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Elijah in Light of Rabbinic and Early Christian Sources

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תשובה

Institute Papers

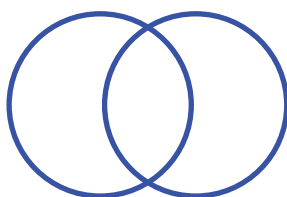
The Prophet Elijah in Jewish and Christian Traditions

*"Elijah in Light of Rabbinic and
Early Christian Sources"*

Rabbi Asher Finkel

*"Elijah Among the Carmelites:
Adopting and Honoring the Father"*

Reverend James Boyce, O.Carm.



The Thirteenth
Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher
Memorial Lecture

The Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
South Orange, New Jersey 07079

This series of papers is titled *Teshuvah*, “turning.” As “Turning to God,” *teshuvah* is the biblical and rabbinical term for repentance. Here it bespeaks the re-vision, the re-orientation to which the Second Vatican Council, in its declaration on the Jews (October 28, 1965), summons Christian thought and action.

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Foreword

Long fascinated with the extraordinary development of Elijah's role in Christian spirituality, I was delighted to bring Rabbi Asher Finkel and Father James Boyce, O. Carm., together to honor the memory of Msgr. John M. Oesterreicher (1904-1993). As founding director of the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies, Msgr. Oesterreicher's profound commitment to Christian-Jewish understanding would be served by having scholars present themes of faith and prayer that are linked with Elijah and with the Land of Israel.

Rabbi Asher Finkel came to Seton Hall University in 1975 as a founding member of the Master's program in Jewish-Christian Studies, the result of Msgr. Oesterreicher's initiative to foster the intellectual and spiritual foundation for developing the vision of the Second Vatican Council concerning "The Church's bond with the Jewish people" (Msgr. Oesterreicher's phrase describing the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* promulgated on October 28, 1965). Rabbi Finkel's contribution to this work is grounded in his work at Yeshiva University, where he studied under Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, and his doctoral program at the University of Tübingen in comparative religion. His publication *The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth* (Leiden: Brill, 1964) laid the foundation for his research in the rich heritage of Jewish history and spirituality in relation to the New Testament. His reflection on Elijah should stimulate the reader to reflect on his other writings.

The Reverend James Boyce, a long-time member of the Carmelite Order, received his doctorate in Musicology from New York University. He was Associate Professor and chairman of the Department of Art History and Music, Fordham University until his untimely death in 2010. May his soul rest in peace! His numerous publications in the chant and liturgy of the Middle Ages provided an ideal background for his presentation of the Carmelite history and devotion to Elijah the prophet.

The publication of these essays provides a context for re-issuing a study of "Elijah the Peacemaker- Jewish and Early Christian Interpretations of Malachi 3:23-24", which appeared in the *SIDIC Review*, edited by the Sisters of Zion in Rome. The other essays in this issue (XVII no. 2, 1984) include: Nello Pavoncello, "The Prophet Elijah in Jewish Liturgy"; Editors of SIDIC, "Gleaning- The Prophet Elijah"; M. J. Stiasny, "Elijah in Kabbalah and Mysticism"; Michel De Goedt, "Elijah- A Victorious, Persecuted, Discouraged Prophet- First of a Long Line (1 Kings 17-19)"; They are available online at www.notredamedesion.org/en/dialogue_sidicTitleView.php?id=67&lingua=en. "Elijah the Peacemaker" is reprinted with the kind permission of the Editors of SIDIC (Service International de Documentation Judéo-Chrétienne).

Elijah in Light of Rabbinic and Early Christian Sources

Asher Finkel

This essay of comparative study sheds light on the three aspects of Elijah's coming in view of early attestation of rabbinic tradition over the millennia since the destruction of the Second Temple. It was presented on Sunday, November 5, 2006 at Seton Hall University, in a program in memory of Msgr. John M. Oesterreicher sponsored by the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies and chaired by my esteemed colleague, Father Lawrence Frizzell.

I. Elijah and the Sabbath

Over the millennia since the destruction of the Second Temple, Elijah's coming signals the return of the ultimate Messiah to preside over the promised age of justice and peace in the Kingdom of God on earth. Upon the expiration of the Sabbath, every Saturday night, Elijah is welcomed in each Jewish religious home with the singing of hymns. Sabbath time in the biblical tradition offers a foretaste of idealic time, when the person is free from work, anxiety and stress to be engaged with God's presence through love and the joy of prayer. With synagogal attendance, meal fellowship, Torah reading, study, singing and rest, Sabbath is experienced also symbolically as the promised era of tranquility and peace. The very six days of creation represent six millennia of human civilization in God's time¹, as the Psalmist relates (Ps 90:8), "for a thousand years are in your eyes but a day past." The eschatological expectation is realized in Sabbath time, and therefore in the person's historical time, at each departure of the Sabbath, the hope-filled expression of biblical promise is dramatized. For in exile Jews were subjected to vilification and persecution. Therefore, they seek to greet Elijah, whose advent will usher in the Messianic age of peaceful coexistence upon their return to the promised land.

Following the *Havdalah* ceremony² of Saturday night, an alphabetic hymnal greeting is sung with a responsive call to Elijah. It is recorded in the medieval work of Abudraham on "Jewish Liturgy" from early Rabbinic sources with a probing commentary (I shall conclude the presentation with a translation and explanation of given selections). The above work relates how family and friends at home call upon Elijah with three designations: "Elijah the *Navi* (prophet), Elijah the *Tishbite* and Elijah the *Gileadite*". These designations already are mentioned in the biblical work of 1 Kings 17:1. It opens with a sudden appearance of the historical Elijah during the idolatrous reign of Ahab, the King of Israel. The narrative, thus, begins *vayo'mer* (he spoke), namely Elijah spoke to Ahab, adding the reference to *Tishbi*, who is a resident (Hebrew play on the word *Toshab* from the verb *yshb* "dwell") of Gilead. His appeal to the king is made, "By the living LORD (YHWH), God of Israel, in whose presence I stand." Such an opening comes to relate the very nature of the prophet, in Hebrew *Navi*. He is not a seer or a clairvoyant one, an

¹ See my article, "Millennium, Jubilee and Human History under God" in *"Ich bin ein Hebraer": Gedenken an Otto Michel (1903-1993)*, ed. Helgo Lindner, (Giessen: Brunnen, 2003) p. 312-326.

² *Havdalah* is a ceremony of separation, departing from the sacred time of the Sabbath and entering secular time for the week. A blessing is made over the wine, to be followed by the smelling of spices and observing a lit twined candle. These actions represent a sign of recovery from the departure of sacred time and entering human creative work, respectively.

ecstatic type who predicts the future, but rather he is a preacher who delivers God's message. The Greek translation of *Navi* from the Hebrew root *NYB*, is *prophetes*, the one who speaks forth. Thus, the prophet of Israel is called a *mattif* (one who drips words, so Mic 2:11, Amos 7:16, Ezek 21:2, 7). As God's messenger, he speaks in God's name: "Thus said the Lord." So did Elijah begin his address, *vay'omer*, namely with the prophetic formula of "Thus spoke (*'amar*) the Lord, God of Israel" (1Kg 17:13).

II. Elijah's Role as Prophet

Apparently the very name Elijah in Hebrew combines the two divine names of *El* and *Yah*, which come to express the two attributes of God, the Creator and the Provider in relation to judgment (*'el*) and love (*yah*), respectively. The Psalmist relates, "with Elohim I raise my voice in praise and with YHWH I raise my voice in praise" (56:11). The prophet offers a speech in God's stern judgment as well as in His forgiving love. This dual expression determines the ambivalent nature of biblical prophecy.³ God as the Creator judges the world with strict rules against destructive damage and wrongful doing to life, person and nature. God as a provider reaches out with compassion towards humanity in his image and even beyond; "His mercy that extends towards all His creation" (Ps 145:9). Thus, the role of the prophet in Israel is impacted by both God the Creator who sends him as well as the human community, which he represents.

The early rabbinic Midrash (Melchilta to Exod 12:1) describes typologically the prophet phenomenon to be affected by deep concern for the Creator's honor as the heavenly Father as well as by deep concern for the honor of human Israel as God's sons. Simultaneously contrasting forces engage the prophet who is moved by God's *pathos* as well as by human conduct. For example, Jeremiah demands the honor of the heavenly Father with the honor of his earthly people. Thus he laments: "We sinned and rebelled but you did not forgive" (Lam 3:42). Jonah, for example, fled for he cared for the honor of his earthly people Israel to be saved from divine punishment. He welcomed his own death to be cast into the sea (Jon 1:12). Elijah, however, demanded first the honor of the heavenly Father, as he was jealous to challenge Israel and Baal worshippers at Mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18:21-36). Thus, he escaped to the desert of Mount Horeb, the very place where God gave the Decalogue to Israel. After forty days journey, there he hid in the cave declaring: "I was extremely jealous for the LORD, God of Hosts. For the children left the covenant... and now I am alone and they seek my death (lit. they seek to take my soul away)" (1 Kgs 19:10). He is consumed by God's presence in Heaven while people on earth, including Israel, have rejected Him as their Creator. At that time they were engaged with sacrificial service to Baal of Canaanite worship.

Elijah remained alone in God's presence at the cave, as Moses had experienced God's presence on the crevice of the rock at Sinai (Ex 33:17-23). Out of a powerful whirlwind, thunder and fire, the voice of God summons Elijah, as "a sound out of silence" (19:12) to calm the agitated soul of Elijah. He then assumed his mission to the remnant of Israel. The very honor of God's children was now demanded from the prophet who sought their repentance to a forgiving God. The early Talmudic tradition (Bab Tal. Berakhot 31 b), in the name of Rabbi Elazar of the fourth century, explained that

³ Consult Biblical Encyclopedia (Hebrew) on "*Nevu'ah*" by B. Oppenheim (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik publication) and refer to A.J. Heschel, *The Prophets* vol. 1 (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

Elijah originally was tormented by a conflicting concern for his people at Mount Carmel. For he appealed first to God: "Answer me, O Lord, answer me and let this people know that you are the Lord God" (1 Kgs 18:37). He was seeking a divine demonstration of His presence, as he was jealous for God's honor. Yet, he concluded with a retort to God in behalf of his people's honor. The above verse ends: "However you have caused their hearts to turn back from you." Elijah identified the human weakness, the evil inclination of their heart, which generates drives of desire, avarice and licentiousness. Rabbi Elazar added that Moses too defended the honor of Israel in his prayer for the sin of the golden calf. The Tannaitic school of Yannai formulated the intercession: "Master of the Universe, what caused the deviant act of the golden calf was that you have bestowed Israel with gifts of silver and gold upon their departure from Egypt" (Exodus 12:35; Gen 15:14). Following Moses' appeal at the crevice of the rock, God appeared to him and taught him how to appeal to God with the thirteen attributes of love that effect atonement. The heavenly Father forgives his sons as *Abba*.⁴ Thus, the early formulation of "Thou" is addressed to God in daily prayer by the early Tannaitic schools, with the dual names of LORD (YHWH) and God (*Elohim*).

III. Elijah and the Final Days

The Torah of Moses guides Israel as children of their forgiving heavenly Father. Elijah too came to defend Israel when he alone and the remnant followers faced humanity, including the idolatrous Israel, in their mythopoeic worship that denied God's transcendental existence. Such became the situation in the first century, when Rome ruled the ancient world of astral worship and mythopoeic religion. Only Jewish believers and gentile proselytes, including the "fearers" of God, faced the evil Roman kingdom and gnosis. They looked forward to the advent of Elijah that will be followed by the Messiah who will transform the work to embrace the heavenly Father. In early Christian tradition, Jesus is the Messiah and John the Baptist is Elijah. Jesus offers the very gift of prayer to *Abba* in his formulation of a Brief Prayer.⁵ Paul understood that such a gift for humankind is extended by the Messiah who comes to restore their relationship to God in total compassion (Rom 8:15-16 and Gal 4:5-7). Paul also recognized that such a gift was given to the Jews already among the seven gifts he enumerated in Rom 9:4-5. Therefore he viewed his ministry particular to the gentiles whom he welcomes as transformed or reborn people into the Kingdom of God with the arrival of the Messiah.

The return of Elijah reflects the apocalyptic anticipation of the biblically oriented faith in God who determines the salvific course of history. Moreover, its hope expression is accentuated by semiotic significance of sacramental life with entry in Sabbath time and in Passover time. Both aspects of time were introduced by Moses to Israel via effective association of heavenly *Manna* with Sabbath and paschal lamb with Passover (Ex 16:14-30; 12:3-14). These times in human life relate the redemptive

⁴ God was proclaimed king by Israel after the event of Exodus and the splitting of the Reed Sea (Ex 15:18). These freed slaves were removed from the hands of Pharaoh the king and now they commit themselves to God's sovereignty. As such they must obey his rules or commandments in the name of his kingdom. Thus, the rabbis define such a relationship with a monarch cannot dismiss offenses against His kingdom, since it breaches the authority of a king. However, a king who is also the father can forgive his children, since he is personally bonded to them by his fatherly love. Thus the very gift of *Abba* in prayer, relates the person in the image of God and in his embrace of fatherly love, as YHWH.

⁵ See my article on the "Prayer of Jesus in Matthew" in *Standing Before God*, ed. A. Finkel and L. Frizzell, (New York: KTAV, 1981) 131-170.

presence of God that will usher in the “redeemer like Moses”.⁶ Jesus, as the anticipated Messiah in early Christian writings, engages the followers with Paschal time at the Last Supper.⁷ The early Church assigned Eucharistic value for its major sacraments to be enjoyed by the participants in their relationship with Jesus the Messiah. John the Baptist is Elijah who came to bear witness to the heavenly voice at the Baptism of Jesus. Thus, the Gospel tradition opens with the testimony of John to Jesus and the Christian faithful await now the return of their Messiah, as the final advent.

Rabbinic Judaism still awaits the coming of Elijah, and the Jews appeal to a speeding arrival of Elijah at Passover night with a fifth cup at the Seder.⁸ They seek him with a Psalmic appeal (79:6 ff) to wipe away the vicious antisemitic attitude of nations towards Israel, which continues throughout the Diasporean period. The Jews await their final physical restoration in their promised land free from threats of elimination. Then the return of the Messiah will come to restore the world to peace in God’s kingdom. The Messianic advent remains the biblically promised event for Jews and Christians alike, as they both share a binding belief in messiahship and resurrection. However, the identity of the Messiah separates the two eschatologically oriented people in the Kingdom of God. All the while the faith expression is shared strongly by both, as a proof of the veracity of God’s mastery of time and space. The future of history is not known nor suspended to chance and caprice. Salvific arrival is determined by God only⁹ and then all world will acknowledge the filial love of their heavenly Father. As Zechariah’s prophecy is rendered by the Aramaic Targum of the first Century: “The Kingdom of God will be manifested to all who dwell on earth and all will worship in unison (literally, with one shoulder) for the name (YHWH) will be one” (Yonathan Targum to Zach. 14:9).

Elijah becomes a central figure in Jewish hope during the course of history that is marked by violence and hatred, war and conflict. He becomes, “the voice crying in the wilderness to clear the way of the Lord” (Isa 40:3). Thus, since the destruction of the Temple Jews publicly read in their synagogue this prophetic lection (the Haftarah of Isa 40) following their public fast day of “Ninth of Ab,” recalling the catastrophe. This very text is associated with the coming of Elijah in the Christian Gospels (Mk 1:4; Mt 3:1; Lk 3:4; Jn 1:23). Three aspects of Elijah’s ministry capture this eschatological expectation for human transformation in both traditions (see Mal 3:22-24). The first is the catalytic role of a prophet to affect “a return (*teshuvah*)” to the heavenly Father and, therefore, to transform human behavior in the spirit of love and righteousness. The second aspect is to “restore (*hashavah*)” family life in its purity and wholesomeness. Disintegration of family structure and marital relationship defies the Creator’s intent for humankind in the introductory chapter two of Genesis. The third aspect is to resolve conflict by promoting the respect for each human being in his relationship to the heavenly Father. Each human

⁶ Eschatological thought is determined by the principle of *Urzeit wirdt Endzeit*, and as, such the rabbinic tradition views that the example of Moses comes to determine the action of the final redeemer. That is why the prologue to John’s Gospel (1:1-18) seeks to contrast Jesus’ ministry with Moses, since it offers a high Christology that defines Jesus as the *Logos* of God, the *Memra* in early Palestinian Targum.

⁷ Note also the reference to John 6:24-59 about the *manna* as the “heavenly bread” in the sermon at Capernaum, where he relates it to the Eucharistic items of food and drink that are associated with the Paschal meal (6:53-56).

⁸ The fifth cup is associated with the fifth expression of YHWH’s revelation about the process of redemptive love (Ex 6:8, “I shall bring them to the land”). The other four expressions represent the four cups (6:6 “I shall take you out; I shall save you, I shall redeem you,” and 6:7, “I shall take you unto Me”).

⁹ This notion appears in Acts 1:7 (“It is not for you to know the time”), as well as in early Tannaitic tradition (Bab Talmud Sanhedrin 97b, in the name of Rabbi Yonathan).

being, singularly or collectively, offers testimony to the reality of God by living in his way of altruistic love. Elijah comes to solve all problems that produce division (*mahloqet*) among people. Therefore Elijah comes to establish *shalom* for humanity in God's Kingdom, i.e., wholesomeness in human relations as well as wholesomeness in their relationship to God himself (see Mishnah Edduyoth 8:7).

The three aspects of Elijah's ministry are captured by the three biblical designations. First is the *Navi* whose mission is to call the people to return to God. Thus, Jeremiah concluded his appeal in Lamentations "Cause us to return to you, O LORD (YHWH) and we shall return, renew our days as of old" (5:21). Second is the *Tishbi*, the one who will restore the hearts of fathers to their sons. Thus, Malachi concludes with the promise of Elijah, "who will restore (Heb. *heshib*) the hearts." Third, he is called the Gileadite. This designation represents the conflation of two Hebrew words, *Gal* and *`ed*. So is the conflation with reference to the monument of Jacob and his father-in-law, attesting to resolution of conflict (Gen 31:47, 48). Gilead is rendered in Hebrew as *Gal* (cairn) and *`ed* (testimony) with its Aramaic equivalences, *Yegar Sahaduta*. This is a unique rendering in the Hebrew Bible that displays a relationship between Israel (i.e. Jacob), the Hebrew believer, and Laban, the Aramean non-believer. Thus, the designation *Gilead* for Elijah comes to relate that his ministry erects a testimony in stone, i.e. firm commitment, between different people as sons to the heavenly Father.

IV. Elijah and John the Baptist

Early Christian tradition is rooted in a similar understanding of Elijah's tripartite mission. Luke is a gentile "fearer of God" and a Christian follower of Paul. He alone offers the account of the birth of John in relation to the coming of Elijah, as the angel's response to the priest Zachariah's prayer at the time of incense offering in the Temple. "He shall go before him (the Lord God) in the spirit and power (*pneuma kai dynamis*) of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the sons and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, (thereby) to make ready for the Lord a people prepared" (1:17). "To be in the spirit of Elijah" points to Malachi's concluding statement. This depiction related to the second aspect of Elijah's ministry with regards to family purity. For such action, John was decapitated by the vicious son of Herod, Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee and Transjordan. John admonished the ruler on the issue of marital impurity, in accordance with the Deuteronomic law of levirate marriage. For Antipas married his brother Philip's wife, Herodias, who bore a daughter Salome to him (Lk 3:19; Mk 6:17-29; Mt 14:3-12). Levirate marriage is only permissible when the brother died with no child, male or female, from his wife (Deut 25:5). This understanding of the biblical text was apparently shared by John and the Pharisaic teachers.¹⁰

The first aspect of Elijah's ministry is captured by Luke's rendition of the angel's response, "in the power of Elijah." It is described as "to turn" the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous. For "the power" of Elijah's coming gives rise to transformation of the people's heart and relationship to the heavenly Father. The prophets Jeremiah (31:32) and Ezekiel (36:26) describe such human

¹⁰ Deut 25:5 reads "uben `eyn lo" (which is translated as "he had no son"). John agrees with the Pharisaic teachers who read masoretically "*Uben `ayn lo*" ("in addition to a son take into consideration any offspring"). Thus levirate marriage cannot take place if the woman had a daughter with his brother. For such is the case of incest (impurity in marriage), so Lev 18:16

transformation as the renewal of spirit and heart in covenant with God, following the defeat of evil powers in the final war of humankind.

The third aspect of “testimonial cairn” is recorded with the Gospel tradition concerning John’s preaching (Mt 3:9; Lk 3:8). Its wording is perplexing as he utilizes the Hebrew or Aramaic play on words of sons (*banim* or *benaya*) and stones (*abanim* or *abenaya*). “I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.” The actual meaning is the formulation of his mission as “*Gal*” and “*Ed*” (the *Gileadite*). A stone from a pile bears witness to those who are immersed in the water by John’s ministry of baptism. Then they become sons in their relationship to the heavenly Father. In the Christian view, Jesus’ immersion was accompanied with the heavenly voice as he emerged. It declared: “This is my beloved son,” or as the Ebionite Gospel adds: You are my son; today I have begotten you.” The latter formulation echoes the wording of Psalm 2:7. Apparently this statement offers the testimony to Jesus’ messianic role. The very Psalm relates the scornful wonderment of people towards God’s Messiah, which is narrated in the Gospel tradition (refer to Acts 4:25-27). Jesus himself engages his followers with the very gift of becoming sons to the heavenly Father, as I discussed above.

Conclusion

Like Moses, Elijah represents the great prophet of Israel. Upon completion of their ministry, Elijah was assumed into heaven and Moses was laid to rest by God himself. Therefore, in Rabbinic tradition both are held by God in heaven for a final return in the end of days. This testimony appears at the end of the “Torah and Prophets”. The earlier reference to the canon in the days of Jesus was “Torah and Prophets” (so Mt 5:17, 22:40; Lk 24:44 with the addition of Psalms that opened the third division of Hagiographa). Thus, Malachi’s final expectation recalls the Torah of Moses and the sending of Elijah before the final awesome day of the Lord. Elijah *redivivus* reinforces Moses the giver of the Torah. Both appear together in early Christian tradition (Mk 9:2-9), as the event of transfiguration is attested to by Peter and Zebedee’s sons. Peter in awe responded with the intention to build tabernacles (*sukkot*=*skene*). The *sukkah* represented the endowed space with God’s glorious presence in the Tannaitic tradition (Bab Tal Sukkah 11b, in Rabbi Eliezer’s name). Jews celebrate the holiday of *Sukkot* in autumn (Lev. 23:31-48) so they recall that the clouds of God’s glory surrounded their ancestors upon departure from Egypt (Ex 13:21-22). Over the centuries Jews enter the *sukkah* and invite the presence of seven guests, the three patriarchs, Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon (the *Ushpizin*). However, every Saturday night the only guest they seek is Elijah, who will usher in the Messianic age of *shalom*.

Ode to Elijah

The response greeting: Elijah the Prophet, Elijah the Tishbite, Elijah the Gileadite speedily come to us with the Messiah, Son of David

The hymnal sections: all begin with “the Man” (*ish*) followed by a succeeding letter of Hebrew alphabet in each line (from *ayn* to *tav*).

‘ The Man who will be sent from the (seventh) heaven of *Aravoth*.

p The Man who is appointed for all good news.

s The Man who is a trusted agent to restore the heart of sons to the father.

q The Man who proclaimed I was jealous for the Lord in glory.

r The Man who rode on fiery horse in a whirlwind.

s The Man who did not taste death and burial

t The Man in addition to his name, he is called *Tishbi*.

Greet us with good news, let us rejoice sons with fathers at the departure of Sabbath. As it is written “Behold, I send to you Elijah the Prophet before the advent of the great awesome day and he will restore hearts of sons to their fathers” (Malachi 3:23-24).

Elijah among the Carmelites: Adopting and Honoring the Father

James Boyce, O. Carm.

"My Father! My Father! Israel's chariots and drivers!" cried Elisha the prophet in what must have been an anguished tone as he saw his mentor Elijah disappear from sight forever in a flaming chariot, as recounted in 2Kings 2:11-12.¹ Despite fifty brave men going to search in vain for Elijah, Elisha accepted the inevitable and began his own prophetic ministry as best he could in imitation of his mentor. The mystique of Elijah has continued to engage people throughout the centuries, from the many pilgrims who traveled to Mount Carmel, during the middle ages, some of whom actually settled there in order to experience his spirit, to the nineteenth-century grandson of the eminent Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, who wrote his famous oratorio *Elijah* in 1846.² This paper discusses one group of people, now known as Carmelites, who settled in the area of Mount Carmel towards the end of the twelfth century before developing into one of the mendicant orders in the thirteenth. In the absence of a charismatic founder comparable to Francis or Dominic for the much larger and better established mendicant orders, the Carmelites made the words of Elisha, "my father, my father," their own. They progressively adopted Elijah as their father and founder, gave literary expression to their understanding of their Elijan descendency and became the only western tradition to celebrate him as a Catholic saint with a proper feast in their liturgical rite. In this paper I shall discuss Elijah among the Carmelites under four points: 1) the origins of the Carmelites on Mount Carmel and the problem of their having no founder; 2) the historical development of the order and the progressive adoption of Elijah as a spiritual father; 3) the importance of the Carmelite liturgy, with its emphasis on resurrection theology and biblical personages, to the Carmelite self-understanding; and 4) the celebration of Elijah the prophet as a proper feast within the Carmelite liturgy.

1. The origins of the Carmelites on Mount Carmel and the problem of their not having a founder;

Carmelite historian Elias Friedman, in discussing the forerunners of the Carmelites, referred to them as "Latin hermits," to distinguish them from Greek Orthodox and other hermits who had settled on Mount Carmel at one time or another.³ The origins of the early hermits are shrouded in mystery, since the only surviving document is the *formula vitae* or rule given to them by Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, some time during his term of office, which extended from his installation in 1206 until 14 September 1214, when he was stabbed to death during a procession for the feast of the Holy Cross.

This early Albertine rule is itself enshrouded in mystery, since its text survives only in a single later version by Philip Ribot, whose *Institute of the First Monks, Letter of Cyril of Constantinople* and two other works comprise his *Ten Books on the Foundation of, and Matters Peculiar to the Carmelites*.⁴ The

¹Scripture quotations are taken from *Saint Joseph Edition of The New American Bible, Translated from the Original Languages with Critical Use of All the Ancient Sources by Members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1970).

² For a discussion of Felix Mendelssohn and his works, including *Elijah*, cf. Karl-Heinz Köhler and Eveline Bartlitz, "Mendelssohn(-Bartholdy), (Jakob Ludwig) Felix," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie, Vol. 12, pp. 134-159; his oratorio *Elijah* is discussed on pp. 145-146.

³ Elias Friedman, *The Latin Hermits of Mount Carmel, A study in Carmelite origins, Institutum Historicum Teresianum Studia*, I (Roma, 1979).

⁴ Bede Edwards, O.D.C., "Editorial Note" in Hugh Clarke, O. Carm. and Bede Edwards, O.D.C., *The Rule of Saint Albert* (Aylesford and Kensington, 1973), p. 75.

dating of the rule, however, is indisputable; from it we can establish that the early hermits must have settled on Mount Carmel towards the end of the twelfth century, since they would have had to follow their eremitical way of life for at least ten or fifteen years before a patriarch would give them the official recognition that a rule implies. Albert began his career as a Canon Regular of the Holy Cross at Mortara in Pavia, then was elected prior of the community in 1180 before being named bishop of Bobbio in 1184 and translated in 1185 to Vercelli where he served for about twenty years before being named patriarch of Jerusalem.⁵ Albert had personal experience of religious life and in 1194 he wrote statutes for the canons of the collegiate church of St. Stephen in Biella,⁶ thus putting him in a good position to eventually write a rule for the hermits of Mount Carmel.

The rule is addressed to "B. and the other hermits under obedience to him, who live near the spring on Mount Carmel."⁷ Nothing is known of B., although later Carmelite documents expanded his name to Brocard, whom the Carmelites later venerated as a saint in their liturgy.⁸ Bede Edwards points out that B's identity may have been deliberately kept obscure in order to emphasize Elijah's prominence among the hermits as their forerunner, model and protector.⁹ One of the few glimpses of the life of the early hermits on Mount Carmel comes from the writings of Jacques de Vitry, Albert's successor as Bishop of Acre from 1216-1228, who wrote of the hermits that they, "after the example of that holy man and solitary the prophet Elijah, led the hermit life on Mount Carmel . . . near the spring called Elijah's Spring, not far from the monastery of the blessed virgin Margaret, in little cells like so many hives where, as bees of the Lord, they produced the honey of spiritual sweetness."¹⁰ Jacques de Vitry thus considered the prominence of Elijah for the first hermits as self-evident; his mentioning Elijah's spring suggests that the Carmelites deliberately chose this particular site on the rather extensive mountain range of Mount Carmel to reinforce their own association with Elijah. While the hermit leader's obvious obscurity was helpful in promoting Elijah as their true founder and leader, the absence of a strong founding personality within the group soon proved problematic for the hermits.

Albert's untimely death had serious consequences for the early Carmelite hermits, since it left them bereft of the ecclesiastical support system they desperately needed during the second Council of Lyons, which convened in 1215, thus within the year of Albert's demise. The decree *Ne nimia*, contained in Constitution 13 of that council declared that "lest too great a variety of religious orders lead the church of God into grave confusion, we firmly prohibit anyone else from founding a new religious order."¹¹ Thus the Carmelites had to establish that they had been approved before the council convened if they expected to survive as a religious order. Had Albert lived to see the council he, as papal legate, would have been in a particularly strong position to defend the Carmelites to whom he

⁵ For a discussion of the life and career of Albert of Jerusalem, cf. V. L. Bullough, "Albert of Jerusalem, St.," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd edition, I, p. 222.

⁶ Hugh Clarke, O. Carm. and Bede Edwards, O.D.C., (eds.), *The Rule of Saint Albert* (Aylesford and Kensington, 1973), p. 13.

⁷ "Albertus, Dei gratia Hierosolymitanae Ecclesiae vocatus Patriarcha, dilectis in Christo filiis B. et caeteris eremitis qui sub eius obedientia iuxta fontem in Monte Carmeli morantur"; Clarke and Edwards, *The Rule of Saint Albert*, pp. 78 [Latin] and 79 [English].

⁸ Andrew Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity, Mendicants and their Past in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: University Press, 2002), p. 191.

⁹ Edwards, "Introduction" to *The Rule of Saint Albert*, p. 12.

¹⁰ Edwards, "Introduction" to *The Rule of Saint Albert*, p. 12, citing Jacques de Vitry, *Historia orientalis sive Hierosolymitana*, ed. F. Moschus (Douai, 1597) and J. Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos* (Hanau, 1611).

¹¹ The Latin text reads, "Ne nimia religionum diversitas gravem in ecclesia Dei confusionem inducat, firmiter prohibemus, ne quis de caetero novam religionem inveniat"; *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, ed. Centro di Documentazione, Istituto per le Scienze Religiose (Bologna: Josepho, Alberigo et al, 1962), p. 218.

gave their initial rule, but such was not to be the case. As a result, the Carmelites found themselves having to defend their origins and their antiquity, a process which lasted the better part of a century and entailed their eventually embracing the mendicant way of life in order to survive as a distinctive order in the church. While we cannot know for certain the influence of Elijah upon the original Carmelites, it is entirely plausible that his total dedication to God and faithful meditation on and proclamation of God's word inspired their own manner of life. At the very least they had to have had a strong consciousness of living on ground made holy by Elijah's prophetic ministry and of imitating his prophet spirit. While much of this information necessarily remains obscure, we can still document the Carmelites' progressive adoption of Elijah as a spiritual model and father, thereby enabling them both to maintain their antiquity as an order and promote his cult in western Europe.

2. The historical development of the order and the progressive adoption of Elijah as a spiritual father.

A key element in the decree *Ne nimia* was that there were too many new religious orders and that only the already established orders of religious, whether monks, canons or mendicants, should survive into the future. It thus became crucial for the Carmelites to establish themselves as old enough to fall into one of these three categories. Progressive attempts at receiving approval for their rule had to take into account two major new shifts in their identity: first, the mendicant movement sweeping Europe provided a framework into which they could incorporate themselves, albeit reluctantly; and secondly, their westward migration beginning around 1238 rapidly changed them from a single group of hermits on Mount Carmel to an international order numbering ten provinces by 1281.

Increasing raids by the native Moslems were probably the main reason, although not necessarily the only one, for the Carmelite migration westward, beginning around 1238, according to the thirteenth-century Dominican chronicler, Vincent of Beauvais,¹² to Sicily, England and perhaps Les Aygalades, near Marseilles in Provence.¹³ The Franciscan Thomas of Eccleston referred to the arrival of the Carmelites in England, when Richard De Grey of Codnor brought them there upon his return from the Crusades in 1242;¹⁴ the foundations of Hulne and Aylesford in England date to around this time, thus corroborating Eccleston's account. The General Chapter of London of 1281¹⁵ listed the ten provinces, in order of foundation, as 1) the Holy Land, 2) Sicily, 3) England, 4) Provence, 5) Tuscany, 6) Lombardy, 7) France, 8) Germany, 9) Aquitaine and 10) Spain.¹⁶ After the Carmelites' definitive departure from Mount Carmel itself in 1291 the Holy Land province relocated to Cyprus where evidence of their presence still exists.¹⁷ Cyprus was not listed as a province in later Chapter acts however, since it really was the Holy

¹² Bede Edwards cites 1238 as the beginning of this westward movement, based on evidence of the thirteenth-century Dominican, Vincent of Beauvais: cf. Clarke and Edwards, *The Rule of Saint Albert*, p. 21.

¹³ Robinson, p. 10 + fn. Later chapter acts from London in 1281 and Bordeaux in 1294 place France after Tuscany in order of foundation, so that Les Aygalades, if founded at this early date, may have been either an isolated convent or one which did not have a long history. It is also possible that the early date ascribed to it is simply an error.

¹⁴ Keith J. Egan, O. Carm., "An Essay toward a Historiography of the Origin of the Carmelite Province in England," *Carmelus* 19 (1972), 78.

¹⁵ Saggi, Ludovicus M., O. Carm., "Constitutiones Capituli Condinensis Anni 1281," *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum* 15 (1950), 203-45.

¹⁶ "In .X. ad presens ordinamus provincias. Quarum prima est terra sancta, secunda cicilia, tertia anglia, .IIII. provincia, .V. tusia, .VI. lombardia, .VII. francia, .VIII. alemania, .IX. aquitania, .X. hyspania."; cited in Ludovicus Saggi, O. Carm., "Constitutiones Capituli Londinensis, Anni 1281," *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum* 15 (1950), 244.

¹⁷ Jaroslav Folda has discussed a panel painting from the church of Agios Kassianos in Nicosia which depicts a Virgin and child along with ten Carmelites, thus strongly suggesting Carmelite patronage of the work; cf. Folda, "Crusader Art in the Kingdom of Cyprus, c. 1275-1291: Reflections on the State of the Question," in N. Coureas and J. S. Riley-Smith (eds.), *Cyprus and the Crusades* (Nicosia, 1995), 209-37, for this discussion.

Land province in exile.¹⁸ The Carmelites thus kept alive the preeminence of the Holy Land in their understanding of the order and its origins.

The progressive internationalization of the order and its embracing of the mendicant way of life meant that the Carmelites now had to chant the Divine Office in choir rather than saying the psalms privately in the cell as they had done as hermits on Mount Carmel. As a mendicant order they had now to reevaluate their identity and mission. This slow process involved numerous papal documents that allowed them at least temporarily to continue observing their rule while they adapted to a new western situation. This adaptation eventually led to the revision of the Albertine rule under the direction of two Dominicans, Cardinal Hugh of St. Cher and William of Reading, bishop of Anterados (Tartous), a suffragan see of Tyre. Their work resulted in the apostolic letter "Quae honorem conditoris" promulgated by Innocent IV on 1 October 1247¹⁹ which contained within it the revised Albertine rule. Newly added provisions in this revised rule included a common refectory and the public recitation of the Divine Office, thereby reshaping the Carmelites into a mendicant order and allowing for the development of a distinctive liturgical tradition.

This progressive refashioning of themselves as mendicants forced the Carmelites to incorporate their relationship to Elijah the prophet into their self-definition. The first direct reference to Elijah comes in what is known as the *rubrica prima* or first rubric, affixed to the Constitutions of the General Chapter of London in 1281, a declaration meant to answer the questions of neophytes in the order as to its identity. In the translation of Carmelite historian Joachim Smet, this *rubrica prima* reads as follows:

We declare, bearing testimony to the truth, that from the time when the prophets Elijah and Elisha dwelt devoutly on Mount Carmel, holy Fathers both of the Old and the New Testament, whom the contemplation of heavenly things drew to the solitude of the same mountain, have without doubt led praiseworthy lives there by the fountain of Elijah in holy penitence unceasingly and successfully maintained.

It was these same successors whom Albert the patriarch of Jerusalem in the time of Innocent III united into a community, writing a rule for them which Pope Honorius, the successor of the same Innocent, and many of their successors, approving this Order, most devoutly confirmed by their charters. In the profession of this rule, we, their followers, serve the Lord in diverse parts of the world, even to the present day.²⁰

Fr. Joachim rightly notes that this, "*Rubrica prima* is the seed from which issued over the centuries the luxuriant growth of the Elijan legend."²¹ The *rubrica prima* makes explicit that the Carmelites descend in a direct line from the holy people of both Jewish and Christian traditions who have dwelt on Mount Carmel in imitation of the devout lives of Elijah and Elisha the holy prophets, thus stating directly a relationship between the Carmelites and Elijah which was tacitly presupposed on Mount Carmel. The

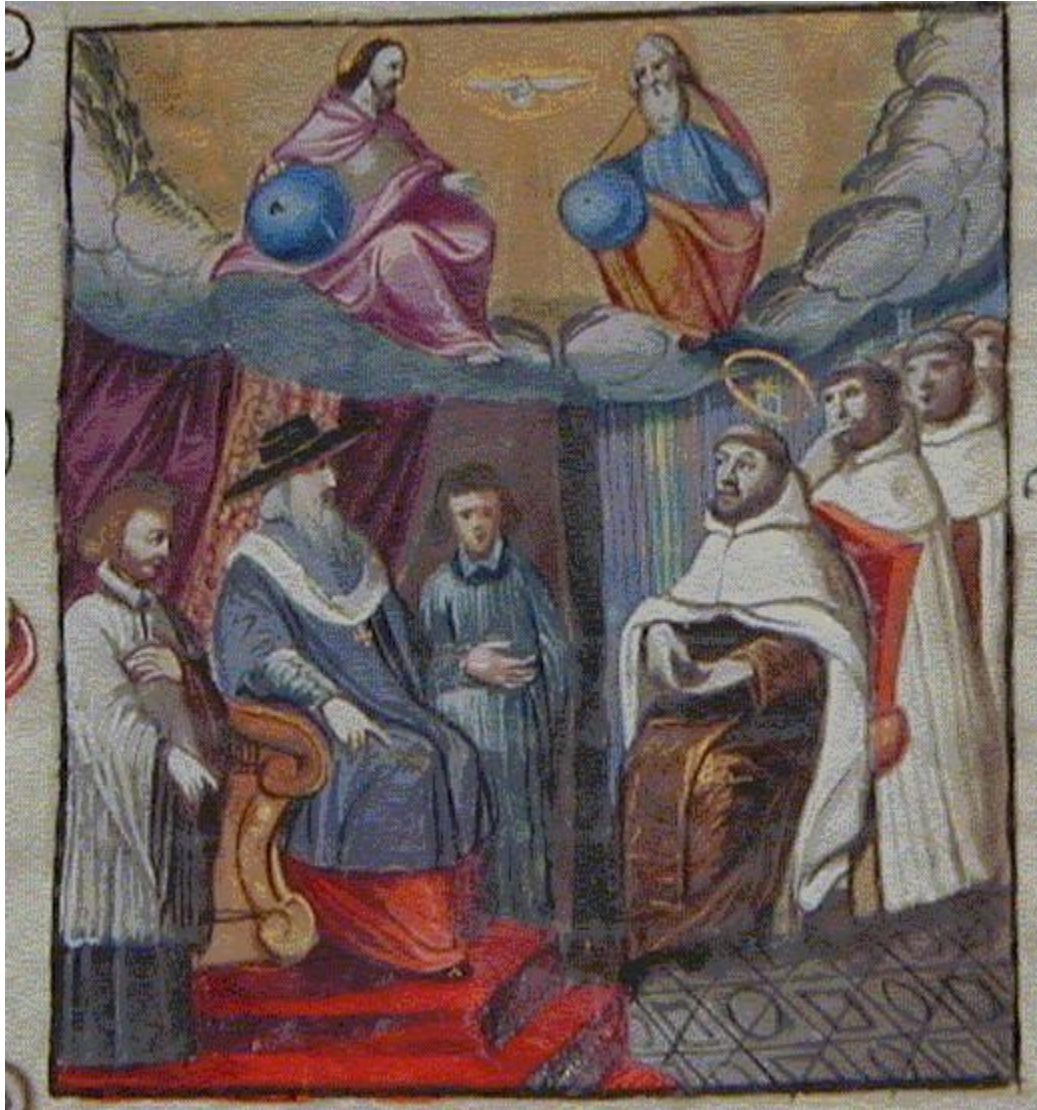
¹⁸ Joachim Smet, O. Carm. briefly discusses the Carmelite convents on Cyprus in *The Carmelites, A History of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*, Vol. 1, ca. 1200 until the Council of Trent, Revised Edition (Darien, Illinois: Carmelite Spiritual Center), 1988, p. 26.

¹⁹ The letter is found in the Vatican Archives, Reg. Vat., no. 21, f. 465v-466. Clarke and Edwards, *The Rule of Saint Albert*, pp. 23-25; M.-H. Laurent, O.P., ed., "La lettre 'Quae honorem Conditoris' (1er octobre, 1247): Note de diplomatie pontificale," *Ephemerides Carmeliticae* 2 (1948), 5-16.

²⁰ Joachim Smet, O. Carm., *The Carmelites*, Vol. I, pp. 15-16; the Latin text may be found in Ludovicus M. Saggi, O. Carm., "Constitutiones capituli Londinensis anni 1281," *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum* 15 (1950), p. 208.

²¹ Joachim Smet, O. Carm., *The Carmelites*, Vol. I, p. 16.

rubrica prima also identifies their location as near the fountain of Elijah, thereby making their association with the prophet geographical as well as spiritual. It bypasses the leader of the hermits in favor of Albert of Jerusalem as the one who grouped them into a community. This ambivalence concerning the founder, either Albert or "B," is expressed in a historiated initial "P" for "Patrem" of the "Credo," "I believe in God the Father Almighty," in a Gradual completed in 1644 by Fr. Stanislaw de Stolec, a friar of the Krakow Carmelite community,²² shown in our example 1.



Example 1. The historiated initial "P" from Krakow, Carmelite Convent, ms. 6, p. 40

²²The initial occurs on p. 40 of this gradual. For a discussion of this manuscript cf. Boyce, "Picturing the Sacred: The Carmelite Gradual of Krakow," *The Sword* 64 (2004), 42-53.

Here both the prelate Albert with the wide brimmed hat and the foremost Carmelite, wearing a halo as well as his habit, are both seated, although Albert is raised on a platform, suggesting their comparable prominence. Fr. Stanislaw seems to be ambivalent as to which one assumes the role of father figure, but the message is clear that obedience to the earthly father and the Carmelite rule correctly professes belief in the heavenly father. In the *rubrica prima* cited above, the association between the prophet Elijah and the hermits of Mount Carmel was still essentially a spiritual one with geographical reinforcements. Throughout the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, however, Carmelite writers developed this association into a much more precise one that expanded these spiritual and geographical roots into a historical relationship as well.

Subsequent versions of the *rubrica prima*, in constitutions from the chapters of 1291, 1324, 1327, 1359 and 1367, added elements to the original statement that emphasized the Carmelites' Marian devotion, pushed back their papal approval to before 1215 and traced their origins to the very beginnings of Christianity.²³ By emphasizing their monastic and eremitical activity, the Carmelites also emphasized their reliance on Elijah as their model and inspiration. Similarly, an anonymous treatise from the end of the 13th century, addressed to *Universis christifidelibus*, all the Christian faithful, sought to clarify who the Carmelites were for outsiders as well as for themselves, now interpreting the "holy fathers of the Old and New Testament" as proto-Carmelites who dated back to the time of Jesus, thereby identifying them with the "pious men" or "devout Jews of every nation under heaven" of Acts 2:5.²⁴

Later Carmelite writers such as Jean de Cheminot in his *Speculum fratrum ordinis beatae Mariae de Monte Carmeli* wrote specifically that "our chief is Elijah, our leader Elisha and the sons of the prophets who lived in the fields and wildernesses, and made dwellings for themselves by the river Jordan,"²⁵ thus tracing Carmelite origins back to the time of Elijah and Elisha. This expansion necessarily entailed a geographical one beyond the area of Mount Carmel to the Jordan and other places in Israel famous for prophetic activity.

The French Carmelite chronicler Jean de Venette, prior of the Paris Carmel in 1339, and prior provincial of France from 1342 to 1366,²⁶ built on earlier writings, particularly of the English Carmelite John Baconthorpe, to produce his own treatise *Qualiter et quomodo* in which he discussed Elijah's parentage and particularly his father Sabacha, or Sobac, who had a dream in which men dressed in white, hence Carmelites in their white cloaks, were saluting him, thus referring to the Carmelites' change of habit to the white cloak in 1287.²⁷

The culmination point for developing the story of Elijah and the Carmelites was a work written by the Catalan Carmelite Philippe Ribot, prior provincial of Catalonia from 1385, known as the *Institute of the First Monks*, dating to around 1370.²⁸ In it Ribot made a curious interpretation of scripture which

²³ The original 1281 version of the *rubrica prima* and several of these later versions have been published by Adrianus Staring, O. Carm., *Medieval Carmelite Heritage, Early Reflections on the Nature of the Order*, Critical Edition with Introduction and Notes (Rome: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1989).

²⁴ Andrew Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, pp. 111-113.

²⁵ Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, p. 122.

²⁶ For a discussion of Jean de Venette, cf. Michael T. Driscoll, O. Carm., "'L'histoire des Trois Maries' by Jean de Venette, O. Carm., *Cahiers de Joséphologie* 23 (1975), 231-254.

²⁷ Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, pp. 124-125.

²⁸ Felip Ribot, O. Carm., *The Ten Books on the Way of Life and Great Deeds of the Carmelites*, edited and translated by Richard Copsey, O. Carm., *Early Carmelite Spirituality*, Volume 1 (London and Rome: St. Albert's Press and Edizione Carmelitane, 2005).

allowed him to equate the "sons of the prophets," that is, the group of disciples whom Elijah gathered around him cited in 1 Kings 20:35, with the earliest Carmelites. This interpretation thus made much more specific the relationship between the Carmelites and Elijah, making Elijah not only their spiritual guide as hermits but the actual founder of their Order. Ribot's work thus definitively resolved the problem of the Carmelites' antiquity by dating their foundation not just to before 1215, the year of the Fourth Lateran Council, but to the time of Elijah the prophet, thus during the reign of King Ahab, 874-853 B.C.E.²⁹ In the parallel development of the Carmelites' association with the Virgin Mary, later medieval writers such as Arnold Bostius wrote of visits to the hermits on Mount Carmel by Mary, her mother St. Anne and her grandmother St. Emerentia,³⁰ creating a spiritual lore that found its way into such works of art as the St. Anne altarpiece, now in the Historisches Museum in Frankfurt.³¹ This Elijan legend³² helped the Carmelites to defend the antiquity of their order against their mendicant competitors, the Franciscans and Dominicans, and also against any local bishop who might challenge it. Despite the rather fanciful writing of Ribot and similar medieval Carmelite authors, the idea of Elijah as the direct founder of the Carmelites took hold and remained in place for many members of the order through the twentieth century, even though it was definitively rejected by the 19th-century group of Jesuit hagiographical scholars known as the Bollandists.

While the Carmelites who adopted Elijah tried to conform themselves to his prophetic way of life, they also made him conform to theirs. Thus their original cloak of undyed wool with several stripes on it was interpreted as the mantle of Elijah which fell out of the flaming chariot during his assumption. While the cloak itself was originally of undyed wool, its exposed parts became singed by the fire of the chariot while the parts that were folded over and hence protected remained intact.³³ Thus the mantle the Carmelites wore in the Holy Land and in their early days in Europe reflected the tradition that it literally descended from Elijah. Elijah proved quite flexible, however, so that when the Carmelites adopted a white cloak over a brown tunic and scapular in 1287,³⁴ a more traditional and uniform garment which ensured them easier acceptance in western Europe, Elijah dutifully followed suit. Thus the frontispiece of the Krakow gradual of 1644 portrays Elijah, sword in hand, dressed in the new habit of the Carmelite order. Not unlike many a modern family where parents are duly obedient to their children, here the ancient prophet, once adopted by the medieval Carmelites, faithfully conformed to their vision of him.

The white cloak was an important symbol of identity for the Carmelites, however, one that helped them to be accepted within the mendicant framework, especially in the universities which they

²⁹ *New American Bible*, [unnumbered page opposite] p. 344.

³⁰ For a discussion of the visits of Mary to Mount Carmel and of the work of Arnold Bostius, *On the Patronage of Mary towards the Order of Carmel dedicated to her*, cf. Eamon R. Carroll, O. Carm., "The Medieval Flowering," in *Carmel and Mary, Theology and History of a Devotion*, edited by John F. Welch, O. Carm. (Washington, D.C.: The Carmelite Institute, 2002), pp. 47-66, especially pp. 52-53.

³¹ This St. Anne altarpiece is discussed in detail by Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn in their "Introduction" to *Interpreting Cultural Symbols, Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society*, edited by Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1990), especially pp. 27-43.

³² Jane Ackerman is the most recent scholar to take up the question of Elijah as the founder of the Carmelites in her article, "Stories of Elijah and Medieval Carmelite Identity," *History of Religions* 35 (1995), 124-147. Cf. also Rudolf Hendriks, "La Succession héréditaire (1280-1451)" in *Élie le prophète, I: Études Carmélitaines* 35 (Bruges, 1956), 34-81.

³³ This is the explanation of the Carmelite John of Hildesheim in his *Dialogus inter directorem et detractorem de ordine Carmelitarum*; cf. Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, pp. 59-60 for this discussion.

³⁴ The Carmelite adopted the white cloak at the General Chapter of Montpellier in 1287; cf. Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, p. 45ff for this discussion.

increasingly attended, first as students and then as teachers. The original striped cloak was not of uniform design, so that it failed to clearly identify the bearers as Carmelites.³⁵ In the middle ages uniformity of dress was crucial to clarity of religious identity. The early portrayal of Carmelites in the striped cloak in the altarpiece painted by Pietro Lorenzetti in 1329³⁶ for the Carmelites of Siena, eventually yielded to portrayals of Carmelites in white cloaks in later iconography. Similarly some iconography of Elijah portrays him in the striped cloak, which is a historical impossibility since it only became striped once he dropped it out of the fiery chariot, while other portrayals of the prophet among the Carmelites feature him in the white cloak adopted after 1287.

This progressive adoption of Elijah as a real historical father and founder rather than just a spiritual exemplar thus shaped Carmelite self-understanding from the later middle ages through the twentieth century. It authenticated their antiquity and validity as a religious order, solidified their ties to the Holy Land where they originated, was consistent with their liturgical tradition and eventually enabled them to promote and celebrate Elijah's liturgical cult in the west.

3. The Importance of the Carmelite Liturgy, with its emphasis on resurrection theology and biblical personages, to the Carmelite self-understanding.

As members of the Latin Kingdom, established by the crusaders after the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099,³⁷ the original Carmelite hermits followed the local liturgy known as the rite of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. Since the purpose of the crusades was to place the sites sacred to Christian memory, especially the tomb of the Lord, once again into Christian hands, the essentially French liturgy adapted for use there predictably celebrated places and people who were important to the area. The rite of the Holy Sepulchre thus was especially prominent in the two principal churches, erected over the site of the Lord's tomb and at the remains of Solomon's temple respectively, both churches being administered by Augustinian canons,³⁸ but also was used in the other area churches as well.

The Holy Sepulchre liturgy emphasized the theme of resurrection,³⁹ so central to Christian theology, in a special feast known as the commemoration of the resurrection, celebrated on the last Sunday of the year or the Sunday immediately preceding the first Sunday of Advent. It also celebrated proper feasts for the entrance of Noah into the ark on May 20 and his exit from it on April 27, and for the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, venerable Hebrew figures now celebrated as Catholic saints with a proper feast on October 6. The feast of the Transfiguration on August 6 celebrated the holiness of the specific locale of Mount Tabor as well as two preeminent figures from the Jewish tradition, Moses and Elijah.⁴⁰ Thus Elijah was quietly celebrated in the Holy Sepulchre liturgy even before he had a proper feast of his own in the later Carmelite rite. Indirectly all these feasts celebrated the theme of

³⁵ Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, pp. 50-51.

³⁶ The Lorenzetti altarpiece is discussed by Joanna Cannon, "Pietro Lorenzetti and the History of the Carmelite Order," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987), 18-28.

³⁷ For a history of the Crusades cf. Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, 3 vols. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1951-54).

³⁸ For a discussion of Crusader churches, cf. Hugo Buchthal, *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); also cf. Charles Coüasnon, O.P., *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*, trans. J.-P. B. and Claude Ross, The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1972 (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

³⁹ For an interesting perspective on the Carmelite liturgy and its resurrection theology, cf. Ari Kallenberg, "The Resurrection in the Early Carmelite Liturgy and Carmelite Spirituality," *Carmelus* 44 (1997), 5-20.

⁴⁰ For a thorough discussion of the Holy Sepulchre liturgy, cf. Cristina Dondi, *The Liturgy of the Canons Regular of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, A Study and a Catalogue of the Manuscript Sources*, *Bibliotheca Victorina* XVI (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2004).

new life, closely associated with this resurrection theology: thus Noah and his ark preserved his family from death and, once they emerged from it safely, gave them new life on land. The feast of the patriarchs was closely allied to Jesus' argument with the Sadducees in Lk 20:37-38 wherein he cites God's announcement to Moses in Ex. 3:6, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." The words "I am" thus suggest that the patriarchs as well as God must continue to be alive. Similarly, the appearance of Moses and Elijah with Jesus in the Transfiguration not only gave approval to the company Jesus kept but also suggested that Moses and Elijah must also somehow still be living. Thus these venerable heroes of the Hebrew scriptures were mobilized by the Christian evangelists to validate the Christian concept of resurrection.

During the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries the Carmelites became progressively established as a mendicant order, with a clearly identifiable and uniform habit after 1287, while Carmelite authors reflected in their writings on the meaning and history of the order. Parallel to this historical narrative was the gradual codifying of the liturgy into a uniform practice, preserving the rite of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and, by the gradual acceptance of new feasts, developing it into a distinctive Carmelite liturgy. A late thirteenth century ordinal, or book of detailed prescriptions for celebrating Mass and Office,⁴¹ was probably an immediate predecessor to a liturgical ordinal assembled by the German Carmelite Sibert de Beka and promulgated by the General Chapter of London of 1312 for use in all the convents of the order.⁴² This ordinal guaranteed that all the services for the Divine Office and Mass would be celebrated with identical chants and prayers in every house of the order. Like the *rubrica prima* of 1281 and the white cloak of 1287, Sibert's ordinal shaped the Carmelites' understanding of who they were and how they fit into the society of medieval western Europe. The fidelity of all medieval Carmelite liturgical manuscripts to the prescriptions of Sibert's ordinal⁴³ means that this ordinal essentially functioned, along with the rule and constitutions, as a primary text for shaping Carmelite identity. Without such a standardized medieval Carmelite liturgy, it would have been impossible to give Elijah the veneration he deserved as their leader and founder.

4. The celebration of Elijah the prophet as a proper feast within the Carmelite Liturgy

Despite the evident literary and spiritual importance of Elijah for the Carmelites, however, a proper office for Elijah was slow to enter the order's liturgy. Two reasons account for this: first he was not a baptized Christian, normally considered one of the prerequisites to being a Catholic saint; and secondly, no one was quite sure whether he had died or not, leaving in question the second prerequisite for Catholic sainthood. No one would have questioned Elijah's exemplary life which, of course, is the

⁴¹ This late thirteenth century ordinal, now Dublin, Trinity College Library, ms. 194, has been edited by Patrick de Saint-Joseph (Rushe), "Antiquum Ordinis Carmelitarum Ordinis, Saec. XIII," *Études Carmélitaines*, 2 (1912-13), 5-251.

⁴² The ordinal of Sibert de Beka has been edited by R. P. Benedictus Zimmerman, O. C. D., *Ordinaire de l'ordre de Notre-Dame du Mont Carmel par Sibert de Beka (vers 1312) publié d'après le manuscrit original et collationné sur divers manuscrits et imprimés*. Tôme Treizième. *Bibliothèque liturgique publiée par Ulysse Chevalier* (Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, Libraires, 1910).

⁴³ For a discussion of sets of Carmelite choir books whose contents follow the prescriptions of Sibert's ordinal cf. Boyce, "The Carmelite Choirbooks of Florence and the Liturgical Tradition of the Carmelite Order," *Carmelus* 35 (1988), 67-93, now chapter 4 (pp. 115-150) of James Boyce, O. Carm., *Praising God in Carmel Studies in Carmelite Liturgy* (Washington, D.C.: The Carmelite Institute, 1999); and Boyce, "Die Mainzer Karmeliterchorbücher und die Liturgische Tradition des Karmeliterordens," *Archiv für mittelhochdeutsche Kirchengeschichte* 39 (1987), 267-303, reprinted as "The Carmelite Choirbooks of Mainz and the Liturgical Tradition of the Carmelite Order," chapter 3 of *Praising God in Carmel*, pp. 71-114.

primary basis for sainthood, and since Elijah performed miracles during his lifetime, no one worried whether or not he would do so after death. Elijah's exemplary life and miraculous deeds could not counteract his unbaptized status and uncertain death, however. Thus the only medieval office for Elijah was the "Historia Raptus sacratissimi Heliae Prophetae," or the Assumption of the most holy prophet Elijah, written by the Carmelite Robert Bale⁴⁴ in a small book of offices and other writings he produced; this, however, is simply the poetic writing of an individual medieval Carmelite rather than evidence of a general tradition within the order. While the Carmelites were willing to overlook the fact that Elijah was not Catholic, since they had already celebrated the patriarchs in their medieval liturgy, the real stumbling block seems to have been the question of his assumption. This paper began with Elisha's confused and anguished cry as he tried to understand what had happened to Elijah. Elisha wasn't the only one who worried about what happened to Elijah, and Christian preoccupation with the issue had a direct impact on his liturgical celebration. If Elijah had not died, he could have no *dies natalis* or date of entrance into the kingdom.⁴⁵ In addition, while Christians recognized Elijah's assumption, since Elisha saw him leave, no one was quite sure where he went. As a devout Jew he may not have believed in the Christian heaven, and the kingdom of God had yet to be proclaimed by Jesus Christ for a number of centuries, let alone opened for admission to the believing faithful. Thus the eminent theologian Gregory the Great maintained that Elijah, once assumed, was not living in the same stratum as God and therefore could not be considered a saint.⁴⁶ The Jewish expectation that Elijah would return before the Messiah and the anachronistic issues that the kingdom of God was only opened after the ascension of the Lord made the question of Elijah's assumption particularly problematic, especially if it was not clear where he went.

Thus while the Orthodox churches celebrated a feast of St. Elijah, it only entered the Carmelite liturgy in 1450.⁴⁷ Nor is it certain how much of a proper celebration it had even then, since no medieval versions of his Mass and office have survived to modern times. A breviary printed in Venice in 1495⁴⁸ and once used by the Carmelites of Bamberg does not contain an office for Elijah. In all probability his feast was not celebrated until the Carmelites revised their liturgy in 1585 as mandated by the Council of Trent.⁴⁹ Some liturgical chants for Elijah were celebrated among the Carmelites, as well as in most

⁴⁴ The texts of this office have been published in Zimmerman, *Ordinaire*, pp. 341-345; the office occurs in the manuscript Cambridge, University Library, ms. Ff. VI. 28, described in *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*. (Georg Olms Verlag. Hildesheim, 1980. Kraus reprint of the original from 1864).

⁴⁵ Pascal Kallenberg, O. Carm. "Le culte liturgique d'Élie dans l'Ordre du Carmel," *Élie le prophète 2* "Au Carmel dans le Judaïsme et l'Islam", *Études Carmélitaines* 35 (1956), 134-150.

⁴⁶ Gregorius Magnus, Hom. in fest. Ascensionis Domini, Hom. 29.5, *Patrologia Latina* 76:1216C refers to this in the section "quod Helias sit raptus in celum"

⁴⁷ Kallenberg, *Fontes Liturgiae Carmelitanae*, p. 20.

⁴⁸ *Breviarium de camera secundum usum carmelitarum ...* [per ... fratrem Joannem Mariam de Poluciis seu Prandinis de Novolaro ... emendatum ... Quod in florentissima Venetorum civitate: impensa sua et arte Andreas de Torresanis de Asula ad finem usque produxit, 1495]. The manuscript is described in *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, (Leipzig: Karl W. Hiersemann; Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag; 1926-94) 5: cols. 120-121. A copy of this incunable is now in the Amherst College Library, with the shelfmark "xRBR Incun 1495 B7." Cf. Frederick R. Goff, *Incunabula in American Libraries: A Third Census of Fifteenth-Century Books Recorded in North American Collections*. Reproduced from the annotated copy maintained by Frederick R. Goff, compiler and editor (Millwood, New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1973), p. 137.

⁴⁹ The legislation of the Council of Trent concerning music has been discussed by Raphael Molitor, O.S.B., *Die Nach-Tridentinische Choral-Reform zu Rom*, 2 Vols. (Leipzig, 1901) and in Robert F. Hayburn, *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music, 95 A.D. to 1977 A.D.* (Collegeville, Minnesota, 1979); cf. also my articles "The Carmelite Office in the Tridentine Era," *The Past in the Present; Papers Read at the IMS Intercongressional Symposium and the 10th*

medieval liturgies, as part of the chants used for ordinary time, but most of the chants for this proper Carmelite feast of St. Elijah are unique to Carmelite manuscripts.

The feast of Elijah, however, celebrated each year on July 20, is contained in many Carmelite choir books from the 18th century, including manuscripts from Poland and Italy and even a processional from the convent of the Encarnación in Avila dating to roughly the same time as its most famous resident member, St. Teresa of Jesus.⁵⁰ In most of these sources the heading for Elijah's feast refers to him as "dux et pater noster," naming him as "our leader and father," thereby making him the equivalent of a founder, so that liturgical practices reinforced Carmelite beliefs concerning his relationship to them. Proper texts were used for both the Mass chants and for all the pieces used to celebrate the Divine Office, the daily round of prayers chanted every day in all the convents of the order. These prayer times, known as Matins, Lauds, Vespers, Compline for the greater hours and Prime, Terce, Sext and None for the lesser hours, each contained some proper texts to reflect on Elijah's story. Of these hours, the longest and liturgically most interesting one was Matins, done during the middle of the night. Matins was divided into three large sections, called nocturns, each of which had three antiphons and psalms as well as three readings and three responsories, or chants which reflected on each reading. The only chant manuscript to contain Matins texts and music for Elijah's feast is now an eighteenth-century antiphonal in the Roman convent of San Martino ai Monti, where it is simply known as Codex F,⁵¹ and these texts correspond to ones from a standard Carmelite breviary printed in 1683.⁵²

While most medieval offices used freshly composed texts to honor a saint, a practice generally banned by the Council of Trent,⁵³ Elijah's story was so well documented in the two books of Kings that this was really not necessary. Thus, much as a librettist organizes texts from a story into recitatives, arias and choruses to make an opera or oratorio, the compiler of the office and Mass texts for Elijah's feast culled the most relevant passages from the scriptures into a suitable format to celebrate his feast. In addition to the texts from 1 Kings 17 concerning Elijah and the widow of Zarephath and the account of the Transfiguration in Lk 9, the Matins readings also used texts by St. Epiphanius on the significance of the prophets for reading 4, a book by St. Isidore of Seville on the Fathers of the Old Testament for readings 5-6 and a homily of St. John Chrysostom which discusses this Lucan transfiguration text for

Meeting of the CANTUS PLANUS Budapest & Visegrád (Budapest: Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, 2003), Vol. 2, 353-387 and "Singing a New Song unto the Lord: Catholic Church Music," in *From Trent to Vatican II, Historical and Theological Investigations*, edited by Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella (Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 137-159.

⁵⁰ This manuscript is described in "El Archivo Musical y el Museo de Instrumentos del Convento de la Encarnación," in Antonio Baciero, *El Organo de Camara del Convento de la Encarnación de Avila* (Consejo General de Castilla y Leon, Ediciones Poniente, 1982), p. 135.

⁵¹ Chants for the office of St. Elijah begin on p. 53 of Rome, San Martino ai Monti, Codex F.

⁵² I discussed these chants for the feast of Elijah in "The Feasts of Saints Elijah and Elisha in the Carmelite Rite: A Liturgico-Musical Study," in *Master of the Sacred Page, Essays and Articles in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday*, Edited by Keith J. Egan, T.O. Carm., Craig E. Morrison, O. Carm. and Michael J. Wastag, O. Carm. (Washington, D.C.: The Carmelite Institute, 1997), pp. 155-188.

⁵³ For a discussion of the effect of the Council of Trent upon the Carmelite liturgy, for instance, cf. my article "The Carmelite Office in the Tridentine Era," *The Past in the Present; Papers Read at the IMS Intercongressional Symposium and the 10th Meeting of the CANTUS PLANUS Budapest & Visegrád* (Budapest: Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, 2003), Vol. 2, 353-387.

readings 7-9.⁵⁴ These last three Matins readings thus ally Elijah's feast to the Transfiguration event at which he and Moses appeared together in the company of the Lord. This, of course, implicitly reinforces the resurrection theology which is central to the Transfiguration and also links this newer feast of Elijah with the much older one of the Transfiguration. The texts for the antiphons and responsories, the chanted portions of Matins, were also taken from the two books of Kings, as well as from the prophet Malachi and the letter of James. Thus while the story of Elijah is contained in the scriptures, its adaptation into liturgical texts is unique to the Carmelites among the western liturgies.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of these chant texts is that the Divine Office and Mass both begin with the same text, the first antiphon for first Vespers, in the Office and the Introit chant for Mass, taken from 1Kings 19:10 and repeated verbatim in 19:14. The opening antiphon for the office of first Vespers reads "Zelo zelatus sum pro domino deo exercituum quia dereliquerunt pactum tuum filij Israel," "With zeal I have been zealous for the Lord God of hosts, but the sons of Israel have forsaken your covenant." The introit version embellishes this text somewhat by adding to it "altaria tua destruxerunt et prophetas tuos occiderunt gladio et derelictus sum ego solus et querent animam meam ut auferant eam," "they have torn down your altars and put your prophets to the sword. I alone am left, and they seek to take my life."⁵⁵ The Introit verse is "Exaltabo te domine quoniam suscepisti me nec delectasti inimicos meos super me" followed by the doxology, "Gloria patri."⁵⁶ The Introit text thus puts Elijah in the place of the psalmist in psalm 30, verse 1, who says "I will extol, you, O Lord, for you drew me clear and did not let my enemies rejoice over me." The reason, of course, that people were seeking Elijah's life is that King Ahab had informed Jezebel that Elijah had slit the throats of the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:40 and she had promised revenge. The most elaborate historiated initial "Z" for "Zelo," in Krakow, Carmelite Convent, ms. 7, shown as example 2.

⁵⁴ *Breviarium Fratrum B. Virginis Mariae de Monte Carmeli iuxta Hierosolymitanæ Ecclesiæ antiquam Consuetudinem Capituli Generalis Decreto ad normam Breviarij Romani directum: & Reverendissimi P. Magistri Angeli Monsignani Prioris Generalis Iussu denuo recognitum & correctum cum Officiis Sanctorum pro tota Ecclesia ordinatis, & aliis eidem Ordini concessis usque ad Sanctiss. D. N. Innocentium XI., Pars Aestivalis* (Antverpiæ: Ex Officina Plantiniana Balthasaris Moreti, 1683).

⁵⁵ The Latin texts in Carmelite liturgical manuscripts follow the Vulgate version; cf. *Biblia Vulgata, iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam Nova Editio*, logicis partitionibus aliisque subsidiis ornata a R. P. Alberto Colunga, O.P. et Dr. Laurentio Turrado, ... Tertia Editio (Matriri: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1959). English translations conform to the *New American Bible* cited in fn. 1.

⁵⁶ The more complete text is the one used in the Missal. Robert Bale's Mass began with the Introit text "Os iusti meditabitur," but obviously was restricted to this Cambridge manuscript, cited earlier. Cf. Zimmerman, *Ordinaire*, p. 345 for these texts.



Example 2. Krakow, Carmelite Convent, ms. 7, f. 135.

This initial depicts Elijah's conflict with the prophets of Baal by portraying him calling down fire upon his offering after that of his competitors had remained unlit and therefore ineffective, in the upper space, while in the lower space Elijah duly slits the throats of the prophets of Baal. Equally miraculous, although not necessarily biblical, is that Elijah's white cloak remained in pristine condition despite his being surrounded by fire and despite what must have been the general mess associated with the sacrificial offering of animals, not to mention his execution of a number of his rival prophets. The "Z" for "Zelo" in other manuscripts is generally decorated but without a specific picture customary in an historiated initial, examples of which occur in Ms. S from the Carmine of Florence, a Carmelite supplement written by Fr. Archangelus Paulius around 1627⁵⁷ as well as in Krakow, Carmelite Monastery, ms. 16, Rome, San Martino ai Monti, codex F, or in Codex N from the Roman Carmelite church of Santa Maria in Traspontina, now in the Centro Internazionale Sant' Alberto in Rome.⁵⁸ This important chant incipit, "Zelo zelatus sum," serves as a reminder that the zeal for God characterizes the

⁵⁷ For a discussion of this manuscript, cf. Boyce, "Carmel in Transition: A Seventeenth-Century Florentine Carmelite Supplement," *Manuscripta* 39 (1995), 56-69.

⁵⁸ These manuscripts have been discussed in Boyce, "The Carmelite Office in the Tridentine Era," cited above.

life of the Carmelite, and must be pursued without compromise, after the manner of Elijah. Thus the Carmelites, when asked "why are you here?," would presumably respond that they like Elijah were also filled with zeal for God. The first Lauds antiphon reflects on this same idea, "Elias dum zelat zelum legis receptus est in celum," "While he was zealous with zeal for the law Elijah was taken into heaven" associating Elijah's zeal for God with his assumption, thus suggesting that it remained unwavering to the very end of his earthly life. Thus the two principal office hours, Lauds and Vespers, both begin by recalling Elijah's zeal for God.

The Magnificat antiphon for first Vespers cites the prophet Malachi (Mal. 4:5-6) announcing the mission of Elijah: "Ecce ego mittam vobis Eliam prophetam, anteqam veniat dies Domini magnus et horribilis. Et convertet cor patrum ad filios, et cor filiorum ad patres eorum." "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers." Matins begins with an antiphon known as the Invitatory antiphon, since it calls people to worship, introducing psalm 94. For the feast of Elijah this antiphon invokes God as the Lord, the king of prophets, a chant text unique to the Carmelite liturgy among western traditions. The story of Elijah is dutifully reflected in the antiphons and responsories for Matins; thus the first nocturn and part of the second reflect on Elijah's interaction with the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17, an encounter later recalled by Jesus in his inaugural sermon in the synagogue of Nazareth in Lk 4:25-26. The antiphons of the third nocturn recount Elijah's conflict with the prophets of Baal, while the responsories deal with Elijah and the messengers of the king of Samaria. The Lauds antiphons, taken from 2 Kings 2, speak of Elijah using his mantle to separate the waters of the Jordan so that he and Elisha could walk safely to the other side, followed by his assumption.

Conclusions

In this paper I have discussed Elijah among the Carmelites under four points,

1) the origins of the Carmelites on Mount Carmel and the problem of their having no founder; 2) the historical development of the order and the progressive adoption of Elijah as a spiritual father; 3) the importance of the Carmelite liturgy, with its emphasis on resurrection theology and biblical personages, to the Carmelite self-understanding; and 4) the celebration of Elijah the prophet as a proper feast within the Carmelite liturgy. The Carmelites' adoption of Elijah began with the simple geographical association between the early hermits and the prophet in the *rubrica prima* of the chapter of 1281 and developed in the writings of Philippe Ribot a century later into an identification of the sons of the prophets with the earliest Carmelites. The Carmelites' adoption of Elijah enabled them to state and develop their antiquity as an order in response to the challenges posed by the fourth Lateran Council in 1215. It also gave them the founder they needed to compete with the more established mendicant orders, the Franciscans and Dominicans, whose charismatic founders were so much a part of their self-understanding from the very beginning of their existence as religious orders. As part of their adoption of Elijah the Carmelites developed a complete and proper liturgical feast for him in which they publicly proclaimed him as their leader and father and recounted in the context of the Christian liturgy his zeal for God and enthusiasm for proclaiming the word of God. The ability to celebrate Elijah liturgically finally put the Carmelites on an equal footing with the larger and generally more prominent mendicant orders, the Franciscans and Dominicans, since they now had an office and Mass for Elijah comparable to the liturgies written for Sts. Francis⁵⁹ and Dominic⁶⁰ in the thirteenth century. While some writers might

⁵⁹ The "Franciscus vir catholicus" rhymed office, written by Julian of Speyer for St. Francis, has been edited by Hilarinus Felder, O.M. Cap., *S. Francisci Assisiensis et S. Antonii Patavini Officia Rhythmica* (Freiburg, 1901).

suggest that the Carmelites created their own history in order to guarantee their survival, I prefer to see such literary narrative as an expression of their own perceived but not yet clearly articulated understanding of the special relationship they enjoyed with the ancient prophet from the time of their origin on Mount Carmel. If the Carmelites made their adopted father conform to them in external symbols such as the white cloak, they tried to conform themselves interiorly to his prophetic example, especially through their life of prayer. In seeing the sons of the prophets from the time of Elijah as their spiritual ancestors, the Carmelites associated themselves with them, not just to promote their current goals of establishing their antiquity, but also as models to imitate in their own daily life. The cultivation of Elijah as a spiritual founder and leader reflects the later Carmelites' unique appreciation of the important role he played in their spiritual consciousness from the outset of their eremitical community. Despite some anachronisms in costume, the medieval and early modern Carmelites expressed their understanding of Elijah's influence on them in enduring works of art, both as liturgical manuscript illumination and commissioned works by Renaissance and baroque painters. Finally, they became the only western religious order to honor the prophet Elijah with a special feast day and complete chants for Office and Mass. In the process they gave expression to their unique spiritual heritage by honoring the prophet they had adopted early in their history and at the same time reinforced their own identity as his sons and daughters.

Obituary

The Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, Order of Carmelites, mourns the death of the Reverend James Boyce, O. Carm., who died at the age of 60 on February 21, 2010.... The Mass of Christian Burial was held on Saturday, February 27, 2010, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Tenaflly, New Jersey, with burial following immediately after Mass at Mount Carmel Cemetery. Father Boyce was born to (the late) Joseph George Boyce and (the late) Gertrude Helen (Meagher) Boyce on November 10, 1949, in Campbellton, New Brunswick, Canada. His given name at baptism was James John. He is survived by his brother, Raymond Boyce, and his sister, Diane Forestell. James John Boyce attended Loyola High School and Marymount High School, and also studies music at L'école Normale de Musique, in Montréal, Québec. After graduating high school in 1966, he pursued undergraduate studies at McGill University, where he earned a B.A. in French and a B. Mus. in Piano. James subsequently attended the Washington Theological Coalition in Washington, DC, where he earned an M.A. in Theology. During his theological studies, James also earned an M.M. in Piano from the Catholic University of America. On November 15, 1972, James received the Carmelite habit and professed simple vows to the Carmelites in the Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary on December 8, 1973. On December 17, 1976, James made his solemn profession with the Carmelites at Saint Therese of Lisieux Church in Creskill, New Jersey, and the next day was ordained a deacon. On June 4, 1977, he was ordained a priest by the Most Reverend Robert Garner, Auxiliary Bishop of Newark, New Jersey.... After his ordination, Father James went on to earn an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Musicology from New York University. Father James began his ministry in 1977 serving as Parochial Vicar at Saint Joseph Parish in Bogota, New Jersey, and a year later as Associate Pastor of Saint John the Evangelist Parish in Leonia, New Jersey. In 1980 Father James was assigned as Parochial Vicar at Saint Cecilia Parish in Englewood, New Jersey, and later at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Tenaflly, New Jersey. In 1989 he became Pastor of Saint Therese Parish in Creskill, and in 1998 returned to Saint John the Evangelist Parish in residence. Father James began teaching music in the Department of Art History and Music at Fordham University in New York in 1998. He also served as Chair of the Department for several years. An internationally recognized scholar, Father James published numerous academic articles and several books on Carmelite Liturgy. His most recent book, *Carmelite Liturgy and Spiritual Identity: the Choir Books of Krakow*, was published in 2009. In February 2010, shortly before his death, Father James was promoted to the rank of Professor at Fordham University. In May 2009, he was appointed Commissary Provincial of the Eastern Commissariat of the Carmelite Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, a position he held until his death.

May he rest in peace.

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⁶⁰ The office of St. Dominic and related offices have been discussed in Marcie Epstein, "Ludovicus Decus Regnantium: Perspectives on the Rhymed Office," *Speculum* 53 (1978), 283-334.

Elijah the Peacemaker: Jewish and Early Christian Interpretations of Malachi 3:23-24

Lawrence E. Frizzell

Introduction

Few biblical personalities influenced the thought of later generations more deeply than Elijah the Tishbite. His mysterious departure (2 Kings 2:11; see Sirach 48:9-12; 1 Enoch 89:52; 1 Macc 2:58) excited speculation, as did the accounts of his miracles and the vagueness about his origin. People read the text of Second Kings to imply that he was exempt from death; this was understood to be a reward for his zealous ministry in defense of God's Torah (cf. 1 Kings 19:10,14). This zeal in imitation of Phinehas the priest (see Num 25:9-12; Ps 106:30; Sir 45:23-24; 1 Macc 2:54), along with the sacrifice he offered on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:20-40), contributed to the identification of Elijah as a priest. There was a general conviction that his departure, like that of Enoch (Gen 5:24; see Sir 44:6; Wis 4:10), did not sever his relationship with the world and his people. The oldest extant text concerning Elijah's return occurs at the end of Malachi, the last prophet in the Hebrew Bible.

1. Reconciliation in the Work of Elijah

Writing rather early in the Second Temple period,¹ Malachi was especially interested in worship and the priesthood. Pertinent to our study is his reflection on the priestly blessing (Num 6:24-27) which ends with a petition for peace. Unless the priests of his day give dedicated service to God, their blessings will be cursed (Mal 2:1-2). They must live up to the Levitical covenant (Num 25:12-13), which was God's promise of peace and perpetual priesthood to Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, «because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the people of Israel» (Num 25:13; cf. Mal 2:4-5). The model priest walked with God in peace and uprightness, and turned many away from iniquity (Mal 2:6).²

Malachi's devastating critique of priestly failures is completed with a threat of divine judgment. He depicts the coming of the Lord in terms that expand on the description in Isaiah 40:3 (cf. Mal 2:17 - 3:5), but rather than stressing God's presence with all his people (as in Isa 40:5), he concentrates on the Lord's manifestation in the Temple to purify the sons of Levi. God will send a messenger to prepare for this coming. The implication that he will have a role in the work of purification is the basis for speculation about his priestly character.

Is the clause, «the messenger of the Covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming...» (3:1b) an interpolation to better distinguish the messenger's activity from that of the Lord?³ This might refer back to «my messenger» (3:1a), but Gelin maintained that «the angel of the Covenant» is not the precursor mentioned previously, because his arrival in the Temple is simultaneous with that of God. Rather, this is

¹ The Book of Malachi is dated approximately 450 B.C.E. The Septuagint rendered the word «Malachi» as «his messenger», so it was not considered as a personal name in the Jewish community responsible for that part of the Greek translation. Later this person is identified as Ezra the scribe (the Aramaic *targum*, b. *Megilla* 15a).

² See Alwin Renker, *Die Tora bei Maleachi: Ein Beitrag zur Bedeutungsgeschichte von tora im Alten Testament*. Freiburg: Herder, 1979. He offers a lengthy study of Mal 2:1-9 and the Levitical Covenant.

³ F. Horst, *Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten (Handbuch zum Alten Testament)* Tübingen: Mohr, 1954, p. 271.

a mysterious title of God himself, referring implicitly to Exodus 3:2; 23:20.⁴ In any case, there is a work of preparation distinct from that of divine judgment.

A later addition to Malachi (3:22-24), which may constitute a conclusion to the prophetic corpus of the Hebrew Bible,⁵ establishes more clearly the identity of the messenger and perhaps the understanding that «the voice in the wilderness» (Isa 40:3) as well may point to Elijah as precursor.

Although Mal 3:1 was not written with a Messianic idea in mind, it could take on such a connotation when read in light of the addition (3:23-24). When the messenger in 3:1a is identified as Elijah, one might easily recognize a second figure, if also distinct from God, in «the messenger of the Covenant.» This is probably how the idea of a precursor arose, but whether a precursor to the Messiah was known in Judaism before the New Testament is debated.⁶

Bowman points out that Mal 3:22 is a prerequisite for understanding the last two verses of Malachi. «Elijah here is bringing the people back to the Law. Prophecy is for Malachi the servant of the Law... Zeal for the Law is the epitome of Elijah's work.»⁷ The task of purifying the priesthood (3:2-4) and bestowing peace (3:24) go together, both contributing to the preparation for divine judgment and Israel's salvation.

Peace begins with reconciliation between the generations of Israel, and this offsets the threat of divine punishment. «(Elijah) will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.» (Mal 3:24). Conversion originates in God's call but is seen as a community activity wherein peace is achieved in the human order so that the people's solidarity in God's service prepares them for communion with the divine.

Besides the demand for conversion and reconciliation implied by the theme of the Last Day, is there any aspect of earlier traditions about Elijah that might be a basis for the idea of turning hearts of different generations toward each other? He did re-animate a child and restore him to his mother (1 Kings 17:17-24), but was not appreciated as a peacemaker (cf. 1 Kings 18:17, where Ahab addresses him as «Troubler of Israel»). Rather, it is the Torah which brings conversion and true peace, and Elijah's dedication to Covenant fidelity makes him a figure like Moses (cf. 1 Kings 19:1-18) and an instrument of God's purifying and reconciling power.

The Septuagint interprets the task of reconciliation as reaching more widely than family or clan. «(Elias the Thisbite) shall turn again the heart of the father to the son, and the heart of a man to his neighbor...» A similar development occurs in the Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach (about 190 B.C.E.), whose hymn summarizes the record of the books of Kings and speaks of Elijah's future task in terms of Mal

⁴ Albert Gelin, «Malachi», *The Jerusalem Bible*, p. 1547 note b. The Covenant mentioned is with the tribe of Levi (Num 25:11-13, see Mal 2:4-5) which they have contravened.

⁵ Cf. the caution of B.S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), p. 495.

⁶ See Morris Faierstein, «Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?» *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100 (1981) pp. 75-86; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX)*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1981, p. 327.

⁷ John Bowman, *The Gospel of Mark: The New Christian Jewish Passover Haggadah*. (Leiden: Brill, 1965), p. 342. The Septuagint places the verse concerning the Torah of Moses after those describing the return of Elijah. This was probably due to liturgical influence; a reading in the synagogue should not end on a threatening note. See Horst p. 275.

3:23-24.

«You who were taken up by a whirlwind of fire...
You who are ready at the appointed time,
it is written,
to calm the wrath of God
before it breaks out in fury,
to turn the heart of the father to the son,
and to restore the tribes of Jacob.» (48:9-10)⁸

The final phrase refers to Isaiah 49:6, which speaks of the Servant's work. For Billerbeck, the fact that Sirach attributes this task to the returning Elijah shows that he saw him to be a Messianic personality, inasmuch as he 1) re-establishes the tribes of Israel, gathering them from Exile and freeing them from oppressors, and 2) bestows peace on God's people by appeasing the divine wrath.⁹ Indeed, Elijah prepares for God's coming in judgment, and is the instrument answering the prayer in Sir 36:1-17. «Gather all the tribes of Jacob, and give them their inheritance, as at the beginning.» (36:11) However, Elijah should not be identified with God's Servant in Deutero-Isaiah, whose role was not restricted to Israel.

2. New Testament application to John the Baptist

An alternative to the idea that Elijah will return in person is the attribution of his spirit to another person. This occurs in a tradition that Luke incorporates into his account of the annunciation to Zechariah, and is found elsewhere in the Synoptic tradition.

«(John) will be filled with the Holy Spirit,
even from his mother's womb.
And he will turn many of the sons of Israel
to the Lord their God,
and he will go before him
in the spirit and power of Elijah,
to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,
and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,
to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.»
(Luke 1: 15-17)¹⁰

Because John receives the Holy Spirit, he will be the divine instrument for conversion of many Israelites. He will precede the Lord as Elijah did, and perform the task of family reconciliation. Within the

⁸ Bowman writes that in 48:10, «Ben Sira does not clearly link up (as does Mal 3:23) Elijah with the great and dreadful day of the Lord» (p. 342). However, the prophets had already described the wrath of God in association with that day (Am 5:18-20; Zeph 1:15; Lam 2:22), so Sirach could be understood as taking up the same motif. There is a gap in the Hebrew text from the Cairo Geniza; the scroll discovered at Masada provides a text from 39:27 - 43:30.

⁹ Paul Billerbeck (with H. Strack), *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* IV. 2, p. 780.

¹⁰ For the relation of this passage to other Elijah themes in Luke, cf. Fitzmyer pp. 213-215. On Elijah and John the Baptist, see David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 121-132.

Covenant, Torah obedience brings righteousness and wisdom and disposes Israel to receive further gifts from God, indeed to recognize his presence in their midst.¹¹ In the record of John's preaching, the identification by the title «children of Abraham» is of little value without activities of repentance (Luke 3:7-9; cf. Mt 3:7-10). Here the conversion is linked to a new obedience, an attitude of listening to God's teaching. John will have a special role, not so much in making ready a path for the Lord, but in preparing people to the renewal of their Covenant commitment. His fiery preaching (e.g. Luke 3:7-9) is reminiscent of Elijah's work.¹²

In the tradition upon which Luke drew, Elijah would bring the people of Israel back to integrity before God. This involved their interior and exterior restitution. Peace would come after the people had done penance, an aspect of the conversion provoked by prophetic teaching.¹³ The central portion of the apocalyptic Fourth Book of Ezra (Esdras) (chapters 3-14), written about 100 C.E. by a Palestinian Jew, contains the following pertinent text.

«It shall be that whoever remains after all that I have foretold you shall be saved and shall see my salvation and the end of my world. And they shall see the men who were taken up, who from their birth have not tasted death; and the heart of the earth's inhabitants shall be changed and converted to a different spirit.» (6:25-26)¹⁴

The sight of Enoch and Elijah, those privileged men who escaped death, is a preparation for the transformation foreseen by Ezekiel (11:19; 36:26f.), intimately linked to the experience of God's salvation.

Because the roots of the Gospel are deeply anchored in the Jewish interpretation of the Bible and earlier traditions, it is not surprising to find similar themes in Luke and the Apocalypse of Ezra. The ministry of Israel to «the inhabitants of the earth» opens the possibility of Covenant fidelity being practised by all whose lives are transformed by God's gift.

3. Traditions of the Pharisees and their successors

The vicissitudes of history, and especially the relation between the Jewish people and the Roman empire, had profound effects on the generations that survived the fall of Jerusalem in 70 and 135 C.E. The community had to make considerable adjustments to the loss of life and the dispersion which followed the destruction of the Temple and the holy city. The people needed reassurance that this

¹¹ Howard Marshall, *Commentary on Luke*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 60, discusses the possible interpretations and concludes: «The people who are prepared for their God are those who have learned to live in peace and righteousness with one another.»

¹² Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1979), pp. 278f., makes some interesting connections between Luke 1:15-17 and the rest of the Gospel. However, I disagree with his effort to interpret the «Lucan parallelism» so that the «disobedient» are the fathers and the «just» are the children. It seems logical to follow the Malachi text and biblical tradition in general and understand that both need to be reconciled with each other and with God. Wisdom is God's gift through the Torah (Sir 24:1-23).

¹³ The Hebrew term teshubah («conversion») would later be linked with Elijah through a play on the word «*Thisbi*» (1 Kings 17:1);

R. Judah said: If Israel will not repent they will not be redeemed. Israel only repents because of distress and oppression, and owing to exile, and because they have no sustenance. Israel does not do a great repentance until Elijah comes, as it is said: «Behold, I will send Elijah...» (Mal 3:23).

Gerald Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*: New York: Hermon Press, 1970 (reprint) p. 344.

¹⁴ Translation of B.M. Metzger in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth) (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983). I p. 535.

situation would not continue in the new age. So the proclamation of interior conversion to the full message of the Torah was accompanied by the promise that the twelve tribes would be gathered together, a theme prominent from the time of the Babylonian Exile.

The text of Deutero-Isaiah (49:6) from which Sirach quotes one clause («to raise up the tribes of Jacob») clearly speaks of restoration of Jacob to God and presumably to the Land of Israel. This is the understanding in the hymn of Tobit 13, with its vision of the captives being cheered (13:10) and the sons of the righteous being gathered together (13:13) in Jerusalem (13:8, 16-18). The eschatological prayer of Sirach 36 contains the same themes of ingathering and Jerusalem, so this was probably the implication of «restore the tribes of Jacob» in Sirach 48:10, at least when these hymns were read in sequence.

In later times this restoration was understood by some to mean that Elijah would segregate the illegitimate from Israel and bring all real Israelites back to union with God's people. The Mishnah records such a discussion.

«Rabbi Joshua said: I have received from Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai, who heard from his teacher, and his teacher from his teacher, a legal tradition (*halakhah*) attributed to Moses on Sinai, that Elijah will not come to pronounce unclean or clean, to remove or draw nigh, but to remove those who were brought nigh by force and to bring nigh those who were removed by force... Rabbi Judah says: To bring nigh but not to remove. Rabbi Simeon says: To bring agreement in disputes. But the sages say: Neither to remove or to draw nigh, but to make peace in the world, as it is said: I will send you Elijah the prophet...» (Mal 3:23-24) [*Mishnah Eduyoth* VIII:7]

This succinct report places the discussion in the decades between the destruction of the Temple in 70 and the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132. The first discussant is Joshua ben Hananiah, one of the favorite disciples of the great teacher who rescued the Pharisee movement prior to the fall of Jerusalem, Johanan ben Zakkai. During the Roman occupation of Judea, the priestly leadership trod a careful path of accommodation and compromise. This led to a renewed discussion of the legitimacy of this priesthood. The genealogy of each family was crucial, and Rabbi Joshua declared that the solution will come through the discerning power of Elijah.

Rabbis Judah bar Ilai and Simeon bar Yohai were disciples of Rabbi Akiba (among other teachers), and both survived the Bar Kokhba revolt and the destruction of Jerusalem by Hadrian. R. Judah continues the earlier interpretation of Elijah's role, but does not see a need for judgment against those already in the community. Alluding to Mal 3:23-24, R. Simeon interprets «fathers» to be teachers and «children» to be disciples, if one follows Blackman.¹⁵ However, he may be referring to the disputes between the Houses of Hillel and Shammai. The majority understood the tradition to mean that Elijah's role as peacemaker goes far beyond the resolution of conflicts. He has a task in the process whereby God brings peace as a creative force whereby wholeness, tranquility and order come upon the world.¹⁶

Although there was every reason for the Jewish community to turn in on itself and ignore the world at large, the sages (who represent the general consensus of the community) continue to hope that God's peace can be shared with all creatures. In the time before the last days this was accomplished by the reception of converts, which was both a joy and a burden to the Jewish community. The medieval document entitled *Eliyahu Zuta* contains a discussion attributed to the early second century C.E. on the

¹⁵ Philip Blackman, *Mishnayoth: Order Nezikin*. (London: Mishna Press, 1954), IV, p. 444.

¹⁶ At this and other points I have profited from discussion with my colleague, Asher Finkel.

related question of recognizing members of the ten tribes.

(In the matter of proselytes), take note that because the ten tribes had been absorbed by the heathen Cutheans (Samaritans), proselytes will not be accepted from the Cutheans until Elijah and the Messiah come and clear up their ancestry, as it is said: Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet... (Mal 3:23-24).¹⁷

As with the priesthood, Elijah would have a special role in deciding the legitimacy of those candidates for membership in Israel who might claim that they descend from one of the lost tribes.

Within the Jewish tradition there is a tendency to link persons of different generations who possessed similar characteristics. The identification of Elijah with Phinehas, the zealous high priest, has been studied recently and need not be reviewed here.¹⁸ It is noteworthy that themes from Malachi studied above recur in the texts which see the similarity between Phinehas and Elijah to be a sign of the future priestly function of Elijah in relation with the Levitical covenant (Num 25:12-13).

4. Christian interpretation of Elijah's eschatological role

The tradition from which Luke drew for the narrative about the birth of John the Baptist used the Elijah tradition, even though the account of Jesus' ministry would apply this typology to him.¹⁹ Mark implicitly identifies John as an Elijah-like figure (9:9-13) and Matthew makes the typology explicit (17:9-13).²⁰ The Apocalypse 11:3-11 records a vision of two mysterious witnesses described in terms of Zechariah 4:3,11-14. Powers attributed to these witnesses show clear reminiscences of Elijah and Moses, both of whom call fire down from heaven (Num 16:28-35; 1 Kings 18:20-40; 2 Kings 1:9-14; Sirach 48:3).²¹ The witnesses are Christians bearing a resemblance to the prophets and acting with similar power, intrepid and inflexible in the midst of their enemies, relying on God for the accomplishment of their mission.²² Their roles in the events of the final conflict between good and evil are described in terms of the greatest prophet and the one who, like him, journeyed to Sinai - Horeb to find the strength to continue faithful in most trying circumstances.

Outside the New Testament, the earliest allusion to Elijah preparing for the Messiah occurs in Justin Martyr. Trypho the Jew explains that the Messiah is not known, nor even conscious of his own identity and power until Elijah comes to anoint him and make him manifest to all (Dialogue with Trypho VIII:4, cf. XLIX:I).

The numerous uses of Elijah themes by Greek, Latin and Syriac writers have been studied thoroughly.²³ It remains for us to report on the way Jerome and Augustine discussed the text of Malachi.

¹⁷ The translation is by William G. Braude and Israel J. Kapstein, *Tanna de be Eliyyahu: The Lore of the School of Elijah*. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1981), p. 403.

¹⁸ Robert Hayward, «Phinehas - the same is Elijah: The origins of a rabbinic tradition», *Journal of Jewish Studies* 29 (1978) pp. 22-34.

¹⁹ See Paul Hinnebusch, «Jesus the New Elijah in St. Luke», *The Bible Today* 32 (1976) pp. 2237-44, and his spiritual interpretation in *Jesus the New Elijah*. (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1978).

²⁰ For bibliography on the Transfiguration and related passages see *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (ed. Colin Brown). (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), I pp. 543-545. III pp. 861-865.

²¹ See R.J. Bauckham, «The martyrdom of Enoch and Elijah: Jewish or Christian?», *JBL* 95 (1976) pp. 447-458, and Alexander Zeron, «The martyrdom of Phineas - Elijah», *JBL* 98 (1979) pp. 99-100.

²² Cf. André Feuillet, «Essai d'interprétation de l'Apocalypse 11», *N.T. Studies* 4 (1957-58) pp. 183-200, reprinted in *Johannine Studies*. (New York: Alba House, 1964).

²³ See the essays in volume I of *Élie, Le Prophète* (Les Études Carmélitaines), (Desclée de Brouwer, 1956).

In his commentaries on the prophets, Jerome frequently cites Jewish traditions and his works bear witness to themes that are preserved only in part in Jewish texts that can be dated early. He reports that the Jews understand «Behold, I send my messenger...» (Mal 3:1) of Elijah the prophet, and what follows about the messenger of the Covenant «they refer to *eleimmenos*, that is their Christ, whom they say will come on the last day.»²⁴ Because Jesus links John the Baptist with Elijah, Jerome applies Malachi 3:23 to him. His lengthy comment on the last verses of Malachi deserves our attention.

«After Moses, whose commandments we have taught should be kept spiritually, (Malachi) says that Elijah is to be sent; Moses signifying the law and Elijah prophecy, as Abraham says to a certain rich man in purple: 'They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them!' (Luke 16:28)...The Lord sent in Elijah (which means 'my God'), who is from the town Thesbi (which resounds conversion and penance), the entire chorus of prophets, who turn the heart of fathers to sons, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the patriarchs, that their descendants may believe in the Savior Lord, in whom they believed. 'Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day.' (John 8:56). Or, 'the heart of the father to the son,' that is, the heart of God to everyone who will accept the spirit of adoption. And, 'the heart of the children to their fathers' that both Jews and Christians, who now disagree among themselves, agree to Christ by like religion. Whence it is to the apostles, who proclaim the plantation of the Gospel throughout the whole world: 'Instead of your fathers shall be your sons.' (Ps 45:17). If, however, Elijah does not turn the heart of fathers to sons before, when the great and horrible day of the Lord comes... the true and just judge will strike, not heaven, nor those meditating on it, but the earth with a curse, those who do earthly things. Jews and Judaizing heretics think that Elijah will come before their *eleimmenos* and restore all things. Hence the question is posed to Christ in the Gospel: 'Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?' (Mark 9:11) and he replies: 'Elijah does come first...' (9: 12), understanding Elijah to be John.»²⁵

Knowing the traditions about Elijah's role in reconciling Israelites among themselves, and causing them to return to God (as his names «Elijah the Thesbite» imply), Jerome places the task within a Christological framework. Then he argues against a Jewish eschatological hope by referring to the Gospel.

Augustine devotes a chapter of *The City of God* (XX:29) to the Malachi passage, with an emphasis on Elijah's work in converting the Jews. Although there are themes in common with Jerome, his thought develops from the Septuagint wording.

(Elijah) will turn the heart of the father toward the son'... the seventy translators used the singular for the plural. The meaning, then, is that the sons, that is, the Jews, will interpret the Law as their fathers - that is, the prophets, including Moses himself - interpreted it. For it is thus that the heart of the fathers will be turned toward the children when the understanding of the fathers is brought to the understanding of the children. And 'the hearts of the children will be turned to the fathers' when the children share the views of their fathers. The Septuagint here says, 'the heart of a man to his neighbor' - for fathers and sons are the closest of neighbors.

However, another and a more attractive meaning... is that Elijah is to turn the heart of God the Father toward the Son, not, of course, by causing the Father to love the Son, but by teaching men that the Father loves the Son, so that the Jews also, who first hated the Son, will love this same Son, who is our

²⁴ The Latin text is found in *Corpus Christianorum, series latina*, volume 76 A. p. 928. The translation is my own. In Judaeo-Hellenic circles the Messiah was called *eleimmenos*, the Anointed; this term was chosen in reaction to the Christian use of *Christos*. Cf. Samuel Krauss, «The Jews in the works of the Church Fathers III», *Jewish Quarterly Review* 6 (1894) p. 244; reprinted in *Judaism and Christianity* (edited by Jacob Agus), (New York: Arno, 1973).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 941-942. Note that the disagreement between Jews and Christians will be resolved by Elijah. This is similar to the point made by Rabbi Simeon.

Christ.» (XX:29)²⁶

Jerome's thought on a major theme such as Christology or eschatology, must be drawn from a variety of places in his commentaries and letters, and we cannot be totally sure of the synthesis. Augustine's *City of God*, on the other hand, places the discussion of Malachi 3:23-24 into the context of a great treatise concerning the Last Judgment. The text quoted comes from the last of five chapters on Malachi's prophecy, and he has commented on Malachi already in Book XVII chapter 35. The speculation concerning Elijah's role, limited to the Jewish people as in some strands of Jewish tradition, is only one point in a large eschatological panorama. However, both Jerome and Augustine share this tradition with a large number of writers in the early Church.²⁷

5. Elijah as man of peace

Ahab's title for Elijah, «Troubler of Israel» (1 Kings 18:17) derives from the identification of the King as the embodiment of the people Israel. Elijah was a troubler only for those who were being unfaithful to the Covenant. Later Ahab called him «my enemy» (1 Kings 21:20) because the prophet continued to oppose the weak King's idolatry and injustice. Elijah could claim that he was extremely zealous for the God of the Covenant, the Lord of hosts (1 Kings 19:10,14). It was that vigorous fidelity to his prophetic vocation that led him to accept deeds of violence. However, the observance of Torah leads to peace and to life, so it is not surprising that Jewish tradition came to see Elijah as both interpreter of Torah and arbiter within the community.

As Elijah's priestly background and role were emphasized in Jewish tradition, he came to be seen in the pattern of Aaron the high priest. Hillel had recommended to all: «Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving your fellow creatures, and drawing them near to the Torah.» (Mishnah Avot 1:12). Those who emulated this great teacher of peacemaking could look forward to the return of the priest whose fidelity to the Covenant led him to a fuller life with God (2 Kings 2:11). In the chain of activities listed by Rabbi Phineas ben Jair, «the Holy Spirit leads to the resurrection of the dead. And the resurrection of the dead shall come through Elijah of blessed memory.» (Mishnah Sotah IX: 15)

In the political order, peace is most often achieved through compromise, and the resulting situation is often defined as «coexistence». Elijah reminds us that the peace which is God's gift must be grounded in faith and pursued with fidelity, an awareness that certain principles cannot be neglected as one pursues the task of drawing that potential for integrity from the ambiguity of the human situation.

At least in the abstract, we are much more sensitive to the rights of dissenters than Elijah seemed to be. Our sense of human dignity and the rights of conscience permit the acceptance of pluralism in the various areas of social existence.²⁸ However, there must also be a strong sense of the individual's responsibilities to God and society as our generation seeks to move from terror, chaos and anarchy to a peaceful and ordered world where each and all find a place. The ancient insight that this will come from

²⁶ Henry Bettenson's translation in *Augustine: City of God* (Pelican Classics) p. 957.

²⁷ See the numerous texts, rabbinic and Christian, collection by R. Macina, «Le rôle eschatologique d'Élie le Prophète dans la conversion finale du peuple juif», *Proche Orient Chrétien* 31 (1981) pp. 71-99.

²⁸ Cf. Eugene B. Borowitz, «The autonomous self and the commanding community», *Theological Studies* 45 (1984) pp. 34-56; Michael Wyschogrod, «Judaism and conscience», *Standing Before God* (J.M. Oesterreicher Festschrift) (New York: Ktav 1981), pp. 313-328.

a divine gift should be acknowledged, along with a concerted effort to imitate Elijah in fostering reconciliation between generations and among neighbors.

Afterword

In many ways like unto Moses, Elijah challenged Israelites of the Northern Kingdom to serve God alone. "How glorious you were, Elijah, in your wondrous deeds!" (Sira 48:4). Because he was taken up to God in an extraordinary manner, his special role in the life of Israel was celebrated by both prophet (Malachi 3:23-24) and evangelist (Matthew 17:10-13; Luke 1:17). In both Jewish and Christian traditions Elijah is a model for profound prayer, peacemaking and hope in the fulfillment of God's plan for his people.

The impact of Elijah on both Jewish and Christian communities through the ages may be studied further by referring to the following works:

1. David M. Miller, "The messenger, the Lord and the coming judgment in the reception history of Malachi 3," *New Testament Studies* 53 (2007) p. 1-16.
2. Menahem Macina, *Les Frères Retrouvés: De l'hostilité à l'égard des juifs à la reconnaissance de la vocation d'Israël* (Paris:Éditions de l'Oeuvre, 2011) p. 281 (note 352) draws attention to his earlier studies in *Proche Orient Chrétien* 31 (1981) p. 71-99 and 34 (1984) p. 209-32. See [www.rivtsion.org/f/index.php?sujet_id=1196](http://www.rivtsion.org/f/index.php? sujet_id=1196) and 987 respectively
3. Pablo Gadenz, *Called from the Jews and from the Gentiles* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) p. 186-189 for Paul's use of 1 Kings 19:10, 14 in Romans 11:2-10.
4. David Frankfurter, *Elijah in Upper Egypt: The Apocalypse of Elijah and Early Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) develops themes found succinctly in O.S. Wintermute "Apocalypse of Elijah," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth) (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983) volume 1 p. 721-53.
5. Kristen H. Lindbeck, *Elijah and the Rabbis: Story and Theology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010) pp. xxi + 241. (Ph.D. dissertation, Jewish Theological Seminary, 1999).
"Rabbinic Judaism knows Elijah as herald of the last days, as legal authority, teacher of the wise, and helper of those in crisis... Elijah plays an esoteric role in kabbalah, and a better known and more homely one as the hero of Jewish folk tales. In these stories Elijah often comes in the guise of a poor stranger, and if he is welcomed he brings benefits and blessings" (p. ix).

When the Rabbis of Talmudic times speak of Elijah as historical prophet or messianic herald, they continue and interpret biblical traditions. On the other hand, when they tell stories about Elijah as a supernatural but human figure who helps and advises rabbis of previous generations, they are expressing a new creation, a uniquely rabbinic Elijah found in Judaism to the present day" (p. xii).

Dr. Lindbeck has studied the longer Elijah stories preserved in the literature of the post-destruction period (after 70 C.E.) and divides them into three categories: 1.) Elijah in disguise rescues Jews from danger, 2.) Elijah refuses to continue teaching a scholar because of erroneous judgment on the part of the latter, 3.) someone meets Elijah and asks a question that no one else can answer. Thus, "Elijah is a supernatural mediator who is as much or more a teacher and ethical guide than a savior." (p. xvii).

The book presents the work of others on Elijah in the context of form-critical and folklore studies and presents Dr. Lindbeck's approach to analysis of the stories. Then she considers Elijah as a supernatural mediator in relation to the angel of death and the *bat qol* (heavenly

voice”), as well as to Hermes (Mercury), other teachers and Christian saints. Finally she analyzes the three groups of stories listed above, with many examples of each. The role of Elijah in Talmudic literature, especially in Babylonian traditions, is completed by a sketch of later periods in Jewish history, with special reference to Elijah’s presence at circumcision and the Passover Meal, dating to the 8th or 9th century and to the 15th century respectively.

This work explores the topic very thoroughly and in an engaging manner. It is recommended to our readers who wish to explore in detail the Talmudic texts and other developments in Judaism concerning Elijah.

6. The vitality of life and prayer on Mount Carmel with its interfaith dimensions was recorded by Father Antonin Jaussen in an essay illustrated by twelve photographs, “La fête de saint Elie au Mont Carmel,” *Revue Biblique* 33 (1924) p. 248-59. This record of the feast of Saint Elijah on Mount Carmel was summarized in the Newsletter from the École Biblique, *Nouvelles de Jérusalem* (Number 83, January 2007) p. 21-22:
 “The Carmelite church on Mount Carmel enshrines a cave in which it is believed the prophet Elijah dwelt. At the bottom of the hill near the sea is a much larger cave, the so-called ‘School of the Prophets’, where he gathered his disciples. For the feast of Saint Elijah, el-Khader, in July these draw pilgrims- Christian, Muslim and Druze- from all over Galilee and Samaria. On the Gathering day (19 July), the great esplanade between the Carmelite monastery and the lighthouse fills with a vast throng (estimated between 10,000 and 12,000) who sing, dance and party all night. The next day all, including Muslims and Druze, attend mass and bring objects to touch to the stature of the prophet in the crypt. The central ceremony is the presentation in the church of the children of the three faiths born in response to the intervention of Elijah. They have been ‘vowed to el-Khader’ and are released by having a lock of their hair snipped.”
7. Moses and Elijah in the Transfiguration. During the public ministry of Jesus, the disciples were unable to appreciate fully either the marvel of his unity with God or the suffering that would flow from his unity with sinful humankind. The privileged inner circle, Peter, James and John, were called aside to join Jesus in an anticipation of his glory and his suffering. The Transfiguration and the Agony in the Garden are linked in the Gospel traditions (Lk 9:28-36 and 22:39-46) as two sides of the same mystery. Indeed, the baptism of Jesus (Lk 3:21-22) points to these key moments on the road to Calvary and the resurrection. Luke notes that Jesus prepared for these experiences by praying; then two great leaders of the Hebrew people conversed with him about his *exodus* which he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem (9:31). More than merely representatives of “the Law and the prophets,” these teachers both had come to know the God of Israel at Mount Sinai (Horeb). Thus they were credible witnesses to the message of God to the disciples (Ex 33:7-34:7; 1 Kg 19:9-18). The cloud symbolizing the divine presence overshadowed the disciples, indicating that they were taken up into intimacy with God. Thus were they prepared to hear the Father’s voice: “This is my chosen Son; listen to him” (9:35). They were not the most astute learners; but rather like ourselves, they pieced together the divine plan only in the light of Paschal faith.
 (L. Frizzell, “Sunday Scripture,” *The Catholic Advocate*, August 6, 2006)

May the God of Elijah inspire many peacemakers to come from the ancient traditions of faith to bring a message of reconciliation and collaboration to the communities of the Middle East and far beyond!

Lawrence E. Frizzell