

Module DC42: Who Founded the Carmelites

This module is designed to introduce students to the historical controversy about whether or not the Old Testament prophet, Elijah, founded the Carmelites. The controversy began in the 1280s and continued right down to the 1970s, when it became more generally accepted that the Formula of Life by St Albert of Jerusalem was the original founding document of the Carmelite Order.

The first unit outlines the historical foundation of the Carmelites in the early decades of the thirteenth century, their transfer to Europe and the Rule they received in 1247.

The second unit outlines the emergence of a claim to have been founded by Elijan towards the end of the thirteenth century when the survival of the Carmelites was in doubt.

The third unit describes the consolidation of that claim during the fourteenth century.

In the fourth unit, the critical examination and rejection of that claim by the Jesuit Papenbroeck in 1675 is summarised.

In the final unit, the initial rejection of that critical examination by the Carmelites and the implicit acceptance of its findings in the last fifty years or so is described.