

La terza parte riguarda la vita della provincia *ad extra*. Essa è suddivisa in tre sezioni: I. I rapporti col clero regolare e diocesano; II. I rapporti con lo Stato sabauda; III. Attività pastorale dei frati.

Il tutto viene corredato di un indice onomastico e un indice toponomastico.

*Aleksander Horowski*

Massimiliano Chilin, *Vita missionaria. I Frati Minori Conventuali nel Medio Oriente (1911-2010)*. (Varia, 54). [Piazza del Santo 11; I-35123] Padova, Centro Studi Antoniani, 2012. 23 cm, 141 p. ill. (€ 13,00) ISBN 978-88-85155-88-6

The present monograph may be read as a kind of case study in mission history. The latter-day reorganisation of missionary structures and the widespread ingress of missionary personnel from younger Churches into overseas evangelisation activities are fast becoming common denominators in the contemporary reality of the missionary undertakings of many religious institutes. This phenomenon seems to echo some aspects of the apostolic times: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth... For we are God's servants, working together" (1 Cor 1, 6-9). The lists of the missionaries in the book are, therefore, very much in place (43-46; 96-97). The fruit of decades of toil and sweat in the Middle East by the Italian Franciscan Conventual friars, particularly by the friars of the ancient Padua Province of St Anthony of Padua has been taken over by their confreres of the St Joseph province of Romania. This change of hands also occasioned a change of its juridical identity. The General Delegation of the Middle East has become the St Francis of Assisi Provincial Custody of the Orient and the Holy Land. The new designation also embodies the long-cherished dream of the Order's missionaries like St Maximilian Maria Kolbe of establishing a "Marian House" in Lebanon and a base in the Holy Land (p. 6, 113).

The author, who is very much a protagonist in these hazardous and trailblazing missionary enterprises, makes profuse use of archival materials in outlining a matter-of-fact account of the various attempts of the Conventual friars to get established in the Middle East. The fact that their ventures have had mixed results, is self-explanatory when viewed against the harsh ground reality they faced. While the friars withdraw from Syria after fifty-seven years of sweat and toil, they are successful in gaining a foothold in Lebanon. Without a doubt the presence and activities of yet another religious family in this region will surely be a positive contribution towards reassuring the members of the local Christian community to stay put and not to take flight (49). In the *Preface*, Luciano Bertazzo, the director of the "Centro Studi Antoniani", aptly presents the book's significance for the Conventual Order: "Grateful thanks to Fr Massimiliano for having left us with these memories of a history; it is a theological place of God's manifestation in time; thanks

also to his capacity still to dream, with the wish that the dream become brother of reality" (6). One wonders if "Massimiliano M. Chilin" (56) is same as "Massimiliano Chilin".

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Cinzia Capristo, *Fine di un Impero – inizi di una Repubblica. La Cina nella testimonianza di P. Antonio Cipparone OFM (1908-1920)*. [Via Vecchia per Marino, 28/30; I-00046] Grottaferrata (RM), Frati Editori di Quaracchi, Fondazione Collegio S. Bonaventura, 2012. 23 cm, 209 p. ill. (€ 28,50) ISBN 978-88-7013-284-7

As its title signifies, the book under review is Dr Vincenza Cinzia Capristo's critical edition of two diaries of Fr Antonio Cipparone OFM (1884-1944), which are largely an eyewitness account of China's transition from empire to its beginnings as a republic in the period from 1908 to 1920. It is the story of the way the imperial rule of the Qing dynasty gave way to the Republic of China, which would in 1948 get transformed into today's People's Republic of China (PRC). The book, therefore, provides an insightful glance into the early history of the contemporary reality of the PRC that had been for several centuries the scene of the evangelization activities of scores of members of the Franciscan family. Fr Antonio Cipparone was a member of the Salerno-Basilicata province of Friars Minor, which had been the religious province of the trail-blazing missionary to China, John of Montecorvino (1247-1328), the first bishop of Khanbalik, today's Beijing. The original of the diaries are preserved in the OFM Immaculate Conception Friary of Baronissi in Salerno. In the *Prefazione*, the minister of the OFM province of Salerno-Basilicata, Fr Emanuele Bochicchio, aptly observes: "The work, re-read, copied out and introduced by Vincenza Cinzia Capristo, is a source and as such supplies the knowledge of events and dynamics of social life that are important for contextualizing directly and closely the Church's openness and for enriching culturally" (p. 2). The author of the diaries also furnishes a vast documentation "as if to show that what has been narrated, corresponds to truth" (*Presentazione*, 5).

The body matter is divided into two parts: *Antonio Cipparone Missionary in China* (17-53) and *The Diaries of Antonio Cipparone* (55-196). The first part effectively serves as a well-got up introduction to the two diaries inasmuch as it contextualises Cipparone's mission in China. He reached his destination of the District of Taiyuan in the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Shanxi on 8 November 1908. He would stay put here till 20 October 1920, when he made his definitive return on grounds of ill-health. A glance through the pages 21-51 gives the reader an idea of the kind of interaction between political ideologues and missionaries that used to characterise several of the Church's evangelisation activities till of late. Without a doubt Dr Capristo has done her homework well in bringing to the fore the underlying forces operative in the unfolding of the undertakings of the missionaries. She highlights the importance of the MSS: "Both the diaries are rich in descriptive details, as well as contain many names of people who lived in China in the