more, because the human will is truly free when it remains rooted in rationality and truth, (e. gr. I am free to deny the presence of the person with whom I am speaking, but my freedom has to take into account the very evident data presented by my reason that he/she is present – and this data I receive through the senses).

Because of the threats to correct teaching on this matter, Xiberta proposes not just to study the theories of “experts”, but to return to reality and deduces the truth from this hard evidence. Inanimate objects are marked by passivity and exteriority. In vegetative life and with irrational animal life passivity predominates. True freedom is lacking because a will is lacking. These are objective facts on which all else follows. Against the English Sensists, for whom there is no

difference between sense experience and knowledge, Xiberta wishes to show the superiority of the human *psyche*. He loudly proclaims an essential difference between human knowledge and purely animal knowledge.

The essential difference between animals and humans is the function of abstraction in which the human person grasps the essence of real things. This is the root of human autonomy which our rational nature confers on us. It is the authentic principle of our voluntary activities which can be and are imputed to us both morally and juridically.

To perceive the essence of things is to have them within us in a kind of eternal way. Sensations are transformed into essential, universal and eternal concepts. This has to do with the person's basic freedom. A person is supremely free when he/she perceives and decides that the norm of acting is not necessarily determined by the sense experience (by the "being comfortable with it" syndrome), but above all by what he/she have attained by their knowing and volitional processes.

Absolute freedom is in God because He needs no voluntary act. He himself is the norm of goodness and value and worth. The human person has to choose to follow good, sometimes at the cost of great sacrifices. With the repetition of acts this becomes not an imposition but because a natural impulse, a constant tendency. The human person, then, is comparable to a heavenly being, whose norm is that of the Supreme Being – when there are no obstacles or temptations to prevent one's fulfillment and ultimate satisfaction, then one is supremely free to let the best in oneself bear fruit. To be able to accept this status is the greatest perfection of freedom.

Of course, man's freedom is always within the limitations of human finiteness. Theoretically we tend to know all things, but practically our intellectual life develops within us in a very limited sphere. Even geniuses have their weak sides. Add to this one's phobias, prejudices, unruly passions and one's limitations are painfully evident in all humans.

Xiberta, in this context, confronted the perennial question, why, if we are free, should we submit to rules of others? Does this go against the dignity of the human person? On this matter, Xiberta, an expert in medieval thought, followed the school of Godfried des Fontaines, who espoused the theory of the *rationality* of the law as contrasted with those who held for the will of the legislator. Thus laws are just if necessary. To follow the will of the legislator, then, is to appeal to the

principle of rationality in society as such and in the human species. Human acts imply the use of the superior functions of man, something that does not obtain when, for instance, man is asleep or distracted.

The value of "merit" is an essential of Catholic dogma as contrasted to Protestant belief. It is not surprising that in this context, as in so many others, Xiberta did his utmost to show the healthy philosophical underpinnings of the Catholic position defined by the Council of Trent. "Merit" is basically a title to certain benefits which have the value of a goal, and Xiberta adds: "in a rational being". In other beings merit can be applied only analogously insofar as they have qualities like a rational/conscious subject. Xiberta would have another addition to the usual definition: "and which a person acquires by his own efforts". Thus there is less merit in a person who is naturally gifted than in someone who becomes a great musician by dint of great effort and sacrifices. For instance, baptized infants who die enjoy eternal joys, but not by their own merits, but by Christ's. Adults have to work out their salvation rendering it "to a certain measure proper to them".

Merit is something that obtains in the present moment. A person deserves a commendation for the future for things he does in the present. With regard to past actions, if the dispositions continue, there can be merit in an improper sense. But basically merit looks to the future, to benefits that are an end or goal. Merit also results from service rendered to others and to promises, for instance, the prize offered to the winner of a competition or a diploma to students who successfully terminate their studies. Naturally, merit implies some sort of obligation in the person who must judge the merits of the case.

In the case of merit, there must be some proportion or equivalency. For material benefits, a person merits material goods, as in the case of buying and selling. For spiritual benefits, e. gr., friendship, advice, teaching... one merits spiritual benefits. For mixed benefits, as a salary to a worker, there should be both material and spiritual benefits.

In this matter, circumstances are paramount. If a poor man saves the life of a rich man, he merits to be raised from his poverty. If he saves a fellow poor man, the latter owes him a debt of gratitude, and the willingness to save the life of his savior if circumstances call for it. A father who pays for his son's education merits the son's filial love. The son who respects his father and acts honorably for his father's benefit merits the heritage which is already his naturally by birth.

It is by no means easy to measure this proportion/equivalency. Sometimes it can seem to be more a gift than merit, as when a rich man, for some small service rendered, gives a poor man a grand sum, really out of proportion to the work done.

Xiberta is of the opinion that the common understanding of merit *de condigno* is not exact. It is made out, more or less, to describe equivalency between merit and the corresponding object. Xiberta insists that the fine line between merit *de condigno* and *de congruo* is very difficult to define, because of the many degrees in merit. Sometimes *de condigno* obtains in supremely just circumstances while at other times it is given because of a promise or of convenience without a real proportion between the service rendered and the merit earned. *De congruo* merit at times is so apt that the contrary would be most inconvenient; at other times it is so slight that there would be no inconvenience if the opposite obtained.

Much depends on the circumstances and the condition of each person. Otherwise, Xiberta points out, that the Protestants would be correct when they accuse Catholics of having a crass notion of merit, taking it like money or some document with which the Christian is able to buy heaven for himself.

On the question of merit, Xiberta follows the constant teaching of the Church in calling for freedom from necessity, and not merely freedom from force (*à la Jansen*). Xiberta holds that merit derives from the fact that a person is master of his present action. Merit occurs not just when the possibility is open to us to act in an evil manner, but we do not, but also when we act well by the imperative of our conscience even when morally we cannot do anything but good. In his teaching, Xiberta often returned to the example of a mother who loves her child without hesitation, meriting no less than a friend or lover who loves with some reluctance. As he enters into the theological area of grace, Xiberta is staunch in proclaiming that God's grace, in confirming a person in doing good, does not surpress but rather strengthens our free will. "The truth will free you", he often quoted.

In Xiberta's mind, a person's happiness is in direct proportion to the correct use of one's freedom. The Latin expression "*beatitudo*" was preferred by Xiberta; it had much more content than the normal expression "happiness". *Beatitudo*, for Xiberta, includes joy, enjoyment, fruition, happiness. Thus, for Xiberta "happiness" is only one aspect of beatitude, which could be defined as the possession of one's final, definitive good. Authentic beatitude is not attained in this life. Happiness is thus the *finite* expression of the beatitude that awaits the

human person in afterlife. This is one example of why Xiberta, until the end, preferred the use of precise Latin, which is a “dead” language and so could be used with much more surety than constantly changing nuances of modern, living languages.

While Xiberta accepted both Aristotle’s and Boethius’ definition of this supreme happiness, he preferred that of the latter. Aristotle had it as the most perfect activity of the most perfect potency. Boethius has it as the perfect status resulting from the convergence of all good things. Xiberta sees happiness as an integral part of man’s make-up, which includes, as well, knowledge, volition, the exercise of one’s active potency, the moral sense, the aesthetic sense and enjoyment of happiness.

Enjoyment (= fruition, in Xiberta’s terminology) on a sensitive level, can dominate freedom and in some cases even suppress it. Spiritual enjoyment does not depend on sensitive sensations. Xiberta speaks of the euphoric sense as a bearing of concrete ups-and-downs with a sentiment of constant well-being. Happiness/fruition do not compromise freedom on condition that the object of fruition is not situated outside the bounds of rationality. The best freedom on earth is hope in eternal life, insofar as fruition is freed of sensitive limitations, which are always of a passing nature.

For Xiberta supreme happiness for us is “rest of the will in an eschatological good”. Only if rooted in moral good will human happiness provide man with a happiness which gives constant and stable enjoyment. Especially relevant for today is Xiberta’s insistence on the hierarchy of values: if supreme fruition of beatitude is prime in one’s life, then one is capable of supporting a barrage of *contretemps*.

The basic moral principle is to place happiness in the correct objects, leaving as a secondary question the pleasure or lack thereof that might be experienced. Although this view seems dramatically opposed to the modern quest for pleasure at all costs in all forms, Xiberta would never retreat from his conviction that the will should not find its rest in a subjective pleasure, but in the good offered, accepted and acknowledged from without us. It is even better, of course, if accompanied by subjective pleasure, because it is better for the subject, but not for the morality of the voluntary act.

Summing up this vital area, Xiberta taught incessantly that free will is not the result of isolated emotive intuitions, but is a constitutive part of man’s rational nature. Xiberta did not understand how psychology could minimize the quality of the voluntary act. For him freedom should be seen as a part of the ontological make-up of the human person, as a part of the superior *psyche* of the human being.

Man is free because he himself elicits his activities independently of stimuli which might influence him from various directions. The more an act is in conformity with reason, the more man acts *freely*. The greatest freedom, as Xiberta never tired of underscoring, is that to choose the moral good. This leads to the highest degree of human happiness. All this philosophical background served Xiberta to buttress his solid theological arguments for the necessity of the Christian message in its insistence on the Supreme Good, God himself, to be enjoyed definitively in true beatitude.

XIBERTA ON THE REASONABLENESS OF FAITH

For a theologian, the reasonableness of faith is an intriguing question, but a decisive one as well. Xiberta left no stone unturned in his efforts to show that theology is a positive science in the sense that theology has to do with revealed truths, guaranteed truth, which can be expressed in *quidditative* statements. As seen above, theology has its methodology. Ramis opines that Xiberta leans towards the position of Scotus Erigena, namely, that theology is *intellectus quaerens fidem*. But without shadow of a doubt the Catalan professor is Thomistic in inspiration, persistently holding that something can be known about the divine nature, something true though limited, while avoiding the extremes of Theosophy and naturalistic theology.

Xiberta had an obsession to remain a faithful son of the Church. In this context more than once he advised his students that in the long run it is a great advantage that the final word of the Church's official teaching authority, the Magisterium, is in the hands of the bishops and not in that of theologians. The reason, he held: theologians put great stress on the natural gifts of reasoning, while bishops are more likely to take the faith in a broader context, including the pastoral dimension, and so be closer to objective truth. Xiberta viscerally rejected the innovations of the "New Theology" as derived from Modernism and Intuitivism. He staunchly affirmed that faith, according to Scripture, is an *obsequium mentis* and not a mere sentiment diffused in different ways among the peoples.

His was an implacable battle with proponents of Relativism and Subjectivism. These latter accepted faith not as an objective reality received through revelation, but rather as a certain kind of personal feeling which some individuals perceive in their limited consciousness. As a religious sentiment, it is something extremely diluted and imprecise. Xiberta often decried the "modern theologian's" tendency to

reduce theology to description and history. When these moderns concentrate merely on the subjective acts of knowledge, they effectively ring out the death knoll for theology as a science. It becomes history and cultural anthropology. While he nurtured an insightful research into the history of dogmas (and in his various tracts, he scrupulously sought to include as complete an overview of the many opinions on a given question as possible), still he strenuously upheld the limitations of this history, which is only a partial knowledge and not the main point of theology. In his efforts to maintain the objectivity of theology, he refused to concentrate all attention on the knowing subject, while the predicate is dismissed out of hand.

Persistently Xiberta affirmed that both natural and supernatural truths are objects of human thought, which allow the science of theology to be built up. The natural truths are attainable by human reason, the supernatural do not contradict, but they do surpass human reason; they do not escape reason's attempts to say something about them. How the current interest in the supernatural, the occult, even the demonic bring out the truth of Xiberta's contention!

For Xiberta, the all important triad on this question is: faith, contemplation, the intellectual process. Faith, then, is a supernatural gift by which we believe all that God reveals on his absolute authority. It calls for an absolute dependence of the believer on God much as a pupil looks to his teacher, and children to their parents. Contemplation, Xiberta defines as a human act which involves the mind, the will and the senses; by it these human potencies are applied to God and to the things of God. In a certain sense, one leaves self and is immersed in God. In his anxiety to establish the reasonableness of the religious experience, Xiberta stresses the human contribution and not the typically Carmelite appreciation of contemplation as a prime gift of God, which can and should be prepared for, but which in the end, as St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross magisterially taught, cannot be merited and is given as sheer gift to those whom God chooses, often contrary to human expectations.

True to his scholastic vision, Xiberta affirms the beatific vision as the highest form of contemplation, with which God is the supremely active protagonist and man the grateful, passive recipient of so great a gift. But there are many degrees of contemplation leading up to the beatific vision. In order to be authentically real and not just a whim or a fantasy or a dream, both faith and contemplation demand the intellectual process, which above all is a grasping of objects as such outside the mind, i. e., they are essences of existences anterior to the human act of understanding.

In his strenuous defence of the intellectual dimension of both faith and contemplation, Xiberta is thoroughly opposed to a-rational theories. And this is true even in those aspects which imply a healthy dose of feeling and intuition. Even the emotive, mystical experiences cannot do without an object which has been previously presented to the mind. No activity of the Christian religion leads to the unknown, nor is it produced by merely subjective impulse. Human reasoning puts the seal of objectivity on faith and contemplation. In the Christian context this process is based primarily on the objective reality of the person and the teachings of the historical Son of God made man.

Besides this direct grasp of the truth by the mind, Xiberta further insists that faith and contemplation also depend on a *doctrinal dimension* of the truth. Although faith and contemplation above all are directed to and based on really existing objects, we do need propositions which allow us to understand. The ultimate source of our propositions/statements is God, who normally transmits them through the Magisterium of the Church. Smarting under the attacks of adversaries of the traditional intellectualism, Xiberta affirms that what matters really is not the mystical emotion which a person feels, but rather the objects with whom the subject is affectively united. The subject is charged to extract the correct doctrine from the sources. The credal formulas and conciliar teachings were meticulously crafted by the Church – often at great sacrifice and suffering – precisely because the faithful were convinced that the purity of the Catholic faith consisted in the upholding of the orthodoxy of the dogmas.

The need is to stress the *supernatural* dimension of the faith. Many revealed truths do not fit the moulds of our finite minds. As in natural knowledge, so too in the supernatural realm, there must be a learning process; however, it must be even more rigid because we have no recourse except to accept statements based on the authority of the Magisterium. In this field, Xiberta sees the Modernists falling into two errors: firstly, they hold that there is no religion that is objectively “natural” to man; secondly, they affirm that there can be no science about manifestations of religious practices. They simply believe in a certain sense of the sacred or of religiosity. This is precisely the opposite of Xiberta’s position.

The Catalan professor also stresses the *universal, social* dimension of the faith. Faith is a phenomenon spread throughout the world by means of signs, symbols, rites, expressions that unite believers all over the world. These are of an objective and not merely of subjective character. His observation: men only unite in virtue of something

objective, since subjective conditions cause them rather to tend to disintegration.

The three elements – faith, contemplation, the intellectual process – are distinct, but demand an interplay; they are meant to work in conjunction. Again Scotus Erigena encapsulated Xiberta's conviction: "I believe most firmly and I understand as much as is given to me". Xiberta explains that it is not a question of our *obsequium mentis* being first belief, and after believing then we perceive intellectually, but rather that from the very moment that we believe, it is necessary that we activate the intellectual process. There is no faith or contemplation without a previous intellectual process. And on the contrary, it is not that we first put the intellectual process into act on the margins of the faith and then we come to believe, but rather that we activate that process enlightened by grace and guided by an act of faith.

Theology, together with faith and contemplation, are preceded by revelation and catechesis. But the three elements should be seen as concomitant. Xiberta often pointed out that until two centuries ago no theologian denied the objectivity of the faith in the sense that it would be relegated to some *volitional* dimension. The intellectual (= theological) aspect was mostly taken for granted, as demanded by a faith that is authentically catholic, that is, apt to be presented to and accepted by all men of all cultures and times.

The tenacity of Xiberta on this point is evident when he cites his approval of an author whom he many times castigates in his *Introductio in Sacram Theologiam*, Chenu, O.P. With the Dominican theologian, Xiberta does not hesitate to use the term *circumincessio*, i.e. the interpenetration of the three acts – faith, contemplation, intellectual process. Xiberta faces the often posed question: what are the limits of the intellectual process *vis-à-vis* the faith. Humanists and Protestants ridiculed the attempts of Catholic theologians to give a rational basis to the faith; their contention was that Catholics depended too much on human authority. They took their cue from Luther himself, who, in obviously Augustinian tonality, taught: "Faith does not enlighten the intellect but rather our affections". Wycliff would accept only the Fathers of the first Christian millennium because in their theology they did not have recourse to natural reason. The modernistic trend follows suit in affirming that faith is not compatible with natural reason.

In a typically provocative way, one that was not afraid to take the offensive, Xiberta held that it was not only licit, but actually something natural that we should deliver into, investigate our faith by use of our natural faculties. By its very nature, Christian doctrine moves

the believers who are more prepared, to search out and deepen their knowledge of the faith. "Sacred Scripture does not give a doctrinal system about God, but firmly declares Him to be one, and his perfections to be supreme and on given occasions extols his other attributes. It leaves to us the task of building up our integral doctrinal system conformable to the above elements" (*Revue Thomistique*, 1946, p. 68). In the process, questions touching philosophy and the sciences do enter. By itself S. Scripture might appear contradictory at times. Here Xiberta invokes one of his favorite authors, Petavius, S. J., an outstanding patristic scholar, who teaches that human reason is called on to delve into revealed truth. The definitions of the early Church councils on the Trinity, on the Person of Jesus Christ, were the result of such assiduous, minute and sometimes acrimonious study and research. As God uses various signs to transmit his truth to us, there rises the spontaneously felt need to study the nature of the privileged sources – Scripture and unwritten tradition in order to discern the true from the false.

Xiberta often pointed out that over the centuries the Church had not been content merely to repeat the words of Scripture and of the Fathers; the need was felt to produce commentaries that were drawn up systematically in order to show the reasonableness and coherence of revealed truths. Some explanations proved to be heterodox and had to be declared heretical. The scientific study that resulted in theology was the Church's reaction to the ferment within the Church to express the truth authentically. And so resulted a body of doctrine which with arguments capable of combatting error and defending the purity of the faith, was declared the authentic explanation and deepening of the message and mission of Jesus Christ, the revelation of God incarnate.

Because of his Voluntarism, Duns Scotus would not call theology a science, since for him the supreme rule was the dependence of everything on the Will of God, who is above and beyond our definitions and speculations. At first glance, this stance seems to contradict Xiberta's deep-seated intellectualism, but not so in practice. In his conferences, Xiberta, referring to the liturgy as living tradition, often pointed out the responsory for feasts of confessors: "*Amavit eum Dominus et ornavit eum*: God loved the saint and so adorned him with gifts". God loves us not because we are good, but loving us He makes us good. This has a distinctly Scotist ring to it.

The aim of Xiberta's *Introductio* was explicitly to prove the scientific nature of theology. The Scotists and the Augustinian school condemned the Thomists for over-intellectualizing the faith, saying that they watered down the wine like bad innkeepers. Xiberta often

referred to St. Thomas' answer to these accusations: "Those who use philosophical arguments in order to draw Sacred Scripture to serve us in the homage of faith do not mix water with wine, but rather change water into wine".

Scripture and the Fathers do contain certain expressions that seem to demand a simple act of faith, prescinding from rationalization. But orthodox writers defended themselves from those who wanted nothing but repetition of the Scriptures and of the Fathers. They pointed out that already Nestorius had accused St. Cyril of Alexandria, probably Xiberta's greatest hero among the Fathers, of adding too many simply human elements into his argumentations. Xiberta takes these objections seriously, and answers them under several headings.

Firstly, he admits that the mind does not directly demonstrate the truth of a revealed fact, but it does and should show the meaning of revealed truth. Apologetics shows things to be revealed on the authority of God and of his Church. Theology clarifies the truths of the faith as far as possible.

Secondly, one cannot deal with the supernatural by means of the human intellect, but what we say about God we say *by analogy*, given that all perfection belongs to Him more than to creatures, as in the contrast between whiteness in itself and things that are white.

Thirdly, reasoning about the faith does not degrade the latter. Theology does not eliminate the need to know the Scriptures (Xiberta collected all biblical data for his dogmatic tracts as in the *Introductio in Mystera Fidei*), but it has to do with the contents of revelation.

Fourthly, theology does go beyond Scripture. Xiberta insists on the place of Scripture as part of the historical process of revelation entrusted to the Church. As Scripture is not a systematic work, the Church is obliged to go a step further in order to preserve the whole economy of salvation. The Scriptures are a unique, a most precious instrument, but to be taken in a broader context. Theologians may seem at times to neglect Scripture, which presents primary truths, because they take the latter for granted and go on to study derived secondary truths.

The intellectual process, as understood by the likes of St. Thomas Aquinas, was admitted by theologians until the 19th century, when, under the influence of Modernism, some denied that the mind had anything to do with the preambles of faith. Thus faith is made to depend on one's subjective reaction to revelation. Dogma, for the Modernists, becomes an historical expression of subjective faith, but it does not have objective value. The most radical of the Modernists deny even

the value of the Scriptures and of the Fathers in their study; all is reduced to a subjective, historical process. The result is *Positive* theology, which in reality is a study of the evolution of dogmas and how each epoch used its epistemological tools to shape its faith.

Xiberta bemoans the fact that the theologians, his contemporaries, often a-critically accept the terminology of the Modernists, and their method as well. The existential approach has infiltrated theology. Xiberta, who cultivated Latin and defended its advantages for theology, saw that contemporary theology has been influenced by the introduction of the vernacular, which broke with the traditional, exact terminology of theology. More modern expressions have been introduced even by such orthodox theologians as Lonergan... Although firmly and explicitly against a mere repetition of past expressions (Xiberta used Denzinger sparingly for this reason), still until he died he kept up a (losing) battle in defence of Latin, because, as a language out of common use, it is more apt to express the faith both in its essential and secondary expressions.

As the intellectual process is denied in theology, Xiberta sees ambiguity and precipitation to be up-to-date everywhere. In his efforts to solidify his stand on the indispensable role of the intellectual process in theology, Xiberta lists the functions of the intellectual in theology:

- 1) it fosters knowledge of the preambles to the faith;
- 2) it aptly interprets the signs of divine revelation;
- 3) it includes the contents of the sources of revelation and of the Magisterium in a material sense;
- 4) by means of *quidditative* statements, it puts in evidence the revealed objects (and not merely subjective reactions!) – and not only those which are practically self-evident, but also those known in a mediated way;
- 5) it comes to understand the revealed objects, using additional means;
- 6) it possesses the objects subjectively;
- 7) it shows the conformity of what is said about the revealed objects with the sources of revelation, reason and the Magisterium, both of the present and of the past;
- 8) it clarifies all that is opportune for the perfect possession and the handing down (*traditio*) of the objects of the faith.

For Xiberta, the basic dogma is the existence of a personal God, Creator of heaven and earth and source of all life, who is known by

means of the two books – the Scriptures (basis of theology) and the world (basis of apologetics). Belief in the “dogmatic” God is not equivalent to belief in a “philosophical” God. Throughout the course of history, there have been many arguments/proofs/demonstrations of the existence of God. At times these “proofs” have been the source of confusion because they rise from different sources and above all from differing philosophical premises.

Xiberta favors the Thomistic five ways to show the existence of God, but understood as a sampling which is not exclusive. Other authors, whom Xiberta had studied deeply and whom he recommended were Henry of Ghent (Xiberta also espoused his sacramental theory), Hervaeus Natalis, Guido Terreni (this Catalan Carmelite was studied in depth by Xiberta; his volume on Terreni was appreciated by fellow [scholars](#); when objection was made that it was chauvinistic to cite Terreni and Baconthorpe, Xiberta in his typically energetic way countered with: “They’re as good as any of the others; why should we not be proud to cite them if they are members of our Carmelite family?”).

Since Xiberta insisted on Vatican I’s dogma that the existence of God can be known by the human mind even without grace and revelation, he considered it a prime duty of a scholar to take seriously, research, classify and critique the various “proofs” for the existence of God. In fact he gathered a typical collection of these arguments and classified them under three major headings:

- arguments based on the metaphysical condition of creatures, under which he included St. Thomas’s “proofs” from motion, from causal dependence and from degrees of perfection;
- arguments based on physical perfections, under which he gathered “proofs” from the beginnings time of living beings and of rational souls, of the situation of cosmic energy, of the wise ordering of contingent elements, and also of supernatural facts;
- arguments based on man as a rational and personal being, under which he noted the universal sense of religion, the universal moral law, the universal desire of happiness.

He also noted that distinction should be drawn up based on external observation and introspection.

Typically, Xiberta is not content with the traditional presentation as found in the manuals of theology. He used all the resources at his command to delve as deeply as possible into these proofs, which are fundamental to the whole concept of theology and ultimately of reli-

gion/faith. For instance, in the argument from motion, Xiberta is not content with limiting himself to local motion, which lacks finality. With St. Thomas's teaching in *De spiritualibus creaturis*, he broadens the meaning of motion to include *actus entis in potentia, quatenus in potentia*, e. gr. the acts of our understanding and will.

This, in the view of Xiberta, is a more convincing metaphysical argument for the existence of God. In this instance, as in many others, it is evident that Xiberta took objection to the views of theologians seriously and entered into dialogue with them. In his answers, he shows a vast culture, citing authors from Cicero to Francis Bacon. Thus he is able to paraphrase a famous saying: "When scientists begin to uncover the physical causes of events, in which men formerly used to see the hand of God... they easily fall into that frame of mind that makes them think that the conviction of the existence of God is based on ignorance of physical realities and they turn all their sense admiration to nature itself. However, when they experience the secrets of nature more fully they are forced to confess that nature on its own is not able to be the basis of such magnificence as is found in it" (*De Deo Uno*, p. 39). Darwin himself was unable to explain the first beginnings of the world prescinding from God.

Amazingly Xiberta kept up with most recent studies in the world of science and found that contemporary theories, e. gr. "the big bang theory" or "the expanding universe theory" or that of entrophy, buttressed the traditionally Catholic position on the existence of God. He showed no fear of reports that life would soon be produced by scientists in laboratories. If and when this happens, it simply means on the one hand there is one less argument on the list (but many more remain), and on the other hand that God has endowed man with such intelligence as to be able to share in his creative power.

Xiberta considers that practical atheism is as rooted in the human heart as the universal sense of religion, given the innate inclination of man towards sensible things. In man there remains a constant dialectic between the material and the spiritual.

He points out, on the question of authority, that direct, personal apprehension of something is better and surer, but if this is not possible, it is supremely rational to accept the authority of those who have the possibility of direct apprehension, especially when they are many and capable. He affirms this trust in authority as a requirement of human nature itself.

In his commentary, Ramis wonders why Xiberta did not make more of the categorial imperative of Immanuel Kant on the question of the moral order and for the need of a supreme lawgiver (= God).

The answer probably lies in Xiberta's passionate nature. He was viscerally opposed to Kant, "the ruin of philosophy", as he called him. With Kant it was definitely a black-and-white stance, something that Ramis knows very well. How many times we who lived with both Ramis and Xiberta in Sant'Alberto, Rome, saw the two of them arguing about Kant to such a heated degree, that in the end Xiberta had to ask to change the subject because he did not want to spend another sleepless night. The deference which Ramis shows for his mentor is seldom better illustrated than by this posing of the question.

Especially in his theological reasonings, Xiberta often musters *ad hominem* arguments, as for instance: "Due to lack of justice in the present life, we spontaneously direct our minds to an invisible judge who one day will restore rights and justice". Xiberta was not as opposed to St. Anselm's ontological argument for the existence of God as most other Thomists, because he held, with St. Thomas, that the existence of God can be justified by the very notion of God. However, he admits that St. Anselm's reasoning is often "childish".

Even though Xiberta valued Thomistic arguments for God's existence above others and he noted that many arguments are deficient, still in class he inevitably taught them all, noting that because of the variety of cultures, of intellectual acumen... some arguments will appeal to some persons and others not. For instance, he pointed out that for many religious people supernatural phenomena such as apparitions will be more convincing than more intellectual arguments.

But until his last breath, Xiberta holds for a God knowable by means of a strictly intellectual process which reveals objective truth. The Church clearly teaches, following the Scriptures and the Fathers, that God can be known by means of the visible works of creation. "The notion of God's existence must be rational, certain, linked with some knowledge which we possess outside the exercise of our faith. It is not enough to accept the existence of God in any which way. A way must be maintained which is conducive to lead all men to God. Not only atheists are enemies of the faith, but also those who overthrow the foundations of the faith, seeking to substitute them with other" (*De Deo Uno*, p. 61). Xiberta made much of the Church's defence of the validity and value of the capabilities of the human mind. He pointed out the paradox, in tones reminiscent of Chesterton, whom he read and admired: the Catholic Church, so often accused of being too other-worldly and concentrated on a pie-in-the-sky reward for good, has especially in our day become the strongest defender of the validity of the powers of the human mind in its natural capacity to attain reality and truth. Xiberta could not hide his pride in the Church's obvious vote of

confidence in the “Natural” gifts bestowed on mankind and especially in the eminently human functions of knowledge, volition and power.

Intellectual apprehension, for Xiberta, is not just a better opinion in order to preserve orthodoxy. It is a *sine qua non* condition for the dogma of the existence of God. Otherwise, only those who were capable of feeling their faith in God by means of an affective movement, could be faithful Catholics. But well-disposed understanding perceives the truth, not everyone will be blessed to be enabled to take pleasure in it. The intellectual process is open to all, from the simplest to the wisest. From creatures we experience and gather together *perfections*, which we attribute to God. We *eliminate* all imperfect aspects which we find in creatures and we raise the perfections to their most eminent degree and then we attribute them to God.

Xiberta kept reverting to the concept of analogy; any and all knowledge we have of God is analogous, i.e. though true as far as it goes, it never reaches God’s real perfection which is infinite and most simple at the same time. This is why Xiberta called for a definition of terms (in his day these were expressed in Latin) in order to avoid equivocation, so that from creatures we come to a knowledge of God’s perfections using expressions which authentically denote God even if in an imperfect way. God’s attributes, then, are not adjectival (e.g. wise, good...) but substantial – in God they imply the totality of what they signify.

With this vision Xiberta stressed that the perfections we find in creatures are also in God, but God is not merely the sum of all created perfections, but their exemplary cause. Reverting to a favorite distinction, Xiberta points out that all we say of God is a *predicate*. It is much more difficult to treat of God as a *subject*. We call Him God not because this is compatible with his dignity, but because of our weakness. And in affirming this, Xiberta insists yet again that we are not allowed to forget the supernatural and sacred dimensions, as parts of the intellectual process. Fundamentally, it is a natural process, but because it is organically linked with the supernatural activities of faith and contemplation, spontaneously it is put into practice in a supernatural way.

Thus, for Xiberta, theology is the study of an intellectual process by which we perceive revealed truth in order to present it to faith and contemplation. This process is acquired by effort; it is not infused. He underscores the inseparability of faith and contemplation, but on condition that with the possession of the divine in a mystical experience, the proper function of the intellectual process is maintained, thus avoiding the loss of the guarantee of objectivity.

Xiberta is wary of Modernist expressions of the faith, such as sympathy, empathy, which stress the subjective motivation for faith. They can be used correctly if they signify the effects of the acceptance of faith, but not its cause.

Some commentators have tabbed Xiberta an integralist. He was a staunch defender of the riches that the past had acquired and he strove valiantly to integrate truths from the past into an overview of the Catholic faith which was definitely maximalist, striving to say as much as possible about truth and Truth, embraced in love. His deepest conviction – and subsequently his greatest fear, that of losing it – was that the integrity of theology passed through a return to classical objectivity. On many counts, he went against the prevailing currents of thought, but the wisdom of his convictions still has to be proved false.

† REDEMPTUS MARIA VALABEK, O.Carm.

Institutum Carmelitanum
Roma

IN MEMORIAM

Necrologi dei PP. Redemptus Maria Valabek e Stefano Possanzini*

REDEMPTUS MARIA VALABEK, O.Carm.
(1934-2003)

P. Redento M. Valabek, della provincia americana di S. Elia e membro della comunità del Centro Internazionale S. Alberto di Roma, è deceduto il 5 agosto 2003 negli Stati Uniti, a seguito d'incidente stradale.

Nato il 3 luglio 1934 a Shelton, Connecticut, era entrato fin da giovane tra i carmelitani, emettendo i voti semplici il 9 settembre del 1954. Subito dopo la professione solenne, avvenuta il 15 settembre 1957, venne inviato dai superiori a Roma, dove arrivò il 17 settembre dello stesso anno, per seguire il corso teologico nello Studium Generale dell'Ordine. A Roma ricevette, oltre alla tonsura e agli ordini minori, anche il suddiaconato e il diaconato, mentre in patria venne ordinato sacerdote il 25 luglio 1960. I suoi successi accademici sono testimoniati, oltre che dai premi ricevuti nei concorsi indetti dall'Accademia Romana di S. Tommaso negli anni 1957-58 e 1958-59, dal dottorato in teologia conseguito nello Studium Generale nel 1961, dalla licenza (1962) e dalla laurea (1964), conseguite presso la Pontificia Università Lateranense, e dal diploma in teologia pastorale ottenuto nell'Istituto «Giovanni XXIII».

Se si eccettua un breve priodo (1982-83) trascorso presso la parrocchia di S. Giuseppe a Troy, New York, tutta la vita del P. Redento si è svolta a Roma, nel Collegio (ora Centro) Internazionale S. Alberto. Il suo impegno di docente di teologia (nello Studium Generale dell'Ordine dal 1963 al 1967, nella Pontificia Facoltà Teologica «Regina



* Notizie biografiche redatte da P. Emanuele Boaga, O.Carm.

Mundi», dove aveva insegnato già il P. Bartolomeo Xiberta, e nell'Istituto «Beda») fu sempre accompagnato da importanti incarichi a servizio della Chiesa: esaminatore del clero romano, collaboratore per i servizi in lingua inglese nella Radio Vaticana.

Nello svolgimento di tutte queste attività P. Redento mostrò sempre una grande capacità di relazione con gli studenti dei suoi corsi accademici e con le persone da lui incontrare nel suo cammino. Confessore di vari istituti, coltivò una preziosa corrispondenza epistolare con i suoi figli spirituali; fu anche confessore ordinario presso la basilica di S. Pietro in Vaticano, impegno che lo vide assiduo e fedele persino in momenti difficili delle sue condizioni di salute, specialmente dopo che un incidente, subito nel 1992, l'obbligò a camminare sostenendosi ad un bastone.

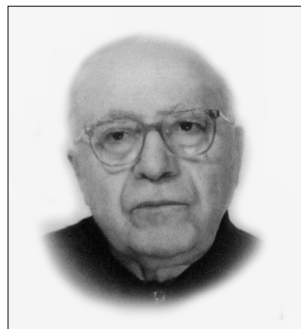
Autore di vari libri e articoli di spiritualità, P. Redento svolse anche un'ampia attività pubblicistica, soprattutto attraverso la direzione della rivista «Carmel in the World», da lui assunta nel 1971 insieme alla cura redazionale, da allora portata sempre avanti con tenacia e costanza, malgrado le varie e non lievi difficoltà incontrate.

Tra gli uffici assegnatigli all'interno dell'Ordine si possono ricordare i seguenti: prefetto degli studenti chierici nel Collegio Internazionale, di cui fu vicario priore dall'ottobre del 1972 al marzo 1973; membro dell'Institutum Carmelitanum, dal 1972 alla morte; postulatore generale per le cause dei santi dell'ordine, dal 1980 al 1996: in questa veste ebbe la gioia di vedere beatificato nel 1985 il martire P. Tito Brandsma, alla cui causa aveva strenuamente lavorato il compianto P. Adriano Staring; delegato generale per il Terz'Ordine secolare e la famiglia carmelitana (1983-2001). Particolarmente nota è la cura paterna da lui rivolta alla famiglia missionaria del «Donum Dei», fin dalla sua aggregazione all'Ordine avvenuta nel febbraio del 1987.

Ai suoi funerali, celebrati il 9 agosto sotto la presidenza del Priore Generale dell'Ordine, si è avuta la commossa partecipazione non solo dei familiari e dei confratelli, ma anche di numerosissimi fedeli e terziari carmelitani. In tale occasione sono state ricordate non solo le sue numerose attività, ma anche e soprattutto la sua completa dedizione all'ideale carmelitano, la sua passione in difesa delle tradizioni dell'Ordine, la sua fedeltà alla vita comunitaria, la sua straordinaria sensibilità alle altrui miserie e difficoltà. È stato ricordato anche il suo amore verso la patria d'origine della sua famiglia, la Repubblica Ceca, che egli ebbe occasione di visitare nel 1985, oltre al suo impegno per il rifiorire della presenza carmelitana in quella terra. I suoi resti mortali riposano nella tomba dei Carmelitani di New York in attesa della risurrezione.

P. STEFANO POSSANZINI, O.Carm.
(1922-2003)

A distanza di pochi mesi dal P. Redento Valabek, l'*Institutum Carmelitanum* ha dovuto dare l'estremo saluto anche a P. Stefano Possanzini, morto sabato 13 dicembre 2003, dopo un ricovero di quasi quaranta giorni all'ospedale S. Spirito ed un breve soggiorno nella clinica oncologica Villa Speranza a Roma. Le esequie, presiedute dal priore generale dell'Ordine, P. Joseph Chalmers, si sono svolte nella cappella del Centro Internazionale S. Alberto, martedì 16 dicembre, con la partecipazione dei familiari e di numerosissimi confratelli, consorelle e membri della Famiglia carmelitana. La salma è stata tumulata nella tomba dell'Ordine al Verano.



Padre Stefano Possanzini nacque il 3 novembre 1922 a Castel d'Emilio, frazione di Agugliano (Ancona), da Umberto e Alma Urbinati. Nove giorni dopo venne battezzato con il nome di Enrico nella chiesa parrocchiale di S. Maria delle Grazie.

A dodici anni entrò nel seminario carmelitano della provincia di Toscana, dove frequentò gli studi delle medie inferiori. Completati gli studi ginnasiali a Ravenna, compì il noviziato nel convento della Castellina. Professò i voti semplici l'8 agosto del 1940 e quelli solenni il 13 novembre 1943. Compiuti gli studi di filosofia e di teologia rispettivamente a Ravenna e a Firenze, venne ordinato sacerdote dal Vescovo di Ancona il 1° dicembre 1946 a Castel d'Emilio, suo paese natale: una scelta, questa, realizzata nel contesto dell'animazione svolta in provincia per le vocazioni sacerdotali e religiose. Per le sue doti d'intelligenza e di volontà, nel novembre del 1947 venne inviato dai superiori a Roma per gli studi accademici di filosofia e teologia; il 22 giugno 1949 conseguì la licenza in filosofia presso la Pontificia Università Gregoriana, ma l'anno seguente dovette sospendere gli studi di teologia, perché chiamato in provincia per necessità del convento fiorentino.

Ancor giovane, ricoprì vari uffici nella sua provincia: definitore provinciale (1951-54), direttore provinciale del TOC (1951-57), professore nel seminario-marianato della Castellina. Priore del convento di

Firenze (1952-54), ufficio che svolse con singolare saggezza, si adoprò per fare elevare la chiesa del Carmine a basilica minore; il suo desiderio venne realizzato nell'anno giubilare mariano del 1954, con la benedizione data dal Card. Elia Dalla Costa.

Semplice, umile, affabile e fraterno con tutti, svolse sempre tutti i suoi impegni con dedizione e precisione; ma ebbe modo di dimostrare le sue doti di governo soprattutto nel servizio di priore provinciale, di priore del Collegio Interprovinciale Italiano Pio XI a Roma e di consigliere generale. Piace ricordare che nel 1954, quando venne eletto provinciale della Toscana, ciò avvenne – cosa insolita – al primo scrutinio. Inoltre, data la situazione interna della provincia, su indicazione dello stesso priore generale P. Kiliano Lynch, che presiedeva il capitolo, mantenne e svolse fino al 1957 anche l'incarico di direttore TOC e assunse pure quello delicato delle vocazioni. Rieletto provinciale nel 1957, rimase in carica fino al 16 agosto 1960. Padre Stefano si sentiva altamente onorato di essere stato annoverato tra i successori di S. Andrea Corsini, ed esprimeva la sua ammirazione verso il santo non solo con una profonda devozione, ma parlandone e scrivendone appassionatamente ad ogni occasione.

Quando, nel 1960, venne trasferito nuovamente a Roma per ricoprirvi l'ufficio di priore e prefetto degli studenti chierici del Collegio Interprovinciale Italiano Pio XI, approfittò dell'occasione per riprendere gli studi di teologia, conseguendo in breve tempo la licenza. Si adoperò insieme a P. Tiziano Ballarin perché si evitasse la chiusura del Collegio Interprovinciale Italiano; poi, chiuso anche lo Studio Generale dove egli insegnava teologia dommatica, tornò in provincia nel 1967.

Nel gennaio del 1970 venne chiamato di nuovo a Roma dalla Curia generalizia per svolgervi l'ufficio di segretario nell'Institutum Carmelitanum. Su pressione dell'allora preside, P. Ludovico Saggi, riprese e completò la redazione della sua tesi di laurea in teologia, che difese egregiamente pochi mesi dopo, presso la Pontificia Università Lateranense, con relatore Mons. Michele Maccarrone.

Il 3 ottobre dello stesso anno 1970, morto l'assistente italiano P. Claudio Catena, il Consiglio dell'Ordine, tenuto conto del voto consultivo quasi unanime dei provinciali d'Italia e Malta, lo chiamò a succedergli; il P. Stefano rimase in carica fino al 1983.

Nella sua qualità di consigliere generale, ampio fu il contributo da lui offerto nella Curia Generalizia, compiendo anche numerosi viaggi in Italia e all'estero, e svolgendo gli impegni di vicario del priore generale, vice-procuratore e delegato generale per le monache; nel frattempo, dirigeva gli «Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum», di cui curava

con dedizione la traduzione latina di tutti i documenti e delle notizie da pubblicare.

Nella fase dell'aggiornamento postconciliare, Padre Stefano prestò la sua collaborazione alla formazione delle giovani suore dell'Istituto di Nostra Signora del Carmelo in Roma, e ancor più si dedicò al primo rinnovamento della legislazione e della vita delle monache dell'Ordine. Fu inoltre intensamente impegnato in conferenze, corsi, esercizi spirituali e visite ai monasteri delle monache carmelitane d'Italia, attività che continuò anche dopo il suo incarico di delegato, specialmente per i monasteri di Vetralla, Carpineto, Jesi, Sutri e Camerino. Tale attività costituì per lui fonte di gioia e di sofferenza, ma la svolse sempre con intelligenza e amore verso le «care e povere figlie», come egli affettuosamente chiamava le monache.

Coinvolto pienamente nella riforma liturgica dell'Ordine, prese parte attiva alle vibranti discussioni sul rito carmelitano, abolito nel 1972, e svolse, nel 1974, un ruolo rilevante nella riforma del calendario liturgico, oltre che nella revisione dei testi del *proprium* carmelitano, con applicazione dei criteri di riforma indicati dal Vaticano II.

Fu anche membro delle commissioni per la preparazione della Regola del TOC del 1977 e della sua definitiva revisione, portata a termine con approvazione della S. Sede l'11 aprile del 2003. Per il TOC, già prima di essere assistente generale, aveva tenuto una relazione all'incontro internazionale del 1957 a Fatima; nel 1965, invece, tenne una relazione al convegno internazionale sulla formazione dei giovani candidati all'Ordine.

Partecipò a ben sei capitoli generali: 1959 (in qualità di provinciale di Toscana), 1965 (socio di Toscana), 1968 (socio di Toscana), 1971 (assistente generale), 1977 (assistente generale), 1983 (consigliere generale); e come assistente generale prese parte a tutti i consigli delle province dal 1972 al 1982 e ad altri incontri internazionali.

Terminato il suo servizio di consigliere generale, dopo un breve tempo trascorso nel Centro Internazionale S. Alberto di Roma, tornò nella sua provincia, prima a Ravenna, dove insegnò teologia nel seminario diocesano, e poi a Forlì, facendosi benvolere dai fedeli che frequentavano quelle chiese. Dopo l'unificazione delle province in quella d'Italia, passò alcuni anni a Pisa, come priore della casa di noviziato. Rinunciato poi al priorato, passò a Forlì, da dove nell'ottobre del 1997 tornava a Roma per lavorare nell'Institutum Carmelitanum, di cui aveva già fatto parte in precedenza (1970, 1983-84). Con molta dedizione e non senza sacrificio accettò e svolse l'ufficio di penitenziere aggiunto nella basilica di S. Pietro per l'anno giubilare del 2000.

Autentico e sincero nelle relazioni umane e negli impegni religiosi e sacerdotali, P. Stefano viene ricordato e apprezzato, soprattutto nell'ambito dell'Institutum Carmelitanum, come attento studioso del patrimonio spirituale e mariano dell'Ordine e scrittore di grande capacità divulgativa, come dimostrano i numerosi articoli di cultura teologica, spirituale e liturgica, le conferenze e relazioni in diversi convegni, il commento alla Regola Carmelitana pubblicato nel 1979 con un buon successo editoriale, l'acuto saggio sulla vita e dottrina mariana del ven. Michele di sant'Agostino, e altri notevoli contributi sulle origini e vicende di vari monasteri femminili, su alcune figure eminenti del Carmelo e sulla liturgia dell'Ordine.

La graduale diminuzione della vista, a causa di glaucoma, ed altri malesseri da lui accusati negli ultimi anni lo portarono, con una certa sofferenza e tensione, a diminuire e poi a cessare praticamente l'attività di ricerca; ma, pur nel suo continuo ricorrere ai medici, rimase sempre disponibile ad aiutare gli studenti, che in comunità si rivolgevano a lui per correzioni d'italiano o per traduzioni latine.

Le ultime settimane della sua vita hanno rappresentato, per lui, il suo unirsi maggiormente a Cristo crocifisso. Un giorno, a chi lo stava visitando in ospedale, ebbe a confidare questo suo abbandono a Lui, pur nella sofferenza e nella consapevolezza del momento, e a dichiarare sommessamente di affidarsi alla Vergine Santissima perché l'aiutasse a donarsi completamente al Signore anche nell'ultimo doloroso passo.

Per questo, e per tutto ciò che egli ha saputo realizzare nella sua vita di carmelitano, di sacerdote e di studioso, Padre Stefano ha diritto a tutta la nostra gratitudine, unita alla certezza che egli si trovi ormai nella contemplazione del Volto divino nella festosa assemblea dei santi.

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This solid work will no doubt become the standard in the field. The author has collected a great amount of information about a subject which is rather niggardly in revealing its secrets and has presented this material in a clear and well-planned form.

In the introduction, the author describes his sources and *modus operandi*. Among university sources, "the foundation document" is the *Ordo licentiatorum 1376-1694*, compiled by Philippe Bouvot, beadle of the Faculty of Theology (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 5657-A). Bouvot lists the names of all clerics licenced in theology, 1376-1694, the date of the licentiate, the date of inception to the *magisterium*, the Order affiliation, and the order of merit.

Another important source is the *Chartularium universitatis parisiensis*, edited by H. Denifle and E. Chatelain, Paris, 1894-1964. Finally, a useful, though late complement to the *Auctarium* is the *Historia universitatis parisiensis*, Paris, 1665-1673, 6 vols., by César Égasse du Boulay.

Finally, official records of individual colleges, the faculty of theology and the Sorbonne, add details not found in the sources already referred to.

Bouvot provides the names of 1042 licenced clerics: 459 secular clerics (to be considered in volume two of this work) and 583 regular clerics. The Orders that advanced students to the licentiate in Paris were 18 canons regular, 129 monks, 427 mendicants, 8 members of smaller Orders, and 1 of an unnamed Order.

The sources for religious Orders are the general chapters in which individuals are assigned to university studies, the semi-official bibliographies of the Order's writers (Sullivan lists such works regarding the monks and Mendicants), and modern bibliographies of the university's colleges and the *studia* of religious Orders.

Sullivan's work is divided into two main parts. The first is a chronological list of the licentiates at the university, 1373-1500. The list provides the names and religious affiliation of the students and their merit ranking. The

second part, which constitutes the meat of the presentation, is an alphabetical list of the licentiates, providing biographical details. Here one is made aware of the exhaustive nature of the author's research in a widely scattered field of information.

One may be sure that the members of the Orders represented here will be combing through the book with jealous zeal for what Sullivan has to say about their institutes.

As to Carmelites, the information is as complete as present-day sources allow. Sullivan adds many modern dependable authorities.

In this journal – 19 (1972), 134-175 – the late Leo Van Wijmen, O.Carm., published ms. 5657, listing the names, merit rating, and province of the licentiates. In his chronological list, Sullivan records not only the merit rating but the size of the individual's class, thereby affording an idea of his academic ability. It should be noted that Carmelites relatively seldom are found in the first half of their class. Also, their literary output, in spite of the large number of graduates, is rather slim.

Of the discrepancies listed below Sullivan is not necessarily at fault.

Van Wijmen lists 94 Carmelites licentiates, Sullivan 95. The Guillelmus de Torcularii, not listed by Van Wijmen, Sullivan lists as a Carmelite or a Franciscan (pp. 33, 347). Sullivan makes Yvo Mignoti an Augustinian (pp. 31, 256); in Van Wijmen, he is a Carmelite (p. 141). From the *Chartularium*, Sullivan adds Laurentius Christiani (pp. 26, 131-2), not of course listed by Van Wijmen in his edition of Bouvot.

Sullivan corrects Van Wijmen with regard to the given name of Matthaëus Courtois (p. 139); which the latter makes Mathurinus (p. 145. Van Wijmen quotes the general chapter of Brescia, 1478, which, however, has the correct name).

In a couple of cases, there are discrepancies with regard to degrees. Sullivan states that there is no record of Yvo Morelli's inception as doctor (p. 263). whereas Van Wijmen has him receive the doctorate at the general chapter of Avignon, 1494 (p. 145). At that chapter, however, Morelli is only assigned to begin lecturing on the Bible and the *Sentences* in 1488, as Sullivan correctly states. At his licentiate promotion in 1494, poor Morelli was last in a class of 17 (Sullivan, *Ibid.*).

The dates of the licentiate of Stephanus Norman differ in our two authors (Sullivan, p. 268, Van Wijmen, p. 145), though this may be due to the fact that Bouvot for dates uses the *more gallicano* (Sullivan, p. 13), which this *quondam* student of chronology is not about to try to decipher.

In a couple of cases, Sullivan incorrectly refers to Van Wijmen: in his notice on Guillelmus Danielis (p. 255; Van Wijmen, p. 142) and on Antonius de Rubo (p. 317; Van Wijmen, *Ibid.*).

The book ends with two appendices: a list of licentiates arranged chronologically according to religious affiliation, which enables religious to identify the members of their Order at a glance; a list of the licentiates arranged by first names, though this list might have been obviated by arranging the biog-

raphical notices and the index in this more usual fashion. In the Middle Ages, especially the second element of a name is not necessarily a surname. Only in the case of *Johannes* would this bring together an inordinate number of names.

The abbreviated reference, *Carmel en France* (p. 372) is not identified with Antoine Maria de la Présentation, O.C.D., *Le Carmel* (misspelled) *en France*, Toulouse, 1936-1939, listed in the bibliography (p. 415). The often-used abbreviation RBFTh (Register of the Beadle of the Faculty of Theology) does not appear in the list of abbreviations at the beginning of the book (pp. xi-xii).

A sturdy cover is fortunately given to this splendid work, because it will be often consulted.

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Vita Spiritualis

EDWARD HOWELLS. *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila: Mystical Knowing and Selfhood*. Crossroads, 481 Eight Avenue, N. Y. 10001. 2002, xi, 212 p. ISBN 0-8245-1943-4. \$ 39.95.

Using Carmel's two greatest mystical authors as its primary sources, this brief but masterful study deals with "the type of self and the anthropological transformation required for mystical experience to become known" (p. 1). The question Howells poses at the outset is this: Given the sharp distinction that John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila draw between the "natural" and the "spiritual", to the point of seeming to establish two parallel epistemological processes (one of the ordinary natural knowledge of created things and the other for the mystical experience of God "in the center of the soul"), how can the fundamental unity of the human person be maintained? The question is a crucial one, not just for the interpretation of John and Teresa, but for contemporary mystical studies. All too often current authors (including some theologians and philosophers of religion) still proceed as if mystics were simply a matter of unusual states of consciousness enjoyed by the same familiar post-Cartesian autonomous subject, largely ignoring (at least for their analytic purposes) what the mystics themselves say about how the knowing human subject itself is fundamentally transformed in its being and operations during the process of growth toward mystical union.

After a helpful introduction, outlining his main arguments, and a short preliminary chapter on the complexities surrounding John of the Cross's use of the vocabulary of "experience", Howells devotes "two main chapters" apiece to John and Teresa: "the first on the structure of the soul, and the second on

the dynamics of transformation” according to each one’s teaching (p. 4). There follows a summary chapter, correlating what has been learned from each author and drawing further conclusions. The book ends with an epilogue on some remaining differences between the two Carmelites, and an appendix on the succession of spiritual stages according to John of the Cross.

Howells argues that John’s and Teresa’s talk of a “division” between the natural and spiritual (or exterior and interior) “parts” of the soul rests on a fundamentally different understanding of human selfhood than the modern one. Here he refers to Maritain’s contention that “the mind is not first of all aware of its thought, as in Descartes’ *cogito*, but is constituted first in relation to the objects that it desires and seeks to know” (p. 42). That is to say, the human self is essentially *relational*, initially establishing itself in a subject-object relationship to created realities perceivable and knowable to the external senses. Yet of necessity the “esterior” self cannot relate itself primarily to God on this “natural” level, since God is not an object among other objects to be perceived. At the same time, according to Teresa and John human beings bear the image of God and are capable of being raised by grace in a divine unione “without intermediary” in the deepest “part” or “center” of the soul. Both authors attempt to clarify how this happens in terms of the development of the image of the Trinity found in the triune spiritual faculties of memory, intellect, and will. “But for both writers”, says Howells, “the important point is not the ‘static’ analogy for the Trinity in the rational faculties but the *dynamic* relations between the faculties and their objects of knowledge, and beyond that, the raising of this dynamism to the level of the Trinity, as the faculties become spiritual and participate immediately in the inner relations of the Trinity in unione” (p. 121). That is to say, if I understand Howells correctly, that the mystic in deepest union knows God not primarily as an intentional *object* standing over against oneself as the knowing subject, but through a kind of felt “pre-conceptual” participation in Trinitarian life and love, in the mutual exchange among the distinct but united divine persons. Likewise, “the soul can now see its own humanity united to the divine Word within its inter-Trinitarian relationship” (p. 122) on the analogy of the hypostatic union, and thus even the humanity of Christ is included in the soul’s deepest mystical experience. Moreover, the interior Trinitarian participation increasingly “overflows” in the “esterior” part of the soul, not only causing sensory delight but giving rise to external works of charity in full accord with the divine will, so that “the entire operation of the soul is unified” (p. 124). Howells concludes that “for Teresa and John, mystical union is to be understood as the interiorization of the divine life of the Trinity into a Christ-like self”, and that “the mystical self is a human Trinitarian intentional structure possessing God’s inner dynamism” (pp. 125-126). The “distinction” between the “exterior” and “interior” self is preserved within a more fundamental unity of the human person in God.

While such a study of either Teresa or John alone would have had its own value, Howells is to be commended for his careful effort to handle both

together and to harmonize the doctrine of those two great Carmelites, while recognizing where they differ; a task rarely attempted in recent times. Along the way, he utilizes and comments judiciously on the best of contemporary Teresian and Sanjuanist scholarship. Experts will no doubt debate some details of his claims, especially since the presentation is so condensed that Howells rarely has time to argue at any length for his own interpretation of ambiguous passages. (He may read too much, for example, into Teresa's intentionally humorous and exaggerated critique of John in her *Vejamen*). Yet even if other readings are possible, Howells's interpretation seems persuasive, in part simply because of its thoroughness, plausibility, and theological fruitfulness.

This book grew out of Howells's 1999 doctoral dissertation at the University of Chicago, perhaps wisely omitting its extensive comparisons with Bernard Lonergan and thereby making the present volume more accessible to a broader readership. Yet especially given its cost, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila: Mystical Knowing and Selfhood* now seems, if anything, too brief, with roughly a quarter of the book devoted to endnotes and bibliography and less than 150 pages given to developing the main arguments. One wishes Howells had been allowed more space to explore certain difficult points further. The writing is lucid and engaging, but some of the particularly dense passages and hard-to-grasp notions could have used additional unpacking. I would have appreciated further clarification, for example, of what this mystical "sharing in Trinitarian relations" actually feels like, though perhaps this is expecting too much, since both Teresa and John declare the experience to be beyond words, and John himself writes that "no knowledge or power can describe how this happens, unless by explaining how the Son of God attained and merited such a high state for us, the power to be children of God, as St. John says" (*Canticle B*, 39.5). In any case, this is a book that requires slow and repeated reading to uncover all its treasures.

Oddly, the least successful part of the book is the appendix on "the order of stages of transformation according to John of the Cross", a section not really essential to Howells's main presentation. The chart given on page 140, for example, associates the *Subida*, Books II and III, with the "passive night of sense" and *Noche* I and II with the "active and passive night of spirit", clearly a mistake and clearly a contradiction of Howells's own explanation on the preceding page. Again, to claim that "the illuminative way", according to the *Noche*, "only begins in the final stage of the passive night of the spirit" (p. 140) seems misleading at best, as *Dark Night* 1.14.1 clearly shows. Here Howells seems to have confused John's traditional use of the three "ways" terminology with his comment that toward the end of the passive night of spirit "dark contemplation ceases to assail the soul in a purgative way mode and shines upon it illuminatively and lovingly" (*Night*, 2.7.4). For John, "illumination" by itself does not necessarily mark the beginning of the so-called "illuminative way", and more than "purgation" is limited to the "purgative way". "Illuminations" of various sorts can occur all along the spiritual path.

Howells joins a small but growing number of authors for whom mystical texts are not simply reliable guides to personal holiness but also significant theological sources. This book is an important contribution both to Carmelite studies and to current scholarship in the fields of Christian anthropology, Trinitarian theology, and Christology.

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Mariologia

“La Madre Ágreda y la Mariología española del siglo XVII”, in *Estudios Marianos*, 69 (2003), 430 p. ISBN 84-607-7232-2. Eur. 35,00.

ENRIQUE LLAMAS, O.C.D. *La Madre Ágreda y la mariología del Vaticano II*. 2003, 121 p. Kadmos, Salamanca. ISBN 84-607-8014-7.

The anniversary of the birth of Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda (1602-1665) stimulated a resurgence of interest in this remarkable Poor Clare (a.d.a. Conceptionist Franciscan), of Spain’s Marian “Golden Age”, famous for her widely disseminated *Mística Ciudad de Dios* (=MCD). The Mother of Jesus, Son of God, is the “mystical city”, temple, tabernacle, shrine of the divinity. The initial threevolume edition was published in Madrid, 1670. The current edition, edited by C. Solaguren, O.F.M., Madrid, 1992, runs to 1509 pages. Composed between 1655 and 1660, MCD is an extended life of the Blessed Virgin, in its own fashion a complete Mariology. Very fanciful, relying on insights experienced in prayer, the book has had a rocky career. The Spanish Inquisition censured it in 1681, but under royal pressure the prohibition was lifted. The Sorbonne (University of Paris) did so again in 1696, scathingly.

Born in Ágreda (Soria) in 1602, María entered with her mother and sister in the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception, becoming superior / abbess of the Poor Clares at the age of twenty-five. Among her achievements were twenty-two years of letters to King Philip IV. The cause of Ágreda never progressed beyond “venerable”, though in recent years there was hope of reviving it, exemplified especially by the Spanish Mariological Society, which met in September, 2002, at Osma-Soria under the title, *La Madre Ágreda y la Mariología española del siglo XVII*, papers making up *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 69.

In his *Presentación* and major paper (“Mary’s collaboration in the work of redemption and 17th century Spanish Mariology”), the president of the Spanish Society, the distinguished Discalced Carmelite theologian, Esteve Llamas, puts the study week in a perspective in a vigorous defence of the venerable author and her baroque masterpiece. In the long list of ill-informed denigrators of Ágreda, E. Llamas singles out Hilda Graef’s well-known history of Mariology (original German edition, 1964).

Students of theology concerning the Blessed Virgin will readily recognize the names of *Estudios Marianos* contributors. The opening paper by Antonio Ma Artola, C.P., is on the “*Mariología*” of MCD, as the flash-point in the process of canonization. Juan Esquerda Bifet applies to MCD the criteria of San Juan de Ávila for discerning extraordinary phenomena. Andrés Molina Pireto studies her Marian spirituality. Luis Díez Merino, C.P., considers the use of the Bible. The 17th century setting receives attention. Ismael Bengoechea, O.C.D., writes of “The same Mariology in different terms by three women religious: Valentina Pinelo (d. 1624), María de la Antigua (d. 1617), and María de Ágreda. The university and cultural ambience of Salamanca are studied by E. Llamas and Ágreda Rodríguez Cuz, O.P., Gaspar Calvo Moralejo, O.F.M., of the International Pontifical Marian Academy (PAMI), spoke of a major theme in MCD, “Mary, Mother of the Church, Teacher of the Apostles”. A paper by Juan M. Ferrer is “The Marian Calendar after Trent”. Germán Rovira Tarazona spoke of Ágreda’s reception in Germany.

Ángel Martínez Moñux, O.F.M., took up the “eco theology” of MCD, its cosmic sensitivity to creation. Describing himself as a convert from skeptical amusement about Ágreda’s writings to respect and conviction, Félix Ochayta Piñeiro presents “*Dos venerables: María de Jesús de ágreda (1602-1665) y Anna Catharina Emmerick (1784-1824): Los misterios de la infancia de María, convergencias y divergencias*”. The beatification cause of Catherine Emmerick has resumed, apparently without dependence on the “revelations” copied down by her amanuensis, the Romantic poet, C. Brentano. F. Ochayta’s study puts in parallel columns the relevant writings of the two visionaries.

The lead article by Artola sees private revelation as the key factor, since Ágreda based her presentation on the mystical experiences that taught her new insights on the mystery of Mary, countless details of her life, even as a child, ant in the early Church, about which the canonical scriptures are silent. The initial hostility to MCD attacked its defense of the Immaculate Conception. The Congregation of Rites approved the continuation of the cause for beatification, yet the Holy Office placed MCD on the index of forbidden books, 1679. Far more damaging was the condemnation by the theology faculty of the Sorbonne, 1696, in a climate roiled, not obly by controversy about the Immaculate Conception, but by Marian piety and Jansenism.

Efforts to revive Ágreda’s cause again failed, when Benedict XIV imposed silence on the issue in 1773. Meantime, MCD remained popular, continued to be circulated, also in translation. In 1973, the Franciscan Order petitioned the Holy See to reopen Ágreda’s cause, and B. Mendiá, O.F.M., answered exhaustively the principal objections to MCD. Paul VI ordered a re-examination of MCD. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith undertook that study; the bittersweet results were communicated to the Franciscan Postulator General in February, 1998. The positive aspect is that the Congregation found no doctrinal and heretical errors in MCD. The negative side is what Artola calls “a painful nightmare” (*penosa pesadilla*). The same dicastery that absolved Ágreda’s revelations of doctrinal error continued as follows, “The presentation of the

figure of the Mother of God in the aforesaid book (MCD) contrasts with what sacred Scripture offers us and is not compatible with the Mariology of Vatican II; hence the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has decided not to grant the *nihil obstat* to continuing the cause for beatification, considering that continuation of the cause would convey implicit approbation of the book on question and indirect promotion of it". Artola asks, "Does this mean that the Catholic Church approves only systematic-rational Mariology?" He goes on to explain and justify "mystical experience and Mariology", arguing that the key issue is private revelation, visions, prophecies.

"Other studies" heads five final chapters in this volume of 2002 proceedings. Two are a Spanish language Marian bibliography for 2001, and the necrology of Armando Bandero González (d. 2002). The other three are: Luis Díez Merino, C.P., with a history of the interpretation of divine maternity in Gal 4,4, carried over from the Huelva convention of 2001; Gonzalo Gironés, on San Juan de Ribera (1532-1611); Juan Cascante, with Mariological themes in Cristóbal de Vega (1595-1672).

Enrique Llamas, O.C.D., may be said to have taken up the gauntlet of the 2998 decision of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in his book that serves as pendant to *Estudios Marianos*. He has done so in the 2003 title, *La Madre Ágreda y la Mariología del Vaticano II*. He considers and rebuts the arguments against re-opening Ágreda's cause. He stresses that MCD sprang from contemplative prayer, not formal study. Her exuberant writing is typical of the Baroque period. Llamas appeals to Pope Paul VI's advocacy of the "way of beauty" (the International Mariological/Marian Congress, 1975). Her writings are not contrary to the Scriptures, they are doctrinally sound, as judged by the same criteria used by the great theologians. Her "theology of mind and heart" anticipated Vatican II and current Mariology.

As Vatican II, so Ágreda, puts the Annunciation in first place. After the divine maternity, the most important question is Mary's collaboration in the redemption, well developed in MCD. Again criting Vatican II and subsequent statements of Paul VI and John Paul II (as *Redemptoris Mater* and the October 2002 Rosay Letter), Llamas makes much of MCD's depiction of Mary as teacher of the apostles after her son's resurrection and after Pentecost, linking her magisterial role to spiritual motherhood. This insight she received in prayer, claims Llamas, often overlooked by systematicians. She offers a "macro-Mariology" compared to the "micro-Mariology" of Vatican II, but there is no radical difference between them. Her theology is totally Christological. In some respects, she anticipates concerns about the Blessed Virgin that have come to the fore recently – such as her relationship to the Holy Spirit.

And there the case and Ágreda's cause rest!

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Historia

BALBINO VELASCO BAYÓN, O.CARM., *História da Ordem do Carmo em Portugal*; trad. Manuel Freitas, O.Carm. 2001, 775 p. Paulinas, rua Alexandre Rey Colaço, 7 1700-023, Lisboa. ISBN 972-751-442-1.

Padre Velasco, noto specialista sul Carmelo spagnolo per molte pubblicazioni e per l'opera da lui pubblicata negli anni 1990-94 che ha costituito la prima storia generale dell'Ordine in Spagna, con la presente opera completa la visione storica dei carmelitani nella penisola iberica. Con aggancio alla tradizione storiografica del Carmelo portoghese – in particolare agli storici e cronisti Simão Coelho, Jorge Contrim, Manuel de Sá, José Pereira de Sant'Anna, Manuel de Azevedo e infine a Manuel M. Wermers – l'autore, attraverso un'ampia ricerca in archivi e biblioteche, offre in questo suo nuovo studio un'egregia opera di sintesi.

L'opera all'inizio offre una chiarificazione sulle origini sul Monte Carmelo e sulla diffusione in Europa dell'Ordine (cap. I). Passando a trattare la diffusione dei carmelitani in Portogallo, affronta, attraverso un esame accurato, le discutibili tradizioni sulla prima fondazione a Moura e offre una ricostruzione dell'azione svolta a favore dei carmelitani da Nuno Alvarez Pereira, noto come il "Santo Condestável", che affidava ad essi il magnifico convento e chiesa da lui costruiti in onore della Madonna in Lisbona e nel quale egli stesso entrò poi come umile frate donato (cap. II). Di seguito viene illustrato il processo che, attraverso nuove fondazioni, ha portato nel 1425 alla erezione della provincia di Portogallo, e si ricordano gli sviluppi ulteriori, prima e dopo il Concilio di Trento, e la riorganizzazione compiuta dal provinciale Baltasare Limpo, che impresse alla provincia stessa una forte vitalità spirituale e caratterizzò l'impegno accademico dell'importante *studium* di Coimbra (capp. III e IV). La provincia svolse anche un'attività missionaria, fondando in Brasile la prima missione stabile dell'Ordine nel secolo XVI. Olinda fu così la culla di una fioritura che portò al sorgere di tre province e un vicariato (capp. V e VI). La provincia conobbe un ulteriore sviluppo temporale e spirituale nei secoli XVII-XVIII, fino al terribile terremoto del 1755, che ebbe gravi conseguenze e segnò il declino del Carmelo portoghese (capp. VI-VIII e X). Rimase soppressa nel 1834, con l'estinzione degli ordini religiosi in Portogallo (cap. XI). A complemento di quanto esposto sono i capitoli dedicati alle monache carmelitane (cap. IX) e, più ampiamente, ai vari gruppi del terz'ordine secolare carmelitano, che costituiscono un aspetto assai rilevante dell'azione svolta dai carmelitani nel diffondere la propria spiritualità e devozione mariana (capp. XII-XIII-XIV). L'ultimo capitolo (XV) è dedicato alla restaurazione del Carmelo portoghese, iniziata nel 1930 e attraverso alterne vicende arrivata alla sua costituzione in commissariato generale l'8 dicembre del 1992. Chiude il volume un'interessante sezione di illustrazioni, con riferimento all'architettura, alla scultura, alla pittura, alle arti decorative ed ai personaggi.

Nel corso dell'opera si presta speciale attenzione, attraverso un'analisi ben documentata, alla fondazione dei vari conventi e monasteri, alle vicende che li hanno caratterizzati e ai religiosi eminenti per dignità ecclesiastiche, santità, erudizione nelle varie discipline, dalla teologia alla musica e alla letteratura. Sono anche offerti profili delle religiose che hanno maggiormente illustrato il Carmelo femminile.

Il lunghissimo elenco delle fonti archivistiche raccolte in 19 archivi ecclesiastici e civili, 4 biblioteche e un museo, e la nutrita bibliografia (sono ben 640 i titoli citati) rendono ancor più pregevole il volume e possono offrire lo spunto per ulteriori indagini e approfondimenti, perché certamente quest'ultima fatica di P. Velasco costituisce un chiaro e valido punto di riferimento.

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Registrato alla Cancelleria Tribunale di Roma, Decr. 3637 del 4.1.1954
