

ANTONIO GARCÍA Y GARCÍA, OFM 1928-2013

Padre Antonio, who died at the Chipiona convent of his Order on 8 July 2013, was, as we English do not often have occasion to say, quite simply ‘a lovely man’. For me he was always so, from the time *when*, thanks to an introduction from Christopher Cheney, during my first *iter hispanicum* in the autumn of 1966 I met him in Salamanca and he whisked me off to a memorable lunch at the Viuda del Fraile just off the Plaza Mayor and insisted on my having a double ration of *chuletillas de cordero*. For his generosity to a beginner and his appreciation of that beginner’s material needs alike, this was doubly typical of him. In 1966 he was just 38, but already it was an ageless 38. The agelessness was also typical. Years later he took up jogging.

And that generosity, of which those lamb cutlets were only one expression, knew no limits. It extended also to his willingness to write letters to colleagues and to unforthcoming archivists, to establish contacts, and to provide references, bibliographical and other, with unwearied regularity. He was the best and the promptest of academic correspondents. My own work, in common with that of others, was enormously assisted by him.

Like St Francis’s earliest disciples he covered a lot of ground. Indeed, on account of his tireless attendance at conferences one came to think of him as ‘the Flying Friar’: *el mendicante volante*. On such collegial occasions, where the tendency to rhetoric of some of our colleagues was all too often on display, P. Antonio was never a time-waster. ‘Tan, tan, tan, y ya está.’ ‘Es importante’, he would pronounce of some small advance achieved on the frontier of our subject, and immediately move on to the next challenge. I retain the happiest memories of him in the company of Stephan Kuttner, Domenico Maffei, Ennio Cortese and others at gatherings of historians of canon law on both sides of the Atlantic.

As I said at Salamanca in May 1998, when I had the honour of presenting him with the two-volume Festschrift published in *Studia Gratiana*, XXVIII-XXIX, to have edited those volumes for him ‘era para mí un honor, y si conllevaba trabajo era algo que estaba dispuesto a hacer de mil amores.’ And I was not alone in those sentiments for, as I also said: ‘Tan pronto como se enteraron de ello, muchos otros estudiosos de todo el mundo pensaron de la

misma manera. El ingente número de ellos que estaban ansiosos a enviar contribuciones para el homenaje es un testimonio bastante elocuente del afecto y estima que el mundo académico siente por el P. Antonio. Hemos acabado con 52 contribuciones ... y hubiese sido fácil tener el doble...’.

I referred to that day at the Viuda del Fraile and to the truly Franciscan generosity I had experienced over the years: ‘Generosidad rayana en el exceso. Dispensando hospitalidad y Amistad o separatas y referencias, en su trato con la comunidad de estudiosos en general el P. Antonio ha compartido sin reticencias su especial conocimiento de bibliotecas y archivos de España y del exterior. Y de allí proceden las materias primas del flujo incesante de sus publicaciones, siempre novedosas y ricas.’

Of those pioneering works one in particular, *Synodicon Hispanum*, will keep his name fresh amongst students of the subject which for so long he adorned. This though is not the place to linger over his prolific contribution to scholarship (with over 250 items already by 1998). It is rather one for remembering P. Antonio for his humanity and his contribution to friendship and cordiality and to do so with respect and, above all, with the deepest affection.

Peter Linehan