

CARMELITE ORIGINS: PART II

HOW THE ORDER CAME TO BE; MODERN VERSION

The circumstances and other data concerning the origins or foundation of the Carmelite Order are almost entirely unknown. In actual fact, they simply amount to what can be deduced from the prologue to the Carmelite Rule. The Order's place of origin is the Holy Land, on the sacred Mount of Carmel. Near to the 'Fountain of Elijah', there lived a group of hermits under the leadership of a certain Brocard. He is mentioned in the official text of the Rule under the initial of B. He does not stand out as a man of outstanding personality or great holiness who could be accredited with the title of founder. We are on more solid ground in identifying the 'Fountain of Elijah' as the Wadi-es-Siah, three miles south of Cape Carmel. On that spot, there are ruins of a monastery that date from the time of the Crusades. As to assigning a date to its foundation, it would seem that no hermits had lived there before Saladin's defeat of the Christian army in 1187. However, this does not mean that hermits were not living elsewhere on Mount Carmel, for example near the Grotto of Elijah. We have no means of knowing what connection these hermits had, if any, with the group that lived near the Fountain. This latter group was the nucleus of the Carmelite Order and finds mention in the prologue to the Rule.

(Carlo Cicconetti : *La Regola del Carmelo*,
p.31).

ASSESSMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL ACCOUNT

Elijah and Elisha, who flourished about 850-800 B.C., were the leaders of a group known as the 'Sons of the Prophets.' There is not a shred of evidence however, for believing that this group survived on Mount Carmel down to the time of Christ. (See McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*: a.v. Elijah, Elisha, Prophet).

The religious groups which are known to have existed among the Jews at the beginning of the Christian era were of later origin and had no connection with Elijah. It would also seem that they were regarded as suspect by official Jewry. (For a good account of the Qumran community and its famous scrolls, see Van der Ploeg: *Excavations at Qumran*: Catholic Book Club, 1958).

There is no doubt that Elijah made a great impact on the monks and hermits of the early Church. He is mentioned frequently by the Fathers in this connection. The following is an interesting quote from the pilgrim Sylvia (also called Etheria) who visited the Holy Land at the end of the 4th century.

'Near Thesbis, from which Elijah the Thesbite got his name, there is a monastery. . . Being not a little inquisitive, I asked the name of that valley where today one can see a saintly monk in the monastery which he has built, I was told it was the vale of Carith where Elijah lived in the time of King Ahab.'

The memory of the Prophets Elijah and Elisha always remained very strong in the Holy Land. The writings of the Fathers, the hermit literature of the Middle Ages and the accounts left by pilgrims all bear witness to the fact that he was regarded as the model and founder of the solitary way of life. Moreover, the name of Mount Carmel was closely associated with him. (cf. Smet: *The Carmelites* pp.8-9, quoting sources. See also *Le~. Plus Vieux Textes* pp.24 foll.)

If any hermits lived on Mount Carmel in the early centuries of the Christian era down to the time of the Crusades (and there are good though not conclusive reasons for accepting this), they must certainly have been conscious of the influence of Elijah. Even the Latin hermits of a later date would have known the prophet's spiritual eminence from the traditions current in the West. (cf. Smet *ibid.*, p.9. For a complete study of Elijah and his influence, see *Etudes Carmelit.* 1956,2 vols.)

When the first group of 'Carmelites' chose the fountain of Elijah as the site for their hermitage, they were making a choice

which was to have momentous consequences for the subsequent history of the Order. No doubt, the practical need of having at hand an unfailing supply of good water was one reason for their choice but they were certainly not indifferent to the spiritual significance of the fountain. In some sense, they were reviving or continuing the type of life begun by Elijah nearly 2,000 years before.

John, 44th' Bishop of Jerusalem, flourished in the 5th century. Although he was a writer in Greek, nothing like a 'rule' for hermits is to be found among his authentic works. (See *Santi del Carmelo* p.37, note 38; *Cath Encycl.* [1908] Vol. III, p.354)

It is not difficult to show that the 'rule' which the medieval Carmelites attribute~ to him, the *Institution of the First Monks* was not written originally in Greek and cannot be dated much earlier than the 14th century, at least in its present form.

There was a Patriarch of Antioch, Aymeric by name, who died about 1187. A reference to him in an old Dominican chronicle would seem to imply that he had a relative among the hermits on Mount Carmel, the one who in Carmelite tradition is called Berthold. But it cannot be established that Aymeric had anything to do with translating the 'rule' of Bishop John 44th. (cf *Santi del Carmelo* p.183)

Two testimonies from the latter half of the 12th century speak of hermits living 'On Mount Carmel. The first is that of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela who visited the Holy Land in 1160 A.D. He says that he saw there a chapel, built by two Christians, near the grotto of Elijah. Unfortunately, it is impossible to identify these two, who may not have been monks at all, with the 'hermits near the fountain.'

The ,second testimony is that of Phocas, already mentioned (1185). Most probably he is speaking of a colony of Greek monks who also lived on Mount Carmel, near the site of the present Carmelite Monastery on the Cape. Their church was dedicated to St. Margaret. Although one should not

completely dismiss these testimonies, they are at best, uncertain witnesses for the beginnings of the Carmelite Order (see *Les Plus Vieux Textes* pp.260, 58. Smet *op. cit.* p.6).

- After the battle of Hattin (1187), the Christian Kingdom

was reduced to a few coastal cities and an area around the city of Acre. It would have been well-nigh impossible for hermits to live in the open country or in the desert at that time. It is a plausible theory that they retreated before the advancing Turks to an area where they could live in comparative safety. Carmel was one of the few places left to them.

An alleged chronicle of the 13th century speaks of a relationship between the hermits on Mount Carmel and those in other parts of the Holy Land. This Chronicle was first published in 1370 by a medieval apologist of the Order, Philip Riboti. He attributed it to a certain William of

Sandwich, a historical personage and an Englishman who

was Definitor of the Holy Land where he had lived since about 1250. According to Riboti, he wrote the Chronicle after his return to England in 1291 (see *Les Plus Vieux Textes* pp.195 foil: also *Anal. DC II*, pp.503-506).

Historians are doubtful concerning the authorship and value of the Chronicle. But it may not be altogether fanciful to say that it preserves a tradition that during the last decade of the 12th century, there was an influx of hermits to Mount Carmel and that some of them formed a kind of loosely federated community around the fountain of Elijah. By 1210, they were sufficiently aware of their identity as a community to feel the need of a Rule.

About 1231, a French pilgrim visited Mount Carmel. He noted that their little church was dedicated to Our Lady. 'It is on the slope of this mountain, in a beautiful and charming spot', he wrote. This simple record is of considerable value in assessing the growth of Marian devotion in the Order (see *Les Plus Vieux Textes*, pp.62-64: *Santi del Carmelo* pp.110-112).

Some time before the year 1240, the Carmelites decided to

migrate to the West. We shall speak of this in more detail later. Some of the friars arrived in England towards the end of 1240. In 1247, they convened a General Chapter at Aylesford, to organize themselves and to plan for the future. It now appears definite that the Prior-General elected at Aylesford was not Simon Stock but a certain Godfrey. His name was discovered in some legal documents, one of them connected with the Carmelite foundation in Pisa, dated March 3rd, 1249; 'Godfrey, humble Prior General of the Order of Mount Carmel'. Beyond this nothing further has come to light concerning him (see article in *Mount Carmel*, Summer 1975, pp.105 foII.).

In view of this fact, the sequence and chronology of the early Priors General must be revised. It would seem to be as follows: Godfrey 1247-1256; St. Simon Stock 1256-1266; Nicholas of Narbonne 1266-1271.

There was an English Carmelite by the name of Peter Swanington, but he was not the secretary of St. Simon Stock as has been asserted. Nor was he the author of the 'fragment' attributed to him. Nearly all are agreed that this document is spurious and does not date earlier than 1642 A.D. (cf. Xiberta: *De Visione S. Simonis*, pp.125-127 et passim).

The oldest written account of St. -Simon Stock is to be found in the *Viridarium* by ;John Grossi who was PriorGeneral of the Order from 1389-1430. The *Viridarium* was published probably after 1411. It is an outline history of the Order's Priors General. Grossi mentions briefly the alleged apparition of Our Lady to St. Simon in 1251. His account, it must be noted, although based on some older documents, was written down about 150 years after the alleged event (see *Ephem. Carm.* 1956, pp.241 foII.).

The ~tatus quaestionis on the Scapular will be discussed in another article.

CARMELITE APOLOGISTS

The traditions of the Carmelite Order, especially concerning

its Elijah origins, were accepted by many medieval schoolmen but denied by others. In view of the unsatisfactory juridical status of the Order for well-nigh a century after its migration to Europe, Carmelite historians and scholars considered themselves bound to defend the Order's antiquity. The result was that they neglected the history of their own times to tilt at historical windmills in their role of defending the Order's claims. Nearly all the 'historical' writings that have come down to us from medieval times in the Order and even well into the 17th century, are polemical. In 1374, a disputation was held in Cambridge University between a Dominican, John Stokes and a Carmelite, John Horneby, on the antiquity of the Carmelite Order. Horneby proved his thesis satisfactorily, in the judgment of the University staff, and was declared the victor. The curious thing is that his arguments were drawn mostly from Canon Law! The custom of annexing various saints to the Order was meant to strengthen its historical claims. This practice was in fashion, particularly in the 15th century.

Another curious approach is exemplified in the writings of Philip of the Trinity, especially his *Theologia Carmelitana*, published in 1655. Its subtitle describes it as 'a scholastic apologia on behalf of the Carmelite Order, to defend its noble antiquity'. Along the lines of theological methods, he undertook to prove that the Order was founded by Elijah and would last until the end of the world to combat antichrist (see *Santi del Carmela* pp.62-64).

In 1668, Daniel Papenbroch, S.J., one of the best-known of the Bollandist scholars, asserted that the Carmelite Order was founded in 1155 by St. Berthold whom he identified with the white-haired monk from Calabria mentioned by Phocas. 'A literary war of thirty years duration' broke out. So violent and disedifying was it, that in 1698, the Holy See imposed silence on both parties. Later on, in 1725 the whole Carmelite Order Calced and Discalced set up in St. Peter's the famous statue of Elijah. It was regarded as a triumph for the Carmelite apologists!

Early in the present century, when the traditional claims were being examined once more, a minor outbreak of controversy took place again. Echoes of it are to be seen in some of the contemporary issues of *Etudes Carmelitaines*. But by that time it was quite obvious that the question of the Order's antiquity was of little more than academic interest. Very few wanted to fight all over again 'the battles of long ago'.

CONCLUSIO

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In earlier periods of history, during the 14th and especially during the 17th centuries, it was felt that the Carmelite Order should have a founder just as the Dominicans and Franciscans had. This meant finding someone who could be credited with the canonical foundation of the Order and from whom an unbroken succession of superiors had followed, down to the time when the Order emerged from the mists of legend into the full light of history. The obvious and most prestigious choice was the Prophet Elijah. The thesis that he in fact founded the Carmelite Order was heroically but unsuccessfully defended. The defense failed for the simple reason that the position was untenable. The modern historian can without any embarrassment take the position that Elijah is not a founder in the canonical sense but a transcendent model whose spiritual influence in moulding the outlook of the Carmelite Order was considerable indeed and is of long standing. Surely this is honour enough. Furthermore, the book in which the influence of Elijah is outlined, *The Institution of the First Monks*, remains an important document in the spirituality of Carmel, no matter what may be said of the book's origins. With these two facts, we can be well content.

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(See *Journey to Carith*, 1966, pp.85-88; also *Les Plus Vieux Textes*, pp.99 foil. In *Mount Carmel*, Summer 1957, there is a good article by Victor Roefs on the origins of the Carmelite Order. See also the exhaustive study by Elias Friedman O.C.D.: *The Latin Hermits of Mount Carmel*, Rome 1979. This book is probably the last word in the great controversy.)

CARMELITE HISTORICAL STUDIES

At this stage, it will be relevant to insert a short review of Carmelite historians and the work they have been doing since the turn of the century.

THE NEW APPROACH

During the 19th century, a new approach to history was developed. This new outlook can be seen as one of the more commendable aspects of the rationalism which was widespread at the time. In general, the new approach stressed the necessity of establishing facts and interpreting them objectively. The historian's role was sometimes compared with that of someone restoring a damaged mosaic. Many of the parts have been lost, many more are buried in the ground. The historian's task is to search for all the fragments he can find, to verify that they are genuine and to replace them where they belong. If gaps occur, it is possible, with painstaking research and judicious inferences, to form a reasonably good idea of what should be inserted. From the finished product, we come to know and appreciate the past.

Careful research and discriminating criticism were a feature of historical writing during the 19th century. As far as the history of the Catholic Church is concerned, the new approach received sanction in 1883, when Pope Leo opened the Vatican archives to scholars (see his Apostolic Letter *In Defense of Historical Truth*, August 18th 1883). He quotes Our Lord's words: 'The truth shall make you free' (John 8,32) and Cicero's famous saying: 'The first law of history is not to dare to tell a lie; the second law is not to fear to tell the truth' (*de Oratore* 2,62).

The Dominican, Heinrich Denifle (1844-1905) is a good example of the new style Catholic historian.

For studies in historical method see: Freeman: *The Methods of Historical Study* (London 1886), Langlois: *Introduction aux Etudes historiques* (Paris 1905), de Smoot;

Introductio generalis ad historiam ecclesiasticam (Ghent 1876), Delahaye: *Legends of the Saints* (London 1907), Lamprecht: *What is History?* (New York 1905). Dutcher, Allison and others *A Guide to Historical Literature* (New York 1932). For a summary of the position within the Carmelite Order, see *Santi del Carmelo*, pp.1-108 (Rome 1972): *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* a.v. History.

TWO PIONEERS

The impact of this new spirit was not felt in the Carmelite Order for some time. Indeed, it can be said that at the turn of the century, historical studies in the Order were not in a very flourishing state. 'The history of the Order was approached in a spirit of devotion rather than of objective criticism. Received traditions were regarded as truths to be defended and not scrutinized. Ancient controversies were recalled, only to make the point that those who attack the traditions of the Order are always vanquished' (see *Bibliography of Benedict Zimmerman* by Fr. Edmond Smith, a.e.D. p.5). It was in this kind of atmosphere that two pioneering scholars began to work, Fr. Benedict Zimmerman, O.C.D. and Fr. Gabriel Wessels, O.Carm.

Probably the first to approach the study of Carmelite history with a genuine critical sense, was Fr. Benedict Zimmerman. His work is a landmark in Carmelite historical studies. Born in Zurich, Switzerland, on March 21st, 1859, he was the son of a Zwinglian clergyman. Baptized George Rudolph Zimmerman, being called after his father, his background was strongly clerical and literary.

At the age of 15, he began to doubt the truth of his Church and to study the claims of Catholicism. On July 29th, 1877, he became a Catholic, with the consequence of being obliged to leave home. After a few years' employment in France, he moved to London in 1885, frequenting the Carmelite Church in Kensington, and by the end of the same year being received as a novice in the Order. He was professed in 1886 and ordained June 15th, 1889.

During the following years, he filled various offices in the Province, novice-master, prior and Definitior. For about a year,

he was Vicar-Provincial of the Anglo-Irish Province, following the death of the Provincial, Fr. Cyril Ryan in 1935.

He died quietly and, unexpectedly on August 7th 1937, being then over 78 years (see Smith, *Bibliography* pp. 3-5: *Anal. D.C.D.*, 1937, pp.182-185: *Carmel*, Dublin, 1937, p.287: *The Month*, 1937, pp.268-270).

Exclusive of personal letters and some unpublished material, Fr. Benedict Zimmerman wrote 190 items in all. He had a versatile mind and pursued a variety of interests including music, though he had a poor singing voice. But his special gift was for historical research and in this he was outstanding. He wrote 2 books, and many articles. He edited several other books and articles and also contributed prefaces or notes to many others. He wrote a number of scholarly reviews including all the articles on Carmelite topics in the old *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 27 of them, including one in the Supplement in 1911. He was equally at home when writing in Latin, English, French or German and several of his articles were translated into Italian and Spanish. His first literary effort was an article on the *Codex Sangallensis*, written when he was only 17. His last, a short review, came out a few months before his death.

Fr. Gabriel Wessels, O.Carm., came from the Dutch Province, of his Order and devoted his life to historical research. He was appointed editor of the *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum*, when this publication was founded in 1909. He retained this post until 1937, shortly before he died. He did excellent work in publishing or editing documents that had a bearing on the history of the Order. Occasionally, he collaborated with Fr. Zimmerman in editing texts, for example the *Acts of the General Chapters from 1318.1593* (Rome 1912). With admirable diligence, the two scholars collected all available evidence concerning the origins of the Order and its later developments. Subsequent generations of scholars have been able to profit by their labours, in no small degree.

Mention should also be made of a non-Carmelite historian, Dr. Clemens Kopp, Professor at the University of Paderborn, who in 1929 published in German a critical study of the Elianic Origins of the Carmelite Order, *Elias und Christentum auf dem Karmel* (for reviews, see *Anal. O.C.D.* volA, pp.204 foll., also *Etudes Carmel*, April 1931).

In addition to the laborious task of research and interpretation, these pioneers had to swim against a strong current of prejudice. In one of his letters, dated 1904, Fr. Benedict Zimmerman wrote: 'I know I shall give offence to narrowminded men and also to those who are too large-minded. But the time has come when many unfounded and untenable traditions which were formerly almost de fide, must be re-considered in the light of modern historical methods. Our predecessors, Lezana, Philip of the Trinity and others, have rendered us the worst possible service by landing us in an intolerable position and nothing but a frank repudiation can save us' (cf. Smith; *op. cU.*, p. 5). In pursuance of this policy, Fr. Zimmerman examined documents and writings concerning Carmelite history and concluded that many of them were not authentic. As a result, he called for re-thinking on the Order's early history, the story of the Scapular vision and the Sabbatine Bull.

Not surprisingly, these new attitudes 'met with opposition. On occasion, he was severely attacked, accused of being lacking in love for the Order etc. (cf. *EtudesCarmelit.* 1911, pp.5-23). But he maintained, and rightly, that if no evidence were forthcoming to support a tradition or privilege then in the interests of truth, it should be discarded. Legends, no matter how picturesque, are not needed to boost the Order's identity.

A CORRECTION

I feel it desirable however, to correct an impression, still rather widespread, that Fr. Zimmerman was actively persecuted for his views during much of his life. It is true that he ran into opposition and encountered a great lack of sympathy during part

of his career (and he was the type of person who felt this keenly). But, to be perfectly truthful (as he himself so often advocated), there was little vindictive hostility. Furthermore, he tended to provoke opposition by his lack of sympathy with views which did not coincide with his own. For instance, it is not quite fair to Lezana and Philip of the Trinity to say that they have rendered us 'the worst possible service.' Nor was an outright repudiation necessary 'in order to save us.' If Fr. Zimmerman had tactfully allowed the texts to speak for themselves, it is very likely that there would have been relatively little hostile reaction. This was the policy of Fr. Wessels and he incurred ~most no censure. Also, Fr. Zimmerman, according to those who knew him well, was somewhat inclined to high-light his own trials. This can be seen from the letter quoted above in which he dramatically offers himself as a victim for truth. It also comes through in certain marginal comments which he wrote into his own copy of the *Monumenta Historica Carmelitana* now in Rome. The fact

that he was Vicar-Provini.a1 of his Province and that *Anale~ta* .
o. *C.D.* published some 20 of his articles,. almost to the very end of his life, proves that there was no deep-seated hostility(see however, *Anal. OCD* 1927, p.145, for a mild repudiation of certain views of Fr. Zimmerman on the Scapular).

SINCE THE TIME OF FR. ZIMMERMAN

The efforts of Fr. Benedict Zimmerman and Fr. Gabriel Wessels have borne fruit in recent decades. Other scholars have been able to work on the material assembled by them 'with a view to publishing in the future an authentic history of the Order,' to quote the words of their mandate (*Anal. OC* Vol. I, 1909).

The principal name in immediate succession to these two pioneers was Fr. Bartholomew F.M. Xiberta,O.Carm., who until the time of his death, was a respected spokesman of the Carmelite Order on matters historical. He died in 1967, aged 70 years. His best-known writing was on the Scapular, published in 1950. It is a work of great erudition and ingenuity. However, in the opinion of most historians, it fails in its purpose.

In the meantime, the two branches of the Carmelite Order have set up historical institutes. The O.Carm branch has worked mainly on the early history of the Order, and has produced such fine historians as Fr. Victor Roefs, Fr. Ludovico Saggi, Fr. Joachim Smet, Fr. Adrian Staring, Fr. Otger Steggink, all members of O.Carm. A good sample of their work is *Santi del Carmelo* (Rome 1972). Produced in collaboration with the Discalced, it is a collection of critical biographies of Carmelite saints and beati.

The Teresian branch of the Carmelite Order also has its Historical Institute which concentrates ~mainly on the history of the Order since the time of St. Teresa. It can be said that the new approach to Teresian history began in 1904, with the publication of *Le P. Jerome-Gratien et ses Juges*, by P. Gregoire O.C.D. This work re-examined the entire story of St. Teresa's great friend and concluded that he had been treated most unjustly. A little later, Fr. Silverio began his historical writings, culminating in *Historia del Carmen Descalzo* (15 volumes) and his monumental edition of Discalced Carmelite writings. The *Historia* began publication in 1935. Others who worked in the same field were Fr. Bruno O.C.D., Fr. Crisogono O.C.D., Fr. Ambrose O.C.D. (Bavarian) and more recently Fr. Ephrem O.C.D.

The Historical Institute, staffed by Fr. Fortunatus O.C.D., Fr. Otilio O.C.D., Fr. Eulogio O.C.D., Fr. Valentino O.C.D., Fr. Bede O.C.D., and others is doing splendid work in editing historical texts which form the groundwork for a history of the Teresian Reform.

CARMELITE HISTORY IN ENGLISH

Credit must go in the first instance to Fr. Patrick Rushe O.D.C. (1866-1922), who began to write the history of the Irish Province of Carmelites and edited an ancient *Ordinale* of our Order which he discovered in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin (see *Etudes Carmel* 1912-1913). As a historian, Fr. Patrick lacks the critical acumen of Fr. Benedict Zimmerman but he deserves acknowledgment for what he accomplished.

In 1926, Fr. P.R. McCaffrey O.Carm., published *The White Friars: An outline of Carmelite History*. While giving Fr. McCaffrey

every credit for the work he put into his book (it is a pioneering attempt in English), it must be regretfully classified as immature, being full of both errors and lacunae (see a severe review of it in *Anal. OCD* 1927, pp.50-52).

A member of the Anglo-Irish Province, Fr. Fintan O'Brien (1887-1962) has done admirable work in assembling material for a history of the Irish Carmelite Province since its inception in 1270. Unfortunately, this material is still unpublished. Fr. Joachim Smet, O.Carm., has begun to publish a Manual of Carmelite History: *The Carmelites from 1220 to the Council of Trent*. It promises to be of good historical quality.

TWO CARMELITE MISSALS

In 1952, an English student of history, Margaret Rickert, published in Chicago a *Reconstructed Carmelite Missal*; from scraps which she discovered in the British Museum. This Missal, written originally between 1387-1393, had been in private hands for a long time. Someone who did not realize its value, cut it up to make a 'common-place book' out of its excellent miniatures. It throws some valuable lights on the Carmelite liturgy of the time.

Another Missal of poorer artistic quality, known as the *Kilcormick Missal*, is to be found in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. It was written in 1485 by the Carmelites of Loughrea and donated to their brethren of Kilcormick, a house which had been founded in 1430. The Missal contains the earliest evidence we have that St. Simon Stock was venerated as a saint (see *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*: Vol. 21, part 10, p.419: Dublin 1900).

EXCAVATIONS ON MOUNT CARMEL

On February 11th, 1958, the Superior General of the O.D.C., Fr. Anastasio, authorized excavations in the locality of the fountain of Elijah, where some ruins could be seen. The project was entrusted to a qualified archeologist, Fr. Bellarmino Bagatti, O.F.M. from the Franciscan School of Biblical Studies

in Jerusalem. "Work began immediately and by June of the same year, Fr. Bagatti was able to report his findings. He discovered the foundation of a small but well-constructed Church, and a belfry. This was the little Church described by a 13th century pilgrim as being very beautiful and dedicated to Our Lady (A.D. 1231). It appears to have been built in two stages, the second being about 1260. The cells of the hermits were built close to the Church. There was a ruined stable close by, with the remains of 13 mangers. Traces of the rings for the cords that tied the animals were also found.

An abundance of pottery, glass and some broken lamps were unearthed. Though not particularly valuable, they help to throw light on the manner of life which our forefathers led in this secluded valley, in the early days of the Order. Two tombs were discovered near the Church.

After Mount Carmel was abandoned by the Carmelites in 1291, the monastery seems to have been used by Moslems and evidence of their occupation has been detected.

This site was acquired once again by the Carmelites in 1881. It is about three miles distant from the present monastery.

Fr. Bagatti's report is to be found in *Acta Ordinis C.D.* 1958, Vol. 10, pp.277 foll. In the second part, he cites all the known references to the ancient monastery, from 1209-1291. (See also *Acta Ordinis* 1961 [1-3], pp.66-70 for more details. There is a summary in *Mount Carmel* Spring 1969, p.155)

CONCLUSION

We can now see that over the past 75 years, the Carmelite Order has come a long way towards writing its own authentic history. It cannot be denied that our older historiographers wrote from a narrow point of view, preoccupied as they were with the glory of the Order and determined at all costs, to trace its origins back to Elijah. It is not to say that their work was totally useless. To them, we owe the preservation of many useful documents. We should also remember that their attitude was common to most religious Orders at the time. But from the time

of the Council of Trent onwards, a sincere effort was made by Catholic historians to present the truth and the whole truth, about the history of religious Orders and their Saints. The well known Dominican theologian, Melchior Cano, a contemporary of St. Teresa, pointed out the inferiority of many of the current *Lives. of the Saints*, in comparison with secular biographies written by ancient historians such as Diogenes Laertius, and Suetonius. This should not be, he' said, saints have no need of fabrications or legends (see R. Aigrain: *L'hagiographie; ses sources, ses methods*: Paris 1953). But it was really only in our own century that the genuine critical approach was adopted by Carmelite historians. For that, thanks are due in no small measure to Fr. Benedict Zimmerman. His work has borne fruit and the new generation of writers is now free to distinguish between fact and fancy. To challenge a belief is no longer looked on as disloyalty to the Order, providing solid reasons can be put forward in support of the criticism. But perhaps the pendulum has swung a little too far in the direction of skepticism. Rationalism is excellent as long as it keeps within its own domain. But it does not provide all the answers. This is one area where the real historian and the psuedo-historian are shown up in their true colours - the insensitive 'debunker' and the iconoclast both delight in smashing everything, under the pretext of revealing the truth. The other kind respects old traditions, even when he knows they are outmoded. These traditions always contain some grain of truth. If they have to be laid aside, it is with reverence and dignity and whatever is true in them is then incorporated into new synthesis. This, we would like to think, is what is taking place when our Carmelite histories are being revised.

There have been many developments since Fr. Benedict Zimmerman laid aside his pen. Indeed, some of his own contributions are now dated. This is what he himself expected. He saw his role as that of a pioneer, trying to cut a new path through the jungle, and it is not surprising if at times he went astray. But anyone who has done even a little research into the past will respect his achievement. His hope was to leave Carmelite historical studies in a better condition than he found them. No one can deny that he achieved this goal (see Smith, *Bibliography*. p.6).