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Simon Stock and the Scapular Vision

by RICHARD COPSEY

St Simon Stock is an elusive thirteenth-century Carmelite saint of whom it may be said that very little is known but about whom much has been written.[1] The details of his life and even the fact of his existence have aroused considerable controversy over the centuries. In part the lack of firm information could be attributed to the fact that, until recently, the early history of the Carmelites, or Whitefriars, was little known and clouded by legendary claims about the order being founded on Mount Carmel by the prophet Elijah. In addition, church historians have tended to focus on the larger and better documented Franciscan and Dominican orders. The Carmelites, although numerically fewer, were nevertheless a significant presence in medieval England comprising at their peak some thirty-nine communities and a total approaching 1,000 friars.[2] Fortunately, in the past few years, the quantity of published research on Carmelite history has increased significantly.[3]

The traditional account of Simon Stock

The first recognisable account of the Simon Stock legend is to be found in a brief catalogue of Carmelite saints included in the *Viridarium*, composed

[1] The majority of sources and references used here can be found in two seminal works: Bartholomeus M. Xiberta OCarm., *De visione S. Simonis Stock*, Rome 1950, and Ludovico Saggi OCarm., *La 'Bolla Sabatina': ambiente, testo, tempo*, Rome 1967. The major conclusions of Xiberta's book were reprinted in English as *Saint Simon Stock (Simon of England): VII. centenary scapular vision 1251–1951*, Faversham 1951. Saggi's essay originally appeared in *Carmelus* xiii (1966), 245–302, and xiv (1967), 63–89, but reference here is to the revised text as printed in *La 'Bolla Sabatina'*. Bede Edwards reviewed the evidence in his 'A memorandum concerning the celebration of the feast of Saint Simon Stock as provincial patron in the English House of the Discalced Carmelite Anglo-Irish province of Saint Simon Stock and Saint Patrick', *Sword* xxxix (1979), iii. 34–50. This article includes 'Observations by Fr Adrian Staring OCarm. on the above Memorandum' (pp. 43–8). (Translations of the sources are by the present writer unless otherwise noted).

[2] Keith Egan, 'The establishment and early development of the Carmelite order in England,' unpubl. PhD diss. Cambridge 1965, 146–7.

[3] See Richard Copsey, 'The medieval Anglo-Welsh province: an annotated bibliography', in P. Fitzgerald-Lombard (ed.), *Carmel in Britain*, Rome 1992, i. 205–50.

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sometime between 1413 and 1426, by the prior-general, Jean Grossi.[4] His brief entry for Simon Stock is as follows:

> The ninth was saint Simon of England, the sixth prior general. He begged the most glorious Mother of God that she would give some privilege to the Carmelite Order which rejoiced in bearing the title of the Virgin, reciting in a very fervent voice:
>
> Flower of Carmel, blossoming vine, splendour of heaven child-bearing Virgin, Unequalled.
> Tender Mother, Whom no man didst know To the Carmelites Give privileges Star of the sea.
>
> To him the blessed Virgin appeared, surrounded by a multitude of angels and bearing the scapular of the order in her blessed hands, saying: 'May this be to you and to all the Carmelites a pledge, that whoever dies wearing it will not suffer eternal fire, that is, wearing this, he will be saved.' This holy general Simon, while he was visiting the province of Gascony, departed this life in the convent at Bordeaux where his body was buried. And therefore by some he is called Simon of Gascony and by others Simon of Bordeaux, but he is rightly called holy Simon of England for that is where he was born.

Grossi's account, although short, includes most of the traditional elements: Simon is a prior-general who prays to the Virgin Mary for assistance, saying the *Flos Carmeli*, and the Virgin appears in a vision, and promises that whoever wears the Carmelite scapular[5] will be saved. Later Simon visits Gascony and dies in Bordeaux. The one major item lacking is the surname 'Stock'.

The historical difficulties

The historical problem with the Simon Stock legend is that Simon is generally supposed to have died in 1265 and Grossi's account was written around 150 years later. The difficulty in finding any contemporary evidence for his existence was charitably summed up some years ago by David Knowles: 'St Simon Stock is without doubt the most elusive personality in a group of eminent Englishmen of his time, ... of whose life and character we know almost nothing.'[6] In fact, throughout the centuries, Simon Stock's life has been the subject of considerable speculation and fierce debate; many of the defenders of the traditional

[4] John Grossi, *Viridarium*, printed in *Speculum Carmelitarum*, ed. Joannes Baptista de Cathaneis OCarm., Venice 1507, fos 102v–3.

[5] The scapular is a long narrow piece of cloth with a hole for the head worn over the tunic and reaching down to the ankles in front and behind. Its original purpose was probably as an apron protecting the tunic from dirt and stains. When worn by lay people as a devotion it is commonly reduced to two small squares of cloth which rest on the chest and back, held in place by two tapes passing over the shoulders.

[6] David Knowles OSB, *The religious orders in England*, Cambridge 1948, i. 197.

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story being inspired, it must be admitted, more by pious devotion or religious loyalty rather than by objective scientific research.

In 1950 Bartolomeo Xiberta OCarm. published, in a meticulous compilation of texts, all the known references to Simon Stock and the scapular vision.[7] Although he found a number of late fourteenth-century sources, the overall result of all his efforts was, from an historical point of view, somewhat meagre and disappointing. Apart from an ambiguous thirteenth-century Dominican reference, his earliest evidence for Simon Stock was, at best, more than 100 years after his supposed death. In spite of subsequent extensive research in the surviving English thirteenth-century sources, no contemporary references to Simon Stock have been found. Keith Egan, who studied the establishment of the Carmelite order in England, was forced to write: 'In the investigations undertaken for this thesis not one contemporary reference has been found for Simon Stock'.[8] In fact, apart from some fifteenth-century references in Carmelite writings, Simon Stock is totally unknown in England before the Reformation. His name does not feature in any of the early lists of English saints, such as John of Tynemouth's fourteenth-century *Sanctilogium*, nor in the enlarged edition printed by Wynkyn de Worde as the *Nova legenda Anglie* (1516).[9] Similarly, Simon's alleged vision of the Virgin Mary is absent from any of the collections of Marian miracles.[10]

The earliest evidence for Simon Stock

There are three early sources which refer to Simon Stock. The first is a catalogue of priors-general composed by that same Jean Grossi. This exists in two versions, an earlier one, written sometime around 1390 when Grossi was prior-general of the Avignon part of the order during the papal schism, and a revised version composed between 1417 and 1430, after Grossi's election as prior-general of the whole re-united order. The earlier version contains a brief entry for Simon Stock: 'Brother Simon Stock of the English province, who was buried at Bordeaux and worked many miracles; he died on the 16 May as is recorded in the calendar of the ordinal of the convent of Orange.'[11] Sadly, the ordinal which Grossi saw in Orange has perished but it must be dated after the foundation of the house in 1307, although some of the information it contained could

[7] Xiberta, *De visione*.

[8] Egan, *Carmelite order in England*, 57 n. 1. Other Carmelite historians, such as P. McCaffrey and Benedict Zimmerman, have also searched the records without success.

[9] Reprinted as *Nova legenda Anglie*, ed. Carl Horstman, Oxford 1901.

[10] For example, Balliol College, Oxford, MS Misc. theol. 230, contains two collections of miracles by the Virgin Mary (43 in one, 21 in other) but neither mentions Simon Stock.

[11] Adrian Staring OCarm., *Medieval Carmelite heritage: early reflections on the nature of the order*, Rome 1989, 323.

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have been based on earlier records.[12] The noteworthy omission in the text is any mention of the scapular vision.

A second, apparently independent, reference occurs in a necrology which belonged to the Carmelite house in Florence. This was composed by Giovanni Bartoli who died in 1396, at the age of eighty-six, having been professed for sixty-eight years. Staring, in a recent evaluation of the necrology, suggests that Bartoli commenced it around 1374 or before.[13] However, from the entries it is clear that Bartoli made use of earlier information. Typically, the entries relating to the thirteenth century are short and include only a name (sometimes a surname), birthplace and the phrase 'de antiquis'. For Simon Stock, the earliest prior-general recorded, the wording is:

> 16 May Brother Simon Stoh of the English province was prior general and a holy man and worked many miracles: he is buried at Bordeaux in the province of Gascony.[14]

Once again, there is no mention of the scapular vision and, apart from an Italian copyist's attempt at the surname 'Stock', the wording is close to that of the Orange ordinal, suggesting a common tradition. Staring proposed that the similarity was due to the fact that, on the death of a prior-general, notices would be circulated throughout the order so that the required prayers or *suffragia* could be said. The communities at Florence and Orange would appear to have copied these details into their calendars.[15]

The cult in Bordeaux

Both the Orange and Florence references claim that Simon Stock died in Bordeaux and later elaborations of the legend add that, after his death, a shining light was seen around his tomb and many miracles took place. These embellishments bear all the marks of a typical medieval hagiography[16] but there is historical evidence for a well-established popular cult at Bordeaux with a tradition of pilgrimages to Simon's tomb. The prior-general, Henry Silvio, visiting Bordeaux in 1604, noted:

> The body of St Simon Stock is contained intact in a painted casket, set in an

[12] Idem, 'Notes on a list of Carmelite houses in medieval France', *Carmelius* xi (1964), 153. [13] Idem, *Medieval Carmelite heritage*, 315. [14] Ibid. 324.
[15] Ibid. 316.
[16] Similar effects are said to have occurred after the death of Thomas Netter in 1430: 'magister brother Thomas Walden performed a miracle in the convent of Rouen after his death and many saw a light appear around his tomb during the night with five bright rays. However, some of the brethren fearing that they would incur some onerous obligations because of the holiness of this man, hid the tomb and removed all traces of it': BL, MS Harley 1819, fo. 117, copied by Bale on a visit to France in 1526.

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elevated position in a special chapel. This saint is held in the greatest veneration in the city, and his office is said in our convent on May 16. It is true that because of wars and devastation by heretics of the convent which was built 500 years ago, first outside the city, then transferred to its present location inside the city, as can be most clearly shown, there are no writings or documents concerning the saint who was our general, and the relics are venerated only by tradition. There are still in this province religious of 85 and 90 years of age who testify that the aforementioned relics were always venerated and held to be those of St Simon Stock. A duplex office was composed in his honour, as can be proved by the very ancient choral books which contain the proper office of St Simon all in chant.[17]

Silvio's statement would date the devotion to Simon Stock to at least the early 1500s. However, earlier evidence can be found in a life of Simon Stock composed in 1500 by Menaldus of the Rosary, prior of Bordeaux. At the end, after describing Simon's death in Bordeaux, Menaldus concludes:

After some days, the most merciful God wishing to praise and magnify his beloved Simon Stock, a vivid light shone forth at night from his tomb so that it seemed to be full day. His frightened brothers turned to the archbishop of the city. The archbishop, amazed at this new miracle, called together the clergy and people, for the light had already frightened the brothers for fifteen days. The archbishop arrived in a procession with a great company of religious and ordered the gravestone to be removed; a great perfume came forth and the bones shone like gold. The pious archbishop placed the bones in an urn, and ordered that such a treasure should be preserved with great care. And many miracles were worked at that time which, because they would be tedious reading, I will omit.

This was related to me by two of the venerable fathers of our convent in Bordeaux, of whom one was a hundred years or more of age, brother Peter Comitis, and the other ninety years or so, brother John Fortis. This very year (which is 1500) brother Augerius de Vineis, doctor of sacred theology, has built a chapel and shrine for Simon Stock, in the same convent of Bordeaux.[18]

The evidence of the two old brothers in Bordeaux must refer to the miracles worked at the tomb which took place in later years and their witness would date the existence of a local cult to Simon Stock back to the early 1400s. The focus of the devotion, though, appears to be on the relics of Simon Stock with their miraculous powers.

A later witness is Martinien Pannetier, one-time prior of Bordeaux who perished on the guillotine in 1794. Pannetier wrote two short works, *La Vie de St Simon Stock* and *Instructions pour la Confrérie de Notre-Dame du Mont-Carmel*, intended for the lay members of the Carmelite Third Order. These were very popular and were reprinted numerous times well into the 1800s. They are filled with the usual legendary details, many drawn from Menaldus of the Rosary, but, in chapter xii, Pannetier records some of the miracles worked at the tomb, one of which concerns a former prior:

[17] Joachim Smet OCarm., *The Carmelites*, Darien, Ill. 1982, iii/1, 105.
[18] BL, MS Harley 1819, fo. 132, copied by Bale in Bordeaux in 1526.

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the Rev. Father Pierre Ratigui, prior of the convent of the Carmelites of Bordeaux, was at death's door due to a deadly illness, abandoned by the doctors and without the hope of recovery. He was moved to place himself under the protection of St Simon Stock and he asked to be carried into the saint's chapel where he assisted at mass which was celebrated in honour of the saint. During the mass, he held in his hand a lighted candle, entrusting himself with confidence to the intercession of his protector. When the mass ended, his prayers were completely fulfilled: he was immediately cured and restored to his former good health.[19]

Raimon de Ratigny is known to have been prior in 1614, so this miracle must have taken place around this date.[20] What is significant is that the prior, wishing to be cured, does not turn to the scapular but to the relics of Simon Stock: he is carried into the chapel in order to be near the tomb. Although fairly late, the story would seem to preserve the original focus of the cult which was based on miracles occurring at the tomb.

In 1423 some relics of Simon Stock were given to the Carmelite convent at Ghent and fortunately the letter which accompanied the gift has been preserved:[21]

To each and every committed Christian, reading, hearing or seeing these letters, may it be known that we brother John de Burgh, Vicar General of the convent of Bordeaux of the Order of the Blessed Mother of God and Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel and William Costall, local prior of the same convent, *magistri* in the sacred sciences and trustworthy men, declare truthfully without any ambiguity or the least trace of doubt or qualification, etc.
Then, first they recount the saintly life of Simon and the benefits conferred on the convent of Bordeaux by him through his miracles: And after he was taken from our midst, his life was approved clearly through the wonders and many miracles which took place.
Then follows the testimony accompanying the gift of the relics: Since the maker of all things wished that, through the passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ and through the merits of the saints, the Catholic Church and the provinces and kingdoms of this world should be enlightened, therefore brother John Hazeiaghere, the bearer of these letters, of the same Order and from the French Province, a religious man and of proven character, as we know from other experienced persons, and devoted to this saint, has humbly asked us if we would consider him worthy to receive some of the relics of St Simon that he might carry them to his Province to the glory of God and the praise of St Simon. We therefore moved by paternal piety, wishing with all zeal to serve the Province of France and being willing to be moved by his request, we give to the said brother John Hazieaghere the arm

[19] M. Pannetier, *La vie de S. Simon Stock*, published with *Instructions pour la confrérie de Notre-Dame du Mont-Carmel*, Bordeaux 1779, 194–5.

[20] Charles Chauliac, 'Le couvent des Grands Carmes de Bordeaux', in *Un martyr bordelais sous la terreur: vie et mort du R. P. Pannetier*, Paris–Bordeaux 1877, 306.

[21] Arnold Bostius OCarm., *De patronatu beate et gloriose virginis genetricis Dei Marie de monte Carmeli* (1471), in Daniel a Virgine Maria OCarm., *Speculum Carmelitanum*, Antwerp 1680, i. 415.

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of this saint, two ribs and a part of his throat. And possessing these holy relics, we ask that they shall be received with devotion and in good faith, and put in an honoured place, so that in this, God may be praised in everything for ever and ever. In witness to all this, the official seal of the Vicar and Prior, here present, have been attached … from our convent of Bordeaux, the 4 November 1423 AD.[22]

Although the text is incomplete, it is remarkable that the letter contains no mention of the scapular vision. Instead it refers to the many wonders and miracles which took place after Simon Stock's death, showing divine approval for his holy life.

The earliest historical evidence for Simon Stock so far describes a prior-general with a reputation for holiness, who died at Bordeaux. After his death, miracles took place at his tomb giving rise to a local cult. Such a beginning indicates why he seems to have been known, variously, as Simon of Bordeaux or Simon of England. However, the surprising aspect of these early sources is the lack of any early reference to a vision of the Virgin Mary or a scapular promise. The cult of Simon in Bordeaux seems to have arisen around the miracle-working grave of a holy man and the scapular vision does not feature there until after 1423.

Simon Stock as prior-general

Before discussing the emergence of the story of the scapular vision, some attention needs to be given to the period in which it is claimed that Simon Stock was prior-general. In theory, it should be possible to identify the years when he held office but the thirteenth-century records of the order are sketchy and the earliest lists of priors-general begin with Ralph Alemanus in 1271.[23] Only later are other figures such as Nicholas the Frenchman, Alan and Simon Stock added. Nicholas is known to have convened the general chapter at Toulouse in 1266 and to have held office from then until replaced by Ralph in 1271.[24] Similarly, from contemporary documents, a 'brother Godfrey' is known to have been prior-general in 1249 and was possibly still in office in 1254. Hence, the idea that Simon Stock was elected general at Aylesford in 1247, a claim which is often repeated even in modern accounts of the order, must be rejected.

[22] *Vinea Carmeli seu historia Eliani Ordinis*, ed. Daniel a Virgine Maria OCarm., Antwerp 1662, 428–9 (italics in the original).

[23] See Staring's introduction to the lists of general chapters in *Medieval Carmelite heritage*, 293–325. Ralph Alemanus is the name in common use but Staring suggests that the 'Alemanus' is a corruption of 'Alnevicus', i.e. from Alnwick, Northumberland. Almost certainly he should be identified with Ralph Fryston who was described as prior-general when given a safe-conduct to go overseas on 2 Aug 1276: *Calendar of patent rolls 1272–1281*, 158.

[24] For Nicholas see Adrian Staring OCarm., 'Nicolai prioris generalis ordinis Carmelitarum "Ignea Sagitta"', *Carmelus* ix (1962), 245–55; for the early priors-general see idem, *Medieval Carmelite heritage*, 287–90, and Smet, *The Carmelites*, i. 22–4.

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Joachim Smet suggests that Simon may have been elected prior-general in the succeeding general chapter which took place in London in 1254 and held office until the election of Nicholas the Frenchman in 1266.[25] No evidence survives on the prior-general for this period although Jean Grossi's list contains not one but two candidates. Apart from Simon Stock whose details occurred in the ordinal in Orange, he gives an 'Alan', whose name he found in another ordinal in Cologne. If his sources are reliable then Godfrey could have been succeeded as general by Alan, followed at some unknown date by Simon Stock who died in office in Bordeaux in 1265.[26]

The emergence of the scapular vision

The earliest accounts of the scapular vision are found in a fifteenth- or late fourteenth-century catalogue of Carmelite saints and any attempt to uncover the development of the vision needs to start with the different versions of this catalogue. In his study of Simon Stock, Xiberta discussed the catalogue in detail and published the earliest surviving texts.[27] The catalogue exists in four versions which Xiberta called the abbreviated, the brief, the common long and the Paris long versions.[28] The abbreviated version differs from the other three in that the entries are more numerous, shorter and are grouped in a quasi-liturgical manner, following the sequence: John the Baptist, Old Testament figures, popes, patriarchs, bishops, martyrs, holy men, priors-general etc. Each entry is prefaced by a Scripture quotation which includes the word 'Carmel'. The other three versions have the saints in chronological order and omit the Scripture quotations.

[25] Ibid. i. 22–3. Before he retired, Staring was preparing an article on the early priors-general; in an earlier publication, he traced out the sequence described here: *Observations*, 47.

[26] Simon Stock may have been born in Bordeaux, to one of the many English merchant families there. This would be an added reason for his visit and the growth of a local cult. However, the Carmelite house there was not founded until just before 1264, so he must have joined the order elsewhere, possibly in the Holy Land.

[27] Xiberta, *De visione*, 281–313. All quotations in this article are translations from this text.

[28] The earliest surviving copies of the catalogue are found in the following manuscripts: Abbreviated catalogue: Brussels, BN, MS 2223 (copied by Christian Buchs in 1471). Later works based on this version were written by Laurence Bureau (d. 1504) and John Currifex (1510); Short version: John Grossi, *Viridarium*, printed in *Speculum ordinis fratrum Carmelitarum*, ed. Joannes Baptista de Cathaneis OCarm., Venice 1507, fos 101–4, and copied with some additions in Thomas Scrope OCarm., *Libellus de institutione fratrum Carmelitarum ordinis* (*c.* 1464), CUL, MS Ff. 6.11, fos 16–23; Long version: Bodl. Lib., Oxford, MS Laud 722 (S.C. 1174) (copied by Richard Paston in 1426; Bibl. Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, MS theol. 218 (fifteenth century); Paris long version: Paris, BN, MS Lat. 5615 (beginning fifteenth century).

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The earliest manuscripts are all from the beginning of the fifteenth century except the single surviving copy of the abbreviated version which was copied in 1471. The entries for Simon Stock give a good insight into the progressive development of the legend. The shortest occurs in the abbreviated version of the catalogue:

> **Saint Simon**, an Englishman of great holiness and devotion, who always begged the Virgin in his prayers that she would bestow some special privilege on his order. To him, the Virgin appeared carrying a scapular in her hands and said: 'Let this be a pledge to you and to your brethren: whoever dies wearing it shall be saved.'[29]

There are a number of unexpected features in this account: Simon is not given a surname, he is described as a holy man but with no mention of his having been a prior-general (in the catalogue he is placed among the holy men and not with the other priors-general), there is no date or indication when he lived, and no reference to his death in Bordeaux. The account describes simply a holy man, Simon, to whom the Virgin Mary appeared with the scapular and made a promise.[30]

The second 'brief' version of the catalogue is that edited by Jean Grossi, (quoted earlier) and in that many of the missing elements are added. Simon Stock is now a prior-general, he prays the *Flos Carmeli*, there is an expanded scapular promise from the Virgin Mary, Simon visits Gascony and dies at Bordeaux, and Grossi adds an explanation of his different names. The one major item lacking is his surname 'Stock.'

The origins of the catalogue of Carmelite saints

Bartolomeo Xiberta and Adrian Staring both concluded that the abbreviated version was probably based on the lost *Legendae abbreviatae* of John of Hildesheim.[31] Cosmas de Villiers lists this title among Hildesheim's writings in his *Bibliotheca Carmelitana*, although it is not noted in earlier sources.[32] Nothing is known about its contents or date of composition although it must date from before Hildesheim's death on 5 May 1375. The reasons given for identifying the abbreviated version of the catalogue of

[29] Xiberta, *De visione*, 311 (Scripture text omitted). The 'Simon' in this account will be referred to as 'holy Simon' to distinguish him from the prior-general, Simon Stock.

[30] On this as the earliest version, Ludovico Saggi's comments are still apposite: 'as it is unthinkable that the briefest text should omit details of significant importance on any saint simply for the sake of brevity, therefore one has to conclude that if these are missing in a particular version then this must be the result of its greater age': *Santi del Carmelo*, Rome 1972, 320–1.

[31] Xiberta, *De visione*, 202–4; Staring, *Medieval Carmelite heritage*, 332–5. The following paragraphs are based largely on Staring's conclusions.

[32] Cosmas de Villiers OCarm., *Bibliotheca Carmelitana*, Orléans 1752, repr. Rome 1927, ii. 6.

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saints with the lost *Legendae abbreviatae* are made on stylistic and intrinsic grounds. Stylistically, it follows Hildesheim's habit (as in his *Dialogus* and other surviving works) of applying the title 'Carmelite' to the Old Testament saints who feature in the order's legendary history, of inserting short metrical passages and of constantly citing sources. Intrinsically the text repeats various historical inaccuracies which occur in Hildesheim such as Peter Thomas being given the title of patriarch of Antioch (instead of Constantinople) etc.[33] In fact, the wording used for some of the early Old Testament figures appears to be derived from the earlier *Speculum* by Jean Cheminot (1337) and the entries follow the same sequence.[34] However, there is no evidence that the catalogue itself was in existence before Hildesheim, and Xiberta's later claim that its origins go back to the early 1300s should be dismissed.[35]

The single surviving version of the abbreviated catalogue of 1471 includes many details which could not have been in the original text. An entry for Anthony of Hungary must be very late as he was not martyred until 1462.[36] The entry for Andrew Corsini (d. 6 Jan. 1374) contains some lines composed by Coluccio Salutati which are inscribed on the saint's tomb in Florence erected in 1386.[37] More important for the argument here, the scapular vision is not mentioned in Hildesheim's major polemical work, the *Dialogus*, composed in 1374 or earlier, and appears to be unknown to him.[38] Hence the 'holy Simon' entry would seem to have been added later. It is possible to conjecture that Hildesheim learnt of the vision after composing the *Dialogus*, but there are other reasons for thinking that the account is by a later hand.

In the abbreviated catalogue, there are three entries which are linked to that of 'holy Simon': these are for three laymen, the only such included, King Louis of France, King Edward II of England and Henry of Grosmont, first duke of Lancaster. Each is said to have died clothed in the habit of the order:

Saint Louis, king of France, who when he had captured the Holy Land brought the brothers of the order from Mount Carmel back to the west with him and

[33] Cf. L. Saggi, *S. Angelo de Sicilia: studio sulla vita, devozione, folklore*, Rome 1962, 24–5.

[34] Jean de Cheminot, *Speculum fratrum*, end of ch. i: 'The lives of these and other saints, of the New and Old Testament, who were members of this religious order, I omit for the moment in order not to weary the reader with too much detail', quoted in Staring, *Medieval Carmelite heritage*, 120.

[35] Xiberta, *De visione*, 205–7. Later Xiberta claimed to have discovered another manuscript which revealed 'traces of an edition not yet influenced by Stephen de Salignac. The sanctoral must have emerged in the first decades of the 14th century': G. Gava and A. Coan OCarm., *Carmelo: profilo, storia, uomini e cose*, Rome 1951, 10. Saggi, though, expressed his doubts on the existence of this manuscript which was never cited and has never been traced: *Santi del Carmelo*, 93–4 n. 248.

[36] Bodl. Lib., MS Bodley 73, fo. 16v.

[37] Staring, *Medieval Carmelite heritage*, 334.

[38] Ibid. 328.

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established them, some in Paris and some in other places. Thus the order had its beginnings in the west and afterwards Louis died clothed in the habit of the order.

Saint Edward, king of England, who on account of his great devotion always turned to the glorious Virgin. Hearing that the brothers of the blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel had been brought across the seas, he sought diligently to have a foundation and gave them his own palace in Oxford as a convent. Finally, at his own wish, he was clothed in the habit of their order when he died.

Saint Henry, first duke of Lancaster, a man of outstanding holiness, when he learnt of the miracle and privilege shown by the glorious Virgin to saint Simon, namely that whoever died wearing the scapular would be saved, always himself wore the scapular of the order. Whence he showed his great devotion to the blessed Virgin. At length, he died and was clothed in the complete holy habit.

The entry for Henry of Grosmont, first duke of Lancaster, claims explicitly that he wore the scapular after having heard of the vision, and the other two entries refer to being buried in the habit of the order so it seems likely that all three are linked to the entry for St Simon and the scapular vision.

At this point, a logical deduction would be that an account of an Englishman who had a vision coupled with entries for two prominent English nobles was the invention of an Englishman but a closer examination of the texts is revealing. The claim in the entry for Edward II (d. 1327) that he brought the Carmelites to England after hearing of their arrival in the west would have been nonsense to an English Carmelite. Edward II did not ascend the throne until 1307, by which time the province numbered twenty-eight houses (out of a final total of thirty-nine). However, Edward's gift of Beaumont Palace in 1318 was recorded in the English chronicles[39] and would have been widely known in Carmelite circles even outside England.

The addition of Henry of Grosmont (d. 1361) as a Carmelite 'saint' is puzzling. One of Edward III's leading nobles, he played an active part in the wars against the French and the Scots and was famous throughout Europe for his prowess as a knight and for his chivalry. However, although generous in his gifts to the Church, he is not known to have favoured the Carmelites and his major benefaction was to a hospital for fifty old persons in Leicester, founded by his brother, where he chose to be buried.

The third lay entry, King Louis IX (d. 1270), relates how he was the first to bring the Carmelites from Mount Carmel to the west. This was a

[39] *Chronicon Galfridi le Baker*, ed. M. Thomson, Oxford 1889, 9: *Chronicles of the reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. W. Stubbs, London 1882–3, ii. 300. The gift is said to have been the result of a vow to the Virgin Mary made whilst Edward was fleeing from the battle of Bannockburn in 1314.

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common historical error and can be found in Jean Cheminot's *Speculum* (1337) and in the chronicle of Jean de Venette (*c.* 1357).[40] However, it is not an error that an English Carmelite would have made. The English province was founded in 1242 when two nobles, William Vescy and Richard de Grey, brought friars from Mount Carmel and established them at Hulne in Northumberland and Aylesford in Kent. This happened nearly a decade before St Louis brought the Carmelites to Paris in 1251. English Carmelites would therefore have been keenly aware of the seniority of their province (it ranked third in the order after the Holy Land and Sicily) and the historical details of its beginnings were well-known from two works by William of Coventry (*fl.* 1340), the *Chronica brevis* and the *De adventu Carmelitarum ad Angliam*.[41]

Finally, the absence of any link in the abbreviated catalogue between the 'saint Simon' who had a vision and the prior-general, Simon Stock, suggests that the composer of these entries was unaware of the local cult in Bordeaux and had no knowledge of a prior-general with the same name. Hence, the indications point to a non-English composer who, nevertheless, was aware and sympathetic (?) to England but who lived well away from Bordeaux, Orange and Florence (where Simon Stock was known as a prior-general).

The identification of Simon Stock and holy Simon and his vision

The prior-general, Jean Grossi, appears unaware of the legend of the vision when he composed the first redaction of his catalogue of priors-general in 1390. A simple comparison of the two accounts shows the complete disparity between them:

Abbreviated catalogue of saints	*Catalogue of priors general by John Grossi*
Saint Simon, an Englishman of great holiness and devotion, who always begged the Virgin in his prayers that she would bestow some special privilege on his order. To him, the Virgin appeared carrying a scapular in her hands and said: 'Let this be a pledge to you and to your brethren: whoever dies wearing it shall be saved.'	Brother Simon Stock of the English province, who was buried at Bordeaux and shone with many miracles, died the 16th May as is recorded in the calendar of the ordinal of the convent of Orange.

At some time after 1390, probably during his travels as prior-general, Jean Grossi, appears to have learnt of the story of 'holy Simon and his vision'. Certainly he was aware of it by the time he edited his own version of the catalogue of saints, in the *Viridarium*. In so doing, he did not simply

[40] Staring, *Medieval Carmelite heritage*, 138, 174–5.
[41] Ibid. 276, 285–6 (Coventry gives the date of arrival in England as 1240).

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copy the entries from the abbreviated version but reordered them into a chronological sequence, removed the Scripture quotations, and expanded those entries on which he had additional information. At this point he appears to have had before him the entry for 'holy Simon' and his own catalogue of priors-general with its entry for 'Simon of England'. It is tempting to think that Grossi identified the two Simons as the same person so producing his composite entry, but there exists a text which suggests that the identification had occurred earlier. Christian Buchs, to whom we owe the single surviving version of the abbreviated catalogue, had a tendency to 'update' the texts he copied, for example his text of Jean Cheminot's *Speculum* contains a number of extra passages (including a complete new chapter).[42] At one point in the *Speculum*, he inserts an entry on 'saint Simon':

> Whence, we read in the story of saint Simon of Gascony that this Simon prayed continually to the glorious Virgin, Mother of God and patroness of the order, that she would give some privilege to those bearing her name, saying daily in his prayers, with real devotion:
>
> Flower of Carmel, blossoming vine, splendour of heaven child-bearing Virgin, Unequalled. Tender Mother, Whom no man didst know To the Carmelites Give privileges Star of the sea.
>
> To this holy man, the blessed Virgin appeared, surrounded by a multitude of angels and bearing the scapular of the order in her blessed hands, saying to him: 'This will be for you and for all Carmelites a pledge, that whoever dies wearing it will be saved.'
> Because of this privilege, many of the great nobles in the kingdom of England, notably blessed Edward II, king of England, who founded the said brothers in Oxford, giving his own palace as a convent and gathering them there, lord Henry, first duke of Lancaster, who is said to have worked miracles, and many other nobles of the said kingdom wore the scapular secretly and in which, later, they were buried.[43]

This entry is an expanded version of the text in the abbreviated catalogue (which occurs in the same manuscript) and incorporates two of the lay entries. It contains all the elements found there but with some notable additions: Simon is identified now as Simon of Gascony, he recites the *Flos Carmeli*, and the entries for Edward II and Henry of Lancaster are integrated into the entry. The use of the title 'Simon of Gascony' shows that the Simon of the vision is to be identified with the Simon Stock buried in Bordeaux but significant details are still missing such as Simon being prior-general and his surname. It appears that the writer knew of the link with Bordeaux (Gascony) but not the details and hence this text appears

[42] Cf. ibid. 109–10.

[43] Ibid. 142.

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to be an intermediate version between the original abbreviated entry and Grossi's later edition.

The placing of the *Flos Carmeli* on the lips of Simon is an interesting expansion but the hymn is not original. It is found in a collection of miscellaneous hymns in a German *Ordinale* copied after 1369.[44] The *Flos Carmeli* was known also in England where it formed part of the office for the Solemn Commemoration of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, instituted *c.* 1375.[45] In the English office, it occurs as the Magnificat antiphon for First Vespers and a Responsory at Matins.[46] However, the office has no mention of Simon Stock nor of his vision, indicating that the verses existed as an independent Marian hymn before being attributed to Simon.

When Grossi composed his edition of the catalogue, it is clear that he knew of this expanded text. All the new details feature in his entry and, uniquely, he adds information from his own catalogue of priors-general, on Simon being prior-general,[47] his burial in Bordeaux and finally, to avoid any confusion, he explains that some call him Simon of Gascony or Simon of Bordeaux but that his correct title is Simon of England (which Grossi himself used in his catalogue of priors-general). Finally, Grossi drops the details on St Louis of France, Edward II and Henry, duke of Lancaster, which accords with his editorial policy of reducing the list to only recognised Carmelite saints.[48]

Motives for a scapular vision story

At this point, it is worth considering some of the reasons which would lead a Carmelite to concoct a story of a vision of the Virgin Mary. In February 1375[49] the Carmelites were involved in a controversy at Cambridge with the Dominicans over which order could properly claim the Virgin Mary as their patroness. For many years the Dominicans had asserted that they were the Virgin Mary's chosen order. The rivalry with the Carmelites broke into an open quarrel when a Dominican, John Stokes, stated that Mary, patroness of the Carmelites, was not Mary, Mother of God, but St Mary of Egypt, a converted harlot. John Hornby, *magister regens*, was

[44] Bibl. Staatsbibl. sb., Bamberg, MS misc. lit. 120, fo. 97v. See also Piergiorgio Ladone, *La commemorazione solenne della B. V. Maria del monte Carmelo presso i Carmelitani Scalzi*, Rome 1990, 37, photo at p. 87.

[45] Forcadell, *Commemoratio*, 32: Ladone, *La commemorazione solenne*, 25–34.

[46] Forcadell, *Commemoratio*, 125, 129.

[47] It is this omission of Simon as prior-general which indicates that Christian Buchs is using an earlier text. No later editor, even if abbreviating the text, would have omitted so significant a detail.

[48] Grossi's catalogue contains 18 entries compared to 30 in the abbreviated version.

[49] The controversy must have erupted during 1374 but the decree signed by the Chancellor is dated 23 Feb. 1375 (modern usage), and it is logical to suppose that the debate had taken place a few days earlier.

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chosen to represent the order before the assembled doctors of the university, and, in his defence, he appealed to a wide range of sources but without appearing to have any knowledge of the Simon Stock story. Hornby's arguments were accepted by the university and the news of his success and the decree signed by the Chancellor John Dunwich quickly circulated throughout the order and were frequently cited by later authors.[50] However, a single victory at Cambridge did not resolve the rivalry, and the conflict was wider than the English scene. John of Hildesheim's *Dialogus* (*c.* 1374), written independently just before Hornby, is another polemical work produced to refute the arguments being aimed against the Carmelites, though the critic this time was a Franciscan.[51] Against such a background of inter-mendicant rivalry, it is quite plausible that the unknown editor of the catalogue of saints would insert the 'holy Simon' entry with its supporting lay entries as 'irrefutable evidence' of the Virgin Mary's special relationship with the Carmelite order.

The choice of the scapular as the special object brought by the Virgin Mary in the vision is significant. During the Cambridge debate, Hornby used the Dominicans' belief that they had received their scapular and habit from the Virgin Mary and their objections to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, as an argument against them:

> But this magister [John Stokes] asserts forcefully that the scapular is their habit, and that this habit and scapular were given to them by the blessed Mary. And if the magister says this, who is this Mary, she was never that Mary who was a heretic and afterwards converted by an angel and thus became a preacher and prophetess, or the blessed and glorious Virgin Mary. If he says that this Mary was the glorious virgin, Mother of God, therefore the Preachers assuming their habit from her, are her greatest enemies and ungrateful. The reason is that the Preachers who received their habit from the blessed Virgin Mary, as is depicted in their houses, among all the churchmen, show her the most ingratitude, for where other religious say and teach that she was not conceived in original sin, and even the secular clergy teach and hold the same, they with exceeding presumption teach and assert this, not noticing what is written in the psalms: 'Turn from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.'[52]

This belief of the Dominicans that their habit was given to them specially by the Virgin Mary dates back to the earliest days of the order. The Virgin is reputed to have appeared to Reginald and, after having anointed his five senses with oil, she showed him the habit and said: 'This is the habit of your order' and, as a result, he entered the Dominicans.[53]

[50] Thomas Scrope gives the text of the Chancellor's response in his *Chronicon* and *Libellus*: *Speculum Carmelitanum* (1680), i. 186; CUL, MS Ff. 6.11, fos 24v–8.

[51] For the background to the *Dialogus* see Staring, *Medieval Carmelite heritage*, 327–30.

[52] Bodl. Lib., MS e Museo 86, fo. 193v.

[53] Petrus Ferrand OP, 'Legenda S. Dominici', in *Monumenta fratrum predicatorum historica*, xvi, Rome 1935, 235, cited in Saggi, *La 'Bolla Sabatina'*, 17.

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This belief in the Marian origin of the scapular was widespread and paintings can be found in medieval Dominican convents, showing the Virgin giving the habit to Reginald.[54] What is significant in John Hornby's defence is that he does not make the counter-claim that the Virgin Mary had also given the scapular to the Carmelites, which suggests that the vision to Simon Stock was unknown at this time.

By the end of the fourteenth century, a number of religious orders were claiming special privileges for whoever died wearing their habit.[55] For instance, the Benedictine, Cesarius of Heisterbach, relates how, in France, a monk was on his death-bed. Oppressed by the heat, he asked the infirmarian if he would take off his cowl and replace it with the scapular. During the absence of the infirmarian, the monk died and so, on his return, the infirmarian replaced the scapular with the cowl before the body was carried into the chapel. However, during the night, while the monks said the office, the corpse rose up and all fled except the subprior who asked the dead monk why he had returned. He replied that, on reaching heaven, he had been refused entrance by St Benedict himself who had demanded: 'Why are you coming to this place of rest, dressed in a working habit?' i.e. wearing a scapular in place of a cowl. The monk was then granted special permission to return to earth in order to put on the cowl again and having done so and been blessed, he passed away peacefully.[56]

That these claims were prevalent can be seen from complaints made by critics of the monks and friars. On several occasions, John Wyclif, an arch-critic of the friars, cites this belief that the wearing of a religious habit guarantees entrance into heaven:

Sermon 55: 'Thes ordris magnefien ther abitis and seyen the pope hath confermed hem. And so seyen summe, that who ever die in hem shal nevere more come to helle.'
Controversial Tracts 22, ch. 5: 'And thus thei blasfemen in God, and seien, whoso dieth in ther habite shall never go to helle, for holynes that is therinne; and so agens Cristis sentence thei sewen an old cloute in newe cloith.'[57]

On another occasion, Wyclif attributes this belief specifically to the Franciscans:

Controversial Tracts 22, ch. 20: 'Also freris prysen more hor rooten habite then tho worschipful body of oure Jesus Christ. For thei techen lordis and namely ladies,

[54] Guglielmo di Agresti OP, *La Madonna e l'ordine domenicano*, Padua–Rome–Naples [1960], 25, cited in Saggi, *La* '*Bolla Sabatina*', 17 n. 29.
[55] These traditions of the different orders are dealt with in Saggi, *La* '*Bolla Sabatina*', 11–23.
[56] *Die Wundergeschichten des Caesarius von Heisterbach*, ed. Alfons Hilka, Bonn 1933–7, i. 158, cited in Saggi, *La* '*Bolla Sabatina*', 18–19.
[57] *Select English works of John Wyclif*, ed. Thomas Arnold, Oxford 1869, i. 60; iii. 350: cited in Xiberta, *De visione*, 160.

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that if they dyen in Fraunceys habite, their schul nevere cum in helle for vertu therof.'[58]

Saggi recounts a story circulating among the Franciscans at this time. A Franciscan, Arnoldo Montaner, put forward, around 1354, a number of propositions which were judged as heretical, among which was the claim that, once a year, St Francis descended into Purgatory and released all those who had worn the Franciscan habit.[59] Although condemned, the belief circulated and is referred to in some satirical verses composed at the time of the synod of London in 1382.

> In the town and market places, these brothers preach
> That whoever dies in the habit of the Friars Minor
> Shall not suffer eternal damnation
> But immediately be led into heaven.[60]

With all these claims by the other orders, it is not surprising to discover a similar story circulating among the Carmelites. If they were to appeal to the ordinary faithful, the Carmelites needed to have some special privilege for their own habit or scapular and the story of the vision to 'holy Simon' inserted in the catalogue of saints satisfies this need. Clearly, the Carmelite story is modelled on Dominican and Franciscan claims and it is difficult not to see it as an attempt to claim equal spiritual value for the Carmelite scapular.[61]

Another detail in the scapular vision account may be significant, as the name 'Simon' features in the Dominicans' own literature. The general chapter of the Dominicans in 1255 requested that all reports of visions or miracles associated with the order were to be collected and written into a book. This was done by Gerard de Frachet, and produced *c.* 1260 under the title *Vitae fratrum*.[62] One of the stories included by Frachet has a reference to the Carmelites:

[58] *Works of John Wyclif*, iii. 382, cited in Xiberta, *De visione*, 161.

[59] Saggi, *La 'Bolla Sabatina'*, 20–1.

[60] Thomas Wright, *Political poems and songs relating to English history composed during the period from the accession of Edward III to that of Richard III*, London 1859–61, i. 256. A later expression of this belief can be found in John Bale's anti-Catholic play *The three laws* (1538) when he puts on the lips of Hypocrisy: 'Saynt Frances habyte with the holy gyrdle and whode [hood]; / Non can go to helle that therein dye, by the rode; / In case Saynt Frances be sure upon their syde, / Els maye they fortune to be of their purpose wyde. / For I reade of one that shuld have gone to the devyll / But the spretes of helle could do to hym non evyll / Tyll Saynt Frances came and toke from hym hys cowle; / Then went he to helle, the fryres ded heare hym howle': *The complete plays of John Bale*, ed. Peter Happé, Cambridge 1986, ii. 107.

[61] In later centuries, the Dominicans adopted the rosary as the Order's major devotion and earlier claims for the habit were discarded. From around 1500 paintings begin to appear of the Virgin Mary giving the rosary to St Dominic and St Clare – paralleling paintings of the gift of the scapular found in Carmelite churches.

[62] For an Italian translation see *Storie e leggende medievali: le 'Vitae fratrum' di Geraldo di Frachet o.p.*, ed. and trans. P. Pietro Lippini OP, Bologna 1988.

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A certain brother in the Carmelite order was tempted to leave the order when he heard that brother Jordan had drowned. He became more and more disturbed, saying to himself: 'All men who serve God are wasting their time; either this man was not a good man and thus he perished, or God does not reward well those who serve him.' Having thus decided to leave very soon, that very night a beautiful figure surrounded by an immense light appeared to him. Trembling with fear, he prayed, saying: 'Lord Jesus Christ help me and show me what this is.' And at once, the figure replied: 'Do not be upset, dearest brother, for I am brother Jordan, about whom you are disturbed; and thus will everyone be saved who serves Our Lord Jesus Christ until the end.' And he disappeared, leaving him consoled about all these things. This brother and the prior of the same order, Symon, a religious and trustworthy man, narrated these happenings to our brethren.[63]

Blessed Jordan, the second master-general of the Dominicans, was drowned off Acre whilst returning from the Holy Land in 1237 and, after his death, a local cult arose around his tomb in Acre. Some Carmelite historians have appealed to this passage as support for the existence of Simon Stock.[64] There is the obvious correspondence of the name Simon and it seems reasonable to assume that the Simon in Gerard de Franchet's account was the prior of the mother-house on Mount Carmel or provincial of the Holy Land. Staring points out that the phrase 'Et prioris eiusdem ordinis, frater Symon, vir religiosos et verax' can be translated as 'a prior of the order' but that that would be better expressed as 'aliquis prior eiusdem ordinis'. In Frachet's account, the formal title precedes the name Simon and hence the logical translation is '*the* prior of the order' indicating that Simon was 'the prior [General] of the whole order'.[65] Smet comments that the title 'prior of the order' was commonly used in documents of this date in the Holy Land to refer to the senior authority figure in an order, i.e. provincial or prior-general.[66] News of this episode would have reached Frachet from the Dominican house in Acre, indicating that some time between 1237 and 1260, there was a Carmelite prior-general, provincial or prior in the Holy Land called Simon. The supposition is that this was Simon Stock who, if not then prior-general, was later elected to that office.

Such an interpretation is tenuous and it is noteworthy that, in this story, as opposed to many others, Gerard de Frachet does not give a location or any further details. Also, key aspects of the Simon Stock story are missing: his English nationality, election as prior-general, reputation for sanctity and vision of the Virgin Mary. Xiberta and others argue that it is unlikely that there were two Simons at this period in positions of authority but this does not answer the fact that the stories are so different.

[63] Ibid. 188.

[64] Xiberta cites this reference but without using it as a foundation for his argument: *De visione*, 138. Smet describes it 'as a possible contemporary reference': *Carmelites*, i. 22–3.

[65] Staring, *Observations*, 46.

[66] Personal communication.

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As Christian Ceroke, a strong exponent of the scapular vision, pointed out:

> The only element in common between the story concerning Blessed Jordan and the tradition of the Scapular vision is salvation. But even here the stories differ considerably. In the case of the story concerning Blessed Jordan, the recipient of the vision is preoccupied with personal salvation. This factor is altogether absent in the tradition of the Scapular vision.[67]

In conclusion, it should be remembered that Gerard de Frachet's work is a collection of stories designed to support the reputation of the Dominican order. Taken as a whole they are typically credulous medieval legends, arranged as *exempla*, to inspire the friars to believe in divine support for the Dominican order, and it would be unwise to place too much reliance on their historical accuracy.

However, an intriguing possibility is that Frachet's story may have been known to the unknown editor of the catalogue of Carmelite saints and that he borrowed the name of the prior, Simon, for his own composition. By using the same name, he gave a quasi-historical reference to his story and, ironically, made reference to one of the Dominicans' own authors in countering their arguments.[68]

Embellishing the legend

The next major development of the legend comes with the composition of the common long (early fifteenth-century) version of the catalogue of saints where there is a radical expression of the text. The number of saints is kept constant but the individual entries are considerably expanded. The entry for Simon Stock has all the appearance now of a medieval *exemplum*, a saint's *Life* written to instruct the faithful:

> The eleventh was saint Simon Stock, an Englishman and sixth general of the order. Who before the coming of the Carmelite brethren to England, inspired by a prophetic gift, awaited their coming, living a solitary life in the hollow trunk of a tree. And therefore, from the trunk, which is called a 'stock' in English, he acquired the name Simon Stock.
>
> Later, when he learned through his priest that the barons Vescy and Grey had

[67] Christian Ceroke OCarm., 'The credibility of the scapular promise', *Carmelus* xi (1964), 107.

[68] Knowledge of the story in Carmelite circles is quite plausible as the Carmelites had access to Dominican libraries. John Hornby, in his defence of the order, says: 'and this quotation is very true for it came to me from the library of the Preaching friars in London where the said book lies chained': Bodl. Lib., MS e Museo 86, fo. 192v. A copy of Frachet's work was in the Dominican house in London in 1339: *The friars' libraries*, ed. K. W. Humphreys, London 1990, 200. Bale copied the story into his notebook whilst visiting the Carmelite house in Ghent *c.* 1523; Bodl. Lib., MS Bodley 73, fo. 12r–v.

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brought some of the brothers of Mount Carmel to England and established them in convents at Alnwick and Aylesford, he renounced his solitary life and with great devotion, he entered the holy order of Carmelites, which for such a long time, through divine inspiration, he had awaited.

After some time had passed, at a general chapter celebrated in the English province, he was miraculously elected general of the order. He led the order, in a religious and holy spirit, for twenty years. During this time, saint Louis, king of France, as a result of a miracle shown to him by the glorious Virgin Mary whilst at sea near Mount Carmel, brought some of the brothers from this mountain to France. And various pontiffs, namely, Honorius III [d. 1227] and Innocent IV [d. 1254], who celebrated the general council at Lyons, impressed by the sanctity of holy Simon, confirmed, mitigated and corrected the Rule of the Order, receiving favourably his delegates, the brothers Reginald and Peter, who petitioned on behalf of the Rule.

This holy man, during his life, worked many miracles, among which we will offer a few here. One day, he had begun to celebrate mass, believing that he had everything that he needed. However, when he arrived at the moment to prepare the chalice, there was no wine, so following the example of Jesus Christ, he changed the water into wine, and with this he celebrated the mass which he had begun.

So, although he abstained from eating meat, on one occasion he went to eat at the house of his brother. But when his brother presented a cooked fish for the meal, this holy man of God ordered it to be returned to the water when it quickly swam away unharmed.

Often he begged the glorious Virgin Mother of God, patron of the order, that she would grant some privilege to those who bore her title, saying each day in his prayers, with a most devoted voice: 'Flower of Carmel, blossoming vine, child-bearing Virgin, without equal: tender Mother, whom no man didst know, on the Carmelites, thy favour bestow, star of the sea.' The blessed Virgin appeared to this holy man, surrounded by a multitude of angels, bearing in her hands the scapular of the order and saying: 'This will be a pledge to you and to all the Carmelites: whoever dies wearing it shall be saved.'

As a result of this great privilege, many of the leaders of England, namely blessed Edward the second of England after the conquest, who founded a convent of the said brethren in his own palace at Oxford, lord Henry, the first duke of Lancaster, who is said to have worked many miracles, and also many other nobles of the said kingdom, wore the scapular of the order secretly during their lifetime and later died wearing it. This holy Simon, when aged 100 years and during a visit to the province of Gascony, left this life on the 16 May in the convent of Bordeaux, where his body rests, and is the source of many miracles. And therefore by some he is called saint Simon Stock of Gascony, and others he is known as saint Simon Stock of Bordeaux, but rightly he is called saint Simon Stock of England for that is where he was born.

This version recovers the surname 'Stock', and adds further details such as Simon's period as a hermit in the trunk of a tree (so explaining his surname), his entry into the Carmelites, election at a general chapter in England and a period of twenty years as general, as well as two miracle

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stories and references to contemporary historical events. The other long version of the catalogue, found in one manuscript in Paris, has basically the same text for Simon Stock, simply clarifying some of the wording and extending Simon Stock's period as prior-general to fifty years.

The added historical details show that the editor of this version had a good acquaintance with what then passed for Carmelite history. Some of the details in the story such as the meaning of the English word 'stock', details of the coming of the Carmelites to England and the reinsertion of the details about St Louis, King Edward II and Henry, duke of Lancaster, suggest that the editor was an Englishman with a knowledge of Carmelite history.[69] The text of the long version survives in two manuscripts, one copied by the English Carmelite, Richard Paston, and the other copied in Germany, both from the fifteenth century.[70] Richard Paston transcribed the catalogue into a small collection of texts on Carmelite history that he was making. The other works in this collection[71] are:

1. *Catalogus sanctorum* (common long version)
2. Jean Grossi, *Viridarium*
3. *Universis Christi fidelibus*
4. Fragment of William of Coventry, *De adventu Carmelitarum in Angliam*
5. Jean Cheminot, *Speculum ordinis*
6. William of Coventry, *De duplici fuga*, ch. vii
7. William of Coventry, *De adventu Carmelitarum in Angliam*, ch. viii
8. John Baconthorpe, *Tractatus de regula ordinis beate Marie de Monte Carmeli*
9. John Baconthorpe, *Speculum de institutione*
10. John Baconthorpe, *Compendium historiarum et iurium*
11. William of Coventry, *Chronica brevis*[72]

Two of the works, John Grossi's *Viridarium* and Jean Cheminot's *Speculum*, are by Frenchmen: the author of *Universis Christi fidelibus* is unknown and possibly also French. Of the works by English authors, Baconthorpe's were probably composed during his time in Paris (early 1320s) and before his election as provincial (1326).[73] This leads to a suspicion that Paston began this collection in France with the intention of making copies to bring back to England. Paston's copy of the catalogue of saints has, at the end, 'Here ends the origin, with the lives of the holy brothers, of the order of the blessed Mary of Mount Carmel, Mother of God. AD 1426.'[74] From

[69] This opinion was shared by Bale who records the *incipit* of the long version and attributes it to an 'unknown English Carmelite': ibid. fo. 5v.

[70] Bodl. Lib., MS Laud 722 (copied by Richard Paston in 1426); Bibl. Staatsbibl, Bamberg, MS theol. 218 (fifteenth century); a third MS in Frankfurt, now lost, was used by the Bollandists for their entry on Simon Stock: *Actis sanctorum Maii*, iii. 654.

[71] Bodl. Lib., MS. Laud. 722 (S.C. 1174).

[72] The manuscript is described in Staring, *Medieval Carmelite heritage*, 108–9; this book contains editions of all the works except the catalogue of saints and Grossi's *Viridarium*.

[73] Staring dates these three works to 1317–30: *Medieval Carmelite heritage*, 177.

[74] Bodl. Lib., MS Laud 722 (S.C. 1174) fo. 115v.

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looking at the wider political circumstances of that period, it is possible to suggest where Paston might have begun his copying.

In the early fifteenth century, under the leadership of King Henry v and in alliance with the dukes of Burgundy, the English had made considerable conquests in northern France, culminating in 1418 with the capture of Paris which was held until 1430. During these twelve years under English control, the English Carmelites were able to return to study at Paris. The names of eight English Carmelites who incepted as doctors in Paris during this period are known and it is likely that there were many others from England studying theology at the lower levels.[75] The occupation by the English forces and the unsettled political situation inhibited the French Carmelites and students from other provinces from attending the Carmelite *studium generale* there. The presence of English doctors in Paris indicates that the English province was not simply taking advantage of renewed access to the university there but also felt constrained to send English Carmelites to augment the numbers in the *studium* and to provide professors to teach.

In addition, during the first half of the fifteenth century, eighteen Carmelites are known to have been engaged in copying manuscripts.[76] Some of their names can be found on copies of Thomas Netter's *Doctrinale*, the dissemination of which seems to have been an important task and much in demand, the remainder from a variety of other manuscripts.[77] Many of these copies were made during the 1420s, precisely the period when Paris was occupied, leading to a suspicion that at least some of the works being copied were manuscripts from the Carmelite library in Paris (or other French houses under English control) and that a determined effort was made to provide copies for use in the English province.

Hence it is possible that Richard Paston copied his collection of Carmelite historical texts in Paris using the library there, which would explain his access to a copy of Jean Grossi's *Viridarium* and its brief version of the catalogue of saints.[78] Whether Richard Paston, though, is the editor who composed the common long version of the catalogue is open to conjecture. Significantly, the colophon to the catalogue records only the date and not the authorship whereas the only other colophon, following Baconthorpe's *Compendium*, includes the author and title and clearly states

[75] The following English Carmelite doctors were in Paris at some time during the English occupation: John Beston, John Abbacia, Peter of St Faith, Richard Acton, John Barat, William Pontefract, Richard Goldhurst and John Barnyngham. However, their names do not appear in the records of the university so their formal status is unclear.

[76] Personal research by author.

[77] Their copying was usually for internal use by the order. One manuscript, BL, MS Royal 11 C. VI, was copied by Richard Tenet during his 'holidays after ordination' (*c.* 1422).

[78] A logical conclusion as Grossi was French and is known to have passed through Paris frequently. As prior-general, he would have had close links with the *studium generale* there.

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'by the hand of Richard Paston'.[79] Certainly, as can be seen from the other texts which he copied, Paston was not averse to making alterations and adding extra passages where he thought appropriate.[80] In addition, he had a keen interest in Carmelite history, as can be seen from the works he copied, and had access to a copy of Grossi's catalogue to use as his core source.

Diffusion of the legend

Whoever was the second editor of the catalogue, the expansion of the Simon Stock story served a useful political purpose. By 1426 a number of French Carmelite houses were in parts of France under English control. The capture of Calais in 1348 had led to the expulsion of all the French inhabitants, including the friars. English Carmelites were sent to form a new community and from that point until the suppression in 1538, Calais was included in the English province. Similarly, following the capture of Caen in 1417, Henry v wrote to Thomas Netter, the English provincial, asking for friars to be sent to replace the French community there. Netter replied, informing the king that he had collected a new community of thirteen friars for Caen, among whom were three noted preachers.[81] Further towns in France subsequently came under English control, i.e. Arras, Paris etc., but it seems unlikely that the policy of replacing their Carmelite communities by English friars continued.

In these circumstances, the propagation of the cult of Simon Stock, an English saint, would have been very congenial to the English Carmelites as members of a nation which was enjoying unparalleled military success against the French. The fact that Simon Stock was buried in Bordeaux was not a difficulty as Gascony had been subject to the English king since 1154. There were strong commercial links and a significant English colony in Bordeaux. There was also close contact between Carmelites in Bordeaux and England; for example William Costall, the prior of Bordeaux and provincial in the 1420s (mentioned in the letter quoted above), undertook part of his studies in London and later corresponded with Thomas Netter.[82]

If Richard Paston copied (or composed) the long version of the catalogue of saints in Paris, then this may help to explain the delay in the

[79] Bodl. Lib., MS Laud 722 (S.C. 1174), fo. 124.

[80] See Staring, *Medieval Carmelite heritage*, 109.

[81] Kevin Alban OCarm., 'The letters of Thomas Netter of Walden', *Carmel in Britain*, ii. 348–9.

[82] William Costall was ordained accolyte on 1 June 1398 in Stepney parish church (Middx) and subdeacon on 12 June 1400 in Much Hadham parish church: *Reg. Braybroke, London*, fos 48v, 55. For a letter to him from Thomas Netter see Alban, 'Letters of Thomas Netter', ii. 377–8.

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Simon Stock story reaching England. Assuming that 'holy Simon and his vision' was an insertion made in northern Europe around 1400, then the full legend would have become known in England through Grossi's *Viridarium or* Richard Paston's manuscript.[83] However, Paston also copied Grossi's *Viridarium* into his manuscript, indicating that this work was not then easily available in England.[84] The Paston manuscript could have arrived in England between 1426 and 1430, i.e. between the date it was copied and the fall of Paris.

The emergence of the scapular vision: a summary

The basic thesis on the Carmelite catalogue of saints being argued here is that a study of the development of the catalogue helps to explain the different versions of the Simon Stock entry. The catalogue appears to have passed through five versions in the course of which the Simon Stock entry was expanded and elaborated:

1. John of Hildesheim's *Legendae abbreviatae*:
   A short catalogue of saints, now lost, composed before 1375.
2. Abbreviated version of the catalogue of Carmelite saints (i):
   The work of an unknown Carmelite from northern Europe who added entries for 'holy Simon', St Louis of France, King Edward II and Henry of Lancaster, among others, to form the core of the surviving version. Unknown to Grossi in 1390, hence composed *c.* 1400.
3. Abbreviated version of the catalogue of Carmelite saints (ii):
   Subsequent editor identified 'holy Simon' with Simon Stock, prior-general, added *Flos Carmeli*, and amalgamated the two lay entries. Dated *c.* 1410?
4. Jean Grossi's *Viridarium* (Brief version):
   Major revision by Grossi, reordering and reducing the entries and adding details on Bordeaux: composed between 1413 and 1426.
4. Long common version of *Catalogue of saints*:
   Addition of legendary details, by an Englishman, possibly Richard Paston, with material from other historical works: composed in 1426 or before.
5. Paris long version of *Catalogue*:
   Final slight modifications of the long version. Composed before 1435.

The reasoning here needs to be restricted to the development of the Simon Stock legend as the overall development of the catalogue of saints is a much more complicated matter. Clearly, there were numerous versions of the catalogue circulating in the order, each with its own idiosyncrasies.

[83] The short entry on 'holy Simon' in the abbreviated catalogue may not have been available or not immediately accepted as it had no historical 'pedigree' and referred to a previously unknown Carmelite, Simon. The long version of the catalogue from Paris with the quasi-authority of the *studium generale* would have had a different reception.

[84] This line of reasoning, in its essentials, still holds even if Richard Paston was in London working on manuscripts brought from Paris.

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Traces of some of these can be found in John Bale's notebooks which record his notes on two visits to France and the Low Countries.[85]

Scapular devotion: development in the cult at Bordeaux

The cult at Bordeaux, as has been already argued, seems to have been based on devotion to a holy prior-general, at whose tomb miracles took place. In the text of the letter given to the prior of Ghent, John Hazeiaghere, in 1423 when he was given some relics, no mention is made of any scapular vision which suggests that it was unknown in Bordeaux. However, in 1435, a few years after his visit, it is known that an office in honour of Simon Stock was entered into the choir-book there.[86] From what is known of its contents, this office contained many of the legendary details of Simon Stock's life, including the scapular vision, indicating a knowledge of the expanded Simon Stock legend.[87]

It seems likely that John Hazeiaghere had learnt of Simon Stock and the scapular vision through Grossi's *Viridarium* or the long version of the catalogue of saints and that a devotion had developed in his convent at Ghent. The Low Countries and Burgundy were England's allies during the early 1400s, so an origin for the story of 'holy Simon and his vision' in the Low Countries or elsewhere in northern Europe would fit in with the conclusions reached earlier. This would help to explain why Hazeiaghere went to visit Bordeaux seeking a relic, as it is unlikely that he would have made such a journey simply because of a little-known local cult.[88] In these circumstances, it seems plausible that John Hazeiaghere himself was the person who communicated the expanded Simon Stock legend, complete with scapular vision, to the Carmelites of Bordeaux.

Certainly, by 1507, the scapular vision had become a prominent feature of the devotion there as witnessed by a second letter written to accompany another gift of relics, this time to the Carmelites at Valenciennes:

> We, brother Menaldus, *magister* in sacred theology at Paris, and humble Prior Provincial of the Province of Gascony of the most holy Order of the Glorious Mother of God and ever Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, and the local Prior and Bursar, and all the Brethren and officials of Convent of Bordeaux, state and attest that, on account of the earnest petition of the venerable Fathers and Brothers

[85] See Bodl. Lib., MS Bodley 73; BL, MS Harley 1819.

[86] Juan Bautista Lezana OCarm., *Annales sacri, prophetici et Eliani ordinis beatissimae virginis Mariae de monte Carmelo*, Rome 1645–56, iv. 386; *Vinea Carmeli*, 430.

[87] The Paris long version was used for the lessons (in it Simon abstains from meat and is prior-general for fifty years).

[88] In spite of enquiries in Ghent and elsewhere, nothing further has been discovered about John Hazeiaghere. The reason for his presence in Bordeaux cannot be linked with any general chapter meeting and, being a prior, it is unlikely that he was studying at a French university.

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Peter Draguet and John Lohet, of the same Order and from the Convent of Valenciennes, and the priests and professed, we give to them the large finger from the right hand of the very holy man, St Simon Stock, to whom whilst he was living on this earth, the Most Holy Virgin Mother of Christ and Patron, gave the habit of our most holy religious Order; promising that whoever dies in it should be saved; who, at 100 years of age, died in our convent of Bordeaux, blessed by many and diverse miracles. To these fathers, we also give the office composed to him. Most beloved fathers, we beseech you that you shall keep the memory of this most holy father in your convent, and offer prayers to him who was once our pastor: so that he will remember his flock before the Most Holy Trinity and that he will care for and defend the same flock. Given in the aforementioned convent of Bordeaux on the 13 February, AD 1506. In witness, the hand seal of the aforesaid Provincial, and the seals of the Prior and Bursar of the same community are attached.[89]

Here the focus is firmly on the vision of the Virgin Mary to Simon Stock and the scapular promise: Simon's death in Bordeaux and the miracles have receded into the background. Also, the request for relics from Valenciennes indicates a growing devotion to Simon Stock in northern Europe.[90]

Scapular devotion: diffusion and controversies

The dissemination of the Simon Stock legend in the catalogue of saints and the active propagation of his cult from Bordeaux led to a rapid spread in devotion to Simon Stock and the scapular. Initially, the story began to be included, as one miracle among many, in general histories of the Carmelite order, for example the *Chronicon* of Julian Hasart (d. 1525), the *Chronicon of* Giles Faber (d. 1506) and the *De viris illustribus* (1492) of Abbot John Trithemius.[91] At the same time, other authors were composing lives of Simon Stock, expanding on the basic details found in the catalogue of saints. Menaldus of the Rosary, from Bordeaux, wrote the *De vita S. Simonis Stock* (1500) which was clearly designed to support the growing cult in Bordeaux. Similarly, at Valenciennes, where the finger of Simon Stock acquired from Bordeaux was said to be working miracles, the prior, Roland Boucher, wrote a biography of Simon Stock in French (*c.* 1513), which was later translated into Latin and published.[92]

[89] *Vinea Carmeli*, 429–30 (year corrected to 1507 following modern usage).

[90] There are references to relics also being at Cologne and Bruges: Pannetier, *Vie de S. Simon Stock*, 109.

[91] These works survive only in notes made by Bale in the 1520s; for Julian Hasart, *Chronicon*, see Bodl. Lib., MS Bodley 73, fos 106v–9, 116–17v; for Giles Faber, *Chronicon*, see ibid. fos 109v–14, 115v–16. John Trithemius' *De ortu et progressu ac viris illustribus ordinis gloriosissime Dei gentricis semper virginis Mariae de monte Carmelo*, was written in 1492 and printed in *Opera omnia Baptistae Mantovani*, Antwerp 1576, iv. 276–92, and in *Speculum Carmelitanum* (1680) i/2, 221–73.

[92] *Vita vestusta et sat venusta sancti Simonis Stock* (1687).

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The popularity of the Simon Stock story led to its occupying a significant place in all subsequent Marian treatises. One early example was the *Collectaneum exemplorum et miraculorum* by Baldwin Leers (d. 1483), the subprior at Arras.[93] This work is a collection of miracles and special graces performed by the Virgin Mary on behalf of the order and the scapular vision to Simon Stock features prominently. The Marian dimension of the scapular vision reached a peak in the *De patronatu* (1471) by Arnold Bostius.[94] Bostius was from Ghent, where the relic of Simon Stock had arrived in 1423 and the cult had developed over the years. In Bostius' theology the scapular vision is not simply an example of the Virgin Mary's special care for the order: he makes use of the scapular devotion to give a systematic explanation of Carmelite Marian devotion. From 1500 onwards the scapular devotion spread rapidly and had an immediate appeal to the laity, thousands of whom began to wear the scapular.

The cult of Simon Stock in the English province

Although Richard Paston's copy of the catalogue of saints with its expanded entry for Simon Stock, dating from 1426, indicates that knowledge of the developing legend was available, interest in the cult was slow to develop in the English Carmelite province.

The earliest account of Simon Stock, complete with scapular vision, written by an English Carmelite, is to be found in the works of Thomas Scrope. A rather unusual friar, he lived as a hermit in the Carmelite house at Norwich from the mid 1420s to 1450 when he was appointed bishop of Dromore by Pope Eugenius IV.[95] Scrope composed four histories of the Carmelite order. The earliest, dated 3 December 1441 and addressed to Eugenius,[96] has no reference to Simon Stock and it is not until twenty years later, when Scrope composed two further historical works, that Simon Stock first appears. The *Libellus de institucione fratrum Carmelitarum ordinis*, written before 1450,[97] includes Jean Grossi's catalogue of Carmelite saints, copied almost verbatim, with its entry for Simon Stock but Simon does not feature in Scrope's account of the historical development of the order. Scrope's last work, *Chronicon de institutione, successione, intitulatione & propagatione Ordinis Fratrum B. Virginis Dei Genetricis Mariae de monte Carmeli*,

[93] The *Collectaneum* was printed in the *Speculum Carmelitanum* (1680), i. 364–74.

[94] The full text of the *De patronatu* survives in a copy made by John Bale during his visit to Ghent in the early 1520s: Bodl. Lib., MS Selden supra 41, fos 221–36. A shortened version is in *Speculum Carmelitanum* (1680), i. 375–431. A modern edition of the complete work is currently being prepared by Eamon Carroll OCarm. and Richard Copsey OCarm.

[95] Cf. Richard Copsey, 'Thomas Scrope', *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, Paris 1991, xv. 868–70.

[96] *Informatio et supplicatio*…, partly printed in *Speculum Carmelitanum* (1680), i. 186–9.

[97] CUL, MS Ff. 6.11, fos 1–32.

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omits the catalogue and incorporates the details on Simon Stock into the historical narrative.[98]

Evidence that Simon Stock featured among the recognised Carmelite saints can be found somewhat earlier in a short extract from an address by the provincial, Nicholas Kenton, to a provincial chapter, dated 1444 or shortly after. In it Kenton includes Simon Stock in a list of holy Carmelites with their special virtues which the members of the province should imitate. For Simon Stock, Kenton cites 'the sincere devotion of our Simon of England'.[99]

Concrete signs of a developing cult can be found in the Kilcormic missal, copied in Ireland in 1458, which contains an office to 'St Simon Stock'.[100] The office is also found in an Irish breviary dated 1489 where, in the calendar of Carmelite saints for 16 March,[101] there is listed: 'Sancti Symonis confessoris ordinis Carmelitarum IX leccionum'. Given the close links between Ireland and England at this period, it should be safe to assume that the office for Simon Stock had been inserted into the English calendar around the same time or before.[102] Such a feast, however, remained a local celebration and was not celebrated as a universal feast in the order until 1564 when a common calendar was approved by the general chapter.[103] No evidence has been traced so far in England of any popular lay devotion to Simon Stock in any of the order's churches. Devotion to the Virgin Mary normally expressed itself in local cults such as that to Our Lady of Doncaster, Our Lady of Ipswich etc. There were statues of other popular Carmelite saints in the order's churches, such as St Albert of Sicily in London and St John the Baptist (clothed in a Carmelite habit) in Nottingham, but no records survive referring to any representation of Simon Stock.[104]

Further information on the developing Simon Stock legend reached England in the 1520s when John Bale brought back copies of the lives compiled by Roland Boucher of Valenciennes and Menaldus of the Rosary of Bordeaux.[105] Bale subsequently used these accounts in

[98] *Chronicon de institutione*, partly printed in *Speculum Carmelitanum* (1680), i. 186–9.

[99] Bodl. Lib., MS Bodley 73, fo. 68.

[100] Trinity College, Dublin, MS B 3.1 (82); B 3.10 (86). See also Paschalis Kallenberg OCarm., *Fontes liturgiae Carmelitanae*, Rome 1962, 138–40, 206–7; Hugh Jackson Lawlor, 'The Kilcornic missal – a manuscript in the library of Trinity College, Dublin', *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* xxxi (1900), 393–430.

[101] The celebration on 16 March is an early aberration (possibly due to a misreading by a scribe); the celebration is normally on 16 May.

[102] The office is not found in earlier liturgical manuscripts: cf. Paschalis Kallenberg, *Fontes liturgiae Carmelitanae*.

[103] *Acta capituli generalis*..., ed. G. Wessels, Rome 1912, i. 460.

[104] No detailed study has been made, as yet, of popular Carmelite devotions in pre-Reformation England.

[105] (Roland Boucher) Bodl. Lib., MS Bodley 73, fos 92–3; (Menaldus Rosarii) BL, MS Harley 1819, fos 129–32.

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compiling his history of the order but any effect on the cult was prevented by the onset of the Reformation and the suppression of the Carmelite houses in 1538–9.

Scapular devotion: later developments and controversies

At the same time as Simon Stock and his scapular vision were being promoted, another Marian miracle emerged in the southern provinces of the order. The claim this time was that the Virgin Mary had appeared to Pope John XXII in a vision and assured him that if anyone died wearing the Carmelite habit, she would descend into Purgatory on the Saturday after their death and release them. This vision was reputedly authenticated in a papal bull, *Bulla Sabbatina*, dated 3 March 1322. The story spread quickly through the order and features in many paintings found in Carmelite churches. No copy of the bull has been found in the Vatican archives and Ludovico Saggi demonstrated convincingly that the document was concocted around 1430 in Agrigento, Sicily, with the author taking as his model a similar Franciscan document relating to the Portiuncula indulgence.[106] The fact that the *Bulla Sabbatina* contains no reference to the scapular vision and that its author felt the need to fabricate a further Marian appearance would indicate that the Simon Stock story had not reached Sicily by 1430.

The absence of any link between the two stories created no difficulties for Carmelite apologists, and the two Marian promises were quickly linked together in the preaching of the scapular devotion. During the sixteenth century the numbers wearing the scapular reached enormous proportions. During his visit to Spain in 1566–7, the prior-general, Giovanni Battista Rossi, claimed to have given 200,000 letters of affiliation to the order and to have enrolled as many in the scapular. By the end of the century in Rome, the scapular confraternity at S. Martino ai Monti numbered 42,000 members and at S. Crisogono, there were 20,000. In Portugal, there were 16,000 members in the confraternity in Lisbon in 1610 rising to 23,000 just three years later.[107]

However, the increasing prominence of the scapular devotion led to historical difficulties for the order which now had not simply to justify its claims to have been founded by the prophet Elijah and to have existed in a continuous historical succession on Mount Carmel, but to defend the historicity of the scapular vision and sabbatine privilege, increasingly under attack from critics outside the order. The first crisis arose in 1603 when a book listing the privileges of the Carmelite order was placed on the index by the inquisitor in Portugal and, in 1609, the same inquisitor went further and outlawed all books mentioning the sabbatine privilege.

[106] Saggi, *La 'Bolla Sabatina'* (see n. 1). [107] Smet, *Carmelites*, ii. 224, 226.

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Although Rome agreed with the inquisitor and forbade the Carmelites to preach these privileges, the popular reaction was such that an exception was made for the scapular. The Sacred Congregation of the Inquisition in Rome, after a lengthy study, issued a decree on 20 Jan 1613, under which the Carmelites were permitted to preach that:

> the faithful may devoutly believe that the Blessed Virgin by her continuous intercession, merciful prayers, merits and special protection will assist the souls of deceased brothers and members of the confraternity, especially on Saturday, the day which the church dedicates to the Blessed Virgin. The conditions for trusting in such a favour are that the recipients die in a state of grace, wear the Carmelite habit, observe chastity according to their state in life and recite the little office of the Blessed Virgin; if they can not recite it they are to observe the church fasts and abstain from meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays, unless Christmas falls on these days.[108]

The decree was accompanied by a recommendation that the Carmelite Fathers 'shall not mention the Sabbatine bull, in order that the term may be forgotten'.

However, Simon Stock and his scapular vision were not to remain in peace for long. In 1642 Jean Launoy, a priest in the College of Navarre, in Paris, published his scholarly *Dissertio duplex, una De origine et confirmatione privilegiati Scapularis Carmelitarum, altera De visione Simonis Stochii prioris ac magistri generalis Carmelitarum*.[109] He argued that the existence of Simon Stock and the scapular vision were unknown to most early Carmelite writers. Predictably Launoy's attack sparked off a series of replies from Carmelite authors. The most audacious defence was that conceived by Jean Chéron of Bordeaux who published *Privilegiati scapularis et visionis s. Simonis Stockii vindiciae* in 1642. To support his arguments, Chéron claimed to have found some fragments written by Peter Swanyngton, the Carmelite secretary of Simon Stock, in which there was reference to the vision.[110] From other sources, Swanyngton is known to have incepted at Oxford *c.* 1295[111] but the fragments which Chéron claimed to have found were a new discovery. In spite of never being seen, their contents were widely quoted by Carmelite apologists and other defenders of the Simon Stock legend until, in recent years, they were exposed as forgeries, composed almost certainly by Chéron himself.[112]

At the beginning of this century, another discussion began when Benedict Zimmerman OCD, one of the first Carmelite historians to apply

[108] Ibid. ii. 226.

[109] Later, Launoy published a second edition, *De Simonis Stochii visio, de sabbatinae bullae privilegio, et de scapularis Carmelitarum sodalitate dissertationes v. editio secunda correctior, et multis partibus auctior*..., Paris 1653.

[110] Reprinted in Xiberta, *De visione*, 125–7.

[111] His name is more correctly 'Peter Scaryngton' and his time at Oxford *c.* 1285–95 would make any link with Simon Stock (d. 1265?) very improbable. See also A. B. Emden, *Biographical register for the University of Oxford*, Oxford 1957–9, 1831.

[112] For a brief account of this controversy see Smet, *Carmelites*, iii. 473–5.

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some rigorous historical analysis to the history of the order, wrote an article on the scapular vision in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*. His arguments for the essential historicity of the scapular vision brought forth some very gentlemanly criticisms from Hubert Thurston SJ, who had made a special study of the historical background of many popular devotions.[113] Then, in 1951, the celebration of the '700th anniversary of the scapular vision' gave rise to a large number of publications, mostly devotional and repeating the commonly accepted legendary details. The one noteworthy historical work was Bartolomeo Xiberta's *De visione S. Simone Stock*, to which reference was made at the beginning of this article. Since then other Carmelite historians such as Ludovico Saggi, Adrian Staring and Joachim Smet, all members of the Carmelite Institute in Rome, and Bede Edwards, a Discalced Carmelite, have reevaluated the evidence.[114] All are in agreement with the general conclusion that there are reasonable grounds for the existence of a prior-general named, Simon Stock, noted for his holiness, who died in Bordeaux and around whose tomb a local cult developed. However, opinions on the scapular vision diverge. Xiberta was the first to direct attention to the catalogue of saints as the prime source for our knowledge of the vision but his claim that the origins of the catalogue can be traced back to the early 1300s is not accepted by anyone else. Edwards briefly dismisses the catalogue, saying: 'it would seem obvious that we can *disregard completely*, from the point of view of historical source material, the catalogue of Carmelite Saints in its various recensions'.[115] However, the catalogue does have a value in revealing how the Simon Stock 'legend' evolved and Saggi was the first to point out that the 'holy Simon' of the abbreviated catalogue was not the prior-general, Simon Stock.[116] This article has extended his line of reasoning to illustrate how 'holy Simon and his vision' was originally a separate legend. Edwards and Staring disagree with the idea of two Simons but neither seems to fully appreciate Saggi's line of reasoning. Saggi was not distinguishing Simon of Gascony from Simon Stock but pointing out how the entry for 'holy Simon' in the abbreviated catalogue has few similarities with the Simon Stock in Grossi's catalogue of priors-general. One of the main arguments in this article is that the

[113] For their exchange of views see Benedict Zimmerman OCD., 'The origin of the scapular: a new essay on an old subject: from original sources', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 4th ser. ix (1901), 385–408; xv (1904), 142–53, 206–34, 331–51; and 'La vision de saint Simon Stock', *Revue du Clergé Français* xxxvi (1903), 634ff. (English version in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* xvi [1904], 259ff.); Herbert Thurston SJ, 'The origin of the scapular', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 4th ser. xvi (1904), 59–75; 'The scapular tradition and its defenders', ibid. xxix (1911), 492–506; and 'A recent confirmation of the scapular tradition' ibid. xxix, (1911), 604–10.

[114] See n. 1. See also Smet, *Carmelites*, i. 22–3.

[115] Edwards, 'A memorandum', 43 (italics in original).

[116] See Ludovico Saggi, *Santa Maria di monte Carmelo*, Rome 1986, 40–5.

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difference in the two accounts reveals separate sources which were later merged. Although Edwards and Staring disagree with Saggi, neither is willing to assert the historicity of the vision and they see the catalogue of saints as a progressive invention of further details in an evolving Simon Stock legend.[117] In fact, it is noticeable that, in recent years, serious Carmelite historians have ceased to defend the historicity of the scapular vision although without going so far as to abandon all hope. As Joachim Smet reluctantly admits:

> The authenticity of this vision … has become the subject of much controversy. Strong reasons against its authenticity are the late date of the first accounts (late 14th century) and the fact that medieval literature is filled with visions of Our Lady, even of visions in which she promises salvation to those who wear a religious habit. Nevertheless the possibility of a basis in fact for the story cannot be entirely ruled out.[118]

Perhaps the time has come to accept the vision as a later invention which was subsequently attached to the prior-general, Simon Stock. What would be more fruitful at this point would be further study on the sources and the origin of the catalogue of Carmelite saints and the rapid diffusion of the Simon Stock legend through the order in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

[117] For example, Staring: 'I do not want to discuss the critical status of the vision': *Observations*, 45.

[118] Smet, *Carmelites*, i. 23.

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