

## ALBERT OF JERUSALEM (d. 1214)

Saint, patriarch

Albert was born at *Castrum Gualterii* (the actual Castel Gualteri, in the diocese of Guastalla, or Gualtirolo, in the diocese of Reggio Emilia /Italy/) about the middle of the XII cent. — of the Avogadro family, as some claim, or, more probably, of the Counts of Sabbioneta.

The first certain date of his life is 1180, the year in which he was elected prior of the Canons Regular of Mortara (Pavia), where some time earlier he had become a member of this Order. In 1184 he was named Bishop of Bobbio; and in the following year he was transferred to Vercelli, which he governed for twenty years. During this period at Vercelli he carried out missions of national and international importance with rare prudence and firmness: he was a mediator between Pope Clement III and Frederick Barbarossa, whose successor, Henry VI, took the ecclesiastical property of Vercelli under his protection and constituted Albert a prince of the Empire. In 1199, on behalf of Pope Innocent III, he effected a peace between Parma and Piacenza, something that he had already done in Vercelli, on Jan. 12, 1194, between Milan and Pavia. In the same 1194 he drew up the statutes for the canons of Biella; about the year 1200 he was the judge in a suit between the abbot and the provost of St. Ambrose in Milan. In 1201 he was one of the counsellors for the Rule of the Humiliati, who had been transformed into a religious order by Pope Innocent III. Of special importance during this period at Vercelli was the diocesan synod celebrated in 1191; it was of great value for its disciplinary provisions, which continued to serve as a norm until modern times.

After the resignation of Cardinal Godfrey (Soffredo, Suffredi) from the patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Canons Regular of the Holy Sepulcher, supported by King Amalric II of Lusignan, elected Albert as their patriarch. Pope Innocent III ratified the nomination and then, with a letter of Feb. 17, 1205, asked Albert to accept the election — even though ... you are very necessary to Us in the regions of Lombardy, inasmuch as We confidently make you our representative even in difficult affairs\* (See PL, CCXV, col. 540).

On June 16 of the same year the Pope announced to the prelates of the Holy Land that he was sending them Albert, «a man approved, circumspect and provident, as his legate for the ecclesiastical province of Jerusalem (T. Haluscynskyi, *Acta Innocentii III*, Rome, 1944, pp. 306-7). Towards the end of the year Albert obtained various faculties and the pallium. He arrived in Palestine at the beginning of 1206; but, since he was not able to enter Jerusalem, which was occupied by the Saracens, he established his residence at Accon (St. John of Acre), even though there was a bishop already in that see.

Also as patriarch, Albert received missions of extraordinary trust from the pope: he was a mediator of peace between the kings of Cyprus and of Jerusalem, between the king of Armenia and the Count of Tripoli, between this noble and the Templars, between the king of Armenia and the same Templars, between the king of Cyprus and his constable. In the ecclesiastical forum he opposed the archdeacon of Antioch, whom he substituted with another person; he opposed the Count of Tripoli, who held the patriarch of Antioch as a

prisoner; he deposed the intruded Greek patriarch and saw to the election of a new Latin patriarch; he annulled the invalid choice of the archbishop of Nicosia in Cyprus and effected the election of another prelate; he arranged an exchange of prisoners with the sultan of Egypt and sent legates to the sultan of Damascus to work for peace in the Holy Land. He was always held in high esteem by Pope Innocent III, who sent him many letters and appreciated his wisdom, his prudence and his fortitude. The Pope attributed to the efforts of Albert the fact that the Holy Land did not entirely fall under the dominion of the Saracens. On April 19, 1213, the Pope invited him to the IV Lateran Council (PL, CCXVI, coll. 830-31). However, Albert could not participate because death had overtaken him.

About 1208-09 Albert wrote the Carmelite *Formula of life* (rule), which he addressed to the prior of Mount Carmel — a B, not better specified, and afterwards called Brocard — and to the other «hermits who, under his obedience, live near the fountain on the sacred mountain. Brief and laconic, the *Formula of life* is a precious example of the insight and of the spirit of Albert, and must be considered as an important text of medieval spirituality. Without doubt, Albert codified what had been the monastic tradition of Carmel, but he also undoubtedly manifested in this code the characteristic traits of his own soul. Tellingly, the *Formula of life*, so brief and discreet on disciplinary matters, particularly insists on the spirit of the new institute oriented towards continual prayer and meditation on the word of God, and to the interior and exterior climate of silence, recollection and detachment which favor contact with God. Because of this text, which is still the basic law for the religious formation and discipline of Carmel, the Order venerates St. Albert as its proper legislator.

On Sept. 14, 1214, while he was taking part in a procession at Acre, he was killed by knife-wounds inflicted by the Master of the Hospital of the Holy Spirit, whom Albert had reprimanded and deposed because of his evil life.

According to Zimmerman, the feast of St. Albert began to be celebrated among the Carmelites in 1504. It was fixed for April 8. Abandoned in 1574, it appeared again in the *Proper* of the Discalced in 1609. The lessons approved in 1672 had the holy patriarch die among his own» on Mount Carmel. At the present time the feast of St. Albert is celebrated on Sept. 17 by both branches of the Carmelite Order, with the rank of *feast*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: J. Ferrerius, *Sancti Eusebii Vercellensis episcopi et mart, eiusque in episcopatum successores vitae et res gestae*, Rome, 1602, pp. 177-185; *Acta S8. Aprilis, I, Venezia 17.7*, pp. 769-802; *Innocentii III vegesta stoe Epistolae*, in PL, CCXIV-CCXVI; P. Marie-Joseph, in DHGE, I, coll. 1564-67; id., *Topographic sacrée du Mont Carmel...et chronologic de l'Ordre aux ss. XII' et XIII'*, in *Etudes Carmél.* III (1913), pp. 134-54; P. Pianzola, *S. Alberto Avogadro, dell' Ordine Mortariense, legislatore dei Carmelitani*, in *Il Monte Carmelo*, XXIII (1937), pp. 196-198, 225-228; XXIV (1938), pp 24-28, 48-51, 89-91, 147-153, 183-191, 219-227; XXV (1939) pp. 25-30, 47-49; Ambrogio di S. Teresa, *Untersuchungen uber die Karmeliter-Regel*, in *Ephemerides Carmeliticae*, II (1948), pp. 17-49.

Adrian Staring.

ICONOGRAPHY. The iconographic attributes of this saint are a crucifix and a knife. This last is probably an allusion to the knife-blow received by Albert during a procession at St. John of Acre, a blow inflicted upon him by a man whom he had justly removed from office. Albert is represented with these two attributes in a picture by Dosso Dossi in the Carmelite church of Modena. P. Lorenzetti portrayed him. in the predella of the altar-piece in the Carmelite church of Siena, as he consigned the rule of the Carmelite Order to B.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Reau, III, p. 46 (It would be difficult to accumulate so many errors in so few lines); Emond, I pp. 128 ff.

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